

Generation Zero Submission to Te Waihanga – New Zealand Infrastructure Commission

July 2021

Submission Details:

Generation Zero is a youth-led climate action organisation. We mobilise New Zealanders to engage with decision-making and campaign for intergenerational climate justice. Our submission is focused around our values of supporting rangatiratanga and climate justice, friendship first, and non-partisanship.

We have answered the questions asked by the commission that we have identified as key to our values, below.

Our submission is underpinned by the work completed in [our submission to the Climate Change Commission](#), as linked.

We wish to speak in support of our submission at any future public hearings relating to the commission or strategy. Our contact details are provided below.

Contacts:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



Summary and Key Recommendations:

We support the Infrastructure Commission's vision of a unified infrastructure strategy for Aotearoa. The fair, accessible, and achievable implementation of this requires the following points.

- The strategy and commission must genuinely incorporate the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as central to all its operations.
- Climate adaptation consistent with the Climate Change Commission's targets, and the Paris Agreement, whichever is more ambitious, must be central to all new infrastructure planning.
- All climate adaptation must be achieved in a manner consistent with Climate Justice, recognising the disproportionate effects of climate change on structurally oppressed or more vulnerable groups of people.

It has been seen that the private sector has sometimes struggled to deliver significant infrastructure projects to time and budget requirements. We support the Infrastructure Commission's discussion of a government body to procure and deliver significant infrastructure projects.

Thorough assessment of infrastructure related co-benefits must underpin the commission's work. The thorough assessment of such benefits lead to better and more equitable decision making by government officials who are often lobbied and pressured to consider short term mitigation costs rather than long-term gains in regards to climate change.

Our position is that behavioral change is a more effective and immediate solution to many infrastructure issues than reliance on unproven, future technologies. In relation to this strategy, this means that the better utilisation of current infrastructure, including the embodied carbon in such infrastructure, must be considered ahead of any new projects. Some modification to established behaviours is needed for the successful adhesion to New Zealand's climate targets. The commission should not be afraid of short-term pain for long-term gain in this context.

It is important that all groups have a seat at the table in the development of future infrastructure plans. This may involve the Commission needing to proactively reach out to some groups. Suggested groups include, but are not limited to, Te Ara Whatu, Pacific Climate Warriors, and CCS Disability Action.



Key Questions:

Q1. What are your views on the proposed 2050 infrastructure vision for New Zealand?

Generation Zero appreciates the consideration and aroha behind this vision, however we feel that it needs to further identify resilience to the worst possible predicted outcomes by scientific review instead of classifying events as “shocks” - worse weather is a predicted outcome of our abuse of the environment, as can be seen by the recent flooding and cold snaps that affect the most vulnerable of our communities. This means we cannot delay looking at our infrastructure in a way that reflects defence against the worst of what we expect so that our communities are minimally affected by these threats in future.

Q2. What are your views on the decision-making principles we've chosen? Are there others that should be included?

Overall Generation Zero supports the decision making principles chosen, in particular the direction of Te Tiriti-led outcomes. We would however like to make an addition to the point on page 26 regarding future focus - “We think about the future while learning from the past and ensure that our infrastructure is adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances, including climate change.” - and the expected effects it will bring to our environment, including but not limited to the increased likelihood of extreme weather events. Therefore, considerations must be made for infrastructure under increased threat, including considerations for outdoor workers. Newly created infrastructure needs to be built for the future, not for the present

Q3. Are there any other infrastructure issues, challenges or opportunities that we should consider?

Generation Zero appreciates the amount of valuable thought that has been put into the issues, challenges and opportunities that we will face in our infrastructure development as we continue to adapt and mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. We would like to request the following considerations:

It is time for us to think critically about the infrastructure that will be needed to shift communities from unsustainable local economies in future, for example dairy farm communities being converted to horticultural farms. Considering these changes now will result in better fiscal decisions. Waiting too long to consider these implications is unfair to communities reliant on currently unsustainable careers as it will result in the external pressures of the market in future to “pop” the local economy bubble in that area, which can have catastrophic results, This can result can already be seen in some mining towns of the USA and indeed is already starting to impact our dairy farmers in the present day.

This section is excellent at covering climate change as a lens but manly identifies water and housing as being threatened by climate impacts. This section needs to specify the extreme climate weather changes, like for example the current lack of adequate infrastructure to handle the flooding in Canterbury. These events will become more frequent so they need to be



expected and planned for rather than being treated as rare events and consider what mitigation infrastructure will be needed in the future. This consideration should also include more than one event happening at once that may aggravate each other; if a flood forces citizens to congregate, it can make the spread of a pandemic much worse. This is especially concerning in considering how communities will draw close to resources as they limit, or to avoid issues such as sea level rise.

Another issue that this section entirely misses is that the infrastructure that our system currently has is often not appropriate for the various needs of our community, which will get worse as climate impacts do also. Issues for those who need plastic straws, mobility access in CBD areas, social access in pandemic lockdowns, are already commonly ignored by current green movements in their aims to create cleaner spaces in our environment, This provides an opportunity for NZIC to not only reimagine what infrastructure in community spaces that involves all members could look like, but also include these members of the community that face these issues heavily in the decision making processes of how infrastructure is developed.

Furthermore, there is also an opportunity for local materials and mahi to be used in the creation of our infrastructure, both in wider Aotearoa and in our local communities. We implore you to consider infrastructure that is designed by and for local Iwi and communities. This will not only strengthen the fabric of these areas but also allow the personalities of different communities in Aotearoa shine through, which is one of the features that makes our country attractive.

We would also like to mention that Generation Zero was told by those in Waka Kotahi that were working on the PTOM public consultation that they were not in collaboration with NZIC on this draft strategy. This is despite page 33 identifying the issue of infrastructure being lumpy due to needing rules and regulations in place for competitors and likewise the identification of unity and continuity needed throughout departments in this strategy. This is disappointing as clearly there is significant overlay in these issues and opportunities and we would appreciate hearing about more consistent collaboration between these pieces of legislation in future.

Q19. What cities or other areas might be appropriate for some form of congestion pricing and/or road tolling?

Congestion pricing is an effective tool to reduce emissions in urban centres. We support the use of congestion pricing across New Zealand to best account for emissions resulting for the private motor vehicle. It is important however to counteract equity impacts arising from such pricing. London's Ultra Low Emissions Zones are a blueprint New Zealand should follow in all its cities for compliance with the Zero Carbon Act.

Q.20 What is the best way to address potential equity impacts arising from congestion pricing?



Generation Zero supports congestion pricing as a measure to reduce single-occupant vehicle travel, especially in our urban areas. We envision pricing is only implemented where public transport is well developed and accessible alternatives are easily accessible. Currently, few, if any, areas in New Zealand meet this criteria. Therefore, the implementation of congestion pricing requires concurrent investment in public transport and active mode infrastructure.

Q21. Is a 10-year lapse period for infrastructure corridor designations long enough? Is there a case for extending it to 30 years consistent with spatial planning?

10 years is not sufficient for infrastructure corridor designations. A 50 year designation would show true forward thinking, considering ever growing urbanism rates in New Zealand, and unforeseen future demands.

In Auckland, the never-built Eastern Motorway is now a productive rail corridor, and soon to be a pathway for active modes. The extended designation of this corridor is what has allowed these outcomes, and is a model for what we would like to see continued throughout Aotearoa.

Q22. Should a multi-modal corridor protection fund be established? If so, what should the fund cover?

We support the establishment of this fund. Such a fund must prioritise just outcomes, including Te Tiriti and supporting the Zero Carbon Act by prioritising active modes, public transport, and accessible options above the private motor vehicle.

Q34. Do you see merit in having a central government agency procure and deliver infrastructure projects? If so, which types of projects should it cover?

We see merit in this proposal. Such an agency would effectively be able to procure and manage all infrastructure projects of national importance without the cyclical nature of private business impacting delivery outcomes.

It is important that such an agency takes a holistic view of infrastructure projects, and evaluates them on merit including recognition of wider social outcomes arising from the projects. This could, for example, include integrating the densification of Kainga Ora housing with stormwater or transit renewals

Q35. What could be done to improve the productivity of the construction sector and reduce the cost of delivering infrastructure?

The integration of concurrent projects is a must. Infrastructure, for example that under roads, must be upgraded in unison with all other infrastructure in the same corridor to reduce disruption, lower costs, and avoid unnecessary duplication.

Summary

Generation Zero would like to thank Te Waihanga for the opportunity to contribute to such an important document for the future of Aotearoa. We also appreciate immensely the valuable



time and effort given throughout the consultation process and the interest in how the process was as a whole. We would like to commend the NZIC on such a well formatted, easy to understand and well considered strategy.

Although the document itself is large, we appreciate that this is due to the content and formatting needed and that it was made with accessibility in mind. We would recommend that in future, more forms of this consultation were made, such as with easy to understand videos and more kinetic forms of engagement to further reach members of the community that usually otherwise might not have capacity or interest to engage with as many pages. We really look forward to seeing the concrete actions that come from this strategy.

Ngā mihi maioha,

Generation Zero