

WestWards • Newsletter

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Ken Turner

Michelle Clayton

This is our new look newsletter in Magazine format, where you can turn the pages, zoom to view diagrams & pictures.

In these monthly newsletters we will cover a myriad of topics that are relevant to the Waitakere area, and Auckland, read on inside our new Magazine.

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Where is our integrated public transport network!

It does not matter if it is a single \$1.75M super sexy hydrogen bus or 29 commonplace shuttle buses, it isn't public transport nor is it saving anything until the public fills them up.



Patronage of the New Lynn to CBD express bus service had been growing as people began appreciating, they could be chauffeured to town while calmly reading, writing on their tablet, or talking to other familiar faces. And on a good day quicker than by car.

But AT's recent removal of their peak hour Express Bus service has added 20 to 30 minutes commuting time from Glen Eden, Titirangi and Laingholm to and from the city. What made the Express service faster, was that after a slow circuit around the suburbs once the 152x, 171x and 172x arrived back at New Lynn it would proceed directly on to the city without any further stops. A big encumbrance is now having to connect and swap buses at New Lynn. Moreover, timetable changes are leading to missed connections, as one frustrated commuter told me, (Murphy's Law - your connecting bus is just pulling out as your city bus pulls in) causing another 20-30 minute wait.

Board members challenged Auckland Transport to reinstate this express service. AT explained that because of Covid (it is always Covid's fault) operational savings are needed thus they could not reinstate the express service. But surprisingly they can afford to increase bus schedules around the suburbs. But if money is the driving factor, then this makes no sense, firstly it is common to see great big buses with only a handful of passengers, especially around our outer suburbs. When the bus is empty, how it is fuelled is virtually irrelevant it is all just a \$1.75M waste.

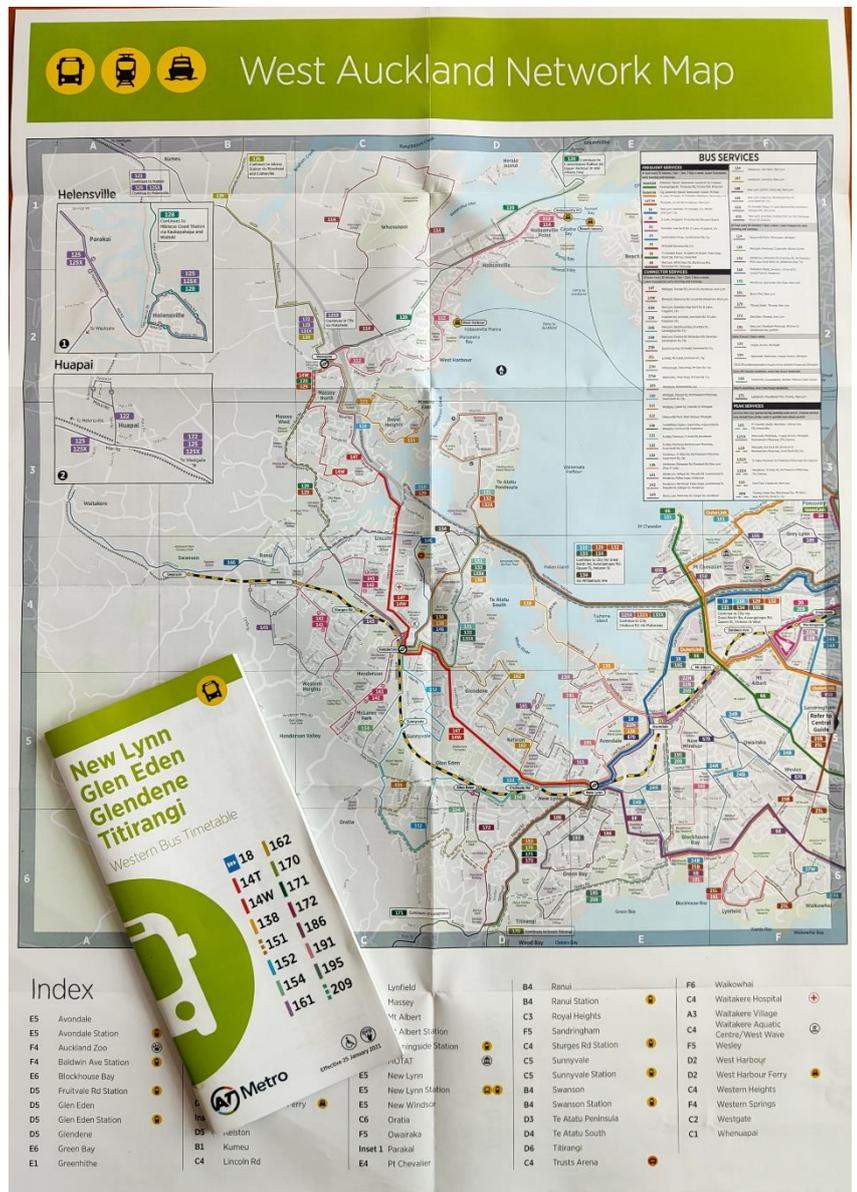
When the size of the vehicle is inappropriate for the type of roads it is travelling it's just a different form of congestion. A classic example of this is the size of buses AT has servicing the Laingholm community, they literally get stuck on the corners.

If Council and Auckland Transport want people to partner in a shared vision of mass public transport into the future, then they need to demonstrate coherent planning that integrates demand, convenience, and vehicle type.

Oh! and open dialogue. My information request came back with virtually all financial data redacted.

One good note, I can confirm AT will **not be installing** 134 parking metres in New Lynn where many bus and train users Park.

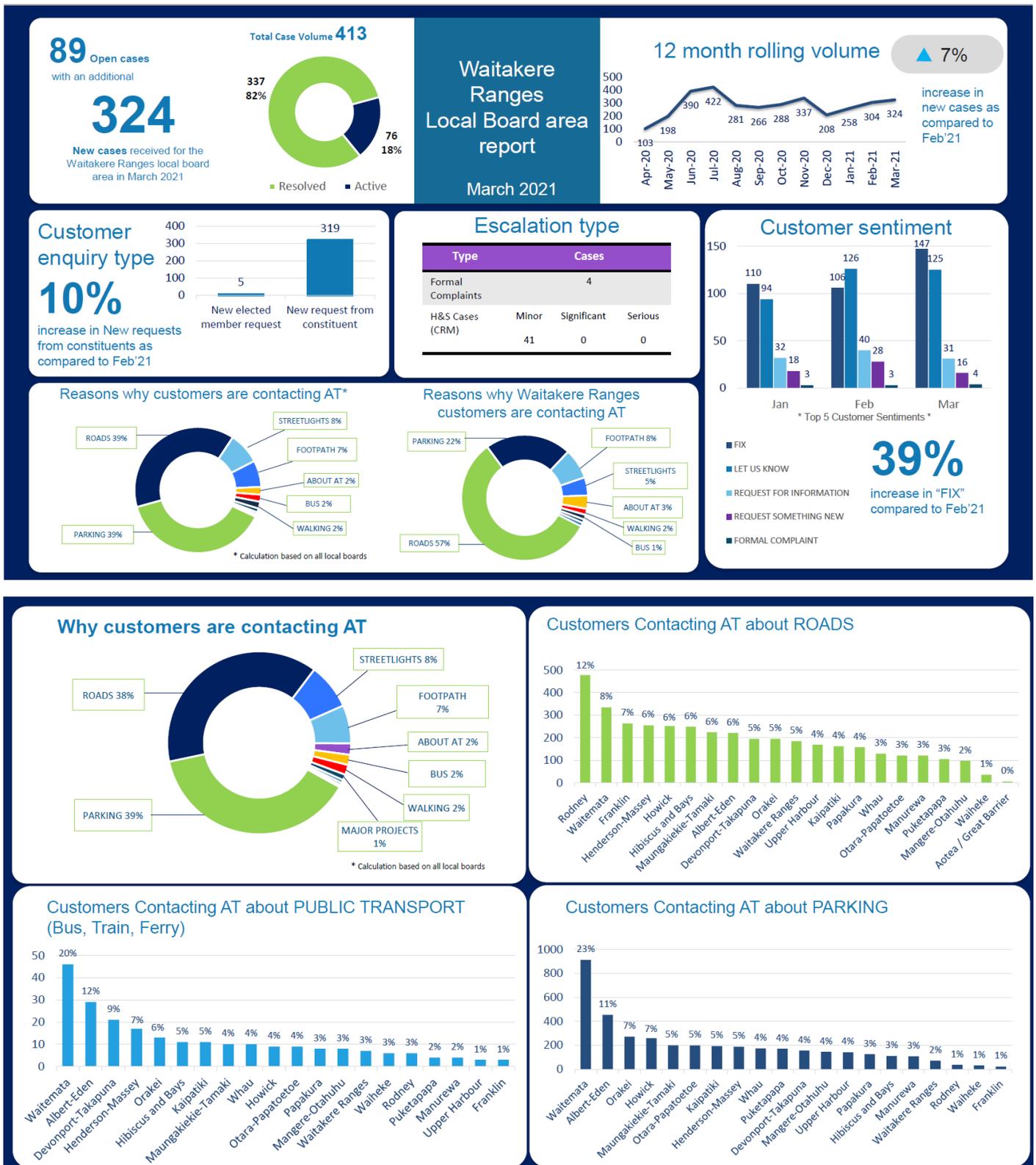
Ken Turner



Auckland Transport Performance Charts March 21.

Received last week 22 April.

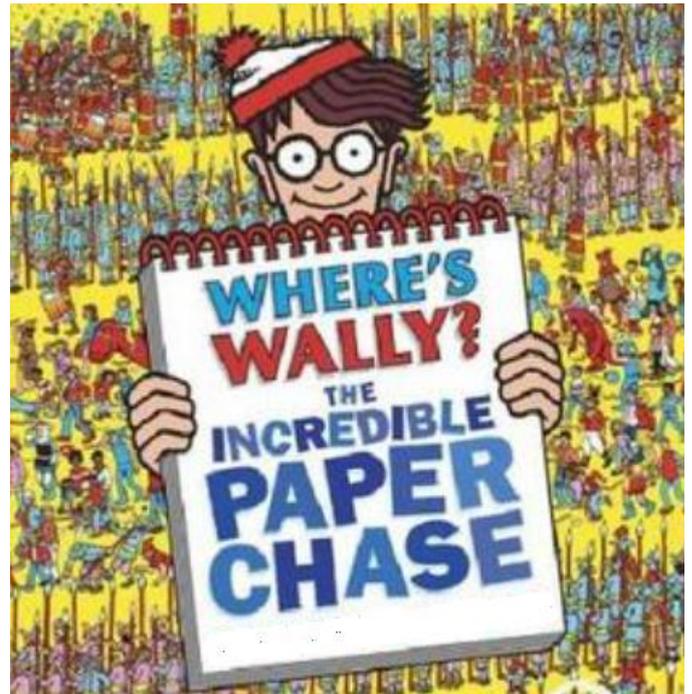
And yes, you may be thinking they are unclear as to what is being shown within their data, it is certainly not clear to me. I have compiled questions which I am wait for a reply from Auckland Transport.



Auckland Council needs to keep it simple!

Unpacking Council spreadsheets to follow Budget outcomes is like a game of 'Where's Wally'.

Even re-occurring line-items (Activities) in our local board budgets get allocated a different ID number each financial year. And often the ID numbers within each spreadsheet are not in numerical order, making little rhyme-or-reason to where they may pop-up.



A simple example is our 'Movies in Parks' activity. In FY19/20 this activity had the ID number 316 and was on page 5 of a 29-page spreadsheet. In FY 20/21 the ID had changed to 1259 now on page 4, and in our draft budget for FY (21/22) the ID is 1585 on page 1 of 33.

This isn't limited to small line-items, larger activities like 'Access to Library Services' (around 900K yearly) also have different ID numbers each year. Nothing is in alphabetical order either. Activities/line-items are sometimes grouped by budget type (i.e Opex or Capex) in smaller supplementary spreadsheets, but the above confusion still exists.



In board workshops I often commandeer more than my fair share of desk space as I try to compare previous budgets with draft proposals.

The whole purpose of a 'budget' is to predict forward costings based on conclusions drawn from

comparing past budgets with what they delivered. But the unusual way Council compiles its budgets and spreadsheets unduly restricts one from making these comparisons and conclusions.

I have asked WHY Council does not follow accounting practices standard in the private sector. I have received answers from “it’s the computer’s fault” to “so to help board members focus just on changes”. The latter suggests the confusion within our budget sheets is by design.

Whatever the truth, the reality is developing a holistic view of board ‘Activities’ over time is made difficult, thus so is demonstrating any need for change.

Getting all relevant facts in a concise manner, like this Arts & Culture chart, is the key to good governance.

Waitākere Ranges arts and culture provision

Arts partner	ABS Opex FY2020/2021	Lease type
Shadbolt House (not in operation)	\$10,500	To be confirmed – work led by Community Facilities
Glen Eden Playhouse Theatre	\$18,500	Memorandum of Encumbrance signifying a ground lease
McCahon House	\$22,500 plus \$10,000 LDI for McCahon’s Auckland	The trust owns land and buildings
West Coast Gallery	\$15,500 plus \$8,000 LDI top up	Community lease
The Upstairs Gallery	\$50,000	Community lease
Lopdell Trust	\$153,000	Joint management – a lease for the site is supported with a Council managed Facility Manager
Te Uru (Waitakere Contemporary Gallery)	\$666,000	Community lease
Lopdell Precinct		

- The local board also supports:
- Open Studios Waitakere (\$25,000)
 - Going West Festival (\$65,000)
 - Ahi Kaa, Matariki Event (\$19,000)

Comparisons are quick, it is easy to see that most of our \$1.06 million A&C budget, \$869,000 (82%) goes to one location. It is an important location, and the historic reason for this level of investment was good.

But the clear facts show it is time to share more than just \$194,000 with the others in this sector of the third biggest (by area) Local board in Auckland. For good governance all our data needs to be this transparent.

Ken Turner

We need a council that understands the basic.

Auckland Council and its CCO's are now publicising their draft budgets and long-term plans. Mostly these involve huge price rises, justified by unprecedented growth and panicked responses to supposed crises. But these justifications ignore the failures and shortcomings resulting from the decade-long Supercity experiment.

Amalgamation was supposed to answer all our problems and growth was supposed to deliver economic stability, but Council is more indebted than ever, and infrastructure and core services are bursting at the seams.

Council's response to this is even more growth and higher rates.

Council grabs every opportunity to advocate for higher rates and more of them.

The 3.5% 'general rate' increase which resulted from an emergency budget and unprecedented 34,000 public submissions, has come and gone like a flash in the pan. Council's draft budgets now propose that existing 'targeted rate' charges be increased, and that they stay in place for a longer term. It is also proposed that new targeted rates are established to fund Council activities which were historically covered by general rates.

Already the Waitākere Ranges 'septic tank pump-out' targeted rate has increase from \$195 to \$290 a year. Watercare is looking to significantly increase its income over the next 10 years and Auckland Transport has indicated needing an extra \$8.9 billion within the same period.

But nowhere in the draft documents does Council suggest how ratepayers are going to find this extra money. To the contrary, Council's draft long-term plans focus on reducing activity (to lower carbon emissions). Closing Glenbrook steel mill, reducing private rural animal numbers by 15% and removing all animals from regional farm parks are some of the suggested ways residents and ratepayers could help achieve this. (It is important to note that Councils' rural areas make it one of the country's biggest rural councils and these areas contribute significant revenue to Council's coffers). No Council documents offer insight into how people will bridge the gap between increased public charges and decreased private income.



Council is setting fire to its candle at both ends, with little consideration of residents and ratepayers caught in the middle, other than espousing electrification.

But again, Council's planning fails to identify and quantify what is practically required to achieve even this goal. Electric cars still require roads, parking, and most importantly fuel. Auckland needs more than a token

charging station at each shopping centre. We need more grid capacity and underground wires, so the supply is more resilient.

We need a council which is getting to grips with the basics, being effective and cost efficient. That is what will best deliver a resilient future for our communities.

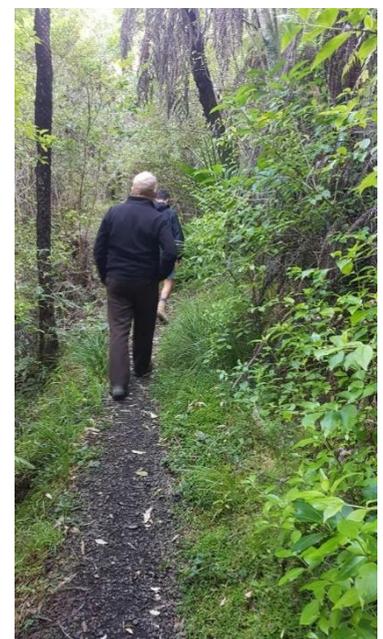
Ken Turner

Walking links are vitally important but let's reopen local community tracks before building expensive new greenways.

What I am hearing loud and clear from residents and ratepayers is a demand for their local board to focus on upgrading and reopening customary walking linkages before spending on new trendy-named options like 'greenways paths' and 'pop-up cycle lanes'.

In last month's *Fringe*, Board colleagues advocated for prioritising the Waitakere greenways Plan, a council plan for new "greenways" and cycling connections across the West, sometimes across private property.

I agree wholeheartedly on the value of walking links and their role in connecting communities, providing recreation and dog walking opportunities and offering travel alternatives but the Greenways Plan overlooks our existing assets.



Our 'local' tracks (i.e. those under local board control as opposed to those under Council control) have always fulfilled these purposes and in some suburbs these tracks compensate for a lack of roadside foot paths.

Of our over 200 locally controlled parks: – 96 have been assessed – \$1.6 million has been allocated for work on 16 tracks within them. Disappointingly, some of the money was to permanently close three tracks (which I opposed) – After 18 months only one local board controlled track has been upgraded, in Wood Bay Reserve, and this track is only 37m long. (Note: Zigzag Track, and other tracks in our area that have been upgraded, are in Council-controlled areas.)

This is an appalling lack of delivery. As frustration grows, the lack of completed local tracks is resulting in people pushing their way through forested private properties to get to harbour-side beaches.

1. Wood Bay Reserve	• Investigate alternative route and implement.	\$0
2. Mahoe Walk	• Indefinite closure of track.....	\$20K
3. Opu Reserve	• Mitigate track to national kaurisafe standards.....	\$90K
4. Bill Haresnape track	• Mitigate tracks to national kauri safe standards.....	\$365K
5. Okewa Reserve	• Staff to report back with further options	\$0
6. Tinopai/ Eric Leigh Hunt	• Mitigate track to national kauri safe standards..	\$244K
7. Paturoa Way/Tinopai Walk	• Mitigate to national kauri safe standards.....	\$133K
8. Arama Reserve	• Mitigate to national standards.....	\$78K
9. Rahui Kahika Reserve	• Track A-B is upgraded to kauri safe standards... • Track B-E is closed indefinitely • (Ken against)	\$128K
10. Titirangi War Memorial	• Mitigate tracks to national kauri safe standards...	\$220K
11. Henderson Valley Scenic Reserve	• Mitigate tracks to national kauri safe...	\$103K
12. Siebel Scenic Reserve	• Mitigate track within Kauri Hygiene Areas.....	\$36K
13. Arapito Plantation	• Mitigate track to national kauri safe standards.....	\$70K
14. Kaurimu Park	• Mitigate track to national kauri safe standards.....	\$90K
15. Warner Park	• Upgrade the track leading into Kauri Hygiene Areas with...	\$50K
16. Waitoru Reserve	• Buffer planting required.	\$1K

\$1.628M

This is not mitigating environmental risk; it is shifting it onto private properties.

Residents tell me they never experienced this type of trespassing before track closures. I want the local board I am part of to stop just giving lip-service to this situation, and demand tangible outcomes.

Let us upgrade and protect our heritage local tracks as our priority.

Ken Turner