

Cyclists and walkers may get to use bridge

BY MATHEW DEARNALEY
TRANSPORT REPORTER

Cyclists and pedestrians may realise their dream of crossing the Auckland Harbour Bridge — as a spinoff from a \$45 million project to strengthen its two “clip-ons”.

Transit NZ has investigated adding a cycleway to the western edge of the 1.2km landmark, and a walkway along its seaward flank, on 1.5m-wide extensions to the clip-on road surfaces.

It expects that would add \$30 million to \$40 million to the strengthening project it wants to fast-track to protect the clip-ons from heavy trucks.

Chief executive Rick van Barneveld said yesterday Transit still had building-code issues to resolve before reporting back to Parliament’s transport select committee on the feasibility of a pedestrian-cycling link across the bridge.

These include a requirement for rest areas for pedestrians.

But he expected the strengthening project would at least make it possible to build a pedestrian-cycling link “if that is a priority for Auckland”.

The MPs called for a study more than three years ago after receiving a petition of

HARBOUR BRIDGE ADD-ONS TO CLIP-ONS

North Shore commuters may get two environmentally-friendly options to cross the Waitemata Harbour.



5813 people frustrated at not being able to walk or cycle over the main harbour divide.

Transit indicated then there was little capacity left on the bridge, which carries 165,000 vehicles a day, and it would have to

give priority to a request by Transpower to run high-voltage cables over the structure to boost electricity to the north.

But Transit northern operations manager Joseph Flanagan said last night an engi-

neering report on strengthening the clip-ons had confirmed their structural capacity to carry cyclists on one side and pedestrians on

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the other, including barriers to protect them from vehicles.

He emphasised that the study did not include design planning, so he could not say what barrier materials might be used, or how pedestrians and cyclists would reach the bridge.

Auckland City development chief John Duthie said a cycleway and boardwalk proposed as part of a \$20 million upgrade of Westhaven Marina in time for the 2011 Rugby World Cup would fit in with a bridge link.

Cycle Action Auckland deputy chairman Graeme Knowles, who pre-

sented the petition to the select committee in 2004, said there would be no excuse for not adding a cycling and pedestrian link to the bridge at the time of its structural upgrade.

Mr Knowles was confident a cycle crossing would be used by plenty of commuters.

He cited the popularity of the cycling-pedestrian link across the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

But new North Shore Mayor Andrew Williams, while agreeing a cycleway would be “ultimately” desirable, said Auckland had plenty of other transport needs such as better bus services.