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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO URBAN FORM AND TRAVEL
BEHAVIOUR
A Case Study Of Auckland**

*This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Resource and Environmental Planning at Massey
University*

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ABSTRACT

There has been increasing awareness in recent years about the need to improve urban sustainability. One major urban sustainability issue that confronts many western cities world-wide is the trend towards increasing reliance on the automobile as the main mode of travel and the impact this has on the environment, economy and society. In recognition of the relationships that exist within the environment, economy and society this thesis seeks to investigate travel behaviour patterns as an urban sustainability issue in a holistic manner. The research examines the relationship between urban form and socio-demographic characteristics of a population with travel behaviour in an attempt to more clearly understand the way in which urban form and population characteristics influence travel choice.

Auckland is one New Zealand City exhibiting a pattern of increasing automobile reliant travel behaviour. This is having major detrimental consequences on both environmental, economic and societal well-being. Auckland has been used as the basis for the study for this research. The thesis therefore identifies the relevant legislative context for transportation management and provision within New Zealand and summaries recent initiatives undertaken within the Auckland region to greater integrate land use and transportation planning.

Researchers to date, have conducted much study on the relationship between urban form, socio-demographic characteristics of populations with travel behaviour patterns. One branch of study is research on “Neo-Traditional Developments/Designs” and the affect this has on travel behaviour. Urban areas with Neo-Traditional Developments/Designs can be characterised as having more connective street layout systems, greater mixes of land uses, higher population and residential densities and more pedestrian friendly environments. An urban form that exhibits these characteristics is associated with lower levels of automobile travel and greater levels non-vehicular and public transport use.

This thesis compares the travel behaviour (and socio-demographic characteristics) of areas within Auckland that exhibit these Neo-Traditional Development characteristics with areas that do not exhibit the characteristics in order to ascertain whether there are any differences in travel behaviour patterns. Socio-demographic characteristics or lifestyle and life cycle stage is also viewed as a significant proponent that influences travel behaviour. The thesis further compares the effect life cycle as determined by age and household role has on travel behaviour patterns.

The thesis concludes that both urban form and socio-demographic variables such as age and household role influences travel behaviour patterns within the Auckland region to varying degrees. The thesis provides support to improve the knowledge and understanding of travel behaviour and the factors that influence it in order to address Auckland’s transportation issues in a sustainable manner.

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