

Entered by Board Secretary

## 2023 Regional Public Transport Plan – Strategic Direction

For decision:  For noting:

### Te tūtohunga / Recommendation

That the Auckland Transport Board (board):

- a) Recommend the proposed strategic direction for the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) to Auckland Council's Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC) for guidance and feedback.

### Te whakarāpopototanga matua / Executive summary

1. The RPTP is Auckland's 10-year plan for public transport (PT) services, required by the Land Transport Management Act. AT must prepare the RPTP in parallel to, or as soon as practicable after, the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP).
2. We are updating the plan to reflect current challenges facing the network and to align with the 2021-31 RLTP.
3. We are in the second of four stages of the RPTP's development, where we plan to seek Auckland Council's guidance and feedback for a strategic direction for the RPTP. We will use this direction to shape the draft RPTP that will go to public consultation later this year. The board agreed to this approach in May 2022, as part of the first phase of the plan's development.
4. The strategic direction consists of three elements:
  - a. An immediate focus on public transport (PT) recovery – this plan will address the on-going issues currently facing the network and our customers,
  - b. Proposed Vision and Goals for the plan – these will provide the overall structure and direction for the plan, and
  - c. Strategic priorities for services – we propose a 'Balanced' approach to service improvements over the period the plan covers.
5. The RPTP will also have to reflect Council's Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway (TERP). The RPTP will make progress towards the TERP's aspirations, but does not have the scope or funding to achieve them fully, or alone. We have discussed this approach with Council's TIC, who emphasised that it is important to make progress towards the targets even if we will not be able to achieve them in the plan's timeframe.
6. These strategic direction decisions will be Council's key input into the plan's development. Once we have Council's guidance, via the TIC, we will focus on completing the detail of the draft RPTP for board to approve.

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## Ngā tuhinga ō mua / Previous deliberations

7. Recent deliberations on the RPTP are outlined below:

Date	Report Title	Key Outcomes
February 2023 Design and Delivery Committee (committee)	2023 RPTP - Strategic Direction	The committee requested a greater focus on current challenges facing the public transport network, to ensure the RPTP is not seen as too aspirational.  The committee recommended presenting the full analysis on meeting the public transport targets of the TERP to the Council's TIC, to ensure the understand why the RPTP will not aspire to those targets.
November 2022 Committee	2023 RPTP update – discussion on key issues	The committee supported a traditional RPTP approach and a focus on a fundable services, rather than an aspirational RPTP. Modelling of the achievability of TERP targets supported this conversation.  The committee were also supportive of both the draft Vision and Goals, and the approach of Council's TIC endorsing the strategic direction.

## Te horopaki me te tīaroaro rautaki / Context and strategic alignment

8. The RPTP is a statutory plan for the next 10 years of public transport (PT) in Auckland, prepared by AT under the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA). It must be updated at the same time as, or as soon as practicable after, the RLTP is updated. The RPTP's core purpose is to enable us to engage with PT operators and the public on our future service planning and policies.
9. A full update to the RPTP is needed to reflect the PT elements of the 2021 RLTP and issues like the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our network and current service delivery challenges related to driver shortages. AT uses the RPTP to tell the full strategic story about our plans for the PT network, including actions we are taking to address the current issues across the network.
10. The RPTP will also need to incorporate service changes that will be funded by the Climate Action Targeted Rate (CATR) and respond to both Council's TERP and Government's Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP). It also needs to meet statutory tests in the LTMA and reflect policy ambition towards supporting mode shift and the Letter of Expectation.
11. There are four key stages to the RPTP's development. The board last received a paper at the first stage, concept development, where we agreed the project's outline and timeframe. We are now at the second stage, strategic direction, where key policy guidance will be requested from Council. This direction will shape the third phase of developing a draft RPTP document, which will come to the board to approve for consultation. The final stage will involve revisions to the draft plan, to incorporate feedback following public consultation, and ultimately approval by the board.

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## Ngā matapakinga me ngā tātaritanga / Discussion and analysis

### TIC's role – endorsing the strategic direction

12. While Council has no statutory role in the RPTP's development, they are likely to have an interest in the elements that make up the strategic direction for the RPTP. We therefore intend to seek its guidance and feedback for our proposed positions on the three key areas that are detailed in this section. We will then develop the draft RPTP in accordance with the Council's direction.

### Strategic direction element one – Immediate focus on recovery

13. Given the significant challenges currently facing the PT network, and therefore our customers, we propose that the short-term focus for the RPTP is on recovery. This means addressing the areas covered in the Letter of Expectation, including returning to pre-pandemic patronage levels, improving runtimes, punctuality and reliability, and improving service utilisation and fare recovery.
14. This focus on recovery will build towards the longer-term Vision and Goals proposed for the RPTP.
15. The short-term focus will guide the Actions included in the RPTP. The Plan will have a range of actions, grouped as short-term, long-term or on-going. There will be a strong focus on the short-term actions that will help us address this focus on recovery.
16. The TIC acknowledged the need to address these existing issues, and requested more details on how we intend to do so.

### Strategic direction element two – Proposed Vision and Goals

17. We are seeking Council's feedback on the proposed Vision and Goals which will shape the later stages of the RPTP's development. The proposed Vision and Goals are detailed in Attachment 1.
  - a. **Vision** – the Vision is to *Massively increase public transport use to reduce congestion, improve access for Aucklanders, support the economy and enhance the environment.* This uses language from the TERP, and also sets out the benefits of PT use for Aucklanders.
  - b. **Goals** – five goals expand on the Vision and describe the aims we have for the PT system. These relate to customer experience, the environment, equity, funding and delivering PT with our partners, and integrating PT with Auckland's growth. The goals provide a framework under which other elements of the RPTP, including Action and Policies, will be organised.
18. These elements reflect feedback from the committee and have been developed with our partners and stakeholders. The TIC were keen to ensure that these reflect both AT's purpose under statute, and the Joint Mayor and Minister's Transport Plan.

### Strategic direction element three – Strategic priorities for services

19. The RPTP needs to set out our plans for service changes, across bus, train and ferry, out to 2031. Most improvements over this period are already committed to supporting funded infrastructure projects that will either enable or require service changes. These include the opening of the Eastern Busway, services to new Southern Line train stations, and to take advantage of the Ō Mahurangi (PenLink) connection.

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20. Beyond 2027, there is some discretion as to how we allocate funding. There are broadly three possible approaches:

- a. **Patronage** – focused on improving frequency of services to the existing urban area.
- b. **Coverage** – focused on improving access to areas which do not currently have public transport, in particular rural or newly urban settlements.
- c. **Balanced** – providing a mix of improvements across the region, targeted to current challenges, similar to the 2018 RPTP’s approach.

21. We have conducted a high-level analysis of how we could approach each option, based on conceptual approaches to services in each option. Once an option has been selected, we will refine the details of specific service changes proposed, in line with the principal of the concept. The results of this analysis are summarised in the following table:

<i>Metric</i>	<i>2022 Performance</i>	<i>Balanced Option (2031)</i>	<i>Patronage Option (2031)</i>	<i>Diff with Balanced</i>	<i>Coverage Option (2031)</i>	<i>Diff with Balanced</i>
<i>Population within 500m of a stop on any service</i>	91%	91.20%	91.20%	0.00%	91.90%	0.70%
<i>Population within 500m of a stop on a rapid or frequent service</i>	39.70%	56.80%	58.90%	2.10%	55.60%	-1.20%
<i>High-deprivation population with 500m of a stop on a rapid or frequent service</i>	45.40%	67%	67.50%	0.50%	66.30%	-0.70%

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<i>Rural settlements served</i>	18 (42%)	18 (42%)	18 (42%)	0.00%	39 (90%)	48.00%
<i>Estimated Patronage (Annual boardings)</i>	57m	200.9m	+0.2 to 0.3 m	+0.12%	-0.6 to -0.8m	-0.35%

22. The TIC requested data like the above to inform a decision on these options, and also questioned whether we can take different approaches for different parts of the region. We plan to provide the data in the table above to the TIC at its 20 April 2023 meeting.
23. Based on this assessment and inputs, we recommend adopting the Balanced option as the basis for further planning, which can be tailored by local board area as appropriate. Note that an option focussed on high deprivation areas has not been developed as these are expected to be addressed by planned service improvements.

**Reflecting the TERP in the RPTP**

24. The TERP and ERP set out ambitious pathways for emissions reduction that require PT to play a core role. The RPTP sets out service patterns and policies that will contribute to mode shift and therefore the aspirations of the TERP and ERP.
25. However, within available funding the service pattern and infrastructure are expected to delivery around 200 million boardings per year, compared to the TERP’s 550 million boarding target.
26. Members of the TIC acknowledged that the TERP’s targets are ambitious, but emphasised the need to make progress towards them. The RPTP will also set out our position on issues likely to influence future PT demand and potential responses if more funding becomes available.

**Ngā tūraru matua / Key risks and mitigations**

27. There are risks related to each of the three elements of the strategic direction, and the TERP response, which are mitigated as set out below:

Key risk	Mitigation
Council does not support the approach to reflecting the TERP in the RPTP, creating the appearance we are misaligned.	Seeking Council’s feedback for our approach to this issue allows us to ensure both that the RPTP is correctly positioned.

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Council does not support the proposed Immediate Focus or the Vision and Goals, delaying further work on the RPTP.	We have developed these with our partners, stakeholders, and have public input into these elements and aligned them with Letter of Expectation.
Council does not support our proposed strategic priority for services, leading to delays to the RPTP.	We will present modelling data, additional analysis and public input to justify our preferred option. We will also note that the approach can be tailored by local board areas as appropriate, based on their input.

## Ngā ritenga-ā-pūtea me ngā rauemi / Financial and resource impacts

28. There are no immediate financial implications related to the strategic direction for the RPTP. The final direction adopted will have implications for how we invest in public transport infrastructure and services, but only within the scope of existing funding envelopes.

## Ngā whaiwhakaaro ō te taiao me te panonitanga o te āhuarangi / Environment and climate change considerations

29. As outlined in the Discussion and Analysis section, a key goal for the RPTP will relate to the environment and addressing climate change.

## Ngā whakaaweawe me ngā whakaaro / Impacts and perspectives

### Mana whenua

30. Mana whenua have been involved in shaping our draft Vision and Goals at a technical level via our regular Transport Hui. They are supportive of how we propose to both reflect their aspirations in the Goals and also embed them throughout the plan. The Kaitiaki Forum has also been updated, from a governance perspective and we are in regular discussion with the Independent Māori Statutory Board officers. We will continue to partner with mana whenua as the plan's development progresses.

31. Matā waka are also being engaged as part of early engagement being undertaken in March 2023; this will allow them to contribute to the development of the Vision and Goals, as well as shape the overall direction of the draft RPTP.

### Ngā mema pōti / Elected members

32. The TIC was briefed in December 2022. They were largely supportive of the approach to the plan's development that was outlined. The purpose of getting the TIC to endorse a strategic direction is to ensure that the draft RPTP will be aligned with the Council's expectations ahead of going to public consultation.

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33. We have briefed local boards on the development of the RPTP and outlined that we will engage with them in detail following Council's feedback on the strategic direction. Their input will be a core part of the draft RPTP's development. We can tailor our approach to services within each local board's area to account for the views of local board members and their constituents.

**Ngā rōpū kei raro i te Kaunihera / Council Controlled Organisations**

34. We have undertaken targeted engagement with Eke Panuku on our draft Vision and Goals and will continue to work with them as we progress towards a Draft RPTP.

**Ngā kiritaki / Customers**

35. Our strategic direction has been informed by customers via:

- a. A survey of Aucklanders undertaken in December 2022 that focused on key trade-offs related to public transport planning,
- b. Previous insights, as summarised in the July 2022 'Customer Insights' pack presented to the committee and
- c. Previous responses to consultation on the 2018 RPTP.

36. We are also planning our second round of engagement on the RPTP, which includes public engagement. This will be used to inform the draft RPTP that is presented to approve for public consultation at the May 2023 board meeting.

**Ngā whaiwhakaaro haumarū me ngā whaiwhakaaro hauora / Health, safety and wellbeing considerations**

37. There are no specific Health and Safety considerations associated with the RPTP's strategic direction. Personal safety and security will be a key policy area for the development of the draft RPTP, given its role in impacting on customer experience and PT use.

**Ā muri ake nei / Next steps**

38. If approved by the board, we will seek feedback and guidance on the strategic direction from the TIC at its 20 April 2023 meeting.

39. We will also engage with local boards on what is being planned in their areas during April and May, to inform the development of the draft RPTP and assist them in providing feedback on it.

40. We will return to the May 2023 board meeting with a draft RPTP, to seek approval to progress to public consultation.



41. Following public consultation, we will incorporate feedback and seek the board's approval for the final RPTP in September 2023.

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## Ngā whakapiringa / Attachments

Attachment number	Description
1	Proposed Vision and Goals

## Te pou whenua tuhinga / Document ownership

Submitted by	Luke Elliott <b>Principal Planner Rapid Transit Network</b>	
Recommended by	Jenny Chetwynd <b>EGM Planning and Investment</b>	
Approved for submission	Mark Lambert <b>Interim Chief Executive</b>	