
REPORT 1
(1215/52/IM)

COBHAM DRIVE TO BUCKLE STREET TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS: REQUEST FOR ENGAGEMENT FROM NZTA

1. Purpose of Report

To respond to a request from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) for ongoing engagement on the Cobham Drive to Buckle Street transport improvements.

2. Executive Summary

NZTA has proposed the establishment of a Councillor Advisory Group to provide information and advice to assist NZTA to prepare scheme assessments for the State Highway projects between Cobham Drive and Buckle Street, including Memorial Park. It is recommended that the Strategy and Policy Committee agree to Council being represented on the Advisory Group and nominate its members.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree that Wellington City Council is represented on the NZTA Councillor Advisory Group for the Cobham Drive to Buckle Street projects.*
3. *Agree that the Strategy and Policy Committee nominates its members on the NZTA Councillor Advisory Group.*
4. *Note that representation on the Advisory Group and participation of councillors as members is without prejudice to Council's submission or decisions on NZTA's final proposal.*
5. *Agree that a workshop be scheduled for NZTA to provide further information on the east-west undergrounding options at the Basin Reserve.*

6. *Note that the next opportunities for the Council to provide formal input are likely to be feedback on detailed design and mitigation measures (late 2012) and a submission on NZTA's Notice of Requirement for the Basin Reserve project (early 2013).*

4. Background

In October 2011, Council made a submission to NZTA on the proposed state highway projects between Cobham Drive to Buckle Street that form part of the Wellington Northern Corridor road of national significance. Among other points, the submission stated

2.3 The Council wishes to work with NZTA in an ongoing process to achieve the best possible social, economic, environmental, and cultural outcomes for the City from these significant transport investments.

NZTA's Regional Director – Central has now written to the Mayor seeking a mechanism for Councillors to provide feedback to NZTA (letter dated 10 February 2012 attached as Appendix 1). The letter also advises that NZTA is progressing the development of bridge options at the Basin Reserve, as NZTA does not have the funding available to construct and operate a tunnel.

The Mayor and NZTA met to discuss the request, and NZTA followed up with a further letter seeking Council involvement in an NZTA Councillor Advisory Group that will also include representation from Greater Wellington Regional Council (letter dated 8 March 2012 attached as Appendix 2).

5. Discussion

On large projects such as the roads of national significance, Council normally provides formal and informal feedback through a number of channels. This feedback at Councillor and officer level is provided to ensure that all relevant factors are considered by NZTA, and is supplied on the basis that it is provided without prejudice to any formal position the Council may adopt later in the process.

Officers have attended a number of meetings to provide informal feedback to NZTA on the further development of options, and the proposed advisory group will provide a similar forum for Councillors.

The next opportunities for the Council to provide formal input are likely to be feedback on detailed design and mitigation measures (late 2012) and a submission on NZTA's notice of requirement for the Basin Reserve project (early 2013).

Terms of Reference

NZTA's letter includes draft Terms of Reference for the advisory group. The key features are:

- The purpose of the advisory group is to provide information and advice to NZTA that will assist in its decision-making processes.
- Until June 2012 the focus will be solely on the Basin Reserve Project (including Memorial Park), with later input on the Mt Victoria Tunnel Duplication Project.
- As well as input in the development of the design, the advisory group will provide advice to NZTA on appropriate community engagement activities.
- NZTA reserves the right to make all final decisions on matters discussed by the advisory group.
- All input will be on a without prejudice basis.

NZTA has not specified the number of Council representatives on the advisory group, leaving the Committee to determine the appropriate representation.

Further information

Following the Mayor's meeting with NZTA, a separate workshop has been proposed at which NZTA will provide an explanation of costs and other issues surrounding the construction of an east-west underground option at the Basin Reserve, and why NZTA is not pursuing this approach.

5.4 Consultation and Engagement

No consultation has been undertaken on this report. Council involvement in an NZTA Councillor Advisory Group will be part of NZTA's ongoing consultation and engagement process.

5.5 Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications from Councillor involvement in the advisory group.

5.5 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

There are no climate change impacts from Councillor involvement in the advisory group.

5.6 Long-Term Plan Considerations

There are no Long-Term Plan considerations from Councillor involvement in the advisory group.

6. Conclusion

NZTA has proposed the establishment of an advisory group to provide information and advice to assist NZTA to prepare scheme assessments for the State Highway projects between Cobham Drive and Buckle Street. This provides an opportunity for the Council to work with NZTA to achieve the best outcomes for Wellington from NZTA's transport projects.

Contact Officer: *Tass Larsen, Programme Manager Policy*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The report recommends that Council agree to be involved in a Councillor Advisory Group to ensure that NZTA projects achieve Council's strategic outcomes.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

There is no LTP/LTCCP impact of the proposed advisory group.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no specific Treaty of Waitangi considerations.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

This report supports consultation being undertaken by NZTA.

b) Consultation with Maori

No specific consultation has been undertaken with Maori.

6) Legal Implications

The involvement of Councillors in a political reference group is without prejudice to Council's submission on the Buckle Street to Cobham Drive Transport Improvements, and the Council's submission on Notices of Requirement relating to the projects once lodged.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with existing transport strategy and policy, and is consistent with earlier submissions to NZTA on the Cobham Drive to Buckle Street transport projects.