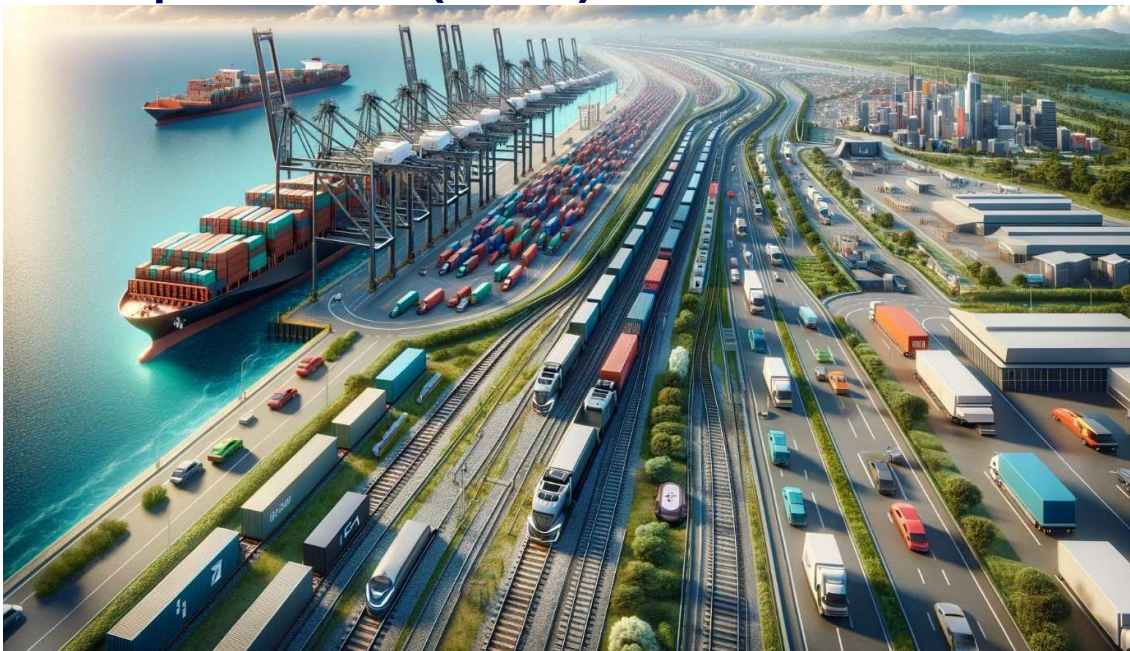




National Road Carriers Association (NRC) submission on

Auckland's draft Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP)



About National Road Carriers Association

National Road Carriers Association (NRC) is New Zealand's progressive nationwide organisation representing 1500 supply chain company members, who collectively operate over 16,000 trucks throughout New Zealand. NRC advocates on behalf of members and works with central and local government on road transport infrastructure and regulations.

NRC members are committed to providing an efficient, productive, resilient, safe and value for money service that supports the wider economy. To achieve this, trucking operators need a safe, efficient, and sustainable operating environment that enables the efficient and safe movement of goods. Our members primarily operate road freight however a number also operate air, sea and rail freight services.

Some 54% of NRC's membership comprises single vehicle operators and 89% employ 10 or fewer.

General Comments

National Road Carriers supports the comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by the freight industry through infrastructure improvements, economic efficiency, environmental sustainability, and robust funding strategies. Our members deliver the goods needed by every business and household in Auckland and they remove what is no longer needed. To do this vital task that keeps any city functioning they need a transport network that is efficient and productive.

Many of our members are multi-modal and we support increasing the capability of the rail network to access the inland ports at Southdown and Wiri. It is important to note however that as the end user of the

contents of the containers that arrive through Port of Auckland and Metro Port at Southdown are located throughout the region, increasing the percentage of containers moved from the Auckland Port by rail to an inland port facility will not reduce truck numbers.

Challenges & Priorities

It is concerning that the Regional Land Transport Plan has no specific freight focus given the reliance of the entire Auckland economy on freight. Any inefficiencies of the freight network results in unnecessary costs that are passed on to consumers.

Time of use charging is also missing despite it being a current project being worked on that has implications for the freight sector.

Getting this right so that major distortions are not driven into the Auckland and surrounding regional economies will require complex and detailed understanding of freight movements.

National Road Carriers acknowledges that there is a significant funding gap, with total bids to the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) substantially exceeding the available funds. Prioritization of projects will be necessary, potentially affecting the timing and scale of freight-related infrastructure improvements.

Decades of reactive maintenance and low levels of investment have impacted the reliability of the transport network. Sound asset management and building back better are key priorities to ensure a reliable network for freight that is resilient to the changes in Auckland's climate and able to meet the needs of a thriving city.

Economic and Operational Efficiency

National Road Carriers supports the inclusion of the following projects:

East West Link Project: This project links key strategic freight networks and adds resilience to the transport system by placing a missing link between SH20 and SH1. This will help decongest Onehunga, Penrose, Otahuhu and Mount Wellington.

State Highway Improvements: Enhancements to SH1, particularly from Papakura to Drury, and ongoing improvements to safety and efficiency are essential to support growth and productivity. This is crucial for the movement of freight in and out of the Auckland region to regions beyond the southern border.

Southern Rail Corridor: The plan to commence four-tracking from Westfield to Pukekohe to support both additional passenger rail services and expanded freight services will address capacity issues expected to arise before 2040. Provision of the third and fourth main lines will ensure the inland ports at Wiri and Southdown can operate unimpeded by the increased passenger train traffic.

Takanini Level Crossing Removal: National Road Carriers believes the preparation for rail crossing closures at Takanini and the design/build of three road grade separations should be a high priority.

The crossings are already subject to high percentage of barrier down which is already impacting productivity in Takanini.

Completion of the three grade separated crossings must be completed prior to the increase in rail activity to avoid further disruption to Takanini businesses and communities.

Deferring the replacement of the level crossings beyond this ten-year period would be devastating for Takanini businesses and residents in the surrounding suburbs.

Auckland Council can no longer defer infrastructure investment simply because it lacks funding, especially when the need for the infrastructure is a direct result of other transport initiatives funded by council.

Balance of Level Crossing Removal:

Grade separation of rail crossings should have been hard wired into the Auckland passenger rail development plan.

There should be plans to address the level crossings between Papakura and Pukekohe after the Takanini crossings are rectified.

In addition all remaining level crossings should be risk assessed with options to remove identified within this ten year plan.

Level Crossings are a high risk for all road users and given the increase in rail traffic they should be replaced by grade separated crossings as soon as practicable.

SH22 Drury Upgrade along with SH1 Papakura to Drury and Mill Road will reduce the impact of urbanisation of Drury South and Paerata.

National Road Carriers encourage Auckland Transport to work closely with Waikato District and Northland District Councils as their populations often travel into Auckland for employment. Having connected plans will reduce the impact on the Auckland Network as growth continues in the upper North Island population and business activity.

The GPS identified the corridor between Northland and Bay of Plenty for investment in Roads of National Significance. These improvements to the wider Upper North Island network will result in increased demand on the Auckland network.

The vulnerability of the existing Waitematā Harbour Connections is a concern for the freight sector. The lack of any plan on increasing capacity across Waitemata is, we believe, short sighted and ignores the consequences of increased disruption to the ageing Auckland Harbour bridge caused by changing weather and the need for higher levels of maintenance required to maintain an ageing asset.

The economic and social consequences of failure of the Auckland Harbour Bridge should not be ignored.

Safety

National Road Carriers supports the installation of the Weigh Right facilities and the Drury Commercial Vehicle Safety Centre.

We also applaud the further installation of Motorway Bridge Safety Screens but would like to see them installed earlier as sadly our members' vehicles are often vehicles of choice for self-harm incidents and their larger frontal glass makes them more vulnerable to objects thrown from bridges.

SH16 safety improvements between Brigham Creek and Waimauku including road and bridge widening is welcomed.

Climate Change & The Environment

National Road Carriers agrees that changes to the climate mean that Auckland needs to increase its resilience to what would have been adverse weather events which are likely to increase in frequency.

The impact to the freight network following the weather events of early 2023 was mainly caused by the inability of the storm water systems to cope with the sheer volume of water that descended upon Auckland in a

single event. Given the likelihood of more weather events such as those experienced in 2023 National Road Carriers would like to see greater commitments to improving resilience of the network.

Reducing emissions will not avoid the impact of climate change on the transport network.

Within the ten years of this plan the freight sector will be adopting technology that lowers our emissions.

Indicators of Success

National Road Carriers would like to see measures of success for the freight sector added to the measures summary.

- Average speeds across the network, both road and rail freight
- Availability of loading zones,
- Percentage of the freight network capable of full high productivity vehicles
- Ability of Kiwirail freight trains to access the hubs at Southdown and Wiri free of disruption from passenger services
- Frequency of delays. Reduction in the number of delays due to infrastructure issues or congestion.
- Incident Response Time. Speed at which incidents affecting road and rail freight transport are addressed and resolved.
- Percentage of pavement renewals meets or exceeds modelled requirements.

Funding

National Road Carriers acknowledges there are significant funding gaps in transport infrastructure financing. These gaps have been increasing for decades with an increasing amount of “Crown Top Ups” required to pay for projects not possible from the traditional sources of funding the National Land Transport Plan or local body contributions from rates.

National Road Carriers supports the investigation and development of additional funding mechanisms for infrastructure. We would recommend that Auckland Transport does not implement bespoke Auckland only solutions and that all options are inline with New Zealand Transport Agency systems to avoid money being wasted on bespoke administration and duplication.

National Road Carriers would like it acknowledged that any increased costs imposed onto the freight sector will be passed on the consumer of the freight service so the consequence of increasing freight costs in Auckland that are out of step with neighbouring regions should be considered.

Closing Comments

In summary, National Road Carriers supports the increased investment in the transport network but would like to see a greater emphasis on increasing productivity and efficiency of the total freight network that will enable economic growth of Auckland.

We encourage Auckland Transport Planners to better understand and coordinate planning that aligns efficiencies between the various modes available for freight.

We would like to see the development of a longer term plan that prepares Auckland for the next thirty years. This would provide a strong indication of the pipe-line of work

needed to meet the needs of Auckland 2050.

Longer term planning would identify earlier the consequences of major projects negatively impacting other parts of the network.

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