

TAHUNANUI BUSINESS AND CITIZENS ASSN INC

SUBMISSION

REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN 2021-31

CONNECTING TOP OF THE SOUTH

APRIL 2021

**The Tahunanui Business and Citizens Association Incorporated (TBCA)
represents the interests of businesses and residents of the
Tahunanui community**

The Tahunanui Business and Citizens Association supports the view of the Chairs of Te Taihū (Page 2) that “Land Transport plays a critical role in connecting our community by providing access to employment, education, recreation and services, as well as enabling the movement of freight in support of business and industry.” and that “**The vision of the RLTP is to have a safe and connected region that is liveable, accessible and sustainable.**”

TBCA is however concerned that the proposals in the RLTP will not achieve these aims when endeavouring to meet the needs of an increasing population, and development of the primary sector resulting in a greater number of vehicles on our roads than ever before, by merely tinkering with the existing compromised and congested roading network and relying on increased use of public transport and/or cycling.

The Executive Summary (page 7) states that “The focus of this RLTP will be on supporting economic and population growth; improving safety; improving travel choice and resilience.” However with freight volumes and movements expected to increase by 4 to 5 percent per year the major effects of these increases will be felt in the Tahunanui and Annesbrook areas.

The growth of throughput at Port Nelson is evidenced by already doubling the proportion of heavy vehicles on SH6 Rocks Road from 2010 to 2019. Any increase in heavy traffic on Rocks Road is also felt along Tahunanui Drive and Annesbrook Drive – these communities cannot deal with this volume.

Severance

There is already severance of the Tahunanui community caused by the traffic volume on Tahunanui Drive, effectively cutting off access by hillside residents to businesses, amenities and services.

TBCA supports the development of further crossing points on SH6 Tahunanui Drive and Annesbrook Drive to mitigate the effects of the State Highway and to better connect the community. Any additional crossing points in Tahunanui would require further consultation with the community. We note crossing changes are included in the Nelson Future Access Project as a Significant Activity on Page 54, however we believe this should be given higher priority and should not be delayed awaiting a possible Future Access Project.

TBCA continues to be strongly opposed to bus priority lanes and clearways along Tahunanui Drive which would compound the issues of severance in our community.

Demographics

While TBCA supports encouraging cycling and walking for some sectors of the population, cycleways and walkways should not be the primary focus of this transport plan. Given that this region has a much higher proportion of 65+ residents than the New Zealand average, we believe that many of this population will continue to require point to point transport that can only be provided by the use of private motor vehicles and bus services for the foreseeable future.

Public Transport

This mode of transport requires major funding for it to be a preferred travel choice by the current population. Although it is recognised that Public transport is an efficient and cost effective solution in cities of larger populations, public transport in the region is not widely considered for a number of factors. These include cost, frequency and routes. There may be a case for incentivising the use of public transport as a part of an education programme and the current review of the routes has not been widely consulted. People will not use public transport if it does not go very close to where they wish to go.

The TBCA has made a submission to the Regional Public Transport Plan. We consider the Plan needs to place greater emphasis on meeting the needs of our community rather than the needs of those travelling across the region.

Freight Routes

With freight volumes expected to grow by 19 percent across the region and the growth in the proportion of heavy vehicles on SH6 Rocks Road recorded from 2010 at 5.8 percent to 2019 at 10.5 percent, this growth is predicted to retain similar proportions over the next few years

With this predicted increase in freight volumes the major effects will be felt in the Tahunanui and Annesbrook areas - these communities cannot remain safe and livable and deal with this volume.

While the problems of the increasing amount of freight are highlighted in several places in the report, it is difficult to find any viable solutions.

The Plan states (Page 28) that “there will be an increase of heavy commercial vehicles on the road networks, creating severance and safety issues. Access across these routes will need to be modified to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are not cut off from social and economic opportunities.” We do not see how this is compatible with making greater use of the existing network, i.e. by creating clearways through our communities.

While High Productivity Motor Vehicles (HPMV) are supposed to use selected routes, residents in Tahunanui regularly experience HPMV using suburban roads, which leads to increased risk and damaged uneven surfaces.

Freight and HPMV, not commuter traffic, continues to be the number one severance issue for our community.

TBCA believes that an additional appropriately planned and developed route to the port would help spread the increasing freight load and a corridor for an express public transport service from the Tasman district.

TBCA is concerned that this Plan (Page 30) has as its stated outcome “Councils and Waka Kotahi will be looking for cost effective ways of providing transport solutions. This may mean that a higher emphasis is put on active modes in urban areas as a more cost effective method of transporting people. It is likely that Councils will need to maximise benefits from the current levels of investment. The focus will be on urban networks that provide good value in terms of vehicle trips per road length. Heavy haulage users of low order roads may be asked to contribute to the costs of maintaining these roads.”

“The Government Policy Statement has signalled four investment priorities in safety, climate change, improving freight connections and improving travel choice.”

However TBCA believes that additional funding should be made available to deal with the increasing volume of heavy freight vehicles and population and economic growth over the Top of the South.

TBCA cannot see how the encouragement of Active Modes (cycling and walking) and maximising the benefits from the current urban networks (maximising the use of existing roads) is congruent with the growth in freight and population in the Nelson/Richmond environment.

Resilience and Climate Change

The only logical and practical solution to cope with climate change and natural hazard events is the construction of a new road from the Waimea Plains to the City and the Port of Nelson. Any such road should be built to the standard of a state highway and provide mitigation for the communities that are affected. Council needs to acknowledge that mitigation is not possible on the current route through Tahunanui, Annesbrook and Rocks Road.

Nelson Waterfront

TBCA recognises the Plan's statement (Page 72) that "Nelson has a world class waterfront". The only way of achieving the dreams of having a world class waterfront is to deal with the issue of heavy transport by removal of freight along this route from the Tasman region to the Port of Nelson.

Increasing active transport along Wakefield Quay and Rocks Road cannot be achieved without connecting the cycle network between the City and Tahunanui and providing a safe pedestrian walkway, but this objective is not possible with the current and projected future volume of heavy freight traffic along this route.

Nelson's waterfront along with the seaside village of Tahunanui could become a desirable destination for locals and visitors, providing an economic and recreational boost to the region, but cannot achieve its potential as a "people focused waterfront" while being used as a heavy traffic corridor.

Washington Valley

The Plan (Page 73) identifies Washington Valley "as an area where vehicle traffic use could be reduced in favour of public transport and active modes".

While we recognise that it is sensible to consider the needs of the Washington Valley residents and users at the time of the major infrastructure upgrades planned for 2021-24, TBCA does not support a major rearrangement of Washington Road at this stage as it will prevent access to the City for many hillside residents. Washington Valley is an important link for residents of the Tahunanui Hills, Port Hills and Moana. The only alternative route to the City for these

communities is via the already congested Rocks Road.

Future housing development on the Eastern side of the Tahunanui Hills will also provide the need for vehicle access via this road. Care should be taken to ensure that this important city feeder road is not constrained by providing for only active modes of transport at the exclusion of other modes.

In Conclusion

This plan is for the next 10 years. During this period the population in Te Taihu is trending to grow by 16 percent (growth of 23 percent since 2001) and freight volumes and movements to grow by 19 percent.

Te Taihu already has a higher proportion of cyclists than the national average, with Nelson having the highest proportion of employees travelling to work by cycle (Page 23). This reflects the substantial investment on cycling over the past few years, but TBCA believes the focus over the next ten years should include a greater emphasis on solving the issue of increasing freight movements and the needs of an aging demographic in local communities.

TBCA continues to believe that a safe, accessible and resilient transport system that will continue to meet the needs of customers and communities can only be achieved by the provision of additional roading corridors alongside encouraging public and active modes of transport.

TBCA supports a Plan (Page 32) that makes our streets safer and our neighbourhoods more vibrant and liveable. Increased population brings with it increased freight and transport needs and along with changing demographics, these needs cannot be handled by solely utilising the existing network

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