



1 May 2021

Greetings.

As promised, this FASTR-Wellington newsletter is going only to those of you who responded by asking to JOIN our mailing list. Your response was encouraging, but we would like to enlist more supporters, so please forward this to others. We are not asking people to say that they want Suspended Monorail. FASTR-Wellington wants to be joined by intelligent readers who wish to see LGWM doing robust research, with a successful outcome likely. If you are irritated by a process that seems biased by not subjecting ALL viable options to a cost-benefit approach, please join us.

We expect a level playing field; a rigorous selection process; and then a comparison of options so that a properly-informed choice can be demonstrated. Currently all that we see is big monthly expenditure, with what seems to be a predetermined outcome yet no clear result, and with one option revealed as ignored despite a number of positive features - particularly being an order of magnitude SAFER than the other options.

Well, our meeting with Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) at last went ahead on Wednesday 12 April. In a one hour timeslot Stephen Moore and Peter Dodwell gave a presentation and answered questions. There was an article about this on Thursday 22nd April at page 2 of Wellington's Dominion Post newspaper, which we reproduce here.

 The Dominion Post | 22 Apr 2021

Monorail proposal dismissed

Transport
Joel MacManus
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An advocate calling for a suspended monorail to be built in Wellington says he was fobbed off during a meeting with Let's Get Wellington Moving executives.

Stephen Moore, a government procurement specialist and Wellington commuter, has been seeking to pitch his ideas to the programme for more than 1½ years.

He presented a 49-page proposal to four executives from LGWM last Wednesday for a suspended monorail, but said he felt it wasn't treated seriously.

He argued a bona-fide, electrified three-car monorail, with a capacity of 228 seated and 496 standing passengers, would be safer, cheaper and faster than the trackless trams or light rail currently being considered as options for mass rapid transit from central Wellington to the airport.

He said similar monorail projects had put small cities with similar populations to Wellington on the map, including Kamakura, Japan, Wuppertal, Germany, and Chengdu, China.

However, he was told in the meeting the project would be an eyesore and was unlikely to pass the Resource Management Act.

"Due to the high visual impact



New appointments

Let's Get Wellington Moving has announced a new independent chairperson and three-year programme director. The appointment came after a review found the troubled programme was at risk of failing to deliver, and lacked credibility, strategic direction and focus. Dave Brash has been appointed the new independent board chairman, and Siobhan Procter will be the new director in charge of projects scheduled to be delivered within the next three years.

A mock-up of a suspended monorail in Wellington. It has been proposed as an alternative mass rapid transit solution for Let's Get Wellington Moving.

and the requisite regulatory processes that need to be fulfilled to build such a structure [including under the Resource Management Act], we consider that it would be extremely unlikely that a suspended monorail would be approved for construction in Wellington," LGWM adviser Seb Bishop told Moore in an email seen by *Stuff*.

Moore said it felt like he had been "stonewalled".

"We're not saying it's necessarily the solution. All we've been asking for is to compare it on the same basis as light rail and trackless trams."

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Stuff, [at this link](#), has provided an update of that newspaper article with a bonus – FASTR-Wellington's *powerpoint* (minus videos) as presented to LGWM. It was gratifying to have increased support from the news media on this occasion.

The outcome was no real surprise. But it contrasted with a very positive response from LGWM regarding the features of our Suspended Monorail proposal. They completely agreed that in terms of engineering it was extremely competitive compared with the other proposals...

Yet, despite that, their *only* objection raised was based on likely objections to the visual impact. In particular, they believed that the Resource Management Act process would pose an insuperable barrier. They also indicated that they had already spent millions on researching the ground-based options and had no intention of subjecting a Suspended Monorail proposal to the same stringency...

In essence, this confirmed that they had had a preconceived idea from the outset and had long ago discarded the overhead option, without any detailed consideration whatsoever. Stephen Moore told *Stuff* reporter Joel McManus that he felt we had been stonewalled over the previous 18 months. As he said later, if that is the approach to the RMA, then we should stop building high-rises in Wellington, stop stringing unsightly high-speed fibreoptic cables between unsightly telegraph poles, and build no more bridges. Somehow, such projects get past the RMA process and become accepted by the public.

And for decades Wellington had put up with unsightly overhead wires for trolleybuses, and later many Wellingtonians wondered why on earth these non-polluting and efficient electric buses were scrapped prematurely. It shows how people's first impressions of visual impact can be overcome. This LGWM stance is reminiscent of Parisian's original opposition to construction of the Eiffel Tower.

As we said in our last newsletter, we would rather LGWM stopped spending huge amounts in the months ahead and gave up aiming for ground-based MRT, because all such options are much the same and will fail to deliver the outcome that citizens have said they want, which is a system that is **faster, safer, and more reliable**. The surveys relied on seem to have asked citizens what sort of *hardware* they would prefer (from a stacked list of options).

It is not rocket science to point out that all these ground-based mass transport options, sharing the road with other vehicles, must **comply with the road speed limits** (50 km/hour, and in many areas as slow as **30 km/hour**). Even if given priority at light-controlled intersections, they must not exceed these speed limits, and traffic fowl ups and accidents will further reduce those speeds to a crawl.

It is fantasy to promise such a system can be made faster, safer and more reliable. We are angry that Wellington citizens have endured a "smoke and mirrors" approach, somewhat like an election campaign, promising much but with a lack of substance and a likelihood that the outcome will be unsatisfactory.

In contrast, any system that is 100% separated from other vehicles can manage faster speeds, and be much more reliable. Trip times will generally be halved compared with these 'stacked' options. Most of all, a system that is 100% separated will have a **safety** record more than 100 times better than all other options. The only options that can promise this safety record are (a) the hugely expensive fully-separated Light Rail (relying on elevated rail and/or underground rail over its whole length); and (b) the considerably less expensive Suspended Monorail.



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The RMA process has already been pruned to permit a faster multistorey building process. It can surely also be pruned to allow an MRT system to be developed that balances any objections regarding visual impact against the likelihood that other objectives (particularly safety, reliability, and speed) can truly be achieved.

WHAT CAN BE DONE? If you are as angry as we are about the impending futile expenditure of major public funds, as well as an impending decade of worse traffic and congestion during construction, then please recruit friends and colleagues to join us in objecting to this biased process.

Please forward a copy of this newsletter to others, inviting them to use [our Contact page](#), to send an email with the subject heading JOIN. We look forward to more voices joining us.

Stay Safe!

Stephen Moore & Peter Dodwell

for FASTR-Wellington.

www.fastr-wellington.com