

Strategy & Policy Cttee 6 16 2011  
Tabled Information  
from Con Flinkenberg.  
Reference 257/11P(a)

## The Flyover debate

### What are the fundamentals?

At its most fundamental level, the debate is between

those who want to use the inner city of Wellington	and	those who see the inner city of Wellington as a barrier that stands between them and something they want to do on the other side of that space
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It is a conflict between the needs of those who make the coolest little capital a vibrant place and those who inhabit its outer suburbs and even other cities. Whose needs should prevail?

### Can the traffic issue be considered in isolation?

No. Traffic is only one part of what makes a modern city. There are competing needs to be balanced, so the best solution is the one that places the whole picture above one detail of that picture.

### Where should a Councillor stand?

I suggest that you should focus primarily on what it is that generates the feeling that there is something special about the heart of Wellington that is lifting the whole city above the ruck.

### What makes the special feeling?

Wellington's vibrancy comes from two features

First, its compactness, the sense that the city is still a village. That comes because there is an intimacy in the inner city spaces created by the tightness of the site under the hills, which makes movement in and through the city an intimate, village, experience. We are forced to engage with our neighbours, even when we are in our cars.

The second is less obvious. It is the fact that the inner city is very evenly balanced. The Te Aro space is a grid, so east and west and north and south are equally balanced. That makes for harmony. To favour one aspect of that grid over another, disrupts the harmony in very significant ways. The impact can already be felt in the sense of amputation that the new bypass creates between the city and the south.

### Should the grid be broken?

The argument for the bypass and flyover is that the needs of the East-West flow are greater than the needs of the North-South flow. At the traffic level, that is probably true. But is it

true at the cityscape level? And what will be the consequences of breaking the weave of Wellington?

## **What will best enhance the cityscape?**

Once the issue of vibrancy has been considered, the next key issue should be what will enhance the built cityscape itself? Is the “feel” of Wellington going to be enhanced by extending the tear across its fabric? And will other key aspects of the cityscape be enhanced by the flyover? Apart from the basic “weave”, two other critical parts of the inner cityscape are affected by the flyover:

- The National Memorial space is going to become far more important to the sense of occasion that a capital city should have. Is it appropriate to hold major ceremonies or to host international heads of state in the vicinity of a bypass and flyover? That question cannot be swept under the carpet by arguments about mitigation.
- What impact will the flyover have on the only true boulevard in Wellington – Kent/Cambridge Terrace line. The twin terraces are an exceptional town planning opportunity for the city and you have already begun to consider how to enhance them. How can they be enhanced if their terminus is the understructure of a flyover? Again, this impact is not one that can be ‘mitigated’.

## **To sum up**

1. Should the movement patterns of persons who do not live and work in the heart of the city be placed above the movement patterns of those who do?
2. Should an West-East flow be favoured over the North-South flow in the city’s grid? (Would you build a motorway and flyover to speed Lower Hutt’s transit to Island Bay?)
3. Will the flyover improve or diminish the impact of key urban spaces?

None of it is easy. But, in 50 year’s time, if individual flying machines have replaced the motor car and Tawa and Johnsonville can “fly over” inner Wellington to reach the airport by some different means, what will have been the best legacy to leave for the vibrancy and health of the city of Wellington?

Good luck in your deliberations

Con Flinkenberg

6 October 2011