MINO-720 Advice regarding the Bay Link project

21 April 2023

This memo provides advice to the Minister of Transport's Office in relation to the Bay Link project following Todd Muller MP's email to the Minister of Transport and Bay Venues' letter to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

The Bay Link project is being completed at a time of significant change and population growth across the region and a shift in focus on transport modes. The project's objective is to upgrade the transport system making it safer and more resilient for people living, visiting and travelling through the area, connecting our growing communities and contributing to a safer transport network for Tauranga and the western Bay of Plenty.

Truman Lane progress
Works at the Truman Lane end of the Bay Link project are progressing well, and Truman Lane will be restored to two lanes by late May 2023. This does differ from our initially communicated completion dates. These works have been delayed due to the unusual periods of wet weather encountered over the summer months. Once two lanes are restored, there will still be some minor works, but this will mostly occur in the evenings with short-term night closures. Waka Kotahi will continue to work with Bay Venues to ensure these occur only when no large events are scheduled.

In mid-July 2023, the remaining ramp of the new SH2/29A Te Maunga interchange is scheduled to open to traffic. This will remove the need for the Truman Lane diversion currently in place and will further reduce traffic volumes along Truman Lane. Unfortunately, once again, works required to get this ramp completed have been delayed due to the impact of unusual wet weather.

Changes to current layouts to improve traffic flow
Detailed traffic planning and a review of lane assignments, together with Tauranga Council and independent traffic specialists, need to occur before Waka Kotahi implement any major changes to temporary traffic configurations. As part of the project, we continuously monitor and explore opportunities to improve our temporary traffic configuration for the safest and best network outcomes, aligned to the construction sequencing. Adjustments to the Sandhurst and Te Maunga interchanges were reviewed as part of this process, however, they did not deliver positive benefits to the traffic flows and so weren't progressed.

Access for people walking and cycling
As part of the project, the contractor is required to regularly check the temporary walking and cycling connections across the work site, to ensure these are safe to use. The concerns raised by Bay Venues have been relayed to the contractor to ensure these meet our expectations.

Once the Bayfair flyover opens to traffic and the remaining ramp of Te Maunga interchange is complete, works will move towards completion of the permanent walking and cycling connections which will greatly improve

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access to Baypark for everyone. The final layout will include the Truman staircase, ramps and footpaths linking Te Maunga interchange with Baypark through the newly created area, Truman Park.

Access to Baypark as part of the Bay Link project

In September 2022, ahead of works starting on Truman Lane, Waka Kotahi reviewed the initial design of the access to Baypark as part of the Bay Link project. As a result of this review and due to ongoing master planning at Tauranga City Council and Baypark, it was subsequently agreed to remove the access as per the initial design and construct a straight-through kerb at the previously proposed location with this providing Bay Venues with the best option for future proposals for egress from Baypark.

Waka Kotahi acknowledges the ongoing impact the Bay Link project, amongst other projects in the area, has on neighbouring residents, local businesses and people who drive through the site. We are committed to completing the works as safely and as quickly as possible while always being conscious of the impacts of construction for all road users.

This information will be provided to Bay Venues in response to their letter to Waka Kotahi on 24 April 2023.

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