

**BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER
CHRISTCHURCH**

UNDER the Resource Management Act 1991

IN THE MATTER of a publicly notified Resource Consent Application
RMA/2018/2029

BETWEEN **FOODSTUFFS SOUTH ISLAND LIMITED**
Applicant

AND **CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL**
Submitter

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF LEONARD ANTHONY FLEETE ON BEHALF
OF THE CANTERBURY REGIONAL COUNCIL
26 November 2019**

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Introduction

- 1 My full name is Leonard Anthony Fleete.
- 2 I am Senior Strategy Advisor, Public Transport, in the Operations Directorate of the Canterbury Regional Council.
- 3 I have been employed by the Regional Council for 23 years in a variety of positions in the Public Transport and Regional Land Transport areas. During this time, I have been involved in the development of numerous iterations of the Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan and the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Plan.
- 4 Prior to my employment with the Regional Council I worked for the Ministry of Transport (and its latter evolutions Land Transport New Zealand and the Land Transport Safety Authority) in a number of policy and operational roles.
- 5 Although this is a Council level hearing, and not a hearing under the Resource Management Act 1991, I confirm that I have read and am familiar with the Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014. I agree to comply with that code. Other than where I state I am relying on the evidence of another person, my evidence is within my area of expertise. I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions that I express.

Scope of Evidence

- 6 I am giving evidence in relation to the Regional Council's submission on the publicly notified resource consent application RMA/2018/2029 Address: 171&165 Main North Road; 7, 7A & 7B Northcote Road (supermarket application).
- 7 My evidence will focus on the implications of the application on Public Transport operations and planning.
- 8 I was involved in the Transport Conferencing process on 16 October 2019, and meeting with Foodstuffs and Abley consulting representatives.

Public transport implications

- 9 The application proposes accessing the site through a new set of traffic lights in Main North Road, approximately 150 metres from existing lights

to the north at the intersection of Northcote Rd and 200 metres from the light controlled Cranford St intersection to the south. This section of road currently has dedicated bus priority facilities in the form of peak time bus lanes in both directions.

- 10 The Main North Road is identified as a core public transport route in a number of planning documents including “Our Space 2018 – 2048” greater Christchurch settlement pattern update document and the Christchurch Transport Strategic Plan 2012-2042. Bus priority in the form of peak time dedicated bus lanes have been provided along the Main North Road/Papanui Road corridor to ensure that the travel experience of bus passengers is enhanced, and usage of public transport is encouraged.
- 11 Buses using the Main North Road service the suburbs of Redwood, Casebrook, Northwood and Belfast in Christchurch City and all of the major settlements in Waimakariri District – Kaiapoi, Rangiora, Woodend and Pegasus/Waikuku. Passengers using these bus services travel along Main North Road to directly access destinations at Northlands, Papanui, Merivale, Central Christchurch and south to Cashmere, and to Bishopdale, Christchurch Airport and Hornby. Other passengers will use these services to transfer to other destinations at Northlands and the Central City bus exchange.
- 12 The bus lanes along the Main North Road enhance the public transport experience for bus users by allowing buses to move along this roadway without sitting in the congested general traffic lanes and competing for limited space. Effectively, by using bus lanes, buses get ahead of cars and the comparative journey time is faster and more reliable, making using the bus more attractive to savvy commuters.
- 13 Moving more people in less vehicles is a desire of urban transport agencies, as it means that the road asset operates more efficiently, and the negative effects of congestion and low occupancy vehicle traffic is reduced.
- 14 The applicant proposes that access to the site of the new supermarket be via a new signalised mid-block intersection. This would result in an additional break in the dedicated peak time bus lanes along Main North Road. The issue with the traffic signals is one of an additional demand being placed on a scarce resource. In this case the scarce resource is

time and the additional demand is the time required to get traffic from the new supermarket access across Main North Road. This will require vehicles travelling along Main North Road to give up some of their time to enable this new movement to occur. It is potentially adding to the delay those commuters travelling along Main North Road experience. Additional mitigation opportunities have been proposed at this location to ensure bus movements are supported, notably a “bus-jump” signal which would allow buses advance priority through the traffic lights. In my opinion this will not speed up journeys for bus passengers travelling along Main North Road.

- 15 Any additional sets of traffic lights along this route will delay the journey of bus passengers travelling along the Main North Road corridor to and from destinations beyond Cranford street. In the 2.5 kilometre stretch of Main North Road between Daniels Road and Wyndham Street there are currently nine separate sets of traffic lights, each with the possibility of slowing the progress of a commuter passengers’ bus along the corridor. Adding an additional set of lights to service the applicant’s site will not improve this situation and will not make the movement of through passengers easier or faster. While I accept that the negative effects of an additional set of traffic lights can be mitigated somewhat, I don’t believe an additional set of lights will improve the travel experience of through bus passengers along Main North Road.
- 16 As an athletics analogy it is equivalent to adding an extra set of hurdles into a 400 metres hurdles race. Having the extra hurdle isn’t going to make it easier - even if you provide a mini-tramp to aid the jump it is probably going to break the athlete’s rhythm and it would be quicker if they weren’t there.

Key activity centres – District Centres

- 17 This application proposes to establish an anchor supermarket outside of a Key Activity Centre/District Centre or a Neighbourhood Centre. The effect of the application will be that the Pak n Save supermarket at Northlands Mall will be relocated 1km down the road.
- 18 There is an important inter-relationship between public transport and Key Activity Centres. Concentrating retail and services at certain points in the network allows public transport passengers to satisfy their needs for shopping and other types of activity (be they banking, library, health

or other needs) in one trip. Not having to undertake additional trips to complete all tasks means a passenger doesn't incur a "transfer penalty". A transfer penalty is the perceived cost of having to re-engage with the network to complete tasks. The cost can be monetary in the form of additional fares – which the Regional Council has tried to minimise in the development of the Christchurch metro fareset – or temporal in the form of the extra time it will take having to undertake an additional bus ride, with the inherent waiting and boarding in addition to the actual movement through the network. These additional penalties can make choosing public transport less attractive, particularly when a potential user is planning their trip and selecting what they perceive to be the most effective mode. Combining many "activities" at key activity centres reduces the need for additional movement through the network and is a positive, symbiotic relationship for public transport.

- 19 This positive relationship is reflected in numerous planning documents in Christchurch including the Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy and Canterbury Regional Policy Statement, and this has been outlined in my colleague Joanne Stapleton's statement of evidence. The Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan 2018-2028 of which I am more familiar, also references key activity centres and key attractors. The core principle in the development of the public transport network in the Regional Public Transport Plan is summed up in the statement:¹

"Designing a public transport system which better connects key activity centres will improve access and provide transport choice, in turn creating a more liveable and inclusive city. The integration of public transport and land use planning is key to creating communities and a more liveable city. In particular, there may be an opportunity for rapid transit to support more compact urban growth and improve access to opportunities like employment, education and recreation. The challenge is to better integrate transport with existing and planned land use in Greater Christchurch."

- 20 The network design in the Regional Public Transport Plan is predicated on improving journey times to be a competitive transport alternative, refocusing services on major suburban attractions such as key activity centres and improving frequency. Establishing and moving facilities

¹ Canterbury Regional Public Transport Plan 2018-2028, p 12.

from points of attraction and concentration dilutes the effectiveness of public transport to provide an alternative transport choice.

Summary of public transport implications arising from the proposed development

- 21 In my view, the application raises the following implications for public transport:
- (a) Additional traffic lights are likely to disrupt the existing bus infrastructure and add to travel time on the core blue line services;
 - (b) Public transport priority infrastructure is likely to be disrupted;
 - (c) The proposal will cut existing bus priority infrastructure. - slowing travel time and reducing its effectiveness.
 - (d) It will be more difficult to cater for multi-purpose journeys.
 - (e) People will need to take two buses if they want to make use of the services at Northlands mall and then shop at Pak n Save, 1km down the road.

Leonard Anthony Fleete

26 November 2019