

### **BIG 3 (+1) Ideas for Congestion Busting:**

1. **School Travel** - no congestion at school holidays - make it like that for the rest of the year.
2. **Townhouses** - more close in living = less car commuting - allow 2 dwellings per section immediately, then create new inner residential zone to allow more townhouses close in.
3. **Clearways on South Waimea** - Annesbrook to hospital hill - just at peak times and available only for buses and trade vehicles
4. **Road building Induces more Traffic** - Obama's transport advisor says "building roads to ease congestion is like trying to cure obesity by loosening your belt" More roads mean more cars choking our city. People not cars bring city vibrancy. Roadbuilding is not a solution in anything other than the short term

Expanding on the 3 big ideas:

#### **NELSUST's 3 BIG CONGESTION BUSTERS**

1. **(School Travel)**. In the School Holidays, road congestion all but disappears. Who in this room, was carted to school in a car? Almost none of earlier generations were, why is this the norm now? If we make it safe, and enticing, to walk and cycle to school, more will do it - its better for kids, its better for parents.

Kids getting to school under their own steam is worth it just from the sociological advantages. The kids learn independence, learn about their town by walking or biking through it, use it as a time to socialise with other kids, observe things on the way to and from school, and all the while getting useful physical exercise. And its better for parents, in that they are relieved of peak hour driving stress. Parents can initially, walk or bike **with** their kids, eventually letting them bike further, until they can bike there by themselves. Biking on safe routes e.g. on footpaths, where the footpath is wide enough, on off road cycle paths where footpath not wide enough, and only biking on the "road" in special "shared zones" like Upper Trafalgar St. where it is like the vehicles are driving through a pedestrian area.

Rototuna school has only 10-12% of kids being carted to school in cars, the vast majority bike, walk or scoot, to school. Why can't we learn from them?

2. **(Townhouses)** - People living close in to town don't need to road commute. If you are within a km of the city centre, you have the option, of an easy walk or a short bike, to get there. These people are not the ones clogging our roads.

The NZTA Slink Bus. Case Study modeling, assumes no extra people will be living in close in suburbs, right out to 2033 - ridiculous. One Example: There are going to be 15 households living where Betts Carpark is = 15 to 30 fewer cars commuting at peak times from this one development.

Regional centres like Nelson are completely different to bigger metropolitan centres. In Nelson you can be 1km from the centre of town but still be in a residential area - in the bigger centres being this close in you would be in a commercial area. Far more people want to live in a townhouse in a close in residential area than want to live right in the CBD in an apartment; almost all of us still want our own bit of dirt here in the provinces.

Apartment living is a step too far for most Nelsonians in 2016.

What we are talking about is not high rise, but medium density. Its not apartments that will bring many more people in to live close into the city centre, but townhouses - adjoining walls, but each with their own bit of ground. Like Hathaway Court opposite Trailways. The next time you're passing have a look and consider if you could live there.

To allow more people to live close into town, we could start by allowing 2 dwellings per property, as of right. And do this whilst keeping all other current regulations e.g. height to boundary rules, daylight planes, boundary offsets, maximum heights, site coverage the same, just so there are no arguments and we can get some “runs on the board” with new affordable housing. After all, the cost difference between a new house in Winton or Nightcaps and one in Nelson is just in the value of the land: the building costs are similar. Two Dwellings per section, as of right, effectively creates free land. It also saves the council money and therefore rates as there is no infrastructure burden (people use existing roads). Water supply and stormwater infrastructure requirements for the 2nd dwelling, could be significantly mitigated, if there was a requirement that all water fittings are low water use types and a rainwater buffer tank be included. Low flow taps, toilets and shower heads lessen wastewater disposal load (this is not obvious) as well as lessening water supply requirements.

Compare this to “forcing people” to live in the outer suburbs like Ngawhatu or Dodson’s valley due to a lack of land for housing closer in. Do you really like paying through your rates for new infrastructure for new arrivals?

After “2 dwellings as of right” rule in place, then we can move onto creating a new **Inner Residential Zone**, in the easy-walk-to-town areas of the city. This would allow higher density than current residential zones, to allow townhouses to be built - we suggest a max 3 stories, with max. 2 story high adjoining walls. It would allow **smaller** sections and **greater** site coverage whilst keeping minimum sunny outdoor areas. Carparking requirements could be reduced in recognition that this land being close to town that families don’t actually need 2 cars, but giving people the choice to incorporate more carparks if they wished. NCC says in the draft RPS that 10% of people in the “central suburbs” don’t have any car at all.

A good example of this is the bottom of Shelbourne St - right adjacent to an Inner City Fringe Zone but actually is a low density residential zone - the first 3 houses on the left at the bottom of the street would be illegal under current zoning - they have 2 story high adjoining walls, high site coverage - perfectly right for being this close in, but illegal to build like this now.

Having more people living close into town is a key plank to increased city **vibrancy**.

**3. (Clearways on South Waimea)** - Annesbrook to hospital hill - just at peak times and available only for buses and trade vehicles.

Express buses running from Richmond on Whakatu drive, directly into Nelson without stopping, running on bus and trade vehicle only lanes would help make, commuting by bus, a more attractive option. And that is actually the issue: its not about forcing people out of cars, its about giving people enticing choices to single occupant car commuting. You only need to shift a small proportion of people out of car commuting to make a significant difference, as congestion is non linear: a small decrease in traffic numbers can have a big impact on congestion reduction.

In more detail: a clearway lane would be formed either side of Waimea Rd from the Annesbrook roundabout **just** to the bottom of the Hospital hill at Motueka St. The morning clearway would be into Nelson on the Western side of Waimea Rd and the afternoon on the Grampians (East) side in the afternoon. Road widening would be required in places, but this would be a radically small cost compared to the S.Link. The clearway lane would enable buses to travel faster than car commuters. This is critical in giving people attractive options to car commuting - after all most people, would just as soon be stuck in traffic, in their own car, as being stuck in traffic in a bus.

We propose that every second **express** bus from Richmond would originate from Wakefield, stopping only at Brightwater before Richmond and then onto Nelson. A real

advantage would be if Whakatu Drive was 4 lanes all the way, with the outer lanes reserved for just buses and trade vehicles, just like the Waimea South clearway lanes. So you can see that these trade vehicle lanes would be great for business productivity.

**4. Road Building Fails** to reduce congestion. While this is not an answer to congestion, its a pointer of where not to go. And it is perhaps the killer blow for the road - the real SLink-Slayer is that actually you can't road build your way out of congestion - it doesn't work. Building more roads creates more traffic.

Its Obvious right? If you've got road congestion the answer is to build more roads. Its obvious like its obvious that the earth is flat.

The earth isn't flat, obvious is not always right.

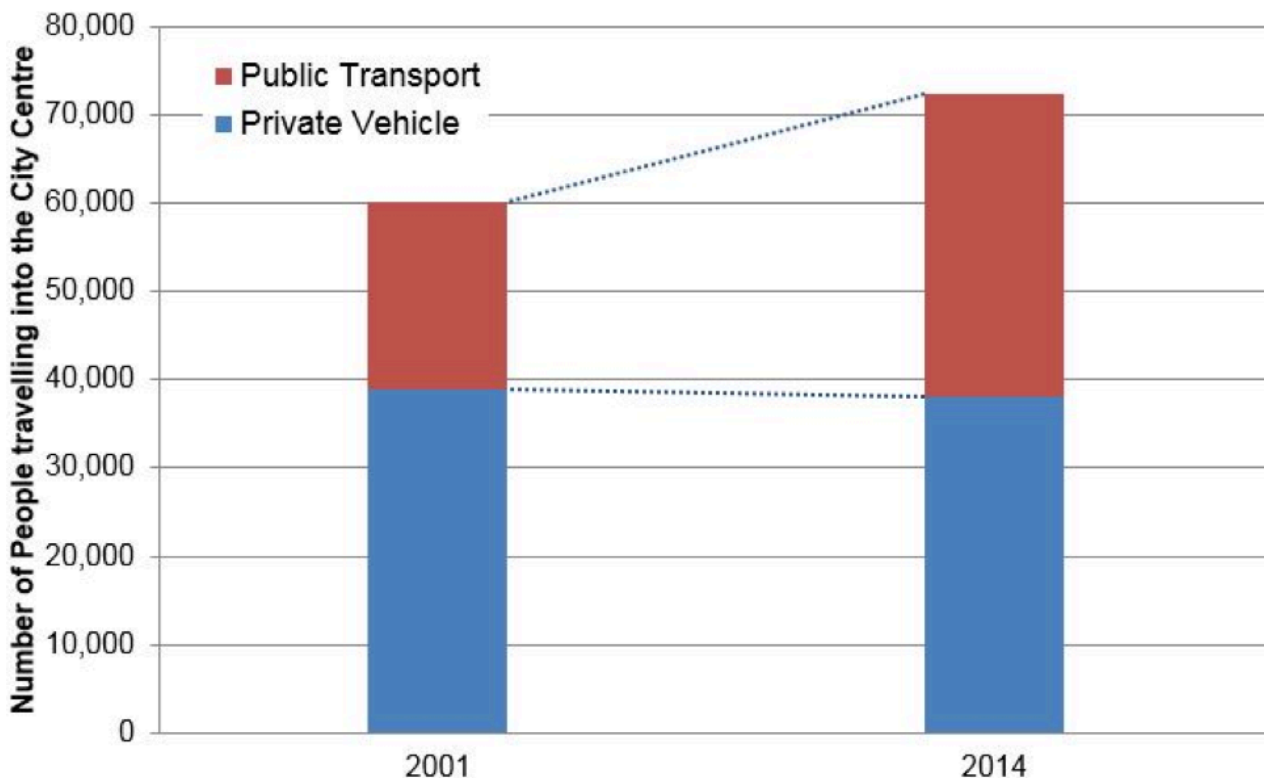
I challenge any of you to name one place in the world, where roadbuilding has solved congestion, in anything other than the short term AND made it a nicer place to live in.

Can anybody name a car dominated city they like visiting?

Does anyone really prefer LA to Barcelona, Houston to Copenhagen?

Building a third road through Nelson to ease congestion would be a failure - just like the M25 ring road around London was. The M25 was built to solve congestion and was immediately gridlocked upon opening: people made investment decisions based on the new road - they moved their businesses and housing out of London. Building road capacity to solve congestion is a dog chasing its tail, as Auckland is belatedly realising: Auckland is finally getting its public transport on track - ALL of the increase in people entering the city has been from Public Transport. 50 years of single solution - roadbuilding has failed to ease congestion.

**People Entering The City Centre by Car and PT: 2001-2014**  
(Morning Peak Period, 7am-9am)



Obama's deputy secretary for transport acknowledges this when he says "building more roads to ease congestion is like loosening your belt to solve obesity" Loosening your belt doesn't solve the problem. What is missing is giving people enticing alternatives to car commuting.

## **MORE OPTIONS**

1. **Beach Bus** - Part of the reason for holiday congestion in Nelson City Centre and along Rocks Rd and Tahunanui is the lack of a viable beach bus. Having to wait an hour for a bus between 9am and 3pm, 6pm onwards is just unacceptable and the reason people take their car instead - this chokes Nelson City up with cars (from Tahuna beach campers) as well as choking Rocks Rd. Suggest beach bus only runs over summer, runs every 10 minutes and is a different fun bus - maybe a double decker, maybe an open topped double decker on fine days. And perhaps the beach bus carries onto the airport, after all there is presently no airport bus.
2. **Cycle Connections** - While a few cycle paths separated from road traffic have been put in place, they are few in number and more importantly poorly connected. When you have something more like a completed network in place you get a sudden lift in cycle numbers due to the "network effect". It would never be contemplated to dump granny in her Honda Jazz off the end of motorway into a quarry with big dump trucks rumbling around, yet this is precisely what presently happens with cycle paths. They dump you out onto the street to mix it up with the trucks. It is surprising we have seen anything like the growth we have in cycling when these safe and attractive connections are completely missing.
3. **Rocks Road Shared Path** - Its ridiculous that currently two buggies can't pass each other on the the footpath around rocks Rd without one of them going onto the road. And there is currently significant suppressed demand for cycling around there from those who are not confident or brave enough to bike on the road. A generous shared path on the seaward side of parked cars will bring a whole new tranche of current car commuters an attractive alternative.
4. **Barging** - Cost neutral log barging of export logs coming from the south of the city, going to Rabbit Island barge terminal rather than the port, gets 35,000 of the most intimidating trucks off the road per year. Double handling would be reduced as logs would be offloaded from trucks directly onto barges. When the log ships come in, the barges would be taken to the seaward side of the log ships tied up at the port. The log ship cranes currently load logs from the port would simply be swung around to load the logs off the barges. No dredging would be required, just some piles to tie barges and floating ramp to. With 4 high tides, 4 barges could load a log ship giving it the 2 day turnaround time it currently has. The whole project could be cost neutral by freeing up valuable port land for more productive uses than storing logs, and using low value land on the SE side of Rabbit Island for the barge depot. This log barging may be able to be extended to fertiliser and fruit, sawn timber and MDF barging, getting those trucks off the road too.
5. **Tahuna lights** - Provide off-street carparking to Tahuna Shops on the Eastern side of Tahuna Drive to enable 2 lanes of traffic from Bisley to Muratai Sts.
6. **School Crossings** - provide either under or overpasses at Tahuna School, Hampton St School and Girls & Boys Colleges on Waimea Rd so children don't have to wait to cross the road, and cars don't have to wait for pedestrians
7. **Congestion Charging** - Charge peak hour commuters a small congestion charge for the privilege of driving on the roads at peak times. Buses and trade vehicles would not have to pay this. See Jonas Eliasson's TED talk on how a very small 1-2 euro congestion charge had dramatic effects on congestion and how initially 70% of people opposed it and now 70% approve of it.

# Q&A

## Nelsusts Answers to Commonly Asked Questions about Road Congestion

### 1. Congestion is Bad Now we've got to do something about it

- a. Well its only bad outside of school holidays. During school holidays it all but disappears. Why are so many children driven to school when none used to be? If we can make it safe and attractive for kids to get to school under their own steam it is better for the child socially, educationally and physically. It is also better for the parent not always having to accompany their child all the way to school. And of course it eliminates a major source of road congestion. So lets have all the wider footpaths as shared paths that children can ride on, segregated cycle paths where there are no wide footpaths and have them all well linked up.

### 2. Its obvious that if roads are congested you need more roads

- a. Actually more roads mean more cars and you are back to square one. The M25 London ring road was built to solve congestion and was immediately gridlocked upon opening: people made investment decisions based on the new road - they moved their businesses and housing out of London. Building road capacity to solve congestion is a dog chasing its tail as Auckland is belatedly realising. Obama's deputy secretary for transport acknowledges this when he says "building more roads to ease congestion is like loosening you belt to solve obesity" What is missing is giving people enticing alternatives to car commuting.

### 3. Traffic is Bad Now, its only going to get Worse

- a. Nelson has had record regional population growth, yet NCC traffic counts show flat to declining traffic since 2006, well before the global financial crisis.
  - i. Trends:
    1. Aging Population:NCC says virtually all of future population growth will be in the over 65's with their low incidence of peak hour driving.
    2. Kids getting drivers licenses later or not at all - more interested in being connected than buying cars
    3. Working from home increased 14% between the 2006 and 2013 census here
    4. Trips to work by bus increased 72%, the actual numbers are still small numbers still but big trend change, 9% increase in active mode travel (walking biking), 42% increase in electric bike and motorcycle travel yet car commuting decreased as a proportion.
    5. More two way traffic - what the 2010-11 Arterial Study found was that even if traffic did increase, congestion wouldn't; The flow would become more two-way - i.e. instead of just into Nelson in the morning and out in the afternoon, it would be in and out in the morning and in and out in the afternoon.

### 4. Getting Trucks off Rocks Road Necessary to Improve Iconic Waterfront

- a. If you look at the glorious Oriental Parade in Wellington, all of the good part of it is on the seaward side of the parked cars: the road is not great. We can do our own oriental parade here with a really generous esplanade on the seaward side of parked cars. Width is critical, the original 4m wide was marginal, the 2.9m current width is really not generous: it can be made wider like Connolly's "wharf" fishing platform just with a few legs into the sea floor, without needing to extend the sea wall. And we can and should increase the seaward carparking wherever possible to create a buffer. Some of this seaward carparking could be for vendors selling ice-creams, coffee, fishing gear, togs and towels. And some of the carparking buffer lane could be amenity seating areas and big raised beds for large trees.

## **5. Putting Trucks onto the Southern Link is the only way to get trucks off Rocks Rd**

- a. Log barging would get 35,000 of the most intimidating trucks at the same time reducing double handling of logs and freeing up valuable port land for more productive uses than storing logs. It could be zero cost though selling the valuable Port land for more productive uses and use the unused South Eastern side of Rabbit island for the barge depot.
- b. Smaller delivery trucks and every campervan in the country would still use Rocks Road

## **6. Building the Southern Link would mean Rocks Road would become a quiet route**

- a. The 2010-11 Arterial Study was specifically asked this question and they found that Rocks Road would continue to be a busy road carrying 65 to 80% of its current traffic even if the S.link was ever built. Its never going to be safe for unconfident riders biking around there with every campervan in the region going around there with the drivers gaping at the view.

## **7. The Southern Link Needs to be built for “Resilience” (to natural disasters)**

- a. We already have 2 routes through Nelson, we’ve already got one spare for emergencies.

The Southern Link route was blocked in 4 places at the same time as Rocks Road was blocked during heavy rainfall in December 2011. The bottom of St Vincent St is already in a region marked on planning maps as an inundation zone whereas Rocks Road isn’t on an inundation zone. The Rocks Road Esplanade / shared path would be higher than the road and project out past the sea wall with the chain-link fence on a plinth some 300mm high so the chainlink fence meets current codes. These things combined could stop waves from breaking over the road during storms.

## **8. Traffic Congestion is Hampering Nelson’s Economy**

- a. This is not what the arterial study found - to quote from the final report “*Whilst Option B (Southern Link) does provide additional capacity for a marginal increase in costs when compared to Option A, the social and environmental consequences of realising that additional capacity are significant. The consequences may be able to be justified if the current network was reaching capacity and the economic wellbeing of the city was being affected. However, the current forecasts show that this is simply not the case and the additional capacity will not be required over the modelled time period (25 years).*” p27 2nd paragraph Stage 4 report of the Arterial Study.

There are things we can do to reduce our road congestion to the minimal levels it is at school holiday times. And reduce the summer visitor congestion by building a generous shared path around Rocks Rd and providing a frequent beach-bus to connect the city to the beach.

## **9. We Need an Efficient Transport Corridor**

- a. Whatever else the Southern Link might be, an efficient route to the port it is not. It is the best part of a kilometre longer from the Annesbrook roundabout to the Port gates and rather than being on the flat it involves grinding up over the Bishopdale hill. And whereas there is only 1 set of lights or roundabouts between Annesbrook and the Port gates going via Rocks Rd, the Southern Link route would involve at least 4 sets of lights or to the port (Toi-Toi, Gloucester, Halifax and QE2 Drive)

## **10. Its Been Planned Since the 60s, we just need to get on with it.**

- a. A lot of things we did in the 60’s now looks not just old fashioned but plain dumb. We used to think it was a great idea for everyone to smoke cigarettes in cars with their kids, we used to cover our apples with DDT and we used to give people suffering mental illness frontal lobotomies. We need this century’s solutions to this century’s problems.