

Hearing Statement - Proposed Plan Change G

Glenn Connelly: New Zealand Transport Agency - Waka Kotahi

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Kia ora tatou. Ko Glenn Connelly tōku ingoa. I am a Senior Safety Engineer for the New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi. My qualifications and experience are set out in Section 1 of my Evidence in Chief (dated 27 October 2023).
- 1.2 I engaged in expert conferencing regarding transport matters affecting Aokautere Drive (State Highway 57) with Council’s transportation expert Harriet Fraser, which resulted in the preparation of a Joint Witness Statement dated 14th November 2023. I was also party to the preparation of the further assessment to the Joint Witness Statement, dated 24th November 2023, which is appended as Attachment 1 to Ms Fraser’s Statement of Reply (28th November 2023).
- 1.3 I confirm the content of my evidence in chief, the joint witness statement and further assessment.
- 1.4 There are no matters of disagreement regarding the traffic effects on Aokautere Drive (State Highway 57).

2 Summary

- 2.1 Plan Change G is a continuation of the residential growth in Aokautere, which will see a substantial increase in the motorised traffic on Aokautere Drive (State Highway 57) between Pacific and Summerhill Drives. This will have an impact on all existing users of Aokautere Drive including pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2.2 There are current initiatives to improve the infrastructure and safety of Aokautere Drive which have naturally evolved in response to the increasing urban development. These include the following:
 - a Reviewing the speed limit via the 2024-2027 Speed Management Plan, with a view to the speed limit being reduced to 60kph, or potentially 50kph to coordinate with the lower speed limit proposed for Summerhill Drive.
 - b Altering the road markings subsequent to the road being resealed in February 2024.
 - c Further improvements to the cycle lanes and pedestrian facilities through the ‘Transport Choices’ programme.
- 2.3 These initial treatments with future enhancements of the highway for all road users, would see appropriate and safe system outcomes develop as residential growth continues.

- a The lower speed limit would provide improved safety for all road users. A 50 kph speed limit would provide safe system outcomes at intersections for motorists, who will be the main transport mode on the highway associated with the proposed plan change.
- b A key component of the future improvements would be the upgrading of the intersections as suggested and included in the Plan Change (Table 7A.1), which will see improved facilities and potentially safe system outcomes for all road users. Safe system outcomes for pedestrian and cyclists could for example be provided at a raised signalised intersection, where speeds are moderated to 30 kph or less.

2.4 The initial planned improvements and anticipated continued development of the state highway, in conjunction with the proposed District Plan provisions, would in my opinion appropriately manage the traffic impacts of proposed Plan Change G, as part of the broader management of the state highway and surrounding land uses.

3 Response to Questions

3.1 The following provides a brief response to questions raised by the Commissioners to statements and presentations by the Palmerston North City Council.

Level of Service

3.2 I agree that the Austroads definitions and guidance regarding Level of Service would be appropriate if clarification is needed in the District Plan. A reference to delay could provide a more intuitive understanding of how the impact would be measured, as per the first column of Table 7.7 from Austroads 'Guide to Traffic Management Part 3: Transport Study and Analysis Methods', as shown in the following figure.

Table 7.7: Summary of LOS criteria using delay

LOS	Average delay per vehicle (d) in seconds			
	Unsignalised intersections	Roundabouts	Signalised intersections	All intersection types
	HCM 2000 and 2016; SIDRA intersection	SIDRA intersection Recommended values	HCM 2000 and 2016; SIDRA intersection	RTA (2002)
A	$d \leq 10$	$d \leq 10$	$d \leq 10$	$d \leq 14$
B	$10 < d \leq 15$	$10 < d \leq 20$	$10 < d \leq 20$	$15 < d \leq 28$
C	$15 < d \leq 25$	$20 < d \leq 35$	$20 < d \leq 35$	$29 < d \leq 42$
D	$25 < d \leq 35$	$35 < d \leq 50$	$35 < d \leq 55$	$43 < d \leq 56$
E	$35 < d \leq 50$	$50 < d \leq 70$	$55 < d \leq 80$	$57 < d \leq 70$
F	$50 < d$	$70 < d$	$80 < d$	$70 < d$

Source: Adapted from TRB (2016a), Akçelik and Associates (2011) and RTA (2002).

Development of the Neighbourhood Centre

- 3.3 The timing of the development of the Neighbourhood Centre in my view is not critical. I agree with Ms Fraser that the Neighbourhood Centre would primarily service the local area and draw limited trade from the wider network. The Neighbourhood Centre could thus see short internal trips occur, potentially by foot or bicycle, thereby avoiding traffic movements outside the area and via the state highway. Additionally, the retail area is of a limited size and its peak use would not necessarily coincide with the peak use of the transport network.

Improvements for Pedestrians Crossing the State Highway

- 3.4 The planned reseal (February 2024) is an opportune time to remark the state highway to be more consistent with lower speeds and the increasingly urban environment. The revised markings will include narrower lanes which will reduce the distance pedestrians have to cross, and help encourage drivers to moderate their speed. It is also planned to allocate more space to the shoulder east of Pacific Drive, thereby improving pedestrian access to Adderstone Reserve. These are initial treatments that can readily be implemented with the reseal. There will also be additional work in the future that provides further improvement for pedestrians; which is expected to include additional centre refuge islands, controlled crossings at traffic signals, and potentially raised crossings and / or intersections.

Certainty & Timing of Upgrades.

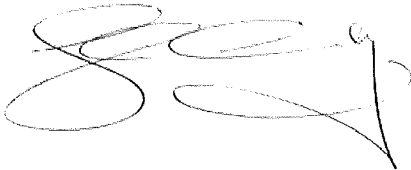
- 3.5 The speed limit is planned to be reviewed in the 2024-2027 Speed Management Plan. It would in my opinion be advanced early in the programme given the review of 70 kph speed limits has been identified as a priority. There is a view to minimising the use of 70 kph zones to reduce the number of speed limits drivers need to recognise. A lower speed limit would also provide safety benefits for all road users. Even if the speed limit legislation were reviewed as has been suggested, the improved safety and urban development would still suggest a lower speed limit would be appropriate. It is my view therefore that it is reasonable to expect that the speed limit would be lowered within the next two years.
- 3.6 The 'Transport Choices' programme is on hold while its funding is reprioritised. The basic white markings can be implemented when the road is resealed, as previously discussed. This will include buffered cycle lanes which will be an improvement and suit reasonably confident cyclists. Separators could subsequently be installed within the painted buffer as part of a planned corridor upgrade to encourage cycling and cater for a wider audience.
- 3.7 Any improvements on the highway are subject to national funding and prioritisation, which have an innate degree of uncertainty. This however is inherent within the routine management of the road corridor and state highway network. The proposed highway improvements are likely in my opinion to proceed given the need to provide improved safety and facilitate growth. The timing will however be subject to the rate at which the area develops and competing priorities for funding. The 'Business Case' process has been developed as a tool that would help balance competing demands on the State Highway. It would consider and demonstrate how any highway improvements would align strategically and integrated with development, which would be a prerequisite to securing substantive national

funding. Additionally, Council has identified funding in there Long Term Plan for infrastructure development in Aokuatere which provides them the ability to influence the timing of infrastructure improvements on the state highway. The above view is based on my perspective as an NZTA Waka Kotahi Safety Engineer. I note however that detailed questions regarding funding and programming would be best addressed by Ms S Downs (NZTA - Corporate).

4 Closing

4.1 Thank you, that concludes my prepared statement and I am available to answer questions.

Glenn Connelly

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

6 December 2023