



The Campaign For Better Transport

The Chair
Transport Committee
Auckland City Council
Private Bag 92516
Wellesley St
Auckland 1141

Tuesday 10th March 2009

Dear Cr Baguley, cc Auckland City Transport Committee

Re: Wynyard Quarter Light Rail

The Campaign For Better Transport has received a copy of Auckland City Council's report on light rail in the Wynyard Quarter, which recommends delaying any decision on the matter for at least a year.

We are disappointed with this outcome, and would like to highlight a number of issues that we hope the Transport Committee will consider in deciding whether or not to receive the report in its entirety at the coming meeting on Thursday 12th March.

CBD Waterfront Masterplan

The report back to the Transport Committee states that "the draft CBD Waterfront Masterplan contains a long-term aspiration to provide an innovative transport solution along the waterfront and into the Wynyard Quarter area."

This is not entirely correct. In fact, specific reference to light rail is made, as shown in the following diagram taken from the CBD Waterfront Masterplan for 2040. One would also hope that given the expense of producing the Masterplan that these goals are more than aspirational.





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ARTA's Proposal

The report to the Transport Committee notes that ARTA is proposing bus based passenger transport to the Quarter. This is correct, but as we noted in our presentation to you, light rail was not one of the options considered in ARTA's Wynyard Quarter Passenger Transport Business Case report. The ARTA report makes no mention of light rail, except to note that light rail is supported in Auckland City Council's Draft Waterfront Masterplan.

The ARTA report is based around a 70% target for non-car modes of transport. The report claims that this can be achieved by:

- Promoting walking and cycling from the CBD
- Extending the Remuera Rider bus service to Daldy St
- Rerouting the City Circuit bus to the Wynyard Quarter

Yet currently at the moment only 37% (2001 figures) of all trips to the northern CBD are by non-car modes of transport. The Campaign for Better Transport believes the 70% target is necessary to make Wynyard Quarter attractive to people, however we do not believe that it will be achieved by the above strategy, particularly in the winter months.

We think that light rail or a tram connection to the CBD will be able to achieve this target, based on overseas experience and the factors we outlined to the Transport Committee in December. However, since no analysis at all has been carried out for this mode of transport, it is hard to quantify expected non-car mode share if light rail was implemented.

Cost of Parking To Triple in Wynyard Quarter

ARTA's Business Case report also notes that

"Achieving the mode share target for workers coming into Wynyard Quarter will be more difficult without major constraints on parking...Modelling of work trips into Wynyard Quarter has indicated that the 'perceived' cost of parking in Wynyard Quarter would need to be more than twice current costs in the CBD for the 70% non-car driver mode share to be achievable."

The implication of this is that daily parking rates need to be more than about \$24 a day, which is triple the current parking rates around Halsey Street.

The Campaign For Better Transport believes that such high parking rates, while offering limited public transport improvements, will be unnecessarily punitive for employers and employees alike, and detract from the viability of Wynyard Quarter as a work and population centre.

Future-proofing

The report to the Transport Committee states that "dimensions of streets within the Wynyard Quarter are being future proofed to accommodate potential innovative transport solutions, such as light rail."

Adequate future proofing for light rail requires more than the dimensions of the street to be taken into consideration. As Colin Zeff from MOTAT noted in our presentation to you, it is imperative that planning be done now for the laying of tracks, associated track foundations and electrical infrastructure to avoid significant structural rework and consequent cost at a later date.



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Te Wero Bridge

The report to the Transport Committee notes that “the current preferred design for Te Wero bridge be able to accommodate light rail”.

We understand that the design of Te Wero bridge is under review by Booz Allen, who have been tasked with examining the form and function of the bridge. We understand that no final decision has been made, and that the Booz Allen report is due back to Auckland City Council shortly.

CBD Passenger Transport Integration Study

Planning for the Wynyard Quarter is well underway through the auspices of the Sea + City project, with significant urban design features such as an exhibition centre in the final stages of planning. We believe that it will be too late to implement light rail cost effectively in to the Wynyard Quarter if a decision is delayed for at least another year.

Councillor Lister’s Toronto Visit Recommendations

Cr. Lister provided a report on his visit to Toronto in the December agenda of the Transport Committee. His comments included the point that the “above ground use of trams is regarded as their greatest asset as I also observed in San Francisco”, and he concluded that “city officers could learn much from a few days working with our Toronto friends in learning ways to amalgamate the cities and provide the services that their constituents require and expect.”

One wonders what the point was of funding his visit if the outcomes are going to be effectively ignored?

ARC Support

On 11th February the CBT repeated its presentation to members of the ARC Transport and Urban Development Committee. We have been informed that Auckland City councillors have been made aware of the consequent decision of the ARC committee to “champion light rail, including heritage trams, in any public transport options for Wynyard Quarter and Quay Street as part of the area’s redevelopment, and take the lead in developing and progressing this initiative.”

We would hope that Auckland City is prepared to work with the ARC to achieve this objective.

Conclusion

Our over-riding concern is that if a decision on light rail is deferred by a year then it may well be too late to pursue it as an option, as planning for Wynyard Quarter will be well advanced by this time. Instead, we encourage Auckland City to work with the ARC and ARTA to immediately evaluate light rail as a transport option for all of the reasons we described in our original presentation to you in December. Failure to do so will severely jeopardise the chances of the Viaduct Quarter becoming a vibrant, attractive and successful part of Auckland, which is the outcome we are all seeking.

Yours sincerely

Cameron Pitches

Convenor, Campaign for Better Transport