

6 May 2014

Island Bay to City Cycleway: Section 1  
Freepost WCC  
Attention: Isabella Cawthorn  
Wellington City Council  
WCC PO Box 2199  
Wellington 6140  
cycling@wcc.govt.nz

**Re: Island Bay to City Cycleway Section 1:Shorland Park to Wakefield Park**

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. The Architectural Centre supports improvements to Wellington's cycling infrastructure, but we do not think this proposal for a cycleway from Shorland Park to Wakefield Park is a good one.

**1. The need for cross CBD cycle routes**

The Architectural Centre considers that the WCC should prioritise getting cycling right in the CBD prior to this project. We believe that there is little use encouraging cycling to the city centre while currently cycling is very difficult, unsafe, and time consuming, across the CBD. In many situations it is quicker to walk than to cycle. The only viable route is the waterfront, which - at commuter peak times - is usually full of pedestrians, making it difficult to cycle due to having to stop/start much of the time.

**2. Reverse catchment prioritising and proposed staging of the Island Bay route**

The Architectural Centre considers that the proposal to commence the Island Bay cycleway with a Shorland Park to Wakefield Bay leg is flawed for two reasons.

(a) Firstly, this leg of the Island Bay route has existing cycle lanes, plenty of space, and low traffic. The need for a cycle way is low in comparison to the lack of cycling facilities elsewhere in the city. In addition, commencing the cycleway at the easiest bit to design may cause unforeseen difficulties and constraints in the design of the more difficult legs of the route.

(b) Secondly the proposal amplifies the currently ridiculous situation at Island Bay of a cycle lane isolated from the CBD in a distant suburb. Rather than commencing at the point with the lowest potential for new commuter cyclists (because of distance from the CBD and the discontinuous nature of the proposed cycleway) the Architectural Centre suggests an alternative strategy for investment in cycling route infrastructure. We suggest that all key routes are developed close to the CBD, and then, after all initial lengths are completed, the cycle network grows another length outward. Building cycle infrastructure from the centre out should be the priority. The current bus zone catchments could provide the staging for cycle route lengths. This would mean that cycle lanes would have an immediate use for people travelling to the CBD, rather than having unused distant cycle lanes isolated in distant suburbs.

**3. Position of cycle lanes relative to traffic**

The proposal suggests two options for the position of cycle lanes relative to traffic. The Centre believes that neither of the options are optimal.



the architectural centre inc.  
PO Box 24178 Wellington

(a) Option 1: Traffic-side: Cycle lanes between parked cars and moving cars

All cyclists are aware of the likelihood of car drivers opening their doors as they pass on the road, and the difficulty of anticipating this given the number of tinted back windows in cars. An advantage of the proposal is to include a "door zone" to provide some separation between parked cars and cyclists, which will go some way to prevent cycling/car door accidents.

(b) Option 2: Kerbside: Cycle lanes between parked cars and the footpath

The alternative suggestion of lanes between parked cars and footpaths is particularly problematic. Most young children are likely to leave cars from the footpath side and may not look prior to opening doors. The same could be said for all other passengers leaving a car on the footpath side. An advantage might be that most cars in Wellington are single-occupancy reducing the chance of a car door opening onto the footpath; similarly cycling fatalities are less likely with no high moving cars involved in any accident, but we do wonder if the flexi poles positioned between cars and cyclists in this option may cause additional health and safety issues. Sufficient space is needed, such as a "door zone," for this option to work.

Given the proposal to include a "door zone" in Option 1, and the high likelihood that footpath-side passengers are unlikely to look prior to opening doors in Option 2, especially given the fact that this will be an unusual cycle lane arrangement in Wellington, we would favour the traffic-side proposal over the kerb-side proposal. We also believe that it would be productive for the council to investigate dedicating one side of roading to counterflow cycle lanes (i.e. 2 lanes, one in each direction) with car parking on the other side of the road. We also note that both of the council's options are predicated on the provision of parking. Other options, which exclude car parking, are also possible. Another option might be reverse angle-parking, which makes it easier for motorists to see cyclists.

#### **4. Cycle lane and bus stop design**

The proposal also documents two possible new bus stop/cycle lane designs. Both propose to divert cyclists from the road onto the footpath where people waiting for buses stand. Footpaths near bus stops are typically constrained, because they often accommodate bus stop furniture or infrastructure. During peak commuting hours they are also a place where bus passengers congregate. In addition, the proposal notes that GWRC is planning on reducing the number of bus stops, which will increase the number of people waiting at bus stop. The Island Bay bus patronage is the already amongst the highest in the city, so The Parade and Adelaide Rd are likely to have more people on footpaths waiting for buses than other parts of Wellington.

The proposal appears to accept what is apparently international good practice in isolation from the awareness of basic issues related to Island Bay bus operations, Wellington bus stop, and footpath design. Both proposals would inconvenience commuter cyclists (who really wants to zig-zag at bus stops on the way to work?), and divert cyclists into footpath space, congested with people and street furniture at a time when people are trying to get on and/or off buses. We find these proposals silly and strongly support the status quo, with footpaths designed to accommodate novice cyclists during off-peak times.

We want to also acknowledge the good work that has been done with bus drivers to raise awareness of cycling issues, which has made cycling in Wellington safer, and encourage similar strategies to increase awareness (e.g. by pedestrians, cyclists, car drivers) of the needs of other road users.

## 5. Other issues

In addition to the points raised above, we note that:

(a) possibly more important than implementing international best practice for cycling infrastructure is nourishing a culture within Wellington where people are both aware of others and make space to accommodate others, whether car drivers, cyclists or pedestrians. Cycling and other roading infrastructure can assist in raising the visibility and need to make space for others (Brisbane is a good example of this), but we also suspect that more complex sociological and cultural shifts are also needed to ensure a safe cycling environment is achieved in Wellington.

(b) the points raised as pros and cons in examining options in this proposal appear to be very "car-centric" and need revising to consider the needs and wants of all vehicle-users as well as any effect on pedestrians.

(c) the Christchurch Cycle Design Guidelines (2013) (<http://resources.ccc.govt.nz/files/CityLeisure/gettingaround/cycling/ChristchurchCycleDesignGuidelinesWEB.pdf>) may be of interest to the WCC. This document seems to suggest that WCC is aiming low in its proposals for cycleways.

(d) unlike most WCC consultations, there was no "text only" document available on the consultation website. These documents make it easier and quicker for people interested in the information and saving paper, and because they are shorter in length, they are often less off-putting than longer consultation documents with multiple marketing images.

Thank you again for this opportunity to comment on this proposal for the Island Bay to CBD cycleway. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Christine McCarthy  
President, The Architectural Centre  
[arch@architecture.org.nz](mailto:arch@architecture.org.nz)