

Who pays the Ferryman?

or

How to ease Auckland's Transport Woes



Discussion Paper, October 2018

Phil Hickling

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Contact: Email: philh@kiwinz.net Phone: 027 527 4575

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Auckland is a public transport mess. The very serious transport failures that are occurring daily in Auckland display the extreme difficulties and frustrations that travellers face: frequent breakdowns causing serious motorway delays, bus and rail services not coping or cancelled. The introduction of regional taxes, fuel surcharges, reduced speed limits in the CBD, stopping red light running and whatever other measures not yet even conceived are just *ad hoc* sticking plasters that are unlikely to make much impact on the short term problems.

There is a stunning silence on how long this situation may continue whilst planned upgrades to road and rail are being constructed, but it is certain that the distress the Auckland travelling public will have to endure is years of waiting and even when completed the planned upgrades are likely to be severely stretched due to population growth.

Auckland is a “water” city, a city that physically is extremely unsuited to land based transport systems, being long and skinny, but conversely has excellent access to harbours and waterways. Similar and much larger cities around the world such as New York, Hong Kong, Sydney and San Francisco amongst many other “water” cities all operate excellent ferry services that are growing, are constantly under review and are being extended by public demand. Ferries are not, and cannot be, the remedy for all transport problems but they certainly offer a considerable contribution to ease the glitches and frustrations of land based travel. When asked by the author, the Director of NY City Department of Transport Planning, Carl Weisbrod (now retired) said: “Ferry services are *always* an important and integral part of our public transport planning and services”.

Auckland Transport statistics regularly confirm that ferries have the highest reliability and punctuality rating of all public transport modes. In the environmentally conscious world of today and in the future the impact of water ferries is likely to be much less than that of road and rail transport systems.

In recent years since 2016, and as part of, the Auckland Transport Alignment Plan (ATAP) the potential for developing ferry services as a fundamental part of the Auckland public transport system has been badly neglected, to the point of being barely mentioned. Ferries were not even included in the ATAP terms of reference.

Compared to other “water” cities the deficiency of developing ferry services in Auckland is both a mystery and censure of the planning process: more importantly, the Recommended Strategic Approach document derived from the ATAP, in 48 detailed pages contains no reference whatsoever to ferry services, only investment in road and rail. The proposed upgrade expenditure of \$28 billion is a massive investment; in the interim funding tranche of some \$16.5 billion announced in June 2018, only \$50 million was tagged for ferries, less

than 1% of the total amount; at the same time some ferry essentials, such as funding for future terminal development, were specifically excluded.

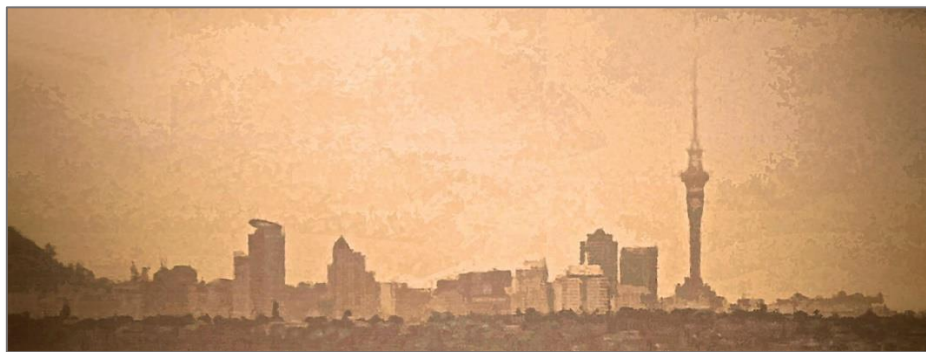
The widespread failure of Auckland MPs, Auckland Councillors and Auckland local boards to question what has happened is an indictment in itself, and their apparent ready acceptance of the planning situation is likely to be to the detriment of those who elected them in good faith. In this criticism must be included Phil Goff as the Mayor of Auckland and Simon Bridges, Minister of Transport in the previous National government, who jointly signed off the original Auckland Transport Alignment Plan.

The most basic question remains, and must be: if so many similar other cities can successfully operate ferry services, why can this not be done in Auckland?

It is not necessarily all doom and gloom: there are some positive and very encouraging signs that the modern Auckland travelling public already embraces ferry transport, limited as it is. Ferry commuters from fast-growing Hobsonville have demanded that due to increased passenger numbers a larger ferry be put on, a demand that will be met. A female passenger who commutes daily on the Pine Harbour ferry to the CBD has said she will never go back to travelling by land transport: the ferry journey is some 35 minutes, relaxing, with refreshments and work space with WiFi access, compared to the utterly exhausting trip by road which has none of these facilities and can take up to two hours twice a day.

The final ironic dryness comes from Auckland Transport, which must take much of the blame for ferry planning inadequacies, but nevertheless has stated on its web site:

“Taking the ferry is a scenic, peaceful change from the hectic mayhem that often comes with commuting”.



SOME POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to the obvious provision of modern and larger ferries:

- 1). Cycleways are gaining popularity, likely to be accelerated by the arrival of electric bicycles and their uptake. The popularity of cycleways is growing and can be developed further in the CBD adjacent to, or in easy reach of, the Ferry Building and Britomart complex.
- 2.) Develop secure under cover facilities for the storage of bicycles at departure points; space wise these would be considerably smaller than vehicle parks, easy and economical to build and maintain.
- 3). Properly develop the carriage of bicycles on ferries as an option for cyclists; the New York ferries from Staten Island are now free for passengers but there is a small charge for bicycles.
- 4). Terminal facilities at the Ferry Building are at capacity. Develop the potential of existing - but rarely used - port wharves as new terminals (close by as possible to the Britomart complex). Some wharves that are marked for demolition can have a second and useful life; development costs are not likely to be excessive since the basic structures already exist and loadings of foot traffic low when compared to cargoes. The wharves in Onehunga, currently closed, are an example of the potential for development as a ferry terminal.
- 5). The capital cost of ferry development and related facilities may be beyond the resources of the present operators; this is an opportunity for a Public Private Partnership (PPP) between Auckland Council and/or central government and ferry operators.
- 6). Vehicle parking is an ongoing problem at all ferry departure points, available space being the greatest. There is significant scope to develop small shuttle bus services travelling continuously on well promoted routes to service ferry terminals; as an additional benefit this should also enable some main route bus services to be reviewed and released, particularly as the present ride-n-park facilities are already totally overstretched and future development of these at reasonable (or any) cost is doubtful.
- 8). Investigate the extension to, or more frequent, ferry services to “new” areas, for example to East Coasts Bays and Gulf Harbour.

In the Manukau Harbour, before the opening of land routes to Auckland from the Waikato most passengers and freight travelled by ferry from Waiuku to Onehunga. The Franklin region is scheduled to become one of Auckland’s two specifically targeted major growth areas, including a new town at Paerata; this will put excessive pressure on even upgraded

road and rail transport. Expressions of interest should be called for the re-introduction of Manukau ferry services to relieve the likely pressure on land based services.

9). Review, then promote, ferry services to provide more weekend travel for families and leisure seekers (including tourists). This was common and very popular in the late 19th century and can be again. Parents with young children on buses and trains are not a good mix, but riding on a ferry is an adventure for young people.

10). The planned road and rail upgrade process is likely to be slow so there is still some time to review the question of ferry service development and bring it properly into the public transport environment. If New Zealand funding is an insoluble problem then maybe there is an investment opportunity for, say, Star Ferries of Hong Kong: they are experienced operators, very successful and China is actively seeking interests in foreign infrastructure. Also see (5).

QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE ASKED

In the light of the apparent failures in planning, it raises a number of serious questions that need to be asked (preferably not via the pedestrian Official Information Act) of those responsible, to the most senior position, at both local and central government level. The \$28 billion of expenditure demands no less as this concerns all New Zealand taxpayers, who will contribute to the cost, not just those living in Auckland.

1) (a) How often and

(b) In what depth have the Auckland ferry operators been involved in the planning process?

(c) If so, was there ongoing round table discussion, or was it at arms' length?

2) (a) Which overseas cities and/or transport operators have been contacted for their experience and advice on ferry services?

(b) Were any actual visits made overseas to investigate and discuss ferry operations?

(c) If so, which cities were visited and when?

(d) Where are the reports of these visits to be found?

3) (a) In view of the lack of traceable information have ferry operator views, local and overseas, been incorporated in the planning process and

(b) If so, where can they be found?

4) (a) What driver/passenger surveys have been conducted in Auckland with vehicle drivers and passengers on bus, rail and ferry services, and

(b) What were the questions asked?

(c) When were the surveys conducted?

(d) What was the result of the surveys?

(e) Where can the survey results be found?

NB Existing ferry operators in Auckland are contracted to Auckland Transport to provide services, which may be constrained their freedom to comment.

Appendix (i)

Auckland Transport Alignment Project

Terms of reference (relevant parts):

4 Purpose of the Auckland Transport Alignment Project

4.1 The purpose of the project is to improve alignment between the Parties over the way Auckland's transport system should develop, including testing whether better returns from transport investment can be achieved.

4.4 The Parties would like to:

(i) Ensure that the aligned strategic approach meets both the Government's and Auckland Council's objectives, results in best possible outcomes for users of the transport system and delivers the best possible value for money

5 Objectives for the Auckland Transport Alignment Project

5.1 The Parties broadly agree that the focus of the project is to test whether better returns from transport investment can be achieved in the medium and long-term, particularly in relation to the following objectives:

- i. to support economic growth and increased productivity by ensuring access to employment/labour improves [relative to current levels] as Auckland's population grows
- ii. to improve congestion results [relative to predicted results], in particular travel time and reliability, in the peak period and to ensure congestion does not become widespread during working hours
- iii. to improve public transport's mode share [relative to predicted results], where it will address congestion
- iv. to ensure any increases in the financial costs of using the transport system deliver net benefits to users of the system.

Appendix (ii)

Local Government Act 2002

Part 2

Purpose of local government, and role and powers of local authorities

11A Core services to be considered in performing role

In performing its role, a local authority must have particular regard to the contribution that the following core services make to its communities:

- (a) network infrastructure:
- (b) public transport services:
- (c) solid waste collection and disposal:
- (d) the avoidance or mitigation of natural hazards:
- (e) libraries, museums, reserves, and other recreational facilities and community amenities.

Role of local boards

Local boards have a significant and wide-ranging role; they make decisions on local matters, provide local leadership and build strong local communities.

The local boards provide important local input into region-wide strategies and plans including those of the council-controlled organisations (CCOs). Local boards are responsible for:

- Preparing a triennial local board plan and negotiating an annual local board agreement with the governing body
- Non-regulatory decision-making on local matters, including negotiating the standards of services delivered locally
- Representing their communities and building strong local communities
- Providing local leadership and developing relationships with the governing body, the community, community organisations and special interest groups in the local area
- Identifying and communicating the views of local people on regional strategies, policies, plans and bylaws to the governing body
- Providing input to [CCO](#) plans and initiatives
- Identifying and developing bylaws for the local board area and proposing them to the governing body
- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of [local board agreements](#)
- Any additional responsibilities delegated by the governing body, such as decisions within regional bylaws.

Appendix (iii)

New York Times

8 March, 2017

Decades' worth of US studies show that whenever cities add roads, new drivers simply fill them up. This isn't because of new development or population growth — although that's part of the story — but because of a vicious cycle in which new roads bring new demand that no amount of further roads can satisfy.

This has been studied at rush hour, studied on individual freeway projects and studied with large data sets that encompass nearly every road in the United States. With remarkable consistency, the research finds the same thing: Whenever a road is built or an older road is widened, more people decide to drive more. Build more or widen further, and even more people decide to drive. Repeat to infinity.

Economists call this latent demand, which is a fancy way of saying there are always more people who want to drive somewhere than there is space for them to do it. So far anyway, nothing cities have done to increase capacity has ever sped things up.

This doesn't mean public transit and land planning are bad ideas, or that widening freeways is a bad idea. When roads are bigger, more people can get around. More people see family; more packages are delivered; more babies are lulled to sleep. It just means that none of those measures have done much to reduce commute times, and self-driving cars seem unlikely to either.

Appendix (iv)

\$28 billion funding package for Auckland roading and public transport projects unveiled

26 April, 2018

Bernard Orsman, Super City reporter, NZ Herald.

A \$28 billion transport programme has been unveiled for Auckland in what's been described by the Government and Auckland Mayor Phil Goff as the country's largest ever civil construction programme. Its backers say the work will help create a 21st century transport network for the city.

"Together, we will invest \$28 billion over the next decade to unlock Auckland's potential. We will be building vital projects including light rail, Penlink and Mill Rd, heavy rail and bus upgrades, safety improvements, and more dedicated cycle lanes," said Transport Minister Phil Twyford.

The investments are made possible by a \$4.4b funding boost resulting from the Auckland regional fuel tax (RFT), increased revenue from the National Land Transport Fund, and a new funding mechanism, Crown Infrastructure Partners, Twyford and Goff said at Newmarket railway station.

Earlier today, the Herald reported the Government will fund two major new roading projects in Auckland.

One is Penlink, in the north, providing a new connection between the Whangaparaoa Peninsula and the Northern Motorway. Motorists will pay a toll to use the road - a measure National has criticised as a "triple whammy" for motorists.

Play Video Penlink will run through Stillwater to join the motorway at Dairy Flat, taking pressure off the heavily congested arterial route through Silverdale. Twyford told the Herald the new Government will allocate \$200 million to get the road built within the next 10 years.

The other project is Mill Rd in the south, improving the connection from Manukau through Takanini to Drury.

Both roads have been favoured projects of the former National-led Government. But until today they did not feature among the key elements of the Labour-led Government's transport strategy for the city.

Projects in the joint Government-Auckland transport programme, known as Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP), include:

- Committed projects like the City Rail Link and Northern Motorway improvements.
- Light rail, or modern trams.
- Eastern busway (Panmure-Botany).
- Airport-Puhinui State Highway upgrade, including a high quality public transport link to an upgraded Puhinui railway station.
- Bus priority programme, to more rapidly grow Auckland's bus lane network and support faster, more reliable and more efficient bus services.
- Albany-Silverdale bus improvements.
- Lower cost East West Link to address key freight issues in the area.
- Papakura-Drury motorway widening.
- First phase of the Mill Rd corridor.
- Penlink road (motorists will pay a toll to help fund this).
- Walking and cycling programme to expand the network and complete key connections, such as Sky Path.
- Significant programme of safety improvements.
- New transport infrastructure to enable green field growth
- Network optimisation and technology programme to make the best use of our existing network.
- Rail network improvements including electrification to Pukekohe, additional trains and other track upgrades.

"This plan is funded to deliver the projects we are committed to," Twyford said.

"The previous ATAP report, released by former Transport Minister Simon Bridges in August 2017, had a \$5.9 billion funding gap. National had no plan to fix that fiscal hole, which would have meant the projects they promised couldn't have been delivered.

"This \$28 billion plan will help ease the awful congestion that has been caused by a decade of under-investment. We will create a congestion-free rapid transit network and boost other alternatives to driving to help free up the roads, enable growth, and improve safety for drivers and others."

Goff said: "ATAP balances the need to deal with Auckland's immediate and pressing transport needs, as well as being transformational for the future.

"ATAP reflects the need for efficient roading for green and brownfield housing development, new transport corridors and major arterial routes. But as Auckland grows we need to move from a focus on roading to a more balanced approach that promotes public transport and active transport networks.

"Auckland has to contribute its share and the regional fuel tax allows us to do that. The more than \$4 billion expenditure it unlocks is critically important to progressing a better transport system for Auckland.

"To raise the same sum from rates would result in a total rate increase of over 13 per cent this year. Alternatively, to do nothing would see Auckland become increasingly gridlocked.

"New forms of revenue such as an RFT to invest in our transport network and light rail to supplement buses, ferries and heavy rail are critical for an efficient and effective Auckland transport system. Auckland's growth means additional investment in these areas is vital for us to tackle congestion problems," Goff said.

"ATAP represents a significant increase in investment in our transport network, but we still need to find innovative ways to fund further development such as PPPs [public-private partnerships], special purpose vehicles or infrastructure bonds."

ATAP includes \$1.8b in funding for light rail. A work programme is under way to leverage sources of investment capital outside of ATAP for light rail, and an announcement will be made soon.

Under ATAP, Auckland is expected to receive 38 per cent of the National Land Transport Fund over the next decade, proportionate with the region's growing share of New Zealand's population.

However, Goff says that this "still falls short of Auckland's projected 55 per cent share of the country's population growth over the next decade".

NOTE: One passing mention of ferries (highlighted) in the funding Package.

Appendix (V)



Huge rise in passengers using the Thames

21 October 2014

Passenger journeys in summer 2014 up by nearly 25 per cent compared to previous year

“The River Thames has played a significant part in the history of our great capital, and I want to ensure it plays a key role in our future as well. That is why I am delighted that the number of people travelling on the river is up a quarter on last year, with passengers benefitting from an ever improving service. We need to continue to build on this success, and with new piers in the pipeline the Thames is set to become an even more integral part of life in the capital.”

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Transport for London (TfL) has today revealed figures showing that over 4.4 million passengers used London's river services between May and September of this year compared to 3.5 million for the same period last year - an increase in passenger numbers of nearly 25 per cent.

News of the figures comes after a successful 12 months for London's river services, with recommendations from the Mayor's River Action Plan put into action, resulting in more frequent services and an improved customer experience. The popularity of the river was given an additional boost by September's Totally Thames festival, a month-long celebration of 'all things river' that was attended by an estimated 2.9 million people.

Appendix (vi)

STATEN ISLAND FERRY, NEW YORK

One of a number of ferry services operating in the NY city area, the Staten Island Ferry provides 22 million people a year (70,000 passengers a day not including weekend days) with ferry service between St. George on Staten Island and Whitehall Street in lower Manhattan. The ferry is the only non-vehicular mode of transportation between Staten Island and Manhattan. New York City (Dept. of Transport) operates and maintains the nine vessel fleet as well as the St. George Ferry Terminal on Staten Island, Whitehall Ferry Terminal in Manhattan, the City Island and Hart Island Facilities, The Battery Maritime Building and all floating dock building equipment.

A typical weekday schedule involves the use of five boats to transport approximately 70,000 passengers daily (109 daily trips). During the day, between rush hours, boats are regularly fuelled and maintenance work is performed. Terminals are cleaned around the clock and routine terminal maintenance is performed on the day shift. On weekends, four boats are used (88 trips each Saturday and 82 trips each Sunday). About 37,180 trips are made annually. Since 1986 passengers travel free, but there is a small charge for bicycles.

The Staten Island Ferry is run by the City of New York for one pragmatic reason: To transport Staten Islanders to and from Manhattan.

STAR FERRY, HONG KONG

The Star Ferry, or the "Star" Ferry Company, is a passenger ferry service operator and tourist attraction in Hong Kong. Its principal routes carry passengers across Victoria Harbour, between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. It was founded in 1888 as the Kowloon Ferry Company, adopting its present name in 1898.

The fleet of twelve ferries currently operates two routes (four prior to April 1, 2011) across the harbour, carrying over 70,000 passengers a day, or 26 million a year. Even though the harbour is crossed by railway and road tunnels, the Star Ferry continues to provide an inexpensive mode of harbour crossing.

Appendix (vii)

With Crowds Flocking to Ferries, Agency Adds New Runs

By Dan Brekke *AUGUST 24, 2015*

The Water Emergency Transportation Authority voted Monday to enhance rush hour service from a couple of San Francisco docks to a few East Bay stops.

The agency overseeing San Francisco Bay Ferry operations extended through October a temporary 5:30 p.m. boat from the city's Ferry Building to Vallejo.

The additional trip has alleviated some of the demand that saw would-be passengers stranded on the docks and drove 276 regular riders to sign a petition calling for more back-up buses. (That's a pretty long bus ride to wish for — from San Francisco's Embarcadero to Vallejo over the Bay Bridge during rush hour.)

"The ferry service, like so many transit agencies in the region, is carrying more and more people," said Ernest Sanchez, marketing manager for San Francisco Bay Ferry. "The demand on the system is substantial and is beyond what we expected to happen, so what we're trying to do is take our 11 boats and get them assigned in the most effective manner."

Bay Ferry has also redirected routes to create a direct 4 p.m. trip from San Francisco's Pier 41 to Alameda, then Oakland.

But the changes will only make a small dent in demand that shows no sign of waning.

"The numbers are going to be small," Sanchez said, adding the new runs amount to a temporary fix while the system awaits longer-term expansions, like two new 400-passenger boats expected to hit the Bay next winter.

"We are working hard to increase the capacity of this ferry system, but these things take a long time," Sanchez said. "What we need to do right now is get the incremental, carrying capability of the system as it is to our commuters at the time that they need it, and that's what we're working to do."

Original Post:

For years, the Bay Area's best-kept commuting secret was ferry service from Vallejo, Oakland and Alameda to San Francisco. Riders could hunker down in the passenger cabin with their laptops if they liked. Or they could sit outside and enjoy the ever-changing waterscape. And I'll admit that I relished the fact I'd often be one of the relative few who seemed to take the boat.

That's all ancient history now. Monday, the Water Emergency Transportation Authority, the urgently named agency that now oversees most Bay Area ferry operations, is considering adding runs to its Oakland/Alameda and Vallejo routes. The reason: The services have become so popular that there's not enough room to carry all the passengers who want to ride during the morning and evening rush hours.

The problem has become persistent enough that hundreds of commuters on the Vallejo route have signed a petition for extra bus service to accommodate "leave-behinds" — passengers left at the dock because there's not enough room on the boat.

The proposal under consideration today would add an extra afternoon run both to Vallejo and Alameda/Oakland for the rest of the summer season, through Oct. 30. The WETA board is also being asked to add one extra morning and afternoon run on both routes beginning next March.

Those requests come as ridership on Bay Area ferry services continues to boom.

Based on newly released statistics, weekday ridership on San Francisco Bay Ferries' Oakland/Alameda-San Francisco route is up about 140 percent in the past five years — from 1,187 trips in May 2010 to 2,841 trips in May 2015. Weekday trips rose to 3,267 in June.

The Vallejo ferry route saw a 75 percent increase in ridership — from 1,624 daily trip to 2,843 — from May 2010 to May 2015. Weekday ridership on the Golden Gate ferries, which run from Larkspur and Tiburon to downtown San Francisco, rose by about 30 percent in the same period, from 6,057 to 7,812 daily trips.

Not only is ferry ridership spiking, the level of traffic far surpasses what WETA has expected.

AUTHOR



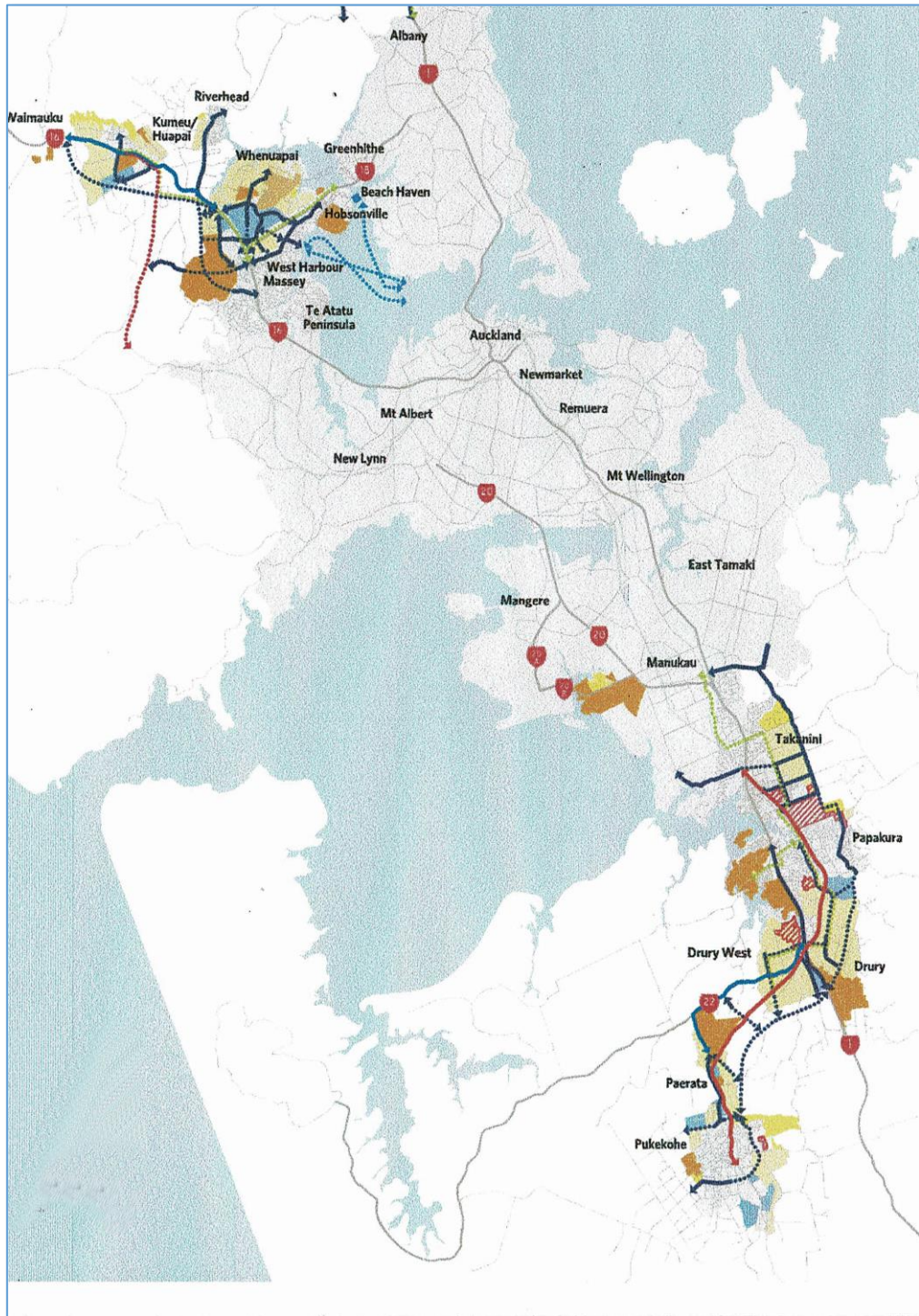
DAN BREKKE

Dan Brekke is a blogger, reporter and editor for KQED News, responsible for online breaking news coverage of topics ranging from California water issues to the Bay Area's transportation challenges. In a newsroom career that began in Chicago in 1972, Dan has worked as a city and foreign/national editor for *The San Francisco Examiner*, editor at Wired News, deputy editor at *Wired* magazine, managing editor at Tech TV as well as for several Web start-ups.

Appendix (viii)

“Supporting Growth” (summary paper, Auckland Transport, 2016)

Map showing proposed routes for transport development; ferry routes (including Manukau Harbour) in dotted light blue:



Appendix (xi)

C P (Phil) Hickling - Relevant Personal Experience

Contacts: Email: philh@kiwinz.net Phone: 027 527 4575

12 years training and at sea with various international companies trading to many countries; achieved rank of Chief Officer with Master's Certificate. Late 1960s working ashore in the UK directly involved in the research, development and start-up of container shipping services from Europe to the USA/Canada, six years before the start of container services in New Zealand.

On return to New Zealand from UK in 1972 joined Seatrans (a division of the Owens Group): the following positions were filled and responsibilities successfully undertaken:

Established and managed the NZ agency of Sea Containers Inc., the leading international specialist container equipment leasing company. By 1983 this agency had become the premier leasing agency in New Zealand for specialist containers, ships and container cranes. Overall responsibility (with a team of three) for the total operation was retained through to 1987, including the setting of marketing goals and target profitability. Particular successes included the introduction of container shipping to the Pacific Is. (with the Union Steamship Co. of NZ), prompt supply (six weeks) of temporary container cranes to Lyttelton after an accident to the one (and only) crane in the port and the charter of a container ship and equipment to the newly created Shipping Corporation of NZ for service with Pacific Forum Line. Drafted and presented to NZ government a proposal for the containerised national distribution of LPG.

In 1975 moved from Auckland to Wellington (Head Office) to plan and oversee for Mitsui-OSK Lines the introduction of the major container shipping service to Japan and Korea together with three other international companies. Overall responsibility for setting up and co-ordinating Marketing, Operations, Accounting and other functions.

In 1985 was responsible for the development of the company into becoming NZ's leading manning contractor to offshore oil exploration interests - US and UK owned drilling rigs – JFP Texas, Zapata Arctic, Atlantic Drilling. This operation was successfully established in New Plymouth at very short notice (two weeks) with a team of four in the face of strong competition; at any one time there were up to 150 rig employees.

(Still) Committee member of The Onehunga Enhancement Society (TOES). This local community group was chiefly responsible for instigating the recent reclamation alongside SH20 to create in Onehunga a new park, now named Taunamu; this was the largest non-commercial reclamation ever undertaken in New Zealand, creating a new beach and park to replace that lost 40 years previously in 1973 when the motorway was first built. The new park has proven to be hugely popular with the public and has won several prestigious design awards.

GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE:

Director, Coolainers (NZ) Ltd

Director, Container Terminals Ltd

Director, Brunel Ventures Ltd

Director, National Touring Exhibition, Photographic Society of NZ

Trustee, Manukau Community Foundation

Trustee, Aotearoa Fashion Incubator Charitable Trust

Trustee, Company Rebuilders Charitable Trust

Committee member, The Onehunga Enhancement Society (TOES)

