



April 21, 2009

RTLP Submissions
Greater Wellington Regional Council
Freepost Authority No. 3156
PO Box 11646
Manners Street
Wellington 6142

Submission on Proposed Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-12

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.

This submission relates to one specific aspect of the Proposed Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-12, the SH1 Basin Reserve Upgrade.

Mt Victoria Historical Society believes that plans for a Basin Reserve flyover included as part of this project mean that it is not an “upgrade”. Instead, this project will be destructive of a unique and important recreational, green space and historic area of Wellington. We wish to register our strong objection to the proposed Basin Reserve flyover.

Our objection focuses on a number of key issues:

1. It will destroy the historic values of the unique Wellington asset that is the Basin Reserve. The whole area is recognized by the NZ Historic Places Trust to be an area of historic significance to New Zealand. Since the earliest days of Wellington’s history, and the first recorded cricket game there in 1842, it has hosted significant sports, commemorations and other defining events for the city. It is acknowledged around the world as being an important cricket ground with a long history in the game. Its character and value would be greatly diminished if a multi-lane flyover were constructed around one side.

In addition to the Basin Reserve itself, we are concerned that construction of a flyover will result in demolition of the last of the original buildings of Mother Aubert's Home of Compassion mission.

2. Construction of a multi-lane motorway flyover will achieve nothing in terms of facilitating traffic movements in the area. It will simply move traffic a little faster over a very short distance before it reaches the Mt Victoria tunnel.

This is a short-sighted solution to the issue of traffic management in Wellington and more effort must be put in to investigating sustainable, long-term solutions which reduce independent car travel. Confirmation this week that an indoor stadium will now be built in Kilbirnie makes it even more important that Wellington look at efficient, clean, frequent public transport services to Kilbirnie (and the airport), utilizing the Pirie Street bus tunnel. We would also suggest that simply making buses larger and larger will not meet this need.

3. As a recreational area, for cricket, concerts with picnics and many other events, the Basin Reserve would be destroyed by the existence of a flyover at embankment height. The unique features of the oasis in the heart of the city and the open embankment for spectators would be gone forever.

The land was gifted to Wellington for recreational purposes and to construct such a motorway is against both the spirit and the letter of the deed which gifted it to the people of Wellington.

4. Finally, we would like to express our concern that Wellington city and the central government would consider so permanently ruining the approach to Government House, at a time when a considerable amount of money is being spent on restoration. This is a route that visiting dignitaries often travel and should be made as attractive as possible.

The Basin Reserve has a rich and unique history, which must be preserved and respected. Since its original gift to the city, a great deal of public recreation land has been taken from the Basin Reserve for transport; while a flyover may not directly 'take' more land, it would contribute just as much to a diminishing of the historic and recreational values associated with it.

Yours faithfully,

Joanna Newman
Convenor