



Mr Fergus Gammie

CEO, New Zealand Transport Agency

Via email

24th May 2016

Dear Mr Gammie

Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing Route Protection

As you are hopefully aware, the Campaign for Better Transport is an independent incorporated society advocating for better transport alternatives in Auckland. Our objective is to support transport projects that maximise throughput of people and freight as Auckland grows, enabling further economic growth and productivity. This is also an objective of the latest Government Policy Statement for Auckland.

The Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing project, which is being championed by the organisation that you control, does not support this objective. The NZTA's own preliminary business case determined it has a BCR of 0.4, indicating a very poor investment.

It is our firm view that provision of six lanes of extra capacity mainly for single occupant cars under the Waitemata Harbour is a poor solution which will only lead to considerable congestion at the constraints of Esmonde Road and the Central Motorway Junction. This will be expensive to resolve, if it is even possible to do so. The tunnels alone have been costed at \$4bn - \$6bn, and the cost of the additional work required to mitigate bottlenecks either side of the crossing and in Auckland's CBD has yet to be determined.

You will be aware that legally¹ the NZTA, in approving a proposed activity or combination of activities, must be satisfied that:

- The activity is efficient and effective; and
- The activity has been assessed against other and transport options and alternatives; and
- Relevant consultation requirements have been complied with. The NZTA has not consulted with the public of Auckland, nor indicated how the project will be funded or what level of tolling might be required on the new crossing and / or the existing Auckland Harbour Bridge.

For these reasons we request that the route protection work currently under way be placed on hold until these issues have been resolved and the Land Transport Management Act has been complied with.

It is also evident that the Better Business Case approach advocated by Treasury is not being adhered to at all.² If it was then \$27m would not have been budgeted to advance a project that your own organisation estimates will return only 40c for every dollar invested.

¹ Land Transport Management Act 2003

² <https://www.pikb.co.nz/home/planning-to-project-delivery-process/overview-documents/the-business-case-approach-high-level-overview/>



The Campaign For Better Transport

There is no pressing urgency for the Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing either. The new multi-billion dollar Western Ring Route is specifically designed to route traffic away from the Harbour Bridge via a continuous motorway from Manukau to Albany. As you are aware this is due to open in 2017.

A realistic alternative to six lanes of general traffic could be an electrified rail only crossing which offers:

- **CAPACITY:** A rail crossing will have the capacity to carry more people at peak times. In contrast, the proposed vehicle tunnels are likely to flood Auckland's CBD with single occupant cars and create yet more bottlenecks on the surrounding motorway network.
- **LESS CARBON:** A rail crossing powered by renewable electricity will generate significantly less carbon emissions compared to a vehicular crossing, and will not require tall ventilation stacks for exhaust fumes at Northcote and Westhaven. Our reliance on imported petrol and diesel will also reduce.
- **LESS COST:** A rail crossing has the potential to be more cost-effective. Smaller diameter tunnels for rail are estimated to cost \$1.2 – \$1.5bn, compared to \$3.7bn and \$4.7bn for two three lane vehicle tunnels. The difference is huge and could fund a rapid transit network covering the North Shore.

The idea of North Shore rail is proving popular with Aucklanders, and our petition to your organisation has gained nearly 1,200 signatures to date.³

The purpose of this request for your intervention is to ensure that we deliver a best value long term solution for Auckland – one that all Aucklanders can be sure has been evaluated properly and will serve them well into the future. I look forward to a reply from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Pitches

Convenor

The Campaign for Better Transport

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³ <http://www.northshorerail.nz>