



17 December 2021

Ms Nicole Rosie  
CEO, NZ Transport Agency

Kia ora Nicole,

We are writing to request that NZTA urgently revisits its recent decision in relation to walking and cycling on the Auckland Harbour Bridge (AHB).

### **Trialling a lane for walking and cycling**

International evidence<sup>1</sup> demonstrates that reducing road capacity typically causes a corresponding reduction in traffic, meaning less congestion across the network and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Per our previous correspondence, NZTA's traffic studies incorrectly assumed that there would be no reduction in traffic if a lane was allocated for walking and cycling, and failed to recognise that at peak travel times, a lane for active transport can move more people/hour than a traffic lane.

Given the Government's declaration of a climate emergency and the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS 2021) mandate for reduced emissions, mode shift, active transport and mode neutrality, we urgently ask that NZTA reconsiders its decision to not undertake a trial. In these COVID times with traffic volumes reduced, now is an ideal time to undertake the trial.

If the trial is successful, then it is a win/win: less congestion and emissions and greater travel choice for Aucklanders. In the unlikely event that the trial is not successful then NZTA should revisit the decision to not proceed with SkyPath.

### **SkyPath**

SkyPath remains a viable option for providing a shared path on the AHB despite NZTA's refusal to progress it:

- 1) NZTA management has disingenuously claimed that SkyPath is not technically viable<sup>2</sup>. They inaccurately refer to the following two documents as technical evidence to support their claim, but in reality those documents confirm SkyPath's viability:
  - i) The "AHB Shared Path Single Stage Business Case" rates SkyPath highly, its Multi-Criteria Assessment scored it second out of the 12 options assessed<sup>3</sup>.
  - ii) The "SkyPath Concept Structural Assessment Technical Report" concludes with the advice that "SkyPath could be used by up to 600 people at a time" and "up to 300

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<sup>1</sup> International Transport Forum (2021). *Reversing Car Dependency* Page 12: "reallocation of road space does not simply shift traffic from one place to another but leads to an overall reduction in the number of motor vehicles on roads." <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/reversing-car-dependency.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> NZTA's NPW2A SkyPath Project Decision Note (dated 18 December 2020) by Norman Collier, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> The top-ranked option "Northern Pathway" subsequently failed its wind tunnel testing. SkyPath passed its wind tunnel testing, and was consented and confirmed in the Environment Court as technically viable by Beca (NZTA's consultants for the AHB).

people in about 20 years' time depending on the growth of traffic load intensity"<sup>4</sup>.

- 2) NZTA management has refused to explore options for SkyPath implementation without the requirement to manage to user numbers (as referred to in 1 (ii) above).

Options to enable this include:

- a. Determining the actual behaviour of the AHB under temperature loading<sup>5</sup> as recommended by NZTA's peer reviewers, Hyder UK.
  - b. Strengthening the AHB clip-ons per the Holmes Consulting solution<sup>6</sup> prepared for NZTA
  - c. Refinement of the second lane factor
  - d. Active traffic management of heavy vehicles
- 3) NZTA has spent over \$51 million on a link across the Waitemata. NZTA now says it is looking at ferries or buses to providing walking and cycling access the Waitemata. Not only is this a remarkable waste of taxpayer funds, this also offers an unacceptable level of service and highlights NZTA's unwillingness to give effect to GPS 2021 as required by the Land Transport Management Act.

We know from dealing with senior NZTA management over the years NZTA's bias against walking and cycling on the AHB affects their decision-making. It was only under Stephen Town's watch that SkyPath was allowed to make progress, since then NZTA's management has stymied its delivery.

NZTA Chair Brian Roche's advice<sup>7</sup> that the agency has a culture of doing things on its own and a prejudice against a proposal from an outside organisation, has rung true for SkyPath and the trial of a lane for walking and cycling.

The current response is insufficient, and unacceptable to the public – and fails to meet the needs of present and future generations. If NZTA continues to stand in the way of walking and cycling on the AHB, then we will be compelled to take further action, including an application to the High Court for judicial review.

We await advice of your decisions in response to our requests above.

Regards,



Christine Rose, Chair  
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CC:	NZTA Board	Shanan Halbert
	Hon Michael Wood	Helen White
	Greg Connor	Phil Goff, Auckland Mayor
	Peter Merci, Ministry of Transport	Chris Darby, Auckland Councillor

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<sup>4</sup> Extracts from Page 24, SkyPath Concept Structural Assessment Technical Report – AHB Alliance (10 December 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Currently NZTA assumes the theoretical worse case for temperature affecting the clip-on box girders and reduces the available load capacity by over 20%. Knowing the actual temperature effect will free up capacity for SkyPath and could allow unrestricted user numbers.

<sup>6</sup> See Hyder Proposal for strengthening of the AHB:

[http://www.getacross.org.nz/uploads/1/2/2/8/122895821/ahb\\_strengthening\\_for\\_nzta\\_-\\_holmes.pdf](http://www.getacross.org.nz/uploads/1/2/2/8/122895821/ahb_strengthening_for_nzta_-_holmes.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/116758857/nz-transport-agency-to-phil-twyford-we-should-have-done-better>