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Wellington Public Transport Spine Study – Cycle Aware Wellington submission

We would like to present our submission verbally. Please contact eleonor.meecham@gmail.com

Cycle Aware Wellington is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation aimed at improving conditions for existing cyclists and encouraging more people to bike more often. We advocate for cyclists who use their bikes for transport. Since 1994, we have worked constructively with councils on a wide variety of cycle projects. We represent 600 members and supporters.

Key points of our submission

We support both of the rapid transport options – BRT and LRT. However, we want to see the following become part of the chosen option:

- separated cycle lanes along the *entire* transport spine
- bikes allowed on public transport vehicles
- bike parking at main stations and the termini.

We have a proposal for:

- rerouting public transport away from the Golden Mile to make this a pedestrian / cycle only shopping area.

We have a question about:

- how the proposed cycle routes on Kent / Cambridge Terraces fit with the possible mitigation for the Basin Bridge offered by NZTA.

We support both Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit

We support both of the rapid options. We are very pleased to see that separated cycle lanes are proposed in some places, but we want to see these plans developed to include a safe, separated cycle route along the entire transport spine. This can be done if on-street parking is removed in some places along the route, and we strongly support this where road space is constrained.

Safe cycling routes are essential along the length of the transport spine

Easing congestion and unlocking economic growth by improving access were two of the overall problems addressed by the *Wellington Public Transport Spine Study*.

While providing better public transport is key to easing congestion in the city, we believe that

making cycling safer and more attractive is equally important. For many people, driving private vehicles to the city centre is currently the most attractive transport option – it's cheaper and faster than public transport (especially for families), and appears to many to be safer than cycling. A connected cycle network, allowing safe and direct commuting and recreational riding, would convince many more people to choose this as a viable transport option. We also know that increased bicycle use improves access to shops, and that people tend to shop more often when travelling by bike than by car, which can contribute to economic growth (New York City Department of Transportation, nd).

We see that separated cycle lanes are currently proposed along only some of the transport spine, presumably because of lack of space on some roads. We want to see a separated cycle network along the *entire* spine (either on the same roads as, or parallel to, the public transport route). We strongly advocate for cycle lanes to replace on-street parking on the following segments of the spine:

- along the Golden Mile
- Riddiford Street (south of the hospital)
- Kilbirnie Crescent

Providing an *incomplete* cycle network along the transport spine will cause problems. Safe cycle lanes attract more people to cycling, but some of these are people who will only cycle if they don't have to mix with traffic. An incomplete network will either put these cyclists off, or force them to cycle in conditions they don't feel confident in, which can cause accidents.

We are concerned about the lack of cycle options along the Golden Mile

To make cycling through the CBD a viable and attractive option for the general public, a safe, direct cycle route is essential.

The Golden Mile is narrow, and we note that no cycle lanes are proposed from Courtenay Place to the railway station. To connect both ends of the transport spine, and because the Golden Mile contains key destinations, it is important that cyclists are provided for on this section. Not giving cyclists direct, safe, and comfortable passage here may tempt some to illegally use the rapid transit lanes.

We think it's essential to plan ahead for significantly increased bicycle use by 2022. It makes economic and practical sense to plan and build for safe cycling whenever other roading changes are made.

We propose:

Remove parking from the entire Golden Mile, providing room for cycle lanes and making this a more pedestrian- and shopper-friendly stretch of the city. Short-stay angle-parking bays could be created on some side streets to make up for the parks that are removed.

Cambridge Terrace to Taranaki St: replace vehicle lanes with a 'shared space' where pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles share a space that blends in with the footpaths (similar to lower Cuba Street, but without the car parks). This space would include street furniture and trees (similar to Fort Street and Elliot Street in Auckland). The rapid transit route would

still exist on one side, as shown in the cross sections of the *Spine Study* (Appendix B).

Taranaki Street to Lambton Quay: Add separated cycle lanes where they are most practical, depending on the eventual public transport route. These cycle lanes could either follow the transport spine exactly, or use alternative but equally direct routes. For example, buses will no longer use Dixon Street, so this could become a convenient cycle route.

We see potential for a fast but safe cycle-commuting route along the quays

We see that Featherston / Hunter / Victoria Streets and Jervois Quay will become a secondary route for buses at peak times. Bus traffic on these roads will further reduce the convenience, safety, and attractiveness of commuting through the CBD by bicycle.

Waterloo / Customhouse / Jervois Quays have ample room for cycle lanes. Reducing the number of car traffic lanes to provide for cycling would also make the quays less of a barrier between the city and the waterfront, as proposed by WCC's [Public Spaces and Public Life Study](#) (Gehl Architects, 2004).

A safe cycle route is needed from the Basin Reserve to Kilbirnie

When the Basin Bridge was first proposed, part of the plan was to provide a shared walking and cycling path along Ruahine Street, joining the Basin Reserve to Kilbirnie and the cycle lane in Evans Bay. The proposed plan for the rapid transport options makes this no longer viable.

We want to see the cycle network joined between the proposed cycle lanes on Kent Terrace and Adelaide road and the current cycle lane in Evans bay. We propose a separated two-way cycle lane along Moxham Avenue / Kupe Street / Hamilton Road, joining up with a cycle lane on Kilbirnie Crescent. Some consolidation or removal of parking may be necessary.

A safe cycle route is needed from Newtown to Kilbirnie

The proposed rapid transport options give commuters the choice of travelling to either Newton or Kilbirnie, on two separate 'arms' of the network. Cyclists need more choices than this. We want to see the proposed cycle lane on Riddiford Street connected to Kilbirnie by a cycle lane through Newtown back streets (eg, along Wilson Street). A shared pedestrian / cycle path could link this with a cycle lane on Kilbirnie Crescent.

Bikes should be allowed on the chosen transport option, and bike parking provided at major stations and at the termini of the spine

To increase both the number of people cycling and the number of people taking public transport, we expect to see the council working towards integrating these two modes.

Carrying bikes on buses and rail extends the reach of the transport spine. It means that passengers can make journeys that would otherwise be too difficult because of long distances between their starting point / destination and their closest transport stop.

We would like to see bike storage space provided on buses, as well as at BRT / LRT termini. We note that both BRT and LRT vehicles are more likely to easily accommodate bicycles than current buses.

Alternative transport spine alignment to Golden Mile / Jervois Mile

Due to the narrowness of the transport spine route from the railway station to Courtenay Place, we

propose an alternative route. This 'Jervois Mile' would consist of a two-way public transport route along Customhouse / Jervois / Wakefield Quays, continuing on to Kent / Cambridge Terraces. This would entirely avoid the tight corners and narrow routes of the current public transport route, allowing faster trip times. The Golden Mile could then accommodate separated cycle lanes along its entire length.

Due to high volumes of pedestrians and businesses on the Golden Mile, shifting the transport spine to this alternative alignment would provide safety benefits as well. Noise and exhaust reduction would be of benefit to businesses. Key streets between the quays and the Golden Mile could be made into attractively landscaped shared spaces to make walking between public transport stops and the shopping area both quick and pleasant.

Alternative transport spine alignment to Featherston / Victoria / Wakefield Streets to Kent / Cambridge Terraces

As above, but with public transport stops just one block removed from the main shopping area.

How will proposed cycle routes on Kent / Cambridge Terraces fit with NZTA's possible Mitigation for the Basin Bridge?

We have heard that part of the 'deal' NZTA made with the council in return for the council's support of the Basin Bridge was beautification of the median strip on Kent / Cambridge Terraces. There was some suggestion that this would include separated cycle lanes.

However, The BRT / LRT cross sections show cycle lanes on the outside lanes of Kent / Cambridge Terraces and rapid transit lanes in the middle. We want to ensure that the transport spine in this area does not remove cycle facilities put in place through the NZTA mitigation.

Please keep us involved as the plans are developed

We hope the introduction of rapid public transport will completely transform Wellington's streets, making the city less congested and more livable. We believe that providing for safe cycling at the same time will make this transformation even more profound. We are very happy to work with you on cycling solutions when the chosen public transport option makes it to the design stage.

Kia ora koutou,
Cycle Aware Wellington

References

Gehl Architects (2004). [Public Spaces and Public Life Study](http://wellington.govt.nz). Available from <http://wellington.govt.nz>.

New York City Department of Transportation (nd). [Measuring the Street: New Metrics for 21st Century Streets](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot). Available from www.nyc.gov/html/dot.