



Public Transport Growth Programme

We know that Aucklanders want more from their public transport services now and as we grow the network. The last few years have been difficult for everyone, and public transport is no exception. Staff shortages, construction projects, rail network rebuilds and other disruptions caused challenges to normal operations and inconvenience for customers. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, public transport in Auckland had reached over 100 million boardings per year. We want to get back to this figure by the middle of 2024. It is no surprise that travel demand has changed after COVID, while disruptions and recent staff shortages caused cancellations that temporarily reduced confidence in the public transport system.

The good news is that things are already getting better for public transport customers; bus services have recently returned to normal reliability. Our rail and ferry services are still dealing with disruptions, and our aim is to get these modes back to normal reliability as quickly as possible. While for rail customers the much-needed rail system upgrades will take some time to complete, for our ferry customers we are investing in recruitment and training to reduce the impact of ferry staff shortages.

Given all of these challenges, AT has decided to develop a Public Transport Growth Programme to bring together the practical actions we will take **to provide reliable services and customer experiences that accelerate patronage growth**. This programme has been endorsed by our funders Auckland Council, who along with Waka Kotahi – The New Zealand Transport Agency and fare paying passengers, fund public transport in Auckland.

We have been, and will continue to be, focused on getting the basics right in order to rebuild Aucklanders' trust and confidence in their public transport network.

Public Transport is part of Auckland's fabric and provides infrastructure to support our lifestyle. Our ferry, bus and metro rail services form an integrated network across the city and region, contributing significantly to our quality of life by

increasing travel choices. We know that public transport is a key part of a balanced transport system, and when done right, provides customers with fast, safe and reliable journeys. We want to drive growth by adding to the many Aucklanders who already use public transport as their preferred travel option.

As Auckland grows and develops public transport will become increasingly important for connecting communities and for providing efficient transport options for people to live, work, and play in all parts of the city. Transport currently contributes around 40% of Auckland's total greenhouse gas emissions. If we can deliver **faster, more reliable and safer journeys** for Aucklanders, more people will use public transport, reducing overall transport emissions.

Our public transport network needs ongoing investment to keep up with the growing demands of our people. Auckland Council, along with Government, are currently investing billions of dollars in new assets like the City Rail link and new busways, and in services that will enable faster, more reliable and safer journeys. These large projects create disruptions across the network, so we will use our network to ensure our customers can always get to their destination. In addition to these large projects, AT is investing across the network in many small improvements that collectively will improve public transport accessibility for all communities.

Changing travel patterns has seen the average number of trips per customer fall, but pleasingly we now have more customers using the network than ever before. We have the following objectives to grow patronage:

1. Win-back customers who have not returned to public transport by:

- Improving reliability and minimising the impact of disruptions for everyone;
- Telling customers what has changed so they will try public transport again;
- Making rapid, multiple and network wide changes that collectively aim to make PT trips faster, safer and more reliable.



Our work programme to grow public transport use

This Public Transport Growth Programme 2023/24 draws from and delivers key elements of our various statutory plans, such as the Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP). Our aim is get back to basics, and then drive growth. To do this, the programme identifies actions in six key focus areas for the next two financial years. These are outlined below.

1. Boosting and valuing the workforce

Workforce shortages in a constrained market mean our services could not operate reliably. In recent times, these shortages have caused many cancellations, and will continue to do so for our ferry customers until sufficient skilled skippers and deckhands join the workforce. Now that we have resolved the bus driver shortage, we need to shift our focus to create an environment to support a thriving public transport workforce. We contract services to a number of bus, rail and ferry operators, who in turn manage the workforce; we have a responsibility to procure services that support the wellbeing and longevity of the workforce.

We will do this by:

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 1:	Working with our partners and stakeholders (operators, unions) to agree minimum terms and conditions. AT will then stipulate minimum employment terms and conditions for future PT operating contracts to ensure that as a sector we attract and retain key people.	Funded	Unfunded

2. Acquire new customers who don't yet use public transport by:

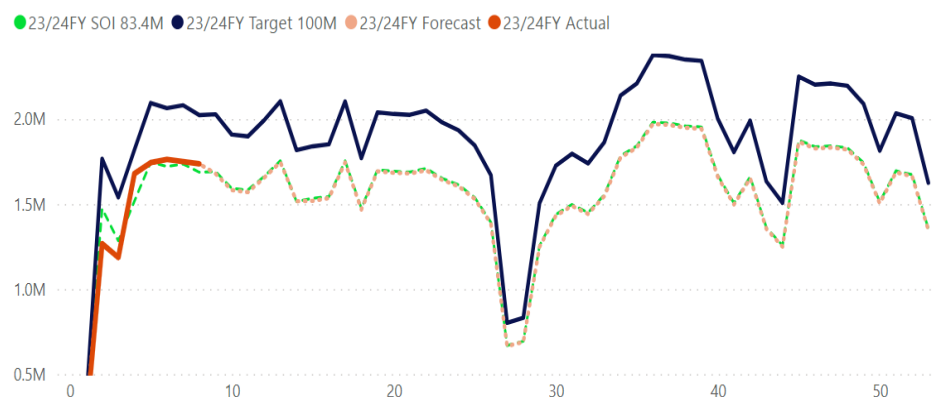
- Promoting public transport more visibly to communities across the city;
- Delivering competitive journeys - improving certainty of journey time, making our services easier to find and pay for;
- Making it really easy for everyone, including visitors, to take their first trip on public transport.

3. Make it easier for people to use public transport more often in their daily lives by:

- Raising awareness of the benefits of the connected public transport network and how to use it to get around;
- Targeted pricing strategies; and
- Partnering with businesses and employers to encourage their staff to use public transport.

Our aim is to grow patronage by 25% so that we achieve a run rate of 100M annual boardings by mid-2024.

Figure 1: Annual patronage profile – actual vs Statement of Intent target vs 100m run-rate target.





		FY24	FY25
Initiative 2:	Holding regular engagement forums with the contracted workforce to gain actionable insights on improvements to their working conditions.	Funded	
Initiative 3:	Commence rollout of bus driver protection shields so that drivers feel safer.	Unfunded	
Initiative 4:	Support the maritime industry to train new skippers and deckhands through an accelerated training programme so that we can return to normal reliability, with normal demands on the workforce. This will require a planned and managed service reduction for the interim.	Reallocation of funds	
Initiative 5:	Implement attrition reporting to proactively understand and work with the industry on any workforce shifts.	Funded	

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 6:	Introducing the 'bus booster' that will prioritise late-running buses through 49 intersections by December 2023, to improve timetable adherence.	Partially funded	Unfunded
Initiative 7:	Accelerate the roll out of bus priority measures, including bus and transit lanes, dynamic lanes, signal priority and other measures. This will include new bus and transit lanes in parts of West Auckland where bus routes are changing, and will improve reliability. We will investigate further measures on the busiest bus routes and corridors, as well as congestion hotspots for the most benefit.	Partially funded	
Initiative 8:	Trial pop-up bus priority to support special events to improve journey times and reliability for event-goers. Rapidly moving from trial to adopting new operational approach for best practice temporary bus-priority to support special events in conjunction with special fares and marketing PT for access.	Unfunded	
Initiative 9:	Promote service reliability and any journey-time improvements we make to all customers across Auckland, so that Aucklanders are encouraged to use PT. In particular with reference to market	Funded	

2. Providing faster, more reliable travel

When buses get delayed on the network, customers have unpredictable journey times which can be stressful while they wait. Improving how buses get through traffic and deal with disruptions brings better punctuality, reliability and give customers easier journeys with predictable arrival times. This is particularly important for bus journeys, which make up 75% of all journeys taken on our network.

We will improve bus journey times and reliability by:



		FY24	FY25
	segments (e.g. by demographic, journey type, sub-region).		
Initiative 10:	Trial headway timetabling and related technology on at least one high frequency bus route to give customers more certainty of wait times, and to measure impact on patronage.	Unfunded	
Initiative 11	Deliver a guarantee on timed connections at key transfer points within the network to give customers more confidence that their complete journey will be easy. Trial “Hold my Bus” and get transfers and connections truly working.	Unfunded	

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 12:	Delivering better disruption services and communication that provides personalised support to navigate disruptions (digital and on the network), so that it is easier for customers to navigate disruptions.		Partially funded
Initiative 13:	Improve on advanced notification of delays and alternative services so customers can make informed decisions in advance of travel.		Funded
Initiative 14:	Implement a staged bus priority plan to reduce the impacts of disruption, in particular improving the performance and routing of rail replacement bus services.		Unfunded
Initiative 15:	Explore whether pop-up park and rides would improve service to customers during the rail renewal programme, making it easier for customers to keep using train service during this major disruption.		Unfunded
Initiative 16:	Ensure we explain clearly to our customers what we are doing with infrastructure and service improvements, and why, so that Aucklanders recognise the long-term benefits and are more likely to return to PT. This includes through targeted communications campaigns and pop-up activations.		Funded

3. Help customers navigate disruptions, and build network resilience

Our customers face disruption to their journeys as a result of ongoing investment in infrastructure that will make our network better in the future. Furthermore, 2023 has shown us that storm events and climate change can cause disruptions and have a rapid and lasting impact on the city. Disruption to public transport services is something we must manage as a growing and diverse city.

In the past our focus has been to ensure customers have up to date information about disruptions to their journeys. We will continue to improve how we communicate about disruptions and shift our focus to using our network to provide greater resilience. We will ensure customers have better alternatives when there is disruption to their normal service. We will do this by:



		FY24	FY25
Initiative 17:	Add disruption information to on-bus audio so that it is easier for customers to make choices during disruptions.	Funded	

		FY24	FY25
	and reduce their carbon footprint, and will incentivise PT use for their employees.		
Initiative 21:	Simplify public transport concessions so that they are easy to understand and support the right groups of customers.	Unfunded	
Initiative 22:	Identifying corporate partnerships and opportunities that add customer value, to incentivise Aucklanders to try PT or use it more.	Funded	

4. Modernising fares

Commuter patterns are changing with more people working from home. Timetables and fares could better match these evolving customer needs. We need to shift our approach to be more responsive to changing travel patterns, and provide simpler fares that encourage people to use public transport more by giving better value for money. This should reward frequent users, and make it easier for everybody to use public transport – including visitors. We will do this by:

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 18:	Introducing a weekly fare cap, to reward customers that take public transport more often, simplify fares for new customers and incentivise more frequent use.	Unfunded	
Initiative 19:	Introducing open-loop technology to make fare payment more accessible by allowing customers to tag on with credit/debit cards and mobile phones.	Funded	
Initiative 20:	Working with businesses to support their employees to get on-board with public transport, including through workplace public transport subsidies. This will allow businesses to report on	Reallocation of funds	Funded

5. Supporting the customer journey

Many people choose not to use public transport because it can be hard to figure out how to use the network or how to pay for it. We will shift focus onto making it easier for our customers – both new and existing - to plan, pay and travel safely and easily with public transport from start to finish. This includes the first and last part of a public transport journey, which is often on foot. We will do this by:

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 23:	Helping first time users take their first journey with interactive guided experiences to make it easier to try PT.	Partially Funded	Unfunded
Initiative 24:	Hiring more transport officers to increase presence on the network and help	Unfunded	



		FY24	FY25
	customers feel more safe (subject to funding)		
Initiative 25:	Improving wayfinding to provide an intuitive experience in navigating the network.	Unfunded	
Initiative 26:	Deploy interactive digital maps and resources to help those with accessible needs.	Unfunded	
Initiative 27:	Seek (or reallocate) funding to increase the minor works programme so that we can make the many small improvements sought by local Boards and communities to improve safety and accessibility right around the network.	Partially funded	Unfunded

6. Marketing great public transport journeys

It can be difficult for people to figure out the best way to use public transport to get to their destination. Many people in Auckland don't know how the public transport network can work for them because it can be intimidating for new users. We want to make sure all Aucklanders and visitors find it easy to make the most of the public transport network. Not just heading to work but visiting each other in different suburbs and traveling for leisure purposes. We also want people to feel confident in planning their travel and making sure they know how to get the most efficient journey.

We must get better at selling the significant value that is the Auckland public transport network, and explain how easy it is to navigate around Auckland. We will also shift our focus to listening better to what our customers need and creating

products that address those needs – whether that means new services, or better fare products. We will get more targeted when promoting services to new groups and highlighting great routes and services that are underutilised. We will do this by:

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 28:	Implement an active customer acquisition programme to get more corporate, youth, supergold, and visitors to the city on board.	Unfunded	
Initiative 29:	Integrate a journey time, cost and carbon calculator to the AT app to allow people to compare their options and understand the impacts of those choices.	Unfunded	
Initiative 30:	Targeted community engagement to encourage use of the existing network, based on market segmentation data, by understanding equity of access and use within our communities.	Unfunded	
Initiative 31:	Promote event transport, local trips, new services and popular destination travel options so that we build on increased leisure travel.	Funded	
Initiative 32:	Directly market new and recently implemented route improvements to customers living with 400m of bus stops to encourage more Aucklanders to try the existing network.	Funded	



Monitoring our progress

We will track our implementation of this programme and report this to our AT Board and to Auckland Council's Transport and Infrastructure Committee. We will agree on the reporting framework to Council and the public, so that information is accessible, readable and transparent.

We will be accountable for the delivery of these actions over the next two years and for achieving the desired patronage increase. Where we know we have funding shortfalls, AT will make the best case we can for investment in the growth of the public transport network. You can see how we are doing in our monthly reports on the AT Website.

We will do this by:

		FY24	FY25
Initiative 33:	Facilitating a regular chairs and leaders meeting to achieve alignment between the Council's Transport and Infrastructure Committee, Auckland Transport Board and relevant senior officials.	Funded	
Initiative 34:	Agreeing on a reporting framework that will transparently report progress.	Funded	
Initiative 35:	Develop a regular benchmarking report to ensure that Auckland customers are receiving value for money for our public transport services, and that we are increasing patronage in line with similar cities that Auckland measures itself against.	Funded	