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# **Infrastructure New Zealand Submission on an integrated transport plan for Auckland**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Infrastructure New Zealand (INZ) welcomes this opportunity to submit on Auckland's future transport projects as Auckland Council and the Government work together on an integrated transport plan for Auckland.
- 1.2 INZ is New Zealand's membership organisation for the infrastructure sector. We promote best practice in national infrastructure development through research, advocacy, and public and private sector collaboration. Our members come from diverse sectors across New Zealand and include infrastructure service providers, investors, and operators.
- 1.3 While INZ has submitted as the peak infrastructure sector organisation, our members may make their own submissions raising those issues specific to their areas of interest or expertise.

## **2. General Remarks**

- 2.1 Infrastructure New Zealand supports the approach that Auckland Council and the Government are taking to develop an integrated transport plan. This partnership approach builds on previous work undertaken through the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) and its subsequent updates.
- 2.2 We also welcome the added focus on freight as well as people movements, as freight considerations have not been as strong a focus in previous iterations of ATAP.
- 2.3 At the same time, we are concerned that, yet another transport plan is being developed for Auckland when many of the region's transport challenges and solutions are well known and understood. Since ATAP was first released in 2016, it has been updated 3 times and this

latest iteration would represent the fourth joint transport plan for Auckland in the space of 7 years.

- 2.4 Previous versions of ATAP have also struggled to attract full funding. While projects such as light rail have been identified as a high priority within the plan, this has not been reflected in subsequent funding allocation nor implementation and operational certainty.
- 2.5 Auckland needs a transport plan that is fully funded and provides certainty for its communities and infrastructure suppliers. Measures should be taken to ensure this plan is implemented quickly and that we do not find ourselves in the position of having to update it again in the near future. These might include:
- Waka Kotahi fast-tracking transport projects included in this latest plan, particularly those that have been identified as high priority for the region.
  - Encouraging cross-party agreement on the plan so that it does not have to be refreshed if there is a change of government this year. It may be that the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission / Te Waihangā is brought in to provide an independent review and endorsement of the plan to encourage cross-party support.
  - Exploring and committing to the use of alternative funding and financing tools to enable delivery of the plan and reduce reliance on the National Land Transport Fund that is becoming increasingly over-committed.

### 3. Suggested changes to principles and objectives

- 3.1 The plan proposes four guiding principles:
- Make better use of our existing road and public transport networks
  - Target investments to the most significant challenges
  - Prioritise investments to achieve best value for money
  - Reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector
- 3.2 We support the need to make better use of existing transport networks. As part of this, options to accelerate the introduction of congestion charging in Auckland should be considered, as a way of managing demand on critical transport corridors and raising revenue for important transport projects. INZ has long been a proponent of congestion charging, provided that genuine travel alternatives are put in place to mitigate its impacts, particularly for those on lower incomes.
- 3.3 We also support the second and third principles. The transport plan needs to ensure that the most significant challenges in the region are addressed first and that high value for money investments are prioritised.
- 3.4 We find that the fourth principle should be reflected as an objective as this appears to be better suited to being an outcome of the plan as opposed to a principle that guides its development. In its place, we would propose including a principle around integration with urban development and land use plans as this ensures the impact of transport investments are optimised (including as it relates to emissions reductions). A fourth principle could be:

*“Align transport planning with existing and planned urban and land use plans for Auckland”*

- 3.5 We support the objectives proposed for the plan and as above suggest the inclusion of a 6<sup>th</sup> objective around emissions reduction. The eventual plan should seek to achieve an optimal balance across each of these objectives as opposed to prioritising one objective over another. We have seen in recent years how efforts at prioritisation have led to perverse outcomes, particularly around road safety and the resilience of our core transport corridors which recent adverse weather conditions have brought to bear.
- 3.6 We would also like to see a more nuanced approach to improving transport access, that considers how to ensure a spatially planned transport network that meets the needs of its users to make trips for work, education, and leisure. The transport plan should be developed based on existing and future travel patterns, and the location of key employment, education, and leisure hubs. Access is the product of well designed, complementary transport networks and urban form and this should be a key component of the next plan.
- 3.7 The eventual transport plan should be based on an analysis of different packages of interventions against each of the objectives, with a well-rounded package selected in the eventual plan.

## **4. We do not support prioritisation on a project basis**

- 4.1 You have sought feedback on which projects should be prioritised in the next decade and beyond.
- 4.2 INZ does not support prioritisation on a project basis. Rather, the transport plan should seek to prioritise delivery of specified transport objectives and outcomes and determine the best mix of projects and initiatives to do so.
- 4.3 The transport plan should signal a shift away from mode-specific analysis and take a ‘horses for courses’ approach based on the evidence of which transport initiatives are likely to address known challenges within the region. Evidence based decision-making, as opposed to politicised project selection, should be encouraged to ensure the longevity of the plan and its successful use to deliver specified transport outcomes.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 7.1 INZ supports more joined up thinking on the future of Auckland’s transport network.
- 7.2 The development of an integrated transport plan for Auckland represents an opportunity to provide long-term direction and certainty for the city’s communities and for infrastructure suppliers that will need to scale up to deliver the transport infrastructure that is required.
- 7.3 This means that the plan should be fully funded, and measures should be taken to fast-track the delivery of transport projects eventually selected within the plan, to leverage alternative

funding and financing mechanisms and, where possible, to ensure that projects are not paused or cancelled should there be a change of government at the next election.

- 7.4 We recommend replacing the fourth principle of the plan with one around integration with urban development and land use plans as this ensures the impact of transport investments are optimised (including as it relates to emissions reductions). A fourth principle could be:

*“Align transport planning with existing and planned urban and land use plans for Auckland”*

- 7.5 The existing fourth principle around emissions reduction should be included as an objective that will need to be delivered along with the existing 5 outlined in the plan.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle McCormick

Policy Director

Infrastructure New Zealand