Draft Waitakere City Transport Strategy 2006 - 2016

Executive Summary

Waitakere City is making the transition to a more sustainable urban form which maximises the benefits of the rail line and the three main town centres. A shift away from single occupancy vehicle travel to more sustainable methods of travel is a key requirement for a high quality of life, functioning town centres and neighbourhoods and a protected natural environment. This strategy is based on the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005 and incorporates Waitakere City policies and objectives. This strategy includes a costed ten year transport programme which proposes how the Council will deliver the strategy.

Key Issues:

The following are key transport issues that have been identified in relation to Waitakere City:

- Health and environmental effects – Health and quality of life in terms of air quality and water quality – 400 deaths pa in the region from air pollution; 1500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each morning from traffic in the region.
- Integration of land use and transport – High growth is required in the three main town centres to support passenger transport and restrict low density sprawl.
- Traffic congestion (mainly at peak times) - Congestion results in delays, time away from family and society, costs for business (estimated at one billion dollars a year for the Auckland region) and increased air emissions.
- Cost - Improvements to the transport system in Waitakere City must be affordable and the costs must be borne appropriately by ratepayers, users, developers, regional government and central government.
- Oil - With oil prices expected to rapidly increase over the next 10 years, all infrastructure projects are likely to increase in cost. A deferral of a project will likely result in increased project costs in real terms.
- Approximately 60% of work force travels outside Waitakere City to work - Transport upgrade needs to support local jobs and access to jobs outside the City.
- Insufficient density means more travel and inefficient for passenger transport – Significant investment is being made in rail. Waitakere City has been preparing for the upgrade of rail services particularly in relation to the town centres on the rail line. Increased growth in those town centres and increased rail trips are required.

- Social isolation – Travel choice is limited in some areas, including the northwest and beyond the metropolitan area.
- Movement of goods and services – It is vital that the transport system enables efficient movement of goods and services in a growing local economy. The transport system needs to provide for more local activity in the long term.

Context:

There are important links between transport and other issues such as economic development, social cohesion, quality of life and quality of the environment. Transport is essential for economic activity for its residents and businesses. Transport is vital for people to get to work, access goods and services and participate in society. The integration of transport in the town centres is vital for their economic growth. The transport system impacts on peoples' safety, health, time and cost.

Transport is a significant consumer of energy and the dependence on the motor vehicle has brought a wide range of health and environmental problems. The negative impacts of transport include noise, air pollution and greenhouse gases, contaminated water runoff and transport-related wastes. The Council's role is to reduce these impacts in a manner that reflects and delivers on the community outcomes for Waitakere City. This is particularly significant in the context of increasing demand for energy and dwindling worldwide supplies of fossil fuels.

Waitakere City's population is growing by about 2% each year and the volume of traffic is increasing by about 3% each year. This is not sustainable in terms of the economy, the natural environment and the effects on communities.

Significant improvements in the transport system in Waitakere City and changes in travel choices are required in order to manage City growth in population and business. The City is in the process of catching up on investment in state highways, passenger transport (particularly rail) and cycle ways to meet current demands. This will provide some capacity to deal with existing demand and some future demand. In order to manage City growth, significant improvements are needed in transport infrastructure, integration of transport with land use and a range of measures to manage the demand for travel and a shift to more sustainable modes of travel.

Historically, Waitakere City has been characterised by low density development and some concentration along the rail line. The city's urban strategy envisages

intensification of urban development particularly in and around the three town centres of New Lynn, Henderson and Massey North/Westgate but also along other major transport corridors such as Lincoln Road.

The Auckland Regional Growth Strategy, adopted by all Councils in the region in 1999, requires such an approach to growth. The Regional Growth Strategy defined a metropolitan urban limit for the region in an attempt to constrain the urban sprawl and set targets for concentration of growth in growth nodes (the three main town centres) over the next 50 years. The Local Government Auckland Amendment Act requires that regional and city resource management plans incorporate the growth concepts of the Regional Growth Strategy.

The basic premise of this strategy is that compact cities are more sustainable because they are more efficient in the use of land, transport and infrastructure. Living in a compact city makes it easier for communities to access a range of employment, community and recreational opportunities with less travel.

Compact cities also support the development and improvement of passenger transport systems and so rely less on private cars to access these opportunities. This in turn contributes to more energy efficient transport, reduced air emissions and less vehicle pollutants in our waterways from stormwater run off. Consequently there is less pressure for sprawl and creating large distances for people to travel.

The Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy sets the direction and funding priorities for roads, passenger transport and travel demand management in the Auckland region. This requires a balance of funding for state highways, roads, passenger transport, travel demand management, walking and cycling.

Vision:

"A sustainable multi-modal transport system that is integrated with land use and contributes to Waitakere City being an eco city."

Objectives:

Develop a sustainable, integrated transport system that:

1. ***Enables Waitakere City to achieve desired social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits for both current and future communities;***
2. ***Facilitates and promotes more sustainable travel modes;***

3. *Supports implementation of the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy and Regional Growth Strategy in a collaborative manner;*
4. *Integrates land use and transport;*
5. *Facilitates and under-pins development of town centres and supports employment growth.*

Desired Outcomes:

a) *People have safe, effective, integrated and sustainable travel choice options;*
b) *Less traffic and more mobility through innovative travel demand management ;*
c) *Opportunity to live, work and play locally;*
d) *Land use is integrated with transport and both are mutually supportive;*
e) *Business and industry travel location needs are met in a sustainable way;*
f) *People have choices that enable them to participate in society;*
g) *Environment and human health is protected;*
h) *Reduced non-renewable energy use for transport in Waitakere City;*
i) *People work in a collaborative and innovative manner to maximise these outcomes.*

Strategic Options:

Three strategic options be developed, which are based on:

- the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005;
- the community outcomes for Waitakere City; and
- the vision and objectives for transport in Waitakere City.

The following elements are common to each of the strategic options:

- Consistent with the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy direction and policies;
- Maintenance, renewals and safety programmes;
- Travel demand management programme;
- Basic walking and cycling programme;
- Passenger transport programme;
- Basic roading programme;
- Provision for growth in the northwest assuming the MUL shift is approved.
- Provision for transport connections with Whenuapai airport on the basis that it

is operational by 2016.

The following is a description of three strategic options, an indicative transport programme cost and expected outcomes:

Strategic Option 1 **– "Better mobility, Less traffic"**

The aim is to reduce the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident and to actively encourage people to walk, cycle, use passenger transport, car pool, travel less often and more locally. Traffic congestion in the short term would be permitted in the short term in order to make a shift towards sustainable travel. This approach requires provision of alternative modes of travel and advocating for a regional congestion charge. This option aims to reduce traffic in selected arterial roads where bus/HOV lanes would take up an existing lane of traffic. A significant shift towards more sustainable forms of transport would be necessary in order for people to get to where they want to go.

This is a low investment in roading in order to substantially invest in passenger transport and establish a travel demand management programme. High cost projects are excluded from the programme, for example: road widening to increase capacity, most new road connections, New Lynn undergrounding, Whau Crossing bridge and half the cycle network.

The direct cost of the ten year transport programme is approximately $205 million to be funded out of rates, user charges, development contributions, regional and central government funding. This represents approximately a 10% increase in the current transport investment.

The expected outcomes of this option are likely to be:

- Reduction in the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident (currently 4,352 kilometres per resident per annum).
- Significant increase in passenger transport (more than 50% increase in passenger transport trips to work at peak times), passenger in a vehicle, walking and cycling and working from home.
- Moderate increase in vehicles on the roading network by 2016.
- Congestion remains an issue and higher than at current levels assuming the shift to sustainable modes of travel.

Strategic Option 2 **– "Better mobility, Managed traffic"**

The aim is to maintain the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident and to actively encourage people to walk, cycle, use passenger transport, car pool, travel less often and more locally. Traffic congestion will be addressed by a moderate shift away from single occupant vehicle travel and some improvements on arterials and in town centres. This approach requires provision of alternative modes of travel and advocating for a regional congestion charge. This option aims to maintain current levels of traffic on selected arterial roads with options for bus/HOV lanes and some road widening. A moderate shift towards more sustainable forms of transport would be sought, with proposed congestion pricing expected to result in a significant shift.

This option comprises a substantial investment in passenger transport and a medium investment in roading focused on town centre connections and arterial improvements. A travel demand management programme would also be established. This option includes the New Lynn undergrounding project. Some high cost projects are excluded from the programme, for example: road widening to increase capacity, Whau Crossing bridge and half the cycle network.

The total cost of the ten year transport programme is approximately $300 million to be funded out of rates, user charges, development contributions, regional and central government funding. This represents approximately a 60% increase in the current transport investment.

The expected outcomes of this option are likely to be:

- Maintain the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident (currently 4,352 kilometres per resident per annum).
- Moderate shift to passenger transport (up to 50% increase in passenger transport trips to work at peak times), passenger in a vehicle, walking and cycling and working from home.
- Moderate increase in vehicles on the roading network by 2016.
- Congestion remains an issue and at current levels assuming the shift to sustainable modes of travel.

Strategic Option 3 **– "Better mobility, Less Congestion / More road capacity".**

The aim is to reduce congestion in parts of the road network and to actively encourage people to walk, cycle, use passenger transport, car pool, travel less often

and more locally. Traffic congestion will be addressed by increasing road connections in town centres and disconnected neighbourhoods, addressing congestion at selected intersections and increasing traffic flow on the arterial road network. This approach requires the provision of alternative modes of travel. In order to prevent the build up of congestion again it would be necessary to advocate for a regional congestion charge. This option aims to increase the traffic capacity on arterial roads with options for bus/HOV lanes and some road widening. A moderate shift towards more sustainable forms of transport would be sought, with proposed congestion pricing expected to result in a significant shift.

This option is expected to ease congestion (except during construction) at key parts of the roading network for a limited period of time until traffic builds up again. The uptake of passenger transport and other sustainable transport options is likely to be limited or deferred. This option may provide increased capacity of the roading network. This is expected to result in more traffic, better provision for bus/HOV lanes, and would benefit economic development with improved access to the state highway network. Further incentives such as road pricing would be required for significant numbers of people to shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

This is a full programme with investment in all modes, increasing the capacity of the road network. It is a high cost programme with investment in PT, roads and TDM.
The total cost of the ten year transport programme is approximately $370 million to be funded out of rates, user charges, development contributions, regional and central government funding. This represents approximately a 100% increase in the current transport investment.

The expected outcomes of this option are likely to be:

- Slight increase in the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident (currently 4,352 kilometres per resident per annum).
- Moderate shift to passenger transport (up to 40% increase in passenger transport trips to work at peak times), passenger in a vehicle, walking and cycling and working from home.
- Moderate increase in vehicles on the roading network by 2016.
- Slight reduction in congestion on the arterials assuming the shift to sustainable modes of travel.
- Increased capacity of arterial roads.

The following are suggested to be considered by the Council in adopting a preferred strategic option:

- Close alignment with the vision, objectives and policies of the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005.
- Stronger likelihood of receiving priority for funding from Land Transport New Zealand because of that alignment.
- The strategy's vision, objectives and policies are most likely to deliver on the outcomes identified by the community, particularly in relation to economic development, health and the environment.
- This is a balanced and sustainable strategy that aims to get the best out of the existing roading network, build new links where essential and get more people using passenger transport, walking, cycling, ride sharing, choosing to travel at a different time or not at all.
- This is an affordable strategy which provides benefits in the short and long term.
- This signals the need for sustainable transport decisions now.

Policies:

The policies set out in the Auckland Regional land Transport Strategy 2005 form the basis of this strategy. [These policies are to be included as an appendix to the strategy.]

Additional policies are required to reflect the Council's approach and the local requirements of Waitakere City, for example:

- Role of each mode in Waitakere City – set out in a section below.
- Role of transport corridors in Waitakere City - set out in a section below.
- The Council's proposed District Plan changes, including the proposed developments in the northwest.
- Road pricing in the region is required in order to reduce single occupant vehicle travel at peak times and to secure a reliable revenue source from road users.
- High occupancy vehicle lanes on selected arterial roads.
- Proposed parking charges in the Council's off-street car parks at Henderson, New Lynn and Westgate
- Advocate for transport connections with Whenuapai airport on the basis that it is operational by 2016.
- Advocate for central government legislation which taxes vehicle pollution into

the air or stormwater system – "polluter pays".

- Building a new road connection will involve effective consultation and opportunity to consider alternatives and input into concept and will incorporate appropriate requirements for safety, walking, cycling, buses and freight.

Priorities:

Assessment criteria are being developed in relation to new transport projects to reflect the strategic option that is preferred by the Council. Criteria for prioritisation of a transport project or programme may include, for example:

- Contribution to local jobs – MUL shift, 3 town centres, Whenuapai airport, work from home,
- Sustainable travel – Shift away from single occupant vehicle travel and long trips. Need sustainable travel modes and shorter trips. Preferably not at peak times.
- Goods and services - To encourage economic development within Waitakere City, roads need to enable flow of goods and services and get people to work.
- Safety – Intersection treatment may be required to address pedestrian and vehicle safety.
- Social cohesion - Aim is to use the existing road space, with some connections and improvements and roads in new growth areas.

Role of modes:

Roads:

Roads provide for a variety of travel by cars, trucks, buses, cyclists and pedestrians parking, stormwater and a range of utility services. State highways and arterials provide for high volumes of traffic, particularly at peak times. Priority needs to given to buses, access to work and education and connections for goods and services.

Council's strategic priority for roading investment is maintaining the safety and use of the existing network. As a general rule, road widening or road connections will not be undertaken only to improve private vehicular traffic. Consideration would be given in the context of safety, a town centre development, connectivity of neighbourhoods, improvement to the entire route (not just a local benefit), improvements to passenger transport, walking and cycling.

Development contributions provide an important funding source for new roads (as well as passenger transport, walking and cycling) in new developments.

Rail:

Rail will provide rapid high usage passenger transport within and outside Waitakere City. Other modes of transport will feed into the rail line, such as integrated bus services and park and ride facilities.

Rail services are expected to be of high quality with at least a train every 10 minutes at peak times. It is likely that rail services will result in some congestion at peak times for traffic crossing the rail line, with plans for grade separation developed over the next ten years.

Rail is core to the growth of town centres along the Western line. The major stations are Henderson and New Lynn, which are passenger transport interchanges. The upgrade of stations from New Lynn to Swanson is a priority. Planning for New Lynn station needs to be integrated with planning for New Lynn town centre. Plans include under-grounding of the rail line through New Lynn, removal of the awkward roundabout intersection with the rail line and a new bus interchange. The Council is vigorously pursuing the opportunity to grade separate the rail line at New Lynn; in our view this offers the best prospect for the future vitality and sustainability of New Lynn as a major town centre. Attracting and holding business activity, jobs and medium to high density residential development are essential to the Regional Growth Strategy and Waitakere City's economic development strategy.

Buses:

Bus services provide the broader connections with residential and commercial locations. Buses will always be an important part of the passenger transport system; the majority of people in Waitakere do not live within walking distance of a rail station and for them the bus will remain the most accessible form of passenger transport.

The Council aims to provide much more focus on developing bus related infrastructure and to collaborate with ARTA for improved services, service quality and frequency. A key priority is proper bus stop signs and where appropriate bus timetable information and shelter.

Bus interchanges need to be established or upgraded at Henderson, New Lynn and

Westgate.

Bus priority measures along key corridors are required to ensure bus services are more reliable and faster. Options of bus lanes and high occupancy vehicles lanes are being assessed. Transit NZ is proposing to establish bus shoulder lanes along State Highways in Waitakere City. Coordination with neighbouring territorial authorities is required.

Bus priority measures include the following:

- Bus lane / HOV lane
- Bus advance signal eg traffic light, ramp meter
- Bus advance lane
- Clearway
- Non-indented bus stop which holds up the flow of traffic
- Bylaw that vehicles must yield to a bus which signals to change lane or enter a lane

Note: There will be specific consultation on bus lanes/HOV lanes on specific routes prior to introduction.

The Council also proposes to 'future proof' priority measures for a rapid bus route linking Henderson and a future town centre at Westgate via Lincoln Road and the motorway.

Ferry:

Ferries represent a niche passenger transport market. Ferries may provide an important alternative to the motor vehicle. Successful ferry services have the majority of users as walk-up from the local catchment. The Council will focus on West Harbour and Hobsonville, with supporting infrastructure.
Consideration of a service at Te Atatu South is also being considered.

Walking and Cycling:

Walking is a fundamental component of almost every trip. Walking contributes to maintaining active and healthy lives. A town centre or neighbourhood centre which has a good walking environment enriches the quality of life of its residents and provides social, economic and environmental benefits.

Waitakere City's Walking and Cycling Strategy aims to promote the health and fitness benefits of walking and cycling and reduce the negative impacts of motor vehicles by:

a. Increasing the proportion of short trips made by walking or cycling to major destinations (town centres, schools, bus and rail stations).
b. Increasing the number of walking and cycling trips made for leisure.
c. Supporting commuting by walking or cycling.

This requires the establishment of a network of routes for walking and cycling which connect to major destinations. The footpath network provides an important walking network. A safe cycle network also needs to be established, with dedicated cycleways, cycle lanes and sign-posted routes. The strategy aims to connect people with the town centres, schools, bus and rail stations and also the green network.

Travel Demand Management:

Travel Demand Management (TDM) seeks to reduce the need for travel, especially as a single occupant of a vehicle, by providing attractive alternatives and appropriate city form and land use. This is part of a regional programme which seeks to influence people's travel choices. Based on attractive alternatives and information, it is expected that people will minimise long trips and frequent trips as a single occupant of a vehicle.

TDM aims to encourage use of passenger transport, walking cycling, ride sharing, working from home, and travelling outside peak periods. This requires smart planning of the city form, land use, transport infrastructure and communicating/promoting more sustainable travel choices.

- Focus on complementary land use and transport policies that support goals of intensification and transport;
- Reduce need and distance travelled through land use intensification;
- Focus on New Lynn, Henderson and Westgate;
- Business Location and Freight strategy are developed;
- Implement Waitakere City's Walking and Cycling Strategy;
- Develop and promote alternatives to car through travel plans and other initiatives;
- Introduce pricing controls (parking and advocate for congestion pricing);
- Communicate plans so people understand the nature of the problem and that each and every one of us is part of the solution;

- Pilot projects that demonstrate sustainable approach to transport, for example, solar powered lights, education regarding fuel efficient vehicles, public support for alternative fuels;
- Advocate regionally and nationally for emission controls, catalytic converters, fuel standards, etc.

Transport Corridors

Rail Corridor – The rail corridor will provide for a rapid passenger transport service within Waitakere City and to Auckland City. The rail line is expected to be double tracked to Swanson, electrified, grade separated at New Lynn, with a cycleway alongside. The rail corridor is identified for high residential growth, with high density catchments up to 800 metres around each station accessible by walking and cycling. The corridor is required to be free of weeds and graffiti.

State Highway 16 – high volumes of traffic; more buses (including express services) using bus shoulder lanes at peak times; walk and cycle way; congestion problems at on ramps in am and off ramps in pm and arterial connections; need upgrade of Lincoln and Te Atatu interchanges; new interchange and connection to State Highway 18 by 2008; extension past Westgate is expected by 2014.

State Highway 18 – State Highway 18 will improve essential economic linkages with North Shore and Rodney as well as economic centres in Waitakere City. By 2009, it is expected that there will be high diversion of traffic from Hobsonville Road to SH 18, more buses (including express services) using bus shoulder lanes at peak times, and a walk and cycle way alongside. SH 18 provides direct access to Westgate and to Whenuapai airport.

Access to State Highway 20 – From the completion of SH 20 Mt Roskill extension to the Maioro Street interchange in 2009, until completion of the SH 20 Avondale extension, significant traffic is expected to be generated along Clark Street to Wolverton and Tiverton Roads.

Great North Road – high volumes of traffic; options for bus advance lanes and signal pre-emption will be proposed.

Lincoln Road – high volumes of traffic; poor integration with land use (competing purposes with schools, residential, retail, access to motorway, hospital, etc); options

for bus/HOV lane and signal pre-emption will be proposed.

Te Atatu Road – high volumes of traffic; options for HOV lane (using an existing lane) and traffic signals at Edmonton Road will be proposed.

Hobsonville Road – Council will seek transfer of control of Hobsonville Road from Transit NZ; high volumes of traffic need to be reduced after State Highway 18 is operational; options for bus/HOV lane and cycleway will be proposed; planning for neighbourhood centres along Hobsonville Road aim to provide the density to justify more bus services, slower speeds and addressing connections and safety issues.

Proposed Whenuapai airport – Road access to the Whenuapai airport needs to be protected to enable high volumes of traffic connecting with the proposed regional airport.

Proposed Whau Bridge Crossing – Joint study is required into the feasibility of a connection to Rosebank Peninsula; may provide an alternative connector and relieve pressure on Rata Street, Te Atatu Road and New Lynn; options for bus and cycle route will be considered.

Key Issues for Consultation:

Key issues for consultation include:

- Strategic options for transport in Waitakere City (including the cost to the Council under each option).
- Allocation of funding to each mode of transport (taking into account the feedback from the public consultation. on service levels).
- Significant high cost projects – particularly New Lynn undergrounding, cycle way along rail line, and the Whau bridge crossing.
- The ten year programme in relation to the Council's preferred strategic option for transport, with an indicative description of the programmes for the other two strategic options for transport.
- Required changes in travel decisions by residents to more sustainable modes of travel.
- Proposed road improvements or connections.
- Proposed road corridors where bus priority measures are proposed to be introduced. (Note there will be specific consultation on bus lanes or high occupancy vehicle lanes on specific road corridors prior to introduction).

- Proposed formal and informal arrangements for car pooling.
- Proposed park and ride programme.
- Proposed cycle ways programme.
- Proposed parking charges in the Council's off-street car parks at Henderson, New Lynn and Westgate.
- The Council's advocacy position in relation to road pricing, tolling, public-private partnerships and 'polluter-pays'.
- Provision for goods and services vehicles.

Conclusion:

This strategy is an affordable and sustainable approach that aims to get the best out of the existing roading network and encourage greater use of sustainable alternatives - using passenger transport, walking, cycling, ride sharing, choosing to travel at a different time or not at all.

The key features of the Waitakere City Transport strategy are:

- Commitment to the essentials – maintenance of existing transport assets, safety, existing commitments, and operation of traffic systems.
- A balance of investment in roads, footpaths, passenger transport infrastructure, walking and cycling initiatives, and travel demand management measures.
- A commitment to integration between different modes of transport, with rail providing the backbone of passenger transport in Waitakere City.
- Planning for integration of transport and land use (i.e. the developments in the city are in the right places and have appropriate roads, footpaths, cycle way, access to passenger transport/state highway network AND transport initiatives are appropriate for the type of activity/development in the vicinity)
- The implementation of transport projects is smart, cost effective and planned so that they directly contribute to the type of City that people want to live in, as reflected in the community outcomes.

This strategy has guided the 10 year transport programme that is included in the draft Long Term Council Community Plan. Public feedback on the strategy and the 10 year programme is sought before a final strategy and 10 year programme can be adopted.