

# Trouble in paradise

Auckland is a stunning location, but ask Aucklanders about their key issues and the response is overwhelmingly 'the traffic'<sup>i</sup>.

This document outlines FAST's approach to solving Auckland's transport issues.



## The world's worst public transport...

Of all the OECD cities with populations over 1 million, Auckland is regarded as having the poorest public transport system<sup>ii</sup> and has the reputation of being one of the worst cities in the world for walking<sup>iii</sup>. Only 1% of Aucklanders regard cycling as "always safe"<sup>iv</sup>.

As a result, Aucklanders are forced to be highly car-dependent, travel delays stifle the economy, communities are degraded, it is unsafe to cycle, air pollution is prematurely killing hundreds of Aucklanders each year, we are exposed to oil price fluctuations and transport is our fastest growing source of climate change emissions.

In order to solve the traffic problems, the over-riding approach has been to focus on building bigger roads, but this has only encouraged more people to drive more often and congestion has worsened<sup>v</sup>.

## It is time for a new approach

In April 2007, the Auckland Transport Strategic Alignment Project identified "**the need for a substantial shift to public transport - starting immediately**" Auckland needs a transport system that provides excellent mobility yet...

- ✓ **reduces congestion** to allow commercial traffic better access and reduce travel times
- ✓ **is more environmentally friendly**, so that air pollution and climate change emissions are reduced
- ✓ **allows Auckland's economy to grow**, reducing the exposure to rising oil prices and pending carbon taxes, whilst moving people and freight more efficiently and freeing up road space
- ✓ **improves road safety**, particularly for vulnerable road users, such as those commuters and school children who wish to walk or cycle.

## The 6 Point Action Plan

1. **Auckland requires central and regional government to have a robust policy framework and greater funding** to enable a world class public transport system for the region.

This requires:

- 1.1. **Strengthened central government legislation** to enable the provision of better public transport (eg: to fund major public transport projects and coordinate integrated service provision).

***"It's time to recognise that we cannot pave our way out of traffic"***

Robin Dunlop, ex-CEO  
Ministry of Transport.  
Press Release, March 2006

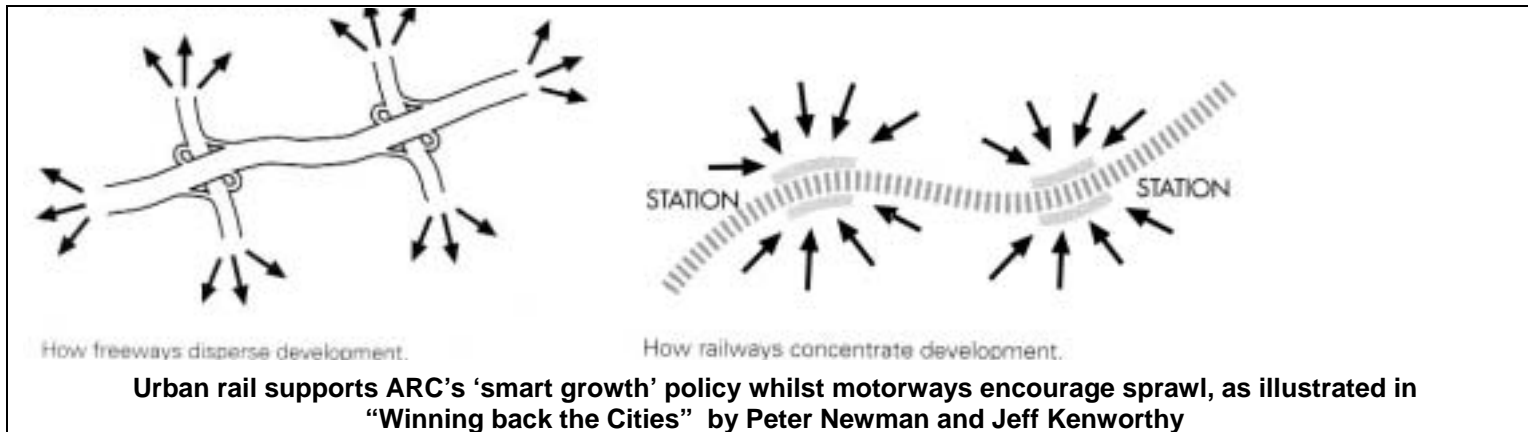
***"Building more roads is not the solution to Auckland's traffic woes"***

Joseph Flanagan, Transit's Auckland Network Manager.  
NZ Herald, August 2007



**Transport plans for Auckland typically ignore the critical issues of declining oil supply, community severance and climate change**

- 1.2. **Re-evaluation of all major transport projects with a view to reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles.** NZTA's annual reporting has started to show a decline in Auckland traffic volumes. Combined with a corresponding increase in demand for public transport, walking and cycling, we must re-evaluate transport projects to also reflect these changes. This will likely lead to a reallocation of funding, where money saved by postponing roading projects can be re-directed to fund the public transport, walking and cycling initiatives described below
- 1.3. **An Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy that is able to prioritise key projects for implementation, rather than being at the mercy of local councils or the NZ Transport Agency.**



**2. Expand Auckland's rapid rail network.**

Electrified rail is the most effective mode of mass commuter transport;

- it is quiet and zero emission
- preferred by commuters over buses
- not affected by rising oil prices or traffic congestion
- it can move the same amount of people as a 16 lane motorway

Light rail and heavy rail trains provide different levels of service which complement one another, international cities such as Auckland need both.

**3. Improve the bus services:** Auckland buses service must be frequent, quick and pleasant. Journey times can be improved with bus/bike or High Occupancy Vehicle lanes, eg: Onewa Rd in Northcote.

By converting existing traffic lanes or removing car parking, a substantial increase in bus lanes can be provided - significantly improving bus journey times. Combined with time saving "signal-priority" technology and integrated ticketing, taking the bus in peak hour traffic should be quicker than driving, resulting in a significant increase in bus patronage.

Further improvements necessary to attract greater bus patronage include; low emissions buses, customer service training for drivers, synchronising bus services



**Blue:** Existing rail  
**Red:** Rail connections which need implementation to start now  
**Red dashed:** Rail needed by 2020

to connect with rapid transit services and improving the quality of bus shelters.

**4. Improve walking and cycling conditions.** Slow down the traffic in residential streets, retail precincts and employment centres to 30 or 40 km/h in order to make walking and cycling safer and more pleasant. Create pedestrian-orientated streets coupled with enhanced public transport. Provide bike paths or cycle ways and safe crossings on busy arterial roads.

Ensure all walking school buses and key routes to public transport have safe walking linkages. Implement the region-wide network of cycle paths, in particular the walkway / cycleway over the Auckland Harbour Bridge. Install bike racks on all buses, introduce 2 way cycle lanes on all one way streets and encourage employers to provide facilities (eg: showers and lockers) for cyclists and walkers.

**5. Reduce freight on the roads by using rail and sea.** Upgrade and electrify the entire North Island rail network.

Complete key rail connections, such as the Port of Auckland to its inland port at Wiri and Onehunga Port, and upgrade the main trunk line to the Whangarei Port, to get freight off the road and make coastal shipping more viable.

**6. Implement a coordinated regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy** to reduce the number of single occupancy vehicles on Auckland roads. For example, a regional car parking strategy to encourage Aucklanders to use alternatives to driving, provide incentives for car pooling, enhancements to public transport, and install bike stations at public transport nodes.

Gradually increase the registration and import levies on larger non-commercial vehicles and charge an ARC annual rating charge of \$10 for each non-residential car park. All of the revenue raised from such TDM tools should be tax-neutral, with all money being re-directed into facilitation of more sustainable transport choices, eg: improved public transport services with reduced fares.



**Light rail in Dublin - fast, quiet, zero-emission and equal to 177 cars or 3 buses.**

**Many cities around the world are bringing their tram networks back with light rail, Auckland should start with Queen St to Dominion Rd.**

***FAST is an umbrella group of organisations and individuals who support sustainable transport solutions to improve Auckland's economic, environmental and social well-being.***

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<sup>i</sup> ARC's *Community Perceptions Report 2007*

<sup>ii</sup> *Back on Track: Rethinking Transport Policy in Australia and NZ* by Philip Laird, Peter Newman, Mark Bachels and Jeffrey Kenworthy

<sup>iii</sup> Page 28, ARTA's *Sustainable Transport Plan 2006-16*

<sup>iv</sup> ARC's *Community Perceptions Report 2007*

<sup>v</sup> SACTRA report – *Trunk Roads and the Generation of Traffic*, Dec 1994 concluded: "An average road improvement, for which traffic growth due to all other factors is forecast correctly, will see an additional [i.e. induced] 10% of base traffic in the short term and 20% in the long term."