MINO-473 Waitematā Harbour Connections - Communications and Engagement update

23 September 2022

An overview of the communications and engagement workstream and opportunities as we approach the start of the Indicative Business Case planning phase for the Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections project.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

The Indicative Business Case (IBC) planning phase is about to begin for the Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections project. Communications and engagement is considered critical to the success of this city-shaping project.

This update will focus on engagement opportunities over the next quarter as we start the IBC phase of work, however engagement will continue throughout 2023 as we evaluate and develop options.

The Additional Waitematā Harbour Connections will work closely with the Auckland Light Rail team sharing the overarching rapid transit narrative and highlighting opportunities where we can work together to engage collaboratively with our communities. The two teams hold regular meetings focussed on integration.

Please find attached as appendix one the Waitematā Harbour Connections Communications and Engagement Strategy. Below is a summation of key points.

Overall key messages:

- Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Auckland Transport and Auckland Council 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.
- Waitematā Harbour Connections is a key part of expanding Auckland's rapid transit network. Rapid transit is already moving thousands of people around the city 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.
- A planning process called an Indicative Business Case (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 - late 2023.
- The project isn't about simply creating new transport connections. It's about urban development and helping Auckland grow by providing better access to more sustainable transport choices.
- There is close integration with other city-shaping projects and while Auckland Light Rail and the Waitematā Harbour Connections are separate projects, together they underpin expansion of a rapid transit system better connecting road, rail, bus, walking and cycling links to encourage quality growth, give people more travel choices, make the transport network for Auckland and beyond more resilient, and tackle congestion and harmful pollution.
- This transformational project will create an enduring legacy on par with the construction of the original Auckland Harbour Bridge.
- As 40% 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.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Engagement purpose and objectives

Appendix two provides an overview of stakeholder, media and community engagement activities until early 2023 and details specific engagement opportunities and timings to the end of 2022. The overall objective of the communications and engagement workstream over the next three months is to educate, raise awareness and help build the project's profile.

Specific objectives include:

a. Provide opportunities for genuine engagement with partners at all levels.
b. Educate and raise awareness of the project to ensure stakeholders and the community understand the changing scope and policy landscape, including the focus on land use patterns, urban development opportunities, climate change and emissions reduction goals, and wider Auckland rapid transit network story.
c. Build a diverse range of stakeholders who play an active role in advocating and sharing information on the need for the upcoming investigations.
d. Provide opportunities for communities and stakeholders to provide high level feedback on existing and future travel behaviours, including how and where they travel.
e. Set the scene for the IBC phase. Create genuine excitement and a sense of momentum for the next phase and future of this project.
f. Mitigate any information gap or misinformation that can have an adverse impact on the project.

A strong narrative is being developed in collaboration with the Auckland Light Rail team to outline the wider rapid transit plan for Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and how the projects integrate with one another.

Engagement activities

We will be engaging in a variety of ways to ensure effective engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders and the community. We will address the misconceptions regarding the existing transport network while conveying a positive vision of the future the project will enable. Stakeholder and community engagement will ensure people better understand the project, feel heard, and are given an appropriate channel to provide high-level feedback on aspirational travel choices.

Stakeholder engagement

The team will use existing and established Waka Kotahi, Auckland Council and Auckland Transport relationships and channels to engage directly with stakeholders. Through ongoing emails, briefings, and workshops they will raise awareness and improve their understanding of what's important to each stakeholder group, gather feedback and help shape the IBC planning process.

Media relations

Through scheduled announcements, one on one briefings, and media stand-ups, we will provide clear, concise, regular, and transparent information to the media. This will ensure we deliver accurate information and keep people informed and engaged. There will be opportunities for proactive media releases and Ministerial announcements on specific events and milestones.

Community engagement

We have developed a simple strategy to raise awareness, address concerns and misconceptions, and understand what's important to people by eliciting high level feedback. We are planning engagement opportunities to share information with students and communities within the effected neighbourhoods. The team will go to where the people are and hold a variety of community events at local markets, with a focus on integration with Auckland Light Rail. They will also connect with local schools in the project area to understand our younger generations' visions and aspirations for their future city.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Future engagement will focus on formal consultation with stakeholders and communities to provide opportunities to feedback on options and their potential merits, benefits, challenges, and impacts. This will occur throughout 2023 as the IBC technical work is developed. Mana whenua are key partners, and the partnership approach and governance structures are currently being developed. The approach may be updated to reflect the views of mana whenua partners when they join the project.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix One

Released under the Official Information Act 1982

Appendix Two

Activity	Timings	Opportunity
Stakeholder engagement		
Ongoing emails, briefings and workshops with stakeholders	Ongoing to the end of 2022	Project team to lead
Media relations		
Media announcement on preferred Alliance partners – joint approach with Auckland Light Rail team	Late September 2022	Project media release and Ministerial media release
One on one briefings with media Media stand-up close to the Auckland Harbour Bridge, could integrate with Auckland Light Rail	Throughout October and November 2022	Project team to lead Opportunity for the Minister to lead a media stand-up
Signing of official Project Alliance Agreement	December 2022	Opportunity for Minister involvement
Community engagement		
Market days – stalls at the following market days including but not limited to: - Devonport: Saturday 5th November* - Smales Farm: Sunday 13 November* - Britomart: Saturday 19th November** **Exact dates TBC* **We will have the opportunity to collaborate with the Auckland Light Rail team at the central city market days.	Throughout November 2022	Opportunity for Minister attendance
Engagement with Central City and North Shore schools, likely a learning session with the project team and activity to understand our younger generations' visions and aspirations for their future city.	November 2022	Opportunity for Minister involvement
Online feedback portal to gather high-level feedback on existing travel patterns, challenges and benefits.	November 2022	Project team to lead

There will be ongoing opportunities throughout 2023 – this table includes information for the next quarter only. Further information on ongoing opportunities throughout 2023 will be provided when it becomes available.

Released under the Official Information Act 1982