

## **A smart, integrated transport system**

As cities emerge as the growth engines of the world, Auckland is facing significant growing pains, which are turning into major infrastructure headaches. As I've travelled around, one that comes up far too often is the daily reality of traffic congestion for hundreds of thousands of us. It also costs us about \$1.5 billion in lost productivity.

### **The ABCs of public transport**

Public transport is critical to reducing congestion and as a start we've got to make it easier to use. Through the way it is currently being run, we're limiting the number of people who can use public transport. That's not acceptable. My plan will:

- expand the frequency and capacity of burgeoning ferry services
- provide more frequent and timely feeder services to stations
- substantially boost the number of park and rides across the city
- deliver better lighting and CCTV surveillance at stations.

There is strong appetite from the private sector to build park and rides and trial smart feeder services. This is exactly the approach we need - if someone can do it faster, better and cheaper, and we can retain oversight, why not?

Partnering with local boards and communities to improve safety around public transport is also crucial. We must give them the resources and flexibility to contract services locally.

### **Smart transport**

The key to smarter integrated transport systems is to collect, quickly interpret and rapidly respond to the big traffic data available for us. The current tracking systems are just not up to standard and heavy processes add further delay. Real time traffic light phasing, sensors and big data tracking travel patterns right across the city can save us a whole lot of frustration through enabling us to be agile in forecasting and responding to demand, almost in real time.

Our city needs a programme in place where Auckland Transport partners to build open data capability and smart sensors across our city. This insight can be used to tailor public transport services and better inform us on how we utilise current infrastructure to reduce congestion.

This data means we can then increase the number of variable lane directions on arterial routes across the region, resulting in real time adjustment on the number and direction of lanes to respond to congestion needs. We will use this information to assess the efficacy of bus and cycle lanes throughout Auckland, ensuring we are not turning our roads into unproductive assets.

Putting this approach together with flexible and smart transport solutions like autonomous shuttles, car sharing and car-pooling applications and services, means we will definitely be on our way to clawing back lost productivity and addressing current congestion.

### **Capital investment**

There is no question however that strong leadership is needed to deliver this and more for Auckland in the next decade to future proof our city.

Reprioritisation and broadening sources of funding to solve congestion is a must. I'll move more of Council's total spend into transport and broaden the necessary funding sources to address congestion and support growth.

There are six key projects I'll bring forward that are not included in Council's current plan, or are too far down the line. They include:

- the North-Western Busway
- Penlink further north
- AMETI in the East
- Lake Road on the North Shore
- Mill Road in south Auckland, and
- electrifying rail to Pukekohe.

Funding sources which fully cover this investment programme include reprioritised funding and savings, Public Private Partnerships along with support from the Government's infrastructure fund.

## **A second harbour crossing**

North of the bridge, Auckland's population is forecast to grow by 130,000 from 2013 to 2033. One of the most critical pieces of infrastructure that connects all of Auckland is the Harbour bridge, yet it's at gridlock morning and night, and when a car breaks down it virtually shuts down much of the motorway network in all directions.

A second Harbour crossing is an absolute key transport priority for me as Mayor. Given projected population growth of 750,000, we will need alternative options to the Harbour Bridge along with the right public transport links. Auckland has a history of delaying large infrastructure projects. Opportunities lost today, mean we pay for them tomorrow. Our city simply cannot afford this ongoing lack of action.

### **Fast-tracking a second harbour crossing**

Auckland must fast track the second Harbour crossing and there is no doubt it must include a world class public rapid transport corridor. If elected Mayor, I will immediately make available up to \$150 million as an initial contribution to the Government-backed project to ensure we get a construction start date early in the next decade.

If the Government agrees to this timeframe, we as Council will agree to invest a further estimated \$600m through to 2027/28 to integrate a northern public rapid transport corridor alongside the launch of the second Harbour crossing. This could include a public private partnership component. Whether the public transport component is rapid bus transit, rail and/or newer technologies, the decision will ultimately be subject to a strong business case.

Given this project relies heavily on Government timing and funding, I have briefed both the Minister of Transport, Simon Bridges and the Minister of Finance, Bill English on my commitment to accelerate the second Harbour crossing.

### **The future of transport**

As part of making a decision on the second harbour crossing's rapid transit, I will call for

Auckland Transport to conduct a robust assessment on the future of public transport, with input from NZTA.

Technology will radically transform public transport as we know it. For example, moving from rigid scheduled timetables to on demand services that suit us (just as Netflix transformed how we watch TV), from stop-to-stop routes to direct door-to-door services, from large vehicles that are under-utilised outside peak times, to small flexible units that can link up and disband depending on the level of demand from users.

Council owes it to Aucklanders to be ahead of the trends and ready for disruptive technology. With trillions of dollars of investment globally in these new transport technologies, we need to think seriously about whether our investments today will become obsolete in the medium term. Whilst my preferences for rapid transit in the short term have been clear, I am only one part of the conversation and will lead communities and stakeholders to get the best outcome and most robust business case for Aucklanders.

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