

News Release:

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Ridesharing Institute says: Why spend so much money when there is enough capacity?

Lost in the excitement of spending billions of dollars, or bickering over who should foot the bill for major transport projects, is the fact that Auckland's roads already have sufficient capacity, and that today's level of traffic congestion is simply the result of our failure to manage it better.

The New Zealand Ridesharing Institute says that a funding option that should be on the table in Auckland's transport funding debate is: don't buy the transport projects. Says the Institute's spokesperson Paul Minett: "It is an opinion, not a fact, that Auckland has an incomplete transportation network. The existing network could be managed for much greater effectiveness".

Institute co-founder Tom Morton points out that the worst traffic congestion occurs during the trip to and from work. "An estimated 400,000 Aucklanders drive alone to work each day, and take 1.2 million empty seats with them. By becoming passengers more often, say one day out of four for the trip to work, Aucklanders could take 100,000 cars off the roads. As pointed out in our submission to the Auckland Plan, this change would reduce or even remove the need for the major transport projects. And the cost of creating the systems to help people become passengers in existing seats, and even paying them incentives to do so, would be less than the interest cost on the capital that is proposed to be spent on the major transport projects.

"Mayor Brown is quoted in the Herald as saying that there is a limit to building more roads and the city must invest in public transport and change motorists' behaviour. If people would become passengers in the empty seats in existing cars, the investment in public transport would not be needed either. If a change in behaviour is needed, why do we not go for the lowest-cost option first?"

The Ridesharing Institute is a non-profit group of concerned citizens and transportation professionals who believe there is an opportunity to make our transport systems work better by encouraging a much greater level of passengership in existing cars, vans, and buses.

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