

Northcote Residents' Association

Deputation to Auckland Council Transport Committee - AHB Pathway Project



13 February 2013

The Northcote Residents' Association (NRA) represents the interests of residents in the Northcote Point and Northcote central areas. We have approximately 130 members and the majority reside in the Northcote Point area.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We note that in doing so we only became aware of the public release of the Pathway Project Update on Monday which meant a very short time to assess the proposal.

We will confine our comments to issues of direct concern to Northcote Point residents but also wish to question the robustness of the report, given in our view it would appear incomplete on very fundamental planning issues in relation to the functionality and access to the pathway and the impact on the Northcote Point community.

The focus of the project to date would appear to be tourism and leisure benefits, technical feasibility, financial assessment and the feasibility of a PPP solution.

We question the accuracy of the capital costs in this report, given we are not aware of any detailed design drawings, for example, of the ramp links at the northern end. We assume the base construction costs identified do not include the associated and necessary infrastructure (confirmed page 80) and we wish to see a breakdown of these costs, and the physical scope of works covered, together with design drawings.

While the patronage numbers seem high, if we accept the projections, we would suggest that a significant number will drive to and then park in the Northcote Point area. This will significantly increase traffic and parking congestion on the local streets, Princes St, Queen St and Alma St. Page 21 of the report states expected commuter patronage of 305,760 per annum, (837 per day), and recreational users of 254,508 (697 per day). Based on a modest, say, 600 cars parked at 30 sq m/car would require 1.8 hectares of parking space. The current infrastructure clearly would not cope with this. We would need to see projections on car parking and traffic issues, and how these are to be mitigated.

We have serious concerns about the impact of the proposed exit at the northern end on Northcote Point which is already detrimentally affected by the Auckland Harbour Bridge. This will have a further negative impact on a heritage and historical residential area.

There are associated safety and security, noise and rubbish pollution concerns, aggravated by the likely extended hours of operation to midnight. We note the inadequacy of public (bus and ferry) transport links and that there is no all-weather ferry terminal at Northcote Point which impacts on the reliability of the ferry service. In addition there are no public toilets facilities in the area.

While there has been significant publicity around the possibility of the Skypath, the NRA has not been consulted on this, and there has been minimal and only informal contact from the Trust with residents in the local area. Specifically, the NRA has tried, unsuccessfully, to get information on how the pathway will exit on the northern end.

The NRA is a key stakeholder. We request that full and balanced consultation, with all details and costs available, be undertaken before any decision is made. It is essential that the Auckland Council fully understands the community implications of the project before supporting it. Notwithstanding, if this is to proceed to the next stage then we urge that it should only do so as part of an integrated network linking to the proposed pathway in Shoal Bay to Takapuna.

Carol Brown

Chairperson

Northcote Residents' Association

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