

16 April 2018

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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 across the business district. 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. The road 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 regional council as a strategic (nodal) area of growth for Auckland (Auckland Plan 2050¹).

Sarah de Zwart
Transport and Relationship Manager
Business North Harbour

¹ 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 road². A prior submission was made 26 August 2016³.

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 3rd April 2018, Business North Harbour were 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 property and 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 contacted over **seventy residing businesses** located on Constellation Drive, again to make them aware of the proposed changes, and to enable them to have their say regarding the impact on both access and parking these changes would have on the businesses and their staff, trade visitors and commercial activities.

²

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

³

<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. Of the businesses who had sufficient off street parking they were in favour, as they could see the benefit of reducing congestion. However as many of the local businesses rely on on-street parking for their staff's parking, 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 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:

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

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.

Appendix 1

7 December 2016

Wayne Lam
Senior Traffic Engineer at Auckland Transport
Auckland Transport
Private Bag 92250
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Auckland 1142

Feedback Form – Constellation Drive Clearway from East to West
Constellation Drive Clearway Zone RTV -010

Introduction

Business North Harbour, represents 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.

Our submission is for a Clearway along Constellation Drive from East to West, from East Coast Road continuing through to Upper Harbour Highway.

SARAH DE ZWART
Relationship and Transport Manager



CONNECT. COMMUNICATE. COLLABORATE.

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Assumptions:

Business North Harbour has 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.

Our Process:

Business North Harbour requested a review of Constellation Drive in November 2015, due to consistent queueing throughout the day.

Constellation Drive is considered a primary arterial road, connecting the Mairangi Bay and Albany area with the Northern and Western motorways. With over 1,200 cars per hour driving through at peak times. Therefore, it is a priority for continuous flow.

It was noted that there are multiple peak times throughout the day, with the evening starting from 2.45pm

After consideration, a loss of approximately 46 carparks within the designated area will create a two-lane flow along the whole road, eliminating bottlenecks where the cars merge back into one lane.

We are aware that the initial correspondence from Auckland Transport in August 2016 to our affected members suggested a clearway between 4-6pm Mon-Fri. However, based on further research, Auckland Transport are concerned that the commencement time is too late. Evening peak generally commencing at around 3pm.

As a service to our members, we personally contacted all the business owners and commercial tenants who were in the immediate vicinity. We needed to understand the level of support, or opposition, to the proposed clearway commencing at 4pm, and the impact on both access and parking these changes

would have on our business and property owner membership, and their staff.

Our Findings:

As mentioned, our findings were based on the clearway commencing from 4pm. In general, there was support in favour of the clearway. All complainants indicated they would be happy to proceed if a viable option for their staff to park elsewhere was provided. They were concerned about the significant disruption caused by staff having to leave the office to move cars before the end of the business day.

The major complainant whose majority of staff would be affected was presented the option of a permanent clearway, they did recognise that a clearway would be the best option for the better of the community.

Conclusion:

Business North Harbour recognises that there would be incremental disruption to our members if the clearway commenced at 4pm, adding further parking restrictions to those already imposed through the 6-9am morning clearway.

Business North Harbour therefore recommends that the 46 affected parking places are removed to provide a permanent clearway. By doing so we eliminate the disruption caused through a 4pm clearway commencement time, and force those commuters to find alternative all day parking locations.

On the proviso that the on SH1 north and southern on-ramp queue management was tightly monitored, we would support an all-day clearway from East Coast Road through to Upper Harbour Highway.

Thank you

Appendix 2

24 August 2016

Alicia Esquivel
Consultation and Project Coordinator
Constellation Drive Clearway Zone
Auckland Transport
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Auckland 1142

Web contact: AT.govt.nz/roadsafetyconsultations

Feedback Form – Constellation Drive Clearway Zone

Introduction

Business North Harbour, formerly North Harbour Business Association, represents approximately 4,500 commercial property and business owners located within the business district north of Constellation Drive/Upper Harbour Highway and south of Albany metropolitan centre.

The number of businesses in this area has grown from 1480 in the year 2000 to 3717 in 2014 *(source Auckland Council Business Demographic data, 2014).

Our submission on the Constellation Drive Clearway Zone is as follows.

Sarah de Zwart
Transport and Relationship Manager
Business North Harbour

Assumptions:

Business North Harbour has 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.

Our Process

Business North Harbour requested Auckland Transport to review the traffic flow in both directions on Constellation Drive, with regards to peak-time congestion. We were advised that Auckland Transport had completed their survey, with traffic count and camera footage, then sent letters to the affected properties and businesses within the area.

As a service to our members, we personally contacted all the tenants/owners who were in the immediate vicinity of the new changes. We needed to understand the level of support, or opposition, to these plans and the impact on both access and parking these changes would have on our business and property owner membership – and their staff.

Our Findings

Please find attached the results of the contact made by Business North Harbour.

There was general support in favour of the Clearway, however the commencement time was of concern.

Objections:

Due to the clearway commencing at 4pm there was a concern that the staff who require the parking would be disrupted as they moved their cars to another location to complete their working day.

Further clarification and information required

Business North Harbour request to review the completed footage and flow count survey to ensure the best representation for our members.

Once received, we will publish this additional information, and our submission on our website www.businessnh.org.nz so that our members know their feedback has been forwarded to Auckland Transport.

Conclusion

Overall Business North Harbour, and those members contacted, support the Constellation Drive Clearway.

However, further information is required regarding the proposed clearway times.

Thank you.