

Transport reform – release of draft legislation and the submission process

Prepared for elected members

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Transport shapes where people live, work and how they connect with what matters most to them.

We have reached a significant milestone and step towards change for transport in our region with the government's introduction of [draft legislation](#), which has been signalled since the end of last year.

The proposed legislation will mean significant local government transformation for Auckland and could impact roles, functions and the structure of both Auckland Council and Auckland Transport. An integrated team of people from both organisations will be working together to review the detail of the draft legislation and prepare a submission to provide government with the advice it needs to make this successful on the ground.

This pack provides elected members with key points and answers to some frequently asked questions to inform discussions and engagement with Auckland Council on the subject of transport reform in Auckland. It serves as a summary of what has happened to date and the submission process ahead.

What are the key things I need to know?

The way transport is governed, planned and delivered in Auckland is changing. Auckland Council and Auckland Transport are working collaboratively on this change to achieve the best outcomes for Aucklanders now and into the future.

We have reached a key milestone as the government has now released [draft legislation](#) to enable transport reform in Auckland. The council will begin work to respond to the draft legislation in the form of a submission with around six weeks to prepare and lodge it. This timeframe will be confirmed when the select committee meets.

These changes were first signalled by the Mayor and the then Minister of Transport in December 2024, with the stated objectives to align longer-term transport planning priorities between government and Auckland Council, and increase:

- democratic accountability,
- local decision-making and
- public trust and confidence.

Transport reform will be a significant local government transformation that could impact roles, functions and structure of both AT and Auckland Council. This will require a new way of working for both organisations.

What's in the draft legislation?

The draft legislation proposes changes that will impact how council is organised and how we work together across the council group. We're working quickly now to understand the detail of the legislation and will share our initial summary with you within the next few days, but some key points are as below.

The draft legislation (bill) proposes reforms for transport governance and planning arrangements in Auckland by:

- ensuring democratic accountability for transport decision making in Auckland;
- and strengthening the role of the government and Auckland Council in long-term integrated transport planning in Auckland.

The way this will be achieved, as stated in the bill:

- **Establishing the Auckland Regional Transport Committee responsible for strategic transport planning**, which includes the development of a 30-year transport plan for Auckland for joint approval by the Minister of Transport and Auckland Council.
- **Making most transport decisions the responsibility of Auckland Council** by streamlining the function of a transport CCO to focus on public transport services. This includes moving regional transport policy and planning such as approval of the RLTP and the regional public transport plan to Auckland Council. It is proposed that Auckland Council will also be responsible for delivering the transport capital programme, as well as for renewals and maintenance of transport infrastructure, and Auckland Council to become the road controlling authority for Auckland.
- **Allocating specific transport functions to Auckland local boards**. The bill allocates decision making for local transport functions on local and collector roads to local boards. A greater role in transport decision making by local boards will support the objective of strengthening local democratic accountability.
- **Reforming role and functions of Auckland Transport**. The bill repeals the legislation that established Auckland Transport and re-establishes a statutory transport council-controlled organisation (CCO). The reformed transport CCO will be responsible for the provision of public transport services in Auckland.

The wellbeing of staff in both organisations remains a top priority as we move through this legislative process. We are confident in our people's capability, passion and commitment to keep delivering for the region during this time.

Who will be the transition director?

This role is signalled in the legislation. The draft legislation states an appointment must be made as soon as practicable after the commencement date of the legislation by the Chief Executive of Auckland Council.

What's already happened?

Through our partnered approach, Auckland Council and AT have already agreed three key early opportunities to progress that do not require legislative change:

- Auckland Transport is transferring some specific strategy, policy functions, and associated roles and budgets, to Auckland Council.
- Development of a joint work programme for AT and council strategy, policy and planning functions.
- Appointment of two Auckland Council staff observers to the Auckland Transport Traffic Control Committee.

Our response to transport reform sits alongside work in council's wider CCO Reform programme. This programme includes establishing new urban development, property and economic development services at the council as well as the Group Shared Services implementation programme. These workstreams will impact how the council group integrates transport delivery.

Why is legislative change needed?

Transport reform requires changing current Auckland Council-specific legislation – the Local Government Auckland Council Act (2009). This Act established Auckland Council as a unitary authority and established AT as a statutory entity and a council-controlled organisation (CCO) of Auckland Council.

Part 4 of the Act sets out transport management for Auckland, the functions and powers of AT (sections 45 and 46) and Auckland Council's role in transport matters (sections 49-52). Any change requires the government to amend the Act (and make consequential amendments to other acts).

The bill is titled: The Local Government (Auckland Council) (Transport Governance) Amendment Bill (the Transport Reform Bill). This bill will move through a process to become law, and we as Auckland Council will respond by transitioning various parts of council and Auckland Transport as required, to implement the legislative changes.

What does a Road Controlling Authority do, and what does this mean for the council?

A Road Controlling Authority (RCA) is an organisation legally responsible for managing and operating roads in a specific area. Currently AT is the RCA in Auckland for major arterials (busy

main roadways not including state highways or motorways), local roads, footpaths, cycleways and traffic-related infrastructure.

RCA functions are wide-ranging covering policy, regulatory and operational matters including the power to make transport bylaws.

The draft legislation is proposing to move the RCA function to Auckland Council. This means both the governing body and local boards will perform RCA functions where appropriate. There will be one RCA – not 22 separate RCAs.

Shifting this function involves changes to governance and structure and we are currently working through what this could look like.

What impact will legislative change have on current or planned transport projects?

Staff at both Auckland Council and Auckland Transport are committed to continuity of service and delivery throughout this period of change. Current projects will continue as planned.

AT has new performance measures and targets set by Auckland Council in its 2025-26 Statement of Intent and continues to focus on meeting or exceeding these.

What does this mean for elected member workload?

These changes will give elected representatives greater influence over what happens in their communities. What this looks like in practice is currently being worked through and will be discussed in greater detail through the upcoming workshops and over the coming months.

We will prioritise thorough inductions for new elected members in the post-election period to further answer this question and plan for any changes that need to be made to support new roles and responsibilities.

What does this mean for the implementation of Group Shared Services?

The full impacts of the draft legislation are wide ranging and are still being worked through. We will be assessing implications for all council group work programmes. In the meantime, the transport reform programme and GSS programme will be working together.

When will Auckland Council and AT staff know what changes will affect them?

We are working quickly to understand the implications of what has been presented in the draft legislation and what it means for functions and roles at Auckland Council and AT.

Any structural change as a result of the legislation is not going to happen immediately. There is a considerable process ahead for the draft legislation to go into effect, and the government has made a commitment that Auckland Council and AT will be given time to design any operational changes once the legislation is finalised. The draft legislation states there will be a six-month transition period.

An integrated team of people from both organisations will be working together to review the detail of the draft legislation and prepare a submission to provide government with the advice it needs to make this successful. This team will also consider how to operationalise the changes made through legislation.

The wellbeing of our staff across both organisations will be a priority throughout this process. Our promise is to keep staff informed every step of the way, as quickly as we're able, as the proposed legislation is considered and debated as it moves through the parliamentary process.

What involvement will the union have?

We are committed to working closely with the Public Service Association as we did for changes to urban regeneration, property and economic development.

FAQS specific to the submission process

When is the submission due?

We expect to become aware of the submission timing in the next couple of weeks and that we'll have around six weeks to prepare and lodge the submission.

Why is there only one submission being lodged?

A single submission ensures that Auckland Council presents a unified, coherent position while drawing on input from various elected representatives, subject matter experts and mana whenua. This approach allows the submission to reflect diverse perspectives while maintaining strategic alignment with the council's vision and desired outcomes.

Who is providing input into the submission?

The transport reform programme will develop staff advice on the draft legislation to inform the submission. The submission will be drafted over the coming weeks, with elected member workshops occurring over that period. This process will be confirmed with elected members and the submission timeline confirmed.

Do Auckland Council and AT staff have a say?

Yes, input from some Auckland Council and AT staff will be sought and considered as we prepare the submission. We are working quickly to understand the implications of what is proposed in the draft legislation to then involve the right team members as appropriate.

What role will local boards play in this?

Ultimately transport reform is about increasing democratic accountability and local decision-making. What is clear is that the changes are designed to give elected representatives greater influence over what matters most to their communities, while keeping delivery strong and

stable. It's important that we get input from local boards into council's submission as they will play a key role in transport decision-making at a local level.

Local boards will be considering the implications of the draft legislation at a business meeting prior to 25 September.

What role will mana whenua play in this?

Mana whenua have been advised of the draft legislation and invited to either provide information to Auckland Council to inform our submission, to submit separately, or a combination of the two.

Is Auckland Council consulting the public?

No, the public consultation process is run by the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee.

Other agencies, stakeholders, interested parties and the general public can lodge their own submissions to have their views heard and considered as part of the standard parliamentary process that [draft legislation](#) goes through to eventually become law.

Who will approve the Auckland Council submission?

At this stage it's envisaged Auckland Council's Governing Body will approve the principles of the submission at the Governing Body meeting on 25 September 2025. Approval of the final submission may be delegated in accordance with election period policy.

When will the draft legislation come into effect?

If it follows a standard process, it will be approximately six months from releasing the draft until the final stage, known as Royal Assent. The general order in which things happen is:

- The draft legislation (bill) will be released publicly through the Parliament website before being introduced into the house. This took place on Friday 5 September. The Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee will meet to decide the process and timeline that follows.
- The select committee will run a public submission process to gather information and prepares a report including recommendations for changes that may be needed (this includes receiving submissions)
- Second reading – the House debates the select committee report and votes on the bill. If the vote is successful, the bill moves to the Committee of the Whole House
- MPs consider the bill in detail and vote on proposed changes
- Third reading – final debate and vote. If the vote is successful, the bill has been passed
- The bill is signed by the Governor General and becomes an act (law) – this is known as Royal Assent. We understand this is likely in early 2026.

Where can I go for more information? How do I submit a question?

There will be a lot of interest in this process. Please direct any further questions through your usual support channels via Auckland Council's Governance and Engagement team.