



2 December 2024


BusinessDesk


REF: OIA-16595

Dear 

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 3 October 2024 requesting information in relation to the proposed options for State Highway 1 (SH1) through Wellington City, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

1. *A copy of the update NZTA provided to the Transport Minister in September on "potential options for Wellington City's Road of National Significance Project".*
2. *Minutes from any meeting held in September to brief the Transport Minister on the options, including his response to the options presented.*
3. *The business case/investigation document on the long tunnel option, including the most recent cost estimate for the project.*
4. *The business case/investigation documents for the two other options.*
5. *Any correspondence between NZTA and the Transport Minister and/or his office relaying the minister's views on the long tunnel proposal in September.*

On 1 November 2024, we wrote to you to provide a response to questions 2 and 5 of your request, both of which were refused under section 18(d) of the Act. We also advised that we were extending the timeframe for responding to questions 1, 3, and 4, by 15 working days.

As you will know, on 5 November 2024 the Minister of Transport announced that the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) Board had confirmed a preferred option for the State Highway 1 (SH1) Wellington Improvements project, including a second Mount Victoria Tunnel, running parallel to the existing tunnel, a duplicate Terrace Tunnel, and upgrades to the Basin Reserve section of SH1. The timing of this confirmation means that we are now able to release documentation that would otherwise have been withheld, ahead of consideration by the Board.

I note there are elements of the dismissed options (the long tunnel and the diagonal tunnel) which are being taken forward as part of the preferred package of improvements. As these elements remain under development and will be considered by the Board, certain details have been withheld for the time being under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act as outlined further in this letter.

I am now able to provide you with a response to the remaining parts of your request, and I will address each part of in turn.

1. *A copy of the update NZTA provided to the Transport Minister in September on "potential options for Wellington City's Road of National Significance Project".*

The document that is responsive to this part of your request, MIN-4610 – SH1 Wellington Upgrade Update, is listed in the enclosed document schedule. I am refusing release of the document under section 18(d), as NZTA is preparing a proactive of advice from NZTA to the Minister of Transport and the NZTA Board in the coming weeks, which includes this document.

Some information will be withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act, as withholding the information is necessary to protect information which is subject to an obligation of confidence or which any person has been or could be compelled to provide under the authority of any enactment, where the making available of the information would be likely otherwise to damage the public interest.

3. *The business case/investigation document on the long tunnel option, including the most recent cost estimate for the project.*
4. *The business case/investigation documents for the two other options.*

The SH1 Wellington Improvements project has not been subject to a business case process as part of our evaluation of options for the corridor. As such, no business case documents exist which fall within the scope of your request and have therefore been refused under section 18(e) of the Act.

However, some investigative documents have been compiled as part of the work to assess options for the corridor, and these are detailed in the enclosed document schedule. Documents 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are released to you with some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) of the Act to enable the NZTA Board to consider the investment case for the project in mid-2025, and section 9(2)(a) of the Act to protect the privacy of natural persons.

In relation to Document 3, it lists a number of appendices on page 5. This information is either released to you in other documents, or has been withheld in full under section 9(2)(ba)(ii). This is indicated in red text next to the title of each appendix for Document 3.

I am withholding Document 4 in full under section 9(2)(h), as withholding the information is necessary to maintain legal professional privilege.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold this information. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

In line with NZTA policy, this response will soon be published on our website, with personal information removed.

If you would like to discuss this reply with NZTA, please contact Andy Knackstedt, Senior Manager Media, by email to andrew.knackstedt@nzta.govt.nz or by phone on 021 276 3222.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Elston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robyn Elston
National Manager System Design

OIA-19595 Document Schedule

Ref	Document	Date	Description
1.	MIN-4160 - Capital works - SH1 Wellington Upgrade Update	28 August 2024	Refused under section 18(d) as soon to be publicly available.
2.	SH1 Wellington Corridor Upgrades – Comparative Estimates Report	June 2024	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) – privacy of natural persons. Some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) – obligation of confidence.
3.	SH1 Wellington Corridor Improvements – Initial Technical Report	July 2024	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) – privacy of natural persons. Some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) – obligation of confidence.
4.	Indicative Programme for Tunnel Consenting Memo	June 2024	Withheld in full under section 9(2)(h) – legally privileged.
5.	Long Tunnel – Preliminary Design Outputs V2	May 2024	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) – privacy of natural persons. Some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) – obligation of confidence.
6.	SH1 Improvements Long Tunnel Feasibility Assessment	June 2024	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) – privacy of natural persons. Some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) – obligation of confidence.
7.	Wellington Highway Improvements Scoping Long Tunnel – Geotechnical Feasibility Assessment	June 2024	Some information withheld under section 9(2)(a) – privacy of natural persons. Some information withheld under section 9(2)(ba)(ii) – obligation of confidence.