

MINISTERIAL BRIEFING NOTE

Subject	The Strand Optimisation Project
Date	11 October 2024
Briefing number	BRI-3177

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

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- Withdrawn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

11 October 2024

Hon Simeon Brown – Minister of Transport

The Strand Optimisation Project

Purpose

1. This briefing provides you with an update on the Strand Optimisation Project (the Project) which is part of the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Auckland Network Optimisation Programme.

Background

2. This is an NZTA led project with support from Auckland Transport (AT) because of State Highway 16 -The Strands (The Strand) and its role in the wider Auckland CBD transport network.
3. The Strand caters for all transport users and is a major arterial in Auckland's strategic road network. It has high traffic and freight volumes, given its proximity to the Ports of Auckland (POA).
4. The Project is designed to address issues of economic growth and productivity, trip reliability, congestion, and safety. It aims to improve:
 - efficiency for freight and high-occupancy vehicles by creating a special vehicle lane (SVL) and by moving cyclists out of the SVL onto a separated Shared Use Path (SUP) from Alten Road to Tamaki Drive. This was requested by the POA and the Freight Reference Group¹.
 - safety for all users through further road improvements given the known safety risks, including cyclist fatalities. For example, adjusting the camber of the road along two sections of The Strand to help reduce instances of truck roll-over events which have occurred in the past.
5. The overall project cost was originally \$13 million however through a 'no frills' assessment, this has been reduced to \$10 million.
6. The current construction is planned to commence early January 2025 and be complete by late May 2025. This timeframe aligns with the proposed dates for neighbouring commercial vehicle safety site works, and planned NZTA maintenance works. Combining the delivery of these projects will help obtain value for money and minimise disturbance.
7. A map of the Project is located at Annex A.

¹ The Freight Reference Group includes representation from AT, NZTA, Auckland Council, Ministry of Transport, KiwiRail, Automobile Association, Road Transport Association NZ, National Road Carriers Association, Heavy Haulage Association, Auckland Airport and POA.

Parking and SVL

8. The Strand serves as a critical freight connection between the central motorway junction (SH1 and SH16) and POA.
9. The Project identified that there are operational and capacity benefits in utilising the entire width of the road corridor for moving traffic and freight. Therefore, 32 on-street carparks will be removed along the corridor to enable two traffic lanes in both directions. NZTA completed a parking survey that indicated the 32 on-street carparks are used for all day parking by university students and local residents.
10. We note there are three private off-street carparks in the vicinity which are frequently underutilised and that parking in nearby local streets will be time limited and enforced to ensure efficient usage of the available parking spaces.
11. To maximise the operational benefits during the peak hours, the Project will construct approximately 1km of SVL, highlighted yellow in the map in Annex A. There will be 415 metres of SVL eastbound and 550 metres of SVL westbound.
12. The SVL will permit two or more occupant (T2) vehicles and heavy motor vehicles to use the lanes between 06:30 and 10:00 in the morning and 16:00 and 19:00 in the evening. These operating times have been identified as being the most congested for the corridor.
13. Operating the SVLs during these times will further improve trip reliability and efficiency for freight and higher occupancy vehicles and support economic growth and productivity by enabling people and goods to reach their destinations more efficiently during the peak times.
14. The operation of the SVL will require traffic enforcement cameras to be employed and infringement fees collected.

Modelling of SVL and pedestrian demand has been undertaken for the Project

15. Modelling to quantify predicted travel time benefits was undertaken for the Project and predicted travel time benefits for trucks and higher occupancy vehicles using the SVL for the AM period in both directions and the PM period for the westbound direction.
16. The result of this modelling is shown in the following table:

	Existing travel time (average min per user)	SVL users travel time (average min per user)
AM peak		
SH16 to Tamaki Dr (Eastbound)	4min 30 sec	4 min
Tamaki Dr to SH16 (Westbound)	8 min 30 sec	5 min 50 sec

	Existing travel time (average min per user)	SVL users travel time (average min per user)
PM peak		
SH16 to Tamaki Dr (Eastbound)	4min 30 sec	5 min
Tamaki Dr to SH16 (Westbound)	7 min 45 sec	6 min 30 sec

Feedback on the Project

17. AT is very supportive of the project and the construction of the SVL and SUP given the role the Strand plays in the wider strategic network.
18. The SVL and off-road SUP is also supported by POA, Heavy Haulage NZ, National Road Carriers and the Local Board. The SUP provides substantial operating benefits to the SVL as it reduces concerns that heavy vehicle drivers have when driving beside vulnerable road users along this narrow corridor.
19. During consultation, most respondents provided neutral feedback, offering ideas where they felt the design could be improved. Business owners on The Strand who do not have off-street parking oppose the SVL due to the loss of on-street parking as they perceive it will negatively impact their businesses. Other stakeholders (POA, freight groups and residents) were supportive of removing parking along the route for efficiency purposes and to maximise the benefits of the SVL.
20. We acknowledge the importance of parking in this area for businesses and the need to find the correct balance between parking needs and efficiency, to support the movement of freight and people. As noted, all remaining parking will be time limited to ensure turnaround throughout the day and other off-road paid parking locations along The Strand will continue to be available.

Next steps

21. NZTA has engaged with stakeholders and the business community throughout the design process to present and discuss options.
22. NZTA will continue to keep businesses, residents, and the community updated as the Project progresses through regular newsletters and written updates. These updates will continue as NZTA progresses into the construction phase of the Project.

It is recommended that you:

1. **Note** the information on the Strand Optimisation Project.



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Robyn Elston

Acting Group General Manager, Transport Services

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Hon Simeon Brown, Minister of Transport

Date: 2024

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

ANNEX A- Map of the Strand Optimisation Project

