

Before the Independent Hearing Panel
Appointed by Environment Southland and Gore District Council

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of an application by Gore District Council for resource consent to
establish the Longford Bridge across the Mataura River

Statement of evidence of Peter Kenneth Standing

2 December 2020

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lloyd.**

Introduction

- 1 My full name is Peter Kenneth Standing.
- 2 I am the Rooding Asset Manager at the Gore District Council (**GDC** or **Council**). I have a New Zealand Certificate in Civil Engineering. I have been working in the Rooding industry for 20 years as a Consultant, Contractor and recently as a Council employee. I have been employed by GDC in my current role for four and a half years.
- 3 In my role, I manage the Council's Rooding Network throughout the District. The 900km road network is divided between 350km of the sealed carriageway and 550km of unsealed. The combined maintenance and replacement budget is \$5,500,000 per year.
- 4 In preparing this statement of evidence, I have considered the following documents:
 - (a) 2018 Government Policy Statement on Transportation;
 - (b) The 2011 GDC Street Scape Strategy;
 - (c) The Longford Shared Path – single-stage business case;
 - (d) The Section 42A report;
 - (e) 2018 Regional Land Transport Plan; and
 - (f) WSP Safety report.

Scope of evidence

- 5 This evidence addresses:
 - (a) Background to consideration of pedestrian and cycle linkages over the Mataura River;
 - (b) Policy and strategy timeline
 - (c) Project development timeline
 - (d) Public consultation; and
 - (e) A response to matters raised in submissions.

Background to consideration of pedestrian and cycle linkages over the Mataura River

- 6 Prior to consideration of this project, the Council was pursuing a number of initiatives to enhance walking and cycling opportunities in Gore and surrounds. This included the development of a linked up walking/cycleway starting at Hamilton Park and moving over to the western part of town. This initiative was foreshadowed by the Council's 2011 Street Scape Strategy. In addition the Council has provided financial support for the development of mountain bike facilities in the Croydon Bush/Dolamore Park area.
- 7 There have been a number of policy directives and Council work streams relevant to promotion of pedestrian and cycle modes of transport and provision of infrastructure to support this, as set out below.

Policy and Strategy - timeline

The Streetscape Strategy (2011)

- 8 The Gore District Council adopted the Streetscape Strategy on 13 December 2011. The Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to creating a road corridor that is not only user friendly but attractive and inviting for the wider community. Of particular note, the Strategy contains the following two objectives:
 - (a) identifying key pedestrian and walking routes (including those used by school children, the elderly, shoppers, commuters, people walking the dog, those exercising etc) and providing a level of amenity (including footpath width and street furniture) appropriate to; and
 - (b) investigating the construction of a riverside walk and cycle track along the western side of the Mataura River from Surrey Street to Hyde Street, utilising the existing stop bank and passing beneath the road and rail bridge.

The 2018 Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Transport

- 9 The GPS Policy listed its strategic priorities for the land transport system as Safety, Environment, Value for money, and Access as follows:

"Access refers to a system that provides increased access to economic and social opportunities, enables transport choice and access, and is resilient".

- 10 These are very high-level aspirations. The policy statement drills down further to explain the concept, by supporting active modes (walking and cycling) and addressing issues with access.
- 11 Having the Government policy statement driving a priority on transport choices, access, and social opportunities was a real step-change for Councils and the communities they served.
- 12 The initial effect for the Gore District was the Government subsidising the maintenance and for the replacement of public footpaths for the first time in decades.

2018/21 Regional Land Transport Plan

- 13 In the 2018 RLTP document, the Gore District Council listed a track along the flood bank as an active modes project it was keen to pursue in the future.

Regional Cycle Strategy

- 14 The Gore District Council adopted the Southland Cycle Strategy (2016-26) in 2018. The Strategy intends to promote alternative modes of travel, to unlock and strengthen social connections through the uptake of cycling and wellbeing.

The Gore District Council Tracks and Trails feasibility study

- 15 The Council adopted The 2017 Gore District Council Tracks and Trails feasibility study on 12 September 2017.
- 16 This was an investigation into the existing and proposed tracks around the District. There was considerable public engagement in establishing the community's priority for track development. The engagement process resulted in two distinct circuits being accorded as a high priority; these were:
 - (a) the establishment of an urban loop on the west side of Gore; and
 - (b) walking/cycling trail around Hamilton Park and the adjoining Waikaka River and linked to a popular spot on the Mataura River known as Walnut Grove.
- 17 These two priority projects were separated by the Mataura River. Therefore, a key question that remained unresolved was how the two projects could be safely linked.

Project development - timeline

Point of entry (PoE) discussion with NZTA - June 2018

- 18 On 2 December 2017, the Council confirmed that an overbridge was its preferred option for the construction of a pipeline crossing over the Mataura River, as part of the Gore Water Treatment project.
- 19 Consequently, Council staff approached the NZTA team to arrange a Point of Entry discussion about an alternate river crossing. The objective of the meeting was to investigate the opportunity of bringing forward the active modes project mentioned in the 2018 RLTP. The project to develop a track along the top of the flood banks was proposed in the appendices of the 2018 RLTP, as a possible active modes development. Council staff lodged a subsequent application, and NZTA approved funding in July 2018. This funding was directed to the development of a project business case. Subsequent to the NZTA funding, the council staff arranged a preliminary discussion with the Regional Council (Environment Southland), to understand the consenting requirement for the river crossing bridge. It was noted that a single span bridge could be considered as a permitted activity.
- 20 All transportation project business cases begin with a set of clear community aspirations and objectives which should closely align with the Government Policy Statement, which in turn guides all transport agency's (NZTA) investments.
- 21 The proposed bridge project aligned well against the intention of the GPS policy by:
 - (a) increasing the uptake of children walking and cycling, especially to and from school (all intermediate and high schools are in Gore west);
 - (b) addressing a high perceived safety risk for commuters, disabled and young people travelling to school, using SH1 bridge;
 - (c) enabling a modal shift from private motor vehicles to active modes;
 - (d) strengthening social and cultural connections;
 - (e) improving liveability in the CBD areas and realising the wider benefits; and
 - (f) providing further economic growth for Gore.

Business Case – July 2018 to May 2019

- 22 An engineering consultant (Stantec) was engaged to develop a business case for the transportation proposal to link east and west Gore via a dedicated pedestrian/cycling pathway. As part of the business case, Stantec were expected to:
- (a) undertake an investment logic mapping exercise;
 - (b) determine the preferred crossing option; and
 - (c) summarise the investment outcomes of the preferred option.
- 23 The first Investment Logic Mapping Workshop (ILM) was held on 22 August 2018 and moderated by Jim McMahon, Director at Caravel Group (NZ) Ltd. There was considerable support from the Councillors and stakeholders alike with 14 representatives from six organisations present (GDC, ES, NZTA, Hokonui Riders, Police, Venture Southland). Unfortunately, Hokonui Rūnanga which was a key stakeholder identified in the invitation list was unable to participate in the meeting.
- 24 The meeting was proposed to consider the development of a cycle/pedestrian track that linked East Gore to the main shopping centre and schools via a single-span bridge. The purpose was to consolidate our thinking about this initiative, the problem definition and benefits with the aim of properly understanding and articulating the need for this investment.
- 25 In the workshop, the problems with the existing east-west link and the benefits and opportunities for a separate link were identified as:
- (a) Problems:
 - (i) pedestrians safety; and
 - (ii) access to the CBD, community facilities and schools;
 - (b) Transport benefits of a new pedestrian/cycle bridge:
 - (i) minimise risk to public safety – improve safety for active modes;
 - (ii) increased numbers of people who cycle and walk for travel in Gore; and
 - (iii) improved access between Gore and East Gore;
 - (c) Opportunities afforded by a pedestrian/cycle bridge:

- (i) improved resilience;
 - (ii) improving liveability of Gore; and
 - (iii) economic growth.
- 26 The engineering staff, along with NZTA developed a long list (20) of options/locations. A multi-criteria analysis was used to assess each option against the investment objectives, Government Policy Statement on land transport (GPS) and other mutually agreed criteria. Please refer to ***Appendix A – Multi Criteria Assessment Matrix***.
- 27 This process shortlisted three options for the primary cycle route being:
- (a) On the existing bridge – eliminated due to the age and ownership of the bridge;
 - (b) Rock Street alignment - longest span, more earthworks, proximity to the existing bridge; and
 - (c) Surrey Street alignment.
- 28 At a further stakeholders workshop held on the 23 November, attendees were asked to review the short listing process and contribute to the selection of the preferred bridge location. After further technical and economic benefits assessment, the Surrey Street alignment ultimately became the preferred location for the cycling project. Please refer to ***Appendix B – Multi Criteria Assessment Scores*** for the short list.
- 29 Benefits cited at the second meeting in regard to the chosen bridge location were:
- (a) the most direct route between central East Gore to the schools in the west;
 - (b) the river crossing was narrowest at this point, and single-span bridge within 100m span should be a permitted activity;
 - (c) at this preferred proposed location, the bridge could be built directly to the existing stop bank, cost-effectively;
 - (d) direct access to the existing road network in the East; and
 - (e) existing paper roads on the western side could be used for the approaches.

- 30 It was a funding condition of NZTA that provision should be made in the broader network to link the River Track to schools and other activities. Even though these linkages to the schools, community facilities and Central Business District (CBD) are not part of this application, the options are being developed as a supplementary project.
- 31 The Longford Shared Path project scored 'High' on the following three of NZTA's investment criteria when assessed against the Investment Assessment Framework for the Walking and Cycling Improvements Activity Class:
- (a) it supports increasing the uptake of children using walking and cycling, especially to and from school and community facilities;
 - (b) it addresses a significant problem with the ability to use existing facilities, including promotion, and use by people who identify as disabled and young people; and
 - (c) it addresses a high perceived safety risk to users of the mode from the existing SH1 bridge.
- 32 In May 2019, the full business case proposal was submitted with NZTA. NZTA approved further funding for the engineering investigations and development of a bridge design.

Bridge Design

- 33 A tender process for engagement of a preferred Designer was conducted over the period, July - September 2019. The Council received only one tender submission which was for a cable-stay single-span bridge. This tender proposal was received from DC Structures Studio Ltd (DCSS). This tender was deemed to be conforming by the Council's tender evaluation panel and was subsequently recommended to the Council for approval. The Council gave its approval and was significantly comforted by the knowledge that the preferred tender had performed to a very high standard by constructing a similar designed bridge in Dunedin.

Design development

- 34 DCSS worked with the Council and Environment Southland teams to ensure all national standards were complied with. All components of the design were peer-reviewed by the professional engineers (BECA) and endorsed without major comments.

Early Contractor Involvement: December 2019 – February 2020

- 35 With a reputable bridge building contractor working within the District on the new Pyramid Bridge, the Council staff believed early contractor engagement for the Longford Shared Path Bridge would be advantageous.
- 36 The Council staff considered that a design and constructability review by an expert and a capable contractor could prevent design mistakes, improve the design quality and save costs and time. The decision was, therefore to proceed to a selected tender process. The tender closed in January 2020. Two tenders from two different contractors were submitted along with alternative designs for consideration.
- 37 Concrete Structures was the preferred tenderer after scoring highest in the tender evaluation process. This is the same contractor who successfully constructed the new Pyramid Bridge.

Safety Audit

- 38 Appropriate safety audits have been carried out by WSP. A first structural design audit of the bridge was carried out in May 2020 and a second audit was performed on the preliminary River Track design in October 2020. A copy of the safety advice provided as a result of this second audit was included in the further information response on 6 November 2020.

NZTA funding advice - December 2019

- 39 NZTA had advised the NLTP funding prioritisation for this project on 20 December 2019.
- 40 The New Zealand Transport Agency's assessment of the project concluded that the bridge was "an integral part of being able to provide a fully connected strategic cycle network for Gore township".

Public Consultation

- 41 Early general public consultation on this project was problematic. The first point to emphasise was up until the promulgation of the Government policy statement on land transport in mid-2018, the Council was only investigating a bridge structure to carry water pipes only, and there was no certainty regarding a shared bridge.
- 42 The following issues needed to be resolved before the Council could meaningfully put credible and costed options to the public:

- (a) funding confirmation from NZTA, which had a huge impact on whether the Council would pursue a bridge structure for water pipes only or a structure that could only be utilised by cyclists and pedestrians;
 - (b) secure the land required for pipe crossing and bridge approaches. We couldn't take this project to the public if we did not have access to critical land. Pursuing the land purchase after the public announcement could have made the negotiations more challenging and cost-prohibitive; and
 - (c) when the Council endorsed the project in a virtual meeting April 2020, the COVID restrictions further delayed consultation.
- 43 In relation to consultation with Hokonui Rūnanga, as discussed above an invitation was extended for the initial ILM workshops. However they were unable to attend. Unfortunately, it wasn't picked up that the subsequent workshops were notified to only previous attendees rather than the full invite list. The Council acknowledge this oversight led to a lack of early engagement on this project with tangata whenua.

Post COVID-19 consultation

- 44 Stakeholder engagement began following the COVID-19 lockdown, with information letters sent by the Council. The Mayor met with Hokonui Rūnanga, and the Mayor and CEM met with several nearby property owners. A project brochure was distributed in early June, and a public meeting held on 15 June. A full copy of the application was sent to those landowners within immediate vicinity of the bridge, as identified in Appendix B of the LVIA report, within the two week period following lodgement.
- 45 This consultation led to written approval being obtained from both Department of Conservation on 28 July 2020, and Fish and Game on 3 August 2020.
- 46 The application was also submitted on 23 July 2020 with a specific request for public notification of the GDC application, to allow full consultation to be carried out in parallel given the significance of this proposal for the Gore community.

Comment on matters raised in submissions

The Transport effects of the bridge and pathway in this location

- 47 The overarching objectives of this project are about pedestrian safety and access to CBD, Schools, and community facilities. The Council is actively considering options to link existing pathways and tracks to the proposed bridge structure. There will be construction required for walking/cycling approach to the bridge that links in with the existing cycling and walking network within the township.
- 48 This project dovetails nicely with the Streets Alive project that promotes active mode options on our existing road network.
- 49 We would expect very little interruption to vehicular traffic on either side of the bridge.
- 50 There is the possibility that there may be added vehicle movements along Huron Street due to the attraction of the bridge, if this eventuates, we shall consider developing a car park over the flood bank off Woolwich Street.

Safety

- 51 The genesis of this project was the safe passage of pedestrians and cyclists from the east side of Gore to the town. Although the scope of this application is focused around the structure there has been significant thought given to the network linkages on both sides of the bridge.
- 52 Although the existing SH1 bridge has served the town well over its life the increase in traffic and reconfiguring of the approaches has presented serious safety concerns for its users. Beyond the state of the path surface new standards for pathway suggest the width is insufficient for easy passage.
- 53 If there should be a change in vehicles and associated traffic movements following construction of the bridge, and around Huron St in particular, there are other traffic management responses that can be implemented to address this. These include more explicit parking areas to the north, or traffic calming measures and safe crossing points.
- 54 As a pre-requisite of all NZTA constructions, safety in design (SiD) audit is required at all stages of the project development as set out in Safety Audit procedures manual.
- 55 NZTA maintain there are two parts to good safety process:

- (a) Safety in Design reviews:
 - (i) through business case phase and design phase;
 - (ii) at the design phase look to design out safety risks unless deemed acceptable (i.e. while building it, using it, maintaining it and decommissioning it); and
 - (iii) hold a workshop at each phase i.e. business case and design phase (invite maintenance people, designers, Councils and key stakeholders – focus is technical);
- (b) Safety audits:
 - (i) safety of the design itself (requirements for each stage of safety audit).

Parking

- 56 As per my comments above parking can be appropriately provided for as required.

Alternatives

- 57 To attract the level of funding support this project has received from NZTA, Council needed to submit a business case that displayed a robust options assessment process. We undertook and documented an extensive exercise that showed true consideration to all options that delivered the community objectives, as summarised in my evidence above.
- 58 The Maitland Street location highlighted by some submitters did not align with these objectives, or address the transport problems identified in the ILM workshop. This location didn't present a direct link to the community in question which is a major detractor in supporting the increased uptake of children walking and cycling, especially to and from school and community facilities.
- 59 Several options were considered around the existing bridge, all were discounted due to the cost and age of the structure. None of these options represented the most direct route identified in the project objectives. NZTA was also nervous about the approaches and preferred separating the different modes of traffic.

Proposal does not add to walking tracks

60 There are wider plans to extend the walking tracks on both sides of the bridge and link to the wider community. The east side will be extended via Woolwich St. and Walnut Grove to Maitland St, while the west side will be connected to the CBD and schools via the flood bank track. The safe linkage to our existing network is a condition of our NZTA funding application.

Expense

61 Costs associated with the project, both construction and ongoing maintenance, have been considered in detail by the project team.

62 In summary, associated costs demonstrate that this structure is a lower cost option for water infrastructure with benefits in terms of health and safety and water security, and by providing for the shared pathway element, reduces the overall construction and maintenance costs through support from NZTA while achieving additional strategic transport goals for the district.

63 A purely water pipe bridge will not attract the NZTA funding support for its construction or ongoing maintenance.

Conclusion

64 The cost efficiency in combining the delivery of essential water service along with the development of a strategic transport route in one construction project would be a noteworthy achievement for the district.

65 I consider the evidence provided above not only shows the significant diligence in developing the project to this point but also highlights the special opportunity this is for the Gore community.

66 The bridge and associated tracks show Gore as a progressive rural town at a time when we have unprecedented numbers of New Zealand residents returning to the country looking to move to the regions.

67 This is a once in a generation opportunity for Gore to truly show we live up to our town branding of "Rural City Living".

Dated this 2nd day of December 2020

Peter Kenneth Standing

Appendix A – Multi Criteria Assessment Matrix.

Appendix D MCA Assessment Matrix

ID	Name	Details	Investment objectives			Multi-criteria											Weighted Investment Objectives	Other criteria total		
			Increase numbers of people who cycle and walk	Minimise risk to public safety - improve safety for active modes	Improve access between East and West Gore	Technical	Consentability	Operational / Maintenance	Financial	Customer s / Stakeholders	Natural Environm ent	Urban Design	Wider effects	Strategic Fit	Economic					
1	Base	Do Nothing	-1	0	-1	Fatal Flaw														
2		Do Minimum	Widening of footpaths/connections on either side of the river as projects and funds become available; improving crossings (either end of the bridge, underneath) Low cost, low risk projects. Pedestrians facilities.	0	1	0		2	2	0	0	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	20
3	Online	Online A:	Reallocate existing bridge width, and approaches - Assuming bidirectional path on one side only	1	1	1		-2	3	0	-1	0	0	1	0	1	0	100	20	
4		Online B:	Reduce speed limit on existing bridge	0	1	0	Fatal Flaw	1	3	3	3	-2	3	0	0	1	0			
5		Online C:	Clip on facilities (one or both sides), and approaches without any other works	1	1	1		-2	-1	-1	-1	1	1	2	0	1	0	100	0	
6		OnC (i) 5+19	Clip on facilities (one or both sides), and approaches	2	2	1		-2	-1	-1	-1	1	1	2	0	1	0	180	0	
7		Online D:	Widen the existing (add more width) SH bridge to better accommodate active modes	1	1	1		-2	-1	-1	-2	1	-1	2	0	1	0	100	-30	
8		Online E:	Install traffic signals at either end of the bridge and turn the bridge into a oneway arrangement	0	1	-1	Fatal Flaw													
9	Offline	Offline A:	Use existing rail bridge (clip on facilities)					Fatal Flaw												
10		Offline B:	Ferry service								Fatal Flaw									
11		Offline C:	New State Highway Bridge multi-purpose bridge (all modes)									Fatal Flaw								
12		Offline D:	New local road bridge (now)									Fatal Flaw								
13		Offline E:	New local road bridge (future) - designating new local road and in interim constructing new active mode bridge.									Fatal Flaw								
14		OfF (i) 12+19	New structure at C immediate upstream	2	2	2		-2	-2	-1	-2	2	-3	3	2	2	2	200	10	
15		OfG (i) 13+19	New structure at B 1km upstream	2	2	2		-2	-2	-1	-2	3	-3	3	3	3	2	200	40	

16		Offline H:	New pedestrian / cycle structure (upstream lining up with approximately Maitland Street) (location A)	1	1	1		-2	-2	-1	-1	1	-3	2	2	2	1	100	-10
17		Offline I:	New pedestrian / cycle structure (downstream)	1	1	1		-2	-2	-1	-1	1	-2	2	1	2	1	100	-10
18	Combination	Combination 1:	Provide more space for active modes on existing bridge (reallocate bridge width) and install new bridge (assume location B)	2	2	3		-3	-2	-1	-3	1	-3	2	2	2	1	220	-40
19		Combination 2:	Lower speed limit on existing bridge and new bridge (assume location B)	2	2	2		-2	-3	-1	-3	0	-3	2	2	2	1	200	-50
20		Combination 3:	Install two new crossings	2	3	3		-3	-2	-1	-3	3	-3	2	3	3	1	260	0
weighting																			
				3		3													
				2		2													
				1		1													
				0		0													
				-1		-1													
				-2		-2													
				-3		-3													
Total flow																			

Appendix B – Multi Criteria Assessment Scores for the short list.

17.10 Urban Design

- Option 14 – Rock Street, the Bridge will be highly visible from the existing State Highway bridge and riverside paths. This will add to the attraction in using the bridge, in terms of surveillance in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guiding principles. Co – locating the bridge near the existing state highway bridge will promote legibility in the landscape, also a sense of familiarity and reference point for potential users. The bridge connects between the existing bike path and the CBD (already local destinations with common uses) and directly to residential area on the eastern side of the river. The bridge also connects both sides of the longitudinal river pathway. The location is within the urban environment (public realm) and opportunities to incorporate design features into the bridge form (where the bridge becomes an art feature in itself) and / or finishing treatments (surfacing, hand / cycle grab rails, parapet finish, art etc.), approaches and illumination, both internal and externally exist. These features will add to the visual amenity if detailed well. Relatively short crossing length of 160m is likely to encourage greater use.
- Option 15 – Surrey Street, Bridge will be visible from riverside paths, but away from the bulk of existing residential development and away from the CBD. This location could be seen to extend journeys and be perceived as a barrier. Location considered to be largely rural, and away from key destinations. The arrival point on the western bank is at the back of an industrial site. A lack of amenity can also be a barrier to use. Opportunities existing to incorporate some features into the bridge form and approaches. External illumination would not be recommended. The bridge and path will need to be illuminated across full extent of flood plain that will introduce artificial lighting into this otherwise rural environment. The crossing is more exposed and may detract from its use in winter and during bad weather. There may be an opportunity to introduce a viewing platform at the western pier to the river landscape upstream.

17.11 Financial

- Option 14 – Rock Street, a base estimate for the construction of the bridge and shared path connections to the wider proposed network, associated works and design and construction management has been calculated as \$5.46m with a lower confidence level of \$4.9m and upper confidence level of \$7.1m.
- Option 15 – Surrey Street, a base estimate for the construction of bridge and shared path connections to the wider proposed network, associated works and design and construction management has been calculated as \$5.15m with a lower confidence level of \$4.6m and upper confidence level of \$6.7m.

17.12 Final MCA Scores for Short List

ID	Details	Investment objectives			Multi-criteria											Weighted Investment Objectives	Other criteria total
		Increase numbers of people who cycle and walk	Minimise risk to public safety - improve safety for active modes	Improve access between East and West Gore	Technical	Consentability	Operational / Maintenance	Financial	Customers / Stakeholders	Natural Environment	Urban Design	Wider effects	Strategic Fit	Economic			
14	New structure at Rock Street	2	2	2	-2	-2	-1	-3	3	-3	3	2	3	2	200	20	
15	New structure at Surrey Street	2	2	2	-2	-2	-1	-2	3	-3	3	3	3	2	200	40	