

29 November 2020

The Panel
Te Ara Tupua Fast Track Consenting Panel
Environmental Protection Agency

Dear Consenting Panel,

You asked for comment from many of our groups on NZTA's application for consent for Te Ara Tupua – the seaward side path from Petone to Ngauranga.

We have previously made comment to NZTA which we understand is included in their application. We support, and have been actively involved in, the extensive engagement process that NZTA have undertaken. We commend them for their efforts in this regard.

In response to this further request from you, we wish to make the following concluding comments.

We consider the need for a safe cycling corridor from the Hutt Valley to Wellington to be both urgent and unquestionable. For reasons of congestion reduction, population health, and environmental sustainability, a marked mode shift from private motor vehicles to active and public transport is necessary through this corridor. It is also a critical link on the Greater Harbour Way and the Rimutaka Cycle path.

The question you are considering is that of "how".

NZTA has been consulting on this route for 8 years – we have been through 2 full consultation rounds. It has been the consistent and clear view throughout that the seaward side of the railway line is the only feasible option.

The obvious tradeoff is the environmental impact of reclamation.

We note that this coastline is already profoundly altered from the existing railway and road infrastructure. We also note the extensive – and costly – efforts that NZTA have planned to mitigate the incremental impact on the coastline of this shared path.

As cyclists, we are profoundly committed to our environment. That is the reason many of us are on our bikes. We also believe that the option of cycling should be available to the thousands of people we believe would use this route if it were not for the demonstrably dangerous existing options.

If we do not make rapid gains in mode shift, every metre of New Zealand's coastline is at risk. We consider this well-mitigated reclamation of an already damaged short section of coastline is an important step forward in allowing the change we all need to make to secure New Zealand's precious environment for future generations.

We also note that this project is but one important link in the corridor from the Wellington CBD to Hutt City and beyond. The success of this corridor is critically dependent on the adequacy of other links. To make Te Ara Tupua achieve its potential, and thereby justify the environmental impact, other sections of this corridor must be built to a high standard, with coordinated oversight. The connections work needs more immediate focus and consideration as this project gets underway.

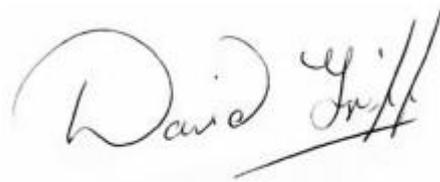
We would therefore welcome the Commissioners' setting clear expectations for a higher level for strategic oversight and inter- agency/council governance for this corridor, in particular with respect to a clearly defined level of service for cycling through this whole corridor.

We are happy to provide further information or comment to the panel at any point.

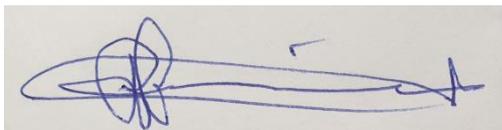
With best wishes for your deliberations,



Timon Bakker
Hutt Cycle Network



David Tripp
Doctors for Active Safe Transport



Ron Bernick
For the Greater Harbour Way Trust



Larry Wallbridge
Port Nicholson Ponake Cycling Club