



Auckland Congestion Report 2018

GUIDING LIFE'S JOURNEYS FOR OVER 110 YEARS.
New Zealand Automobile Association



Issue Two: July 2019 | Storm clouds gathering

The AA Auckland Congestion Report is an annual review of congestion trends in Auckland, based on Google travel-time data.

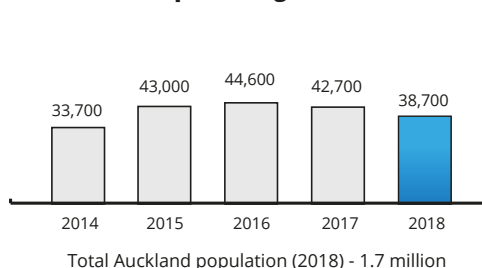
2018 Key points:

- After rampant growth between 2013 and 2016, congestion in Auckland is holding steady, thanks to Waterview Tunnel and to a slight easing in growth in demand
- But Aucklanders are still feeling the pain, and delays on many parts of the network are slowly increasing. The average motorway commuter lost 85 hours to congestion last year, compared to 79 hours in 2017
- The concern is less the near term, and more the medium-long term, with serious question marks around whether the Auckland transport programme can deliver on predicted de-congestion outcomes over the next decade
- Action is urgently needed beyond what's planned in the current programme, but officials will first need to 'own' the congestion issue

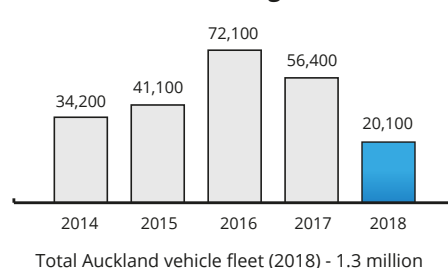
Growth easing, but demand strong

In 2018, growth in the population and vehicle fleet eased back from record highs:

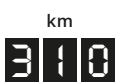
Population growth



Vehicle fleet growth



But the amount of driving Aucklanders are doing continues to soar. Among other things, the volume of growth on the periphery of the city is fuelling this.



+310 km

Increase in per capita travel on roads in the last year
(distance travelled on roads, per capita: 9,300 km)



+900 million km

Increase in distance travelled on roads in the last year
(total distance travelled on roads: 15.5 billion km)



5.2%

Public transport share of total person-kilometres travelled on roads last year

Source: Auckland Transport, Ministry of Transport, NZ Transport Agency, Stats NZ. Based on latest available data.

Sarah Geard
Barney Irvine

Senior Advisor - Infrastructure
Principal Advisor - Infrastructure

M: +64 27 281 2069
M: +64 27 839 9309

E: sgeard@aa.co.nz
E: birvine@aa.co.nz

Congestion's impact in 2018

In aggregate terms, congestion stayed at similar levels between 2017 and 2018, but there were different impacts on different parts of the city.

Motorways: slightly worse



85 hrs

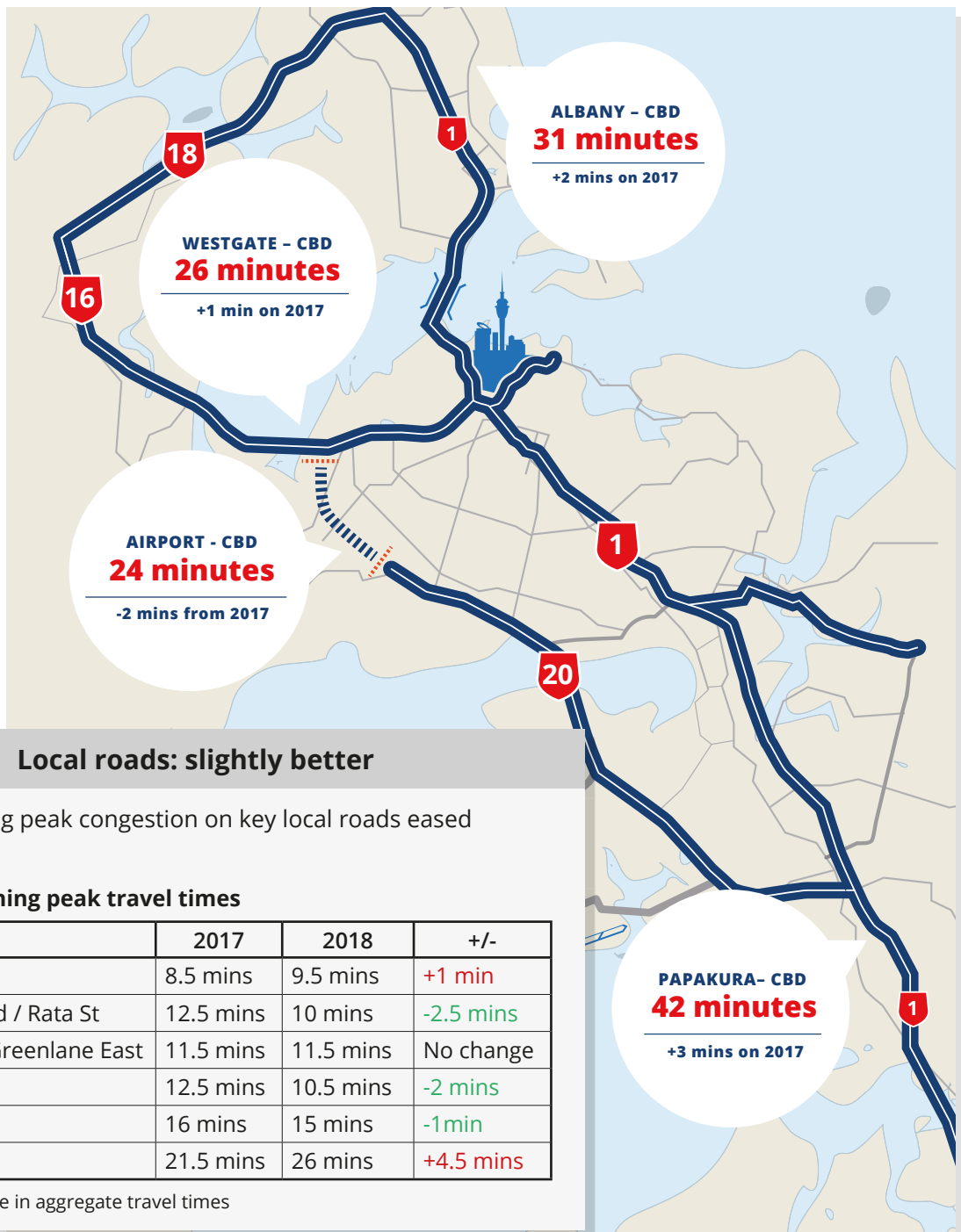
Time lost to congestion over the year by the average peak-hour motorway user
79 hours in 2017



42 km/h

Average peak-hour speed on main motorways
43 km/h in 2017

Morning peak travel times



Local roads: slightly better

Average morning peak congestion on key local roads eased by **2%** in 2018.*

Average morning peak travel times

	2017	2018	+/-
Onewa Rd	8.5 mins	9.5 mins	+1 min
Great North Rd / Rata St	12.5 mins	10 mins	-2.5 mins
St Johns Rd / Greenlane East	11.5 mins	11.5 mins	No change
Dominion Rd	12.5 mins	10.5 mins	-2 mins
Manukau Rd	16 mins	15 mins	-1 min
Mill Rd	21.5 mins	26 mins	+4.5 mins

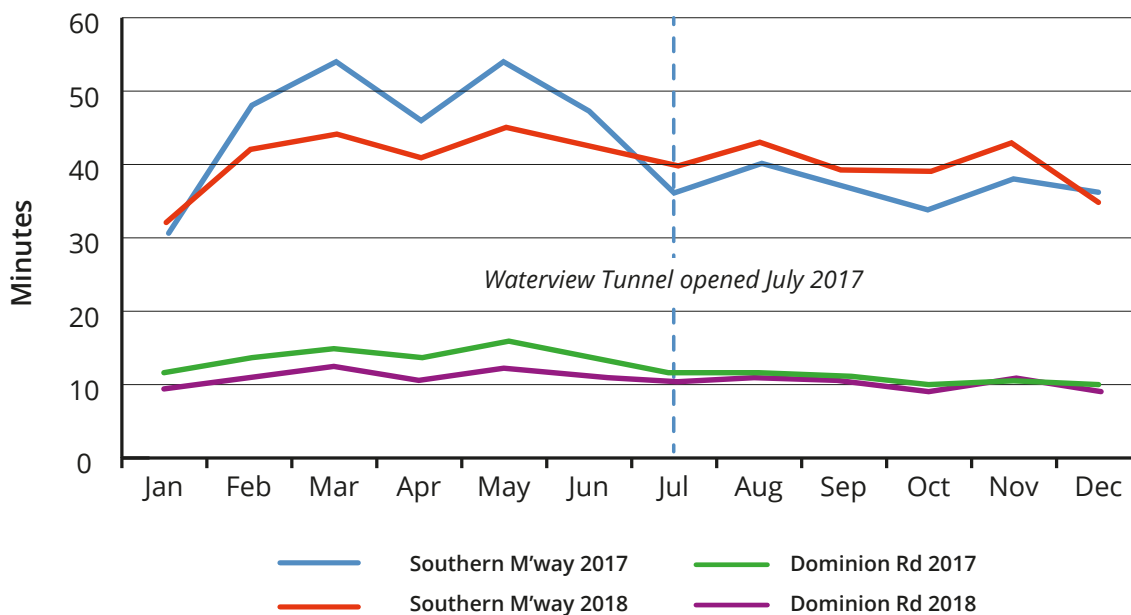
*Based on change in aggregate travel times

Waterview Tunnel still delivering

Waterview Tunnel delivered a massive, immediate benefit to the wider transport network, which is still being felt today. It's not that Waterview created new capacity – rather, it unlocked capacity on other parts of the network.

All the same, delays are slowly trending up once more on many key routes. Even with the shock absorption Waterview provides, the question is: how long can we stem the tide?

Morning peak travel times



Looking ahead: No let-up in demand

There is no sign of the tide turning any time soon. Growth in demand on Auckland's network is set to remain strong through to 2028, the end of the first decade of the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) programme:

- Auckland's population is expected to grow by around 300,000 by 2028, to around 2 million
- Based on current ownership rates, Auckland's vehicle fleet will grow by 200,000-250,000 to around 1.5 million
- Four of the five local board areas with the highest forecast population growth are outside the Auckland isthmus – further from centres of work and study, with lower levels of public transport (PT)
- Consequently, total driving by Aucklanders is expected to increase up to 20% by 2028
- Large-scale investment will see PT carry more of the load – PT trips are forecast to increase by around 70%. But PT will still only account for around 7% of all trips in 2028
- The Government says that the 10-year ATAP programme will result in congestion being held at 2016 levels (by 2028). But that relies on all the projects in the programme being completed
- There are massive question marks around the funding and delivery of the Auckland programme. Even if those questions were resolved soon, big-ticket projects can't realistically be built in eight or nine years
- Based on the points above, the AA does not see how the predicted congestion outcome can be achieved

The Government says the ATAP programme will result in congestion being held at 2016 levels...The AA does not see how this can be achieved.

Actions

Here are five things the AA wants to see happen now, alongside what's envisaged under the ATAP programme. These are all the more important in light of the current question marks around ATAP's funding and delivery:



Congestion KPIs

The Government and Auckland Council must confirm whether the stated ATAP congestion outcome is going to be achieved. Progress against that outcome needs to be tracked and regularly reported on, and incorporated into Auckland Transport's KPIs. The contribution that key projects – particularly rapid transit – make to congestion needs to be spelled out in business cases.



Congestion charging

High-quality analysis has been done by officials into why and how congestion charging could work in Auckland, but the findings are being held back from the public. If, indeed, the benefits of congestion charging are found to stack up, the Government is wasting time that could be spent advancing the all-important public debate.



Rooding

Even with much-needed changes in transport behaviour, the vast bulk of Aucklanders will continue to get around in private vehicles, and it is difficult to see how growth can be accommodated without more road capacity. Bringing forward road projects in greenfields growth areas and widening specific sections of the motorway network need to be looked at. Much more focused planning is needed for the next transformational road project (bearing in mind the benefit that Waterview has delivered).



Get more out of the existing network

But it's not just about new roads. Much more could be done to use smart traffic lights, dynamic lanes (including on motorways) and peak-period clearways to de-congest existing roads.



Land use and transport

Change zoning rules to allow greater density in high-growth outer suburbs – Albany, Howick, Silverdale, Westgate – to support transit-oriented development and localised work and study options.