

# Connection Options for the South-West Central Isthmus

## Purpose

The existing Quality Transit Network (QTN) level of service on Dominion Road provides an integral element of an overall network solution in the South-West Central Isthmus. The purpose of this paper is to seek the Board's endorsement to progress the delivery of improvements along this road that meets growth demands of the area whilst ensuring the needs of the local community are proactively addressed.

This paper also articulates how community and Local Board concerns are addressed; why it will be prudent to proceed with some land purchases and how the designation will be removed as a matter of urgency.

## Executive Summary

Future traffic demand does not justify a RTN along Dominion Road. A network solution refining the three existing PT and QTN routes on Dominion Road, Sandringham Road and Mt Eden Road to more effective QTN routes providing an effective balance of movement and place is proposed.

To achieve the desired result it has been estimated that a further \$6.3m of property purchases will be required in addition to \$5.7m awaiting settlement. The latest strategy results in a \$16.7m relocation in the property budget. Further to this, land already purchased and not required will be returned to the market and this will result in an estimated income \$4.7m.

The designation will be removed by uplifting those parts of the designation that are now considered surplus to requirements, completing the outstanding land purchases and vesting these strips as 'road'.

The revised strategy mitigates all the major issues raised by the community whilst still enhancing the operations of the existing QTN route along Dominion Road to provide a key element of the overall effective network solution.

## Network Context

There are three existing transport corridors that traverse the South-West Central Isthmus, connecting it with the CBD. These are Sandringham Road, Dominion Road and Mt Eden Road. The form of the existing network through this area predominantly relies on public transport during the peak hours with tidal bus lanes in place on Mt Eden, Dominion and Sandringham Roads. Mt Eden and Dominion Roads also form part of the existing QTN network.

Modelling analysis of future years (2041) show peak hour demand along these corridors would be generated by the outer South-West Isthmus area and growth along the individual corridors – not the airport precinct. The major destination for trips from this area is the CBD and as a result the model predicts significant growth in public transport trips to the CBD on both Sandringham and Dominion Roads.

The high demand for public transport trips require the future network solution to include on-going QTN classification along Mt Eden and Dominion Roads whilst also classifying Sandringham Road as a QTN route. Dominion Road will remain the corridor with the highest public transport patronage. The distribution of public transport trips onto the network is largely driven by the walking distance to the closest corridor, making re-distribution of trips from Dominion Road onto say Mt Eden Road not a realistic scenario.

The future demand along Dominion Road will not be high enough to justify RTN by 2041 but significant benefits can be unlocked in refining the existing QTN by smoothing some bottlenecks. To achieve the required QTN refinement we need to address the following areas of constraint along the route:

- **South of the Mt Roskill Village Centre:** There are no bus lanes along this section. We propose to widen the road to extend bus lanes south and also remove the Denbigh Avenue roundabout and replace that with traffic signals.
- **City bound through Balmoral Village Centre.** Extend bus lanes through the intersection with Balmoral Road.
- **Mt Roskill bound through Valley Rd Centre.** Provide bus lanes to the View Road approach and extend bus lanes through the Valley Road intersection.

Attachment 1 illustrates the location and impact these constraint areas have on the Dominion Road QTN route.

The proposed form of Dominion Road to support the desired network solution would therefore have tidal peak hour bus lanes from Denbigh Avenue to Ian McKinnon Drive. This implies an extension of the existing bus lanes south of Mt Albert Road intersection to Denbigh Avenue, as well as continuation of bus lanes through the Mt Albert, Balmoral, Valley and View Road intersections. These bus lanes will continue to be utilised as parking lanes in the off-peaks to support the commercial land-use adjacent to the corridor. The bus lane operational hours for the afternoon peak will be reviewed but most likely extended by 30 minutes to operate from 4pm to 6.30pm.

Where appropriate consideration will be given to widen the existing bus lanes to provide for a shared use bus / bike lane. This will reduce the delays caused by cyclist cycling in the centre of the 3m bus lane during peak hours, and will also improve the cycling safety along this road. In addition to the shared bus/bike lane we propose to investigate further the provision of a parallel cycle route through this area, utilising off road or lower volume streets, with the aim to establish the feasibility of such a facility.

**Key point: *Future demand doesn't justify a RTN along Dominion Road and a network solution consisting of 3 QTN routes is proposed.***

## Property

Removing the constraints along the Dominion Road corridor (especially south of Mt Albert Road) require on-going purchase of properties within the existing designation. In fact, the majority of the properties still to be purchased are located along the section of the road between Mt Albert Road and SH20 – the area with constraints to both AM and PM operations. These properties are identified as yellow in Attachment 1.

The budget implications for completing the land purchase identified above are relatively minor (compared to existing investment). Under the original proposal the total budget for the property purchase along the corridor was set at \$48.7m. Of that \$20.0m has been purchased and settlement for a further \$5.7m is pending.

A large portion of the remaining \$23.0m relates to properties behind the village centres. We do not envisage progressing with the purchase of these properties as they are not considered essential to achieve the desired QTN refinement now under consideration. Therefore, to achieve the desired result it has been estimated that a further \$6.3m of property purchase will still be required in addition to the \$5.7m awaiting settlement.

Should the proposed way forward be endorsed a \$16.7m saving to the original property budget will be achieved. In addition to this, an income approximately \$4.7m could potentially be realised if properties purchased but now considered surplus to our requirements are offered back to the market (e.g. village centre lanes).

The analysis of property requirements has also revealed that a significant investment has been made in purchasing strips of land from adjacent properties. Unfortunately there is little opportunity or value in offering these back to the market. With this in mind a better option for these will be to utilise them in the design process to enhance amenity for the community which could be through minor widening, footpath widening, landscaping, parking provision or similar.

**Key points: To achieve the desired result it has been estimated that a further \$6.3m of property purchase will be required in addition to \$5.7m awaiting settlement. The latest strategy results in a \$16.7m reduction from the previously anticipated property budget. Land already purchased and not required will be returned to the market and this will result in an estimated income \$4.7m.**

## Designation

An objective in progressing this project will be the removal of the existing designation to provide certainty to the community.

Along the majority of the corridor the designation will be able to be removed by completing the outstanding land purchase as soon as practicable, surveying off the strips and moving the fences/walls etc. back into their final position. All enabling work will also be completed (e.g. reconstruct driveways, footpaths, etc.). This will allow the designation to be removed, and allow redevelopment to occur within a confirmed transport environment.

Probably the more contentious part of removing the designation will be the removal of the designation which has been established behind the Valley Road Village Centre. It is the project team's view that this will not be required within the foreseeable planning horizon for transport purposes and as such it would not be prudent to retain this portion of the designation. It would therefore be proposed to uplift this part of the designation.

**Key point: The designation will be removed by uplifting those parts of the designation that are now considered surplus to requirements, completing the outstanding land purchase and vesting these strips as 'road'.**

## Community

A major part of the project team's focus has been on ensuring that the community concerns are effectively addressed by the proposed way forward. Future project development will be progressed in consultation with local communities.

The community's concerns with the previous proposal have been well documented through the Albert-Eden Local Board (a Notice of Motion), the Save the Dominion Road Coalition's written submission and a further submission entitled 'How does Auckland get best value from Dominion Road?'

The major concerns from these submissions were the removal of on-street car parks along Dominion Road, restrictions to right turn movements and the impact caused by uncertainty due to the lack of project clarity especially with regards to the designations.

These concerns have all been mitigated by the revised concept that proposes retaining the peak hour bus lanes (tidal) and all existing right turn movements. Bus lanes will however be widened to allow for shared bus/bike movements and extended into the intersections.

**Key point: The revised strategy mitigates all the major issues raised by the community whilst still enhancing the operations of the existing QTN route along Dominion Road.**

## Proposed Way Forward

The proposed way forward following the Board's endorsement is:

- Progress the preferred option design in consultation with the Local Boards
- Communicate the preferred option with the stakeholders
- Continue to progress property purchase required to provide the refined QTN enhancement
- Commence the process to uplift the designation behind the village centres
- Offer surplus properties back to market

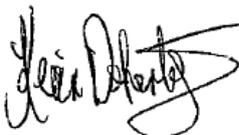
## Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Receives this report
- ii) Endorses the proposed way forward including:
  - Improvements to the Dominion Road corridor that support the refined existing QTN level of service be developed, and socialised with stakeholders; and
  - that land purchases which enable the refinement of the existing QTN be completed as soon as practicable;
  - Sale of surplus property.
- iii) The Chief Executive be authorised to action the recommendations

## Attachment

**Attachment 1:** Location and impact constraint areas have on Dominion Road QTN route

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