

# SkyPath Update – March 2018

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General Manager System Design & Delivery

# Strategic Context

- NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Transport and Auckland Council are joint partners in the delivery of Auckland's cycling programme. They are working collaboratively to plan, promote and deliver cycling across Auckland through the implementation of the Auckland Cycle Network - a connected network that works outwards from the Central Business District (CBD)
- An active mode link across the Waitematā Harbour has been identified as of high strategic importance to the completion of the Auckland Cycle Network. In addition to the benefits arising from the transport function of such a link (for example, travel time savings and health benefits), it has also been identified as having significant potential place-making and tourism benefits
- SeaPath is a proposed cycling and walking path linking Esmonde Road with Northcote Point, which would link with the SkyPath, thereby establishing a pedestrian and cycling link between Takapuna and the Auckland CBD (refer Attachment One)
- A detailed business case for SeaPath is currently being developed based on the preferred landward route option, which is expected to be with the Board for approval at the end of Quarter 2, 2018
- The Transport Agency aims to have construction of the SeaPath completed and available for users, when an active mode link across the Waitemata Harbour opens

# The SkyPath project is closely linked to SeaPath

- Based on initial economic assessments, there is a direct relationship between the SkyPath and SeaPath projects with respect to user numbers and the scale of benefits able to be delivered by the two projects. Despite this, the SkyPath and SeaPath are independent and are currently being completed as two separate projects
- The Auckland Council model for SkyPath assumes user charging. The Transport Agency's economic assessment of the project does not include for user charging and there could be legal obstacles to the Transport Agency charging for access. The use of turnstiles (or similar), however, will likely be required regardless of user charging to control user numbers on the facility
- There are no consent conditions or other legal requirements that would prevent the construction of the SkyPath without the SeaPath; however, the Transport Agency has made a previous commitment that the SeaPath will be completed when the SkyPath comes into operation, ensuring there is suitable access to the facility for pedestrians and cyclists from Takapuna

# Since the previous update in August 2017

- The Transport Agency has continued to support Auckland Council in the development of the SkyPath
- The Labour Party's announcement that they would commit \$30 million in funding for the SkyPath project if elected, and subsequent change in Government, has resulted in the Morrison & Co. Public Infrastructure Partnership Fund (PIP Fund) not being "actively engaged" in the project and likely to withdraw should the Transport Agency deliver the project
- The SkyPath Trust had previously withdrawn their support of the proposed hybrid PPP model between Auckland Council and the PIP Fund, and have advocated for direct Government funding of a toll free SkyPath, and Transport Agency delivery of the project
- Since the change of Government, the Transport Agency has provided two briefings to the Minister of Transport regarding the SkyPath project (BRI-1141 and BRI-1199). These supplied an update on the current status of the SkyPath and SeaPath projects, including the potential impact of SkyPath on the Auckland Harbour Bridge, funding implications, and expected completion dates for each project

# An assessment of options is underway

- The Transport Agency is currently undertaking an assessment of options and alternatives for the project to satisfy business case process requirements and ensure the most viable option is taken forward
- Through this process, the Transport Agency is also considering whether alternative options can address some of the concerns with the SkyPath concept, while still delivering the potential benefits.
- During the business case process, the Transport Agency will seek to resolve the following outstanding items:
  - confirm structural design and impact on Auckland Harbour Bridge loading
  - develop operational requirements to ensure the facility is safe to use at all times
  - refine cost estimates and funding requirements
  - develop a detailed programme to completion, and
  - develop a detailed construction methodology

# Current short-list of options requiring further assessment

- The current short-list of options requiring further assessment consists of the following (refer Attachment One for concept sketches):
  1. The current SkyPath option attached to the Auckland Harbour Bridge eastern box girder
  2. A separate structure supported from the Auckland Harbour Bridge concrete piers with no fixed connection to the Auckland Harbour Bridge box girder
  3. Variations of an on-deck option, including removal of a lane of traffic on the eastern box girder or extension of the outside edges of each box girder to accommodate a walking/cycling path in each direction
- Note that these options are based on broad assumptions and may have fatal flaws that will be assessed during the next stage of the options assessment process
- Should an option be chosen for the active mode link that is significantly different from the SkyPath option, then a new or amended resource consent may be required

# SkyPath option handover requirements

- Before the project is taken over by the Transport Agency, the Transport Agency needs to satisfy existing commitments with Auckland Council
- Auckland Council and the PIP Fund have notified the Transport Agency of the following requirements that would need to be met in order to transfer the SkyPath project to the Transport Agency for delivery, which include:
  - formal request to Auckland Council to change ownership of the project to the Transport Agency, requiring a resolution from the Auckland Council Governing Body;
  - transfer/purchase of completed technical work from the PIP Fund, including the granted resource consent and wind tunnel testing results;
  - discussions with a proposed naming sponsor for the SkyPath, who has a partnership agreement in place with Auckland Council (no obligation to retain agreement); and
  - update Auckland Council to allow them to inform their councillors, local board members and other stakeholders before a public announcement is made
- Discussions will also need to be held with the SkyPath Trust to transfer the intellectual property associated with the SkyPath concept design used to gain resource consent for the project

# Project timing

## SkyPath

- A high level programme for a best case scenario for the SkyPath project has been developed and indicates a best case completion date for the project of the fourth quarter of 2020
- A risk adjusted programme for the SkyPath project has also been developed and this would result in a potential completion date, including contingency for possible risk items, of the fourth quarter of 2022
- Note that these dates are based on the current option and assumes no additional consents are required

## SeaPath

- A high level programme for the SeaPath project has been developed and this shows a best-case completion date of the third quarter of 2020
- A risk adjusted programme for the SeaPath project has been developed and this shows a potential completion date, including contingency for possible risk items, of the fourth quarter of 2021

Delivering both projects together is recommended, due to the potential for efficiency gains through combined design and delivery procurement models and the ability to maximise the integration of the projects to ensure a consistent user experience

# Next Steps for the SkyPath project

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- Complete assessment of options, prior to reporting back to the Board in April 2018. This will involve:
  - completing the assessment to confirm a short list of options to take to the next stage
  - developing the investment case to support the project
  - confirming and completing the steps required to transfer the project from Auckland Council/the PIP Fund to the Transport Agency
- In April 2018, seek Board approval for:
  - the Transport Agency assuming responsibility for the SkyPath project
  - the Transport Agency approaching Auckland Transport to create a project in the Regional Land Transport Plan; and
  - funding for a detailed business case