

1 February 2019

Hon Phil Twyford  
Minister of Transport  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

**By email:** [p.twyford@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:p.twyford@ministers.govt.nz)

Dear Phil

## **INCREASING PUBLIC TRANSPORT PATRONAGE IN AUCKLAND**

We suggest that the consideration of options to rapidly accelerate mode shift from private car use to public transport and active modes in Auckland becomes a major line of inquiry within the ATAP “next steps” exercise.

The recent increase in Auckland public transport fares by an average of 1.9%, but in some cases up to 7%, has led to a debate about the impact of fares on our joint efforts to encourage people to move from private vehicles to public transport.

The Government, through the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), requires Auckland Transport to recover 50% of the cost of public transport from fares. We invite you to consider the appropriateness of maintaining this policy, and whether the Government has the means to hold fares while also extending its investment in the transport network and improving its quality. If public transport could be funded to achieve all three objectives, we could further accelerate the shift of more people from private vehicles to public transport.

Notwithstanding the impressive progress over recent years in improving service frequency, convenience and patronage – particularly in peak hours – Auckland’s population and economic growth will result in a significant growth in road congestion if we cannot achieve even higher levels of patronage. This underlies the urgency of deploying every reasonable tool to increase the supply of, and demand for, public transport.

We accept that a range of other factors influence public transport patronage. Key drivers include service levels (frequency, convenience and reliability), economic factors (fare box, income, fuel costs) and levels of private vehicle ownership. Understanding how these different factors interact and influence patronage is critical to achieving the best possible outcomes from public investment in new public transport services and networks, service frequency, and subsidies to moderate the adverse effects of the fare box.

We understand that you have commissioned NZTA (supported by Auckland Transport) to develop proposals to accelerate public transport patronage and active modes (cycling, walking). We are keen for this work to be incorporated into the ATAP “next steps” exercise so that all the key agencies and stakeholders can collaborate on the generation of insights, assessment of options and development of recommendations.

Given the urgency of this work, the timing of final recommendations on how to accelerate public transport patronage could be treated as an early deliverable from the ATAP “next steps” exercise.

We are happy to discuss this further with you at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely



Phil Goff  
Mayor of Auckland



Councillor Chris Darby  
Chair, Planning Committee



Councillor Richard Hills  
Deputy Chair, Planning Committee

Copy to: Dr Lester Levy, Chair, Auckland Transport