

Build the Path Meeting 01 February 2018 (12:00 – 14:00)

Attendees:

Greg Lee (NZTA)
Sarah Downs (NZTA)
Jonathan Kennet (NZTA)
Stefan Wolf (NZTA)
Coral Aldridge (NZTA)
Brent Barrett (Built the Path)
Ross Castle (Built the Path)
Rachel Keedwell (Built the Path)
Karleen Reeve (Built the Path)

Introductions

Brent and Rachel advised that they are attending in a personal capacity. Build the Path (BTP) grew out groundswell in community interest in the NZTA's 'Te Ahu a Turanga project' providing a shared path facility.

Project overview from Sarah Downs outlining that primary objective of the meeting is to understand where Build the Path are coming from and what type of facility it is that they think is needed. Advising no decisions will be made we are here to listen.

NZTA Presentation

Jonathan presented a slide show, during which the following items were discussed:

- Network integration plan. Ross asked how to get involved. Greg/ Sarah/ Coral advised that the condition was proposed as part of the RMA application and was intended to ensure that the design of the project was developed cognisant of current and planned transport networks (all modes). How the community and parties were to be engaged in this plan had not been defined. The work by Jonathan and Coral was to start developing elements of this plan.
- Jonathan to provide Ross with statistics around the type of bicycle rider identified as 'Interested but Concerned' i.e. the typical proportion of the population that is considered to 'interested but concerned'.
- BTP – noted that gradients of paths are becoming less of an issue due to the significant increasing popularity of e-bikes. Ross noted that current sales dominated by e-bikes.
- BTP advised that the project should provide a path that is separated from the road and in order to traverse gradients should include switch backs and the pavement should be of a specification to match use. Path is not necessarily to be provided alongside the road. BTP considered that such a facility would provide a recreational and tourism facility, as well as accommodating commuters.

Questions/discussion

BTP asked if NZTA provide a separated path in conjunction with the new highway they would that be something that is safe, successful and a source of pride.

Jonathan advised that such a facility would be safe but queried whether there were enough users and therefore could it be successful.

BTP advised that path need to provide access between Woodville and Ashhurst to provide access to work.

Jonathan / Coral queried how do people travel now?

Coral advised that NZTA has a mode neutral approach.

Sarah advised that the scope of the Te Ahu a Turanga project had been to focus on fixing the broken link in the network, so as to reconnect east west movement through the region. This means that SH3 could be used instead of SH2 as a route for trucks, where freight is a major factor for choosing route across the ranges

BTP agreed that there no doubt that the road is needed. The key issue is why has the NZTA not thought about walking and cycling properly during the projects development to date. They considered that the workshops with the NZTA that walking and cycling was raised but has been disregarded.

BTP want access from Wellington to Hawke's Bay.

Sarah advised that a compacted time frame was perhaps one of the issues and so that NZTA's assessment of this issue was not communicated clearly.

BTP asked if the current form of the project (as described in the NoR) meets what is in the GPS? Greg advised yes.

Sarah / Greg confirmed that the project does not include Ashhurst Bridge as it is another project that is currently in the NLTP. Jonathan advised the improvements to Ashhurst Bridge will be investigated and that the intention (subject to investigations) was to complete the safety improvements for walking and cycling was intended to be constructed by 2021.

Sarah confirmed that NZTA are addressing the Clip on at Hearing as part of the NOR as a sign of good faith.

Sarah advised that funding of walking and cycling facility to be built as part of this project is not currently allocated and so would need to be applied for. If funding was allocated to it, then it would be at the expense of another project. BTP advised that a proper walking and cycling facility should have been properly included in the NOR with land requirement etc thought of.

Greg advised the Te Apiti Master Plan which identifies potential walking and cycling facilities on the northern side of the Gorge only emerged very recently (October 2018) and was not yet ratified.

Greg confirmed that the proposed road would probably be designed to 4-star road standard and that the star rating relates to design standards and thus to all potential users. In respect of cycling, Jonathan advised that the road shoulder would provide a grade 4 (Advanced) route whereas if a facility was provided on the outside of the barrier (i.e. barrier between traffic lanes and cycling path) then would be a grade 3 (Intermediate).

BTP asked if space within the road could be reallocated for walking and cycling facility. Greg advised that opportunities for this to occur were limited by safety standards, which require good visibility on curves (and hence wide medians on curves).

All agreed that constructing a walking and cycling facility alongside the road as part of the construction of the Project would be much more cost effective than retrofitting later.

BTP asked what is the Agency's experiences with appeals and how do they impact on the project plan? Greg advised could potentially be a 6 month to 2 year delay, and was dependent on Environment Court scheduling. BTP asked if this is a risk the NZTA was willing to take? Brent advised that advised Ashhurst is a high networked community and if the Path facility is not provided that then BTP will appeal the decision. Sarah said we are here to understand the issues and to then work out what needs to be done. The community would be very concerned about delays to the Project.

BTP considered that NZTA should have answers to technical questions such as demand, type of facility that should be provided, and how facility can be provided. These are not questions for BTP. Noted that path should also provide for mountain bike use.

Jonathan queried who would use the path?

BTP advised would be tourist, Ebike users, and commuters. Urged NZTA to think about 100 year time frames (cathedral thinking). Should also allow for equestrian use. And other mobility devices.

BTP noted that should consider carbon emissions and move towards increasing numbers of non-motorised vehicles/ forms of transport.

BTP advised that AA support BTP as they too want walkers and cyclists off roads and on safe, separated shared paths

BTP queried how much would an appeal to the Environment Court cost NZTA? Greg advised that costs are negligible as compared to construction costs, but in any event depends on the scale of appeal and effort needed to resolve issues.

BTP will send out a survey asking what level of use their submitters would like?