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Submission for the Constellation Drive Clearway and Additional Broken Yellow Lines for Bus Stops  
Ref: RTV-136

## **Introduction**

Business North Harbour, represents approximately 4,500 commercial property and business owners located within the business district north of Constellation Drive/Upper Harbour Highway and south of Oteha Valley Road. This business district attracts 35,000 plus employees per day, and more than 11,000 students.

Constellation Drive is a critical arterial route for North Harbour, East Coast Bays and West Auckland and is recorded as one of North Shore's busiest arterial routes. The Eastern end connects to East Coast Road, the main road connecting all of the Bays on the North Shore. At the Western end, Constellation Drive connects to the North Western motorway, SH18 - the major route to Auckland and the ring route to West Auckland. Whilst in the middle it has both on and off ramps connecting with the Auckland Northern motorway, which is the main motorway connecting central Auckland City and the former Rodney District via the Hibiscus Coast and North Shore. It is part of State Highway 1, which is the main motorway connecting the North Island.

Constellation Drive is one of the main roads connecting the East and West of the North Harbour business hub.

The businesses located on both sides of Constellation Drive, are mainly commercial and retail. Access to their business location is critical for employees, trade visitors and suppliers. Productivity of the business is directly impacted by the level of this accessibility.

As a location, Albany has been identified by Auckland's Council as a strategic (nodal) area of growth for Auckland (Auckland Plan 2050<sup>1</sup>).

**Sarah de Zwart**  
**Transport and Relationship Manager**  
**Business North Harbour**

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<sup>1</sup> Auckland Council Plan 2050, Development Areas

## Process and methodology

In 2015, Business North Harbour formally requested Auckland Transport to review the traffic flow in both directions on Constellation Drive to provide us with base line data regarding peak-time congestion.

In December 2016 we were asked to present our submission on Auckland Transport's proposed clearway. After thorough member research we presented in support of a clearway for both sides of the road<sup>2</sup>. A prior submission was made 26 August 2016.

Subsequent to these formal submissions, the only feedback we received from Auckland Transport on this project was that there was concern as to the level of complaints a proposed clearway would generate. No further correspondence was received by Business North Harbour in 2017, until April 2018 on this matter.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2018, Business North Harbour was notified that Auckland Transport were undergoing public consultation regarding proposed changes to Constellation Drive, including;

- **Implementation of a weekday evening clearway along the southern side of the road that applies from 4pm – 7pm, Monday to Friday.**
- **Installation of broken yellow lines around existing bus-stops, to allow sufficient room for buses to maneuver in and out.**

Auckland Transport advised that they had delivered letters to the affected property owners within the area.

Auckland Transport did not clarify if they had notified the affected tenants and business owners within the area.

For reasons stated in our introduction, Business North Harbour initiated our own consultation with the affected parties. We felt it critical that both property and business owners were made aware of such a significant operational and access change and were given the opportunity to have their views considered.

Through Business North Harbour communication platforms, an email was sent to all business owners located on Constellation Drive providing details of the proposed changes, and a personalised letter was mailed to all affected Constellation Drive property owners.

In support of the above, we personally visited over **seventy residing businesses** located on Constellation Drive, to make sure they were aware of the proposed changes. Through this contact we encouraged them to have their say regarding the impact on both access and parking the proposed clearway changes would have on their businesses and staff, trade visitors and commercial activities. It was noted through Business North Harbour's direct contact, it was evident this was their first communication regarding this proposal. Stakeholder messages had not been received.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://businessnh.org.nz/media/files/Advocacy/Constellation%20Drive%20Clearway%20Submission.pdf>

## **Purpose of consultation**

Business North Harbour sought to understand the level of support for, or opposition to, the proposed implementation of a weekday evening clearway along the southern side of the road that applies from 4pm – 7pm, Monday to Friday.

In addition, Business North Harbour sought to understand the impact of these proposed changes would have on commercial property owners, and their ability to attract and retain tenants.

## **Our findings in terms of the specific Constellation Drive Clearway and Additional Broken Yellow Lines around bus stops consultation are:**

- A. Public awareness of the submission was minimal.
- B. There is mixed support for the proposed clearway.
- C. Businesses with sufficient off street parking were generally in favour of the proposed clearway, as they could see the benefit of reducing congestion. However for those local businesses who are reliant on on-street parking for their staff and trade visitors, many were opposed to the proposed clearway.
- D. In terms of the extended bus-stop access, our members were ambivalent.
- E. Business North Harbour uphold their submissions dated 24 August 2016 and 7 December 2016 in support of a clearway.

We will publish our submission on our website [www.businessnh.org.nz](http://www.businessnh.org.nz) so that our members know their feedback has been forwarded to Auckland Transport.

## Member feedback on the need for a review of the Constellation Drive Corridor (unaudited)

- The evening traffic wanting to turn right onto East Coast Road are holding up those wanting to turn left, the left hand T2 is empty and we are stuck in a queue, wanting to turn left. Two left hand lanes don't work if we can't access them!
- The T2 camera man is ticketing staff and customers who are simply trying to **access** their premises on Constellation Drive.
- Coming out of Ascension Place, turning left again onto Apollo Drive – they can't get into the slow moving SOV lanes – and they are being **ticketed**.
- An observation noted by many was when the 'traffic camera man' is on patrol, there is an increase in **congestion** due to the illegal drivers needing to stay in the one driver lane. Therefore, turning both the lanes into clearways would reduce the congestion.
- Our members are concerned about their **safety**, especially knowing when to safely enter the T2 lane prior to turning left onto Apollo Drive - confusion caused by road markings.
- **Accidents** being caused by those crossing the T2 lanes to gain access to side streets, due to the **speed** of the T2 laned cars.
- Another common comment is the **uncertainty** of when cars can access the T2 lane prior to turning left, without being penalized. Business North Harbour have been reminding our members through media of the 50 metre rule, however when driving many have indicated they are not able to assess the distance, therefore are asking for physical guides (e.g. signage or line markings).
- It was noted due to the Auckland wide T2 lane change with **no public consultation** there was public bitterness and 'who cares they will do it anyway' attitude.
- My comments about the difficulty parking in the mornings apply equally in the afternoons.
- Because of the northern side (even street numbering) T2 and bus lanes on Constellation Drive, many staff move their cars from one side of the road to the other before the 4pm deadline. Those staff will not be able to find carparks if they are not able to park on the southern side. There is already a shortage of parking on both sides of Constellation Drive because of the existing busway hours.
- Instead of imposing a southern side (odd street numbering) clearway in the afternoons it would be better to use the existing centre of the road (much of which is currently a median strip) for south bound traffic, so that the car parking could remain. Alternatively, the existing berm should be narrowed and the road widened so that there can be two lanes of traffic plus car parking.
- This loss of street parking will further adversely affect all businesses on Constellation Drive.
- For many years the bus stop outside 33 Constellation Drive has been one car length which given its occasional use worked well. It has now been changed and increased to two carparks. The latest AT proposal is to do away with the two remaining carparks. This means we lose all the street carparks outside 33 Constellation Drive 24/7. This loss of all street parking outside 33 Constellation Drive will further adversely affect all businesses at 33 Constellation Drive.
- While the Northern Busway works well for staff on that bus route, for others it is very difficult to get to work without using motor vehicles. The limited off street visitor parking along Constellation Drive means that staff in the various businesses have to park elsewhere. Staff often have to start work before 9am so there will be a real problem finding somewhere to put their cars until 10am.
- While I appreciate that there are advantages in standardising T2 lanes throughout Auckland I consider that it is wrong to do so.
- For Constellation Drive and many other areas (such as Dominion Road), most of the traffic is off the road by 9am and so there is a one hour (9 to 10am) when businesses cannot have visitors or customers or staff when the road is not in use to any significant degrees.
- If there had to be a change it would have been better to have trialed 9.30am rather than 10am and most businesses could probably have accommodated that.

## Conclusion:

It is clear due to the significance of Constellation Drive as a main arterial route, and the impact this route has on surrounding feeder routes and motorway connectivity, that a piecemeal approach such as what we deem the specific consultation offers, is **not** sufficient.

Therefore, as a major stakeholder and representative of over 35,000 commuters, we request of Auckland Transport a **formal review of the Constellation Drive corridor**.

This review is to include, the following unexhaustive list of issues raised by our member:

1. Inter-peak congestion – updated position of peak traffic modelling, east and west Constellation Drive.
2. Inter-peak congestion – feeder routes onto Constellation Drive – to include Apollo Drive and East Coast Road.
3. T2 lane patronage – provision of evidence through commuter patronage to support AT's continuance of this dedicated lane. Please refer below to our member feedback for direct comments on the T2 lane.

Business North Harbour would expect a **formal review of the Constellation Drive corridor** to include the pros and cons of the following options.

Preferred option supports our 7 December 2016 Submission: Due to road layout (which has safety concerns) and increased congestion, change the T2 from SH1 – East Coast Road back to clearways on both northern and southern sides of Constellation Drive. Provide additional parking options for the residing businesses' staff so that the allocated onsite parks would be available for customers.

Second option: Removal of the T2 lane from SH1 through to East Coast Road (northern side) as it does not provide a connection between the existing arterial routes and does not form part of the existing T2 network. There is no T2 lane north bound on East Coast Road, nor Apollo Drive. Therefore, the T2 lane along the northern side of Constellation Drive, is in isolation and causes unnecessary congestion, especially at evening the peak period.

## Further comment:

It is noted that the proposed Constellation Drive clearway proposal was released for consultation at the same time as the T2 Lane changes implemented through-out Auckland. Constellation Drive had an increase in hours, and due to the no public consultation and limited public awareness, there was public discontent.

Auckland Transport needs to conduct a thorough media campaign ensuring all drivers are aware where and when they can access the T2 lanes as single occupant cars.

Auckland Transport needs to ensure clear markings are on the road or signage clearly indicating where it is legal and safe for single occupant cars to enter the T2 lanes.

Thank you.

***Business North Harbour have not undertaken independent verification of Auckland Transport's plans nor designs. Our positioning is based on the assumption that Auckland Transport's plans are both robust and accurate. If this proves not to be the case, our position and subsequent evidence may need to change.***