

Hi

Following is a submission on housing related to roads efficiency. I submit that housing prices must take into account roads as a necessary part of housing and urban development efficiency. I submit that travel times impinge directly on house prices. Identical houses in different travel time locations will command different prices all things else being equal.

Chief Planning Officer Roger Blakeley of Auckland CC says:

"A key feature of being the world's most liveable city will be lifestyle opportunities. People will not want to travel long distances through urban sprawl to enjoy our countryside." [**Source below.]

His argument uses urban sprawl as implying long driving times at slow speeds to 'our countryside'.

I submit that citizens do not want EVER to travel thorough urban sprawl at slow speeds whatever their destination, whether to shopping centres, places of work, or the 'countryside'. I further submit that slow speeds through urban sprawl is caused by council planners.

It is observable that the planners deliberately make virtually all urban roads at slow residential speeds mostly at 50kph. In AM and PM traffic, urban roads design results in average speeds closer to 30kph than the allowable 50kph. That causes more traffic on the roads at that time thus escalating the congestion.

The roading design planners commit the cardinal sin of planning by allowing 'ribbon development' along potential arterial routes. They are in breach of their own longstanding planning rules. Every such route in Auckland has car entrances direct onto the arterial routes.

The question is why do they want to slow traffic. A Tauranga City retired traffic engineer was reported in the NZ Herald as saying that it is necessary to 'force' people into public transport in order to solve congestion. [Source date unfortunately not retained]. They design the roads to make traffic slow down and so encourage / use 'force' to get people into buses. They seem to believe that citizens have unlimited time to spend in traffic congestion. Buses of course take four times longer because mostly they stop every few minutes to allow passengers on and off.

I argue that there is an abuse of statutory power. They are encouraged of course by developers who want business to have high traffic count and slow traffic speeds; and by residential developers to minimize land used for roads.

It is my submission that for efficiency, the urban roads planners need to be forced by central government to ensure that urban roads are efficient. So when opening up future 'greenfields', it must be a paramount requirement that arterial routes are included in the design stage and that such arterial routes are all double lane and without private car entrances. It may need specifications related to volume of housing at further ends of arterial routes.

They must be told to move the private car access into subdivisions away from the arterial route. If that had been done in Auckland for the last 50 years including on relatively recently developed North Shore [for which there is no excuse of historical restraints], there would be virtually no congestion. Traffic would get to destinations faster and be off the roads sooner. Efficiency would be greatly increased. But planners do not want efficiency except on their terms which are tied to mythical unproven concepts of utopia using public transport.

A consequence of creating a network of higher speed dedicated arterial routes is that nearby residential streets could have their speed lowered to 40kph or 30kph on the basis that everyone lived or worked very near to a fast arterial route. So a short distance at a lower speed where people walked and biked and played would not impinge on faster travel times and would result in a safer environment.

Hamilton City has provided limited examples of such arterial routes without private car entrances albeit damaged by frequent roundabouts. There is a need for planners to be told to make use of overseas designs of speed turning without roundabouts. [To turn right, you must first go left at speed then do a right u-turn in marked lanes in a wider part of road when the way is clear. The result is that traffic flow is not hindered as it is by roundabouts.]

As an alternative remedy, it may be necessary to transfer the roads planning divisions of all councils to the NZ Transport Agency which includes the function of efficient road use: 'New Zealand's land transport system has a vital role in the country's economic prosperity - enabling people and freight to travel to and reach their destinations safely, efficiently and cost effectively.'. If this remedy becomes the necessary course of action, a deserving initial action would be the transfer of Auckland Council's roads function to NZ Transport.

** Source of quote:

<http://nz.news.yahoo.com/a/-/top-stories/12392441/housing-affordability-a-priority-of-draft-auckland-plan/>

Housing affordability 'a priority of draft Auckland Plan'

Miles Hayward-Ryan