

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY
NORTHER CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS
FINAL STATEMENT OF
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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT v. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The planning documents claim to achieve both – and many other objectives as well. Conflicts between them are not explored, nor any detrimental consequences of such conflicts. Rather, Plans assume that no objectives conflict and all can be achieved, for benefits which will exceed any cost.

In reality, Plans conform to the UN's Agenda 21/2030's definition of Sustainable Development", and ignore the detrimental consequences for economic development. The proposed NCI project epitomises the former, and disregards citizens' real wants and needs, for which they are paying dearly.

JOINT WITNESS STATEMENT

My views are fairly represented in the JWS. Evidently there is a primary difference between my own world view, informed as it is of a need for people and communities (including companies) to be **enabled** to make their own choices and achieve betterment according to their own wants & needs, values, and affordabilities as the only means to develop wealth, thus addressing the Plans' economic objectives, and that of the contemporary enviro-planning industry, where often unaffordable "world class standards" are sought for some sectors while other sectors are ignored, or even pilloried and demonised. Standalone housing (necessitating urban expansion), decentralisation (for greater inter-access efficiency) and adequate provision for automobility where it is preferred by citizens are three classic cases in point.

This difference is an ancient one between what Chinese have long seen as Yang and Yin. They represent the two sides of the one coin; immiscible but wholly dependent on the existence of the other for an appropriate balance for that point in evolutionary time. Hills and valleys, men and women, realism and idealism, progress or perish; such couplings are everywhere apparent; polar opposites which could not exist without the other. We need romantic idealism (visions, aesthetics, designs, plans), but in no more than equal measure to the rational realism (rationality, logic, pragmatism and functionality) with which nature and nurture have predominantly endowed me. The problem as I see it is the rise and rise of idealistic "Neo-Romanticism" at the expense of the Ages of Reason and Enlightenment on which the west has been built, ultimately to obliterate them The cause is what I see as a casual disregard for economic soundness and the resulting productivity on which our civilizational edifice is built. The effect could be a pulling of the rug on which our current world and wisdom rests, potentially with devastating effects.

While the NZTA-proposed NCI project could be seen as the application of collectivised idealism and biased social engineering, it can demonstrably deliver some benefits for automobility as by far the most (overall) efficient form of transport. It could equally well deliver a great deal more for automobility for a similar financial outlay, helping us to climb out of the depths of debt in which the average New Zealander finds himself.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

APPENDICES PROMISED BUT NOT YET DELIVERED

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT v. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Auckland stands at the cross-roads. The NCI project epitomises the choice still open to us.

Are choices being made today – such as neglect, derogation, even demonization of automobility – (as epitomised by the NZTA/AT-proposed NCI) the right ones? Are public transport, cycling and walking adequate substitutes for an automobility which enables greater human flourishing (prosperity) than any other invention in history (perhaps excluding fire)

In CUTS opinion and associated world view, no. For me, the NZTA-proposed project gets it wrong.

There can be no doubt our economy is going downhill (rising debt, growing unaffordability), and we need immigration to hide this unsavoury fact. For we are choosing to cut off our nose to spite our face, with ideologically-driven anti-economic projects like this compromise created by NZTA and AT (under the aegis of the real Auckland Plan – globalist-originated anti-market/human/western “Sustainable Development” as specified in UNEP’s Agenda 21/2030, for which implosion cities like Auckland are to be monuments – to counter-productivity, and destruction of the western world.

The Auckland Plan is a “fail” in terms of the real wants and needs of Aucklanders; this is increasingly obvious to increasingly frustrated angry and indebted citizens. It has achieved nothing that can be described as truly sustainable development. But why should it? Urban implosion’s association with truly “sustainable development” has never even been attempted, far less been persuasively argued, and an absolutely opposite outcome is increasingly evident. Brexit and Trumpism, here we come.

Do we “enable” our citizens to make their own choices according to their own values as to how to better their lives, or is it the right and duty of central planners to make decisions for us, on the likes of transport mode, preferred destination, housing location, type, standards, costs, affordabilities, etc. If so, those decisions are increasingly under scrutiny. I consider many of them to be wrong.

Do we continue destroying our society and economy (always blaming something else, such as offshore markets)? OR do we realise that the “natural” (genetic) driver of all life forms is towards evolution, progress, betterment, flourishing, “peace and prosperity”, rather than stasis, stop-the-worldism and stagnation under the banner of “sustainability”, which costs a lot but delivers very little. Except a hiding from progress and denial of the (wealth) means to peace and prosperity. As President Clinton said, “It’s the economy first, stoopid” That means, real benefits must exceed costs.

For “de-development” is what is occurring, under a figleaf of protecting the planet – which is itself demonstrably not happening. Planning has reverted from “enabling” the economic use of space, progress and economic development to centralised (“integrated”) “command and control”, as is deemed necessary (by enviro-planners) to achieve someone’s subjective idea of “sustainable development”. That way lies death, even as Lot’s wife “looked back” to a “safer” more familiar place – and “turned into a pillar of salt”. Ahead lie problems, but life itself is solving problems and making personal choices “for the better”.

The CUTS proposal is designed to enable citizens to achieve such betterment. That way lies peace and prosperity – and the wealth with which to address environmental problems without “breaking the bank”. For the latter ensures real environmental degradation faster than anything else does.

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Auckland Plan as the Overall Framework :

Auckland Plan is a direct copy of Portland OR's "Smart (sic) Growth" town plan, which purports to address the requirements of UN/UNEP Agenda 21 for "Sustainable Development" but has little if anything to do with "Sust Development" or "Sustainable Management".

What it does do is "Act locally in the interests of Globalist re-distributions"

Economically and socially, it can be shown to lead to societal unsustainability. (look around)

Auckland Plan is an aesthetics-based "designer city" which relies more on economy-suppressive "Command & Control" rather than "enablement of people and communities" (incl. coys)

Auckland Plan is counter-productive of resource-lean productivity/prosperity, ie of objectives, wasting resources including energy and capital, destroying urban greenery, dividing society

Auckland Plan demonises and does not provide for intra-urban automobility, relying instead on public transport, cycling or walking, which, for around 95% of day-long vehicular trips, is **(sometimes much) less economically-efficient** than automobility.

(Note : all vehicular trips are commercial; suppressing them suppresses commerce)

Auckland Plan demonises residential subdivision and urban expansion, which is the cheapest and most choice-laden form of urban development, the environmental effects of which are not (net) significant, and the social & economic effects of which are substantially positive.

Moreover, the transport effects are not significant in the overall scheme of things)

Auckland Plan is a globalist ideology claimed to be "world's best practice", so local planners have not been and may not in future be willing to "hear" anything against it or resile from it.

Auckland Plan is a recipe for economic debilitation, societal division – and ever-growing congestion

Auckland Transport :

Auckland Transport is legally required to implement the transport aspects of the Auckland Plan,

thus does not provide for the automobility which pays road user taxes, subsidises transit.

All forms of cross-subsidisation weaken the economy, and must be offset by other gains, which are not evident in coercive public transp. (unless reduced living standards = "gain")

Thus an NZTA design approved by AT as meeting the requirements of the Auckland Plan is counter-productive of the Plan's stated objectives (and those of other relevant plans)

The NZTA roading proposals in particular :

There are no south-facing inter-motorway ramps at Constellation. There should be.

Nor is there proof that they could be added later

There are no south-facing mwy-std ramps linking Albany Expwy with SH1 (south). There should be.

Nor is there proof they could be added later.

The east-west ramps linking SH20 with Constellation Drive should be west of Paul Matthews Drive.

The NZTA Busway Extension proposals :

There is no background of proposed road network development, so it has to be assumed that SH1 will carry the bulk of local and long-distance traffic. Auckland's population is forecast to increase substantially, yet there is no obvious provision for motorway widening, or that the busway leaves room for such widening as will become essential. An ultimate state of SH1 development should be planned, and room left for it by busway footprint. That's 'planning'!

Other :

There is no call for a 5m wide SUP between Albany Hwy and Paul Matthews Dr. It should be deleted.

The Hockey facility can and should be retained on its current site, with fields 3 & 4 slid north-east, thus preventing an expensive, disruptive and resource-diminishing domino effect on others

NZTA'S NCI PROPOSAL - CUTS' SUMMARY

The NZTA-sought connection of SH18 to SH1 (north) addresses inter-regional (Northland-connecting) needs (as is NZTA's sole responsibility), but such needs are a small percentage of the intra-regional needs for which the SH18 and SH1 corridors also exist.

As proposed, the project does not meet metro-wide objectives, particularly those of "enabling" productive efficiency (prosperity) and reducing congestion towards that end, such as only the provision of judiciously-located new arterial and motorway general-purpose roadscape can achieve. Nor does the proposal mention local needs (eg Upper Harbour Local Board objectives), which purport to reflect community wants and needs and which also seek relief of congestion, as a primary goal.

Yet, provision is made for extension of the North Shore busway, which, overall, is very restrictive in terms of origins, destinations, and origin-destination couplings served. That is, the project would not optimally "enable" additional commerce, ie restricts the means of "enabling" productivity and prosperity. Contrary to assertions (eg by Enviro-NGOs and the previous Mayor), public transportisation will not "fix" congestion, so much as exacerbate it by opposing congestion-reducing decentrisation. Rather, it feeds off congestion's growth rather than relieving it. Nor can fixed-route transit adequately substitute for the efficient inter-accessibility of all parts of the urban region enabled by the auto-mobilisation (and motorway-building) which "enabled" the western world's post-WWII growth spurt. This growth has been subsiding ever since planners claimed to be capable of "integrating" a whole city's wants and needs in a single rigid plan while not providing for growth of private road traffic.

Generous provision is also made for cycling & walking trails, usage of which is both measured and forecast to be far less than could warrant their provision economically, quite apart from being inappropriate alongside motorways and replicating existing connections which are generally more pleasant, more "integrated" with existing landuses and almost as direct. A triumph of ideology and social engineering over the economic intent of S.32.

"Where there is a will, there is a way" (No will, no way)

Or at least there could be, provided planners admit open and balanced consideration of all relevant factors by NOT assigning absolute value to a perception of 'safety' or 'sustainable management/development', all of which are at least questionable on grounds of direct fact and logic, and all of which are indirectly opposed to the economic development and prosperity that both government and the Auckland Plan also seek. In other words, there's a mis-match between the public's 'will' and the 'way' proposed in this project, for no good reason and some very economically counterproductive ones.

The Mayoral Drive and much of the motorway network were mostly built in the 1960's – 1980's. They represent an addressing of the city's long-term infrastructural needs despite difficulties at the time. Today, city planners lack the will to 'enable people & communities' (including commercial companies) to address their personal wants and needs optimally and affordably according to their own values. Instead their plans adopt perceived global needs for transfer of wealth from the west to developing countries as expressed in UNEP's Agenda 21/2030 = 'sustainable development'¹, and are absolutist as regards those perceived 'global needs'. Plan-stated social and economic objectives are mere wishful thinking which deludes the public into thinking it can have its cake and eat it too. Auckland's currently-failing net-productivity (overhead costs, eg high and growing congestion), the unaffordability of developed land (thus housing), and the high costs (capital, material resources, energy) of prematurely reconstructing and upsizing in situ existing infrastructure and urban fabric are all consequences of a globalised (centralised, unilateral) and absolutist enviro-planning industry opposed to free choice² in favour of aesthetics and a formulaic 'designer city'³ built around pre-WWII, pre-automobilised and outdated (overall, much less efficient) public transport. Legislation governing Auckland Transport requires it to realise that Auckland Plan, rather than effectively address congestion⁴ as a priority.

¹ eg "save energy" – which the Auckland Plan doesn't do; re-centralising the city and congesting traffic costs far more in increased energy use per km and increased distance travelled (than to sub-regional centres). Also supposedly "preventing climate change" by reconstructing densifying re-orienting and railroading the city while paying \$1.4 bill. annually into some U.N. black hole offshore for no real and significant reduction in carbon dioxide concentrations, all-the-while assuming that CO2 is the sole agent of climate change and there are no other significant factors or feedback mechanisms; - extraordinary assumptions!

² eg of automobility and provision of general purpose arterial roadscape for it, of urban expansion as the most affordable and choice-laden form of development, and of minimally 'world-classed' land development such as enables housing affordability.

³ which extensively demonises people by demonising automobility, roadscape, standalone housing and 'environmental effects' for no sound environmental reason other than (their perception of) an 'overgrowth' of global population (reversing by 2050?).

⁴ ... which rules out public transport. Cycling and walking are insignificant as economic forms of urban inter-accessibility.

The only general purpose roading project planned for North Shore is an access road relieving Gills Road. In contrast, planning for public transport is intensive and extensive, despite low real demand. Re-orienting local bus services to force-feed the Northern Busway as a means of coping with congestion instead of building roads, when the beneficiaries are (largely) the top lawyer/accountant classes serving the whole region, rather than the 90% of jobs (including blue-collar jobs) located throughout the suburban area, has been shown in America to reduce patronage of the local buses more than the increase in radial transit traffic such as uses the Northern Busway.

This is not 'planning' in the sense reflected in stated objectives and approved of by the public; ie to enable citizens to provide for their own wants and needs (RMA S.5) by funding efficiently and effectively 'enabling' infrastructure (through road user charges) subject only to 'environmental bottom lines'. Walking and cycling to work had their heyday when cities were much smaller and before people could afford (originally) privately owned and adequately profitable (unsubsidised) public transport. And public transport had its heyday until extraordinarily market-enabling automobilisation became almost universal after WWII, enabling the massive increase in productivity which saw western world cities grow to their present size.

Rather, it is 'anti-planning' which, as in this project, is failing to address growing congestion, thus suppressing economic activity by imposing – and/or allowing to develop - high jump barriers to economic development. Planners and other advocates of public transport (fares are subsidised from about 40% of actual running costs, ie it's a partial "freebie") ignore the comparatively high level of inter-accessibility thus commercial activity thus productivity, jobs, and prosperity that auto-mobility offers when they say "why build roads; they only fill up with traffic". Such nihilism and abandonment of the "enablement" imperative will see the city grind to a halt. An analogy; 'Why build houses when they only fill up with people? Or sewers, when they will only overflow anyway? Have we lost the will to accommodate the increased population which has become necessary to prop up an otherwise-failing economy? (Why not growth per capita, which is the real measure of progress/evolution/development?)

Until multiple conflicting goals are seen as considerations rather than as absolutes, and weighed along with realities such as utility, desirability and affordability, our economy will continue to suffer from central "planning" which does not address citizen wants and needs, and the economic decline which automatically results. Just where has central planning ever succeeded, if it doesn't "enable"?

This is not to say we do not need planning and environmental care

Clearly we need both, but in a manner which also addresses real human wants and needs rather than suppressing them in favour of 'planet saving'. For the most basic (genetic) drivers of all life forms are to survive, prosper and procreate to ensure species sustainability. Accordingly it is the most basic of human rights to prosper, for which cooperating within communities is propitious. Planning to 'enable' prosperity serves the public in the manner they are paying for, and vice versa. Planning which frustrates prosperity (while claiming to seek it) and acts as if population growth and the most efficient form of inter-access must be artificially suppressed opposes the public interest rather than serving it.

Similarly, the environment is showing some signs of stress which can be relieved (although in the absence of any restraint much of it is grossly exaggerated). The wealthier the society, the more of such environmental care it can afford – and does afford, as is evident throughout the world; 'richer is cleaner'. Fish now live throughout the Thames, and Los Angeles excessive ozone days have reduced from one in three to one per year, both without guidance from an RMA.

But the current system presents a problem.

When there is 'only one game in town' (being the 'Smart (sic) Growth'/Urban Implosion/'Compact Cities' formula) and (supposedly) only one profession capable of integrating everybody's preferences into one plan, that plan becomes a subjective monopoly of ideas, a fixity, and its promotion becomes defence demanding unquestioning acceptance 'on trust'. Throughout history the high priests of such religions (and there have been a great many) have been exalted while all others have been reduced to servitude, with their values being dictated to them rather than personally discovered and pursued.

How to address such a problem?

The Chinese perceive the need for balance in all things, via creative tension between polar opposites referred to as 'Yin and Yang'. One facet of such is the need for realism to keep idealism in check; working without restraint, both sets of initially well-intentioned advocates keep the other set honest, and the answer on any question requires value-judgements and tradeoffs as constrained by public

affordabilities. The purpose of political representatives is to study the issues and effect such trade-offs, making decisions governed by their perception of value and affordability to the citizenry for which they can be held accountable, rather than merely rubber stamping any set of values presented to them. Such values currently take the form of a globalist planning formula which is held – by proponents – to reflect 'world's best practice', and claimed to represent the epitome of 'sustainable development'. Nowhere is such a claim justified; in effect it is a recipe for collapsing the western world.

One way of discouraging such corruption-of-purpose could be to split the planning department in half, and set pragmatic, realistic professionals (infrastructural engineers, urban economists, civil project accountants) in charge of one half. The staff would soon sort themselves out into idealists or realists.

Otherwise the power imbalance between project proposers and submitters will always work against the submitters, and we have planning by fiat which is unconstrained to address that which citizens are paying for. Like genuine alleviation of congestion.

Can the current system admit of error?

That is, is there any way for a productivity/progress-oriented 'world view' to be admitted alongside the (effective, if not always intended) 'stop-automobility' which upsets the world view established through the Auckland Plan, and resulting projects which do not address the major rationale for a 'transport' (roading!) project – which is alleviation of congestion? That is the question!

WEAVING BETWEEN ADJACENT ON- AND OFF-RAMPS.

1. SAFETY v. EFFICIENCY CONSIDERATIONS

Much is made of weaving capacity – as measured by weaving distance and crossing volumes - being theoretically sufficient to prevent any slowing of traffic speed, nominally for 'safety reasons', although any accident is more likely to be a bent fender or broken taillight rather than a serious injury or worse. But often it is more desirable (in terms of traffic service on roads accessing the motorway, and access to/from the motorway) to have an on- or off-ramp installed almost regardless of such weaving capacity

Again, calculations are made for a subjectively-determined horizon (2031? 2100?) which is probably almost irrelevant when the life of the motorway and possible changes in on- and off-traffic are taken into account. Eventually, any weave will be engulfed by general arterial congestion if arterial road-space is not increased at the same rate as increases in population, thus economic activity, thus traffic.

In practice, for most of the day capacity is not a problem, and the ramps perform useful service, but in peak hours when capacity is approached the traffic slows down anyway, rendering calculations questionable and consequences minimal when compared with the benefits of general facilitation.

2. AASHTO WEAVING DISTANCES

The merge distances between on and off-ramps recommended by AASHTO in the 1995 edition of its "Policy (Manual) on the Geometric Design of Highways and Streets", in particular Figure X-72. The recommended merge/diverge (crossover) distance between on-ramp joinings (measured from where an on-ramp is 1.5m from a through-lane) and off-ramp separations (measured to the point at which an off-ramp diverges from the through lane) is **600m**. Since 1995, the Manual has been digitised and its information is available today for a fee. (American wealth, terrain, rural distances and standards are arguably too generous for New Zealand, yet in absence of our own standards, we still use AASHTO.)

It should also be noted that AASHTO 1995 is a guideline only in that it does not specifically allow for variations in the volumes and speeds of merging/diverging traffic, the nature (eg queue speed) of traffic on on- and off-ramps, variation of merge speeds and volumes such as may be affected by on-ramp signal departure speeds and volumes, the varying holding capacities of approach and departure lanes and the way this may influence signal timings to minimise the prospect of overload spilling back onto feeder arterial (on-ramp) and motorway (off-ramp).

Further, I understand that, in recognition of the urban situation which generally operates at a lower level of service than rural highways, and with experienced drivers familiar with which lanes to take, a reduced guideline (ie less than 600m; **perhaps 450m?**) is now the "urban guideline" (as has long existed for Khyber-Gillies and St.Marks-Market weaves, including decades at 100kph "speed limit").

Moreover, the guideline should be considered (and historically has been considered) with reference to other factors, such as the consequences elsewhere if it is treated as an absolute. Such consequences may include a high level of congestion on the signalised arterials interchanged upon, especially motorway underpasses, quite apart from the rest of the arterial road network and the "rat-runs" which develop (where possible) to bypass congested arterials.

3. PROJECT WEAVING DISTANCES

Approximate weave distances of the existing situation and proposed designs by NZTA and CUTS have been established for comparison purposes from NZTA's plans or from Google Earth Distances on the latter were established by comparing with scaled maps. The overall distances between interchanging streets were scaled from the nearest road reserve boundary.

(a) Existing Situation

- Khyber Pass – Gillies Ave950m less 500m ramps = net **450m weave**
- St Marks Road – Market Road.....950m less 500m ramps = net **450m weave**
- Albany Hwy—Paul Matthews Dr (existg no weave)..1200m less existing 300m on-ramp
- Albany Hwy—Caribbean Dr (existg no weave).....1880m less existing 420m off-ramp
- Albany Hwy--Caribbean Dr (NZTA - EB)1880m less 1050 ramps = net **830m weave**
- Albany Hwy--Caribbean Dr (NZTA - WB)1880m less 1050 ramps = net **830m weave**
- Albany Hwy--Paul Matt's Rd (CUTS - EB)1200m less 600m ramps = net **600m weave**
- Albany Hwy--Paul Matt's Rd (CUTS - EB)1200m less 600m ramps = net **600m weave**
- Constell'n Dr—Greville Rd (overall distance)1920m
- Constell'n Dr—Greville Rd (existg NB weave)**1140m weave**
- Greville Rd---Constell'n Dr (existg SB weaves)**880m weave and 730m weave**

(b) Proposed Designs

- NZTA's Caribbean Dr--Albany Hwy (WB)..... 1880m less 700m ramps = net 1180m weave
- CUTS's Paul Matthews Rd--Albany Hwy (WB)..1200m less 600m ramps = net 600m weave
- NZTA's Albany Hwy--Caribbean Dr (EB)..... 1880m less 840m ramps = net 1040m weave
- CUTS's Albany Hwy--Paul Matthews Rd (EB)...1200m less 600m ramps = net 600m weave

- NZTA's Constell'n Dr--Greville Rd (5L NB)1920m less 1090 ramps = net 830m weave
- CUTS's Constell'n Dr--Greville Rd (5L NB)1920m less 1090 ramps = net 830m weave

- NZTA's Greville Rd--Constell'n Dr (4L SB)1920m less 1240 ramps = net 680m weave
- CUTS's Greville Rd--Constell'n Dr (4L SB)'.....1920m less 1270 ramps = net 650m weave
- CUTS's Greville Rd--Constell'n Dr (5L SB).....1920m less 1090 ramps = net 830m weave

4. CUTS's PROPOSED SH18 (EB & WB) RAMPS

In the CUTS proposal, SH18 ramps would terminate on Paul Matthews Drive instead of at Caribbean Drive. Both weaving sections would satisfy the AASHTO guideline for rural highways; the urban location should mean that, at 600m each, they equal the AASHTO 1995 guideline, despite longer-than-usual ramp lengths. Additionally, the on-ramp traffic from Albany Highway is currently very limited, and with limited prospects of increase, owing to limited prospects for its catchment. In both cases the weaves are about 1/3 longer than city weaves included in above the tables above.

I do not consider the merge-demerge distance should be used as a reason for discounting an east-bound off-ramp onto Paul Matthews Road, particularly as the alternative as proposed offers several disadvantages, not least a messy design which requires considerable 'back-tracking' for traffic destined for Paul Matthews Drive.

If the Shared Use Path is to remain despite the availability of an alternative route of Bush Road and Paul Matthews Rd, then some property (and a slice of building?) may need to be acquired from the industrial buildings hemming in the existing arterial-standard SH18. However, the cost of same would be substantially less than the cost of shifting the Hockey fields with all the flow-on effects resulting in reduction of recreational space even as population is increasing. The outcome would be (in my opinion) a better design, better functional operation, and reduced call on Drainage Board land.

5. POTENTIAL FOR SOUTH-FACING RAMPS CONNECTING SH18 AND SH1

While NZTA and/or AT staff have verbally indicated that a retrofit of such ramps is possible, they would require the widening of SH1 south of Constellation Drive to at least three lanes. It appears that this widening, despite existing congestion, is frustrated by the Northern Busway being located too close to the existing two southbound lanes, and the bus-lane would need to be shifted laterally.

Also, an experienced eye suggests that the split of SH18 into north-connecting and south-connecting ramps may require more space than the present NZTA design allows. Again, it will hardly be as economic in future to retrofit south-facing overpasses in the present of a busy interchange. Ideally these ramps together with any eastwards shifting of the Northern Busway would be a part of this proposed project, raising the question of why it isn't.

To ensure that such difficulties do not become the basis of a future "do nothing" policy, CUTS recommends that feasibility be demonstrated with the preparation and publication of design drawings, to limit the prospects of a change of heart after current NZTA/AT staff and consultants have "moved on

6. NEED FOR DIRECT RAMPS BETWEEN ALBANY EXPRESSWAY AND SH1 (SOUTH) (INCLUDES "TRANSIT IS NO ANSWER TO GROWING CONGESTION")

The Greville underpass and (especially) the heavy right turn onto south-bound motorway on-ramps is a major cause of congestion throughout this extended multiple intersection area. Flow's traffic forecast indicates that the project could add around 50% of traffic to this intersection within ten years of opening, and projected growth of the Albany centre (and associated housing) suggests that that increase could be very conservative, especially beyond 2031.

The SH1 traffic northbound for Albany Expwy is currently rather less disruptive. However; its growth could be similar. North American experience, where (in many cities) "freebie" protagonists have been pushing the spending of vast sums on transit for much longer than Auckland, demonstrates that transit is no answer to growing congestion, being far slower for most purposes, impossible for many,

and decidedly inconvenient if loads are to be carried, or clothing is a problem, or multiple destinations are intended, or route flexibility is important, or people are to be carried or picked up, or the primary destination is other than downtown where only 10% of jobs are located. This 10% is down from 50% immediately post WWII and unlikely to increase as a percentage of all urban jobs which automobility enabled decentralisation of to substantially reduce travel times and distances. And then, the work trips comprise only about 35% of total daily vehicular trips, almost all of which are essential to the conduct of commerce. (Trips to the gym, concert, sick Aunt Mary, hospital, funeral, beach (to recreate for work!), church, shops, dentist etc etc all have important social or economic value to the trip-maker)

In short, American experience in cities analogous to Auckland indicates that a ceiling for all vehicular transit use in Auckland is about 5% of total daily vehicular traffic (up from about 4.2% today). No amount of expense on transit will in itself "fix" Auckland's congestion problem; the only way to keep it down to acceptable levels is to add arterial roadspace at the rate – and in the locations – where increased populations occur. Enforced densification will only exacerbate the problem (even as it, together with unaffordable "world class" standards, "urban design", a plethora of ticket-clippers, delays, fees, charges, etc etc) merely add cost with little or no benefit to warrant that cost. That is, if you are allowed to do anything at all; and we wonder why our productivity is so low and debt per capita is amongst the worst in the world and some 70% worse than Iceland's when it was bankrupted. Yet if the Busway extension is built as NZTA proposes, without providing for the overpasses and fifth motorway lane CUTs proposes the ability to ameliorate Greville congestion could be lost.

7. POSSIBLE NORTHBOUND GREVILLE OVERPASS RAMP BETWEEN SH1 AND ALBANY EXPRESSWAY

The NZTA proposal has an 830m weave between Constellation Drive and Greville Road, even allowing for the significant reduction in weave length caused by the large-radius ramp from SH20. This would make it almost twice the length of the city weaves at 450m each, and 230m longer than the ASSHTO rural guideline.

Thus safety auditors were correct in allowing the proposed north-bound merges, both of traffic from Constellation Drive and from SH18. They are reported to have granted their approval with a degree of caution, as is appropriate when rigorously observing justifiably defensible standards regardless of other factors. Specialist involvement may lead to poorly balanced overall designs, which CUTS considers will occur in this case if direct ramps between SH1 (south) and Albany Expwy are excluded.

The CUTS proposal is for the departure point for the northbound off-ramp to Greville Road to be shifted up to 100m southwards, reducing the weave length to a minimum of 730m (possibly larger, dependent on detailed design of the overpass ramp). The longer off-ramp would then allow a Greville Road/Tawa Dr. overpass ramp to depart from that off-ramp about half-way between its departure point from SH1 and that east-west arterial. That would separate the two departures by up to 240m as recommended by AASHTO 1995 (Table X-72) for motorway to motorway ramps. Automatically-slower speeds on the off-ramp would ensure that 240m separation is more than adequate, and well in excess of the 180m that AASHTO recommends for "Service Road" interchange.

No difficulty is foreseen connecting the overpass into the Albany Expressway on the northern side side of the Tawa/Greville arterial.

8. POSSIBLE SOUTHBOUND GREVILLE OVERPASS RAMP BETWEEN ALBANY EXPRESSWAY AND SH1 – ASSUMING ONLY 4 SOUTHBOUND LANES ON SH1

The general configuration of this CUTS-proposed ramp would be for it to depart from Albany Expressway at such a location as allows clearance over SH1 with an alignment still restricted to 50kph although the design may be able to achieve 80kph standards. It should then join SH1 with a new lane ahead, which enables its traffic to avoid weaving before making a choice of SH1 or SH18. The on-ramp from Greville Road would then merge with this 4th lane with a merge separation of at least 180m. This would result in a weave distance for on-ramp traffic bound for Constellation off-ramp or SH1 beyond Constellation of about 680m, somewhat greater than AASHTO's 600m guideline.

In real life, drivers naturally adjust their speed, especially in peak hours when weaves are most heavy but drivers are familiar with the lane configuration (thus any weave necessary). The AASHTO guideline of 600m is appropriate for a higher level of (rural) service and speed than that obtaining in urban peak hour situations, accommodating drivers who can not be expected to know the road. The 1995 AASHTO manual neither includes a reduced standard appropriate for urban motorways (as I believe the recent electronic version includes) nor allows for the ameliorative measure of "managing" on-ramp traffic with ramp signals, as will occur here. Thus it is naturally conservative for this situation.

9. POSSIBLE SOUTHBOUND GREVILLE OVERPASS RAMP BETWEEN ALBANY EXPRESSWAY AND SH1 – ASSUMING 5 SOUTHBOUND LANES ON SH1

A significantly better solution would be to increase the southbound lanes between interchanges to 5 lanes, as NZTA proposes for the northbound lanes. This would result in a better-“balanced” design, as there is no reason for any significant difference between northbound and southbound traffic volumes on this stretch of motorway. Moreover, with an on-ramp separation distance of 180m, the weave distance would be increased to about 830m and additional motorway capacity would be provided in a location where it would easily prove its economic worth.

10. ECONOMIC OR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - WHICH COMES FIRST?

Para 9 above provides the obvious design solution for a designer “allowed” to optimally enable the public’s need for efficient commerce; it is regrettable that the design is in fact controlled by planning values that have become so unreal as to promote the opposite of “enablement”; ie “command and control”, with the objective of engineering society to fit with a plan which (supposedly) addresses U.N. goals (as stated in UNEP’s Agenda 21/2030 for “Sustainable Development”) by re-engineering “business as usual”. The UN’s abdication to “think globally by acting locally” in reality means opposing economic development and (attempting to) engineer society into a static, stop-the-worldist, stagnating state of “sustained stasis” where nothing can be done unless it can be shown to be perfect from day one, regardless of cost, its incidence, its affordability (especially to lower-income citizens) and its societal consequences. The high cost of such idealism is that of “sustainable” consumption.

While the landfill provides a lateral constraint on motorway widening to 5 lanes and the additional space needed for two ramp merges (if the flyover is to be built or at least provided for), it has not prevented the inclusion of a 5m wide “Shared Use Path”. Usage of this path will surely be limited, and not much greater than would otherwise use the parallel Hugh Green Drive-Apollo Drive route. Its proposed construction instead of a fifth motorway lane and flyover ramp clearly demonstrates the prevalence of a Neo-Romantic view of urban development as (wholly subjective) “sustainability-writ-large” the latter being wholly detached from the logical economic betterment considerations implicit in the “enablement” purpose of the RMA and the original purpose of S32 to facilitate “Economic Development”, doubtless included to help pay for the multiple anti-economic aspects of its nemesis, “sustainable development”. But without a Ministry for Pragmatism (and City Engineers’ Department) to balance the Ministry for Idealism-As-Everything, idealism rules supreme, precluding any contest of ideas – and ideology. There can be no wonder we spend our hard-won rates and taxes on luxuries and fripperies while ignoring the wants and needs of commerce. With such wilful disregard for economy and affordability, there can be no wonder at the Reserve Bank Governor’s warnings about the state of the economy, or the value of an integrated, affordable and motivated society.

For those still concerned about “peak energy”, bus transit is no more energy-efficient per person-km delivered, day-long, than cars. (Despite wide-spread delusion to the contrary, trains in an Auckland-type situation are substantially less energy-efficient than both cars and buses, AND their radiality and downtown focus directly oppose and negate – to our considerable cost - the immense social and economic forces driving expansion and decentralisation. Witness the failure of the Auckland Plan – unchanged since when Portland OR’s zoning-based “Smart” (sic) City Plan was imported in 1993 to become Auckland’s first Regional Policy Statement and Growth Strategy. Instead of humanity flourishing to afford environmental clean-ups, diseconomies have flourished, with widespread housing unaffordability, growing congestion, growing debt, and welfarism and drug use booming to cover the cracks. Witness the growing social (property) divide and recent collapse of the MUL in favour of development at Kumeu, Dairy Flat, Warkworth, Orewa – with a total lack of infrastructural planning and provision demonstrating the unexpectedness of such economic consequences.

So how will this project address the economic aspirations of the Auckland Plan? Or at least balance them against the misguided presumptions driving provision for transit cycles and pedestrians but not for efficient private vehicular traffic (other than Northland’s access to the airport, but not to the city). Many claims are made for the project as satisfying planning objectives, but real outcomes demonstrate a disconnect between such words and reality. “Liveability” a classic case in point.

Finally, a comment on “safety”, as in “a safe weave”. Government appears to have adopted it as of absolute value, justifying whatever cost is necessary to “eliminate” risk. Many people, given the choice (which is what “enablement” and “economic development” is all about) would prefer a flyover ramp to avoid Greville congestion, regardless of their (enabled) perception of risk, and despite the clamours of those who have drunk the enviro cool-aid, or want another “freebie” at others’ expense. .