

Peak Spreading for Auckland Productivity: Proposal Summary

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The problem. Auckland drivers lose about 85 hours a year in rush-hour traffic, and morning trips take around 71% longer than in free flow (TomTom Traffic Index). NZIER (2017) estimated that decongesting Auckland's roads to their design capacity on weekdays would be worth **\$0.9–1.3 billion a year** (1–1.4% of Auckland GDP).

The principle. When every bell rings at once, the corridors jam. Vickrey's (1969) bottleneck model shows that peak queues waste time without moving any more people through. Henderson (1981) shows that employers clustering their start times impose costs on everyone else, and that staggered hours can be the better outcome. Large overseas programmes cut peak-hour car volumes on approaches to work centres by **5–10%** (NCHRP Synthesis 73). A Honolulu trial cut travel times by **5–18%** on affected routes.

The proposal: voluntary and outcome-based. 1. Rates remission or grant for a verified **20–30% shift of arrivals to at least 45 minutes outside the AM peak**. 2. Enhanced AT **Fareshare** for participating employers. 3. Recognition of staggered-hours commitments as **travel planning** in Integrated Transport Assessments under AUP **E27 Transport** (Policies E27.3(1)–(2)). 4. **Public sector leadership** by Council, CCOs and agencies. 5. Measurement with **SCATS** signal data (run through ATOC), AT HOP data and analytics.

Target precincts. City Centre (154,633 jobs) · Airport/The Landing (~25,000) · Manukau (~17,000) · Rosebank (8,000+ FTE) · Onehunga and Lincoln Road (not published).

Safeguards. Hours change only by agreement, including through Employment Relations Act 2000 Part 6AA requests (decision within one month, refusal only on listed grounds). Participation is voluntary. Payments are made only for measured change above a baseline, to avoid deadweight. Rostered industrial shifts are respected. Shifts are capped so that no new shoulder peak forms.

Legal basis. LGA 2002 s 10 (purpose, as replaced in 2026: cost-effective infrastructure and services, and support for local economic growth), s 12 (full capacity, for grants), s 102(3)(a) and s 109 (rates remission policy). LG(Rating)A 2002 s 85 (remission under that policy). ERA 2000 ss 69AAA–69AAF (flexible-working requests). AUP Chapter E27.

Ask of Council. An 18-month, two-precinct pilot; consultation on a remission policy amendment; enhanced Fareshare with AT; ITA guidance; and a published evaluation.

Illustrative modelling in the full page is labelled "Illustrative scenario, not a forecast". Sources: thecitybuilder.com/peak-spreading.