

Business East Tamaki Feedback

Draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on land transport

1. Business East Tamaki is disappointed with the lack of vision in the Draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on land transport. We agree that the transport system needs to support New Zealand's economy, but the GPS threatens instead to undermine it.
2. Business East Tamaki represents New Zealand's largest industrial district, with 2,000 firms, 40,000+ employees and \$3bn of annual economic activity <https://businesset.org.nz/>. The area is ideal for industry; it is flat, well-located and well-connected. Many businesses are suppliers to other enterprises in East Tamaki and there are numerous specialist firms that benefit from proximity to one another. This agglomeration generates knowledge and wealth.
3. The biggest threat to the East Tamaki economy is its transport system, which relies very heavily on cars. This has failed to keep pace with the area's growth and intensification and threatens its future development. 96 per cent of employees arrive by car – the highest rate in New Zealand.
5. The GPS fails to understand the nature of labour markets and transport. It seeks to end traffic congestion by building new roads. This will not work; it simply induces further traffic jams, embedding congestion in East Tamaki for decades to come.
6. Business surveys reveal that staff would like to have the freedom to take public transport or cycle to work (East Tamaki *is* flat) but are deterred by a road network that caters exclusively for trucks and cars. It offers almost no priority for public transport and is unsafe for cycling. Business East Tamaki is keen to work with local partners to rebalance the transport system, but this cannot happen without commensurate public investment.
7. The GPS threatens to reduce the amount of operational funding for public transport. Our surveys reveal that more people would use buses, but only if they were more frequent and reliable. We welcome the completion of the Eastern Busway in 2027. In the meantime, East Tamaki urgently needs more frequent buses, operating for longer hours, with bus lanes and other priority measures, to reach its economic potential. The GPS does not appear to recognise this.
8. The GPS is biased against active travel, to the extent that it specifically excludes cycling and walking infrastructure from general highways improvements, while making the active travel fund much smaller and more contestable. The GPS needs to recognise the value of cycling for transport, then commit to investing in cycling infrastructure in industrial and warehousing areas like East Tamaki.
9. The GPS proposes significant expenditure on brand-new highways infrastructure. Physical infrastructure should not be built without considerable scrutiny because it is expensive to build, operate and maintain. The best way to use urban transport assets efficiently is to support space-efficient transport

modes; that is, public transport, walking and cycling. East Tamaki would benefit considerably from improvements to its existing transport assets, such as:

- Bus priority measures, including bus lanes, bus gates at traffic lights and other measures to improve the speed and quality of bus services in the area
- A programme of dedicated, high-quality, two-way separated cycleways along the main roads in the area. There is space to do this within the existing highway corridors such as Highbrook Drive, Kerwyn Avenue and Allen's Road.
- Improvements to the pedestrian environment, including safer crossings, wider footways and better lighting.
- This chart shows how a road's capacity will increase if it accommodates walking, cycling and public transport: <https://nacto.org/publication/transit-street-design-guide/introduction/why/designing-move-people/>

10. With its overwhelming focus on increasing motor traffic capacity, the GPS is a one-way bet on cars. This is an extremely outdated approach to transport investment; one which will fail to support the economy of East Tamaki and, by association, New Zealand.

11. The East Tamaki Transport Plan (<https://businesset.org.nz/uploads/ddb3b74b4acbb17648293177b068801f.pdf>) has been compiled with input from some of New Zealand's largest manufacturers and employers. It seeks to increase the mode share of public transport, walking and cycling, freeing up road space for freight movement and providing more choice. We are not doing this for altruistic reasons; quite simply, the current congested, unreliable, heavily pro-car transport system in East Tamaki is bad for business.

12. We want to address this constraint and support growth, competitiveness and economic output. East Tamaki could be the most desirable business location in New Zealand, but it needs a transport system to support this vision. The car-centric approach used to date – and promoted in the GPS – has led to unbearable traffic congestion and the highest car mode share in the country. It is time to take a more intelligent approach to transport investment.

13. We urge the Minister to engage meaningfully with Auckland Transport (AT), transport planning professionals and the East Tamaki business community.