

29 January 2026

Daran Ponter  
Chair  
Greater Wellington  
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Ref. NZT-11269

Dear Daran

Thank you for your letter of 12 December 2025 regarding the State Highway 1 (SH1) Wellington Improvements project.

As part of our Roads of National Significance programme, this project is an important priority for both Wellington City and the wider region. I recognise Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC)'s ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) on this project and other transport solutions for the region.

I appreciate your acknowledgement of the challenges involved in developing this project within Wellington's complex urban environment and the opportunity this project unlocks by reducing traffic on local roads. As you note, representatives from both our organisations have been engaging directly on technical matters related to the project and NZTA is continuing to assess its benefits and possible effects with a target to lodge consents in mid-2026 via a Fast Track Approvals application. The ongoing engagement from your officers is important in helping us to shape the best possible outcomes for the project and the region.

We also recognise the points you have raised regarding public transport impacts, future proofing, funding pathways, and the need to mitigate disruption during construction. It is helpful to have these priorities clearly confirmed by GWRC, and we are working through these matters as part of project development. At the same time, it is important to note that the project's scope and investment objective is to improve state highway efficiency and reliability, and we will remain focused on delivering these outcomes. The organisation has provided an initial response to some of the issues you have raised, and this is detailed in the appendix.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with GWRC officers as the project develops, and to further consider the specific issues you have raised. As we approach lodgement of the Fast Track application, we will ensure GWRC remains informed and has opportunities to engage as the technical work advances.

If you would like to discuss this matter further with NZTA, you are welcome to contact Emma Speight, Director Regional Relationships (Wellington and Top of the South) by email to [emma.speight@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:emma.speight@nzta.govt.nz) or by phone on 029 200 6055.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bridges', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Simon Bridges**  
NZTA Chair

#### **Appendix: NZTA initial assessment of GWRC concerns:**

- **Public Transport:** While the project is guided by a clear investment objective, our proposed designs allow for neighbouring bus routes to be accommodated. We also recognise the importance of maintaining an efficient bus network during the construction period, and we will continue to work with GWRC officers to understand where supporting measures may be appropriate. We are establishing a Network Planning Group with GWRC and the Wellington City Council (WCC) to support coordinated planning as the project progresses. In addition, there are significant opportunities to strengthen the wider public transport system over time. These opportunities are for GWRC and/or WCC to pursue and would follow the usual Regional/National Land Transport Programme (RLTP/NLTP) inclusion, prioritisation and funding processes. While these opportunities are complementary, they are not interdependent with the SH1 project.
- **Mass Rapid Transit (MRT):** While MRT is not in scope for this project, the current proposed design doesn't necessarily preclude such a scheme being explored in the future.
- **Tolling and Time of Use Charging:** As GWRC will be aware, we are considering tolling as a possible funding tool for the project. Our investigations of tolling options will include an assessment of potential effects on local traffic patterns. We are also supportive of the use of Time of Use charging. NZTA continues to hold a view that a more holistic approach that combines Tolls with local network Time of Use charging will achieve better outcomes overall, and we will encourage and work with WCC to explore such an option now that the legislation is in place.