

Newmarket Viaduct Improvement Project I & R Phase

A hearing to consider the Notice of Requirement was held in July 2006. One outcome of that hearing was that a number of urban design conditions have been attached to the designation. These include the development of an urban design framework overseen by an urban design working party (comprising Transit, Auckland City Council and iwi). This condition formalises the urban design initiatives Transit had previously undertaken, prior to the hearing. Transit is committed to developing this framework which will balance the desire for improved urban form under the Newmarket Viaduct along with meeting the safety and operational requirements of the state highway.

NEXT STEPS

A joint Urban Design working party (Project Team, Auckland City Council & iwi) will be established to progress the development of the project in accordance with the designation conditions and Transit's Urban Design Policy in the design phase of the project.

A review of Transit's policy regarding development under the Viaduct will also be undertaken.

KEY LESSONS

- Integrating engineering and urban design solutions will have major benefits for project progress and will lead to better long-term outcomes for both Transit and the community.
- Visual images, montages, diagrams and modelling are essential tools to convey urban design elements to the target audience.
- External peer review brought international urban design ideas to the team and validated the thinking to-date.



Existing View



Construct new southbound bridge



Demolish existing southbound bridge



Construct new northbound bridge



Completed new viaduct

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project cost: \$150m
Project status: Council hearing July 06, substantial construction within 5 years.

i & R Phase Project Team:
Transit Project Manager - Helen Borland
Consultants - Beca/Opus
Urban Designer - Kevin Brewer (Brewer Davidson)
Urban Design Peer Reviewer - Colin Polwarth (Connybeare Morrison)

The Newmarket Viaduct Improvement Project is part of the wider CMJ works being undertaken to reduce congestion on Auckland's Central Motorway Network.

The challenge for Transit on this Project is the need to carry out this work while keeping the traffic running on New Zealand's busiest stretch of highway. This will be achieved through a staged construction process as illustrated in the diagrams to the left.

URBAN DESIGN IS A KEY ELEMENT OF THE PROJECT ...

URBAN DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

Urban Design was one of the key elements of the Newmarket Viaduct Project in the I and R Phase. The Viaduct sits within a complex urban area, steeped in history with a variety of land uses from historic residential villas to modern car yards, boutique retail outlets and thriving commercial activities.

The urban design components were split into two separate yet interconnected areas or elements. The first element was concerned with the aesthetics of the new Viaduct structure and the second element was the urban form and use of land under the Viaduct.

Transit has seen itself as a member of the community throughout the Viaduct Project and as such, is initiating improvements that will allow greater community connectivity and flow between northern Newmarket and southern Newmarket.

THE PROCESS

As part of the documentation supporting the project's Notice of Requirement, Transit commissioned an Urban Design Assessment of the Project. Early in 2006 Transit commissioned an external peer reviewer to review the work undertaken to date and assist the Project Team in identifying a process for ongoing development. This was undertaken through a workshop with the Project Team and the external peer reviewer.

Transit and the Project team have invested considerable time and effort into urban design elements, utilising photomontages and indicative modelling to investigate and represent the various options available.

Existing Land Use Under the Viaduct



Possible Options for Future Land Use Under the Viaduct



1. Central pedestrian access clear of structure. 2. Podium buildings extend under viaduct. 3. Open space option.

Photomontages



Photomontages showing existing and proposed barrier height in relation to views.

The workshop looked at both the aesthetics of the Viaduct and the landuse beneath. In terms of aesthetics, it was agreed that the new Viaduct be a slim and elegant structure similar in form to the existing structure. For the landuse beneath the Viaduct, it was agreed that 4 quite different scenarios be explored as potential urban design solutions.

The 4 scenarios were:

1. Urban infill option.
2. Urban infill option with open space beneath the Viaduct for maintenance access.
3. Open space option.
4. Do minimum option, i.e. improve existing car-parking areas.

In assessing the scenarios, an important consideration for Transit is the operational and maintenance requirements of the Viaduct. Transit is currently assessing the relative merits of each of these scenarios in the design phase of the Project.

Transit and the Project Team invested considerable time and effort into the urban design elements of the Project in the I & R phase, utilising photomontages and indicative modelling to investigate and represent the various options available. These were presented to Auckland City's Urban Design Panel in May 2006 and received favourable feedback.

At a broader level, the philosophical shift was looking at the Viaduct within its context in the community rather than solely an exercise in bridge aesthetics.

