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Cobham Drive Walking and Biking Paths Consultation (114)
Freepost,
Wellington City Council
P.O. Box 1299
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Re: Cobham Drive Walking and Biking Paths Consultation (114)

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design.

We have the following comments to make regarding the Cobham Drive Walking and Biking Paths Consultation.

1. The proposal appears to repeat the fundamental problems of the Island Bay cycleway:
 - i. firstly that it proposes a solution where there is no problem to address (i.e. cycling or walking along the harbour edge is not currently a significant problem), and
 - ii. secondly, that it avoids the difficult bits in adjacent parts of the city (e.g. for the Island Bay to City route these include the pinchpoints in Berhampore and the John St intersection).
2. Consequently, the proposal is to use significant resources to little, or no, net benefit for cyclists and pedestrians. In fact, in relation to whole of the commuter route from Miramar to the city, this is the least problematic place to walk or cycle. The proposal hence will use resources which could be used to make a material difference to improving Wellington for active modes elsewhere in the city.
3. We consequently consider the proposal to address a very low priority - if it is indeed a valid priority - and one which will achieve little, if anything, in terms of improving the walking and cycling environment of Wellington, and we consider that it is negligent for the council to waste resources in this manner.
4. The principle difficulty in this area for pedestrians and cyclists is the difficulty in crossing Cobham Drive. This is an important issue to address for pedestrians and cyclists.

5. This suburban road is extremely dangerous to cross because:
 - i. the design of the road and the vegetation in the median strip obscure views of traffic, and
 - ii. the speed of the traffic is very high.
6. This situation is exacerbated by the unsafe design of Cobham Drive for cyclists when riding on the road, especially the multiple-laned roundabouts and high speed of the traffic.
7. We suggest the following to address these issues:
 - i. reduce the speed limit on Cobham Drive,
 - ii. redesign the roundabouts in accordance with the NZTA's recommendations for cycle-friendly roundabouts (<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/cycling/cycling-network-guidance/designing-a-cycle-facility/intersections-and-crossings/roundabouts/cycle-friendly-roundabout/>), or C-roundabouts (<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/research/reports/510/docs/510.pdf>),
 - iii. use traffic calming to make this road safe for all road users,
 - iv. address the problems of visibility, e.g. the design of the median strip and height and shape of vegetation,
 - v. provide designed spaces for pedestrians to cross the road, and a pedestrian crossing (currently this is a long stretch of road with no viable way for pedestrians to cross it), and
 - vi. consider cycle and pedestrian routes from the city to Miramar (and Kilbirnie) in both directions of travel, being aware that a single route may not be the best route in both directions.
8. We believe that the proposal and the intention to re-construct the footpath along Cobham Drive to be a missed opportunity because it will use \$4 million to little effect. This is not in reality 1.6 km of new cycleways but rather 1.6 km of refashioning a currently safe, viable and enjoyable route.
9. The council must take a more meaningful approach to the provision of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.
10. We encourage you to draw on the information being gathered for the Let's Get Wellington Moving project, which among other things has found that the "[i]nfrastructure for cycling in the central city is currently limited, resulting in safety issues and a very poor level of service for cyclists" (<http://getwellymoving.co.nz/assets/Documents/LGWM-Progress-Report-Feb-2017-low.pdf> pp. 3, 18). Addressing this need in the CBD is a significantly higher priority than prettying up an existing, safe footpath used by both cyclists and pedestrians.
11. We urge you to address the more difficult and dangerous parts of the city for pedestrians and cyclists prior to the minor housekeeping of the "nice-to-have" list. We need a safe and viable pedestrian and cycle network that responds to the current significant problems and gets maximum benefit for expenditure.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Cobham Drive Walking and Biking Paths Proposal. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



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