

# Insights

Topical commentary on the Auckland economy



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## More public transport is good for everyone

- Auckland ratepayers currently subsidise public transport, and a regional fuel tax that will fund more public transport projects is on the horizon.
- Some have responded that they shouldn't subsidise public transport as they don't use it.
- But the economic benefit from public transport investment to those who continue to drive, and will drive even with a regional fuel tax, is huge.

Aucklanders subsidise public transport by about [\\$320 million a year](#). The new government supports a regional fuel tax to fund a mix of transport projects likely to include more public transport. The city is also investigating longer-term road demand management.

But some have expressed concern over even the current level of public transport rates funding. The most common argument is that people who do not use public transport should not pay for it.

This argument misses the point of investment in public transport, which is that **every traveller benefits regardless of whether they use public transport or not**. A single-decker bus with 50 people headed to work takes approximately 46 vehicles off the road; a double-decker removes more. Trains each replace hundreds of cars. This is a huge benefit to those using public transport **and** to those who still use the road, which is why many cities and regions around the world subsidise public transport. Over the last 12 months, there were 89

million public transport trips in Auckland. Every day, public transport replaces over 40,000 cars that would otherwise be carrying workers into just the Waitemata Local Board (the CBD and neighbouring suburbs). This figure excludes those not in the labour force, like students and tourists, so the impact is really even bigger. Without public transport, there would be around **40% more cars** on the road into central Auckland during rush hour. And with congestion already costing Aucklanders \$1 billion a year, imagine the impact without public transport.

Another way to think about this is if public transport in Auckland didn't exist, it would be roughly equivalent to closing Ellerslie-Panmure Highway, Quay Street, as well as Dominion, New North, Balmoral, Manukau, and Pakuranga Roads.

Put simply, **everyone benefits from other people using public transport**. Commutes are shorter and less fuel is used. And even a small shift from cars to public transport [can increase speeds significantly](#).

Even more distant communities in North Rodney or south Franklin benefit from their local commutes or commutes to the city centre being less congested than if we hadn't invested in public transport.

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