

Chief Executive's Report to the Board – March 2010

dimension and mass limits than otherwise allowed. The objective of the Rule is to improve the productivity of the heavy vehicle fleet so that freight can be moved as efficiently as possible and, where possible, enable a given amount of freight to be carried on fewer vehicles, without reducing the safety of road users. The Rule is expected to be signed by mid April and come into force on 13 May 2010.

3. Draft Land Transport Rule amendment to be released for consultation in March

- A proposed amendment to Land Transport Rule: Traffic Control Devices 2004 is to be released for six weeks' public consultation in March. The purpose of this proposed amendment Rule is to contribute to the safe and efficient operation of our road network by introducing new and proven traffic control devices to those already available to road controlling authorities and amending or reinforcing existing provisions of the Rule.

The main proposal relates to the form and location of parking signs. If adopted, these proposals will see a reduction in the number of signs, highly desirable from cost and urban design implications, but this must be balanced by the need for road users to have clear and reasonable indication of the parking restrictions that apply.

Update on the Driver Licensing and Driver Testing Fees' Review

The proposed schedule of fees was released for public comment on Thursday 28 January. Public notices were placed in the metropolitan newspapers on Saturday 30th, and over 600 individuals and groups were individually advised of the release. Consultation closed on 26 February. Initial reaction was very subdued, with media stories only at the time of release, and limited numbers of enquiries and submissions.* The time allocated for summary and analysis of submissions is 2 to 3 weeks, with the intention of completing the process and introducing a revised scale of fees from 1 July 2010.

The proposed schedule does not increase every fee; for example, the highest volume transaction, 10-year renewal, has a marginal reduction proposed (from \$44.30 to \$43.00). None of the proposed increases are more than 20% above existing prices. Even with higher fees overall, the NZTA will still have to make savings (estimated as around \$500,000 p.a.) to bring the driver licensing account into balance. Proposals for changes to existing legislation will be presented to the Minister as one contributor to the necessary savings.

A paper has also been forwarded to the NZTA Board proposing the write-off of the accumulated deficit in these accounts (estimated at around \$21 M by 1 July 2010) against equity.

~~(we will have to update these for the meeting since submission close off is after the lodgement of this item)~~

Victoria Park Tunnel – Southbound Tunnel (Tommy Parker)

Background

The Vic Park Tunnel (VPT) project, a Road of National Significance (RONS), and the VPT project involves construction of a three lane northbound tunnel beside the Victoria Park viaduct and conversion of the existing viaduct to four southbound lanes. The number of lanes between the viaduct and the Harbour Bridge will be increased to five northbound lanes including provision for bus priority when necessary, and five lanes with a bus lane for southbound traffic.

Southbound Tunnel Proposal

The VPT Alliance have put forward a proposal to construct a VPT Southbound Tunnel, replacing the existing viaduct, as part of the current Victoria Park Tunnel works. Their justification implies that due to the safety egresses required for building a northbound tunnel only, a full southbound tunnel could be constructed now for only an additional \$70 to 80 million. This would also remove the requirement to spend any money retro-fitting the existing Viaduct, for which \$69 million is currently allocated in the NLTP, as it would be completely removed and replaced by the southbound tunnel.

A review of the proposal has been undertaken by the Auckland Transport Planning Team and has concluded that a southbound tunnel can not be justified at this stage. The major advantage of this proposal is the aesthetic value of restoring the park once the viaduct is removed. However, the viaduct can be maintained for the next 20 years with approximately \$8-10 million of mitigation, hence there is little justification in spending \$70 to 80 million now to replace it. Beyond this timeframe it is expected that this part of the park will form part of the Additional Waitemata Harbour Crossing. As reported to the Board in November 2009 a designation is being sought for a future crossing. Investigation is ongoing on the final form and function of the crossing. Provision of a southbound tunnel at this stage could restrict options and potentially remove the possibility of a bridge option.

Progressing a southbound tunnel now would also lead to a reduction in functionality. The viaduct will be reconfigured to provide 4 lanes southbound, where as a new southbound tunnel would provide 3 lanes southbound.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no compelling case to constructing a southbound tunnel now, and as a result this proposal should not be progressed any further. The additional tunnel would be in the order of \$70-80 million, where as the Viaduct can be maintained for another 20 years with \$8-10 million of mitigation, prior to being replaced by an AWHC project.

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