



10 February 2012

Office of the Mayor
First floor
Town Hall
111 Wakefield Street
Wellington 6011

Dear Celia

Submission on the Cobham Drive to Buckle Street Transport Improvements

On behalf of the NZ Transport Agency, I would like to thank Wellington City Council for its submission on our proposals to improve the transport network between Cobham Drive and Buckle Street. I acknowledge the points and issues raised.

I would also like to thank the Council for expressing a strong desire to work with the NZTA in an ongoing process on these transport improvements. We are keen to work closely with the Council in order to achieve the best possible social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for the city and the wider region in a way that achieves the best return for the significant investment proposed. These sentiments are reflected in our existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Council for the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project, which the Greater Wellington Regional Council is also a party to.

We are aware that the Council has expressed a preference for a tunnel from Buckle Street to the Mt Victoria Tunnel in its submission. As we have previously advised, we do not have the additional funding available to construct and operate such a tunnel. I am sure you will appreciate that it is our responsibility to progress the development and assessment of our bridge proposals for the Basin Reserve.

Over the next 18 months we will be moving through more detailed design and NZTA Board approval phases, and on to seeking approvals under the Resource Management Act (RMA). The next three months are particularly important, as we will be addressing some of the fundamental design aspects that will underpin the remainder of the work on the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project. To achieve the best possible social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes for this project, it is vital that the Council be involved with our work over the next three months. As such, given the timing and importance of this work, I would like to determine as soon as possible *how*, in practice, the Council and NZTA can best work together during this critical period.

To assist us, I thought at this point it would be helpful to outline our next key steps, so we can use this information in determining the best way to involve Council as we make progress.

For clarity, we are progressing the Mt Victoria Tunnel Duplication scheme assessment work independently of the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project. The latter project relates to our

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proposals for a bridge around the Basin Reserve. Development of Memorial Park, including improvements to Buckle Street, is also being progressed in parallel with this project.

We expect to complete our analysis of the submissions we received from the public in 2011 in March. By mid to late April this year, we will have finalised the scheme assessment for the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project. The scheme assessment will contain more refined design thinking on our preferred Option A as well as on Option B, respond to issues raised in submissions, and will incorporate the final findings of our investigation work. On approval by our Board, it will form the basis of our applications for RMA approvals.

We anticipate presenting this scheme assessment material to our Board for its consideration and decision making (which will include its decision on Option A or B), in May or June 2012. Communication of Board decisions will follow in June/July, and this will include making a summary report of the submissions received on both projects publically available.

Following this, but dependent on the outcome of the Board's decisions, we anticipate undertaking further public engagement on detailed design and mitigation measures for the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project in the second half of 2012. Lodgement of our applications for the necessary approvals under the RMA is, at this stage, programmed for late 2012 or early in 2013.

Completing the scheme assessment for the Mt Victoria Duplication is programmed towards the end of the year, with a view to seeking the necessary RMA approvals towards the end of 2013.

As I have noted above, there is an immediate opportunity for NZTA and the Council to work together, particularly during the next developmental phase of the Basin Reserve Transport Improvements Project, and for the Council to have direct input into this work. Given Greater Wellington Regional Council's interest in our MOU, there may also be an opportunity to invite its representatives to participate in the conversations over the next few months.

To discuss this opportunity, and how we might specifically set up a mechanism to realise this opportunity, I will be contacting your office to set up a meeting with you early next week.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Chetwynd
Regional Director - Central

Cc: Garry Poole
Chief Executive
Wellington City Council

Cc: David Benham
Chief Executive
Greater Wellington Regional Council