

Response to NZTA/WDC Review of Cambridge Road/Newell Road Intersection

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Response from: **Tamahere Community Committee**

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The Tamahere Community Committee [TCC] was established by the Waikato District Council [WDC] in conjunction with the Tamahere Ward Councillor. Its members are elected at a Triennial Public meeting convened by the CEO of the WDC and is governed by the Council protocols for Community Boards and Committees. This submission is made by the TCC representing the wider interests of the Tamahere Community and its planned population of over 6,100 living in a rural/country living environment.

Proposal: **Cambridge Road/Newell Road Intersection Review**
Report: Opus NZ Transport Agency Contract No NZTA 2/09-015/602
dated Nov 2017 (Final V2)
Reported to TCC on: 12 February 2018 [currently treated as “in Committee”]

TCC is making this response as a Community organisation.

Opus has released the Report to TCC to begin a community consultation process. The Report proposes:

- Closing Newell Road (at the Cambridge Road intersection), or alternatively
- Restricting access to Cambridge Road as Left turn movements only

TCC **Opposes** the Proposal to close Newell Road
Supports a proposal to restrict access to Cambridge Road as left turn out only (with Right turn out, Left turn in and Right turn in all prohibited)

TCC response is for the reasons set out below.

TCC **wishes to be heard** in support of this response by way of a formal meeting with representatives of NZTA and WDC, in addition to and before any public ‘open day’ consultations.

Factors for consideration from the Report:

1. The Report requires careful consideration.
2. The various “Predicted Daily Traffic Flows in Tamahere” figures are questionable and should not be relied on. Although Information Sources are identified in the Report (§ 2.3) the Report records:
 - a. An area of uncertainty is the amount of traffic on Cambridge Road that will shift over to the Hamilton Section of the Expressway when it becomes operational. A “credibility check cannot be undertaken as the actual Origin/Destination survey data is unavailable” (§ 3.5).
 - b. Opus staff undertook a site survey at the intersection to obtain current traffic volumes on Friday 20 May 2016 between 7:30 – 9:30 am and 4:00 – 6:00 pm (§ 3.3). The data from this survey is included in the Report with projections for traffic movements:
 - i. Pre-opening Hamilton Section 2021
 - ii. Post-opening Hamilton Section 2021
 - iii. Pre-opening Southern Links 2041
 - iv. Post-opening Southern Links 2041(Table 1 and Figure 3 in § 3.4)
 - c. At § 6.1 the Report states “Calibration of the SIDRA models was not attempted as no detailed delay and queue information for the existing intersection was available” (SIDRA is an industry recognised traffic modelling package including outputs for degree of saturation, queue lengths, average delay, level of service for each traffic movement).

- d. The Report records “SIDRA modelling of the existing intersection layout indicates capacity problems in ... 2016 and 2021” (§ 6.2). Tables 4 and 5 show the worst level of service for the intersection for 2016, 2021 and 2041 pre and post changes.
- e. The Report also details the crash history for the intersection for the 5 years from 2011 to 2015, being 3 non-injury crashes, all minor (§ 6.4) recorded in the Crash Analysis System (which are crashes reported to Police) then proposes that there could have been “at least one injury accident” (§ 6.5) with ongoing speculation based on a probability of future injury accidents, not supported by any data!
- f. Newell Road is identified as a “Country Living Collector” road and assumes the new East-West Link road will have the same status, but Birchwood Lane is a “Local Access” road designed to be a “small road facilitation daily activities” (Devine Road has the same classification) (Table 2 at § 4.2).
- g. Table 6 in §7 purports to define the problem and potential operating deficiencies and observes there are “constructability issues” specifically ‘large stream culvert extension, land purchase, maintaining access to adjacent business, construction costs and a likelihood of closure at a later date’ due to poor safety performance or unreliable trip times at a cost to be paid by WDC and /or Hamilton City Council, once the expressway is operational, without further consideration of what should be done to address these issues, therefore leaving them unaddressed.
- h. The Report assumes:
 - i. Birchwood Lane connects to Devine Road
 - ii. The intersections at both ends of Birchwood Lane (Newell Road and Devine Road) will be T intersections
 - iii. Riverfields Lane is not included in the WRTM model
 - iv. Heavy traffic will be 5% of turning movement flows (§ 8.2)
- i. The Report also acknowledges that significant increase in traffic flows in Birchwood Lane could become a safety issue (§ 8.4) but, surprisingly, notes that expected traffic flows are within the “assigned road hierarchy” [*a local access road designed as a small road for facilitation of local daily activities*]

and, at 50 kph, is not likely to result in high severity crashes ... with traffic volumes of 1,000 – 6,000 vpd (§ 8.6).

- j. No local community inputs have been obtained for the investigation work to date (§ 9.2)

 - 3. NZTA cannot close Newell Road – legally this can only be done by WDC (§ 9.1).

 - 4. Any changes to Newell Road will have to be made within the construction window for the Hamilton Section of the Waikato Expressway (completed by 2020) otherwise the full cost will fall on WDC (§ 9.3).
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The reasons for our response and our concerns are:

- 1. The Tamahere CLZ is twice the size of the current population of Raglan and TCC favours two access routes for residents to travel into Hamilton, particularly in the event of an accident on Cambridge Road between the East-West Link and Newell Road. Therefore the left turn out of Newell Road onto Cambridge Road should be retained, with a slip lane to allow a safe merge into traffic in the left lane, which means the “constructability issues” should be addressed and not ignored.

- 2. Once the Hamilton Section of the Waikato Expressway opens, Cambridge Road will be 4 lanes (2 lanes into Hillcrest and 2 lanes out of Hillcrest), so using Newell Road to:
 - a. Right turn travelling south is unsafe and impractical given the alternate available access via the East-West Link
 - b. Left turn travelling north is rarely used now and unsafe given the angle of the turn into Newell Road
 - c. Right turn, from Newell Road across Cambridge Road, to travel south is rarely used now, unsafe and impractical given the alternate available access via the East-West Link or the existing Tamahere interchange.

3. The WDC plan for the Newell Road/Birchwood Lane intersection contemplates a roundabout. The Report proposes a “gooseneck” curved narrow T (Appendix E). TCC is concerned that this design will:
 - a. push more traffic onto Birchwood Lane at speed
 - b. significantly impair traffic movement into and out of the northern section of Newell Road “cut off” by this gooseneck design
4. Is Birchwood Lane to be extended to Devine Road? If so, by what date and who is responsible for the cost?
5. As a result is Birchwood Lane to be renamed Birchwood Road? The SIDRA results in Appendix D refer to “Birchwood Road”!
6. It seems better to upgrade part or all of Birchwood Lane/Road to “Country Living Collector”, the same as Newell Road and the East-West Link road. It will no longer be a “Local Access” road.
7. The concept of a 3m wide footpath makes sense but not at the expense of leaving Birchwood Lane designed as a “local access road”. A footpath on the north side of the road should be added from the East West Link road to Newell Road.
8. Smooth seal (not chip seal) needs to be used for all finished surfaces in the CLZ, including the East-West link and the upgrade to Birchwood Lane/Road.
9. Will it be necessary to consider traffic calming measures in the design of Birchwood Lane/Road, especially the section from Devine Road to the East-West Link road? These will suppress the use of this section of road as a “rat run” for traffic having a choice of using the expressway and/or Cambridge Road.
10. TCC records that Newell Road is still used by some motorists and taxis as a “rat run” and recent discussions with WDC resulted in the Mayor undertaking to ask the NZ Police to monitor this road with traffic enforcement to suppress excess

speeds. The changes to Newell Road, at the Birchwood Lane/Road intersection, will have a traffic calming effect but may not solve the problem unless further measures are adopted on other sections of Newell Road.

11. If, at a future date after the opening of the Hamilton section of the Waikato Expressway, the Tamahere community and WDC determine to close Newell Road at the Cambridge Road intersection, that could be done for minimal cost to WDC following further community consultation at that time (assuming all other issues are appropriately addressed now). TCC sees no benefit to closing this intersection fully until more substantial information, post the opening of the Hamilton section of the Waikato Expressway, is available.

This response is submitted electronically for OPUS, NZTA and WDC.