

Waitematā Local Board feedback on the draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan 2018-2028

Introduction

The Waitematā Local Board (the Local Board) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the draft Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan 2018 - 2028 (draft RPTP).

The vision of the Local Board is to foster ever-more vibrant, connected, healthy and thriving communities. We aspire to be a city where our transport network is integrated and gives options for moving about with accessible, sustainable and reliable public transport, and safe, pleasant walking and cycling routes. Our pedestrian-friendly streets are great public spaces.

The Local Board is committed to working with Auckland Transport, New Zealand Transport Agency and KiwiRail to achieve an integrated and multi-modal transport system that connects communities, offers transport choice and allows people to travel safely whichever mode they are using.

On 11 December 2018 the Waitematā Local Board resolved to delegate to the Local Board's transport portfolio leads to provide feedback on the draft RPTP.

Proposed Regional Public Transport Plan

Resolution number WTM/2018/206

MOVED by Chairperson P Coom, seconded by Member V Tava:

That the Waitematā Local Board:

- a) **note Auckland Transport has agreed that Waitematā Local Board's feedback will be submitted after the outcome of the public consultation has been reported to the local board**
- b) **delegate to the Transport Portfolio leads to provide feedback on the Regional Public Transport Plan focus areas and any further local specific interests:**
 - i) **expanding and enhancing rapid and frequent networks**
 - ii) **improving customer access to public transport**
 - iii) **improving Māori responsiveness**
 - iv) **harnessing emerging technologies.**

Summary

The Local Board supports the overall direction of the draft RPTP, the vision for public transport and how Auckland Transport proposes to meet the identified challenges for the next 10 years. We are generally supportive of the steps to increase public transport services but would like to see a clear statement of intent to increase mode-share of public transport.

We acknowledge Auckland Transport's achievements since the RPTP 2015 including:

- Successful implementation of the Central New Network
- Bus priority lanes in the City
- Roll out of the AT HOP card
- Integrated fares
- The opening of Parnell Station

We also acknowledge that a decade of investment in the public transport system has resulted in a rapid increase in public transport boardings from 79 million in June 2015 to 92 million in June 2018.

In order to consolidate and build on this progress the board particularly supports:

- The Integrated Corridor Priority Programme approach to prioritising the use of road space
- Increasing public transport provision, including expanding rapid and frequent networks
- Improved provision of public transport infrastructure, including bus stops and interchanges
- Safe and convenient access to public transport, particularly pedestrian and cycling links
- Planning to ensure there is available capacity to meet increasing demand
- Improving journey time reliability, including new bus priority lanes
- More and clearer wayfinding signs and information
- Bi-lingual (i.e. Māori and English) announcements and signage
- Harnessing new technology to improve payment options and journey planning
- A focus on low carbon transport including rail, bus and ferry electrification

The Local Board would like to see further public transport services and infrastructure improvements through:

- Delivery of a comprehensive Vision Zero approach to road safety
- Providing end-to-end journey requirements, including a more 'people friendly' approach such as more accessibility, more supportive infrastructure (pedestrian crossings, lighting, footpaths) and better trained drivers who consider passenger comfort
- Auckland Transport recognising the Local Board's special governance role in placemaking and working with Local Boards to enhance public spaces
- Maintenance, renewals and new projects across the organisation leveraged to deliver on the vision for public transport
- More ambitious targets particularly for low emission buses and other vehicles to be rolled out earlier than currently proposed.

Specific feedback on the four focus areas are outlined below.

Focus Area 1 Expanding and enhancing rapid and frequent networks

The Local Board supports the delivery of high frequency, high capacity public transport services for Auckland. “Frequency is freedom” for Aucklanders and provides the single most important driver of public transport usage.

Specific feedback:

- The Local Board is concerned that the draft RPTP proposes a reduction in future rail service from previous RPTPs that do not meet AT’s proposed criteria for rapid or frequent services every 10 minutes throughout the day, every day of the week
- Support increased service frequency of RTN and FTN but with a more aspirational timeframe than just over the next decade as Auckland grows
- We would like to see the span of hours the frequent networks run at increased to meet the needs of our diverse communities, including running later at night
- We would like AT to have a clear policy linked to a budget on the split between ‘patronage’ seeking routes and ‘coverage’ providing routes to ensure that the public transport network provides viable options for as many Aucklanders as possible. For example, the removal of bus services from Williamson Avenue has decreased coverage in our area, allegedly based on low patronage
- AT to encourage off-peak services to help spread the demand. For example, offering discounts for off-peak travel
- The Local Board seeks reassurance that the citylink bus or alternative arrangement will continue post-2020 (when the contract is due to expire) to service Wynyard Quarter and for this to be included in the final RPTP
- The roll out of the new central network in July 2018 has largely been successful for Waitematā but there are a number of issues the local board would like AT to address as a matter of urgency:
 - Regular delays experienced on the Inner and Outer Link routes (in particular, the layover at Victoria Park)
 - Removal of a route serving Williamson Avenue
 - Termination of the service along Garnet Road short of the Westmere shops
 - Missing bus stop on Stanley Street resulting in a long gap between bus stops (this needs to be resolved with NZTA)
 - An absence of bus shelters where routes have been relocated such as the number 18 bus on Victoria Street
 - The need for an increase in buses servicing the growing number of workers in the Lower St Georges Bay precinct, Parnell

In addition, the Local Board supports:

- The initiative to source only zero-emission buses and to plan for the gradual phasing out of emission producing vehicles, but would like to see it started earlier than 2025
- More bus priority lanes on our major corridors and bus lane priority over car movements to reduce congestion and improve bus frequency

- AT accelerating the roll out of residential parking zones and other measures to discourage commuters using residential streets for informal, free “park and ride”
- The objectives set out under monitoring and evaluation categories, in particular public consultation
- The aims of the Integrated Corridor Priority Programme to provide whole-of-route priority to public transport services as well as improvements to walking, cycling and safety noting a “one-size-fits-all” approach will not work and that solutions must reflect the individual character of local areas such as Parnell Road.

Focus Area 2 Improving customer access to public transport

The Local Board supports the focus on convenient, safe access to and from public transport.

Specific feedback:

The Local Board supports the improvements to customer access proposed in the draft RPTP (table 11), however we would also like to see AT take a more holistic approach to making public transport more attractive, including:

- Improving the quality of existing footpaths and creating new ones where they don't currently exist
- Improved lighting at bus stops and on walking routes
- Improving wayfinding to encourage walking to public transport services. For example the Local Board has for some time requested AT install wayfinding on signed “No Exit” streets that provide a walkway for active modes
- Improving safety with new pedestrian crossings
- Improving shelters on RTN and FTN – many bus stops still lack any shelter or seating. For example, a bus shelter at a bus stop on Parnell Road was requested over two years ago
- Easier access to purchase and top up HOP cards, for example on trains and buses
- Improved amenities at train/bus stations with access to public toilets. For example, the Local Board has requested AT work with CRL Ltd to ensure that toilets located within the new train stations are accessible without a HOP card
- Implementing all door boarding on buses – this can improve dwell times thereby speeding up services and attracting more passengers
- Safe and secure lockers/storage and bike parking (also for e-scooters or other personal small-wheeled transport modes) located near transport hubs, and all major train and bus stops/interchanges.

In addition, the Board supports:

- Full end-to-end journey requirements, including a more ‘people friendly’ approach, such as more accessibility, more supportive infrastructure (pedestrian crossings, lighting, footpaths) and better trained drivers who consider passenger comfort

- AT accelerating the roll out of residential parking zones and measures to discourage commuters using residential streets for free informal “park and ride”
- Improved marketing of public transport services. For example a new route providing a service between Kingsland Train Station and Wynyard Quarter via Ponsonby has yet to be advertised
- AT working to better understand the customer experience and to reflect this in the RPTP so that, as AT states, “customers are at the centre of our plan”
- Recognition and support of the Local Board’s placemaking role
- Maintenance, renewals and new projects across the organisation leveraged to deliver on the vision for public transport in line with the Local Board’s advocacy position:

Maximise Renewal and Maintenance Opportunities – [Auckland Transport to] *Consider how every renewal and maintenance project can be leveraged to improve the road design for all users including layouts that include bus lanes, greenways, and cycle lanes, remove cycle pinch points and add better pedestrian crossings and street trees*

- Accessibility improvements for buses including for people with prams, wheelchair users and people with limited mobility. For example, the current design of many buses makes it difficult for those with prams and wheelchairs due to the limited storage space on the buses
- AT reviewing opportunities for free travel on Public Transport for children and young people.

Focus Area 3 Improving Māori responsiveness

The Local Board supports

- dual language on signage and announcements
- the implementation of the Te Aranga design principles; and
- social procurement practices in AT contracting processes.

We also welcome working more closely with AT in this focus area.

Focus Area 4 Harnessing emerging technologies

The Local Board supports making better use of emerging technologies to improve the public transport experience and environmental outcomes. However, we would like to see AT focusing on consolidating and improving its existing technology, rather than investing in new areas.

Further feedback about the draft RPTP

Events

- We support the objectives to ensure special events meet the need of the event and minimise impacts on other parts of the network but would like to see the services offered

expanded. For example, ticketed events at Western Springs allowing free access to all buses which run passed this location.

- Further work is needed to promote and incentivise access to major events via the public transport network rather than incentivising driving. For example, car parking is free on the day of the Farmers Santa Parade, but not public transport
- Request AT work more effectively with NZ Police and relevant agencies to “open” streets to people for major free events. For example, New Year’s Eve in the city centre.

Ferry Services

- Acknowledge ferries as a critical element of the public transport network and support initiatives that improve ferry operations and increase patronage as set in the draft RPTP
- Support AT advocating for Fullers exempt ferry services to be brought within the Public Transport Operating Model.

Low carbon future

- The RPTP needs to be more aspirational for introducing low emission buses and other vehicles
- Support the Puketāpapa Local Board’s proposal for inclusion of a Low Carbon Transport Future as a new Focus Area.

Targets and Monitoring

- The Local Board supports regular monitoring and reporting however there is lack of clarity around what targets the RPTP seeks to achieve and how monitoring and reporting will be undertaken.
- Many of the proposed targets/expected results seem to lack ambition.

RPTP terminology

- The draft RPTP refers to the “CBD”. The official terminology to describe the central area of Auckland is the “City Centre”.
- We request that AT takes care to ensure “Auckland Council” is not referred to as separate to “local boards”. Council is made up of the governing body and local boards
- Local boards have a statutory governance role and should not be referred to as “stakeholders”