

Entered by Board Secretary

Draft 2023 Regional Public Transport Plan

For decision: For noting:

Te tūtohunga / Recommendation

That the Auckland Transport Board (board):

- a) approves the release of the draft 2023 Regional Public Transport Plan for public consultation.

Te whakarāpopototanga matua / Executive summary

1. The Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) is Auckland's main plan for public transport (PT) services, required by the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA). Auckland Transport (AT) must prepare the RPTP in parallel to, or as soon as practicable after, the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP).
2. Our current RPTP covers the 2018-28 period. This plan has been updated to reflect current challenges facing the network, including the current driver shortage, funding constraints and uncertainty of key interventions) and to align with the 2021-31 RLTP. The Plan has a short-term focus, that addresses public sentiment about on-going disruptions on the network and explains what we will do to address their concerns.
3. The RPTP sets out the policies and service changes planned for the coming decade. It also sets targets for performance which align with the Statement of Intent, together with broader targets such as recovery of reliability in the short term and patronage ambitions for the long term.
4. The RPTP is being prepared at a time of significant budget challenges and ongoing uncertainty around funding. We are still confirming the exact funding we will receive from the Government and Council for the 23/24 financial year. The public transport funding story beyond the next financial year into the three- and 10-year timeframes also needs clarification and articulation. We will reflect our best understanding of these, and what that means for service levels, in the draft RPTP before it is finalised for consultation. It is management's intention that this will be included in the version of the draft RPTP that the board endorses in June 2023. We will use the opportunity of the engagement on the draft RPTP to communicate the public transport funding picture and its challenges.
5. The updated RPTP presents the network changes which will accompany many forthcoming major planned interventions, such as City Rail Link, Eastern Busway, new low emission ferries, Ō Mahurangi (PenLink) and additional stations on the Southern rail line. It includes details of other initiatives, such as service improvements funded through the Climate Action Transport Targeted Rate (CATTR). This updated plan incorporates board direction, Council direction and input from partners, stakeholders, and the community.

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6. The updated RPTP is now ready for wider public consultation. This consultation is required by the LTMA, and its statutory purpose is to enable operators and the public to engage with us on the design and operation of the PT network. The consultation will involve person and online feedback sessions, as well distribution of the draft RPTP to libraries, community centres, and our website. Consultation will be open for four weeks, beginning 17 July 2023. The results of the consultation will be used to inform the final RPTP, which will be presented to the board for approval in November 2023. The consultation process also presents AT with an opportunity to demonstrate to Aucklanders the context and challenges in which PT is being delivered, and how the needs of Aucklanders are being understood and delivered within this context.

Ngā tuhinga ō mua / Previous deliberations

7. Recent deliberations on the RPTP are outlined below:

| Date | Report Title | Key Outcomes |
|---|---|--|
| June 2023 Design and Delivery Committee (committee) | Draft 2023 RPTP | The committee requested changes to place greater emphasis on innovation, particularly On-Demand services earlier in the plan and to clarify our aims related to working with private providers of micro-mobility services to integrate with the PT network. These have been incorporated. |
| April 2023 Auckland Council Transport and Infrastructure Committee (TIC) | 2023 RPTP – Strategic Direction | The TIC endorsed the strategic direction for the RPTP, including a short-term focus on recovery, a medium-term focus on leveraging service changes related to infrastructure investment, our long-term vision and goals, and a balanced approach to service improvements. |
| March 2023 Board | 2023 RPTP – Strategic Direction | The board approved recommending the strategic direction for the RPTP to the TIC for its endorsement. |
| November 2022 Committee | 2023 RPTP update – discussion on key issues | The committee supported a traditional RPTP approach and a focus on a fundable service improvements, rather than an aspirational RPTP. Modelling of the achievability of Transport Emission Reduction Pathway (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. |

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Te horopaki me te tīaroaro rautaki / Context and strategic alignment

8. A full update to the current RPTP (2018-28) is needed to reflect the PT elements of the 2021 RLTP, the impact of COVID-19 on our network; current service delivery challenges related to driver shortages; to incorporate service changes that will be funded by the CATTR and set out AT's response to both Council's TERP and Government's Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP). It also needs to meet statutory tests in the LTMA (particularly regarding our consultation approach), reflect policy regarding supporting mode shift, and the Council's Letter of Expectation.
9. The four stages of the RPTP update are: concept development; strategic direction (when the board and TIC last considered the plan's development), plan development (the current stage), and finalisation (which will occur after we have received feedback from consultation).
10. Strategic direction previously provided by both the board and the TIC requested a focus on short-term recovery of service levels, in line with what Aucklanders tell us is most important to them, a medium-term focus on leveraging up-coming capital investments to increase patronage and contribute to a positive public perception of PT. It also requested us to articulate extensions to the proposed plans should more funding become available; and has requested the achievement of a 'balanced' approach to additional investment, meaning investment in both growing patronage in key corridors, and investing in additional services on the urban fringe.
11. Auckland Council's CATTR is a rate that was struck as part of Councils 2022 Budget. It provides funding to continue accelerate the transition of our bus fleet to low emission vehicles, and to make significant improvements to bus services. Given inflation, the rate will not enable the same level of improvements as originally envisioned but will still allow for the introduction of ten new or upgraded frequent routes, and other improvements to over 70 routes. This RPTP will be the first confirmation of what these improvements will include and when they will be made.
12. Key features of the draft RPTP include: an updated vision and goals (which focus on massively increasing PT use to reduce congestion, improve access for Aucklanders, support the economy and enhance the environment); a new format intended to make the plan more readable easily understandable for the public; confirmation of new service planned to be introduced over the RPTP's timeframe (including confirmation of how trains will operate once the CRL opens and how CATTR funding will improve services), and our updated targets for patronage, emissions reduction, and service performance (which are aligned with the updated Statement of Intent). The current draft is included as Attachment 1.

Ngā matapakinga me ngā tātaritanga / Discussion and analysis

13. The RPTP comes at a difficult time for the PT system. We have: an ongoing bus driver and ferry crew shortage (affecting reliability and customer experiences) following difficulty in driver recruitment by PT operators during COVID-19 New Zealand immigration border closures; significant disruption from the track infrastructure renewal programme works and track closures on the rail network by KiwiRail; and changes in travel pattern behaviour and a reduction in travel frequency following COVID-19 Auckland lockdowns and a greater extent of work-from-home by PT users (in particular regular commuters).
14. The RPTP is also being prepared at a time of significant budget challenges and ongoing uncertainty around funding. We are still confirming the exact funding we will receive from the Government and Council for the 23/24 financial year. The public transport funding story beyond the

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next financial year into the three- and 10-year time frames also needs clarification and articulation. We will reflect our best understanding of these, and what that means for service levels, in the draft RPTP before it is finalised for consultation.

15. The RPTP's Monitoring and Evaluation framework includes four components: our current (2022) performance, expected performance in both 2026 and 2031 based on current funding levels, and aspirational performance levels in 2031 if more funding were available. This enables us to transparently show how we expect to track against key targets, while acknowledging our aspirations to do more. These targets are based on those in the updated Statement of Intent. Where appropriate (such as patronage targets) we will be using 12-month rolling figures.
16. One of the goals of the draft RPTP is 'Safe and accessible transport for everyone'. The safety area under this goal sets out our efforts regarding personal safety and security. Specific actions relate to our on-going efforts to improve safety on-board services, our short-term focus on gating pedestrian level crossings on the rail network, and our long-term plans to remove level crossings from the network.
17. The draft RPTP acknowledges Council's TERP's aspirational targets and states that we will be making progress towards them under the RPTP, within available funding. The plan also advocates for more funding, to enable us to make faster progress. This approach was set out when we sought TIC endorsement of the plan's strategic direction and they did not raise concerns with it.
18. The CATTR will enable the majority of the bus service improvements that the RPTP will contain, given the constrained funding environment the RPTP is being prepared in. The rate enables improvements across all of Auckland, but focuses on areas such as South and West Auckland where improvements will help to address existing issues with equity of access to quality PT. While the amount raised by the rate will not cover as many improvements as expected, due to inflation and cost indexation in bus service contracts, we have worked to ensure that as many of the core changes that were highlighted in the CATTR's consultation will be implemented. This RPTP will be the first time these have been confirmed to the public since that consultation in 2022.
19. In addition to meeting the statutory requirements, include policies and funded service levels, the plan also incorporates our advocacy and positions on key issues affecting PT. This includes advocating for more funding to reach the aspirations of Council and Government regarding emissions reduction, the expected impact of congestion pricing on PT demands (and how that could provide funding for service improvements) and setting out our position on the Government's proposed Sustainable Public Transport Framework.

Ngā tūraru matua / Key risks and mitigations

20. The key risk associated with the release of the RPTP is that the public feel their expectations (and future ambitions) for the PT system, are not reflected in the draft plan, or do not deliver on the expectations and ambitions of plans like the TERP. This risk exists because the RPTP is required to be a fundable plan in a time where funding is significantly constrained. We have mitigated this risk by being clear in the draft RPTP on what can be done with the level of funding certainty available, advocating for additional sources and outlining how we would make further improvements to services to make progress towards these aspirations if more funding were to become available.

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

21. There are no immediate financial implications related to approving the draft RPTP to be released for public consultation.
22. As outlined earlier, there is a current and ongoing PT funding issue. AT has advocated for more certainty for ongoing PT funding, rather than the current 12 month-only approval (which means annual agreements are needed and AT needs to prepare contingency plans in case the funding doesn't eventuate).

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

23. Additional PT services and usage is a key lever in reducing emissions generated by the transport system and the draft RPTP reflects our expected outcomes in this area.

Ngā whakaaweawe me ngā whakaaro / Impacts and perspectives

Mana whenua

24. Our hui with mana whenua have increased our understanding of the outcomes mana whenua are seeking from PT services and infrastructure delivery. They support the progress AT has made on bilingual announcements on services and the use of te reo Māori in wayfinding, the use of iwi-led design principles and incorporation of features that enhance the natural environment in PT infrastructure, and on-going efforts to involve Māori in social procurement. They want the draft RPTP continue to focus on these areas and are supportive of the draft RPTP's vision and goals. A key area they want us to make greater progress on is the provision of PT services to rural Māori communities, which we committed to in the previous RPTP and will also carry forwards.
25. Mana whenua did not want Māori issues to be 'put in a box' in the draft RPTP. They supported embedding the issues they were concerned with throughout the plan, in addition to a Māori outcomes section that expresses their position and notes where the relevant actions and policies are include. We have reflected this in the draft RPTP.

Ngā mema pōti / Elected members

26. The strategic direction provided by Council's TIC underpins the proposals in the draft RPTP.
27. Our engagement with local boards to date has been to inform them of our approach to the RPTP's development. Their core involvement will begin as part of the consultation on the draft RPTP. Local boards will be provided with information on the content of the public feedback from

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their communities at the close of consultation, and we will then work with the boards to ensure their perspectives and needs are understood and incorporated where possible.

Ngā rōpū kei raro i te Kaunihera / Council Controlled Organisations

28. Eke Panuku has provided input into our Vision, Goals, and Actions for the draft RPTP. Their feedback has primarily related to improving access to PT via active modes, and the placemaking impacts of PT.
29. Tātaki Auckland Unlimited feedback to date relates to the importance of PT to visitor experience and supports making PT easier to pay for (without needing a HOP card).

Ngā kiritaki / Customers

30. Online public surveys, both public and using a representative market insights panel, seeking views on key issues related to PT have been conducted and the results have informed our development of the draft RPTP. Consultation will now include testing if the public is supportive of how the draft RPTP reflects their input.
31. Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency, Kāinga Ora, KiwiRail, the Ministry of Transport, Auckland International Airport Ltd, the Automobile Association, and Generation Zero have also provided input into the RPTP's Vision, Goals and Actions.

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

32. There are no specific Health and Safety considerations related to approving the draft RPTP be released for public consultation.

Ā muri ake nei / Next steps




33. Public consultation will commence on 17 July 2023 for a period of four weeks. This will include in-person drop-in sessions across Auckland, as well as online sessions. Drafts of the RPTP will be available in libraries, and feedback will be available online, by post, or via the call centre.
34. Once consultation closes, we will begin working with local boards on to get their formal input into the RPTP, based on the views of their communities. We will then use this to inform the final draft of the RPTP.
35. Management will present the revised RPTP to the board in November 2023 for adoption.

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Te whakapiringa / Attachment

| Attachment number | Description |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Current draft of the RTPP |

Te pou whenua tuhinga / Document ownership

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Submitted by | Luke Elliott Principal Planner Rapid Transit Network |  |
| Recommended by | Jenny Chetwynd Executive General Manager Planning and Investment |  |
| | Mark Lambert Executive General Manager Integrated Networks |  |
| Approved for submission | Dean Kimpton Chief Executive | |