

Architectural Centre Response to WCC Report

The Architectural Centre considers the WCC's "Basin Reserve - Assessment of Alternative Options for Transport Improvements" to be biased at a number of levels.

1. The methodology for the Urban Design assessment is flawed. The assessment has no weighting of criteria which is a fault in the methodology. Similarly there is overlap with repeated assessment of the same issue, which inherently biases the result.

2. The council report does not treat Option X consistently, particularly in its understanding of Option X as a concept design, which has the potential for several different outcomes. The impact of this inconsistency on the evaluation of the concept is especially true with respect to Dufferin Park where detailed design work (such as legibility, the interpretation of the NZTA lane layout, safety, programming of activities, material selection, amenity value, and historical referencing) are dependent on the next stage of design.

3. There appears to be a bias towards Option A. At times this is integral to the criteria (e.g. the inclusion of Option A in the Regional Land Transport Programme (p. 42) and that the flyover is currently funded through the National Land Transport Programme (p. 44) automatically rewards Option A in the Strategic Fit Analysis assessment). At other times the bias is less explicit (e.g. there is no acknowledgement that the view of the Carillon will constantly be blocked from ground level view by the undercroft of the Option A flyover (p. 56)), while the evaluation of the same criteria incorrectly claims that the Option X green bridge will block the view of the Carillon (**fig 1**).

4. The analysis of views is fundamentally erroneous. For example, the analysis of views from the Option A flyover does not acknowledge the need for a noise barrier. A noise barrier will block views, negating much of the positive evaluation of the flyover. Best practice sound mitigation usually requires a 3 metre high barrier along motorways, although some places in American suggest sound barriers on motorways of 5 metres (Virginia) and 7.5 metres (Washington). This will be an especially important aspect of the flyover design because the Basin precinct is envisaged by the WCC as one to accommodate increased residential density (and so higher residential buildings), and highway noise is notorious for sleep disturbance.

There is no acknowledgement that the Option X green bridge will provide significant elevated views for pedestrians and

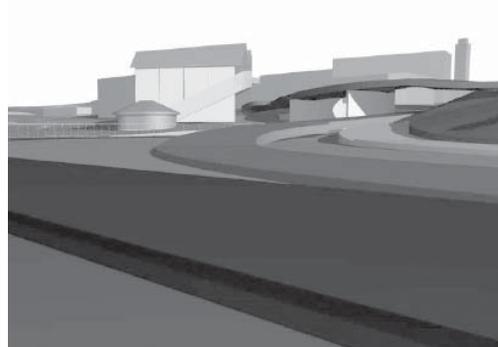


Fig 1: Views of the Carillon from Kent & Cambridge Terraces; Bottom view including Option X

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cyclists of Memorial Park, Kent/Cambridge Tce and Mt Victoria. The experience of crossing the green bridge will be similar to that experienced crossing the delightful City to Sea bridge in Civic Square (**fig 6**), which crosses six lanes of traffic. Chicago's Millenium Bridge is another possible model for the Option X bridge (**fig 7**).

5. The assessment appears to be unaware of the size and location of existing structures. For example, the comments about shading are inaccurate. The statement that "There will be significant overshadowing [by the Option X bridge] in the north-west of the Basin Reserve" (p. 33) fails to understand that this is impossible for two reasons. The Option X green bridge is lower than the R.A. Vance Stand, and the Vance Stand is between the green bridge and the Basin Reserve. More generally, the report overstates any shading caused by Option X and largely ignores the negative shading effects of the Option A flyover. The width of Sussex Street is stated to be two lanes of traffic, when it is in fact three lanes of traffic and carparking (p. 63). Such inaccurate statements are unfairly used to discredit Option X and bias the report towards the NZTA option.

6. The visual impact of the Option A flyover will be significant on the Basin - but this is minimised in the assessment because it is assumed that the flyover will be blocked by a mitigating grandstand. Will any mitigation measures extend to the embankment? The Option X's green bridge will have limited impact on the Basin because it is largely blocked by the R.A. Vance Stand. Similarly it will not block the view of the Carillon. The greatest impact on the view of the Carillon is Tasman Apartments (cnr Buckle and Tasman Streets) (**fig 1**). In contrast the pedestrian ground level view of the Carillon in Option A will be frequently blocked by the undercroft of the flyover. The report also fails to evaluate the visual impact of each project on St Joseph's church. This is important because (1) the church is a significant building in the area, and (2) the precinct has a long Catholic heritage, which has been evident



Fig 2: Image of Mount Victoria tunnel (27 August 1958) Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL) Ref: WA-47253-F (cropped)



Fig 3a: Image showing Rugby St from Dufferin St cnr [ca 1928] ATL Ref: PAColl-8235 (cropped)



Fig 3b: Image showing the asymmetrical traffic flow onto Buckle Street (1955) ATL Ref: EP/1955/0501-F (cropped)



Fig 4a: View from N-W [ca 1875] ATL Ref: PA1-q-120-28-1



Fig 4b: View from S-E, Kent Tce stream in foreground [ca 1877]. ATL Ref: PA7-30-19

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through a number of buildings and institutions, including St Patrick's College on Buckle St. The remnants of this historical use are the former Home of Compassion Crèche and St Joseph's. The flyover will have a negative visual impact on St Joseph's church and may compromise the visual connection between St Joseph's and the former Home of Compassion Crèche.

7. The Urban Design criteria are biased against change. This is reflected in the numerous criteria which emphasis a need to retain existing situations (e.g. "Retains the type and character of key streets" (p. 60)). This conservatism is fundamentally at odds with the demonstrable need for change at the Basin. From both traffic and urban design points of view the Basin precinct is flawed and in need of change. This rigidity also does not reflect the history of change apparent in the Basin's heritage from swamp to internationally-renowned cricket ground.

8. There is a bias against natural landscape forms, and a favouring of rectilinear geometries (p. 60). This is due to the privileging of the local street grid, and does not acknowledge (1) the curved geometry of SH1 (e.g. Paterson St, and the shape of the Basin) (**fig 2**), (2) the historical asymmetry of the arterial route from Kent/Cambridge Tce to Adelaide Rd via the eastern side of the Basin (**fig 3a & 3b**), (3) the existing topography and natural land forms (**fig 4a & 4b**), and (4) the R.A. Vance Stand (1979-1981), which is the dominant form in the Basin, and introduces a large and strong curvilinear structure that the geometry of the Option X green bridge supports.

9. The Urban Design assessment uses an NZTA 3D traffic geometry model designed to assess traffic, not design drawings, which would be the appropriate drawings to be used for an Urban Design assessment.

10. The evaluation of Strategic Fit is inadequate because it only evaluated transport measures (p. 20). Built form and the need to support increased intensification are key to the success of many of the WCC strategies and policies for this area, indicating that the evaluation is insufficient.

11. There is a prejudice against green open space in favour of the concrete infrastructure of the bridge. This is apparent in both the ratings given, and the unjustified conclusion that: "It is questionable whether the "open space" approach is suitable for this part of the city" (p. 73). This appears to be in contradiction to the documented increase in high density apartment living, and infill and medium density housing (pp. 12. 17), the expected need to accommodate projected population growth and the WCC's stated strategy to intensify residential density in the Adelaide Road precinct. These both indicate that publicly accessible green open space will be a much-needed public amenity in the future, which is as important to design for as roading capacity, and will make new development viable.



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12. The council evaluation of comparative costs does not present evidence for its conclusion. In a footnote, the report mentions costs for Option A \$90m vs Option X \$104m (p. 49) - but later gives the costs as: Option A \$90m, Option X \$216.3m (p. 92). There is no substantial justification for the cost difference in the report.

13. The Urban Design evaluation of Option A prioritises the experience of those on the flyover and forgets the impact of those in the dark beneath the flyover (e.g. “The western connection gives a direct and easy-to-see connection into Memorial Park at the same level as the park, so is optimal” (p. 62); “the bridge structure will elevate the view across the precinct and towards and over parts of Te Aro for motorists entering the city.” (p. 69)). This is despite the high probability that barriers at the flyover edge will likely interfere with imagined views.



Fig 6: The City to Sea Bridge, Wellington: bridge and great public space



Fig 7: Millennium Bridge, Chicago: bridge as public sculpture

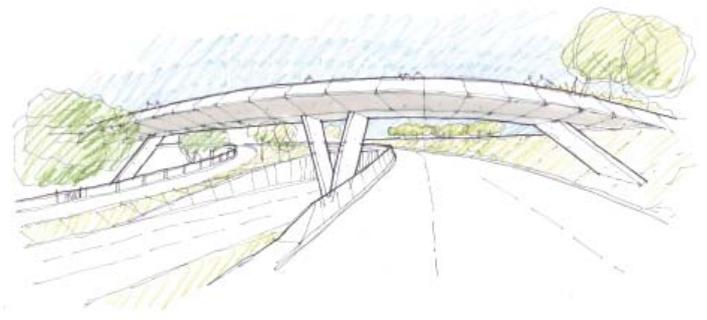


Fig 8: Sketch design views of possible Option X green bridge

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These are the key points which indicate a fundamental bias in the WCC Report, which has not delivered a fair and objective assessment of the alternative options.

References

Opus Transport Improvements Around the Basin Reserve: Preliminary Assessment of Option X (September 2011) <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/basin-reserve/docs/prelim-option-x-assessment.pdf>

Wellington City Council's "Basin Reserve - Assessment of Alternative Options for Transport Improvements" (28 February 2013) <http://wellington.govt.nz/~media/your-council/news/files/BasinReserveAlternatives.pdf>

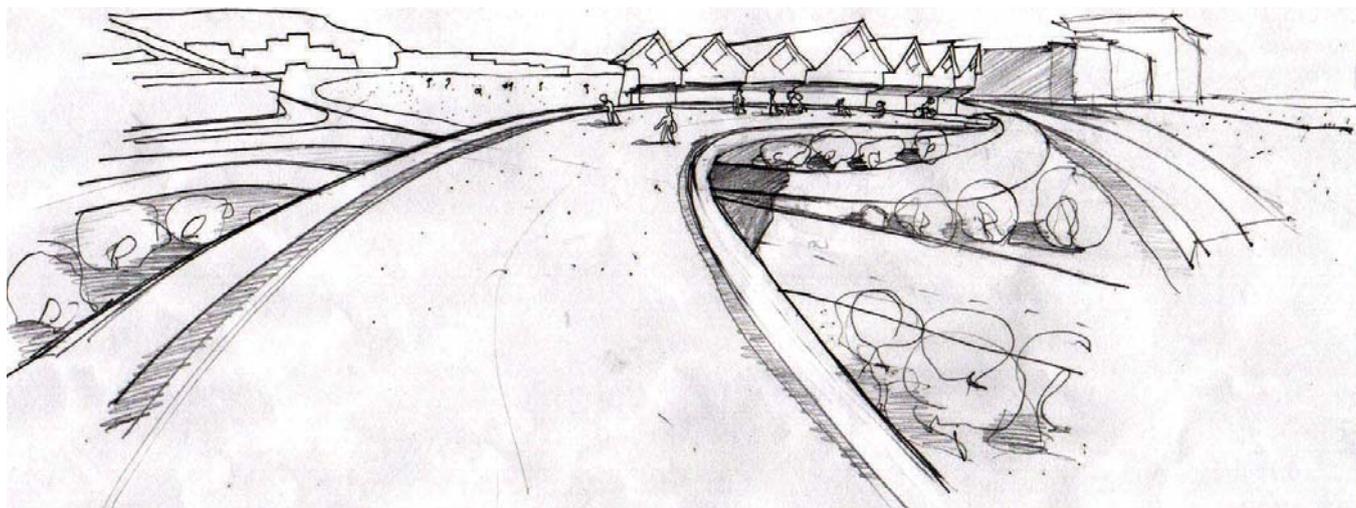
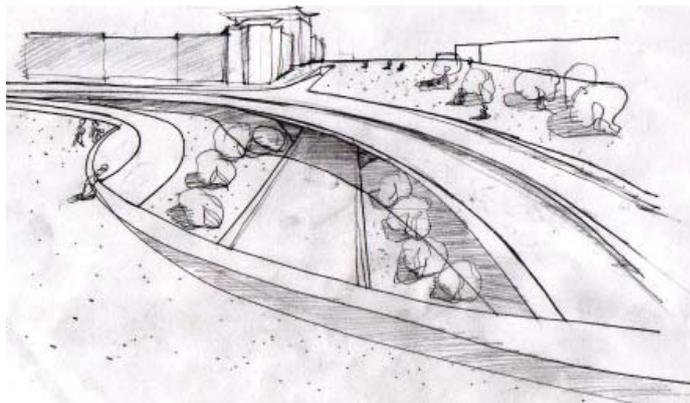
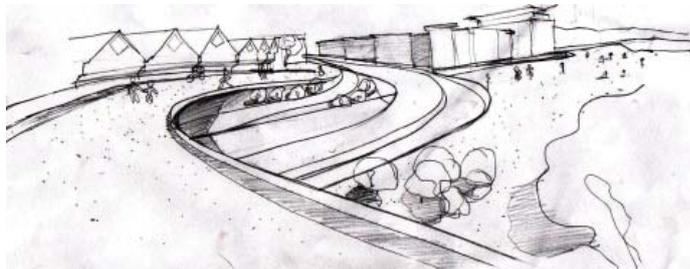


Fig 9: various design concept views of and from the Option X bridge