

# Auckland Council Submission: Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19-2027/28



Date: 2 May 2018

*He mihi ki te kaahui tūpuna,  
te taura-here mō tātou te muka tāngata,  
ki ngā mana ātua, kia tau te mauri.*

*He kura tangihia, he maimai aroha,  
rātou kua whetūrangitia ki a rātou  
tātou te hunga mata-rerehua ki a tātou*

*E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā karangatanga maha,  
tēnā rā koutou katoa.*

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## 1. Overview

This is Auckland Council's submission in response to the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19-2027/28.

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This submission has been approved by the Planning Committee of Auckland Council.

## 2. Introduction and Summary

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018/19 – 2027/28 (GPS 2018).

Since 2010 Auckland's population has increased by over 250,000 to around 1.7 million. In recent years, annual growth has spiked to more than 40,000 people per year, one of the fastest growth rates in the developed world. While this very high rate of growth may tail off over time, Stats NZ projections suggest that over the next 30 years, up to a million more people may call Auckland home. Over the next decade, around 55% of New Zealand's population growth is expected to occur in Auckland.

Ongoing growth brings great opportunities and much progress has been made over the past 10-15 years to support Auckland's evolution into a modern, world-class city. This includes a

sustained increase in investment for transport and a willingness of Aucklanders to change the way they live and travel. Use of public transport has tripled since the mid-1990s, the city centre is New Zealand's fastest growing residential neighbourhood and, most recently, Aucklanders are rapidly taking up cycling where quality infrastructure is provided.

However, a combination of the sheer scale and pace of growth, a longer history of under-investment and insufficient levels of housing construction means that despite this progress Auckland faces significant transport and housing challenges.

Our transport challenge is not just one of congestion, but also:

- Poor travel choice beyond private vehicles, especially in lower income areas
- A near doubling of deaths and serious injuries on our roads since 2012
- Growing recognition of the need to reduce the transport system's environmental impact
- Enabling and supporting a rapid acceleration in the rate of housing construction
- The need for our streets to play a growing role in creating vibrant and inclusive places.

Through this Government Policy Statement on land transport and the Auckland Plan, the Government and Auckland Council have both recognised the critical role of transport in delivering a successful Auckland.

To unlock the benefits of this growth, Auckland needs a transport system that provides safe, reliable and sustainable access. This means:

- Easily connecting people, goods and services to where they need to go
- Providing high quality and affordable travel choices for people of all ages and abilities
- Seeking to eliminate harm to people and the environment
- Supporting and shaping Auckland's growth
- Creating a prosperous, vibrant and inclusive city.

The role of transport in enabling, supporting and shaping the way Auckland grows is also critical to addressing our housing challenges.

#### *The Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP)*

Over the past three years, Auckland Council and the Government have worked together to develop an aligned strategic approach to the development of Auckland's transport system over the next 30 years. In 2016 a recommended strategic approach was agreed, based on three integrated components:

- Making better use of existing networks
- Targeting new investment to the most significant challenges
- Maximising new opportunities to influence travel demand.

In late 2017 the new Government requested an update to the ATAP indicative package. Around the same time Auckland Council approved the draft Auckland Plan, which reflects

the long-term strategic approach of the original ATAP, but with a greater and earlier focus on improving travel choices and reducing harm to people and the environment.

The ATAP update was released in April 2018 and includes a funded \$28 billion “ATAP Package”. To enable the package’s implementation, ATAP will need to be reflected in statutory documents like the GPS.

*Submission Summary:*

Our key submission points are:

- **Support** for the GPS’s strategic direction, particularly the stronger focus on:
  - the safety of people
  - providing travel choices
  - enabling and supporting growth
  - the key role of streets in creating high quality public spaces
  - environmental outcomes
  - value for money
- **Support** for the GPS’s increased investment priority given to safety and demand management, public transport, walking and cycling, and local road improvements and local road maintenance, especially how this should translate into full co-funding for the Auckland Transport capital and renewals programme
- **Support** for the new activity class framework - especially the creation of a mass transit activity class and the commitment to a more sustainable funding source for rail (GPS stage 2) - and its flexibility to enable delivery of the ATAP indicative package
- **Support** the mode neutral approach to transport planning and investment decisions
- **Request** the GPS enables the funding assumptions made in ATAP to be implemented, particularly around changes to activity class flexibility, funding assistance rates and enabling all transport investments to access NZTA funding (e.g. footpath renewals and road seal extensions).
- **Request** the early implementation of road safety improvements
- **Support** the increase in funding for “Road policing”
- **Request** an appropriate level of rapid transit funding and the need to establish clear, consistent and sustainable funding for these projects
- **Suggest** minor wording changes

These main submission points are expanded upon below.

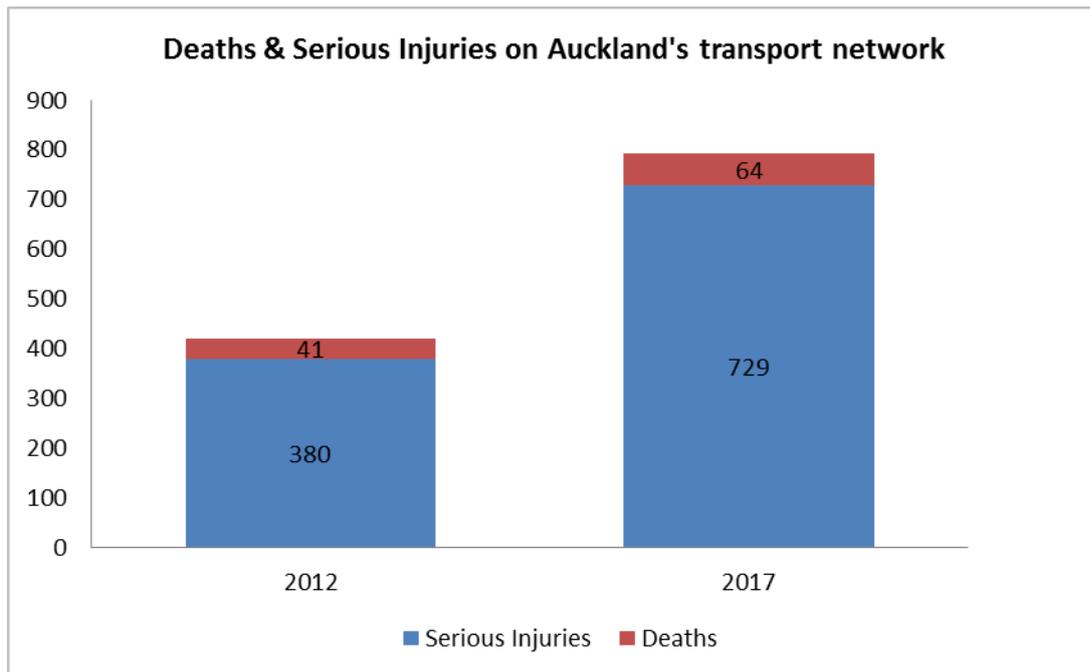
### **3. Strategic directions and priorities**

Council supports the GPS’s strategic direction and its closer alignment with the Auckland Plan, particularly the stronger focus on:

### a. the safety of people

Council strongly supports the top-priority given to requiring a transport system that considers people’s safety and the greater focus on investment in safety improvements, particularly in improving the safety of vulnerable road users like people walking and cycling, and effective enforcement in promoting safe behavior by road users.

As recognised in the draft GPS, there is an urgent need to improve road safety outcomes and reverse the increase in deaths and serious injuries that has occurred in recent years. In Auckland the number of deaths and serious injuries has increased by 48% over the past four years, from a low of 421 in 2012 to 813 in 2017.



Auckland’s highly urbanised environment and the intense use of its transport networks by different users means that vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) make up a higher proportion of deaths and serious injuries in Auckland (43%) than in the rest of New Zealand (33%). This suggests a need to tailor approaches to safety for large urban areas like Auckland. For example, lower speeds in urban areas dramatically reduce pedestrian harm if collisions occur.

Rural parts of Auckland also face significant safety challenges, requiring tailored solutions such as median and side barriers, rural intersection upgrades, improved skid resistance, signage, targeted seal widening and speed management. We support the specific mention of rural road safety in paragraph 35 of the draft GPS.

Reversing recent safety trends will require new approaches and interventions, particularly in Auckland. We support the proposed increase in investment in road safety promotion and road policing and the tilt in the balance towards safety when trade-offs are being made against travel-time.

### b. travel choices

Council supports the priority given to Auckland in the GPS, particularly in relation to the “Access” strategic priority. Improving access to opportunities (particularly for people living in

the western and southern parts of Auckland) and supporting investment in measures that encourage mode shift from private vehicle travel to walking, cycling and public transport are key priorities in the Auckland Plan that align well with the GPS.

There are limited opportunities to substantially increase capacity on Auckland's road network to accommodate growth. Therefore, we support the GPS's recognition of the need for more people to walk, cycle or travel by public transport to reduce pressure on our roads and free up room for freight and commercial travel.

The growing use of public transport, walking and cycling in Auckland over the past 15 years has demonstrated a desire and willingness to use these options where they are efficient, reliable, safe, and attractive. However, many Aucklanders continue to lack quality travel choice, particularly for lower income households in western and southern parts of Auckland and in rural areas. This creates more pressure on household budgets due to the high cost of car dependency and means that travel in Auckland is often long and unreliable, with Aucklanders unable to avoid congestion that wastes precious time and reduces life quality.

### **c. enabling and supporting growth**

Council supports prioritising the role of transport investment in enabling and supporting growth, including investment in modes such as public transport and walking and cycling in opening access to existing and new housing developments.

Transport infrastructure and services are important for enabling and supporting population and housing growth in new and existing urban areas, while the location of growth affects how well the transport system performs. Stronger integration between transport and land use decisions is required so that housing, business and employment growth occurs in areas with better travel options. Council supports prioritising investment in areas that supports intensification in the existing urban area, growth in new urban areas and improves connections between these newly developing areas and the rest of Auckland.

### **d. creating high quality public spaces**

Council strongly supports the recognition of streets playing a key role in creating high quality public spaces – supporting investments that make streets more inviting places for people and promotes equitable access.

Roads and streets exert an immense influence upon Aucklanders' lifestyle and travel behaviour. How we use and design our roads and streets directly influences place identity, accessibility, public health, social equity, inclusivity and local and regional economies, amongst other factors. Council, including our Local Boards, have an expectation that Auckland's roads and streets need to deliver a wider range of benefits across the four well-beings (social, cultural, economic and environment) than has historically been provided for.

The scale and pace of growth in Auckland is placing increased pressure on an already constrained road and street network, resulting in a greater need to make conscious investments that balance the sometimes-competing demands of movement and place values. The recognition given to place making in the draft GPS is welcomed and will assist in the funding and delivery in regional and local projects of all scales.

### **e. environmental outcomes**

Council supports the increased priority the draft GPS places on reducing environmental impacts from the transport system, including reducing transport's negative effects on global climate, the local environment and public health. We also support the draft GPS's

acknowledgement that the 'second stage GPS', informed by the Independent Climate Change Commission, will undertake further work on the steps needed to reduce transport emissions.

We also support the priority the GPS places on the role of transport investment in improving water quality through mitigating stormwater runoff. This may require different design standards and increased investment to ensure stormwater infrastructure that forms part of the transport network helps to protect or enhance the overall health of the environment and ecosystems.

Council is a signatory to the C40 Fossil Fuel Streets Declaration, which commits to transforming our streets into greener, healthier, and more prosperous places to live. Our streets must be safe and accessible for everybody and our air must be clean and free from harmful emissions. For example, there may be a need for additional investment in public transport services to help support our transition to an electric bus fleet.

#### **f. value for money**

Council supports the increased emphasis on delivering the right infrastructure and services to the right level, at the best cost. Transport is Council's largest area of expenditure and it is therefore critical to ensure strong processes are in place to maximise the benefits of this investment.

#### **4. Investment priorities**

Council supports the Government's increased investment priority given to safety and demand management, public transport, walking and cycling, and local road improvements and local road maintenance, especially how this should translate into full co-funding for the Auckland Transport capital and renewals programme.

#### **5. Activity class framework**

Council supports the new activity class framework - especially the creation of a mass transit activity class and the commitment to a more sustainable funding source for rail (GPS stage 2) - and its flexibility to enable delivery of the ATAP indicative package.

Rapid transit forms the backbone of Auckland's public transport network, providing fast, frequent, high capacity services operating along corridors separated from general traffic and unaffected by road congestion. Rapid transit can also have a particularly significant impact on shaping urban form and development. The speed and reliability of rapid transit delivers a long-lasting step-change in the accessibility of an area.

Auckland's rapid transit network barely existed a decade ago, but sustained effort and investment has increased annual boardings on the Northern Busway and the rail network from 6.8 million in 2008 to 26 million today. However, major parts of Auckland are still not served by the rapid transit network, while existing parts of the network need substantial capacity improvements to meet current and future demand.

Through ATAP, Auckland has undertaken a comprehensive planning process with Government to agree the main transport challenges and to develop a strategic approach for addressing these challenges. This provides both parties with a higher level of assurance that investment will focus on the biggest transport challenges facing Auckland.

Because of this alignment, there are significant benefits from ensuring funds available for transport investment can be directed towards the area of highest priority. Council supports the GPS activity class structure having broader funding bands that enable greater flexibility to direct funding to the most important investments.

## **6. Mode neutral approach**

Council supports the mode neutral approach to transport planning and investment decisions. An important element of the Auckland Plan's approach to transport is ensuring that planning and funding systems support using the "right tool for the job", rather than privileging any particular mode.

## **7. Appropriate funding allocation for Auckland**

Council requests that the GPS enables the funding assumptions made in ATAP to be implemented, particularly around changes to activity class flexibility, funding assistance rates and enabling all transport investments to access NZTA funding (e.g. footpath renewals and road seal extensions).

The Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) provides detail on transport funding in Auckland over the next decade. This includes an assumption of \$16.3 billion from the National Land Transport Fund. Realising this level of funding may require changes to current funding approaches, including:

- Greater flexibility across activity classes
- Changes to funding assistance rates
- Ensuring all transport investment areas are eligible for co-funding (for example, footpath renewals and road seal extensions)

As noted earlier, over half of New Zealand's population growth is expected to occur in Auckland over the next decade. Growth is a key driver of the need for many transport improvements, particularly those relating to network improvements (as opposed to maintenance, operations and renewals).

Because the draft GPS was prepared before ATAP was completed, the funding arrangements required to deliver ATAP are not yet detailed in the GPS. To ensure the GPS reflects ATAP, it would be helpful for it to reference ATAP's NLTF assumptions and the potential changes to funding arrangements detailed above.

## **8. Early safety funding**

Council supports the development of a new road safety strategy and action plan but request early implementation (rather than waiting 18 months to its completion) to address current pressing road safety issues.

Strong growth and changing travel patterns have exposed safety gaps on Auckland's transport network. On average one person that is walking gets hit by a motor vehicle every day in Auckland and every third day that person dies or is seriously injured, resulting in \$1.14 billion/year in social costs<sup>1</sup>. Council has a strong understanding of our most significant road safety risks; immediate funding would allow these risks to be addressed within the timeframe of the Road Safety Strategy being prepared.

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<sup>1</sup> AT RoadSafe Strategy 2018-2023

## 9. Road policing funding allocation

Council supports the increase in funding to the “Road policing” activity. Police road safety enforcement has an important role to play in reducing the levels of road fatalities and serious injuries.

## 10. Rapid Transit Funding

Council supports the inclusion of a new rapid transit category in the GPS and looks forward to participating in ongoing work relating to funding arrangements for rapid transit projects.

The ATAP Package includes around \$8.4 billion of investment into Auckland’s rapid transit network through a combination of bus, rail and light-rail improvements. It is critical the GPS enables and supports the delivery of these projects.

While ATAP provides much greater funding certainty for rapid transit than has previously existed, there is still a need to ensure clear, consistent and sustainable funding arrangements for rapid transit improvements – including rail. This should form part of the follow-on work identified in ATAP that looks at funding arrangements.

## 11. Minor Wording Changes

In addition to these high-level points, we have identified several minor changes that we would like to see in the final version of the GPS 2018. These changes are outlined below:

Section/Paragraph	Suggested Amendment
Environment in GPS 2018 Page 8	Inclusion of a bullet point acknowledging the localised negative impacts of transport infrastructure and transport activities – particularly air/water pollution and quality of life impacts (noise, light, vibration, severance, etc).
Section 2.2 – Safety Page 9	Inclusion of a clearer message regarding trade-offs– e.g. that historically we’ve traded vehicle delay against safety outcomes. Also, should give direction on how to better address these trade-offs – for example; safety improvement projects should have lower consideration of vehicle delay that may result.
Page 9 Para 25	Insert new paragraph between para 25 and 26 that discusses issues around motorcycle safety.
Page 10 Para 35	Inclusion of additional sub-bullet point to the second bullet point that specifically identifies motorcycle travel as an area of high-risk and an area for increased investment in primary safe system treatments to reduce the risk of motorcycle crashes.
Page 13 Para 62	Needs to include point regarding transport investment to support re-development, regeneration areas. Currently this para is weighted towards opening <b>new</b> serviced land for housing.
Page 13 Para 74	Remove “at-peak travelling hours” from the sentence. The first sentence over emphasises PT as a peak hour service.
Page 14	Replace “off peak public transport” with “all day public transport”.

Section/Paragraph	Suggested Amendment
Para 76	Bullet point 3 should also cover regeneration/redevelopment areas.
Page 14 Para 80	Rephrase bullet point one to be about matching capacity to demand rather than providing extra capacity. As an example, reallocation of existing road space to more efficient transport modes should be considered ahead of providing extra capacity through road widening.
Page 15 Section 2.3.2	<p>Section 2.3.2 talks about transport choice and para 93 refers to walking and cycling but nothing related to PT. There needs to be a similar paragraph to cover off GPS investment in PT.</p> <p>Needs also to discuss reallocation of existing capacity to support more efficient transport modes (including freight) i.e. using what we have more efficiently.</p>
Section 2.5 Value for money	Needs to discuss the value created by transport investment and how this can benefit others. For example, there is a case for supporting suboptimal transport investment where it supports other govt investments (such as housing developments) and provides better value overall.
Page 20 Para 129.	Should include route protection and cover funding consequential OPEX particularly when PT is a lead investment in growth areas.
Page 26 Safety	<p>Add short term result of addressing key safety issues this year (not waiting for the new road safety strategy and action plan in the next 12-18 months).</p> <p>Add stronger wording regarding reducing speed limits in urban areas and rolling this out faster.</p> <p>Add specific reference to making motorcycling safer.</p>
Page 27 Access:	Should include a bullet point about the number of people who have access to frequent all day public transport.
Page 36 Para 192	Needs to include that NZTA investment supports and respects local authority land use planning and growth strategies.
Page 38 Para 196	NZTA need to not just shape urban form, they need to support it (Auckland's growth strategies) as well.
Page 38 Para 197	Replace reference to greenfield areas with "Auckland Council growth strategies". Section should be amended to reflect updated ATAP priorities.