

Property Council New Zealand

Submission on

Auckland Transport Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31

27 April 2021

For more information and further queries, please contact

Natalia Tropicova natalia@propertynz.co.nz 021863015
--

27 April 2021

Auckland Transport
Private Bag 92250
Auckland 1142

Email: ATengagement@AT.govt.nz

Auckland Transport Draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31

1. Recommendations summary

- 1.1 Property Council New Zealand Auckland Branch (“Property Council”) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Auckland Transport’s (“AT”) draft Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31 (“RLTP”).
- 1.2 We support the RLTP in principle. To influence better and fairer outcomes for all, we recommend AT:
 - continue working with key stakeholders to identify potential missing transport links to ensure better connectivity throughout the city;
 - continue engaging with Aucklanders, the retail sector and other key stakeholders to find alternative factors to achieve safety outcomes and identify appropriate and future areas with reduced speed to ensure a wider range of positive outcomes for all;
 - work with Property Council to identify and address barriers to intensification along the CRL route;
 - better co-ordinate with other Council’s Controlled Organisations, central government agencies, power companies, technology providers and other key stakeholders for the provision, development and delivery of key infrastructure (transport, water and electricity) across Auckland;
 - work closely with Auckland Council around the National Policy Statement on Urban Development to drive greater intensification along key transport routes;
 - proceed with introducing a congestion pricing scheme in Auckland to fund future infrastructure projects while ensuring that funding arrangements reflect more fairly and accurately those that directly benefit from services;
 - ensure that introduction of congestion charges is coupled with increased availability of alternate modes of transport; and
 - encourage more express busways, such as the Northern Express busway to provide other options to driving.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Property Council's purpose is; "Together, shaping cities where communities thrive". We believe in the creation and retention of well-designed, functional and sustainable built environments which contribute to New Zealand's overall prosperity. We support policies that provide a framework to enhance economic growth, development, liveability and growing communities.
- 2.2 Our Auckland Branch has 360 businesses as members. The property industry contributed \$22.8 billion in 2016 to the Auckland economy, with a direct impact of \$10.5 billion (13 per cent of the GDP) and indirect flow-on effects of \$12.3 billion. It employs 53,050 directly which equates to eight per cent of the total employment in Auckland. For every \$1.00 spent by the Property Industry it has a flow-on effect of \$1.70 to the Greater Auckland region.
- 2.3 This submission responds to the [DRAFT Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-31](#). In preparing our submission we sought and received feedback from a selection of our Auckland-based members. Comments and recommendations are provided on those issues that are relevant to Property Council and its members.

3. Overview of the Plan

- 3.1 We support the AT's proposed transport programme designed to respond to the current transport challenges. While we are supportive of the programme, further work could be done to influence better outcomes. Sections below provide further details around how it can be achieved.

4. Travel choices

- 4.1 A lack of competitive travel options and high car dependency is limiting the ability to achieve the quality compact urban city. Therefore, we strongly support the RLTP's focus on providing Aucklanders with better travel choices to enable more sustainable and economically productive transport options. We support multiple public transport modes including trains, buses and ferries. We also support regional public transport such as dedicated public transport routes, additional train services as well as infrastructure to support ferries. More coordinated regional transport and supporting infrastructure help make the city more available to urban fringe communities and in turn encourages development in these areas.

5. Access and connectivity

- 5.1 Existing deficiency in the transport system and an inability to keep pace with increasing travel demand is limiting improved and equitable access to employment and social opportunities. Therefore, we support the RLTP's objective of better connecting people, places, goods and services.
- 5.2 Public transport that connects key areas of the city is of paramount importance to everybody. Transport options need to be reliable and frequent for users to switch from their private vehicles to public transport. Public transport access across Auckland needs to better connect individuals from their home to their work or desired destination. This would see a more integrated planning approach between Auckland Council, AT and key stakeholders.

5.3 We support many of the proposed initiatives, but believe further work is required to provide better public transport options and enable more connectivity throughout the city. If Aucklanders are to switch from private vehicles to public transport, services must be well connected, reliable and frequent. For example, one of the missing transport links in the city centre is connecting Wynyard Quarter with the rest of the CBD. Wynyard Quarter is an expanding commercial and residential area of paramount importance to the CBD. It has limited car parking and public transport options, becoming isolated and hard to reach. Therefore, we recommend greater connections between Britomart, Aotea Centre and Wynyard Quarter. This would not only help assist commuters but also allow Wynyard Quarter to flourish and reach its potential of being a vibrant and safe waterfront location for all. We also recommend AT continue working with key stakeholders (including Property Council) to identify other potential missing links to ensure better connectivity throughout the city.

6. Safety

6.1 We support the RLTP's objective of making the transport system safe by eliminating harm to people. It is critical to address the needless fatalities and serious injuries on our roads. However, it is also important to make sure that appropriate and effective tools are used to achieve this objective.

6.2 AT is aiming to continue implementation of speed limit reviews on high-risk roads. Back in 2018, AT selected the entire Auckland CBD for a 30 km/h zone. Last year, new limits were also deployed on a selection of rural roads in Rodney and Franklin districts, with some short stretches having their speed limits reduced from 100km/h and 80km/h to 40km/h.

6.3 We are not ideologically opposed to reducing speeds in the CBD. However, not all streets (and particularly in CBD) are equal, and a finer-grained approach is needed. Arterial roads should not be treated in the same way as the likes of High street or Shortland street, for example. Therefore, we recommend AT take this into account when implementing further speed limit reviews.

6.4 Moreover, it is important to note that lowering speed limits alone will not produce safe areas. Other factors such as the streetscape, available amenities, ease of access and safety all come into play. Therefore, we recommend AT continue engaging with Aucklanders, the retail sector and other key stakeholders to find these other factors to achieve safety outcomes and identify appropriate and future areas with reduced speed to ensure a wider range of positive outcomes for all.

7. Climate change and the environment

7.1 The key contribution to climate change in the RLTP is the extensive investment in network infrastructure and services, designed to encourage mode shift away from private vehicles and towards lower emission public and active transport options. The proposed programme will also include actions for decarbonising Auckland's public transport fleet, and accelerated uptake of electric vehicles and low emission vehicles.

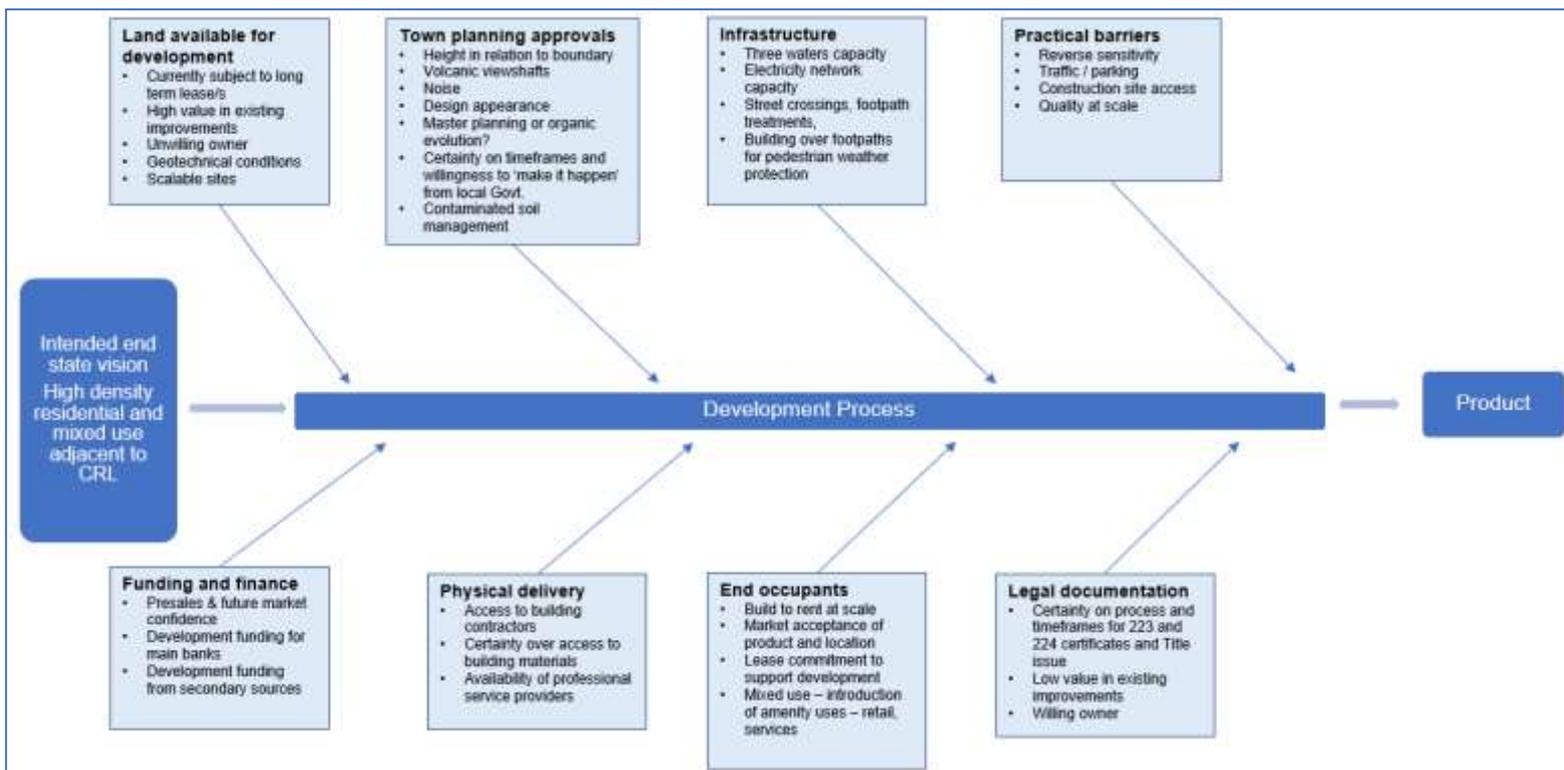
7.2 We strongly support the RLTP's focus on addressing climate change issues, especially given the current climate emergency status in Auckland. However, it is important to note that with the

imminent increase of electric vehicles come potential issues around electricity network capacity. Ultimately, the success of our city depends on better planning for infrastructure development across power, three waters, and transport to support both commercial and residential development in a collaborative way.

7.3 Given the above, we recommend better co-ordination with other Council Controlled Organisations, central government agencies, power companies, technology providers and other stakeholders for the provision, development and delivery of key infrastructure (transport, water and electricity) across Auckland.

8. Growth

8.1 We support the RLTP’s objective of enabling Auckland’s growth through a focus on intensification in brownfield areas and with some managed expansion into emerging greenfield areas. However, there are certain barriers that have to be addressed to enable that growth. Our members identified a number of potential failure points and barriers toward delivery of high-quality intensification around the new CRL (see Graph 1 below or Appendix A). We would like to work with AT to provide further advice on how these barriers could and should be addressed.



Graph 1. Barriers to intensification along CRL route (for a larger graphic please see Appendix A)

8.2 We encourage Auckland Transport to continue working closely with Auckland Council particularly around the National Policy Statement on Urban Development review process to drive greater intensity along key transport routes. We believe that a special focus should be on:

- CRL route, as there is currently a significant lost opportunity (as outlined above);

- Proposed light rail; for example, properties along this route could be levied with a special rate to help support funding;
- Significant busways and bus routes (see section 9.4 below).

9. Funding and Financing

9.1 Auckland is growing exponentially and requires new infrastructure to increase its current and future transport capacity. Maintaining status quo is not an option, given that Auckland faces significant challenges in funding its critical infrastructure, including its transport network. Given the above, we support the AT's intention to explore alternative funding arrangements to reflect more fairly and accurately those that directly benefit from the service/s (i.e. beneficiary-pays funding model).

Congestion charging

9.2 Further improvements in congestion, accessibility and travel speeds could be delivered via the introduction of a congestion pricing scheme in Auckland. Therefore, we support the AT's investigation into the feasibility of introducing a demand management-based pricing scheme to improve network performance and reduce congestion. The Productivity Commission report on Local Government Funding and Financing has noted that user charging tools, such as congestion charges would help give councils the means to efficiently fund the costs of growth and help manage demand by increasing the number of people that existing infrastructure can support and extending the useable life of these assets. ¹ Further to this, applying user charges to help manage demand in this way would delay the need for new infrastructure investments.

9.3 Many international cities have congestion charges on roads that enter the CBD or Isthmus. Congestion charges are a form of user pay system, as those that benefit from using the road will pay for its use. Congestion charges have additional benefits of encouraging alternative methods of transport (i.e. a switch from private to public transport) and can support the lifetime of the asset (i.e. through reinvestment). However, it is important to note that for these options to be successful, viable alternative transport options need to be readily available and accessible. Given the above, we recommend the Council proceed with introducing a congestion pricing scheme in Auckland.

9.4 While we support implementation of congestion charges, it is important to note that congestion charges need to be coupled with increased availability of alternate modes of transport. The demand will not change if it costs more alone, it will just be a new tax, primarily impacting those who can least afford it with the aim of improving the convenience of those who can.

9.5 We also want the CBD to be as competitive and compelling a location in the city as possible rather than make it hard to get to by delaying major infrastructure and instead taxing demand away. For example, the Northern Express busway has had a huge impact on the northern

¹ New Zealand Productivity Commission. (2019). Local government funding and financing: Final report. Retrieved from https://www.productivity.govt.nz/assets/Documents/a40d80048d/Final-report_Local-government-funding-and-financing.pdf

motorway as an alternative to driving. We believe that timely completion of similar projects on the other arterial routes, such as East, West and South should also be encouraged.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 We support the RLTP in principle. To ensure better and fairer outcomes for all, we have made a list of recommendations. These include a better collaboration with key stakeholders to identify potential missing transport links, appropriate and future areas with reduced speed; address barriers to intensification along CRL route and provide, develop and deliver key infrastructure (transport, water and electricity) across Auckland. We would like to be involved in any further discussions with AT to provide advice on our recommendations if required.
- 10.2 Property Council members invest, own and develop property across Auckland. We wish to thank Auckland Transport for the opportunity to submit on the RLTP as this gives our members a chance to have their say in how Auckland's transport infrastructure is shaped, today and into the future. **We also wish to be heard in support of our submission.**
- 10.3 For any further queries contact Natalia Tropicova, Senior Advocacy Advisor, via email: natalia@propertynz.co.nz or cell: 021863015.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Hay
Auckland Branch Chair
Property Council New Zealand

Appendix A. Barriers to intensification along CRL route

