**Updating Auckland’s Rapid Transit Network: Affordability, Stageability & Flexibility**

Auckland Transport (AT), with other agencies, are tiaki (custodians) of Auckland’s Rapid Transit Network (RTN). The planning of the RTN has always evolved over time, however 2023 saw some of the most significant changes in recent memory, with several ‘mega-projects’ developing in ways that challenged previous thinking, followed by major shifts in political direction, which created further abrupt changes.

In late 2023, AT led an update of the network to identify a more affordable, stageable and flexible way forward – one which better supports Auckland’s future growth and better represents AT’s tiaki (custodial) role.

This paper provides an overview of the context for the network planning, the challenges created by the development of the ‘mega-projects’ and the process and findings of this fundamental network update.

As well as being more affordable (this new network will save billions of dollars compared to the emerging alternative), it is also able to be delivered in adaptable stages which respond to changes in growth and other external factors. In particular, this network acknowledges greater levels of uncertainty into the future, and the need to be confident in near-term decisions but leave open longer-term options. Rather than a 30-year network plan, the recommendation is for a three-phase approach focused on levels of sureness (‘Certainty’, ‘ Reasonable confidence’ and then ‘Direction of travel’).

So, instead than being project-focused, AT took on a tiaki (custodian) role for the overall network that responded pragmatically to the challenging economic and political environment in a principled way – one that is intended to provide an enduring network. This paper aims to overview the updated network but also offer advice to other agencies about how to reframe the challenges in front of them – regardless of the topic.