

26 August 2025

25-621

David Schwartzfeger

Kiwi Property

Dear Mr Schwartzfeger

Drury Fast Track Application

As requested I am pleased to set out my review of the traffic and transportation issues associated with the Fast Track application for the Drury Centre. I have not carried out a formal peer review, however I have reviewed the questions raised by Auckland Transport and New Zealand Transport Agency staff and considered the material prepared in response by Mr Daryl Hughes.

1. WORKING FROM HOME AND CHANGES TO TRAVEL PATTERNS

The release of the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings Journey to Work data by Statistics NZ confirms what we have already been aware of with demographic changes and a major increase in remote working. My own review of travel patterns of residents in Metropolitan Centres and Statistics Areas adjacent to Metropolitan Centres shows that the incidence of working from home has broadly doubled between the 2018 Census and the 2023 Census. The Albany Centre is probably the most relevant to Drury as a comparator for travel changes because Albany is similarly located on the edge of the urban area and is comparatively new but has had sufficient time for commercial activities and residential activities to establish. The changes in working from home between 2018 and 2023 for Albany Central and the adjacent Statistics Areas is shown below.

Working from Home	Census Year	
Area	2018	2023
Auckland	9%	18%
· Albany Heights	10%	23%
· Fairview Heights	9%	21%
· Albany Central	7%	20%
· Albany West	11%	19%
· Oteha West	8%	20%
· Albany South	10%	20%
· Pinehill North	9%	20%
Albany Subgroup	10%	20%

Changes in Proportion of Working from Home

The work from home share in Albany Central has increased from 7% to 20% or in other words the percentage of people who commuted has dropped from 93% to 80%. That is a drop of 13% of the total (or more correctly a drop of 14% of those who actually travelled¹). We see similar but slightly smaller changes in the areas around the Albany Centre as a whole and across wider Auckland.

That has impacted directly on travel demand in the weekday commuter peak hours. As a result, we have noticed a reduction in trip generation by households, and there has also been a smaller reduction in peak hour trip generation at supermarkets and stores that serve people travelling home from work. We have not observed a significant reduction in weekend or off peak travel.

Mr Hughes has adjusted travel forecasts to try and reflect these changes with an 8% reduction in peak traffic generated by households and a 1.5% reduction in peak hour retail traffic. In my view these changes are justified in terms of the Census data, and the adjustments made are probably at the conservative end of what might be expected.

To work out if the 1.5% reduction in retail traffic is justified, I have compared pedestrian data at Sylvia Park that you provided me with for 2025 with earlier data I obtained in 2014. By comparing a whole week of data, I noted that in 2014 the five evening peak hours made up 5.7% of the total weekly pedestrian entries to Sylvia Park. That has dropped to 5.5% of total weekly entries in 2025, a comparative reduction of 3.5%².

2. INTERNAL TRIPS

The original assessment for Drury included significant residential development which would have resulted in a large number of trips occurring that would have started and finished in the Drury East area.

The concern raised by AT and NZTA appears to be that developing the retail activities first will result in more external traffic than might otherwise have occurred. I don't think this is correct.

A retail centre has a catchment area that is defined by the other competing centres that people might choose to visit. Leaving out development from the centre of that catchment is not likely to

¹ $(93\%-80\%)/93\%=14\%$

² $(5.7\%-5.5\%)/5.7\%=3.5\%$

result in any increase in trips from further afield. The outer boundaries of the catchment won't alter. All that will occur is that some internal trips would not be present in the short term.

However, the opposite could also possibly be true. Deferring development of the retail core of the Drury Centre would quite likely result in people having to travel much further than they otherwise would have. The existence of a full retail offering at Drury will mean that people living in nearby residential areas such as Drury West can shop locally rather than driving to Papakura, Manukau or even Sylvia Park.

It should also be noted that it is quite common that development at new centres is led by retail activities. That has occurred at Sylvia Park, Albany, Westgate and even within New Lynn. It makes good sense to homeowners to buy a house or an apartment in a building located close to shops and entertainment. It makes less sense to purchase a residence in the hope that retail and entertainment will be built soon.

The net result of building retail activities into a plan sooner is that residential development can also be built sooner than expected (albeit after the retail).

In my view the assumed level of internalisation starting at 6% and finishing at 12% is a very conservative assumption. The larger a centre is the higher the level of internal trips will be. Drury is being planned as a Metropolitan Centre and these centres are only second in scale and intensity to the City Centre zone. In reality I would expect internal trips to end up at well over 15% and probably even over 20% as the cost of travel inevitably increases and as decarbonisation becomes more of a focus.

3. DIRECT LINK FROM SH1

The proposed link into the Drury Centre from SH1 has always been intended to occur after the development of the Drury Centre has commenced. The original consent included development triggers that were based on transport modelling. I reviewed that work carried out by Mr Hughes and Stantec at the time of the Drury Plan Change.

It should come as no surprise that subsequent modelling has shown that the direct link is still required but can be built later than originally approved. The link itself only provides for a direct entry into the Drury East area and does not allow for traffic to exit in that same manner. The critical traffic conditions that dictate the timing of any mitigation works is the evening peak period,

in particular traffic exiting the area in the evening peak period. The proposed connection doesn't help with traffic exiting and only has a secondary impact on that traffic by removing some traffic entering at Waihoehoe Road.

In my view this direct link is necessary but should only be a required mitigation at the time it is needed and that is addressed specifically by the modelling carried out by Mr Hughes and Stantec. For that assessment Mr Hughes has used exactly the same traffic queue thresholds he used for the original application. A reduction in expected traffic should therefore inevitably result in the direct link occurring later than was originally forecast.

4. EFFECTS OF A 'MEGA-ATTRACTOR'

In my view it is very difficult to estimate the possible impacts of a retail development that is by definition unique. Costco at Westgate and IKEA at Sylvia Park fall into that category. The real question is whether or not such a development at Drury would result in unexpected high traffic levels in the evening peak. Given the location of Drury on the edge of the urban area it seems unlikely that a development of that nature would result in a large amount of passing traffic diverting into the centre. Those sorts of developments are more of a destination retail activity and would more likely attract peak trips on Saturday or Sunday mornings or around mid-day.

I am aware that queues have formed at the Westgate offramp on Saturdays as a result of Costco, particularly shortly after it opened. If a second one were to open then it would no longer be unique and I would expect a small reduction in its traffic generation rate.

In my view Mr Hughes has addressed this issue in as much detail as can reasonably be expected.

5. SATURDAY AND SUNDAY TRAFFIC

The original plan change was not required to be tested at weekend traffic times. Nor was it required for Albany, Westgate, Sylvia Park or Botany, the other recent Metropolitan Centres. In part that is because roads are not actually designed for weekends, they are designed for weekdays when work trips make up a significant proportion of trips. Work trips have a higher economic value and include higher levels of freight.

At a more basic level weekend testing has not been required for Metro Centres because there are simply no weekend models available. Again, that is because of the fact that roads are designed for weekdays so models have been developed accordingly.

We do test Saturday noon traffic for individual retail stores particularly in built up areas where there is already a significant level of weekend traffic. That situation doesn't exist at Drury because it is a greenfields site.

I look forward to discussing the project with you.



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