

Unbalanced Consultation Requirements from Auckland Transport

Removing One Car Park vs Increasing Traffic.

I wondered why the [Central Park Drive project](#), involving the replacement of one parking space with 9 m of yellow dashed line, required formal consultation, whereas the 350m-long [Redoubt Rd dynamic lane project](#), involving on-road lights along its length, gantries, network effects, and requiring every road user to adapt to a new system, didn't.

The first is a benefit to the system. It provides safety and is in line with Council's goals of modeshift. The second is a disbenefit to the system. It reduces safety by adding confusion for drivers, and increases traffic volumes, reducing the safety and efficiency of the network and causing congestion in bottlenecks elsewhere.

My initial questions about what triggers formal consultation weren't answered satisfactorily, so I asked more fully. The second question below asks them to explain why one of these projects required consultation and the other didn't.

Auckland Transport continued to refrain from explaining the difference in consultation requirements for the projects. The quoted legislation explains that Auckland Transport can choose "[to seek public input in order to gain local insight](#)", but there is no further explanation for why this is needed for the minor, and not the major project.

Perhaps Auckland Transport themselves consider the loss of a kerbside space for parking, even if it is done to improve safety for all road users, is of vastly more concern than a reduction in safety and increase in traffic volumes and fumes, which impacts children and vulnerable road users the most.

The bias is overt and substantial. And there is nothing in the quoted legislative requirements to support this bias.

Q 1. I asked about what triggers formal consultation. "The approach to consultation is a function of the scope for change that is possible for any given project." I take from this that if the scope of the project is small, that this approach to consultation is acceptable. Has the trigger level been identified and expressed? If so, what is it?

A 1. AT complies with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 to take into account the views of people affected by its proposals. The organisation carries out around 400 public consultations a year – the vast majority of these are non-statutory. In other words, AT chooses to seek public input in order to gain local insight and, ultimately, better decision making.

We consider consultation as an integral component of operating and improving Auckland's transport network. The public and stakeholders have invaluable information that is used to inform decision-making. Consultation is the process of seeking feedback from the public and

stakeholders in order to inform decisions. It is a two-way communication between AT and any consultee where feedback is carefully considered before decisions are made.

Consultation is not necessarily a “vote” to determine whether to proceed with a project or not. We want to know the reasons why people support or oppose a project in order to address the issues if possible. We want to know the point or suggestion being made by the submitter which is why every submission is important. By way of further background below are instances where we would consult:

i. Legislative requirements: As above, there are a number of projects that require by legislation a prescriptive approach to consultation.

ii. Significant decisions: One of the legislative requirements is that AT follows the Auckland Council Significance and Engagement Policy.

iii. Community input: On many decisions AT makes there will be scope for input from the local community, stakeholders and wider public. The transport network we are building needs to be fit-for-purpose and address the local community’s current and future needs. Local people, stakeholders and the wider public can provide important insights into how an area functions and how they would like it to function. In addition, we seek constructive suggestions on how our proposals can be improved.

iv. Planning: Some projects will require Resource Consents and/or Notice of Requirements. AT Resource Consents are often fully notified which means that they can be appealed to the Environment Court. If there is a concern from the public relating to a Resource Consent, the project team may be able to address it prior to lodging the resource consent. Full public consultation or consultation with directly affected parties is sometimes a requirement for Notice of Requirements.

v. Business Case for funding: At various phases of the lifecycle of a project, a business case will be required in order to apply for funding. An important component of the funding application will be to understand the thoughts of local communities, affected and interested parties.

vi. Impact on access to non-AT controlled land: AT’s projects are almost always adjacent to property which is owned privately or by some other party. Where there may be impact on this property, we will work with the land owner to mitigate the impact where possible.

Q 2. Can you explain why

the [Central Park Drive project](#), which involves the replacement of one parking space with 9 m of yellow dashed line, required formal consultation, whereas

this 350m-long project Redoubt Rd project, involving on-road lights along its length, gantries, network effects, and requiring every road user to adapt to a new system, doesn't?

A 2. The Redoubt Road project is one lane changing direction (at certain times of the day). There is no reallocation of space between modes. Property owners and residents in the area have received letters, been invited to a public open day, and have been able to provide feedback through our webpage. We plan on addressing any issues or concerns raised, where possible.