



## Submission on Draft Regional Land Transport Plan May 2018

Submission from Andy Smith on behalf to Walk Auckland Inc and the Auckland branch of Living Streets Aotearoa.

### Who is Walk Auckland

Walk Auckland is the pedestrian advocacy group

*Registered Charity CC34550*

Aim: To promote the rights of people to walk with independence, comfort and safety

Objectives:

- Ensure everyone has the right to –
- walk as the basic means of human movement, without restriction and fear
- expect that councils and other organisations that have responsibility to pedestrians to have clear development and maintenance standards for footpaths and walkways and apply them.
- To promote and advocate for-
- walking as a healthy, environmental-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- social and economic benefits of a pedestrian friendly community
- Liaison with local, national and international groups
- Input into decision making (building, parks, transport & roading, walkways, designs/strategies) at local and national transport levels
- clearly identified maintained and accessible footpaths & rights of way
- policing of traffic to enforce and educate drivers on pedestrian rights especially at crosswalks.
- campaigns, meetings and publications to further pedestrian rights.
- safe, pleasant, uninhibited, easy pedestrian access between key points such as their residence to all amenities, including parks, public transport, waterways workplace and other common destinations.

### Top Priorities

- ! Bayswater Ferry Terminal upgrade
- ! Downtown Ferry Basin – increased capacity
- ! Ferry Strategy
- ! Lake Rd/Esmonde Rd improvements
- ! Sea level rise north of Harbour Bridge resilience improvements (NZTA project)
- ! Skypath (NZTA project)

- ! Seapath (NZTA project)
- ! Safer communities and speed management
- ! Integrated ticketing – improvements, replacement and national system
- ! Footpath maintenance and renewal

## Introduction

Overall, We welcome the initiatives outlined in this draft Regional Land Transport Plan, and welcome the opportunity to highlight issues which we see as particular priorities for us and our community.

Comments in this submission follow the structure of the Draft RLTP document, highlighting issues important to me and my community.

## Vision

The vision needs to be more clearly and boldly articulated in this opening section.

Support a vision of

“an accessible\*, well connected, safe and sustainable city”, where it is easy to access employment and services; where it is safe to walk and cycle, and **drive only where an alternative mode is not feasible**; where there are **genuine travel choices for all, including disabled people**; and where the negative impacts of the transport system on people and the environment\*\* are minimised.

Support the objectives of:

a move away from a city where single occupant vehicles are the dominant mode of travel to one **where public transport and walking and cycling are prioritised** in the transport system, and there is a major focus on **improving walking and cycling safety and a target of zero road transport deaths on Auckland roads**.

- ! Accessible should be defined as making the transport system useable and providing real choice for disabled people (people with cognitive, physical, psychological and sensory challenges or impairments).

\*\* Minimising impact on the environment should include a target to reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and to protect estuaries, streams and Auckland’s bays and harbours from road run-off.

## Addressing Auckland’s challenges

### Strategic approach

**Support** this approach.

Walking, cycling and public transport should be prioritised modes, particularly in town centres

Walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure must provide genuine choice for people living in established suburbs and in new subdivisions at a distance from the city centre to travel for employment, study, recreational, social and cultural purposes.

### Safety

**Support Vision Zero approach** (page 31).

Safety programme should prioritise:

- ! **Reducing the speed limit to 30km/h at all times** in town centres and around schools and retirement homes and villages
- ! **Improving road crossing infrastructure for pedestrians**, in particular replacing pedestrian refuges with table pedestrian crossings, or signalised crossings, reducing wait times at signalised crossings and increasing cross times for pedestrians crossing wide intersections
- ! **Separating walking and cycling** facilities as these two modes travel at different speeds
- ! **Providing wider footpaths or kerbside** berms in new subdivisions and when upgrading existing footpaths to accommodate the increased number of wheelie bins and larger mobility devices. **Mobility devices required by disabled people** to maintain mobility should be the only motorised wheeled devices permitted on footpaths

- ! The law prohibiting most cyclists from riding on the footpath should be enforced
- ! Removal of at grade rail/pedestrian crossings should be a priority.

## Access

**Support** this approach

Ensuring accessibility of all transport modes for all disabled people must be prioritised in all new projects and when maintaining and upgrading existing transport infrastructure.

Public transport needs considerable improvement to meet the accessibility needs of all disabled users. Audible announcements for all buses are urgently needed and ferries need to be fully wheelchair accessible.

I support the Access Alliance's<sup>1</sup> campaign for an Accessibility for New Zealanders Act. We urge Auckland Transport and NZTA to ensure all infrastructure and services are developed in anticipation of such an act becoming law, to avoid the disruption and additional expense of retrofitting to meet the requirements of any such future law.

<sup>1</sup> Access Alliance: [http://www.accessalliance.org.nz/the\\_accessibility\\_act](http://www.accessalliance.org.nz/the_accessibility_act)

## Rapid transport network

Support all priorities except light rail to airport. Extending existing rail network would provide a far better level of service for airport workers, visitors/tourists and local travellers. Light rail may serve Dominion Rd commuters well but is not well suited to servicing the airport as there is far less certainty of journey time on a light rail network shared with other road traffic.

## Ferries

Support proposed programme for ferry infrastructure improvements, especially:

- ! Bayswater Ferry Terminal upgrade
- ! Devonport Ferry Terminal upgrade
- ! Ferry Strategy.
- ! Downtown Ferry basin upgrade

It is of concern and unsatisfactory that these projects are listed in Appendix 1B as unfunded projects.

The Future Ferry Strategy is urgently needed. This needs to address the poor quality of vessels and level of service provided by the current operator and resolve the issue of an integrated fare structure to provide AT Hop users with incentives to use bus-ferry-rail connections, and choose to use public transport at weekends.

The Bayswater Ferry terminal upgrade must be a priority project to complement Lake Road congestion reduction initiatives. While an accessible, fit for purpose terminal is required, service frequency particularly off peak and at weekends must be increased, bus connections provided to all services and an integrated fare structure as part of the upgrade package.

It is good to see a plan to develop the Downtown Ferry piers 3 and 4 at Queen's wharf and to continue seismic strengthening of the Quay Street seawall as part of an America's Cup project. However **the entire Downtown Ferry terminal is urgently need of an upgrade** and more ferry berths as the terminal is at capacity at peak times creating delays for many commuters. The waiting area still lacks effective shelter for waiting passengers.

**Do not support the investigation of a Brown's Bay ferry service.** Upgrades to existing ferry terminals and services must be prioritised over expansion of the ferry network. A Brown's Bay – Downtown route is unlikely to deliver significant journey time reduction benefits, and is likely to be an unreliable service frequently subject to adverse weather conditions due to the exposed outer harbour route and exposed beach terminal location at Brown's Bay.

## Rail

**Support** rail transport programme

- ! Particularly support the progressive improvement and removal of road/rail level crossings to better manage safety risks and address road congestion, and to allow increased train speed. **Eliminating at grade pedestrian/rail crossings** should be prioritised.
- ! Investigation, design and route protection for a new rail route from Auckland International Airport to Botany via Manukau City Centre, including Puhinui should be prioritised over the proposed light rail to Airport link.

## Walking

### Support the strategies to increase walking.

There should be a dedicated walking programme with staff and funding separate from the cycling programme. Walking and cycling are different modes which travel at different speeds, and have different needs and aspirations. Some priorities such as slower speeds in town centres, around schools and retirement homes and villages will contribute to both safer walking and cycling. **Pedestrians need well maintained footpaths, safe road crossing points (not pedestrian refuges) and well-designed street spaces** where they feel safe, and which are well-lit, provide green space and shade, and free from all fast moving traffic, including cyclists travelling at speed.

### Support proposed walking and cycling infrastructure programme, particularly:

- ! **Skypath and Seapath which should be delivered as an integrated package.** Environmental impacts of Seapath must be mitigated and the route developed in consultation with local environmental groups, such as Forest and Bird, to protect the unique ecology and bird habitat of Shoal Bay. This is essential walking and cycling infrastructure for people across Auckland and of particular benefit for the North Shore community, from Northcote, Takapuna and Devonport.
- ! **New footpaths regional programme - to construct new and widened footpaths.** This is essential to accommodate wheelie bins for rubbish collection and increased use of mobility devices. Mobility devices used by disabled people should be the only motorised wheeled devices permitted to share footpaths with pedestrians.

### Additional project proposed:

- ! A walking / cycling link from Northboro Reserve to Sandy Bay Road, Bayswater (mostly on reserve land and less than 1km) should be developed to effectively link Seapath and the Hauraki catchment to the Bayswater and its ferry terminal. This is also an ecologically sensitive area but environmental impacts would be mitigated with the use of a boardwalk. This would be suited to adoption as a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board initiative.

**Walking and cycling modes should be separated wherever possible.** Where paths are shared pedestrians should have priority as the slower moving mode and cycle speed should be reduced through design features, signage and education.

## City Centre

**Support bus interchange upgrades.** Bus interchanges urgently need to be rationalised. At present it is extremely difficult for anyone unfamiliar with the bus network and disabled people to find the correct bus stop or navigate between stops.

Interchanges should be focused on Customs and Lower Albert Streets to facilitate bus to ferry or rail connections. Once CRL is complete interchanges on Wellesley Street will also be useful. Seamless connections with inter-regional bus or rail services and transport to the Airport are also critical for people coming from north, east and west.

## Airport

A rail link from the city to the Airport, integrated with the northern rapid network is urgently needed.

## Visitors

A more coherent bus network, in particular city interchanges is urgently needed. Buses need to meet international accessibility standards, including audible and visual bus announcements on arrival at bus stops and on board to assist disabled passengers, and visitors to get on the right bus and alight at the correct stop.

## Placemaking

Auckland Transport has an important role in placemaking. This is particularly important around public transport nodes, in town centres and where parks and reserves provide important active transport routes between arterial corridors. **More effort needs to be made to ensure placemaking projects meet the**

**needs of pedestrians, disabled and older people.** Seating, lighting and design which can be easily navigated by people with sensory and mobility impairments are particularly important elements of public spaces. Spaces free from all fast moving traffic (including bicycles) are valued by these population groups and all walkers. **More needs to be done to ensure there are green, traffic-free public spaces with trees in town centres.** Green space is important for mental and physical health, providing shade and quiet space, and to supports biodiversity in the city.

## Technology

### **Support technology initiatives.**

Technological solutions must be developed in consultation with disabled people, especially blind and vision impaired, and cognitively impaired people to ensure the technology can be used, and improves access for these groups.

## Environment

### Support these initiatives.

New transport initiatives must be subject to robust environmental assessment to ensure impacts on the natural environment and ecosystems, particularly in coastal areas are minimised and mitigated, and developed in consultation with groups advocating for protection of our natural environment.

### Supporting growth

It should be recognised that established areas are also experiencing increased intensification. This particularly impacts on the Devonport peninsula – from Stanley Point to Esmonde Rd/Takapuna. Improved transport infrastructure and more frequent and reliable bus and ferry services need to precede new housing development. Weekend travel times are now particularly unpredictable on the Devonport peninsula impacting on everyone's employment, social and recreational activities.

### Corridor improvements

Support:

- ! Lake Road, Devonport/Takapuna – improvements to Lake Road and Esmonde Road to improve journey time reliability.

This is the **number one priority** for Devonport peninsula communities, including Bayswater. Improvements are urgently needed before additional residential development takes place in the Devonport, Bayswater and Hauraki areas, as a result of Ng ti Wh tua land redevelopment, which will result in additional households needing access to education, employment and other social activities along the Lake Rd corridor.

**These improvements must be in conjunction with upgraded Bayswater ferry terminal and more frequent bus and ferry services.**

**Support** the NZTA project relating to sea level rise north of the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

- ! Implement interventions to increase the resilience of this portion to future storm tide inundations and sea level rise.

Both these projects also impact on the resilience of Devonport peninsula communities in the event of natural disasters.

### Maintaining and renewing existing assets

Maintenance of footpaths must be prioritised to prevent slips, trips and falls. Kerbing and channelling at crossing points must be improved to remove water pooling at the very point where pedestrians wish to cross, and to improve access for those using prams, pushchairs, wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

Boardwalks and sea walls are also in critical need of maintenance on the Devonport peninsula. Sea walls supporting critical road infrastructure in Bayswater are at particular risk due to greater wave action due to sea level rise and increased adverse weather events.

### Inter-regional priorities

Particularly support:

- ! Upgrading the rail network to provide greater capacity for freight and passenger movement into and out of the Auckland region to Tauranga and Hamilton

Rail upgrades for passenger and freight movements to Northland should also be prioritised.

Passenger rail access to Hamilton, Tauranga and Whangarei and other centres north of Auckland are much needed to reduce the need to drive these busy and unsafe roads. The travel distances to these centres from Auckland are well suited to train travel, and would greatly enhance the economic and tourist development of these regional centres.

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