

Auckland Regional Council
Transport Planning
Project Manager: Regional Land Transport Strategy
Private Bag 92012
Auckland

17th December 2009

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission on Auckland Land Transport Strategy

Thank you for the invitation to review the Land Transport Strategy and for the opportunity to make a submission, which is attached.

The Auckland Disability Providers Network (ADPN) has a membership of 100 disability provider organisations, each one representing a large group of people with disabilities in the Auckland region. (Attached are brief details about the ADPN)

Our principle objective is to ensure an inclusive future for all people in the Auckland region, with a particular focus on the needs of people with disabilities. However, it must be remembered that there are many citizens who do not consider themselves disabled, but whose lifestyle is compromised. If we get it right for people with disabilities, we also get it right for the elderly, for children, young families with prams, and for people for whom English is their second language and other minority groups.

NZ has a Disability Strategy which received international recognition through the United Nations Franklyn D. Roosevelt Award in 2008. However, the strategy has received little more than lip service in many Government and local body departments.

It is estimated that in New Zealand one person in five has a disability; that is 20% of the population. A not inconsiderable proportion! The day will come when each and every one of us will need an environment which suits our aging and failing condition. We need to be certain that these vital aspects of life are not left as "add-ons" or after thoughts in all the planning.

We feel strongly that provision should be made to ensure that all citizens are given the same opportunities to enjoy the benefits of accessible, efficient transport which will facilitate access to normal daily activities such as employment, education and leisure.

The disability committee who reviewed the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy wish to congratulate the ART committee on the document which represents a major body of work, one in which there is no doubt the needs of the disability sector have been considered.

We welcome the opportunity to speak to the submission if there are to be hearings and assure you of our willingness to assist if there are questions concerning disability issues in the future. We would also like to receive future consultation requests via email.

Yours sincerely

Pam Antill
Executive Officer.

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In order to 'get it right' before it is signed off, we would like to offer the following suggestions:

Page 10: The New Zealand Disability Strategy is not mentioned in the list of Government Policy documents. It should be recognised as the minimum standard.

Page 15: Vision
2.1, point #5 – add: '.....and accessible to disabled people.'

Objectives

We commend the work done and the objectives are good. However, the reference to 'disability' is implicit rather than explicit e.g. the use of the term 'transport disadvantaged' tends to imply disabled people are the problem rather than the transport itself. Disabled people do not see themselves as disadvantaged.

Page 28: Objective 3
Performance targets for 2040: no mention of blind, visual or hearing impaired (i.e. sensory impairments)

Page 27: 3.3 Access and mobility
"Current trends ----- these include: and disability."
Delete the word 'disability' in that context as the disability is not a hindering factor to accessibility of transport. It is the inaccessible transport that creates or aggravates the disability.
Ref: "Accessible Journey" document
New Zealand Disability Strategy
UN Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities

Disabled people don't see themselves as disabled until barriers are put in front of them as explained by the social model of disability.

We are grateful to Cassandra Smith of the Regional Land Transport Team for the time and effort she gave in bringing to our attention sections of the strategy that she considered would be of particular interest to us. All of the items identified by Cassandra are important and we would like to add:

The journey to whatever destination starts from leaving home and arriving at the public transport 'station'. If we are to have consistency of quality of access, responsibility must be taken by all to ensure safe passage. Therefore, the streets and pavements are part of the journey and need to be of good standard. The targets for 2040 are noteworthy but will not be achievable unless the infrastructure is integrated.

Parking

Lack of consistency between RLTS and ARTA, City Council and ARC is a problem.

Pick up and drop off points for people with disabilities remains a problem.

Currently when people in wheelchairs are dropped off from the back of mobility vans, this represents a potentially hazardous manouver as frequently they must be dropped off into fast moving traffic because of lack of parking space. These vehicles are too long to enable them to park in angle parking. They must be parked parallel to the kerb.

It is therefore vital that the different agencies who all administer parking communicate and work to achieve consistency.

5.3 – page 74 Managing Road Space
Doesn't include "people with disabilities"

5.3.1 clarity around access ways eg. pavements, kerbing, access to buses (bus stops) and kerb ramps at bus stops must include provision for mobility and vision impaired.

Rules around parking must be enforced more vigorously.

Shared Cycle – walkway: a painted white line is inadequate because blind and elderly people are unable to see it. The line should be tactile.

Airport – Policy 5.4

We support the rail link from the city to airport project and in fact, would like to see it brought forward. We should not be totally dependent on a road network to access the airport.

People who can't climb onto a shuttle bus have no choice but to use taxis, which are expensive.

All transport to airports, ferries, trains must be accessible.

Much of the above is summarised in the World Health Organisation Age-friendly transportation checklist: (page 12 of the Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide)
http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en/index.html

"Step Up Auckland" - the study carried out in 2009 in Auckland by the Auckland City Council and Auckland District Health Board, as two key agencies responsible for improving services to, access for and wellbeing of disabled people should be used as a reference document. It points to the enabling roles and responsibilities of all key decision-makers in the Auckland region. It is based on the understanding that disability is a result of the interaction between people's impairments and their environments.

This report provides evidence about the key issues, needs and aspirations of the 77,000 disabled people in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. It was brought together by

representatives of the Auckland City Council, Auckland District Health Board, Waitakere City Council and AUT University's Institute of Public Policy. These agencies aimed to provide a clear snapshot of Auckland City's heterogeneous disabled people and the reality of their lives that can be used to inform decisions in achieving enhanced citizenship.

Signage

Health, safety and wellbeing information must be conveyed in an accessible way to cater for people with sensory impairments. Those with communication problems must be able to access information e.g. danger, information about transport, timetables, routes etc. Barriers to access are not solely physical.

References

NZ Disability Strategy

United Nations Convention on Rights for Persons with Disabilities

Step Up Auckland - Decision-makers getting it right for disabled Aucklanders

<http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/council/projects/disability/docs/stepupauckland09.pdf>

WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities

http://www.who.int/ageing/age_friendly_cities/en/index.html.

www.who.int/aging/en

Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040 Consultation draft

Accessible Information and Communication Standards, Ontario, Canada:

<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario/accesson/act.htm>

Please see Summary – Page 5

Summary: points for consideration to ensure an inclusive future

- Affordability
- Reliability and frequency
- Travel destinations: -giving access to key destinations eg. hospitals, health centres, public parks, shopping centres, banks, seniors centres and clubs.
-All areas well serviced with adequate, well-connected transport routes within the city and suburbs
-Transport routes are well-connected between the various transport options.
- Age-friendly vehicles (accessible, with floors that lower, low steps) clear signage indicating vehicle number and destination.
- Priority seating for people with disabilities and older people
- Staff trained in customer service, with good communication skills.
- Transport drivers: trained to cater for the needs of disabled, older passengers and the very young.
Park alongside the curb so that it is easier for disabled and older passengers to embark and alight from the bus safely.
- Not overcrowded
- Transport stops and stations located in close proximity to where people live, are provided with seating and shelter from the weather (bus shelters often do not provide sufficient cover for people in wheel chairs)
- Safety and comfort: Unless people feel safe, they will not use public transport. Cleanliness, good lighting, freedom from graffiti all help towards a feeling of safety. This applies to all facilities: vehicles, buildings, bus shelters; also well constructed pavements, steps, lifts and escalators.
- Pedestrian crossing lights allow sufficient time for older people to cross the road and have visual and audio signals.
- An inclusive environment will ensure walking, wheelchair travel, mobility scooters and cycling are perceived as safe and enjoyable modes of transport.
- Accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible signage suitable for people with language difficulties, intellectual and sensory disabilities
- Safety and shelter at public transport stops e.g. shelters cover people sitting on bus shelter seats but often the roof does not overhang far enough to provide adequate shelter for people in wheelchairs.

Watch-dog

- To ensure the Auckland transport system is accessible to everyone and to guarantee that both new facilities and alterations to existing premises and routes are cost effective (ie. to avoid expensive mistakes) they should be subjected to barrier free audits.
- Regular audits should be programmed into any transport programme.