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ACCESS

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Access

Access refers to the ability of Aucklanders to physically and virtually access the places, services and opportunities they need to lead fulfilling lives. This includes accessing information and services, virtual access (through the internet and telecommunications), and accessing public and private transportation, including alternative means of transport. Access needs to be provided in ways which are user-friendly and affordable.

Where possible, infrastructure should be provided in spatial forms which minimise the access requirements and thus unnecessary travel. Ensuring access for all Aucklanders means understanding and endeavouring to meet the varying needs of Aucklanders to access what the region has to offer.

Access for all Aucklanders

For Auckland to be a liveable city for all its people, access needs to be universal, reliable and uncomplicated for all of Auckland's communities. This is particularly pertinent for those experiencing social and physical isolation, people with temporary injuries or illness, parents and their children, people who are getting increasingly frail, and people experiencing disability.

Around 250,000 people are estimated to experience disability in the wider Auckland region (Auckland Disability Research Group, 2009, pp. 1, 9). The ability to move freely and reliably around the region, and to access services and the internet, has far-reaching positive social and economic benefits for those experiencing disability, which, in turn, has positive implications for all Aucklanders.

Virtual Access

Virtual access includes telephone, internet and other virtual media access. Internet and telephone access has important implications for people's ability to access employment, education, training and services. The internet and telephone can also be important tools for social connectedness. Access to TV, radio and other media is nearly universal, with Auckland having a particularly high density of radio stations.

Household Telephones and Cellphones

Telephone access to households is nearly universal across Auckland. In high areas of deprivation, approximately 4% of people have no telephone access at home; in low deprivation areas the percentage is less than 1% (see Appendix table A2). There may be a shift in these numbers as cellphone usage begins to take preference over household telephones. The increasing uptake of cellphones is changing



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the way Aucklanders communicate, but due to the high cost of cellphone use in New Zealand, their use has also created another element which can contribute to disparity in Auckland.

The Internet

Increasingly, internet users are viewing the internet as a more important source of information than television, newspapers, radio, family and friends, and community services (Smith, 2010, p. 10). Those who are able to access the internet are using it for a diverse range of purposes. For example, 43% of Aucklanders are using the internet to view arts online (Colmar Brunton, 2009, p. 19).

Aucklanders' internet access has increased from 69% in 2006 to 80% in 2009 (Statistics New Zealand, 2009). There are fairly good broadband services available across Auckland and a competing range of providers. However, access is not evenly distributed across the region or across the different ethnic groups that live in Auckland. At the time of the 2006 census, areas with high proportions of Pakeha and Asian people had more than 65% internet access, whereas areas with high proportions of Maori people had 43% internet access and areas with high proportions of Pacific peoples had just over 30% internet access (see Appendix table A2).

There appears to be an increasing 'digital divide' between those in Auckland who are able to use the internet to access information, services, employment and education opportunities, and maintain social connections, and those who cannot.

Access to Services

The barriers Aucklanders experience in accessing services and information include a lack of knowledge of existing services, socio-economic limitations, cultural barriers, literacy and language challenges, and the transportation and virtual access limitations outlined earlier. This contributes to growing inequality in the Auckland region. For all Aucklanders to be able to access information and services, it is important to have information available in forms and languages that Auckland's diverse communities can engage with.

Perceptions of Access

There is a perception that services are, on the whole, accessible. In the 2008 General Social Survey, more than 90% of Auckland respondents felt they could get to the facilities they wanted to – such as shops, schools, post shops, libraries and medical services – most or all of the time (see Appendix table A1). In the same year, the Big City Quality of Life Survey looked at Aucklanders' ability to access education providers of their choice. There was significant variation across the different areas of Auckland, with a significantly lower number (just over 70%) of people in Waitakere, Clevedon and areas of Rodney feeling they are able to access education providers of their choice compared with in Mangere, Avondale-Roskill, Western Bays and Eden-Albert (over 90%) (see Appendix table A4).



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An Example of Banking Services

Banking services provide an interesting example of both the way in which the spatial pattern of Auckland affects access and some of the tools that can be used to overcome these challenges. The 2008 Big City Quality of Life Survey found that urban Aucklanders felt more able to access banks and cash machines (ATMs) than those living in more rural areas (see Appendix table A4). The availability of mobile banking services and online banking can assist in overcoming these barriers for those who can afford internet and have the skills to use it.

Moving Around Auckland

The geographic layout of Auckland (in particular Auckland's harbours) brings various challenges and opportunities for those moving across the region. Population density in the Auckland region is relatively low, with many dispersed communities spread over a broad geographic area. There is limited provision and use of public transport and a high reliance on private motor vehicles, with the result of arterial routes reaching capacity as the population grows (MSD, 2008, p. 21). In addition, Auckland's current transport infrastructure does not allow for easy movement between different modes of transport (e.g. public transport, walking, cycling, driving, biking, etc.) in order to move across the region (Royal Commission on Auckland Governance, 2009, para. 2.39).

Travelling to Work

Movement across the Auckland region to work is particularly high for people living in Waitakere and Papakura, where approximately 60% of the working population commute to other areas of Auckland, with most working in central Auckland (MSD, 2008, p. 21). Approximately 75% of the working population in Auckland commute by car for the main part of their journey (ARC, 2007, p. 8). In the morning peak-time, work-related trips average 11 kilometres (ARC, 2010a, p. 36).

Working from home decreases movement across the city. The number of people who work from home increases depending on how far they live from the city centre. Approximately 6% of those living within 10–20 kilometres of the city centre work from home, whereas the number rises to almost 17% for those living 40 kilometres out from the city centre (see Appendix table A2).

Travelling for Education

Approximately 40% of peak-time trips are related to education. Fifty-four per cent of children travel to school by car (MSD, 2008, p. 21), although in 2007 the majority of students reported wanting to walk or



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bike to school (ARTA, 2007, p. 9). The number of students travelling by car has doubled in the last decade. Most trips are short local journeys (ARC, 2010a, p. 37). While many are travelling by car, there is a small (but growing) movement of 'walking school buses' whereby children walk to school in supervised groups (MSD, 2008, p. 21). In 2007 there were close to four thousand children using 'walking school buses' (ARTA, 2007, p. 11).

Public Transport

There has been a steady increase in the number of passenger boardings on Auckland's trains, buses and ferries. The 2009/10 financial year has seen a 3.4% increase from the last financial year (ARTA, 2010a, p. 2). This can mainly be attributed to population growth because the average number of trips per person has not shown any significant increase in the last decade, fluctuating between 35–40 trips per person per year (ARC, 2010a, p. 50). The exception is train passenger boardings, which show rates of increase which exceed population increase rates, having risen from 2.3 million in 2000/01 to 8.5 million in 2009/10 (ARTA, 2010b). ARC attributes the increase to service and infrastructure improvements (ARC, 2007, p. 9).

Many Aucklanders are not using public transport. In the 2008 Quality of Life Survey, 43% of Auckland respondents reported not using public transport at all in the previous year. An additional 23% used public transport less than once a month. Respondents said the main reasons for this were a preference of private transport and the inconvenience of public transport. Feeling unable to easily access public transport was a greater concern for those living in Papakura, Franklin or Rodney (Reid, 2009, p. 17).

Private Transport

Cars, Vans, Trucks and Motorbikes

The main form of private transport in Auckland is the car, with only 7.5% of households being without a car (ARC, 2007, p. 15). There are approximately 700,000 cars in the Auckland Region – one car for every two people (ARC, 2010a, p. 37). This is one of the highest rates of car ownership worldwide (MSD, 2008, p. 2). There are an additional 35 cars on Auckland's roads every day (ARC, 2010c) and it is predicted that by 2021 there will be 300,000 more cars on the region's roads (ARC, 2010a, p. 37). There has been a 22% increase in the total distance driven by Aucklanders in the last ten years. This is more due to population growth, rather than individuals travelling further (Ministry of Transport, 2009, p. 10).

Biking

Although Auckland is not a particularly bike-friendly city, a regional cycleway construction programme is under way and bikeways such as the Northwestern Cycleway which parallels the Northwestern motorway are important.



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Biking eases congestion, increases physical activity and reduces pollution. Approximately 1% of all morning peak trips are by bicycle (ARTA, 2007, p. 10). There has been a 27% increase in cyclist movements across the whole Auckland region since 2009, with Franklin being the only area which has shown a decrease (31%) in cyclist movement (Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited, 2010, p. 1). The highest rate of cyclist movement is on Tamaki Drive and this route has almost double the rate of the area with the next highest rate (Gravitas Research and Strategy Limited, 2010, p. 8). Safety is one of the main barriers to cycling. Only 21% of cyclists surveyed this year feel safe cycling in Auckland, down from 26% in 2008 (ARC, 2010b).

Walking

There are significant health, economic and environmental benefits from increased walking. Despite this, historically there has been very little investment in improving Auckland's infrastructure for walking compared with other transport modes, particularly cars, buses trucks and vans (Lee and Muhammad, 2010). Nevertheless, there are several important walkways within the city area and well-maintained tracks in surrounding areas for bush walks and similar activities. Approximately 40% of short journeys are made by foot (ARTA, 2007, p. 9). The 'walking school buses' make up a very small proportion of these journeys (see earlier section *Travelling for Education*).

Impacts of Auckland's Transport

There has been much money spent on providing transport infrastructure in Auckland region over the last decade and this has seen some substantial improvements. However, the high (and increasing) use of private transport is having a significant impact on Auckland and the people who live in the region. Impacts include the deterioration of roads, pressure on parking systems, damage to the natural environment, traffic congestion problems and decreases in people's physical activity. High levels of private transport ownership do allow more Aucklanders to access employment, training and education, services and leisure activities in places they may be unable to reach otherwise. However, lack of alternative transport creates a greater disparity of access for those without private transportation. This has significant social and economic implications.

Time potentially spent on work and leisure is decreasing as increasing rates of congestion means Aucklanders are spending more time on the road. In 2002, there was a 0.59 minutes delay per kilometre in the morning peak; by 2010, the delay time had risen to 0.76 minutes (Beca Infrastructure Ltd, 2010). There is also a significant impact on our natural environment as pollutants (from fuel emissions, oil, brake linings, etc.) affect water quality when rain washes them into waterways (ARC, 2010c, p. 25). Likewise, air quality is affected by the increasing use of private transport and the corresponding congestion. (See *Environment* section for more details).



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