

Memorandum

19 February 2020

To: Members of the Planning Committee

Subject: Auckland Transport's position on City Centre Masterplan matters

From: Auckland Transport

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Purpose

1. To provide advice in support of the presentation made to the Planning Committee workshop on 19 February 2020 regarding Auckland Transport (AT)'s position for the refreshed City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and the Access for Everyone (A4E) proposal.

Summary

2. Modal shift and road safety are key priorities for Auckland Transport (AT) and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), and the emerging CCMP proposals and the ongoing city centre investment programme provides an opportunity to transform how people and freight moves in the city centre.
3. Both agencies have submitted in support of the CCMP and the A4E concept, identifying that it is deliverable within the coming decade if sufficient funding and supporting approvals are provided.
4. Although some initial analysis has been undertaken on A4E to inform the submissions, AT and NZTA will shortly commence comprehensive and detailed investigations into the specific options and actions required to implement the concept.
5. Both agencies will be developing initial Regional Land Transport Plan bids for new funding for projects and programmes to enable the CCMP outcomes. Initial cost estimates for some major elements have been made.
6. The agencies will provide assistance to Auckland Council as it leads further public and stakeholder engagement on the CCMP and A4E. It is important that the city centre continues – and is seen to continue – to operate as a vital economic hub, a thriving focal point for our communities and an attractive place to visit.
7. AT will continue to develop comprehensive travel demand management programmes and further expand more customer-focused efforts on disruption management, network optimisation and works co-ordination. AT considers it important to help people navigate the city centre as it changes, and help prepare people for the network changes over time.
8. AT and NZTA will come back to the Planning Committee with more information on the implementation of A4E as it is developed.

Context

9. This memo is in support of the presentation made to the Planning Committee workshop on 19 February 2020 regarding AT's position for the refreshed CCMP and the A4E proposal.
10. AT and NZTA have submitted in support of the CCMP, noting a range of issues and implications which are outlined in this memo. Ports of Auckland Ltd (Ports) also submitted on the CCMP, raising a number issues, many of which were similar to those of AT. Ports is therefore involved in ongoing discussions on the implementation of A4E.

Discussion

11. Transport context

12. The city centre has experienced significant growth in employment, residential and entertainment activity over recent years and demand for travel to and from the city centre has increased to over 80,000 people entering the city centre each morning two-hour peak. The investment made by local and central government to the public transport and walking/cycling systems mean that since 2000 all of the growth in travel has been accommodated by additional trips by public transport and active modes.

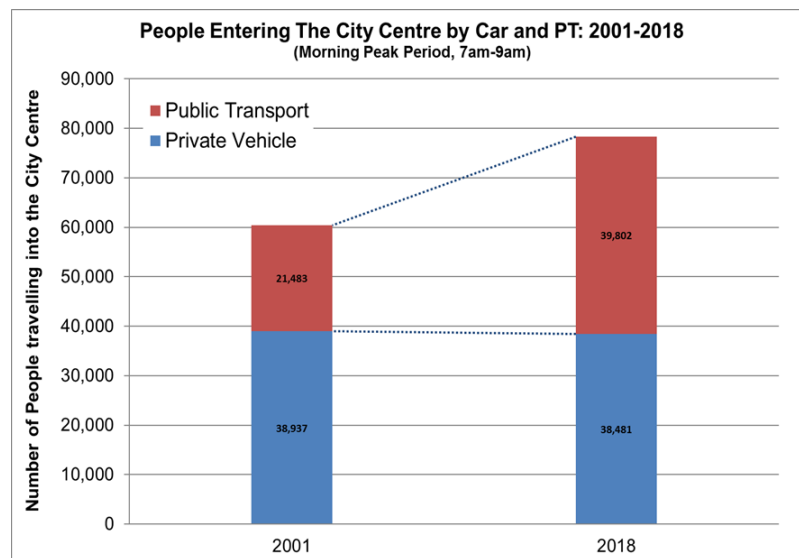


Figure 1: Recent trends for travel to city centre (AM peak).

Note that active modes in addition to these trips.

13. In spite of that investment and more attractive transport options becoming available, the number of private vehicles travelling to/from the city centre in peak periods has remained fairly constant.
14. Current projections are that peak travel demand to the city centre each morning by vehicle and public transport will reach 105,000 by 2028. Due to the increasing number of people living in the city centre (approximately 35,000) as well as the growing numbers of workers, tourists, students and visitors, there are estimated to be at least 500,000 walking trips per day within the city centre. This highlights the importance of providing sufficient space and infrastructure for those people, regardless of how they arrived in the city centre.
15. The ongoing growth in the use of sustainable transport modes, along with an increased focus on road safety, are key priorities for both AT and NZTA. The CCMP and A4E concept align well with this general approach, but take it much further.
16. As such, both agencies support the A4E concept and intend to investigate in more detail how best to stage and deliver in a way that achieves the desired CCMP outcomes.
17. An additional challenge for AT is the impact of significant ongoing construction on the street network from both public and private developments. Although the completion of these works will bring significant benefits to the city centre, there remains the challenge of managing travel demands and customer experience. AT considers it important to help people navigate the city centre as it changes, and help prepare people for the network changes over time.
18. For Ports and NZTA in particular, it is vital that the changes in city centre transport patterns do not unduly impact on the travel needs of those using the strategic road network. This includes the needs of freight access to and from the Port, as well as regional and inter-regional trips.

19. AT's initial Access for Everyone (A4E) findings

20. A4E will require a fundamental change to the management of city centre transport systems and involves an entirely new traffic network based on a car-free Queen St valley and a series of 'zones' which general traffic can enter/exit but not travel between. Buses, pedestrians and people on bikes would be able to pass between the zones, and some special arrangements will be considered for disabled access, taxi services and the range of servicing and loading operations. The A4E approach is intended to eliminate through traffic and strongly discourage 'discretionary' traffic, leaving the motorway and Mayoral Dr as the sole remaining parts of the network available for circulation between zones or around the city centre.



21. A4E appears to be strategically aligned with the NZTA's new mode shift plan *Keeping Cities Moving*¹.
22. AT undertook initial analysis of the A4E concept in order to inform its submission. In summary, the findings were that A4E is achievable within the coming decade provided sufficient funding and approvals are provided for the enabling programmes and infrastructure.
23. The analysis found that A4E requires a reduction in peak-time traffic of around 30% to avoid gridlock on constrained parts of the traffic network. This requires a mode shift of approximately 11,000 people from vehicles to public transport or active modes over and above current projections. Over the coming decade, AT expect to need to carry an additional 30,000 people to/from the city centre each peak period by public transport, so the 11,000 on top of this represents a significant increase. As a note, this would achieve a 75% public transport mode share, up from anticipated 65%.
24. To enable this uplift in public transport capacity, additional trains, buses and ferries and space for supporting infrastructure is required. The opening of City Rail Link will assist (however this increase in capacity is already taken into account) and implementation of 9-car trains may need to occur earlier than planned. In particular, Customs St is required to become effectively a bus-only 'transit mall' (A4E sees the removal of through traffic from this space). AT is aware that the substantial new investment in quality bus infrastructure and growth in bus volumes is likely to conflict with placemaking aspirations.
25. Additionally, new transport links would be needed within NZTA's strategic road network to better enable remaining traffic to pass around the city centre. The first of these is new on-off ramps in the vicinity of Nelson St for traffic to and from East Auckland. Without these new links, remaining traffic from the East is unable to use the motorway network to access the West of the city centre (something drivers from all other parts of the region can do).
26. The second change is to substantially increase the capacity of State Highway 16 (Stanley St and The Strand) between the motorway and Tamaki Dr. This is required because all remaining Eastern traffic must use this corridor to go to, through or around the city centre and the current corridor capacity cannot accommodate this. It is additionally important to improve this corridor due to it being a strategic freight link to the Port.
27. As well as these two major infrastructure changes (and the additional public transport services and infrastructure) A4E requires a new operations system to be in place to manage the new logistics and permitting systems for access between 'zones' or into restricted areas (e.g. time-limited deliveries, disabled access, emergency vehicles, etc.).
28. AT and NZTA are working together to understand how the current legislative framework for controlling access on streets can be used for the implementation of A4E. Some changes in the legal framework and AT's bylaws are expected to be required.

¹ Keeping Cities Moving <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/keeping-cities-moving/>

29. Whilst A4E is unique to Auckland, there are lessons to be learned from other cities (Ghent, Oslo, Birmingham, etc.) which has instituted significant transport system change. The prime lesson is that it is critical to engage with the public and stakeholders throughout the development of implementation plans, as these can be complex and wide-ranging in their effects. Adequate funding must be set aside for enabling programmes, especially a pro-active communications campaign and robust access management system.
30. As such, AT and NZTA will support Auckland Council as it leads ongoing public engagement on the development and implementation of A4E and other parts of the CCMP.
31. AT, Auckland Council and NZTA will work in collaboration with this change, as each agency has a unique perspective, responsibilities, expertise and set of levers with which to enable change - and we cannot do it alone.

32. Opportunity for Queen St pilot

33. With *Auckland's Climate Action Framework*², and as a signatory to the *C40 Fossil Free Streets Declaration*³, Auckland has pledged to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by transport and traffic. This is expected to be based around the Queen Street valley, and AT is aware of the desire to create pedestrian-friendly streets as early as possible.
34. Previous investigations into increasing pedestrian provision on Queen St found this was difficult to achieve as envisaged in A4E due to the high volumes of diverted buses/traffic from nearby CRL construction and the need to maintain legal property access/servicing. However AT is working with NZTA on the development of a more flexible statutory framework, and upcoming A4E implementation planning will include seeking early guidance on the establishment of a Queen St pilot as soon as possible.
35. The intention is that a pilot would capitalise on current construction works, and be an opportunity to show Aucklanders of how the future of Queen St could be.

36. Communications and engagement

37. It is important that the city centre continues – and is seen to continue – to operate as a vital economic hub, a thriving focal point for our communities and an attractive place to visit.
38. An overarching communications strategy will be key to ensuring that Aucklanders are taken along on the journey of change which A4E will necessitate. This is to be co-ordinated with ongoing disruption management and the opportunities current construction provides.
39. AT intend to take the opportunity to 'sell' the transport vision for the city centre and show, not just tell, Aucklanders that the future is in progress. This aims to open up and maintain a progressive dialogue with Aucklanders and shift stakeholders from seeing only the negatives to starting to understand and support the positives. AT is already working with partners, including Auckland Council, to make this a joint initiative.
40. One way this could be advanced is by using existing temporary road closures and planned single day and or weekend closures of roads to showcase opportunities, and allow Aucklanders to experience the vibrancy of the emerging city centre. This should benefit city centre businesses, visitors and residents, especially those who have been impacted by recent construction.
41. The ongoing funding of this initiative in a more fulsome way will need to be considered in future budget planning.

42. Managing the impact of construction

43. The city centre is experiencing both significant public works but also an unprecedented level of private development. Much of this change has impacts upon the transport network through lane closures or diversions for all modes of transport. To manage these impacts and keep the city moving AT monitors and manages the network through the City Centre Network Operations team (CCNO) who oversee temporary works applications and co-ordinate transport operations. As the

² Auckland's Climate Action Framework <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment/Pages/auckland-climate-action-plan.aspx>

³ C40 Fossil-Fuel-Free Streets Declaration <https://www.c40.org/other/green-and-healthy-streets>

construction progress increases in the city centre and with further changes underway, AT is enhancing its forward planning and customer experience.

44. A dedicated Works Co-ordination team has been created to enable a forward view of works on our transport corridors which encompasses road, footpath and cycleways. This team is currently overseeing the programme of changes and works in the city centre so as far as possible all works can be co-ordinated to minimise disruptions. A key part of this work is liaison with developers to have a greater understanding of programming for new construction in partnership with Auckland Council.
45. AT's customer experience teams will play a key role in providing 'on the ground' guidance to public transport passengers to provide a greater level of visibility of changes in the city centre and effective engagement with our wide range of customers so they are fully aware of changes to their journeys and options available. This programme will enhance communication to a wider customer base and lead to improvements to the journey experience in the city centre. This will be especially important as we gear up for 2021, a significant year for major events in the city centre. Auckland will be hosting the America's Cup and APEC as well as numerous other events and activations. Continued investment in these key areas will be required to support the delivery of the CCMP proposals.

46. Travel Demand Management (TDM)

47. TDM is a coordinated strategy which will help support the implementation of the CCMP and A4E. TDM is the application of a focused, data-led strategy to change demand on transport networks by redistributing journeys to other modes, times, and routes – or taking demand off the network altogether. This is known as the Four Rs – remode, reroute, retime and reduce.
48. TDM has three key components to it:
 - *Behaviour Change*: empowering people to make informed choices about how and when they travel, the route they take and the number of trips they make
 - *Network Management*: managing the way the existing network and infrastructure operates to get the most out of it
 - *Capacity Creation*: ensuring there is enough capacity within the network to accommodate desired travel whether this is on a particular mode, route or time.
49. TDM is frequently used by transport agencies and organisations across the world to manage demand for both planned and unplanned events, including periods of change and disruption. A comprehensive and coordinated TDM campaign helps mitigate the impacts of ongoing construction on the network. Up to date information is given to customers on the most impacted routes to enable them to plan their journeys to avoid it.
50. As a nearby example, Transport for New South Wales launched Tomorrow's Sydney in 2013⁴, a comprehensive communications campaign using TDM to mitigate the impacts of the light rail construction through the city centre as well as other ongoing major projects impacting how customers travel. This clear branding and messaging informs customers about impacts and supports them in planning their travel. The Travel Choices initiative within this supports impacted businesses, helping employees plan their travel. They also work with freight operators to support them in retiming deliveries and minimising the impacts of disruption on their business operations.
51. AT's campaigns will be data-led, customer-focused and support the mode shift required for A4E. They will provide up-to-date travel information to customers and clearly communicate key messages which target both travel demand and supply.
52. AT has established forums for coordinating works to minimise the impact on customers. This can be built upon to include new workstreams and engagement with stakeholders such as the freight industry, as well as bolstering engagement with businesses, visitors and residents. There are also opportunities to bolster information provided to customers through utilising new and existing

⁴ <https://mysydneycbd.nsw.gov.au/>

technologies and touch points as well as making better use of AT HOP data to ensure messaging is targeted.

53. AT's current 'Betterway' campaign, alongside the wider 'Auckland's Future in Progress' campaign, are key platforms to support this. Tracking and monitoring the impact of a coordinated campaign is also critical to measuring success. This should be aligned to any targets identified to support delivery of CCMP.

54. Funding

55. Having undertaken initial investigations into enabling projects for A4E, AT and NZTA will submit initial funding bids to the 2021-31 Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) for those projects and programmes. This is expected to include physical network changes, a new operations centre for access restrictions, and comprehensive public engagement programme.
56. Future investigations and business cases will refine the exact costs, benefits and timing for the full A4E implementation programme, and future RLTPs will be updated to reflect this. As noted earlier, significant new funding will be needed, especially for additional public transport services and infrastructure (e.g. extra buses, trains, stations).
57. Initial budget estimates for infrastructure projects include approximately \$270million for the additional capacity required for the Grafton Gully boulevard and \$150million for new on/off-ramps near Nelson St. Interim and transitional projects (such as pilots) will also have costs to secure within the RLTP or Council's Long Term Plan.
58. If sufficient funding is unavailable within the upcoming RLTP period, implementation of A4E will take longer, however it is expected that the projects are likely to have strong alignment with government direction (e.g. NZTA's *Keeping Cities Moving*).

Next steps

59. There is a substantial amount of work necessary to more fully understand the options and actions for implementation of the A4E concept. AT has established a working group, including members of the Auckland Design Office and NZTA, and this group will co-ordinate the various workstreams. The first tasks for this group is the scoping of the comprehensive A4E investigations, build upon the initial analysis undertaken to inform AT's submission.
60. As noted earlier, AT is undertaking further efforts into better managing the significant increase in construction within the city centre and looking to use disruption as opportunities to move towards the future transport system. This includes an increased focus on travel behaviour change and substantial additional communications with the travelling public.
61. AT and NZTA will also be shortly submitting initial funding bids to the 2021-31 RLTP for enabling projects and programmes. Future investigations and business cases will refine the exact costs, benefits and timing for the full A4E implementation programme, and future RLTPs will be updated to reflect this.
62. Both AT and NZTA will provide assistance with Council-led engagement on A4E. The agencies will also report progress to the Planning Committee on the implementation of A4E as it is developed, including a more customer-focused approach.

Attachments

AT's submission on the CCMP