

Media statement

11 September 2015

Keeping Wellington moving

Wellington Transport Leaders are committed to working with the regional community to find a solution to the Basin Reserve traffic issue now that the Basin Bridge project has been abandoned.

Regional Transport Committee Chair Paul Swain says the first step will be to work with the community to look at how we can improve the current traffic flow at the Basin, while a more permanent solution is investigated.

"Everyone agrees we need a solution at the Basin that allows people to get to their destination as quickly as possible. We need to find a way for public transport, private motorists, walkers and cyclists to move freely through the pinch point, and we will need the community's help to find the way forward", Mr Swain says.

"We're ready to hear ideas from the community on how we can keep Wellington moving, and we want to try and find a solution that has buy-in from as many people as possible".

The Wellington region is seeing unprecedented progress on its transport network with the recent upgrade of the rail fleet and rail infrastructure, and projects such as Transmission Gully, the Kapiti Expressway and the Smart Motorway getting underway. There are major plans to improve the bus service throughout Wellington city, which will need to be linked to the new cycleways that are due to be built following the Government's recent funding boost for cycling in the region.

"We've agreed that keeping up the momentum is vital, and we've identified some important next steps. However, we also recognise that there's no easy solution for what is a very complex situation at the Basin Reserve. A permanent solution will take some time as we need to work with the community to get it right."

The Ngauranga to Airport Governance Group, which is made up of representatives from the Regional Council, Wellington City Council and the NZ Transport Agency to lead the coordination of the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan, has agreed to the next steps for addressing congestion throughout the Wellington City transport network, including:

- Refreshing the Network Operating Framework - the plan for how the agencies jointly operate the network and get the most out of the roads. This will help to identify new opportunities to improve the network.
- Entering into a new collaborative process to hear ideas on how best to address traffic issues, not just at the Basin but also at other pinch points between Ngauranga and the Airport.
- Identify optimisation improvements, which are modifications to the existing network that can help to improve traffic flow.
- Continuing with the modelling work for the Detailed Business Case of the Bus Rapid Transit project. This modelling work will provide current and detailed data and information which is not only critical for BRT project decisions, but will also help to guide the development of other future projects.
- Continuing with the Port Access Study, which will help to improve access to Centreport, creating flow-on benefits for motorists and cyclists while providing an economic boost by helping to unlock our city's main distribution hub.

- Continuing the development of cycleways identified as part of Urban Cycleways Package, and planning for a cycleway between Ngauranga and Petone.
- Continuing the planning for the Petone to Grenada Link Road.

Transport Agency Regional Director Central Raewyn Bleakley says that the Agency and its partners will welcome the local community and wider region participation in the development of future transport plans.

“We recognise that this is about more than just getting to work more quickly – this is about improving access to our airport, our regional hospital and other regional assets. It's about freeing our transport network up for all modes and enabling our regional economy to reach its full potential. We need to solve these issues together, and we're committed to that.”

Wellington City Council Transport and Urban Development Chair Andy Foster says that, while the need for a big-picture rethink on the Basin means there will be no overnight solutions, the partners are committed to driving transport improvements throughout the city, and to engaging the community on what should happen at the Basin and beyond.

“We also recognise that sorting out our city's transport issues is not just important for the city – it's important for the whole region, which depends on our infrastructure for access to key destinations such as the regional hospital, Centreport, the airport, the ferry terminal, major sports complexes and of course the CBD itself.”

“We look forward to engaging with the regional community on ideas for the Basin area. We will be meeting again soon including to plan out the timetable and process for inviting that community input, and will be announcing shortly on how we think that should be done”, Cr Foster says.

For media comment, call 021 914 266