

Media Statement
5 August

Mayor and Council correct to investigate transport funding options for Auckland

"The Mayor of Auckland should be applauded for broaching the politically prickly but absolutely fundamental question of transport funding," said New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development Chief Executive Stephen Selwood.

"Auckland has a substantial transport funding deficit over the life of the Mayor's imminent 30 year spatial plan. Unfunded projects critical to lifting regional productivity and fulfilling the Mayor's vision to make Auckland the world's most liveable city include:

- Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing - \$5 billion
- CBD rail loop - \$2.4 billion
- Auckland-Manukau Eastern Transport Initiative (AMETI) - \$1.5 billion

"That's \$9 billion of investment unfunded, and across only three projects. In addition, the Auckland Plan discussion document identifies projects of "high regional significance" which include roading and rapid transit upgrades around Botany, the airport and Albany. Then there's a whole range of smaller projects, including intersection upgrades, safety improvements, walking and cycle ways, all of which cannot be funded through traditional means.

"And this is just catch-up. It includes none of the long term investment required to keep Auckland moving when an equivalent population to Wellington of over half a million people moves into the region. Furthermore it assumes no major new motorway enhancements beyond Waterview in metropolitan Auckland, despite hundreds of thousands of new commuters on the road network.

"The Government has been clear: it has no more funds to commit to major transport infrastructure projects in Auckland over and above that which it is already committed to. A \$5 billion harbour crossing would consume the entire national capital transport budget for five years. Although it may be possible to fund the crossing with \$6-\$8 tolls, the reality is that to resolve an Auckland-wide transport problem an Auckland-wide funding solution is required.

"It's clear that the Auckland Plan suffers from a funding gap. It is therefore essential that a credible funding plan be developed and that the Council investigates all options.

"This leaves the region with a very simple choice. We can choose not to lift transport funding, in which case we choose congestion, economic under-achievement and a decline in our standard of living. Or we can look at new ways to do things.

"The Auckland Council was established to tackle the big issues and no Auckland governance issue is bigger than transport funding. By giving Aucklanders an alternative to transport policies which we know have failed in the past, the Mayor is doing exactly what his position requires," says Stephen Selwood.