

MT MESSENGER BYPASS PROJECT: SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF WENDY TURVEY (SOCIAL) FOR THE NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY

1. I prepared, alongside my colleague Stephanie Brown, the Social Impact Assessment for the Project.
2. The assessment was undertaken on a regional (recognising the strategic importance of SH3 to the wider community) and local scale (area directly affected by the construction and the surrounding area from Ahititi to south of Uruti) primarily using the:
 - (a) assessment framework of the International Association for Impact Assessment;
 - (b) Transport Agency's Environmental Management Professional Services Guideline (PSG/13) and Social and Environmental Management Form (PSF/13) and Social Impact Guide;
 - (c) social issues identified in the review of literature;
 - (d) the wider statutory planning framework and policy environment that is relevant to the Project; and
 - (e) community engagement undertaken in respect of the Project in 2016 and 2017.

Positive Social Effects

3. In broad terms, the Project will bring a range of significant positive social effects, through the construction of a much-improved SH3 through the Mt Messenger area. These benefits will accrue at the Taranaki regional level, and also for those living in the vicinity of the Project. These include:
 - (a) positive social benefits related to transportation, connectivity and accessibility due to greater resilience and improved movement of people and freight;
 - (b) assisting residents to feel less isolated and improving outsiders' perception that the Region is difficult to access by upgrading one of the worst sections of the main link to Taranaki from the north;
 - (c) improving resilience by reducing actual and threatened road closures, which will in turn provide a social benefit to residents given the critical reliance on Waikato Hospital and related health infrastructure and for groups such as sports teams travelling outside the region;
 - (d) reducing the frequency and duration of road closures, which will lead to improved reliability of the route, and will in turn lead to increased business confidence, and potentially investment and economic growth in the region;

- (e) increasing competitiveness for the Taranaki region due to an improved SH3 being able to be used for oversized loads and higher degrees of certainty that the road will be open, thereby improving accessibility and increasing the flow-on economic benefits;
 - (f) improving the competitiveness of Taranaki-based businesses, and the attractiveness of the region to locate new businesses or expand existing businesses, due to greater route resilience and trip time reliability; and
 - (g) increasing the attractiveness of the New Plymouth District and the Taranaki region for business and residential development as well as improving accessibility for visitors.
4. Social benefits can be expected to flow from these economic benefits, particularly the retention of businesses in Taranaki, and encouraging the establishment of new businesses. This level of stability:
- (a) enhances employment opportunities; and
 - (b) aids in retaining and growing the region's population, which in turn leads to the maintenance and upgrading of social infrastructure (houses, recreation areas and community facilities).
5. Increased liveability then itself becomes a factor in retaining skilled technical and professional people in the region.

Adverse Social Effects

6. There will be some limited adverse social effects at the local scale on the small number of people living in the immediate vicinity of the Project. Mr Rob Napier explains in his evidence that there are eight private properties that will need to be acquired in part for the Project (temporarily during construction, or permanently), excluding the Ngāti Tama land which is additional to the eight. Agreement has been reached for the permanent or temporary acquisition in respect of four of those properties; while active negotiations are ongoing in respect of the other four properties.
7. Discussions are ongoing with the Pascoes. The Pascoe house will not be able to be lived in during construction (and the Pascoes have communicated to the Transport Agency they do not wish to stay onsite during the construction period in any event) which has an adverse effect on lifestyle and wellbeing. Mitigation options are limited but could potentially involve temporary relocation during construction; and post construction relocation of the existing home or construction of a new home.

8. Other than land issues, adverse social effects will occur primarily during the construction of the Project.

Response to submissions

9. I have reviewed the submissions from the SH3 Working Party, NZ Automobile Association (Taranaki District), Heavy Haulage Association, Steven Barham, Christine Brown and the 'form' submission from over 1100 parties. These submitters, along with 20 others who did not submit 'form' submissions, are in support of the Project. The submitters consider that the positive effects of the Project (for example, improved safety and resilience and journey time and reliability) will contribute to improved social and community effects.
10. The submissions reviewed illustrate an overwhelming desire to see the Project constructed given the significant benefits.
11. I have also reviewed the 20 submissions in opposition. A very small number of those submissions (those made by J. Washer and R. Newman) are concerned about the impacts on directly affected landowners, in particular, land that is needed for the Project. I note that the Public Works Act 1981 addresses the matter of property compensation. However, I acknowledge that such processes can create concern and anxiety and accordingly a number of key mitigation measures were recommended, and have been incorporated into proposed conditions.

Response to NPDC Section 42A Report

12. The section 42A report identifies impacts on the Pascoe family, who have strong linkages to the land, as well as the potential impact on social cohesion on the local community,
13. The Pascoes clearly have a strong affiliation with their land, and any loss of land will have an impact on their way of life (including the disruption of relocating during construction). As above, I understand discussions are ongoing between the Pascoes and the Transport Agency as to how the Pascoes will be accommodated or relocated.
14. If the Pascoes returned to live in the same location, the operational noise effect that would be experienced has been assessed as minor, and any amenity effects could be mitigated by landscape planting. If the Pascoes' home was relocated or rebuilt elsewhere on their property, any social cohesion effects would be temporary given they would return to their land.

Mitigation

15. The key mitigation measures in respect of social effects have been incorporated into proposed conditions, primarily through the CEMP, and include:
 - (a) Ensuring that good information is available to affected individuals, local community groups in particular schools, recreational users and the general public. A public information strategy should be prepared as part of the consent application and this should identify the various communities of interest and how construction information will be provided. Provision has been made in the draft conditions contained in the S42A Report prepared by NPDC regarding Communications and Public Liaison, Complaints and Construction Environmental Management Plan. I support the inclusion of conditions to this effect.
 - (b) Development and implementation of relevant construction management plans as referred to in the various specialist reports and evidence. Management plans have been prepared for consideration through the hearing process.
 - (c) A Community Liaison person should be appointed by the Transport Agency for the duration of the construction phase. That person should be the main and readily accessible point of contact at all times for persons affected by the construction and operation of the Project.
 - (d) At all times during construction work, the Transport Agency should maintain a permanent register of any complaints received alleging adverse effects from, or related to, the construction of the Project.
 - (e) Involving local schools and the community in the construction process through regular talks, and engaging schools in the process by providing access to ecologists and other specialists.
16. Overall the Project has significant social benefits to the region in terms of way of life, growth and development, and wellbeing. Furthermore, the minor negative social effects on the small local population can be either appropriately avoided, remedied or mitigated.