

10 July 2006

Re: North Wellington Public Transport Study

This submission is from the Wellington Architectural Centre, a group which represents both professional and non-professionals interested in architecture and design, and in the promotion of good design in Wellington.

1) Support for Scenario Four – Light rail

The Wellington Architectural Centre strongly support the Fourth Scenario, a street level light rail transit.

2) Discussion

In evaluating the four options we have considered the following:

a) Wellington needs a long-term sustainable transport system. While public transport is clearly a more sustainable option than private cars, fossil fuel dependent options will have limited longevity. We therefore privilege transport options which use electricity as an energy source over those dependent on petrol and diesel, because there are long-term sustainable options for electricity production.

b) The cost of the different transport options needs to be adjusted to reflect the quality of what will be provided. While the light rail is, on the surface, a more expensive option, we believe that to present costs in this way is partly deceptive. The four scenarios are not equivalent, and the consultation documents are not comparing "apples with apples." The comparison is instead based on initial capital costs and doesn't take into account long-term running costs. We also consider that the higher cost of light rail reflects a higher quality of transport option, it is a more sustainable transport option and includes the continuation of the transport link into Courtney Place. In addition, the provision of light rail to connect the north of Wellington with the city will put in place infrastructure which will be able to be extended to provide a seamless link to the airport, as well as developing in the long-term to enable other light rail routes into the city.

c) The need to privilege light rail over cars and other vehicles in the CBD (like the trams are privileged in Melbourne) is another positive aspect of this option. The private car is unsustainable as a transport option and cities must begin to realise this in their design. In the long-term other fossil fuel transport options will become unfeasible and we must start to plan for this now and learn from mistakes made overseas. We consider that the consequential reduction in both road capacity and parking in the CBD will be productive for our city.

3) Other issues

Regardless of the transport option chosen, as any commuter in winter will know, the current bus shelters (soon we hope to be light rail shelters) are in desperate need for replacement by a better designed shelter. We need transport shelters which are designed to shelter regardless of weather. These need to be deeper in their design, and located to protect from prevailing wind, and the accompanying rain. The shallow design of the current shelters are ineffectual against Wellington weather.

4) Conclusion

The Architectural Centre strongly supports this fourth option for light rail transit. Our members' experience of light rail option overseas suggest that adopting a light rail



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infrastructure in Wellington will be a productive move for the city in the long-term, despite short terms costs and some inconvenience during construction. We would like to see a proposal developed to extend light rail further out through Newton to the airport, and anticipate that planning for this extension will be taken into account in the planning of this initial phase.

Yours sincerely

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The Architectural Centre