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## **Consultation on the ARC Draft Annual Plan 2008/2009**

Auckland Regional Council is calling for submissions on the Draft Annual Plan until the 2<sup>nd</sup> May (i.e. rather soon). The main item of interest to CAA would be the proposal for a fuel tax to pay for increased public transport.

CAA will make a submission to the ARC supporting the fuel tax, and we encourage everyone interested in having more mode choice – public transport as well cycling – to read the below and consider making a personal submission. We apologise for the late notice – a lot of annual plans are currently being consulted on!

- **What is being proposed?**

A regional fuel tax, to be collected in the Auckland Region, which would add 5c per litre. In addition to this ARC (Auckland Regional Council) share, Government may add (up to) 5c of additional tax. The tax could be levied as early as the middle of 2008, though it will likely be phased in in smaller increments.

- **What will the money be used for?**

To repay loans to be taken out for a number of public transport and roading projects which will otherwise be unlikely to be funded. The major initiatives are:

Auckland Regional Council (5c share per litre):

- \$494 million: electric trains and supporting infrastructure
- \$157 million: more diesel trains
- \$135 million: new train stations and facilities
- \$43 million: upgraded and new ferry terminals
- \$52 million: electronic ticketing, passenger information systems

Government (up to 5c share per litre)

- Part of the costs of electrifying Auckland's rail tracks (by 2011-213)
- Part of the costs for the \$1.89 billion Waterview motorway tunnels
- Rodney District's "Penlink" toll road to Whangaparaoa Peninsula

In sum, the measures are intended to boost Auckland's limited public transport provisions and raise ridership to twice the current levels by 2016.

*Cycle Action Auckland is an incorporated society with the objective of promoting cycling as a non-congesting, non-polluting, energy-efficient and health-promoting form of transport for the Auckland region. Cycle Action is affiliated to Cycling Advocates' Network (CAN), a national voice for cyclists.*

- **Why is this not paid for by general taxes?**

Political reasons. Government has refused to directly subsidise Auckland's public transport. Additional funds have been promised, but not in the amounts required to tackle Auckland's traffic problems.

- **Why does CAA still support this tax?**

CAA considers that a more public-transport focussed city will be beneficial not only for Aucklanders in general, but also for cyclists. Less cars and less congestion are an advantage to everyone. More bus transport will eventually mean more bus lanes, which are usually beneficial to cyclists as well. Improved trains and ferries will allow cyclists to carry their cycles on part of their journeys.

Most of all, the investments would signal a change from the "cars first, cars only" approach that has been Auckland's fate since the 1950s. By having more choices, we all stand to gain.

- **What do I gain? I don't use public transport!**

In short: roads that are less congested. Auckland is still growing fast, and 60 more cars are hitting our streets every day - but there is no more space for new roads (unless we bulldoze large tracts of our city).

Public transport offers a more efficient transport option for the high-volume corridors, thus keeping everyone moving. Unlike new roads, public transport capacity can be increased within just a few years - the train tracks are already there. Let us use them.

The alternative is more decades of gridlock, and more long waits for large roading projects like the Waterview tunnel, which will cost almost \$2 billion (!) - yet will improve little for the average user.

- **What would CAA like you to do?**

Make a submission (which does not need to be very formal at all, but does have to be in the mail soon) on the ARCs Draft Annual Plan 2008/09. Please tell them that you support the fuel tax for the reasons set out here. The form is found at the bottom of the following link:

<http://www.arc.govt.nz/plans/annual-plans-and-report/draft-annual-plan-200809.cfm>

And spread the word - explaining why the fuel tax is necessary if Auckland wants to become a less congested, more liveable city!