



(Billing, 2014)

Congestion in Auckland: A critical examination of the land transport management policy hierarchy

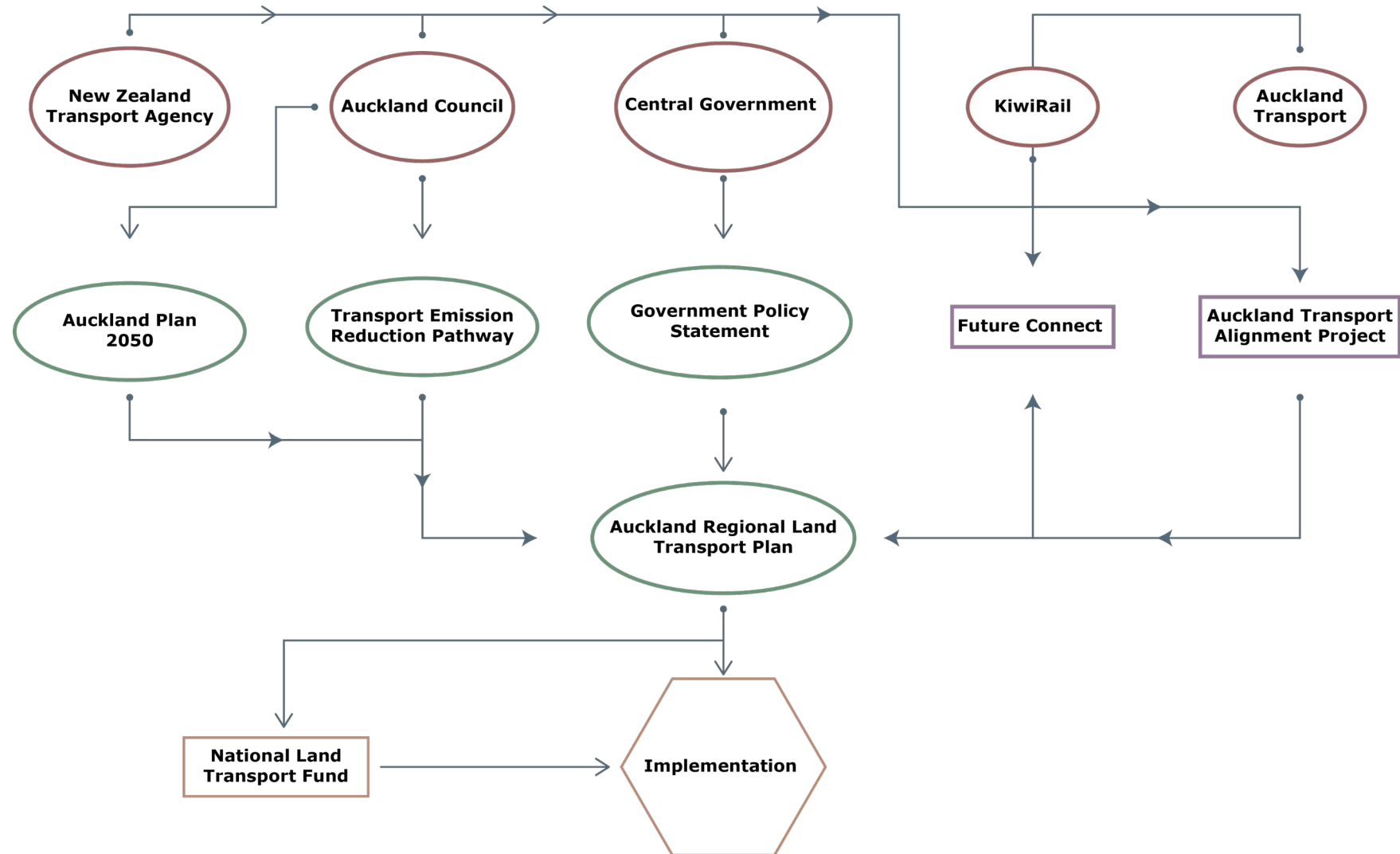
Arson Rashidmardani – Mina Al-Ali – Ty Smith – Christian Black

Congestion:

- **What is congestion?**
 - “Congestion occurs when the demand for a road exceeds its capacity, reducing the flow of cars on a road.” (ARUP & EY, 2025)
- **What is the cost of congestion?**
 - Auckland will annual lose \$2.6B from time related opportunity costs, macro-economic related factors (such as impeding access to labour supply) and increased emissions. (ARUP & EY, 2025)
- **Why is congestion bad in Auckland?**
 - Congestion is bad in Auckland due to rapid population growth, a historic investment deficit in public transport, and low connectivity due to its geography. (Auckland Council, 2018)



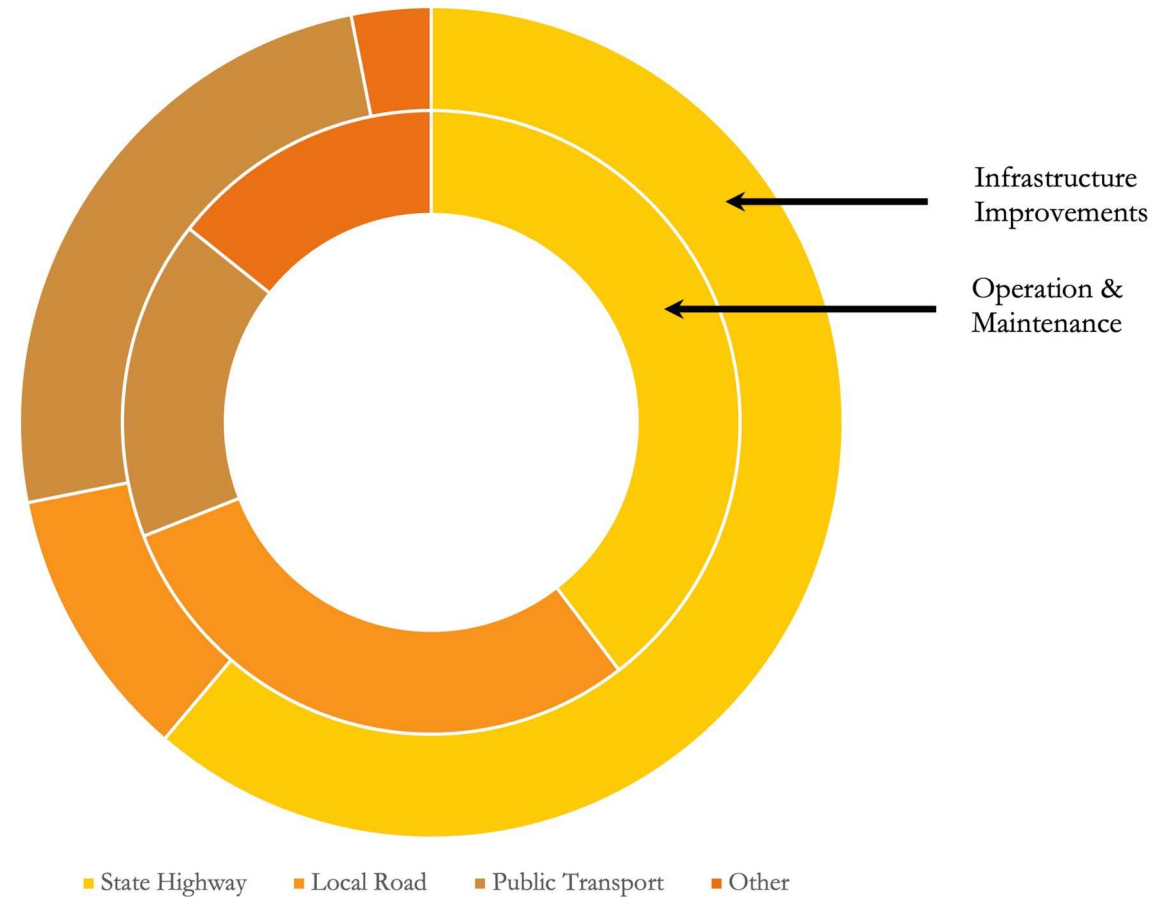
Policy hierarchy:



Government Policy Statement on land transport

- The purpose of the GPS-LT is to set out the expectations of the Minister of Transport.
- It allocates significant funding to State Highway improvements.
- **Strategic priorities:**
 - Economic growth & productivity
 - Increased maintenance and resilience
 - Safety & value
- **Methodology:**
 - Lack of publicly available methodology
- (New Zealand Government, 2024)

Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 Projected Spending



Auckland Plan 2050



(Baltana HD Wallpapers, n.d.)

- **Purpose:**
 - Auckland's Long-term Spatial Plan
 - Meet key challenges
 - Population Growth
 - Environmental Degradation
- **Auckland's History**
 - Sprawling, low-density development, investment in road capacity
 - Historic underinvestment in public transport – large subsequent investment backlog
- **Transport Outcomes:**
 - Better connect people, places and goods and services
 - Increase genuine travel choices for a healthy, vibrant and equitable Auckland
 - Maximise safety and environmental protection
- **Aims**
 - Rebalance funding to prioritise public & active transport
 - Achieve significant mode shift
 - Integrate land use and transport
- (Auckland Council, 2018)

Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway

- **Primary Objective**
 - Aims to significantly reduce transport emissions 64% reduction
- **Proposed outcomes:**
 - Increase PT usage to 29% of trips from 4%
 - 50% reduction in Vehicle Km travelled
 - Support a compact urban form
- A statutory policy
- Mainly developed through emissions modeling and public feedback
- (Auckland Council, 2021)



(Ministry for the Environment, 2022)

Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan

- **Objectives:**

- Achieve a fast and reliable public transport network and a resilient land transport network that supports economic productivity, improved safety, and continued decarbonisation of the transport fleet.

- **Priorities:**

- Maintenance and renewal of local roads and public transport services.
- Finishing off projects like the City Rail Link & Eastern Busway
- Dictionary spending prioritized for public transport projects & cycling projects.

- (Auckland Transport et al., 2024)



(Greater Auckland, 2025)

Auckland Regional Land Transport Plan

- **Methodology:**

- Developed alongside modelling to understand deficiencies:

- Future connect
- ATAP

- **Three-stage process:**

- Identifying non-discretionary projects and allocating funding automatically
- Discretionary projects are ranked by a multi-agency working group
- Other variables such as dependencies between projects and geographical spread are examined. This process was constrained by time.

- Consideration of public feedback.
- (Auckland Transport et al., 2024)



(Auckland Transport,
n.d.)

Interconnections and contradictions:

- **Contradiction:**
 - Prioritisation of State Highway funding by GPS-LT as opposed to desire for prioritisation of public transport by ARLTP. (Auckland Transport et al., 2024; (New Zealand Government, 2024)
 - Embracing greenfield development alongside RoN/RS as opposed to integrating land use with rapid transit. (Auckland Council, 2018; Auckland Transport et al., 2024)
 - Embracing the use of the ETS to manage emissions as opposed to prioritising mode shift. (Auckland Transport et al., 2024; (New Zealand Government, 2024)



(New Zealand Transport Agency, 2022)

Weaknesses in methodology

- The ARLTP relies on ATAP for transport modelling, which had severe time and resource constraints. (Ministry of Transport, n.d.)
- ARLTP relies on FC, which uses modeling, embedding risk of modelling assumptions being wrong. (Auckland Transport, n.d.; Auckland Transport et al., 2024)
- ARLTP constrained by time and did not adequately consider other variables. (Auckland Transport et al., 2024)
- The GPS-LT does not provide publicly available evidence or modelling for its methodology. (New Zealand Government, 2024)
- Auckland Plan 2050 and TERP are more overarching plans with a significant emphasis on public engagement alongside modelling.



(Stuff, 2018)

Conclusion and suggestions

- The lack of publicly available evidence for developing the GPS-LT points to the politicisation of the issue. This can be addressed by amending the LTMA to require publicly available evidence alongside the GPS-LT to increase accountability.
- Demand management schemes such as congestion charging have not been adequately considered by these policies (addressed in The Congestion Question) and could help reduce congestion whilst providing an additional funding source for transport improvements.
- A revision of the ATAP, which addresses the methodological deficiencies of the previous version, should be developed to inform future transport policies better.



(Greater Auckland, 2024)

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