**Water Streets: transport infrastructure to make space for water**

In Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, there has been extensive commentary on “making space for water” in response to the flooding of 2023. Proposals including daylighting streams, creating blue-green networks, managed retreat and acquisition of high-risk properties, and increased resourcing for flood planning and modelling tools have all been put forward. However, we still struggle to address the generation of stormwater from impervious surfaces in our existing road reserves. So, the question arises, what do we expect from a transport network that is built to make space for water?

This paper examines this question through a thought exercise; placing a water lens across our transport infrastructure to explore form and function. To do this we consider the engineering design of street networks and the functions we need to achieve. Streets can be catchments and ecological networks; captured stormwater can irrigate sports fields, golf courses and green spaces, and green infrastructure can provide for habitat, pollinator spaces and ecological movement corridors. Streets can also be floodways; designed to store and move water during extreme storm events in such a manner that minimises destructive flooding of adjacent properties. Promotion of active modes can reduce pavement strength requirements, in turn increasing the allowance for permeable paving, soakage and aquifer recharge.

Building on examples both locally and overseas of water sensitive infrastructure we investigate the capacity for transport network to make space for water and, with a water-first perspective, look to a low-impact, multi-functional future.