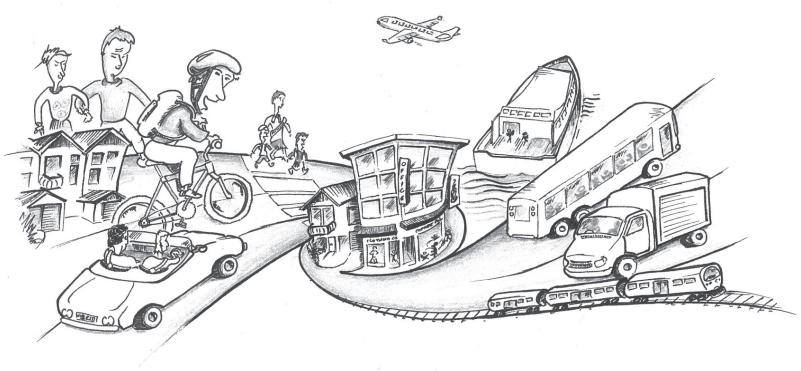

Appendix 2: Background to Strategic Options

The following three strategic options were developed and consulted on to enable an informed choice to be made about the level of investment in transport and the balance of that investment.

Strategic Option 1 – Minimal road investment: High demand management approach

This option is a more accelerated approach to managing travel demand than that contemplated in the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005. This option requires a significant shift out of the motor vehicle to use of passenger transport. This would be actively promoted to residents.

The aim is to reduce the number of cars on the road and the number of vehicle kilometres travelled per resident. Current levels of traffic congestion would be expected to continue in the long term. This option aims to reduce traffic on selected arterial roads where high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes would take up an existing lane of traffic at peak times.

This option requires a low investment in roading and a substantial investment in passenger transport. Road investment would be limited to new connections which enable new businesses to establish rather than to make traffic flow better. High-cost projects would be excluded from the programme, for example: road widening to increase efficiency, most new road connections, New Lynn Transit Orientated Design project, Whau Crossing bridge and half the cycle network.

Strategic Option 2 – Selected road investment: Medium demand management approach

This option provides less investment in the arterial roads than contemplated under the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005. The aim is to provide some road connections, but to use the existing road network to manage traffic, buses and high-occupancy vehicles.

This option requires a shift to passenger transport for traffic to flow on the road network at peak times. This option requires a low investment in roading and a substantial investment in passenger transport. Road investment would be focused on town centre connections and arterial improvements to enable HOV lanes. An existing lane on selected arterial roads would be used for buses and high-occupancy vehicles at peak times with limited improvements at intersections. This approach would not provide extra capacity on arterial roads.

This option includes the New Lynn Transit Orientated Design project. Some high-cost projects are excluded from the programme, for example: road widening and intersection treatment to increase efficiency, and half the cycle network.

Strategic Option 3 – Balanced road investment: Travel choice

This option is the most closely aligned with the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005. The aim is to reduce congestion in parts of the road network and to give people the choice to use passenger transport. Traffic congestion will be addressed by increasing road connections in town centres and disconnected neighbourhoods, addressing congestion at selected intersections and improving traffic flow on the arterial road network. This approach requires the provision of alternative modes of travel. This option aims to increase the traffic efficiency on arterial roads with options for bus and HOV lanes and some road widening.

This option includes the New Lynn Transit Orientated Design project. New road connections would be created

to generate new businesses and to improve traffic flow in the network. Some road widening on arterial roads would be done to enable bus priority measures and increase the traffic efficiency on arterial roads.

This option is expected to provide increased efficiency and ease congestion at key parts of the roading network. The arterial roads would be better able to manage the traffic entering and exiting the state highway network. Measures such as congestion charges would be required for significant numbers of people to shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

This is a balanced programme with travel demand management and investment in all modes increasing the efficiency of the road network.

The key distinguishing factors between these strategic options were:

- The extent to which there is road widening and road connections in order to address congestion and efficiency issues.
- The 'choice' or 'push' to shift from a single-occupant vehicle to other modes of travel.
- The size of the programme in terms of the Council's financial investment.

Waitakere City Council adopted option 3 as its preferred option. A number of options were considered prior to the development of the three strategic options:

a. Carry on as we are.
b. The programme modelled for the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005.
c. A modification of the programme modelled for the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005 to take into account Waitakere's particular issues, requirements and ability to pay:
    i. City form and land use initiatives, such as the creation of a major town centre at Westgate, civilian airport at Whenuapai, and new schools in the north west, which provide significant transport benefits.
    ii. Business location and transport of goods and services.
    iii. Preparation for road pricing.
    iv. Advocacy positions.
d. Doing more or less than the programme proposed in the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005.
e. Greater emphasis on local economic development.
f. Greater emphasis on a particular mode of transport (for example, roading - Increase the capacity of the roading network as a priority to address congestion).

Carry on as we are

The 'steady as she goes' approach essentially means that the Council would carry on with the same focus and priority as in previous years.

Historically, the vast majority of Council expenditure has been on road maintenance and new connections, such as the Munroe Bridge.

Funding on passenger transport infrastructure has typically been low, although the Council has recently increased expenditure on bus and rail infrastructure. The Council has long advocated for development of the rail corridor and as a result expenditure associated with development of the rail station precincts is either underway or planned in conjunction with upgrading of the rail corridor.

Prior to 2006 there had been little or no expenditure on Travel Demand Management (TDM) schemes although plans had been laid to commence development of school and workplace travel plans. The Council adopted a walking and cycling strategy and proposes to begin implementation from 2006.

The Council does not believe it can continue the previous narrow and limited approach to transport investment. This approach would help keep rates similar to present levels but would not deliver the outcomes sought by the city and region.

Focus on roads

An alternative school of thought says that the Council should simply widen and construct more roads for use by all traffic given that the vast majority of travel in Waitakere is by car or other private vehicle.

Various studies have been undertaken to assess what such as policy might mean for Waitakere. The aim of these studies has been to identify the scale of improvement works required just to maintain current operating speeds and journey times on the local road network and accommodate growth in population and employment.

The studies have identified that developing the road network in this way would require substantial capital and ongoing investment in the roading network which would be unaffordable to the ratepayers of Waitakere. In addition there would be significant environmental and social impacts and substantial land and property required to develop the road network in order to keep up with demand.

Such an approach would also result in increased stormwater and air pollution, severance, less interaction and tend to increase urban sprawl. This would conflict with the

Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 1999, and Waitakere City Council's District Plan policies which are aimed at encouraging intensification at the major town centres.

It would also encourage increased travel by car and would reduce demand for travel by alternative means such as passenger transport, walking and cycling and thereby reduce investment in these more sustainable travel modes. The outcome would be that some parts of the community would continue to have little or no choice other than to travel by car. There would also be less incentive for people to consider travel options, including the timing of trips or the need to travel at all.

To sum up, this approach would not be sustainable and would conflict with council and regional plans and strategies seeking to develop a more sustainable future. If the Council were to pursue this option, it would be difficult to obtain the funding assistance required given the conflict with the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005.

Even with a substantial investment in the roading network, gains in travel times would be unlikely to be sustained as the city grows in population and local activity. More roading investment, beyond the plan period, would be required just to maintain present operating levels, the consequences of which would be very considerable.

Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005 (RLTS)

In contrast, the RLTS is a balanced and sustainable strategy that aims to get the best out of the existing roading network, build new links where essential, and get more people using passenger transport and other non-car modes or choosing to travel at a different time or not at all.

The RLTS supports compact urban development with intensification around transport nodes and along transport corridors. It aims to build a platform for more balanced investment in transport across modes. It has a strong focus on passenger transport facilitates and the possible future introduction of road pricing in the Auckland region.

The following are the proposed investment allocations to each mode in the RLTS over the 10-year period 2006 to 2016:

- $6.810 billion on new roads and state highway infra-structure, maintenance/renewals, traffic management and safety (62%);
- $3.80 billion on passenger transport (34%);
- $0.42 billion on Travel Demand Management, including travel plans, walking and cycling (4%).

The following is a summary of expected outcomes of the RLTS by 2016 (subject to the effects of increases in oil prices and the introduction of road pricing):

- Traffic volumes are expected to increase by 22% over 2005 levels (45% increase in traffic volumes between key business centres).
- Interpeak travel speeds are expected to decrease by 5.6%.
- Average speeds for travel to the port in the morning peak are expected to decrease by 9%; and 8% to the airport.
- Excellent information on the availability of different modes of transport will assist sustainable travel choices.
- Half the trips into the central city in the morning peak will be by passenger transport.
- In the peak periods, passenger transport will represent 11% of trips (compared to 7% in 2001) and walking and cycling will represent 15% of trips (compared to 5% in 2001).
- Driver attitudes towards drink driving, speeding and general traffic enforcement are expected to improve over current levels.
- Regional road injury crashes per 10,000 people are expected to decline by 6%.
- Crashes, deaths and injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists are expected to decrease.
- Energy used to travel, as measured by fuel use, is expected to increase by 26%.
- CO_2 emissions are expected to increase by 21%.
- Discharges to water from the transport system are expected to increase by 20%.
- 13% of the urban population should be living within the regional growth nodes.
- The number of walking and cycling trips in town centres is expected to increase by 63%.
- Passenger services on the rail line will not be more than 10 minutes apart in the morning peak.

Whilst this will not solve traffic congestion over the 10-year period, and travel times are expected to continue to increase, the RLTS will mean that more people will have greater travel choice than at present.

Applications for funding will be prioritised to some extent according to a project's contribution to the RLTS.