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Let's Get Wellington Moving
PO Bo 5084, Thorndon
Wellington 6145

Submitted by email to getwelldmoving.co.nz

Submission on Let's Get Wellington Moving Scenarios

This submission is made on behalf of an organisation, **Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc.** (MVHS) <http://mtvictoria.history.org.nz/>. MVHS is an incorporated society founded in 1996, 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.

Contact: Joanna Newman, Convenor
[details removed]

1. Introduction

MVHS's interest in submitting on the proposed Scenarios arises from the fact that all the scenarios impact, to a greater or lesser degree on the suburb, of Mt Victoria and the Basin Reserve which abuts it. We have a particular concern for the heritage values of the built and natural environment in this unique part of Wellington.

2. Key points

- MVHS supports Scenario A
- We reject Scenarios B, C and D.
- In addition, we ask that LGWM expand Scenario A and add strategies such as transport demand management and serious investigation of public transport options such as light rail. This could be called Scenario A+.

3. General

MVHS finds the presentation of these scenarios by Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) disappointing as it essentially presents NZTA's already-rejected Ngauranga to Airport strategy in a different manner. At the same time, roading/bridge/tunnel proposals around the Basin Reserve are vague but potentially involve even more bridges and therefore adverse impact on the character of the Basin Reserve. LGWM's table comparing the scenarios, for instance, states under *Built environment and heritage* that there will be an impact on heritage items "due to works at Basin/Mt Vic" for Scenarios B, C and D.

We find it almost incredible that LGWM would present such scenarios as part of proposals very similar to those that were resoundingly rejected by both the Board of Inquiry into the Basin Bridge Proposal Decision in August 2014 and the High Court Appeal against the Report and Decision of the Board of Inquiry into the Basin Bridge in August 2015.

4. Support for Scenario A

MVHS supports Scenario A because it has minimal adverse effect on the Basin Reserve precinct. By giving priority to public transport and improving cycle lanes it encourages active transport and a move to public transport, while an improved Basin layout will enhance traffic movement around the Basin Reserve. Expert witnesses during the Board of Inquiry into the Basin Bridge provided ample evidence that traffic flow can be effectively enhanced with redesigned roading layout.

We support Scenario A because of the unique values of the Basin Reserve precinct to the heritage and environment of Wellington. These must not be further compromised. The Board of Inquiry into the Basin Bridge Proposal concluded that construction of only one 'bridge' (and a new entrance to the Basin Reserve) would have a severe adverse impact:

[1289] We have discussed in some detail the heritage values and the effects of the Project on those values. We have found that the effects would be significant and that the Project is inappropriate in terms of Section 6(f).

Also, as LGWM acknowledges, all indications are that traditional vehicular transport in western urban centres is on the point of undergoing a radical change. Building more roading infrastructure, to plans that are essentially decades old, does not make sense.

5. Heritage values of the Basin Reserve and surrounding area

5.1 Significance of the wider area of the Basin Reserve

A key reason for MVHS's rejection of Scenarios B, C and D is the heritage values of the Basin Reserve and the suburb of Mt Victoria. These were confirmed by the 2014 Board of Inquiry into the Basin Bridge Proposal Decision in 2014 after intensive investigation and analysis, and then widely publicised.

This is a unique environmental and heritage precinct, which helps define Wellington and plays an important role in collective memory and current and future recreational activities. A by-no-means comprehensive selection of the Board's key conclusions are included here as a reminder to LGWM of the importance of not causing an adverse impact on the Basin

Reserve through roading or other plans. For more detail, the report can be found at: [http://old.epa.govt.nz/Resource-management/previous/Basin Bridge/Final Report and Decision/Pages/default.aspx](http://old.epa.govt.nz/Resource-management/previous/Basin_Bridge/Final_Report_and_Decision/Pages/default.aspx)

[598] The wider heritage area also extends beyond this registered Basin Reserve Historic Area to the east to include Government House to the southeast and the Mt Victoria residential suburb to the northeast. Government House is a Category 1 registered building under the Heritage Act, with national and international significance, while a substantial part of the Mt Victoria residential suburb is registered as a Character Area of local significance in the District Plan, as noted previously.

[599] We understand there is no dispute amongst the experts as to the significance of the identified heritage area within which the works proposed under this NoR would be carried out.

[709] We also find the combined effect of two new structures dominate their surroundings, which, in this case, happen to be the surroundings of a registered Historic Area and set within an important, wider historic heritage precinct. Moreover, this dominance effect severs the historic relationship between the two open space reserves and detracts significantly from the open space qualities of the main entrance to the Basin Reserve from the City.

[780] Our overall evaluation is not simply a matter of considering effects on listed heritage items or confining our evaluation to a consideration only of the loss or restoration of heritage fabric, although such historic heritage effects are part of the cumulative picture. We must consider the character and significance of the whole wider heritage area and the appropriateness of such a structure within it.

[782] Consequently, we find that the evidence on historic heritage supports the conclusion that the Project before us constitutes an inappropriate development within this significant heritage area of the city.

5.1 Basin Reserve

The heritage built and landscape values of the Basin Reserve itself were thoroughly canvassed and it was conclusively stated that these would be adversely impacted by adjacent roading developments involving bridges:

[626] Statutory recognition of the status of the Basin Reserve Historic Area and the listed structures within it is accepted by all heritage experts.

[627] In terms of the framework for thinking about heritage values adopted by the Transport Agency experts, we acknowledge a range of heritage values associated with the Basin Reserve, many of them to do with its role as an historic cricket ground. In terms of representativeness and rarity, the Basin Reserve is considered by many to be New Zealand's premier test cricket ground, as well as being internationally unique in allowing spectators the freedom to walk all around the boundary fence.

5.2 Mt Victoria

The Board of Inquiry Decision also specifically acknowledged the heritage values of the southwestern corner of Mt Victoria in declining consent for a road 'bridge:

[711] The District Plan recognises the Inner Residential area of Mt Victoria as a special Character Area, because of the high proportion of pre-1900 buildings still in existence. As noted previously, one specific rule in the District Plan – Rule 5.3.11 – recognises to a limited degree the historic heritage value of pre-1930s residential buildings in that part of Mt Victoria by requiring a consent application for demolition as a Discretionary Activity. In doing so, the District Plan recognises the tangible architectural and urban form values of heritage interest in this area.

[712] Other heritage values relevant to this sub-area are vulnerability, public esteem and

context. As noted earlier, the southwestern corner of this designated Inner Residential Area has already been subject to notable incremental loss of heritage fabric. The historic heritage of the local area is manifestly important to the local community, exemplified by the existence and activities of its own Historical Society. The southwestern corner of this Inner Residential Area forms part of the northeastern quadrant of the Basin Reserve setting that has been the focus of considerable discussion during the hearing, due to the evident coinciding of various adverse effects of the proposed Basin Bridge.

Scenario B (and by implication C and D because these are presumably premised on first completing a second tunnel) is strongly rejected because not only does it vaguely propose “tunnels or bridges” around the Basin Reserve, it also proposes a second tunnel which would largely destroy the historically important Paterson Street. Scenario B, if it follows earlier proposals by NZTA (and there is every indication that there has been little new thinking), would also involve the loss of Town Belt land to widen Ruahine Street. 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.

6. Scenario A, plus additional measures

Scenario A, plus some additional measures, would best meet LGWM’s own stated principles, a number of which are actively ignored or given insufficient consideration in other Scenarios (e.g. principles 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9).

In particular, MVHS urges immediate investigation and implementation of traffic demand management, and serious and genuine investigation of light rail and option development.

We would want to see details of any light rail proposals before giving formal support but we do not agree with LGWM’s assertion that “the point at which demand would justify mass transit is about 10 years away”. Now is the time to seriously investigate such a mode of transport because:

- a) it is widely known that residential densification follows installation of good public transport
- b) to start investigating when the demand is already there shows a lack of strategic thinking
- c) to start investigating after massive investment in roading and post-dwelling intensification does not make sense.

In conclusion, we support Scenario A but urge that this be enhanced by additional investigations and actions to achieve maximum benefits with least environmental and heritage impact.

We would like to receive a copy of the engagement report by mail and also by email.
Thank you.