

SUBMISSION: CONSTELLATION DRIVE TRANSIT LANE EXTENSION OF HOURS 22ND MARCH 2021

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Reference: NOP2021-014 - Submission to Constellation Drive Transit Lane

Introduction

Business North Harbour (BNH) is a significant commercial and industrial Business Improvement District (BID), representing over 4,500 commercial property owners and businesses within the North Harbour area. Collectively they employ over 35,000 Auckland residents and ratepayers.

Our businesses comprise of a mix of sole traders, Small Medium Enterprises (SME), through to multi-national organisations, representing sectors such as ICT, business services, specialist manufacturing and light - medium warehousing. In addition, we have key educational institutions within or on our boundary, including Massey University Albany and AUT Millennium, along with a variety of primary and secondary schools including Rangitoto College, the largest bricks and mortar secondary school in New Zealand. All within an industrial estate which is on average less than 20 years old.

Our primary interests are decisions within Auckland Council which:

- Impact on the cost of business – across a short to medium timeframe
- Impact on economic development and the ability to leverage value from location.
- Support or restrict business growth opportunities.
- Impact on access to both regional and localised transport hubs
- Impact on R&D and investment – sector development and capability

Background

Auckland Transport contacted Business North Harbour in March 2021 with regards to the following proposal.

To improve the evening peak traffic flow along the southern side of Constellation Drive and our investigations confirm the need for changes. We are proposing to extend the operating hours of the T2 transit lane to help move more people safely and quickly.

Constellation Drive is a major arterial road and an important link to State Highway 1 and the Northern Busway. AT's research states over 28,000 vehicles per day travel along Constellation Drive.

An AT bus travels along Constellation Drive approximately every 15 minutes during a working week. Which equates to around 32 buses per day.

Business North Harbour Feedback

BNH are pleased that AT contacted BNH prior to the proposal going public. This ensured the BID manager had a full understanding of the proposed plan and a sufficient period to enable all affected members are aware and able to respond to the proposal.

We are also pleased to note that AT expanded the mailout to include a larger catchment of businesses that were notified of the proposal.

BNH emailed AT's proposal to over 2,225 contacts on their database with 723 people opening the email.

In addition, we physically visited 44 businesses located on the southern side of Constellation.

In total we have received 63 responses either in person or via survey.
The results are as follows:

40% agreed or were despondent to the proposal*

22% opposed

16% agreed with changes

22% were unable to provide feedback, due to the decision maker or team were unavailable or unable to provide an answer, therefore many were directed to respond directly with AT.

Two observations that must be noted:

*There seemed to be confusion over the difference between a T2 transit lane and a clearway. When this was identified 79% of the respondents stated their preference to be a clearway.

Many individuals were despondent of the proposal, with the main comment being that AT will not listen or act on the majority verdict, doing what they were planning on doing any way.

Only six percent opposed the proposal due to the reduction in carparking.

Individual members feedback:

- Most of the congestion is either in the business park (Apollo Drive) or at the motorway feeders (due to busses coming out of parkway) The latter will be addressed with separation of the busway. A Clearway is much better as it will enable all traffic to move more efficiently and safely preventing a build-up and increasing overall capacity is better than priority for multi occupancy vehicles. (i.e., no one should be delayed unnecessarily) As for saying that blocking exiting roads (i.e., T2 lanes) is paid fuel tax - what a croc why should users contribute to being excluded from a lane they already paid for and have access to?
- A clearway makes sense to allow more traffic flow through Constellation Drive.
- Instead of removing the south side carparking in the afternoons from 4 pm to 6 pm, the existing centre line median should be removed or narrowed and that would

provide sufficient from for 2 lanes of traffic next to the carparks (or the road could be widened into the existing verges).

- If the intention is to provide a key arterial route for throughput of traffic, then instead of a T2 lane, the lanes on both sides should be ordinary Clearways and they should only be from 5 pm to 6 pm.
- Instead of a T2 in the afternoon could the parking become a clearway after 3pm?
- The T2 lane on Constellation Drive is just plain dangerous. Make it 2 lanes each way and remove the carparks completely. It would flow better without the T2 as cars back up in the general traffic line then jump across into the T2 to get down one of the side roads. It is even more dangerous when your T2 camera man is outside McDonalds!!!
- This will push car parking onto already congested side streets and create further issues.
- Needs policing, the north side T2 on constellation is frequently filled with cars prior to 9am. Also do something about Air NZ staff using Vega Place as a carpark. Businesses on the road can't provide street parking for staff or customers. Hopeless!
- the T2 lane concept just creates more congestion because most traffic remains stuck in a single lane.
- One lane cannot cope with the current traffic.
- Forcing non T2 cars out of the left-hand lane will make it even more risky to negotiate a right-hand turn from any of the northern side roads adjoining Constellation. As it is you may be waiting several minutes for a clear spot between oncoming traffic and that heading toward the motorway, and moving out the flush median as a partial method of joining the motorway bound traffic is particularly dangerous with the current traffic flows.
- The T2 lanes on Constellation cause additional delays and traffic blocks for all traffic. Particularly those heading east and wanting to turn left into Apollo Drive or left into East Coast Rd.
- I don't believe it eases congestion at all. I think it creates congestion. I avoid Constellation Drive at both ends of the day going via Sunset/Caribbean Drive which just pushes traffic into suburban streets.
- Something needs doing with the Northern part where vehicles turnin right to Sunny nook block the lanes for traffice wanting to turn right and there is always AT there catching vehicles using it just to avoid sitting in traffic due to this.

Conclusion

With over 28,000 vehicles on Constellation Drive per day and only 32 buses, the main feedback from our members is to reduce congestion, and keep the area flowing. Therefore, Business North Harbour on behalf of our members recommend that the outside lane on the southern side of Constellation be changed to a clearway, rather than a T2 transit lane. This would increase the traffic flow rather than decrease it.

With the recommended hours to be monitored however starting from 4pm-7pm.

We also ask that AT re-review the northern side of Constellation Drive to convert the T2 lane to a clearway during the peak hours.

Although we understand that there will be no opportunity to make a presentation on this Submission, should there be any questions or other matters arising from this Submission, we would be pleased to respond to those.

Yours sincerely,

SARAH DE ZWART

Relationship and Transport Manager