

Basin Reserve Roundabout

Date: 2011 –

Location: Wellington

Client: Mt Victoria Residents Association (MVRA)

Project status: under review by Government-appointed Board of Inquiry

Our alternative design for the Basin Reserve Roundabout has been submitted as evidence to the Board of Inquiry hearing on NZTA's Basin Bridge Project. We are appearing on behalf of the Mount Victoria Residents' Association (MVRA), an incorporated society and not-for-profit organisation whose community resides adjacent to the Project and opposes NZTA's application.

NZTA's application seeks to bridge over the Basin Reserve Roundabout with a flyover in order to improve the capacity, efficiency and reliability of both the state highway and public transport networks. NZTA contends that grade-separation will remove the conflict between state highway traffic heading westwards meeting local north-south flows at the roundabout. The significant reduction in traffic at ground level is expected to enable priority lanes to be given to public transport.

NZTA accepts the flyover will create significant adverse effects for the Basin Reserve Historic Area. NZTA proposes to spend \$11M+ on buildings and infill planting to mitigate these, however submitters against the application argue these will create further significant adverse effects, which combined with the flyover, will dismantle the spatial structure of the city, Basin Reserve Roundabout and Basin Reserve Cricket Ground.

The hearing process has established the flyover will deliver 90 seconds of travel time savings for traffic heading west at a cost of \$90 million, and up to 1 minute savings travelling north-south on the Roundabout. The Board of Inquiry will need to weigh these transport improvements and mitigation measures against the cost and effects of the Project on the environment. The decision must be a fair and balanced one and the Board has been granted an extension of time to hear and consider all the evidence.

We believe NZTA's Objectives for the Project can be met by enhancing the existing Basin Reserve Roundabout. We found the same objectives can also be used to enhance the historic structure, unique character and sensitive environment of the Basin Reserve Historic Area. Remarkably, NZTA never investigated the base case in any depth or detail throughout their many years of options' analysis. Our alternative proposals, the Basin Reserve Roundabout Enhancement Option ("BRREO") and its predecessor, the RR Option, are the only ones which do.

BRREO is a collaboration between our practice and John Foster and David Young, two highly experienced traffic experts with long standing knowledge and insight into traffic problems in the vicinity of the Roundabout and across the Wellington regional network. John and David are appearing on behalf of MVRA and Save the Basin Campaign.

BRREO differs in important respects from the conceptual drawings Richard Reid & Associates supplied to Wellington City Council in January 2013 (the "RR Option"). The RR Option identified that most congestion is created by bottlenecks before and after the Roundabout rather than by the Roundabout itself. These can be removed with a second Mt Victoria Tunnel, Buckle St Underpass and fine tuning of the Roundabout. The RR Option concluded most travel time savings will be produced with these improvements rather than by a flyover, an insight now confirmed by peer reviewers of NZTA's proposal. Despite providing the Council with this information our analysis, methodology and recommendations were not advanced.

BRREO is our team's significant development of the RR Option. BRREO's transport initiatives include extending the three lanes to be provided in the new Buckle St Underpass and Taranaki St intersection back through the Roundabout to the Paterson and Dufferin Street intersection. This maximises the Roundabout's carrying-capacity and efficiency, improving both east-west and north-south traffic flows, including for public transport. The changes required to the Roundabout configuration are minimal, inexpensive and long-lasting.

BRREO has also benefited from incorporating our practice's urban and landscape thinking for the Project. This information was left out of the documentation provided to WCC due to the terms and conditions of our contract. Of major concern is to protect the Roundabout's high order place within the urban structure and landscape context of the city. The Roundabout is the city's key pivot point and major traffic distributor - the City turns upon the Roundabout.

With this in mind we have brought consistency and simplicity to the roundabout layout. We have also strengthened the axial alignment of key roads approaching it. This is particularly evident in our alternative proposal for Paterson St which NZTA is planning to modify as part of the future Mt Victoria Tunnel Duplication Project.

In BRREO, walking is integrated with the traffic light phasing of the Roundabout so that traffic flow accommodates walking in a regular and predictable way. In most journeys, walking is separated from traffic movement by being directed through the centre or around the outside edges of the Roundabout rather than close to traffic lanes. Of special note is our proposal for a major walking spine down the central median of Kent/Cambridge Tce, connecting the Basin Reserve ultimately with Courtney Place and the sea.

Similarly, cycling routes reinforce established and common sense desire lines at-grade level. Cycling is directed to surrounding streets outside the periphery of the Roundabout or on dedicated cycle lanes along Kent/Cambridge Tce which continue the traffic-free journey from the Basin Reserve.

Our focus on developing a holistic and integrated solution means we avoid the need to mitigate any harmful impacts from achieving the transport objectives. Our solution also enables a significant amount of building development to occur at the Roundabout. Over the long term, both this development and our enhancements will reinforce the Basin Reserve Roundabout as a major urban space of the city.

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