

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

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Auckland RLTP Consultation & Auckland 2029 ATP Consultation
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Submission on the Auckland Transport Plan 2009 and the 2009/10-2011/12 Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme

1. Thank you for the opportunity for the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to provide a submission to the Auckland Transport Plan 2009 and the 2009/10-2011/12 Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme.
2. The following submission represents the views of the Auckland Regional Public Health Service and does not necessarily reflect the views of the three District Health Boards. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more information on ARPHS.
3. ARPHS understands that all submissions will be available under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, except if grounds set out under the Act apply.
4. The primary contact point for this submission is:

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

5. ARPHS has chosen not to comment in detail on the versions of the Draft Auckland Transport Plan 2009 (ATP) and Draft 2009/10-2011/12 Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme (ARLTP) due to its belief that Government's recent announcement of the abolition of the Regional Fuel Tax together with the forthcoming revision of the Government Policy Statement on transport are likely to have made much of the draft ATP and ARLTP subject to major amendment.
6. ARPHS believes that ARTA needs to understand the Auckland region's transport patterns in greater detail and understand the factors that govern individuals'¹ transport choices. Further understanding of the aggregated impacts of individual choices is necessary to develop an ATP and ARLTP of optimal impact and one that both supports the statutory framework and the health and economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the region's inhabitants.
7. ARPHS believes that ARTA needs to give greater attention to short and medium length distance travel in its planning documents.
8. ARPHS believes that changes to the funding allocation and financial assistance regime models would help ARTA to bring forward more projects supporting active transport modes around schools, town centres and transport nodes.

2.0 TRANSPORT'S RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC HEALTH

9. The importance of transport for public health is reflected in the requirement in the legislation that the regional transport strategy must contribute to the objective of:
 - Protecting and promoting public health

The public health interest in transport encompasses:

- *Traditional public health disease control* – air quality contributing to respiratory disease
- *Obesogenic² environments* – urban form, streetscape, transport that influences an individual's choices around transport mode; car use, public transport and active transport (walking and cycling) - contribute to conditions such as cardiovascular disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes
- *Inequalities* - access to facilities, services, education and health (through transport). Economic development can also be considered a public health if economic development improves living standards. Those members of the population in higher socio-economic groups tend to enjoy better health than those less fortunate.

Treating the health consequences that result from the transport system imposes substantial costs on the region's health system and the opportunity costs of this treatment reduces the amount of funding available for other health needs.

¹ Both individuals and freight

² The physical and social environment of countries like New Zealand has been called 'obesogenic, i.e. it tends to increase the likelihood of people becoming obese. Obesogenic environments exist wherever avoiding physical activity and eating a poor diet are the easier options. Egger, G., & Swinburn, B. (1997). An "ecological" approach to the obesity pandemic. *BMJ*, 315, 477-480.

10. ARTA and local authorities, through their roles as place shapers and transport provider / enablers, have considerable influence over the extent of transport sourced air pollution, the extent to which a particular suburb or city becomes an obesogenic environment and the inequalities experienced by the transport disadvantaged.

3.0 SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON THE AUCKLAND TRANSPORT PLAN AND REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

Changes to Policy Settings

11. In the period since the Auckland Transport Plan 2009 (ATP) and draft 2009/10-2011/12 Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme (ARLTP) were published many of the assumptions that shaped the documents, such as funding from the Regional Fuel Tax, have changed. The forthcoming update of the Government Policy Statement on transport (GPS2) mean that further changes are likely to the policy settings within which ARTA has prepared these documents.
12. The recent Royal Commission on Auckland Governance (Royal Commission) report recommendations, if accepted and implemented, also impact on the medium and longer term horizons in the ATP and the region's transport governance arrangements.
13. ARPMS believes that these changes will mean that both the ATP and ARLTP will face substantial changes as a result of Government's actions. Due to this uncertainty ARPMS has chosen not to comment in detail on either document, but has instead confined its comments to broader issues within the documents.

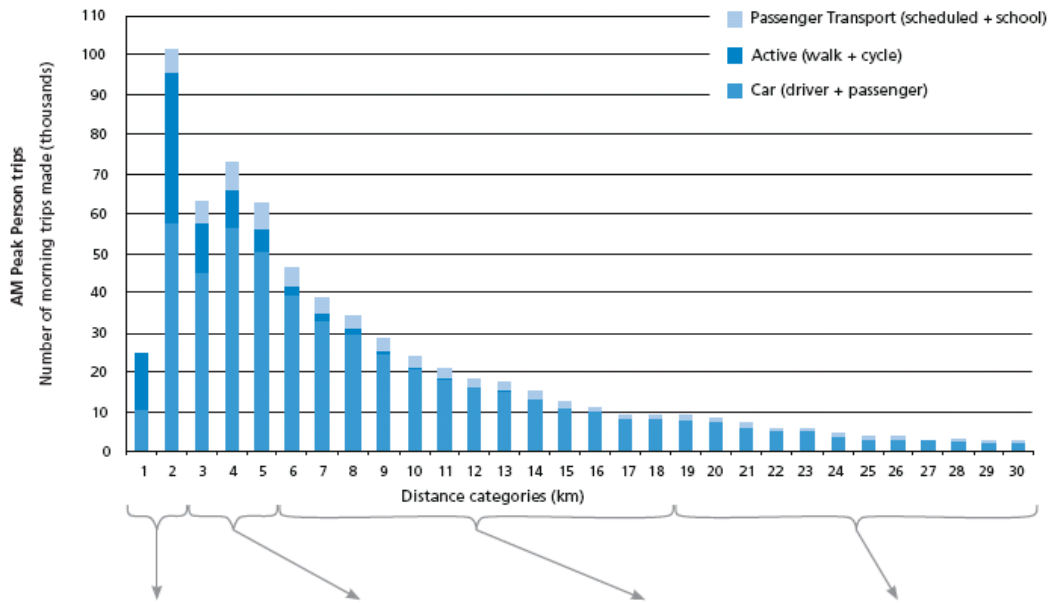
Understanding transport patterns and transport user choices

14. ARPMS questions the accuracy of statements such as "Only cars, trains, buses or ferries are suitable for the distances travelled for most trips in Auckland...³".
15. The ARTA data⁴ below suggests that for the Auckland region a substantial proportion of peak hour trips are over distances between zero and five kilometres. The vast majority of these journeys are by car.

³ ATP Page13.

⁴ Sustainable Transport Plan 2006-16, Auckland Regional Transport Authority accessible through http://www.arta.co.nz/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uuid=C7AEA87F-BCD4-1A24-91D2-1E0436FD4439&siteName=arc

Figure 6.2 Morning peak trips by means of travel, Auckland region 2001



Short local trips: <2km	Mid-range trips: 2-5km	Long trips: 5-18km	Very long trips: >18km
Over half (54%) of short local trips are by car 41% of short trips are by walking (a few by cycling) Only 5% of short trips are by passenger transport	Three quarters of mid-range trips (76%) are made by car 14% of mid-range trips are by walking/cycling 10% of mid-range trips are by passenger transport	Almost all long trips (87%) are made by car Very few long trips (3%) are by walking/cycling 10% of long trips are by passenger transport	Almost all very long trips (89%) are made by car 11% of very long trips are by passenger transport
Trends	Trends	Trends	Trends
Clear evidence that parents now drive children short distances to school ²⁶ Likely that shopping trips and trip chains are now made by car due to changes in the design and location of shopping areas	Clear evidence of a dramatic decrease in cycling, especially to school ²⁷ Passenger transport in most areas is slower and less reliable than car travel, but where effective priority measures are in place patronage has soared	Passenger transport patronage increasing now, following decades of decline ²⁸	Very long trips to work are becoming more common as living on the urban fringe becomes a popular lifestyle choice ²⁹ Rail and the northern busway are just beginning to provide a reliable and fast service for a small proportion of very long trips ³⁰
Impact	Impact	Impact	Impact
More short trips by car clog local roads and increase traffic danger, noise and air pollution Walking and cycling become less safe and less pleasant	Many mid-range trips are made on urban motorways ³¹ , causing disproportionate congestion impacts	Long trips by motorway are becoming slower, however across most of Auckland passenger transport is slower still	Tremendous political pressure to improve provision for very long vehicle trips; however such improvements encourage people to live even further out on the urban fringe

Table 6.2 Key trends in Auckland transport by trip type

16. Unless ARTA has more up to date data that changes these findings, or evidence that inter-peak, afternoon peak and weekend travel is substantially different, it is difficult to see how ARTA can justify the statement in the current draft ATP.
17. ARPHS believes that data supports the average journey length in the region being only 8 km. The short distance covered by the average trip length and the skewed distribution favouring 5 km or shorter trips means that far greater emphasis needs to be given to short and medium distances, than in the current documents.
18. Changing the mode used for such short journeys to active transport would deliver substantial benefits around:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change
 - Improved social connection between residents
 - Reduced incidence of non communicable disease such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
 - Reduced incidence of respiratory disease
 - Reduced congestion hindering economic development
19. From the health sector view point greater use of active transport will reduce the incidence (and costs) of some non communicable diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease⁵.
20. There is likely to be a disproportionately large impact on traffic sourced air pollution (and associated respiratory illness) than the reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled would suggest. Most of these shorter journeys are likely to be undertaken by vehicles with cold engines and there is evidence that cold engines produce far higher emissions than engines that have reached full operating temperature⁶.
21. To better quantify the health benefits, a small 5% shift from cars to cycles (back to 1980s levels) has been estimated as delivering 116 fewer deaths due to increased physical activity, 6 fewer deaths due to air pollution and a net health benefit of \$193 Million⁷.
22. As the ARTA draft Auckland Transport Plan⁸ notes “the relationship between transport and land use is complex, and urban form is an important determinant of travel patterns”. In undertaking its transport planning and funding functions ARTA needs a deep understanding of the transport usage in the region. By way of example the transport implications of individuals choosing to use the northern motorway between Oteha Valley and Constellation Drive are quite different if they are travelling from Albany to Glenfield as opposed to Albany to Newmarket. The shorter journey provides far more practical travel options than does the longer sub-regional one.
23. Investing in regional arterials or the rapid transport network (RTN) may be an appropriate strategy for longer journeys, but if the majority of transport is between adjacent suburbs a focus on regional arterials or the RTN may not deliver as good an outcome for the region as a focus on shorter journeys together with increased support of the quality transport network (QTN) and local connector passenger transport services.

⁵ An overview of the links between car use, climate change and obesity can be found in Davis A, Valsecchi C & Ferguson M (2007) *Unfit for Purpose: How Car Use Fuels Climate Change and Obesity*, Institute for European Environmental Policy available through http://www.ieep.eu/publications/pdfs/2007/IEEP%20-%20Unfit%20for%20purpose_transport%20climate%20chagne%20and%20obesity.pdf

⁶ Fisher G, Kjellstrom T, Kingham S, Hales S, Shrestha R, et al. Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand. A Research Project Funded by: Health Research Council of New Zealand for the Ministry for the Environment and Ministry of Transport. June 2007, accessible through <http://www.hapinz.org.nz/>

⁷ NZ Centre for Sustainable Cities - Four Cities in One Day: Travel and Urban Form Workshop Presentation <http://sustainablecities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/a-microsoft-powerpoint-a-woodward-changing-modes-handout.pdf> N.B. the analysis also projected an additional 5 cycling fatalities.

⁸ Draft Auckland Transport Plan 2009 <http://www.arta.co.nz/publications-projects/consultation/draft-regional-road-safety-plan-rrsp.html>

- 24. Government has recently announced an increased emphasis on the provision of roading to “reduce congestion, improve safety and support economic growth”⁹ as part of its transport announcements. In considering Government’s objectives ARTA needs to understand as fully as possible the amount of induced or generated traffic that roading investments produce.
- 25. Such transport projects may appear to deliver desirable benefits in terms of reducing congestion, supporting economic growth etc. The reality may well be very different.
- 26. In the UK a major study found that in terms of the benefits to economic growth “the theoretical effects listed can exist in reality, but that none of them is guaranteed”¹⁰. A recent American meta-analysis has estimated that for every 1% increase in roading capacity that nearly three quarters of that increase is absorbed by induced traffic^{11,12}. There are a number of reasons for the generation of induced traffic, these include¹³:

Short Term	Long Term
New trips	Higher car ownership
More distant destinations	Reduced public transport service
Mode shifts	Activity location shifts
Route shifts	

- 27. The New Zealand Transport Agency’s Economic Evaluation Manual mirrors overseas experience and notes that:

”Over the long run, generated traffic often fills a significant portion (50 – 90 percent) of added urban roadway capacity. ...Generated traffic does not eliminate the benefits of capacity expansion projects, but it can significantly change the nature of their benefits. It often means that road traffic reduction benefits are smaller and shorter lived than projected...”¹⁴

- 28. Before substantial scarce transport funding is invested in the provision of new roads it is necessary that a full and comprehensive analysis is undertaken otherwise there is a very real risk that the majority of the investment will go towards satisfying the demands of induced traffic.

⁹ Steven Joyce announcement of routes of national significance
<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/first+roads+national+significance+identified>

¹⁰ Standing Committee on Trunk Road Appraisal (SACTRA) report on the effects on the economy of transport policies and projects
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/economics/sactra/transportandtheeconomyfullre3148>

¹¹ Induced traffic is defined as the increment of new traffic that would not have occurred at all without the capacity improvement.

¹² Reid E, Bartholomew K, Winkleman S, Walters J & Chen D (2008) *Growing Cooler: The evidence on urban development and climate change*, Urban Land Institute

¹³ NZ Centre for Sustainable Cities - Four Cities in One Day: Travel and Urban Form Workshop Presentation <http://sustainablecities.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/r-ewing-pdf-transportationimpactsonlanduse.pdf>

¹⁴ NZTA Economic Evaluation Manual Volume 2, section 3.8
<http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/economic-evaluation-manual/eem2-1.pdf>

29. ARPHS suggests that ARTA's project profiling needs to incorporate issues such as:
- Density – people, jobs or dwellings per unit area
 - Diversity – land use mix
 - Design – street network characteristics
 - Destination accessibility – the number of jobs / attractions reachable within a given time
 - Distance to transit - public transport accessibility
30. Using these factors to analyse differing transport projects will help ensure that ARTA's investments in transport support its wider transport objectives and not just create more traffic congestion with its associated ills.

Walking, Cycling and Road Safety

31. ARPHS shares ARTA's concerns that councils across the region have failed to put forward sufficient projects to utilise all nationally provided funding. In the current economic climate projects supporting walking and cycling may be being viewed as 'nice to have' but not as essential as other roading projects which have been included in draft LTCCPs.
32. ARPHS will be raising this issue in its submissions to the region's seven territorial council long term council community plans.
33. ARPHS notes the inclusion of completion of the regional cycle network as one of the components of the regional transport plan. ARPHS questions the value of the regional cycle network as a component of the long term transport plan.
34. Cycling is ideally suited to shorter distances and investment should be prioritised around access to schools, access to town centres and access to transport (RTN & QTN) nodes. A regional cycle network may well appear from this prioritisation, but it should be a by product of cycling investment not the goal.

Prioritisation

35. The Royal Commission in its chapter on Promoting Social Wellbeing identified 4 priority areas, one of which was:
- Improve public transport, particularly to disadvantaged communities
36. ARPHS believes that this issue requires further emphasis in both the ATP and ARLTP. ARPHS notes that in the ATP prioritisation process that the needs of the transport disadvantaged are included in ARTA's Strategic Focus Areas, 1,4,5 as a prioritisation principle and that the transport disadvantaged are also listed under the assessment criteria for the Access and Mobility objective
37. ARPHS questions whether this level of emphasis is adequate given both the Royal Commission's concerns and the statutory requirements of the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA) where Section 35 requires that "In preparing any programme under this Part, ..., ARTA, ... must consider the needs of persons who are transport disadvantaged".
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- 38. ARPHS notes that Section 35 is under the heading “General Provisions” in the LTMA and as such ARPHS believes that ARTA is required to consider the needs of the transport disadvantaged in all parts of its programme rather than under selective strategic focus areas and objectives.
- 39. ARPHS supports the ARTA aim of obtaining greater flexibility around funding allocation and the financial assistance regime if it will help the implementation of those aspects of the ATP and ARLTP that are supportive of public health outcomes. ARPHS believes that changes to the funding allocation and financial assistance regime models would help ARTA to bring forward more projects supporting active transport modes around schools, town centres and transport nodes.
- 40. As noted in the ATP a “significant transport funding gap exists in Auckland”¹⁵, the recently announced loss of the regional fuel tax will exacerbate this funding gap. The funding gap makes it essential that the most beneficial projects are selected from the plethora of potential projects. ARPHS questions the description of work associated with short term “international challenges and opportunities” as “must do”¹⁶ projects.

Issue	Time Frame
Regional Land Transport Strategy	30 years
Auckland Transport Plan	10 years
Auckland Regional Land Transport Programme	3 years
Rugby World Cup	7 weeks

- 41. The value of such short term events in terms of prioritisation should only be considered under the ‘urgency’ sub classification of the ‘seriousness’ category in project profiling where ARPHS accepts that it may be advantageous to bring forward previously planned investment on occasions.

¹⁵ Page 35 ATP
¹⁶ Page 22 ATP

4.0 CONCLUSION

42. Thank you for the opportunity to submit on both the ATP and ARLTP. ARPHS believes that the abolition of the regional fuel tax and the forthcoming GPS2 will require that the current draft documents are extensively amended. ARPHS hopes that its comments will help ARTA in preparing its final ATP and ARLTP and enable it to better deliver on the statutory and regional objectives.

Yours sincerely

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APPENDIX 1 - AUCKLAND REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) provides public health services for the three district health boards (DHBs) in the Auckland region (Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata District Health Boards), with the primary governance mechanism for the Service resting with Auckland District Health Board.

ARPHS has a statutory obligation under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities in the Auckland region. The Medical Officer of Health has an enforcement and regulatory role under the Health Act 1956 and other legislative designations to protect the health of the community.

ARPHS' primary role is to improve population health. It actively seeks to influence any initiatives or proposals that may affect population health in the Auckland region to maximise their positive impact and minimise possible negative effects on population health.

The Auckland region faces a number of public health challenges through changing demographics, increasingly diverse communities, increasing incidence of lifestyle-related health conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes, outstanding infrastructure needs, the balancing of transport needs, and the reconciliation of urban design and urban intensification issues.
