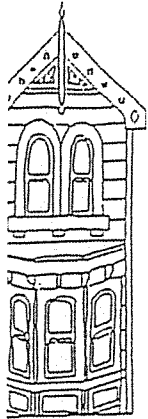


Strategy and Policy Committee
6.10.2011. - Tabled information
from Martin Hanley.
reference 258/11P(a).



I am Martin Hanley, from the Newtown residents' Association, I am also a partner in Red Design: Architects and a part time design lecturer at the Victoria University School of Architecture.

The Newtown Residents' Association is the Incorporated Society representing the suburbs of Newtown, Berhampore and Mt Cook. For nearly 100 years our organisation has worked actively to make our community a thriving, diverse, great place to live. We care passionately about the design and function of our urban environment. The Association is one of the threads that ties these southern suburbs together as a community. Every year we celebrate our place, and celebrate Wellington, convening the iconic Newtown Festival.

I'm talking to you today on behalf of the Newtown Community, and on behalf of past citizens and future citizens of Wellington, asking you our current elected representatives to help to look after this important part of Wellington.

The Basin Reserve precinct is the beginning of Newtown and Mt Cook, it's our community's front door to and from the central city. As well as the iconic cricket ground here can be found the home of our Nation's Governor General, the National War memorial, 2 primary schools, 2 high schools and a University campus. This place is much much more than an arterial traffic route.

No where in the world has a highway flyover improved the surrounding city. The under belly of a four lane bridge is always shady. It's an industrial space with an overbearing structure above. Cities all around the world are regretting and demolishing their 1950's and 60's motorway flyovers. In May 2011 the weekend Dominion Post ran a whole feature on how devastating earthquakes are not all bad..... in the case of California's Loma Prieta the 1985 quake meant the city freeway was disrupted and as a result the city was able to re-evaluate its traffic flow and demolish the still standing flyovers that had blighted its key urban spaces for 30 years! Lucky Loma Prieta, why on earth here in 2011 would Wellington embark on repeating others mistakes and building such a flawed strategy. Both proposed flyover options elevate the noisy state highway one traffic for nearby Mt Victoria, overshadow the Basin Reserve, make our National War memorial a highway lay-by, and put the ceremonial cavalcade from Government House to the city and parliament through an industrial like under belly portal. You can put as much lipstick and as classy a dress as you like on the chimp, but it's still a chimp !

As well as a road of national significance, these are places of National Significance. Here thanks to an amazing amount of donated pro-active creative design work the Architecture Centre has presented the city with the Option X sketch design, a viable alternative that the Newtown community would like our Councillors to recommend NZTA refine and implement.

Option X is costed at between 10 – 45 million more than the option B flyover. But Option X creates a desirable parkland environment, a magnificent place for the city, but also a magnificent asset for NZTA. With the new desirable urban environment created the fringes of the project are suddenly an asset that can be managed and used to fund the project just as our City Council has configured Lambton Harbour development rights to make the public waterfront spaces affordable. With Flyovers you have to pay to build the compensating mitigating structures but with cut and cover parklands it's the other way round, developers will pay to be there with direct prime access.

My specialty at Victoria University is using the students creative design work to test drive urban initiatives, and projects our city and communities need. With 80 -95 students this is a great urban laboratory. An off shoot of this work has been that talented senior students and graduates have for 7 years now donated their efforts to designing and refining the Southern Suburbs Safe Cycleway.

This Safe Cycleway project is currently two thirds documented. It connects Island Bay Beach, with Te Papa via a safe designated carriage way that uses Town Belt, park land and city streets. We have been developing and refining this project in conjunction with WCC officers and councillors. This corridor directly connects six primary schools, the intermediate school, one high school and a university campus with a cycleway where 7 – 77 year olds who can balance a bike are safe from being run down. Significantly our designated route towards the city is along Tasman and Tory Street, reducing the amount of vehicle traffic in those streets. With the Option X parkland one more high school and another primary school are joined to this off road safe cycle path, and Wellington East Girls is nearly linked. In designing the safe cycleway none of my team ever imagined something as innovative and visionary as Option X but our preferred route could with WCC endorsement today be in the future passing through a parkland directly linking 2.5 high schools, 2 primary schools, and a University. !

Our architecture practice specialises in listening to clients, they are the project experts. We do the same with our urban projects and along with Wellington City's traffic engineers we have worked on several projects where we convene the consultation, engaging local public expertise. The community's valuable fine grain local knowledge and experience is used alongside traffic engineers expertise to develop and improve the city. This empowering inclusive community based design is not how NZTA approaches the design of highways, which is fine out in the countryside but in amongst urban fabric more care and a closer fit is needed.

The Newtown community is concerned that some of the unnecessary extra costs mentioned recently by NZTA as possible required clip-ons to Option X have been designed to distract WCC from the proposals merits. Please be careful not to be hoodwinked when you vote today.

Here, with the Option X design the council is in the unique position of having a complete alternative configuration it can recommend. Interestingly on both state highway one and the Adelaide Rd to city local road Option X has less sets of traffic lights. We understand NZTA's singular focus on vehicle movements, but cities are for people. We elect our City Councillors to help us citizens look after our city – on behalf of the citizens of the future and respecting those who came before.

