

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

Submission Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) to Auckland Transport

The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) describes the public transport network that Auckland Transport (AT) proposes for the region, identifies the services that are integral to that network over a 10-year period, and sets out the policies and procedures that apply to those services.

Focus area 1: Expanding and Enhancing Rapid and Frequent networks

The City Centre Residents' Group supports all proposed extensions to rapid transit on the basis that this supports a more pedestrian and cycling friendly city centre. Pedestrians need to be put first, followed by cyclists and then transit, all taking priority over private vehicles.

We support expansion of the Rapid and Frequent Bus network, CRL, Light Rail and Eastern Busway as a method to deliver more people into the city centre while reducing access for single occupancy vehicles.

We are concerned that the goals for PT boarding's is lower than what has been achieved over the previous three years, and the punctuality goal is worse than what was achieved in 2018. We request that these goals be made more ambitious as we seek an improvement to service levels, not maintaining or worsening existing levels of service. We request that general bus priority within the city centre be improvement in support of these service level improvements.

Finally, we request that transit movements by city residents be further considered. It is noted that the Inner Link will be disestablished as part of Light Rail construction, but it's not clear that a replacement service exists that meets the current need, especially for the elderly and disabled. Movement across town for residents is often challenging, especially in the diagonals, and we request that these needs be considered in all transit network decisions - not just the termination of commuter services from the suburbs.

Focus area 2: Improving customer access to public transport

We believe that improved pedestrian access within the city centre is a major factor in improving customer access to public transport - all trips to and from the city centre start and end with walking. As such, walking should be the highest priority in the city centre to ensure a successful transit network.

There are numerous safety issues related to moving between transit stops and destinations, traffic lights that still prioritise vehicles over pedestrians, poor quality footpaths, poor lighting, poor wayfinding and very little consideration for children, the elderly and disabled. Once a person leaves a vehicle, they do not cease to exist - this is when they are at their most vulnerable and need the most support and consideration.

We also suggest that the stick-on advertising on bus windows be removed, this makes it very difficult to discern where you are in the city centre, especially at night and provides a barrier and level of anxiety to riders, especially new ones.

Focus area 3: Improving Maori Responsiveness

The City Centre Residents' Group supports this initiative - Auckland's ability to understand, appreciate and celebrate our own, and other cultures, is the key to our economic future.

Focus area 4: Harnessing emerging technologies

The City Centre Residents' Group believe that battery and electric technologies on mass transit vehicles is the most important emerging technology and this should be the focus over micro transit and other small volume movement options. As such, we support bringing forward Electric Bus and Light Rail technologies as much as possible.

Noise and air pollution are significant issues and must be better managed to limit the impact on residents and visitors to the city centre while maintaining a vibrant city centre. As recent news has highlighted, air quality in the city centre is at a dangerous level and residents feel the brunt of this with poorer health outcomes, even though they are the least likely to be causing this pollution. We believe that residents are entitled to a healthy City Centre environment.

In addition to this, we support all methods to provide travel choices to and within the City Centre beyond the single occupant vehicle, but again require that Pedestrians, Cyclists and Transit be prioritised, in that order. When conflicts arise, space should be allocated in this prioritisation.

There is ample corridor space for all users of the city centre once we stop prioritising single occupant vehicle access. We don't believe that regulation is necessary, just that space be provided for the various combinations of mass and speed (slow/light weight e.g. walking, medium speed, light weight, e.g. cycling/scooters, high speed/heavy weight: buses, light rail, vehicles).

Auckland City Centre Residents' Group
13 December 2018