

25 February 2021

Nicholas Lee
fyi-request-14262-d9040ee9@requests.fyi.org.nz

REF: OIA-7598

Dear Nicholas

Request made under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 8 December 2020 to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

In accordance with s 12 of the Official Information Act 1982, please provide any information, reports or advice considered by the Government, in deciding to fund and build Mill Road, in respect of:

1. *The increased greenhouse gas emissions that will result from the construction and operation of Mill Road;*
2. *How Mill Road will impact New Zealand's ability to meet the 2050 target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions under s 5Q of the Climate Change Response Act 2002;*
3. *How Mill Road will impact New Zealand's ability to meet its international obligations in respect of climate change, including under the Paris Agreement;*
4. *Whether and how Mill Road will give effect to the Government's objectives, recorded in the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2018, of:*
 - a. *reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport; and*
 - b. *increasing mode shift from private vehicle trips to walking, cycling and public transport;*
5. *Whether and how Mill Road will give effect to the Government's road safety strategy and plan, Road to Zero, adopted in December 2019; and*
6. *The views of Auckland Council, including Auckland Council's declaration of a climate emergency on 11 June 2019.*

Your request was subsequently transferred to Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency on 27 January 2021 for response. Please note that we have subsequently also accepted transfer of questions 6 of your request. I understand that there was a technical issue at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet which meant that your request was transferred later than would have normally been expected.

The Mill Road project was identified and approved for funding through the NZ Upgrade Programme at a very early stage of its development. No advice regarding Mill Roads impact on greenhouse/gas emissions, climate change, the Road to Zero strategy or the Auckland Councils declaration of a climate emergency was provided to the Government as part of the establishment of the NZ Upgrade Programme. I am therefore refusing parts 1, 2, 3, 4a, 5 and 6 under section 18(e) of the Act, as the documents requested do not exist.

I have identified one piece of advice, contained in a table, that was provided to the Government during the establishment of the NZ Upgrade Programme regarding the scope, costs, timing and outcomes of the Mill Road project, which falls within part 4b of your request. A copy of this advice is provided in the table below:

Project	Mill Road full proposal (stage 1, 2 & 3 and Drury south Interchange)
Outcome	This strategic alternative route will support large housing and employment growth in Auckland's south and is a priority network improvement in the Auckland Plan.
Improvements proposed	<p>Provision of a new four lane road and upgraded intersections from Manukau to Drury running parallel and to the east of State Highway 1.</p> <p>The northern section is approximately 9km and runs from the State Highway 1 Redoubt Road intersection at Manukau to the intersection of Mill Road and Popes Road. The southern section will be from the Mill Road/Popes Road intersection to Papakura and Drury.</p> <p>It will include on-road cycle lanes and shared paths to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and provide more reliable bus journey times and the ability to move more passengers via public transport.</p>
Phasing	Requires business case, design, consenting and property prior to construction.
Construction start	2022 (with phased delivery)
Estimated cost	\$1.354bn (\$1.197bn - \$1.512bn)

As noted above, at the time of establishing the NZ Upgrade Programme and identifying projects for funding, it was acknowledged that many of these were in very early stages of development and that a significant amount of pre-implementation work, such as business cases and detailed design would be required before the final project scope, cost and timeframe could be confirmed. It is during this pre-implementation phase that further detailed emissions analysis will be undertaken.

While this did not form part of the advice to the Government when selecting Mill Road for inclusion in the NZ Upgrade Programme, the following information may be of interest to you.

Mill Road is part of an integrated transport package for South Auckland which also includes improvements to public transport and active mode infrastructure to support anticipated future growth in this area and broader transport outcomes such as inclusive access. Greenhouse gas emissions modelling has been undertaken by the Supporting Growth Alliance at a project level and system wide level for Mill Road through regional modelling. The modelling indicates that while the project in isolation may contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions, the overall transport package will deliver a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions when compared with a future baseline with no integrated transport package. This information was provided to you in response to your previous request (reference OIA-7425).

Understanding the emissions impacts of transport decisions is a new area of consideration for Waka Kotahi. We recognise that programmes underway, and decisions yet to be made relating to land use, infrastructure, policy and regulation will determine the carbon future. Quantitative data on the emission reduction required overall for the land transport sector, and in relation to specific projects and programmes, to meet the 2030 and 2050 targets is not currently available and is a work in progress to respond to these requirements.

Waka Kotahi launched Toitū Te Taiao - Our Sustainability Action Plan in April 2020 which signals our commitment to improving environmental sustainability and public health, and sets a vision of a low carbon, safe and healthy land transport system by 2050. Reducing land transport greenhouse gas emissions using a whole of system approach is identified one of four major challenge areas. Further information about this work is available on our website: nzta.govt.nz/about-us/about-waka-kotahi-nz-transport-agency/environmental-and-social-responsibility/toitu-te-taiao-our-sustainability-action-plan/

Waka Kotahi is also developing an environmental impact model Te Puna Taiao for land transport investment. It aims to identify the right kinds of interventions, in the right combinations and at the right levels, to significantly reduce environmental harm arising from the land transport system. The priority focus is on reducing carbon emissions. We are using the model to assist the Ministry of Transport and the Climate Change Commission with planning for transport emission reductions.

We are working with the Ministry of Transport in the development of the Transport Emissions Action Plan (TEAP) to identify system changes that would enable investment programmes such as the National Land Transport programme to deliver greater levels of carbon reductions. A key component of this work is identifying how the TEAP could influence future Government Policy Statements on Land Transport, as well as legislative and policy settings.

With respect to the information that has been withheld, I do not consider there are any other factors which would render it desirable, in the public interest, to make the information available.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse this request. The contact details for the Ombudsman can be located at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Elston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robyn Elston
Senior Manager, System Design