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Infrastructure New Zealand is the peak industry body for the infrastructure sector and promotes best practice in national infrastructure development through research, advocacy and public and private sector collaboration. Infrastructure New Zealand members come from diverse sectors across New Zealand and include infrastructure service providers, investors, and owners.

This submission represents the views of Infrastructure New Zealand as a collective whole and may not necessarily represent the views of individual member organisations.

Infrastructure New Zealand submission on the Supporting Growth Programme's southern Auckland transport plans

Infrastructure New Zealand supports at a high level the South Indicative Strategic Transport Network (the Network). The Network appears to provide a sufficient improvement in accessibility and mobility necessary to support growth, including across the three transport modes (private, public and active transport).

At a more detailed level, we are unclear of the outcomes the package will deliver and whether these will meet the expectations of current and future local communities, business and other stakeholders.

We would like to see evidence that the Network achieves its overall stated purpose, that is, to "support growth".

The key performance data we results in two main sets of outcomes:

1. Improved transport outcomes, in particular, acceptable congestion and safety performance over the long term.
2. Improved land use outcomes, in particular land supply and values which enable the delivery of housing at a price level consistent with local incomes.

Introduction

Over the next 30 years, the population of southern Auckland is expected to rise from under 200,000 to over 300,000.

Supporting Growth has the opportunity to spatially plan for the long-term future of Auckland. Taking best advantage of this will involve designating transport corridors, housing, and other land uses for many decades to come.

A lack of forward planning in New Zealand has meant that transport, housing, and other land uses have been allocated too late, leading to insufficient infrastructure networks, congestion, and poorly planned developments.

We note, for example, that Mill Rd is not able to interchange with SH20 at its northern end and nor is it able to continue along Cosgrove Rd at its southern end due to poor long term planning in the past.

The southern Auckland transport plans presented by Supporting Growth have the ability to align land uses for the next 50-100 years and we commend Supporting Growth for proactively planning how to unlock this growth.

We conditionally support the key elements of the South Indicative Transport network

We have long supported a major upgrade to the Mill Rd corridor. As previous analysis has shown, the current corridor is unsafe, congested and incapable of supporting future growth.

We have long supported the upgrade of the Papakura to Pukekohe rail line, including full electrification and the addition of new stations. Strategic early investment in rapid transit (and active transport) is critical to enabling integrated development and early adoption of alternatives.

We have long supported an upgrade to the SH22 corridor. This is one of the most dangerous stretches of road in Auckland and will be a key strategic corridor in future years as the city grows.¹

Other more minor improvements to connect strategic corridors will be required and the plans outlined in available documentation appear to provide reasonable connectivity and accessibility.

What we do not see

However, what we cannot tell from available evidence is whether the South Indicative Strategic Transport Network will actually work.

Is the programme sufficient to address existing deficiencies and support the 120,000 new residents expected over the next 30 years?

¹ Our support for each of these initiatives is set out in our 2017 Innovation City report: <https://infrastructure.org.nz/resources/Documents/Reports/Infrastructure%20New%20Zealand%20Meeting%20Aucklands%20Growth%20Challenge%20Report.pdf>

Can it support growth beyond 30 years?

Will the roads be congested? Will the rail be utilised?

What will homes cost and can the local community afford them?

Does the extension of Mill Rd beyond SH1 through to Pukekohe need to be accelerated? Does there need to be an additional rail station? Does SH1 need to be expanded?

Does the sequencing of transport investment need to change in order to support greater competition in land markets?

Will the combination of homes, transport and employment result in a well-functioning community which supports the future growth and development of wider Auckland?

What we would like to see

As part of the early engagement process for future growth and investment in the south, we would like high level data projections for key transport and land use (particularly housing) outcomes.

Specifically, we would like to have confidence that the Network is sufficient to achieve the objectives not just of the project itself, but that the public expects.

For the purposes of this work, there are two main outcomes that need to be achieved:

1. Transport performance needs to improve in the near and long term.
2. Housing needs to be provided at a speed, price point and of a typology that meets the needs of the current and future community.

There are several key datasets which will indicate the performance of land use and transport outcomes in the south and these need to be communicated to the local community and stakeholders at an early stage:

- Transport
 - Congestion: what are travel times today along key corridor at peak, off peak and weekends? What will they be in 5, 10, 20 and 30 years?
 - Since travel demand not met by alternatives tends to be met by private vehicle use, congestion indicators are a proxy for the overall success of land use and transport planning, integration and investment.
 - Safety: what are the rates of death and serious injury on and around road and rail corridors currently and what will they be following investment?
 - Ensuring travel is safe is a basic objective of transport policy.
- Housing
 - Supply: what is the housing need today and what will it be in 5, 10, 20 and 30 years? Does the Network unlock sufficient land to meet demand?



- Ensuring that there are enough homes for residents is the most fundamental objective of planning and it is transport which unlocks land for development.
- Affordability: what are the incomes of the local community today and what is expected in the future? What will land cost to develop and will it be possible to deliver homes that the local community can afford?
 - If land release is inadequate to provide a flow of affordable land and property, the local community will be pushed out.
- Typology: what is the mix of housing typology (detached, apartment, etc.) demanded today and what will be demanded in 5, 10, 20 and 30 years? Will the housing provided for in the plan meet needs and expectations?
 - If larger families are forced due to cost or availability to live in cramped conditions or smaller households have no ability to trade off space for proximity, planning will have failed.

Conclusion

If the Network is timed and sequenced to address congestion and safety while at the same time unlocking land at a scale and price which enables affordable housing, then we support the Network.

If the Network does not improve congestion, safety and housing supply and affordability, then more work is required.

Once there is clarity that the Network will achieve the outcomes we and the public expect, there will then need to be a discussion around affordability, who pays, when and how.

With an effective and integrated land use and transport plan supported by appropriate funding tools in place, we will be pleased to offer our full support the South Indicative Transport Network.

We thank Supporting Growth for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Blair
CEO, Infrastructure New Zealand