



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan

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We wish to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing.

We would prefer to attend hearings in Central Auckland.

We do not feel our submission contains commercially sensitive or other information that may be withheld under section 7(2)(b) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

We wish to be involved in the local bus service consultation that will be conducted as part of the service implementation programme.

INTRODUCTION

(i) Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning, for the City and Region.

(ii) The Trust considers that good planning includes quality public transport.

(iii) The Trust has associations with other groups within and beyond Auckland, both those with an interest in the protection of Auckland's natural and built heritage, and those which focus on transport issues.

(iv) CTA has submitted on matters regarding public transport as follows:

- Draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan, 24 December 2009
- Section 4.6 (Transportation) Hamilton City Council 2010/11 Draft Annual Plan, 23 April 2010
- Waikato District Council 2010/11 Draft Annual Plan, Roading / Transportation section, 23 April 2010
- Auckland Council Draft Annual Plan, 1 April 2010
- The Auckland Plan, 31 May 2011
- City Centre Masterplan, 17 June 2011
- Draft Local Board Plans (all), 8 August 2011
- The Auckland Plan, 31 October 2011
- Draft Long-Term Plan including the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme, 23 March 2012

PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

(1) Civic Trust Auckland supports the general direction of the proposed Public Transport Network outlined in chapter 5 of the Draft RPTP and in particular the advances made in the areas of rail electrification and integrated ticketing.

(2) More frequent, reliable and faster services will enhance transport options for those wishing to travel around Auckland and will thus contribute to making the city more liveable.

(3) We read on page 58 that route protection is being undertaken for the following projects:

- Airport rail loop
- Waitemata Harbour Crossing
- Rail to the North Shore
- Avondale-Southdown rail corridor.

(4) We support these projects and would like to see them implemented sooner than projected, particularly the airport rail loop.

(5) All harbour crossings should include provision for trains and bicycles. CTA considers the walkway-cycleway proposed for the harbour bridge to be a key link in the transport network.

(6) We understand that Avondale Southdown already has a designated rail corridor and that this rail link was proposed more than 60 years ago.

(7) We support deferring / cancelling state highway projects to make funding available for rail.

(8) We caution against the transport infrastructure having a negative impact on Auckland's built and natural environment, particularly in terms of the effect on historic heritage and viewshafts. Consideration in the plan should be given to addressing negative effects in both the planning stage (as to where infrastructure will be placed) and when the transport systems are in place. It is vital that community concerns are listened to in this regard before planning progresses, including prior to land use changes and greenfield purchases.

(9) We strongly support policies 1.2 and 2.2 and their accompanying actions (pages 26 and 28): *“Design the frequent service network so that at least 40 per cent of the population within the rural-urban limit reside or work within 500 m of a frequent service stop”* and *“Design routes so that at least 90 per cent of the population within the metropolitan urban limit lives or works within 500 m of a rail, bus, or ferry stop”*. Ideally these percentages would be increased beyond the life of this plan.

(10) Bus and train (and future tram) routes should be planned carefully to avoid unnecessary duplication.

(11) “All-day service” would ideally mean “24-hour service” for at least the major routes. Currently public transport users need to return home before midnight or travel home after this time by private transport or taxi. This is a disincentive for people to move beyond their local community for the purposes of visiting, entertainment and shopping. A 24-hour public transport service would contribute greatly to providing the public with more transport choices.

(12) We suggest that an extension of service on major routes be introducing an hourly service throughout Friday and Saturday nights, and that such a trial is heavily publicised to potential users. Alternatively, extra services be provided (again with appropriate publicity) for special late night events.

(13) Customers should not have to change to a different service more than once, especially in the central isthmus.

(14) We propose the adoption of one region-wide free public transport day per month in order to encourage those who do not normally use public transport to trial it and become regular users.

(15) An alternative to region-wide could be Local Board areas having a different free public transport day per month for people both travelling out of their area and into their area. This might assist people visiting from other parts of Auckland as tourists.

FARES AND TICKETING POLICY

(16) CTA supports the proposed fares and ticketing policy outlined in section 6.4. A single ticket would simplify travel and make it easier and more attractive. A zone-based fare system is logical.

(17) We note the statement on pages (v), (vii) and 13 that funding for public transport is constrained and that, *“In the first decade of the 30 year period, the intention is to build on the investments made over the last decade by completing the strategic road and public transport networks”* (page 10). We would like to see more of the budget for new roads allocated to rail and to public transport services.

(18) We do not support the intention to increase of public transport fares in the near future. Increased *patronage* should be the means by which operating costs are recovered through fares. Low fares for public transport encourage and enable more people to use the services, especially the economically disadvantaged amongst the transport disadvantaged. The amount of the fare impacts on whether people venture forth to spend money on retail, entertainment and services. We note that action (c) related to policy 9.2 in the plan indicates that the effect of raising fares has been considered: *“Closely monitor the impact of fare changes on patronage, and review the farebox recovery policy if growth in patronage is threatened by fare increases”*.

(19) We are pleased that Auckland Transport recognises that there is economic value of public transport to non-users (stated in action (d) for the above policy). We further note the comment on page 9 that public transport use *“reduces congestion and supports economic growth and productivity”*. We add that public transport usage thus makes a valuable contribution to the liveability of the city, and, furthermore, reduces the need for new roads, reduces the need for land for car parking, reduces emissions, reduces health costs, reduces the need for new roads and reduces the stress that drivers experience contending with city traffic. These are clear benefits to the whole region.

(20) Motorists benefit by other people using public transport and therefore should contribute towards the cost of it. We suggest that consideration be given to raising car parking fees, as a funding source for public transport, with the highest fees being charged for those vehicles brought into the CBD and other centres during peak hours. This would, in effect, serve as a means of congestion charging without the cost of administration. This would be in line with the “earlybird” cheaper parking fees

charged by some parking facilities, which has the same effect, i.e. rewarding private motor vehicle users for avoiding the peak traffic.

(21) We suggest that Gold Card users be encouraged to contribute towards their usage by placing a donation in the farebox.

(22) We submit that there should always be available on public transport a cash option for payment of fares for the following customers: tourists, those for whom English is not their first language, infrequent users and those who are unable to understand any form of ticketing other than an on-the-spot exchange of cash for a physical ticket.

FERRIES

(23) Water transport does not require extensive infrastructure, is free from congestion and has other benefits for the environment. Auckland is a harbour city, the harbour being one of our greatest strategic assets, currently undervalued as well as underutilised.

(24) CTA supports an expanded ferry network as a part of the public transport network. There are opportunities for a much extended network to the many bays and inlets, especially within the inner harbour, where the demand will justify the provision of services. Included should be trips from the North Shore to the eastern suburbs and from the CBD to the eastern suburbs and also on the Manukau Harbour. Such a network should be integrated with rail and bus services as well as smaller vessels such as water taxis.

(25) We are encouraged by the work on the ferry terminals at Hobsonville Point and Beach Haven and upgrades to further terminals as listed on page 11.

(26) Ferries in themselves can be a tourist magnet, e.g. as in Sydney and Hong Kong and that, in turn, generates economic value.

BUSES

(27) Bus lanes and bus priority lights have helped to reduce bus travel times and we would like to see provision of more bus lanes. However, the bus lanes being shared by bicycles work best for buses when there are no cyclists in the lane and for cyclists when there are no buses in the lane. If cyclists and buses are using the lane at the same time there is an element of risk, with the cyclist's safety, in particular, being compromised.

(28) There needs to be more clarity on the rules regarding use of bus lanes by all other road users.

(29) We note on page 30 that, *"All new and used passenger service vehicles entering the bus fleet on contracted services within Auckland are required to conform to NZTA's **Requirements for Urban Buses** - a nationwide set of standards for bus quality and accessibility. Research with other stakeholders will be undertaken on future alternative fuel and bus traction vehicles"*. We submit that low noise emission would seem to be an important aspect of bus quality. A major complaint about buses is the loudness of the noise they make, especially when pulling away from a stop. More hybrid electric buses would help to alleviate the noise problem. Aside from more buses of this type, we support further investigation of alternative fuels.

(30) 3.2 e on page 32 states, “Specify vehicle size to match local service route geography and loadings, as required”. It would seem that introduction of smaller buses to the fleet, as and when old buses need replacing, would be more cost-efficient and sustainable than large buses, especially if these smaller buses could run more regularly and/or be used during off-peak times.

(31) For vehicles that serve high density areas, it would seem that the public light bus (as used in Hong Kong): a 16-seater which does not run to a timetable but leaves the terminal as soon as it is full but not until it is full, could provide a cost-efficient and regular service.

(32) An alternative to smaller buses for off-peak travel or in addition to them could be some way of integrating with taxis at a cheaper rate.

(33) Ideally all bus stops would provide shelter from the rain, otherwise rain is a strong disincentive to travelling by bus.

~~(34) We would like to see provision on Queens Wharf for additional bus terminals with convenient access to Britomart rail terminal and the ferry wharves. [rescinded]~~

TRAINS

(35) CTA supports more trains on the tracks that are already in place.

(36) We support the implementation of the City Rail Link. This route must not compromise the built heritage in the area.

(37) We would like to see a higher priority give to the airport rail loop. Lack of a train service from the airport is a major disappointment for people arriving from overseas as well as an inconvenience for locals and entails more road trips as well as requiring land for parking near the airport.

(38) We are aware of the need for more stations as having been identified by the communities of Parnell (Cheshire St) and Purewa Valley. The Cheshire St site has potential for development beyond the provision of transport stop. The Gowing Drive site would serve Selwyn College students, among others.

(39) Suburban rail stations need to be well maintained, as otherwise the shabbiness caused by damage and graffiti discourages public transport use.

(40) We support the establishment of a commuter line between Auckland and Hamilton.

(41) Planning for inter-modal usage of rail corridors should be considered through gradual passenger gauge change standardisation to 1435mm, as used for trams e.g. at the present Wynyard Loop, and modern light rail vehicles, so that these vehicles can use both networks.

CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS

(42) We are pleased to note that the plan states that, “An efficient and effective public transport system relies on the provision of well-designed and well-maintained facilities” and that the list of facilities includes cycle paths and footpaths and that, “Their design also needs to provide good access, and safety and personal security at all stages of the journey, particularly for people with disabilities”. (page 37) In

addition, we note on page 39, policy 5.6 *“Integrate public transport with cycling and walking”* and the actions as follows:

- “a. Ensure that the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are recognised when designing and delivering public transport services*
- b. Provide convenient and visible connections between public transport, and cycling and walking networks*
- c. Work with public transport operators to improve facilities for better transfer and integration between public transport and cycling and walking”.*

(43) All public transport journeys out of necessity include a walking component and so the needs of pedestrians are important.

(44) Aucklanders need to be encouraged to rediscover their ability to walk medium to long distances and the benefits that this has not only individually but collectively.

(45) Pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods including safety at night near public transport facilities need to be addressed in some areas of Auckland.

(46) More care needs to be taken to maintain footpaths to a high standard and ensure that they are non-slip.

(47) Integration of green walking and cycling routes should developed.

(48) The cycling infrastructure needs much attention to provide safe routes that join up the current paths and lanes so that cyclists can experience a complete trip without dangerous and unpleasant gaps. This will encourage cyclists who wish to travel long distances to incorporate public transport into their journey. There are sections of cycle paths and cycle lanes across the region but many of them are isolated and short, often running out just where they are needed from a safety perspective. A priority is the extension of the north western cycleway to Beach Rd in the CBD.

(49) If an inner city tram loop were established along Queen St, K Rd and Ponsonby, cyclists could cycle safely, as there would be enough space on the road for them without two lanes being taken up for cars.

(50) Where safe cycle routes are not yet provided, CTA advocates for permitting cyclists to cycle on footpaths in designated areas where there is space for this and where the pedestrian count is low. Sharing the footpath between pedestrians and cyclists currently works in many parts of the city (examples being Devonport, Greenlane and Glen Innes).

(51) Ideally all public transport services would have provision to carry bicycles.

(52) Parking for bicycles would ideally be under cover to protect them from rain.

TRAMS

(53) The only mention of trams in the Draft RPTP is in the legend of figure 3-1 “Annual Auckland public transport boardings (millions), 1920-2012” on page 12. The figure shows that at its peak in about 1945, tram patronage was just under 120 million boardings in that year. This was well above the 71.1 million public transport boardings in the year to June 2012.

(54) It is obvious that trams were a popular mode of transport and in cities overseas they continue to be extended. We consider that trams have an important place within

a range of quality transport options and we would like to see a tram network reintroduced as part of a public transport network.

(55) We would particularly like to see the extension of the tramline from the Wynyard Quarter to St Heliers and the reintroduction of trams following the historic routes, such as the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board's proposed investigation of introducing a modern tram system along historic tram routes connecting Takapuna, Devonport, Bayswater and Milford.

(56) Trams to connect neighbouring parts of the city centre would both address the issue of what is steep terrain for pedestrians in some places and provide an attractive transport option. This would not only serve the interests of Aucklanders but also of tourists.

(57) See point (49).

PARK AND RIDE

(58) Action 5.5c states: *"Where appropriate, introduce charges for Park and Ride facilities to manage demand"*. It does not seem to us to be appropriate to charge for Park and Ride, as people should be encouraged to use these facilities in order to use public transport.

(59) Page 121 shows in general terms where new park and rides are planned but the details of exactly where they are proposed to be built are not provided. CTA supports new and extended Park and Ride facilities but submits that the placement of these must take into account the effect on the surrounding environment and community. Parking for cars uses up valuable land and is usually unattractive.

(60) We favour the development of Park and Ride facilities beside the ferry wharves.

(61) Park and Ride could integrate with any linear transport system envisaged along the isthmus.

ALTERNATIVE / ADDITIONAL NETWORKS

(62) A future public transport option that we present for discussion is "Sky-Waka" - an overhead transport system bringing people to the city centre from the south, west and north. Running up the middle of and above the motorway, it takes no new land. Passing over motorway traffic jams, the public transport user is privileged with quick journeys and views across a canopy of green to the city's volcanic cones (potentially a world heritage site and a tourist attraction creating economic value). Spaghetti Junction is the interchange, where the use of 35ha of city centre real estate would contribute significantly to funding this proposal. (A whole city block was created in this way in Boston where existing roading was effectively buried beneath new above ground property development.) Arriving at Spaghetti Junction, travellers cross the plaza to K' Rd, where they may either get on a tram making the K' Rd - Queen Street - Victoria St - College Hill - Ponsonby Rd loop or use the city rail link service. Further funding would come from the Park and Ride malls to be built at existing nodal interchanges, e.g. Penrose and Papatoetoe, heading south.

CUSTOMER INTERFACE

(63) CTA submits that the Auckland Transport call centre should provide a 24-hour service to enable customers to plan their journeys. This phone service would ideally include information in languages other than English (as per 6.4 c).

(64) Customer feedback could be provided in a variety of ways, including on the service itself (e.g. via a feedback box), at the station / terminal, by phone and online. The latter could follow the model of the Community Roadwatch online reporting form <https://forms.police.govt.nz/forms/online-community-roadwatch-report/9>

(65) We support in particular policy 6.4 in regards to enabling people with disabilities to access information.

(66) The extension of the GPS tracking equipment to all public transport service vehicles and the trip information RTPIS electronic displays is of great assistance when planning trips. If there is not yet an app for Auckland that informs customers where their public transport service is at any time, then we would like to see one made available soon.

(67) Driver training needs to include awareness of passengers trying to distinguish which of several buses approaching the stop is theirs.

(68) Driver training should include how to approach customers regarding their eligibility for a concession.

(69) Timetable information should be available at all stops / stations.

(70) The streets that a bus drives along need to be named, to enable customers to plan their journeys.

(71) To “*Ensure appropriate public consultation on future RPTP variations*” (policy 10.3), information about proposed variations and how to give feedback on these should be clearly provided on all services.

(72) We would like to see travel plans developed for the facilities in communities that attract large concentrations of people.

(73) School safety travel plans should include educating parents about public transport options for their children.

TOTAL MOBILITY

(74) We have had feedback from Total Mobility customers that the service would be improved if users did not have to book their rides several days in advance but instead the service were made available for spontaneous outings - as is available to the rest of the population. This would seem to require the provision of more Total Mobility vans. With recent advances in technology it must be possible to book rides efficiently online or via cell phones.

(75) We would like to see consideration given to enabling mobility scooters to travel on buses. The access to and space on buses for mobility scooters could also be used for strollers, bicycles, wheelchairs and luggage. When not used for these purposes, standing passengers could use such spaces.

(76) If someone’s means of mobility to get to a service stop is a mobility scooter and the scooter cannot be carried on the bus or train, if they are to park it near the bus /

train stop then there needs to be secure parking for it e.g. undercover in a monitored / patrolled car park.

(77) Civic Trust Auckland commends Auckland Transport's Draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan in its intention to provide more routes and higher frequencies for all public transport,

(78) We submit that the Auckland region can learn from and adopt transport strategies and practices that have been used successfully elsewhere.

Date of submission: 5 November 2012

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Audrey van der Pijl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland