



MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	Waitemata Harbour Connections Stakeholder Breakfast Event
Date	25 November 2022
Briefing number	BRI-2657

Contact(s) for telephone discussion (if required)				
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Action taken by Office of the Minister/Associate Minister

- ☐ Noted
- ☐ Seen by Minister
- ☐ Agreed
- ☐ Feedback provided
- ☐ Forwarded to
- ☐ Needs change [please specify]
- ☐ Withdrawn
- ☐ Overtaken by events

25 November 2022

Hon Michael Wood – Minister of Transport

Waitematā Harbour Connections Stakeholder Breakfast Event

Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with information about the Waitematā Harbour Connections project Indicative Business Case (IBC) phase, prior to the Stakeholder Breakfast event on Wednesday, 30 November 2022 from 7.30am-9.00am.

Project funding and costs

2. The forecast IBC phase cost for the Waitematā Harbour Connections project is s 9(2)(i) (including Alliance procurement costs), which will be funded by the National Land Transport Fund.

Project features

3. Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport, in partnership with mana whenua, are embarking on a crucial phase in the planning and delivery of Aotearoa New Zealand's most significant city shaping project in coming decades, Waitematā Harbour Connections.
4. Key features of the Waitematā Harbour Connections Project IBC phase include:
 - assessment of options for transport improvements as part of a Waitematā Harbour Connections Indicative Business Case
 - the IBC will explore all modes of transport for a package of improvements confirming the timing, form, and route of future new connections and how we best use our existing infrastructure, with a recommendation expected to be delivered mid to late 2023
 - the preferred alliance to deliver this technical work comprises four companies, including New Zealand-based and international firms, WSP, Beca, SYSTRA and Cox Architecture.

Project Benefits

5. A well connected, sustainable, resilient and reliable transport system encourages quality growth, gives people more choices, helps tackle congestion and harmful pollution.
6. The Waitematā Harbour Connections project will provide for a fully multimodal solution, investigating future options for people wanting to drive, walk, cycle, transport freight, take the bus or travel by light rail across the Waitematā Harbour, connecting people to transport options across the region.
7. Planning work will look at how all modes need to cross the harbour in the future, what new infrastructure is needed to cater for these modes, where it will go, and how we make the best use of our existing infrastructure including the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

8. Waitematā Harbour Connections is a key part of expanding Auckland's future rapid transit network. Rapid transit is already moving thousands of people every day around the region and now we're working on the next stages to improve transport choices and make Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland a better place to live now and for future generations.
9. Investing in high capacity, high quality, rapid transit is critical to developing a modern, connected city, providing people with faster, safer, and more reliable trips and reducing carbon emissions. Rapid transit enables housing and business growth and is the catalyst for neighbourhood regeneration and people-friendly streets, unlocking the region's growth potential.

Project Context

10. There is a long history of planning work for improvements to cross-harbour transport connections, with at least ten major studies conducted over the past 30 years.
11. The current Auckland Harbour Bridge structure is coming under increasing operational pressure, affecting the resilience of the bridge and the wider network, and these pressures are forecast to increase further as population, employment and freight needs continues to grow.
12. Ongoing regular maintenance is needed on the bridge structure, and unexpected incidents such as crashes and high wind events mean the bridge and wider network are increasingly compromised, causing widespread disruption for all users of the bridge.
13. There is an existing gap across the harbour for people on foot and bikes, this project will investigate future long-term links to tie into the wider walking and cycling network.
14. The Waitematā Harbour is a taonga/ treasure with significant cultural, historical, and environmental value; critical considerations when considering new connections, especially relating to kaitiakitanga/ guardianship, protection, emissions reduction, climate change and rising sea levels.
15. The Northern Busway is working well, and Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi continue to undertake improvements to cater for more passengers. However, even with those improvements, a second rapid transit connection is needed.
16. Waitematā Harbour Connections will connect with Auckland Light Rail in the city centre, providing seamless travel options between the North Shore and employment hubs at Auckland Airport and areas of housing growth in Mt Roskill, Onehunga and Mangere and with other future rapid transit corridors to the Northwest.

Urban development opportunities

17. An essential part of this project will be to recommend ways to integrate these transport improvements with quality urban development and land use outcomes. The places this project will pass through will become vibrant, diverse, centres and neighbourhoods, focused on quality transport routes, enabling people to have more choice in housing, employment, education, and other services.

Sustainable transport choice

18. More transport choices and reducing reliance on private vehicles, will help the Government and Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. Work will align

with the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP), which describes how we are going to meet emissions budgets and make progress towards meeting the 2050 target. This includes reduced carbon emissions, reduced embodied carbon emissions and ways to build resilience in the transport network. It's already apparent that sea level rise is affecting the section of Northern Motorway from Esmonde Road to the bridge, so any new or improved existing infrastructure will be future proofed to cater for increasing natural environmental events.

19. To provide more transport choice for people wanting to walk or cycle across the harbour, this project will investigate future long-term active mode connections to tie into the wider walking and cycling network. This will be a fully integrated approach and walking and cycling will be considered along with all other modes to assess how to make the most of the existing and new infrastructure.

Resilient connections

20. The current Auckland Harbour Bridge structure is coming under increasing operational pressure, affecting the resilience of the bridge and the wider network. These pressures are forecast to increase further as population, employment and freight needs continues to grow. Unexpected incidents, such as crashes and high wind events, mean the bridge and wider network are increasingly compromised, causing widespread disruption for all users of the bridge.
21. As 40 percent of travel through this corridor is not Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-bound, this project will provide greater connection for the whole Upper North Island and unlock significant value for the entire country. It is a nationally significant, high-volume, strategic corridor providing substantial local, regional, and national benefits and a key route for the nation's freight network, which relies heavily on the existing Auckland Harbour Bridge and wider network to transport goods across the country.
22. Efficient, reliable, safe, and resilient freight transport – within cities, between regions and to ports – is vital for a thriving economy. This project will support the movement of freight by increasing resilience and improving future corridors and links to the wider transport network, including key freight routes via the Western Ring Route and through Grafton Gully to the Port.
23. The Auckland Harbour Bridge carries most major services and utilities, such as power, telecommunications and water. We will look at how we integrate these services into any new or existing infrastructure to continue to support these essential connections.

A key part of Auckland's growing rapid transit network

24. Rapid transit is fast, frequent, and reliable public transport that carries large numbers of people, on dedicated corridors separated from other traffic. It provides more reliable, congestion-free, seamless journeys. Large cities around the world are highly reliant on rapid transit to sustainably and efficiently move large volumes of people in a way that's unaffected by congestion.
25. Auckland needs to significantly expand and upgrade its rapid transit network over the coming decades to support and shape the city's growth, whilst reducing emissions and managing congestion. This will be the most substantial investment in Auckland's transport system over the coming 30 plus years.
26. Getting the most value out of Auckland's rapid transit system will require excellent integration with the rest of the transport system, as well as supportive land-use policies and plans. This will enable the greatest number of people possible to have good access to rapid transit, as well as realising the wider benefits to help shape the way Auckland grows over time.

27. Auckland's rapid transit network currently includes the existing heavy rail lines, the Northern Busway, and stage 1 of the Eastern Busway. Rapid transit barely existed in Auckland 15 years ago, but has already proven highly successful with more than 26 million trips a year taken prior to the global pandemic.
28. Waitematā Harbour Connections is an important part of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland's future rapid transit network. While the Northern Busway already provides rapid transit to the North Shore, the service is expected to run out of capacity over the coming decades. Providing an additional rapid transit connection, in the form of light-rail, will allow more people to travel between the city centre and North Shore. The new light rail connection will be supplemented by the existing Northern Busway, integrating effectively with the wider public transport network to keep up with growing passenger transport demand.
29. Previous planning work identified that an additional rapid transit connection should directly link the city centre with Takapuna, Smales Farm and is likely to extend to Albany. These areas are growing residential, commercial, social and employment hubs. Finalising route options for this new rapid transit connection will be undertaken during this current planning phase.
30. The rapid transit connection will integrate with the Auckland Light Rail project and rapid transit to the Northwest (currently being investigated) to allow people to travel seamlessly from the North Shore to the city centre and beyond, improving access to employment hubs at Auckland Airport and areas of housing growth in Mt Roskill, Onehunga and Mangere, along with other future rapid transit corridors to the Northwest. Planning across all rapid transit projects will be coordinated to ensure Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland has a fully integrated transport network for future generations.
31. Major rapid transit projects currently under construction in Auckland include:

• Phase of development	Projects (as of late-2022)
Under construction	City Rail Link Northwest interim bus improvements Rail electrification (Papakura to Pukekohe) Third main (Westfield to Wiri)
Detailed design & procurement (funding approved)	Eastern Busway (Pakuranga to Botany)
Business case development (detailed)	City Centre to Mangere Airport to Botany corridor Northern Busway enhancements
Business case development (indicative)	Northwest rapid transit North Shore rapid transit Upper Harbour corridor Rail network development plan

32. These projects are currently led by a range of organisations, including Auckland Transport, Waka Kotahi, Auckland Light Rail, and KiwiRail (with support from other organisations). These projects under investigation are focussed on expanding the existing rapid transit network to support growth, improve access to centres, and offer alternatives to congested corridors.

Timings

33. The IBC planning phase has started and is being undertaken by an experienced Alliance team, including skilled individuals from New Zealand-based and international firms - WSP, Beca, SYSTRA and Cox Architecture.
34. This project will be a substantial city-shaping undertaking, and comprehensive engagement is a mandatory requirement for the project. Accordingly, community and stakeholder engagement is key to its success.
35. We are engaging now to raise awareness and give people the opportunity to provide feedback on their vision for the future of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. From early next year, we will share more information on the possible solutions and ask for feedback on specific options to help shape the project as it moves forward.
36. The long-term solutions are likely to require significant investment and involve complex, large-scale construction, anticipated to take more than 15 years of design and construction work.
37. Although the long-term solutions may take some time to deliver, Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi is already progressing enhancements to the Northern Busway to help keep up with growing bus patronage and ease pressure on the transport system.

About the IBC phase of the Waitematā Harbour Connections work

38. Options will be developed to look at the existing and future use of the existing Auckland Harbour Bridge, including how services and utilities will cross the harbour.
39. Planning work will consider the form, function, route, and timing of future connections and recommend ways to integrate these transport improvements with the best urban development and land use outcomes.
40. Options will align with the Government and Aotearoa New Zealand's commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2050. This includes reduced carbon emissions, reduced embodied carbon emissions and ways to build resilience in the transport network. Ngā Mana Whenua o Tāmaki Makaurau will partner with us, to provide guidance and leadership to ensure Te Ao Māori values, and the position of the Waitematā as taonga is reflected throughout in the delivery of the project.
41. Work will align with the Government's Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP), which describes how we are going to meet emissions budgets and make progress towards meeting the 2050 target. The approach will also be supported by the Transport Emissions Reduction Pathway (TERP), which has been developed by Auckland Council and Auckland Transport in response to te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri Auckland's Climate Plan and sets out what needs to happen for the region to reduce its transport emissions by 64 percent by 2030.
42. Waitematā Harbour Connections will connect with Auckland Light Rail in the city centre, providing seamless travel options between the North Shore and employment hubs at Auckland Airport and areas of housing growth in Mt Roskill, Onehunga and Mangere and with other future rapid transit corridors to the Northwest.

Public sentiment research

43. Research with Aucklanders has shown overwhelming support for more connections over the Waitematā Harbour with eight out of 10 expressing the need for additional connections.

44. A similar level of support was expressed by people living in Waikato and Northland.
45. The research also reveals the clear need for reliance on the existing Harbour Bridge to be supplemented by alternative connections and that it needs to happen within 25 years.
46. Current usage of the Auckland Harbour Bridge revealed almost every Aucklander has travelled over the bridge in the last 12 months with five out of 10 being frequent weekly users.
47. This underlines how crucial effective connections are for the city, a fact which is underscored by the increasing operational pressures the bridge faces.
48. Aucklanders feel additional harbour connections are important to make commuting easier (68 percent), offset increasing traffic volume concerns (64 percent) and the need to improve productivity and enhance economic benefits (38 percent).

Community Engagement

49. Opportunities for the public to have their say is online now (via iPads at community events and online). Waka Kotahi will consult on the shortlist options in early 2023.
50. Waka Kotahi has already received over 4,000 survey responses containing valuable feedback that can be used during the option analysis process. Of the responses we have received to date there is strong support for new connections.
51. Key themes that are emerging include:
 - The need for future proofing/resilience
 - Concerns about the environment and carbon emissions
 - Calls for rail options
 - Prioritising public transport as a whole
 - A desire to walk and cycle across the harbour, and comments on cycling and walking indicate there is a desire for this option sooner rather than later
 - Reliability and speed are the most important factors in encouraging future public transport usage
52. Waka Kotahi has the following Community Engagement Events Remaining for 2022
 - Takapuna Christmas Carnival, Saturday 3 December 2022, 10:00am - 3:00pm
 - Grey Lynn Farmers Market, Sunday 11 December 2022, 8:30am - 12:00pm

You have received the following briefings on this subject:

53. BRI-2066 - Update on the Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections project, 12 November 2020

54. BRI-2369 - Additional Waitemata Harbour Connections Update, 22 December 20221
55. BRI-2554 - Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections – Progress Update, 19 August 2022
56. BRI-2619 - Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections – Investment Logic Map, 19 October 2022
57. BRI-2633 - Waitematā Harbour Connections Community Events, 28 October 2022
58. MIN-3862 – Meeting with BECA, 2 May 2022
59. MINO-383 – Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections consultation, 5 May 2022
60. MINO-493 - Waitematā Harbour Connections Communications and Engagement Strategy – Indicative Business Case phase, October 2022
61. MINO-473 - Waitematā Harbour Connections - Communications and Engagement update, 23 September 2022
62. MINO-499 – Waitematā Harbour Connections Minister's Monthly Update, 26 October 2022

Stakeholder Breakfast Event

63. The event will be located at Richmond Yacht Club, 173 West haven Drive, Herne Bay, Auckland 1011.
64. Key attendees to acknowledge:
 - Simon Bridges, Chief Executive, Auckland Business Chamber.

Media

65. Media are not invited to the event.
66. There is high public interest in this event, thus media may be generated as stakeholders give their takes on the project publicly.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the contents of this briefing.



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Steve Mutton

Director Regional Relationships, Auckland and Northland

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Hon Michael Wood, Minister of Transport

Date: 2022

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