



Promises, Promises: What do the election policies hold for moving people and goods?

Introduction

With the 2017 elections a few weeks away, the parties have released their transport policies knowing this is the second biggest issue in Auckland after the housing shortage. But understanding all the policies isn't easy. It seems no party is still willing to take public private partnership seriously despite a global trend that this is the future. So what's in store.

Funding

As of Friday 11 August the government and Council have agreed that there is a \$1billion shortfall each year over the next 10 years to fund the Auckland transport programme. This is due to the pace of population and commercial business growth in Auckland. The government wants the rate payer to pick up the tab, the Council wants special levies and new powers to implement the levies.

Labour appears to be more open to alternative methods of funding transport infrastructure. They have announced they will seriously consider fuel taxes, introducing new legislation, likely related to congestion charging.

National has also picked up on congestion charging in response to Labour's

announcement. If commercial transport operators and businesses are in favour of the approach, then if National gets in, they may explore that option.

NZFirst and Greens are unsurprisingly the only parties that favour user pays, PPPs and congestion charging.

There is of course the controversial Targeted rate which is helping fund CRL. Although that is not the National party's preference, it is the only available tool to the Council if no other methods are able to be pursued.

What's clear is that no matter who forms the next government, there is a high likelihood that some new costs are going to be borne by residents and businesses if the woeful state of Auckland's transport problem is to be solved.

So when all this money comes in, what is it going to fund. We examine the options proposed by each party.

Rail

A key theme is the expansion of the rail network, and upgrading the existing network to encourage freight movement.

National proposes a third main rail line in Auckland, dedicated to freight. This Price? Estimated to be: \$100m.

The Greens proposed to develop “land port” facilities to minimise heavy truck movements and facilitate road to rail transfer, as well as encouraging most heavy goods to be carried by rail.

NZFirst intend to create a ‘railways of national importance’ and implement more rail options in Auckland and connect the regions to Auckland.

Labour and the Maori want to do the same: reopen the Napier-Gisborne rail line, upgrade the Northland line, and add a Marsden Point link.

Coastal Shipping

An increase in Coastal Shipping is proposed by all of the parties. Not only is it logical, it is now essential given the high rates of natural disaster NZ has suffered lately.

The Greens intend to investigate introducing a concessionary “tonnage tax” or container tax on coastal shipping lanes.

NZFirst want to provide a favourable fiscal regime for coastal shipping for New Zealand resident companies who register vessels and employ New Zealanders.

Roads

National ranks the development of the road network as its top priority with rail.

An example of this being their policy to fast track and build the \$1.85billion East West Link.

Although Labour, Greens and NZFirst consider that roads are important, their

view is that road development should allow rail, bus way and freight way construction at the same time. If thats not affordable, then focus on rail, bus and freight way first.

Summation?

My view is that there isn’t too many differences between the parties. It’s simply the tools and timing of funding each option that differs between the parties.

Let’s see what the election brings!

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