

Submission

By



To the

National Infrastructure Unit

National Infrastructure plan

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Bus and Coach Association

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Introduction

1. The Bus and Coach Association of New Zealand (**BCA**) is a voluntary industry organisation that represents all areas of the bus and coach sector. This sector includes: urban buses, school charter services, long distance coach services and charter operations, tourism, and other businesses associated with the industry such as vehicle, equipment, and service suppliers.
2. The BCA is the only body representative of the interests of the bus and coach sector specifically. Our membership includes the majority of bus operators, ranging from the largest bus company in New Zealand with over 1000 buses, to many single vehicle operators. Our members are particularly concerned with improving bus public transport infrastructure through a collaborative approach by national and regional authorities.
3. The BCA welcomes the opportunity to make submissions on the Treasury paper: **“Infrastructure Issues- Toward the First National Infrastructure Plan.”** The BCA, as an industry representative, supports the proposal of a national view to infrastructure. Because of the nature of public transport, both national and regional regulations and policies impact upon the standard it may run at. It is therefore important that national and regional public transport policies are aligned in order for our members to be able to provide the best possible services. A National Infrastructure plan will help to assist with this requisite co-operation.
4. The BCA acknowledges that the Infrastructure plan is currently in draft stage; however we were surprised that **bus public transport** was not specifically mentioned in the paper. The BCA submits that bus public transport be included in the first draft of the National Infrastructure Plan because of the economic and other practical advantages it will deliver. We detail below what we believe to be some of the many benefits of improved bus public transport infrastructure, and also ways in which improvements to bus infrastructure can be achieved. The addition of bus public transport infrastructure to the plan will ensure that the bus industry also gains from the proposed alignment of national and regional policy.

Benefits of Improved Bus Public Transport Infrastructure

5. Bus public transport has the ability to impact considerably on the economic development, safety, mobility and sustainability of New Zealand transport as a

whole. When infrastructure is improved, the system will be able to deliver quicker and better quality services. These benefits will be especially evident in the major urban areas, where congestion is rising and subsequently restricting mobility.

Reduction of Congestion

6. Populations of major urban areas continue to grow, and congestion will certainly increase along with population unless public transport use increases also. Restricted bus lanes in metro areas provide buses with shorter journey times and allow buses a direct and speedy route to their destination. The availability of quick and punctual public transport attracts more passengers. An increase in public transport use speeds up general traffic flow which increases the reliability and performance of bus public transport.

Safety

7. Accident statistics show that per hour, travelling by bus is 4.5 times safer than walking, 8 times safer than driving a car and 83 times safer than riding a motorcycle. Thus, other things being equal, if more people can be encouraged to travel by bus instead of driving the NZ transport death toll should be lowered. Therefore, improvements to bus infrastructure will reflect positively on transportation safety generally.

Sustainability

8. Well patronised bus transport will significantly lower CO2 emissions relative to car transport. Environmental sustainability is an important policy objective that the infrastructure policy should aim for, and buses are a sustainable form of transport. Especially with the introduction of more electric buses, CO2, air pollution and noise emissions should reduce with the introduction of more bus priority measures and improvements in road design.

Improving Bus Public Transport Infrastructure

Rugby World Cup 2011

9. The Rugby World Cup 2011 is named in the paper as one of the four immediate priorities that must be addressed. The BCA submits that this event may provide a great opportunity to pilot expansion of bus priority lanes, especially in the Auckland area. Bus public transport will play a large role in transportation of visitors to games, especially to Eden Park. Bus transportation is the most cost

efficient way of conveying people to the games. Bus infrastructure can be improved to this end by establishing continuous bus priority lanes along Great North Road, New North Road and Sandringham Road. The development of bus priority lanes for the Rugby World Cup will demonstrate how improved bus infrastructure benefits transport, and how these benefits can be passed on to the wider community in an economically favourable way.

Road Design Generally

10. Improved road design will also play a part in improving safety standards such as bus priority measures, better intersection designs, passing lanes on inter-urban roads. Enhanced road design, like bus priority lanes, increases the speed of transit times on bus public transport. Quick travel can result in reliability of services, and convenience, which in turn makes bus use more attractive to discretionary users. We recognise that the costs of widespread road design to accommodate bus travel are substantial; however they are still significantly less than the cost of redesign with private car use solely in mind.

Bus Stop and Station Infrastructure

11. The BCA submits that improvements to bus stop and station infrastructure will improve the waiting environment for passengers. Many attitudinal studies have shown waiting time to be valued worse than time spent travelling on the bus: the higher value reflecting the inferior waiting conditions often without seats and exposed to the weather. Improving the waiting environment may enhance passenger experience.

Funding

12. The BCA wishes to remind the Treasury that improvement to bus public transport offers great rewards for public funding in relatively short time frames. Any increased funding for bus transport would help the sector provide better services, which in turn will result in the abovementioned benefits. We are supportive of the proposal to improve effectiveness of public funding by continuing to utilize the private sector.

Closing Comments

13. The BCA's main concern is that bus public transport be specifically addressed in the National Infrastructure Plan. We believe that bus transport as a wider sector will benefit substantially from the plan's objective of aligning national and regional policies and regulations. Benefits to the wider NZ community of improving bus

infrastructure are readily achievable through the imposition of bus priority lanes, which are able to be introduced on a trial basis during the Rugby World Cup 2011. The BCA looks forward to ongoing consultation regarding the Infrastructure Plan as a whole, and specifically with reference to bus public transport.

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