

11 August 2017

Councillor Greg Sayers
Auckland Council
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Dear Cr Sayers

Hill St Presentation to the Auckland Transport Board

Thank you for your presentation to the AT Board on 1 August. I have been asked to respond on behalf of Auckland Transport.

As you are aware Auckland Transport (AT) and the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) are investing significant resources into Warkworth with the Matakana Link, the recently completed stage 1 of the Warkworth Western Collector and Ara Tūhono as well as the planning stages of the Supporting Growth – Delivering Transport Networks, formerly known as TFUG. Matakana Link is programmed to be finished at the same time as Ara Tūhono, as you have stated in the FY 2021/22.

As you are aware, AT has also been considering interim solutions. In December 2016, AT concluded the trial of short term improvement measures at the Elizabeth Street intersection. The findings were valuable and were used to inform the subsequent investigations being undertaken to improve safety and operations in the interim. As part of this work, we investigated a number of options for short term improvements at the Elizabeth Street intersection and these are currently being reviewed with NZTA. Once we have completed the review of options with NZTA, as promised to the Local Board and wider community, AT will engage publically on the short listed options during September. We anticipate that works will be completed by the end of this calendar year.

Ara Tūhono and the Matakana Link projects will have a significant positive effect on Hill St, with Ara Tūhono removing most of the north/south movements and the Matakana Link taking the east/west movements from the motorway as well as being placed to operate as a local road connecting to future stages of the Warkworth Western Collector. I understand that this may be contrary to some of the public opinion but these two projects alone will have a profound effect on the Hill St intersection on completion.

As you are also aware there is a joint AT/NZTA project underway investigating Hill St, funded from NZTA. A joint approach is necessary from both a planning and operational perspective as the Hill St intersection has both the State Highway and AT's local roads in the intersection.

At the end of the investigation phase there will be sufficient information to understand what the project build entails, what land is required, the environmental and social effects and the traffic effects taking into account changes to the traffic flows from Ara Tūhono and the Matakana Link road when complete. At that gateway AT and NZTA will make an informed decision on funding. The project will go through the normal funding and approval gateways for projects. If it meets the required criteria, then it will attract funding. This is a critical part of the work involved in the current investigation.

I can confirm that the previous investigation work done for Kowhai Park will be accessed for the project however that will only contribute a portion of the investigation work required.

Construction funding will at the soonest sit in the 2021/23 LTP but as above will be dependent on meeting the normal funding criteria. Any significant construction work at the Hill St intersection will only be undertaken when the Matakana Link is constructed as there are no alternative routes and as such no network resilience meaning such disruption would be unacceptable to all road users. Despite strong local opinion that this work could be undertaken in short order, a more realistic timeframe is two construction seasons.

The Elizabeth St trial did show that Sandspit Rd was congested at peak times but not at capacity most of the time. Timing for the proposed link between Matakana Rd and Sandspit Rd is dependent on the land use for the North East Warkworth area. Auckland Council's Future Urban Land Supply Strategy to has the relevant land being released in 2033-2037. There may be some wider land pressures that could bring it forward so we are anticipating the new connection to be a second decade project. At this time the Sandspit Connection will not be built at the same time as the Matakana Link but at a later date.

You have requested specific feedback on your suggested quick wins.

Quick Win #1 – Provide safe pedestrian crossing

AT acknowledges the concerns raised by residents for an improved safe crossing for pedestrians to access the town centre. Currently there are pedestrian phases on the Hill Street intersection to enable safe crossing of SH1 on the southern access. AT and NZTA are currently working together to determine the impact of improving the pedestrian crossings for the northern slip lane access, which would enable safer crossing from the north of Sandspit Road to the town centre. This would require new pedestrian signals on the slip lane which is one of the items mentioned earlier and will be completed this calendar year.

Quick Win #2 – Sandspit and Matakana Road Intersection

AT have previously investigated improvements at this intersection, however there are concerns about deliverability. This proposed option would be a significant cost.

As above, the Matakana Link project will provide significant relief to this intersection.

In regards to this specific proposal we have the following concerns:

- Safe access for residents of Millstream Place
- Operational issues created as vehicles in two lanes on this section of Sandspit Rd weave and change lanes before Elizabeth Street and SH1. The effect of this will be further queuing along Matakana Road north.
- Speed differential for vehicles on the new left turn lane creating an unsafe environment for lane changing.
- Relocation costs for utilities (power pole and underground) and land acquisition.
- The additional lane for the Sandspit Rd to the intersection only provides relief for around 3 or 4 cars to have a bigger impact there would need to be further widening along the road which would be costly due the topography
- To be more effective this would require 3 lanes further along to the Elizabeth St intersection, however, this would require further land acquisition.

For the reasons above this option will not be progressed.

There are currently 'Keep Clear' markings on the road and AT will progress as part of changes improvements to the visibility of these markings with cross-hatch markings in conjunction with the works proposed before Christmas.

Quick Win #3 – Capacity Improvements

Change to the capacity of this intersection will also need to consider the impact of the safety of operations. We are in the process of investigating with NZTA the implementation of a pedestrian crossing facility at the Hill St intersection.

In terms of traffic signal operations, this suggestion is the equivalent of full signalisation. As previously discussed full signalisation of the Elizabeth Street intersection is not a feasible option due to its proximity to the Hill Street intersection. Additional signalisation would have to be incorporated into the signal phasing of Hill St and this would have an adverse impact on the operation of the intersection.

The proposal of the additional lane to Elizabeth St is not a feasible quick win. This requires land take for a section that is in private ownership and also crosses the stream so there would be significant structural and consenting works required.

AT and NZTA would also have safety concerns about the additional entry/exit proposed from the State Highway.

For the reasons above this option will not be progressed.

We do note though the cross-hatching in the proposal and this is part of the works AT is looking to implement in conjunction with the works intended prior to Christmas.

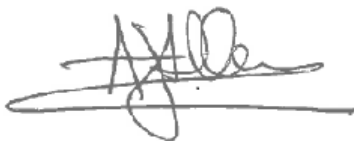
Quick Win #4 – AT will review the signage and street name blade at this location.

This has been reviewed and we agree that published maps and even Council's GIS are not consistent with the signage. We are confirming the legal name of this section of road and if this confirms that Sandspit Road is the correct street, name a new sign will replace the current street name blade sign. This will be completed within a month.

We appreciate the effort and consideration that you have given to developing these quick wins. Unfortunately, for the reasons stated in this letter we will not pursue some of them. However, there are suggestions like metering the SH1 slip lane and improving crossing facilities across this slip lane that we are considering further with NZTA. As you will appreciate, this intersection is complex for many reasons and AT recognises that. Hence we have committed to implementing interim measures as quickly as possible.

We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the quick wins further.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Allen

Chief Transport Operations Officer

cc : Lester Levy
Wayne Donnelly
David Warburton
Greg Edmonds