



May 1, 2012

Draft Regional Land Transport Submissions 2012-15
Freepost Authority No. 3156
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
Wellington 6142

Submission on Draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15

This submission is made on behalf of an organisation, Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc.

It is an incorporated society with the aims of researching and sharing the history of the suburb of Mt Victoria and promoting interest in, and preservation of, its unique heritage.

We would like the opportunity to speak to our submission.

Contact:
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This submission relates specifically to two “**third-priority projects**” as set out in the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15, namely:

- No. 3 SH1 Widening of Ruahine Street/Wellington Road, and
- No. 7 SH1 (RoNS) Basin Reserve Improvements.

We oppose both projects. We do not believe that a different ranking should be given to them but that they should be removed from the programme altogether.

No. 3 SH1 Widening of Ruahine Street/Wellington Road

Mt Victoria Historical Society (MVHS) opposes this project because:

- There will be a loss of at least 1.6 hectares of Town Belt land. NZTA already has a designation allowing it to cut 25m into the Town Belt along Ruahine Street and seeks a further 10 m. The Town Belt is a gift to the people of Wellington in perpetuity – it was not given to the Wellington City Council or to the Government. Up to 50% of Town Belt land has already been eroded by development. It is a unique gift to the people of Wellington that should not be taken for roading purposes.

- A full heritage assessment has not been carried out on the houses in Hataitai that will be affected by the roading proposals for widening Ruahine Street. The current plans for a shared slip lane and at least 6 lanes of traffic will also have significant noise impacts, create more pollution, loss of land and amenity values.
- A full heritage assessment has not been carried out on the houses that will be destroyed for widening of Wellington Road. The built-heritage form of the housing along Wellington Road contributes to the heritage of Hataitai and Kilbirnie. The loss of houses on both sides of Wellington Road will be detrimental to the character and urban form of these suburbs and to Wellington. Many of the houses are the original homes built on the sections that were developed in the first decades of the 20th century.
- Relocation of the Marist clubrooms on Kilbirnie Park will be required. This should be avoided and seems unnecessary when there is currently road space for four lanes.

7 SH1 (RoNS) Basin Reserve Improvements

Mt Victoria Historical Society opposes this project because:

Buckle and Tasman Streets

- The stretch of Buckle Street between Tasman and Taranaki Streets is an important military and penal precinct including the Defence General Headquarters (Category II historic place), the Mt Cook Police Barracks (Category II historic place), the Tasman Wall (Category I historic place) and the National War Memorial, Carillon and Old Museum Building (Category I historic places). There has been no assessment of the effects on the historic streetscape in the area of Tasman, Tory and Buckle Streets.
- The original alignment is to be disrupted, with the road further widened to three lanes and pushed closer to Mount Cook School. This creates a poor-quality pedestrian environment and does not allow for the appreciation of these significant heritage places.
- The proposed Memorial Park site is on land owned by the NZTA and not by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, who should be the custodians of any national Memorial Park. It is also inappropriate and disrespectful for a memorial park to be separated from its central memorial by a three-lane highway. Nor is a pedestrian-unfriendly thin green strip beside a highway a suitable place to site new monuments from other nations when the aim is to show respect for their contributions.

Home of Compassion Crèche

Flyover Options A and B both have a major effect on the Home of Compassion Crèche run by Mother Aubert, which has a Category I registration from the NZ Historic Places Trust. Option A removes it from its site and Option B retains it on-site but in isolation. Both options create poor outcomes for heritage values of the Crèche. MVHS believes that any roading improvements must avoid relocating or isolating it.

Basin Reserve

- NZTA has failed to adequately explain, or take into account, the significance of the Basin Reserve as a nationally significant site that has national and international recognition. The Basin Reserve is Wellington's most iconic public recreation space and significant heritage precinct. The whole area is registered by the NZ Historic Places Trust. Its amenity and landscape values will be lost under the current roading proposals. MVHS opposes any plan for an elevated bridge structure, including both Options A and B.
- Options A and B will also result in the loss of the significant heritage boulevard views leading to and from the Basin Reserve, along Kent and Cambridge Terraces. In addition to the early presence of a boulevard, this uninterrupted connection with the Basin retains the significance of the Basin's link with the harbour via Waitangi Stream, an important determinant and feature in Wellington's development and history.

Ellice and Dufferin Streets

- Historic buildings in lower Ellice Street will lose their heritage and amenity value and the historic streetscape of Ellice Street will be destroyed. (The houses between 31 and 37 Ellice Street were built to the same design in 1890 and 39 Ellice Street dates from 1876.)
- The visual impacts of an elevated bridge structure on St Joseph's Church will be major. The church is an architectural award winner, designed by Studio Pacific Architecture, and contains significant stained glass works which include a major piece by well-known Maori artist, Shane Cotton. It is our heritage of the future. It is also at the heart of the Te Aro Catholic community, forming part of a catholic precinct that includes buildings along Brougham and Ellice Street. The presence of the Catholic Church in the southern end of Mount Victoria has important historic links to the Buckle Street site of the Home of Compassion Crèche and the former Archbishop's residence at 7 Paterson Street.

Second Mt Victoria tunnel

While not in the list of projects listed in the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme, it is well-known that increasing roading capacity leads to a direct increase in vehicle traffic. There is therefore no logic to carrying out projects No. 3 and No. 7, on either side of the Basin Reserve, in isolation. The unstated objective must be to increase traffic, and consequently the build-up and congestion at the tunnel, in order to force development of a second Mt Victoria tunnel.

MVHS believes that proposals for a second Mount Victoria tunnel have not undergone the full assessment and analysis required for the public to understand its impact. There has been no publicly available assessment by NZTA of the heritage values in the affected area of Mt Victoria. Our specific concerns are as follows:

- Construction of another Mount Victoria tunnel would result in the loss of the original housing on the southern boundary of the historically significant suburb of Mount Victoria. The original town acres (No. 673 and 676) dating from the 1840 William Mein-Smith plan of Wellington City will be affected by the roading plans.

- The current roading plans will result in the total destruction of Paterson Street. Paterson Street was built as a private street by Harry Crump in 1900, and included acquiring part of the original College Reserve Town Belt land. Crump built all but four of the houses at the end of Brougham and along Paterson Street between 1901 and 1909. These are significant two-storey, wooden Victorian villas.
- In addition, Wellington would lose 7 Paterson Street, built in 1869 for William Waring Taylor, after whom Waring Taylor Street is named. This is one of the earliest homes of an early settlers 'elite' remaining in Wellington. Designed by Nicholas Marchant, it was also the home of the Catholic Archbishop of Wellington, Thomas O'Shea, and the Catholic Presbytery. It is one of the oldest homes in Mount Victoria and Wellington.
- Etrick Cottage, 19 Paterson Street, built between 1871 and 1874 and a Category II historic place, would also be lost under the current roading proposal.
- Up to 20 houses and apartments, including the whole of Paterson Street, parts of Brougham Street, Austin Street and Austin Terrace could be lost or severely affected by construction of another tunnel. These properties add to the diversity of Mount Victoria's built heritage and the urban form. The MVHS opposes any roading proposal that demolishes or relocates these buildings.

Other

This submission focuses on the impacts of the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme's projects 3 and 7 on heritage. It is important to set these in the wider context, however, as the destruction of heritage is all the more indefensible given the dubious claims of value and lack of strategic vision of the overall projects.

Policy and Transport Plans

- The Regional Land Transport Plan was informed by the Ngarauunga Gorge to Airport consultation. 80% of respondents did not want a flyover option for improvements to the Basin Reserve. This has been ignored, with NZTA's Option A and B only offering an elevated bridge structure option. The proposals do not include the multi-modal approach that was the basis of the Land Transport Strategy. MVHS supports an approach which prioritises investigation of improvements to public transport, cycling and walking options before building more roading capacity.
- MVHS believes that the majority of traffic to and from the eastern suburbs is local traffic. This is not a Road of National Significance but a local route for those accessing the city and the region. MVHS believes that the roads that currently make up State Highway 1 through Wellington should be designated back to local roads. Mass transit for commuting, recreation and access to Wellington city is a more strategic, long-term solution for the environment and the economy, and would be more efficient in terms of movement and access for citizens. Taking further land for roading, as under the current proposals, is not a good use of scarce resources and would be detrimental to the Wellington's environment. The focus on creating more capacity for private car use is outdated and not forward thinking. It does not contribute to environmental, economic or social outcomes that should be the bottom line for any transport proposal. MVHS believes the effects on the

local communities, the built urban environment and heritage are major and should be avoided. Even the NZTA acknowledges that impacts on heritage sites will be high¹.

- It is unacceptable in the 21st century to continue to destroy and severely affect heritage and Wellington's built urban form for roading projects. Past roading projects have seen the loss of significant areas of Thorndon and the Bolton Street cemetery for the motorway, and the loss of heritage and urban built form of Te Aro for the Wellington Inner City Bypass. The current proposals are a continuation of the roading projects of the last 30 to 40 years and there is no justification for their implementation.

Economic and social impacts

- Many commentators have written knowledgably about the spurious economic claims made by NZTA for the projects 3 and 7 and a second Mt Victoria tunnel. (Furthermore, it can be almost guaranteed, on the basis of past projects, that costs will ultimately be considerably higher than predicted.) The loss of large amounts of land for future recreation, housing and business opportunities, to roading, will in fact have major impacts on health, the local and regional economy and social cohesion.
- Urban environments are complex and creative spaces that should be the heart of the economy. A unique and defining feature of Wellington City and its surrounding suburbs is the constriction of its typography and the compact nature of the built urban form. This creates more opportunities for connectivity, especially if people are walking, cycling, interacting with the environment and each other. Built heritage and special inner city suburbs like Mount Victoria, Te Aro and Mount Cook contribute significantly to the city's built urban form, its liveability and economy. Disruption to, or destruction of, these areas by major roads has far-reaching and detrimental impacts on the city and its people. Poor urban environment outcomes will be created by the current roading proposals. The loss of connectivity for pedestrians, residents and visitors to the many historic sites and heritage precincts and streetscapes will result in their being devalued, isolated and increasingly at risk in dead urban spaces.
- We also believe that the proposals also do not take sufficient account of Wellington City's strategic direction, including the *Toward 2040: Smart Green Wellington* strategy, for which there is considerable public support.

Conclusion

Mt Victoria Historical Society opposes the inclusion of Projects No. 3 and 7 in the Draft Regional Land Transport Programme 2012-15.

¹ *Mt Victoria to Cobham Drive Study Technical Report – Environment, p 32*