



**Greater East Tamaki
Business Association Inc.**

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Auckland Regional Transport Committee
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Submission to Proposed Regional Fuel Tax and Draft Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan 2018-2028

Introduction

The Greater East Tamaki Business Association Inc. (GETBA) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission. GETBA is the Business Improvement District business association for the greater East Tamaki business precinct including the world-class Highbrook Business Park. GETBA advocates for business and property owners in the area's economic development; provides a conduit to business support, education, resources and networking; enhances the safety and security of the area; and promotes the precinct as a great place to do business and work.

The East Tamaki business precinct is situated in a key strategic location with links to the airport, port, CBD and other business areas within the region. The precinct has developed from greenfield origins and the availability and relative cost of land has, in the past, made the precinct attractive to businesses. As such, the area has a number of nationally and internationally significant companies, some of which are involved in developing innovative technologies. It is a dynamic and highly successful production and export zone, contributing \$3 billion to the New Zealand economy and 19 million in rates each year.

As a manufacturing and distribution hub there are frequent movements of freight in and out of this business precinct. Most commuters to East Tamaki drive alone in their cars, with some driving with passengers, but very few choose public transport (as there are few options) and active modes are restricted by the nature of the roads and types of traffic.

Consequently, transport issues (especially congestion) are a significant impediment to East Tamaki businesses' ability to attract and retain staff, and to productivity. Improved roading and transport is required to enable more efficient movement of freight and people in and out of the area and to address productivity losses.

Feedback

Question 1. Draft Regional Fuel Tax Proposal

We agree that rapid population growth in Auckland has brought challenges, including increased congestion, and reduced accessibility. We also accept that we are not going to address this problem simply by building more roads. Demand management of our existing network must be a key solution, especially creating priority for freight and delivery movements.

We recognise the need to raise more funding for transport projects and services, however we have concerns that the proposed Regional Fuel Tax will not raise sufficient funds or effect sustainable behaviour change. We therefore see it as an interim funding tool until central government enables the introduction of congestion charging initiatives that both manage demand and raise funds equitably as soon as possible, balanced with investment into affordable and more frequent public transport to effect sustainable behavioural change.

We are also concerned that the previously unannounced additional 9-12 cent per litre national fuel tax (to be brought in over the next three years), on top of the RFT will place a further unexpected financial burden on business. This is likely to cause a supply chain knock-on effect that may deliver unintended inflationary consequences such as price rises on consumer goods and services.

A less costly option could be to continue the Interim Transport Levy (ITL) until a more permanent alternative road pricing mechanism is put in place. The ITL is \$114 per household or per business, while the Automobile Association has estimated the average commuter will pay \$135 a year under a RFT.

We previously noted it is essential that the regional tax is hypothecated to spending on specific transport projects and services in Auckland and be reported on with complete detail and transparency. We are pleased to see that the Draft RFT Proposal Document identifies the specific transport projects and services that the proposed regional fuel tax will be spent on and ask that this transparency also be more clearly reflected in the final Regional Land Transport Plan.

Question 2. Regional Fuel Tax Projects

We feel road corridor improvements together with enhancing network capacity are priorities in order to make better use of the existing transport network travel to increase the number of people who can travel through key routes and corridors and decrease travel times.

Project 12: Road Corridor Improvements

We are very pleased to see a key congestion hotspot in the East Tamaki business precinct - Smales/Allens intersection upgrade and road widening - included as one of Project 12: Road Corridor Improvements. Your Draft RFT Proposal Document on page 17 acknowledges that this upgrade will *“have benefits for freight movements and other business-related traffic”* and states *“The project has a very high Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) as it delivers sizeable travel time benefits for a relatively small level of investment.”* We therefore feel this makes a case for the Smales/Allens intersection upgrade and road widening to be prioritised for implementation within the first three years of the decade.

Project 4: AMETI Eastern Busway

We appreciate the acceleration of AMETI stages 2, 3 and 4 with Stage 4 completed by 2025. We particularly note in the Draft RFT Proposal Document on page 9 that *“the project recognises that some key congestion points along the primary vehicle routes still need to be unlocked via targeted road improvements or new connection”*. This will be true of some of the intersections (and related roads) along Ti Rakau Drive between Gossamer Drive and Botany.

Project 3: Improving Airport Access

We welcome the proposal for improved public transport to the airport from East Auckland by 2020/21.

Question 3. Regional Land Transport Plan

In response to your question regarding whether you have identified the most important transport challenges facing Auckland, while we agree overall with the challenges you have identified (safety, congestion, decreases in accessibility, impact on the environment and supporting growth), as you also note, improving network capacity and performance by making the most of the existing transport system is key.

You have properly said that this must focus on optimising the transport network through targeted changes, such as improving the efficiency and coordination of traffic lights, the use of dynamic lanes at peak times, giving priority to freight movements on key freight connections and removing bottlenecks to mitigate congestion. Maximising the benefits from new technology and taking opportunities to influence travel demand are also important, as well as introducing pricing to address congestion as soon as possible.

NZTA Programme – East West Link (revised)

We are pleased to see a revised East West Link included in the Appendix of the RLTP. Our key message regarding this crucial piece of work, is that the East must be included as originally envisaged. It is vitally important that the debilitating congestion impacting the movement of freight and business productivity be addressed as **originally intended** – that is as a key initiative to improve freight access to key freight destinations encompassing the Airport, Onehunga, Penrose **and East Tamaki**.

To date there is next to no detail on how this project is to be revised, so we are very keen to see more detail and look forward to being included in early consultation.

Question 4. Funding Activities

All seven of the areas listed are important but road corridor improvements and network capacity and performance are very important for the reasons identified above.

Conclusion

While we welcome the release of the Regional Land Transport Plan as well as the Auckland Transport Alignment Project Report and the greater clarity this now brings to funding requirements, expenditure and broad delivery timeframes for transport projects across Auckland, we would also like to see more detail on the precise timing and the relative priorities for both the funded and unfunded projects set out in the Plan.

Significant works are planned for the next decade. In the interests of the Auckland economy, it will be important that harmful disruption to businesses affected by construction is minimised and mitigated. We recommend a comprehensive strategic development plan be implemented so that any business disruption be identified, minimised and avoided where possible through careful project management and adequately funded initiatives be designed and actioned to remedy and mitigate any disruption that is unavoidable.

It is of utmost importance to us that early and clear channels of communication are established between the delivery agencies (such as Auckland Transport) and Business Associations as well as key stakeholders in those areas affected by the planned works to facilitate a smooth transition and efficient outcome for the projects.

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