



Cycle Aware Wellington

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GRWC Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2014 – Cycle Aware Wellington submission

We would like to make an oral submission. Please contact Alastair Smith, agsmith37@gmail.com/ 021 036 4443.

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 recreation and transport. Since 1994, we have worked constructively with local and central government, NZTA, businesses, and the community on a wide variety of cycle projects. We represent around 600 members and supporters.

Key points of our submission:

- Cycling should be seen as a transport system, alongside other modes.
- Integrating cycling with public transport extends the reach and utility of the overall transport system.
- A public bike scheme should form part of the public transport system.
- Cycle routes should be parallel to bus routes, rather than sharing bus lanes.
- Separated cycle lanes should be built on or parallel to the entire Golden Mile.
- Bus driver / cyclist workshops should continue.

We encourage you to see cycling as a transport system

Although the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan concentrates on rail, bus, and ferry, cycling provides a transport system that:

- is door-to-door
- provides reliable journey times
- is fast within the CBD
- does not contribute to congestion
- requires only minimal parking facilities
- creates no carbon emissions

- has significant health benefits
- is relatively safe.

Bikes are uniquely capable of integrating with public transport, and should be seen as opportunity rather than problem. The Plan recognizes (p67) cycle paths as part of a public transport network, but more could be done to exploit the synergy of cycling and public transport.

Promoting cycling as a transport system – for example through signage, coherent routes that are seen as safe, and integration with other transport systems – will have many benefits for Wellington's transport network.

Better integrate bikes with public transport

The Plan argues that part of the lack of growth in public transport patronage is due to increased cycling. (p20). By making it easier to integrate cycling with public transport, MetLink can capitalise on the growth in cycling.

The Plan aims that "75% of Wellington's residents will live within one kilometre of a high-frequency bus route". Being able to integrate bikes with public transport means that an even greater number of the population can reach a public transport stop within a reasonable time. Typically 1km is about 15 minutes walking, but only 5 minutes cycling.

Effective bike / public transport integration requires:

- Bike racks on buses, including BRT.
- Bike facilities at public transport stops. 'Park and ride' should also be 'ride and ride' ie, people should be able to ride to the stop, and then ride the public transport conveniently. Facilities should include secure bicycle storage and basic repair facilities (eg air pumps, basic tools).
- Increased flexibility for carrying bikes on trains. The current rule that only three bikes can be conveyed in a rail unit, even when plenty of space exists in the carriage, makes bike / rail an unreliable integration option for cyclists. While many public transport systems have rules on carrying bikes, Wellington must be unique in having a complex policy that takes up a wall panel of the train by the bike area. There is no similar regulatory approach for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

Bring forward the trial and installation of bike racks on buses

We would like to see the installation of bike racks on buses brought forward to begin much sooner than the proposed 2017/18 timeframe. While the new BRT buses will be bigger and have more space for bikes, we also want to see the older buses fitted with bike racks. This will allow more people to use their bikes for transport sooner, with the option of using buses as a back-up.

Provide a public bike rental scheme

Public bike schemes provide rental bikes that can be used for free or at low cost for short trips in the CBD. Such a scheme should be seen as part of the transport network. Public bike schemes have had positive benefits for cities such as Paris and Montreal. Most of Wellington's CBD is flat and conducive to cycling so that picking up a public bike at the railway station and riding it to Courtenay Place, for

example, would be an attractive option.

Build cycle routes parallel to bus lanes, rather than on them

Sharing bus lanes is a poor substitute for proper cycle routes, and does not attract new cyclists. It makes cycling more dangerous, and taking the bus slower. International experience shows that separating vehicles of considerably different speeds and mass creates not only greater safety but greater *perception* of safety, which is one of the key factors in whether people decide to cycle.

Dutch transport experts Leo de Jong (Director, Keypoint Consultancy, traffic and transport consultant) and Mark Brussel (ITC, lecturer urban infrastructure planning and management Twente University), who visited Wellington this year as advisors to WCC, strongly advocate for separation of buses and bikes.

If separated cycle lanes cannot be provided adjacent to bus lanes because of a lack of space, they should be built on parallel routes.

Separating cyclists from buses will also make bus travel times faster, helping to boost the use of public transport.

Provide separated cycle lanes along the Golden Mile

The Golden Mile has become a complex environment and cyclists are excluded from several sections, making for inconvenient routes. To make cycling through the CBD a viable and attractive option for the general public, a safe, direct cycle route is essential.

We propose:

Entire Golden Mile: remove parking to provide room for cycle lanes and make 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. This space would include street furniture and trees (similar to lower Cuba Street, but without the car parks). The rapid transit route would exist on one side, with a dedicated cycle lane alongside it. Making this a very low-speed environment would create a much safer and more pleasant night spot, and would encourage car traffic to travel on the roads around Courtenay Place, rather than through it.

Taranaki Street to Lambton Quay: add separated cycle lanes where they are most practical, depending on the eventual BRT 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.

Continue bus / bike workshops

These workshops have proved to be extremely valuable in making both bus drivers and cyclists understand how to better share the road.

Many of the Go Wellington drivers have been on a workshop, but Mana/Newlands hasn't got involved. When tendering out the bus services next time, GWRC could require all bus drivers to attend a workshop before starting their job.

Consider the effect of other transport improvements on cycling

Some of the specific questions raised in the Plan are not directly about cycling, but may have an effect on making cycling more (or less) attractive to the general public.

Wellington city bus fleet options

We support a bus fleet that uses sustainable fuel, and minimises carbon emissions, ie electric or hybrid. GWRC should be trialling these options now. Fumes from diesel buses are a strong disincentive to cycling.

Improving park and ride facilities

We support this, particularly if it includes 'ride and ride' facilities, such as secure bicycle storage at stations, and basic repair facilities (eg, air pumps, basic tools).

Nā mātou noa, nā Cycle Aware Wellington
9 May 2014