
East West Link Project - political reference group and delegations

File No.: CP2016/22662

Purpose

1. To establish a political reference group to consider and approve an Auckland Council submission to a Board of Inquiry on the New Zealand Transport Agency's East West Link project.

Executive summary

2. The New Zealand Transport Agency (the Agency) has prepared notices of requirement and resource consent applications (applications) to protect and construct a major road connecting State Highway 1 at Mt Wellington and State Highway 20 at Onehunga. The project is named the East West Link, as it runs east to west between the two state highways.
3. The Agency intends to lodge the applications for the project with the Environmental Protection Authority in early December 2016.
4. The Minister for the Environment and the Minister of Conservation will jointly make a decision on the national significance of the project and whether a Board of Inquiry is selected to make a decision on the project. This is expected in December 2016. Depending on the Ministers' decision, the applications could be notified in late January/February 2017, with a hearing in mid-2017.
5. The project has environmental and community effects, impacts on council's assets and impacts on transport systems and strategic outcomes identified in various council plans including the Auckland Plan and Local Board Area Plans.
6. It is recommended that the council makes a submission on the project.
7. Establishing an East West Link Political Reference Group comprising the Chair of the Planning Committee, the Ward Councillor for Maungakiekie- Tāmaki, two members of Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board, the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board Chair, and a member of the Independent Māori Statutory Board to consider and approve an Auckland Council submission on the applications will:
 - facilitate development of a council submission representing shared governance views from the most directly affected council wards and local boards and from the Independent Māori Statutory Board,
 - enable preparation and finalisation of the submission within the statutory 20 working day submission period, taking into account the summer holiday shut down period and the Planning Committee meeting schedule.

Recommendation/s

That the Planning Committee:

- a) agree to make a submission to the notices of requirement and resource consent application by the New Zealand Transport Agency for the East West Link.
- b) establish an East West Link Political Reference Group comprising the Chair of the Planning Committee, the Ward Councillor for Maungakiekie- Tāmaki, the Chairs for Maungakiekie –Tāmaki and Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Boards, a second member of Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board and a member of the Independent Māori Statutory Board.

- c) delegate authority to the East West Link Political Reference Group to work with the Manager Central and South Planning to prepare, approve and lodge a submission to the notice of requirement and resource consent applications by New Zealand Transport Agency for the East West Link project.

Comments

Context

8. The East West Link is a new transport link on the north side of the Māngere Inlet continuing the greater Western Ring Route between State Highway 1 at Mt Wellington, and State Highway 20 at Onehunga. Its features include a new four-lane road along the foreshore, on-ramps, reclamations and connections to key local roads. The widening works on State Highway 1 at Princes Street in Ōtāhuhu and a new shared path bridge over State Highway 1 at Panama Road are part of the project and a broad programme of East West connections. It also includes new walking and cycling routes between Māngere Bridge, Onehunga town centre and towards Sylvia Park and around part of the Māngere Inlet. East West Link is intended to reduce travel times in the area for local businesses, truck operators and others to get in and out of Onehunga-Penrose and Neilson Street. It is intended to be an arterial road (incorporating traffic lights and intersections) and not a motorway.
9. The East West Link entails a major programme of new infrastructure aimed at improving freight efficiency, commuter travel, walking, cycling and public transport in the area. It seeks to reduce the amount of traffic on local roads by separating through traffic from local traffic. It also addresses the challenging issue of the impact of industrial and manufacturing activities and urban stormwater on the Māngere Inlet by creating wetlands to capture and treat stormwater runoff from the Onehunga and One Tree Hill water catchment (refer to the map at Attachment A - East West Link Key Design Features).
10. The Onehunga-Penrose-Mt Wellington business and logistics hub is often described as the engine room of manufacturing and industry in New Zealand (Auckland Plan, pages 153 and 325). The area's accessibility to air and sea ports, the state highways and railway network is vital to how this area functions in the future. The project also has significant implications for the area's communities and environment and for a range of projects relating to Onehunga, the Onehunga Wharf, Māngere Inlet and local board plans (refer to Attachment B - East West Link emerging issues).
11. In recognising the East West Link as a key transport project, the Auckland Plan describes the project as: "a strategic transport corridor that will connect the Western Ring Route (State Highway 20) at Onehunga and the Southern Motorway (State Highway 1), providing improved access to the rail freight hub at Metroport and major employment areas, such as East Tāmaki. This link will address the high traffic and freight movements on congested local roads, provide efficient freight movements between State Highway 20 and State Highway 1, and between industrial areas and the port and airport. This link will also enable east-west improvements for public transport, walking and cycling." (Auckland Plan page 325, Box 13.3)

Auckland Council involvement in East West Link

12. The Agency has been engaging with Auckland Council for several years including local boards, Panuku Development Auckland (Panuku), other Council Controlled Organisations, social and network infrastructure providers, planning and regulatory staff, and technical experts (refer to the Local Board Views section below for details). The focus has been to balance the various land use, environmental, and economic outcomes to achieve a high quality urban form.
13. On 6 July 2016, the Council's Auckland Development Committee agreed that the East West Link project is a proposal of national significance, that it should be referred to a Board of Inquiry, and that Auckland Council has the capacity to process the matter, if required. It also

delegated authority to prepare a list of potential Board of Inquiry members, which was sent to the Minister for the Environment and the Minister of Conservation.

14. The Agency engaged with council staff and local boards on six different alignment options in October 2014 and feedback was provided. Feedback on proposed connections into and out of Onehunga-Penrose and public transport and cycling options between Māngere, Ōtāhuhu and Sylvia Park was provided in June 2015. The Agency provided copies of preliminary draft technical assessment reports and plans for their preferred alignment and project proposals in September 2016 and council staff provided feedback on 18 October 2016.

Board of Inquiry process

15. The Agency intends to lodge notices of requirement and a number of applications for resource consent that identify the corridor and works in detail and will include an Assessment of Effects on the Environment. It intends to protect and construct the corridor for the East West Link through the designation and to obtain a range of land use, discharge and coastal resource consents under the Resource Management Act 1991. Part 6AA 'Proposals of national significance' of the Resource Management Act allows these matters to be processed by the Environmental Protection Authority.
16. There are a number of differences with the Board of Inquiry process from the usual process for a notice of requirement and resource consent combined hearing led by the council which include the following features:
 - the Environmental Protection Authority notifies and assesses the applications and council is a submitter and not the regulator
 - appeals are limited to points of law which reduces the risks of delays and uncertainty.
17. The council has a statutory role to assist the Environmental Protection Agency with the Board of Inquiry with pre-lodgement checks and a Key Issues Report. Like any other affected organisation or individual, council can make a submission on the proposal. There must be clear separation between these statutory and submitter roles. It is this second role that is the subject of this report.

Submission options

18. Options for council's submission have different resource implications and include making detailed or general comments which could:
 - oppose the proposal and seek to have it withdrawn
 - support the proposal and seek appropriate outcomes and conditions to mitigate effects
 - support the proposal with no additional requests.
19. It is recommended that the council makes a detailed submission because of the importance of the project for the region and local economy and the potential for effects on local communities, the environment and other projects in the area including:
 - council assets (stormwater and leachate collection systems and roading assets)
 - council land (14 open space sites including Gloucester Park, Waikaraka Park and Cemetery, and Ann's Creek Esplanade Reserve)
 - new council and community assets such as roading assets, recreation and cycling paths, boardwalks, lighting, artwork and information signage
 - effects on natural features, ecological areas and heritage sites protected in the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan and reclamation works within the coastal marine area.
20. By making a detailed submission on the project, council will be privy to any changes that evolve during the Board of Inquiry, and be able to participate in discussions over detailed technical matters.

Delegated authority options

21. Creating a political reference group will greatly benefit the development and agreement of a submission within the 20 working day submission period which is likely to fall between late-January and mid-March 2017. The Planning Committee is scheduled to meet on 7 February and 7 March 2017, which will not allow for careful development and decisions on a Whole of Council submission in the timeframe.
22. Alternatives to the recommendations include expanding or reducing the size of the political reference group, and having the Planning Committee consider and approve a council submission.

Consideration

Local board views and implications

23. The project is important to the region but has particular implications for the industrial areas of Onehunga, Penrose and Mount Wellington, and is relevant to a range of projects within these Local Board areas including: Panuku's Onehunga Transformation Project, Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Area Plan 2013, Onehunga Port, and the Ōtāhuhu – Middlemore Spatial Priority Area project.
24. Feedback from Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board in July 2016 on the project recognised the need to improve road, walking, cycling and public transport connections in the area and highlighted the 2014-17 Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board Plan statements about the importance of the area's business economy, the need for infrastructure projects to enable freight movements, the need to reduce heavy traffic in residential areas, the need to engage with communities, stakeholders and iwi in a robust and understandable way, and the need to clearly identify a suite of mitigation initiatives. It also made detailed comments on Hopua Crater, Gloucester Park, stormwater treatment, historic heritage, walking and cycling routes, rail to the airport, Ann's Creek and Riverside (Panama Road).
25. Feedback from Māngere-Ōtāhuhu Local Board in July 2016 identified the potential impacts on business areas at Highbrook and Auckland Airport and the need for integration with greenways and other projects in the Māngere-Ōtāhuhu area. It also discussed protecting future rail connections and the importance of meaningful and timely engagement. Pedestrian safety in relation to Princess Street Bridge and congestion at Highbrook Interchange were also discussed.
26. Maungakiekie-Tāmaki and Māngere-Ōtāhuhu local board representatives have been briefed on the current status of the East West Link project, the role of council in the Board of Inquiry and the anticipated timeframes.
27. It is recommended that the Maungakiekie-Tāmaki and Māngere-Ōtāhuhu local board chairs (or the chairs' nominees) participate in the Political Reference Group and ensure local board views are considered in any submission by the council. Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board has requested to have two members on the Political Reference Group (see Recommendation/s for details).

Māori impact statement

28. The relationship of mana whenua with Onehunga, Manukau Harbour, Māngere Inlet, volcanoes, creeks and other places of significance is acknowledged. The Agency has engaged with mana whenua on the development of options and details for the project over several years. The following iwi have declared an interest in the project as mana whenua:
 - Te Akitai Waiohua
 - Ngāti Te Ata Waiohua
 - Ngāti Paoa
 - Ngāti Maru Rūnanga

- Te Kawerau a Maki
 - Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki
 - Ngāti Whatua Ōrākei
 - Ngāti Whatua
 - Te Ahi Waru
 - Ngāti Tamaoho
29. Panuku and Auckland Council staff have met with a Kaitiaki Project Working Group for East West Link and attended a mana whenua governance hui for East West Link in October 2016 to discuss respective roles of the council and mana whenua in the Board of Inquiry process, the relationship of East West Link to other council and Panuku projects and to explore opportunities for council/ Panuku and mana whenua to work together.
30. Council staff will seek to meet with mana whenua representatives once the project is lodged, to understand issues.
31. It is recommended that the Political Reference Group includes a member of the Independent Māori Statutory Board. This, together with future planned engagement with mana whenua, will ensure Māori perspectives are considered during the preparation of a council submission.

Implementation

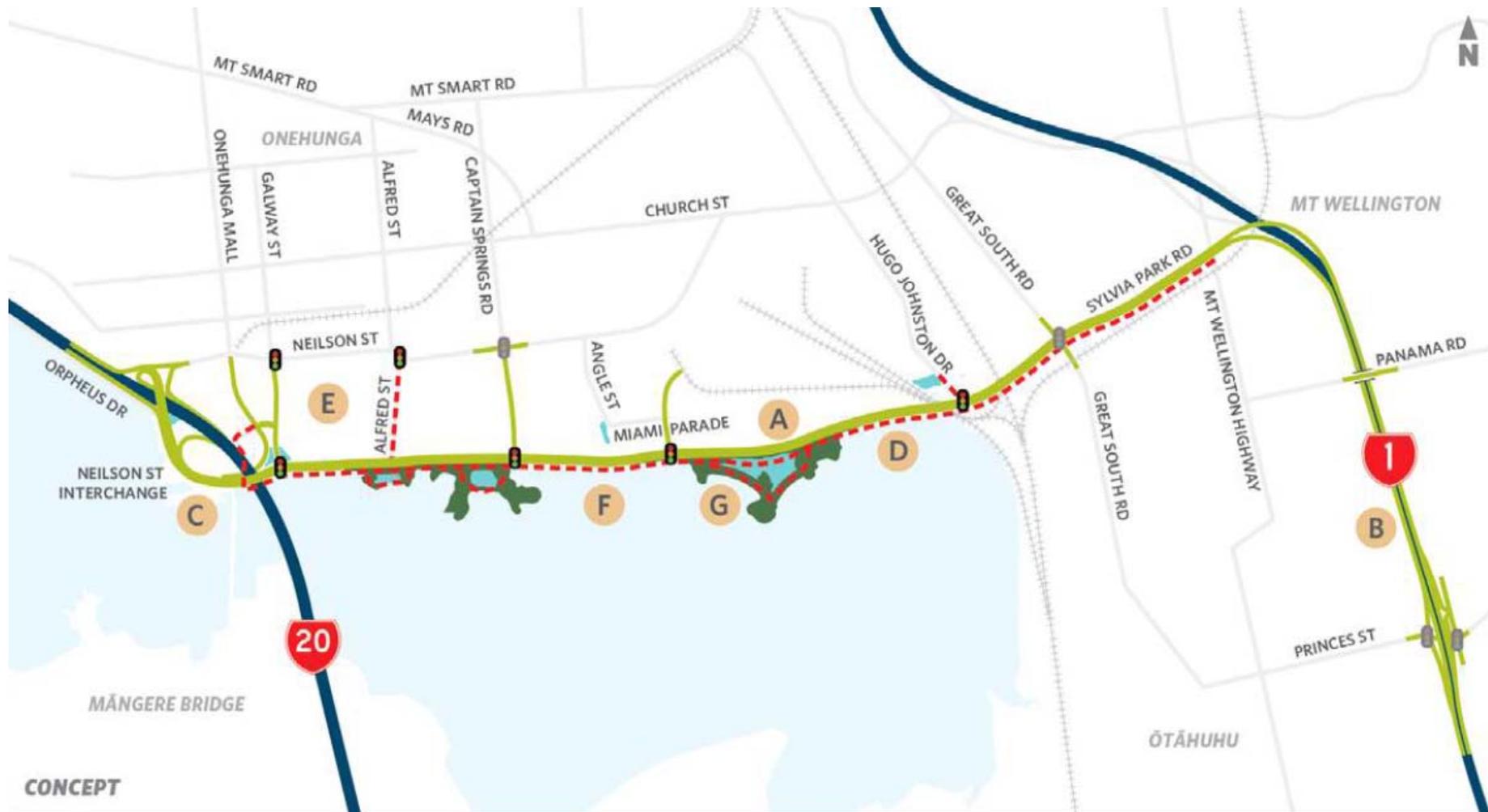
32. Council staff will advise on and prepare any submission and will workshop with the Political Reference Group. The costs of this work will come from existing budgets.

Attachments

No.	Title	Page
A	Attachment A - East West Link proposed alignment	
B	Attachment B - East West Link emerging issues	

Signatories

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CONCEPT

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|--|--|--|--|
|  Existing state highway |  Existing rail line |  New intersection |  Wetland |
|  East West link road |  New or upgraded path |  Existing upgraded intersection |  Coastal Edge |
|  Existing local road | | | |

- | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| New four lane arterial road | SH1 widened | Major upgrades to the Neilson St interchange | A full pedestrian and cycling link | Local road improvements | Coastal edge of Māngere Inlet | Treatment wetlands |

Attachment B: East West Link emerging issues

1. Key issues identified with the project to date include:
 - managing impacts on sensitive estuarine areas and wading bird habitat, geological features like Mutukaroa (Hamlin's Hill), Te Hōpua a Rangi (Gloucester Park) and ecologically important areas like Māngere Inlet
 - addressing stormwater impacts and leachate from contaminated land and improving stream health in Ann's Creek and Miami Stream
 - maximising accessibility for all types of transport in and out of Onehunga, improving recreational access along the foreshore and minimising barriers to walking and cycling
 - the configuration of the design and its impact on journey times into and out of the industrial areas of Penrose, Onehunga and Mount Wellington including the functionality of key intersections at Neilson Street and Princess Street
 - impact on the future development of Onehunga Port, rail to the airport, Onehunga Town Centre and the Transpower transmission lines
 - integrating with broader aspirations for Onehunga Transformation, the Karetu/ Ōtāhuhu portage routes between the Manukau Harbour and Tāmaki River, the Ōtāhuhu – Middlemore Spatial Priority Area
 - understanding and managing impacts on council owned assets (parks, stormwater, landfills) and future assets
 - high levels of interest in outcomes for the Manukau Harbour and broader Manukau environment by Mana Whenua and local interest groups
 - consideration of alternatives including the Onehunga Business Association alternative design (sometimes referred to as 'the Community Plan').
2. Effects on existing council assets and proposed new council assets require council, local boards and Council Controlled Organisations to enter into negotiations with the Agency alongside the approval process. These discussions are addressing the use of parks, existing and intended future asset ownership and maintenance arrangements.