

## BAYFAIR UNDERPASS ALLIANCE (BUA)

27<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

Mr Howard Cattermole ([Howard.cattermole@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:Howard.cattermole@nzta.govt.nz))

GM – Investment and Finance,  
New Zealand Transport Agency  
Level 5 / 100 Willis Street, WELLINGTON

Dear Mr Cattermole

### **Baylink Project – Retention of Pedestrian Underpass Bayfair Tauranga**

The Bayfair Underpass Alliance (BUA) is a group of Tauranga community groups working together to represent our community and express its horror at NZTA's decision to demolish and not replace the Bayfair Underpass that allows pedestrians and cyclists to safely navigate their way across SH2 at this important location. We were disappointed NZTA chose to not front to over 1,000 protesters voicing their opposition on Sunday 25 August.

The BUA is committed to retaining an underpass at the Bayfair Roundabout.

NZTA approved the reinstatement of the underpass in April this year following public outcry. And then canned this underpass in July 2019. We do not accept that the cost of this work should increase from the \$13m you approved, to a new sum of \$33m and an additional 2 years extension on this \$120m project.

The alternative you have proposed is for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the Bayfair roundabout through four double lanes of traffic controlled by lights. We invite you to think more carefully about this. There are currently 500+ **daily** movements of school children, cyclists, elderly residents (on their mobility scooters) from nearby retirement villages, local residents and shoppers using the underpass and this figure increases significantly in summer and is growing annually with the Bayfair Mall expansion and the construction of housing in Owens Place.

This movement of 500+ people crossing the Bayfair roundabout daily by pedestrian crossing will create intolerable delays and dangers for these people, many of them vulnerable on account of age and will *also* undermine the goals of the Baylink Project.

The delays to traffic will also be intolerable as peak pedestrian flow coincides with peak traffic.

NZTA's flyer for Baylink lists as its first two project benefits:

- *Improves walking and cycling connections*
- *Improves safety for all road users through the area*

NZTA's decision to demolish the Bayfair Underpass completely undermines these promises that NZTA has made to our community. To summarise, the alternative is a lethal solution that will be challenging to all – School Children to Oldies.

We agree again that the \$33m revised cost of the Bayfair Underpass is poor value for money but we do not believe that this price tag and the 2 year project delay represent a smart engineering solution. We are confident that a better outcome is possible within the approved budget.

The BUA asks and challenges you to revisit the underpass solution and revise the design or develop a new design which meets the budget. A combination of the existing underpass and a new section may be the answer. Look at the holistic answer – do not just silo the underpass design, look at the whole design – it may involve movement of the embankment. We all know it can be done.

If you continue on the very unprofessional “hands off, just stare them down” approach you are using now, you will delay any chance of a good solution unless the project is stopped.

Can we please meet with you urgently at Tauranga City Council offices to agree a route to urgently resolve this matter before your intended demolition of the existing underpass in a matter of weeks.

The Tauranga community will not stand aside and allow NZTA to destroy facilities that work well for us when the alternative is dangerous, largely unworkable and will fail all users of Baylink, be they in cars, buses, trucks, cycles or on foot.

We attach – to provide you with context for our concerns - a video made last week demonstrating traffic activity at Bayfair and people using the Bayfair Underpass. This can be seen at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/4iop90ub3z1p9fq/Underpass.mp4?dl=0> .

Yours sincerely

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Signatories to BUA:

Greater Tauranga  
The Local Schools  
Sustainable Business Network  
Tauranga Environmental Protection Society  
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Papamoa Resident & Ratepayers Association

