

17 September 2017

Freepost 2199

Consultation on options to improve cycling connections in the eastern suburbs and to the city

Wellington City Council

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Re: Options to improve cycling connections in the eastern suburbs and to the city [Options for Evans Bay Parade, Kilbirnie connections, Miramar connections, and Miramar Avenue (Tauhinu Road to Park Road)]

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.

1. We strongly support the WCC aims to:
 - (a) Make Wellington an even more people-friendly, attractive and sustainable city,
 - (b) Provide safer and easier ways to get to places by bike
 - (c) Encourage more people to travel by bike, and
 - (d) Create a connected cycle network
2. We make the following comments regarding the proposed options:
3. The proposals all "fit" cycling infrastructure into a space which continues to prioritise traffic over sustainable transport including cycling. **What is needed is a new design of roads which truly responds to the WCC transport hierarchy**, which states that sustainable transport (walking, cycling and mass public transport) is to be prioritised over traffic. The status quo design is inadequate to fulfil this transport hierarchy, and fitting sustainable infrastructure in and around the edges is not good enough. With even the ACT party advocating for car-sharing to disincentivise single-occupancy vehicles, and peak-time congestion charging to discourage car-use, and higher uptake of e-bikes, the time has come where the prioritising of traffic to the extent of providing free public land for both moving and stationary cars must end. We strongly ask the council to approach the NZTA and the Ministry of Transport to **commission work for a twenty-first-century road design**. We would be happy to assist in running any related design ideas competition. The following comments on specific aspects of the proposals raise issues which ultimately we believe should feed into a bigger vision for new road design. We do not endorse the current approach of editing an inherently flawed design because it fundamentally prioritises traffic over all other transport modes.
4. Many of the proposals locate cycle lanes between parked cars and footpaths, with the aim to provide a safe space partitioned from moving cars. This design



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restricts the versatility of cyclist movement (e.g. right turns). In addition, as the Island Bay experience has shown, the design also increases conflict points, and reduces visibility for both car drivers and cyclists, when located in suburban areas where driveways frequently cross the cycle path, and parked cars block the view of car drivers. **The design was intended for urban and peri-urban, not suburban, contexts.** It might be okay where there are no driveways and long lengths of roads with no intersections (e.g. Evans Bay), but is not good for short suburban blocks with driveways at each house.

Additionally, Island Bay has shown **the social importance of the space between the suburban footpath and the parked car for greeting and farewelling visitors**, meaning that often groups of people oblivious to cyclists occupy the cycleway. These cycleways are also a favoured place for service vehicles (e.g. furniture removal vans, tree-cutting contractors, and retailer goods delivery vans), as well as car drivers trying to see where road traffic is in order to get out of their driveways. Their success is context-dependent, and we ask the council to be mindful of this when selecting final options.

5. A number of the proposals employ sharrow road-markings (>>). New Zealand drivers generally do not understand the meaning of the sharrow leading to abuse of cyclists when cyclists ride in the centre of the lane as intended because of driver impatience. Better education promoting the sharrow is needed in order to make these roads safe for cyclists, and lessen the anger shown towards cyclists, including aggressive and dangerous driving. **Roads with sharrows should be signposted as cycling-priority roads** to stress the right of cyclists to occupy the centre of the lane, and create an expectation of car drivers that they will necessarily have to drive more slowly. This is needed to shift the current cultural expectation that cyclists are to be squashed between parked and moving motor vehicles. In addition, **sharrow road-markings should only be used in conjunction with traffic calming**, and if road humps are used they should be designed so they are flat in the centre (where cyclists can ride uninterrupted) with bumps aligned to car wheels only.
6. **The proposals avoid explaining intended intersection design.** This will be crucial to the viability of the different options and could make some options unsafe for cyclists turning right, for example, due to insufficient visibility. Similarly how is it proposed that cyclists cross to and from the counter-flow path proposed for Queens Drive to the Leoni Gill Pathway?
7. Equally, **how bus stops are to be incorporated** (e.g. Rongotai Road) is absent from the designs. These should not interrupt the straight path of a cyclist, requiring cyclists to have to deviate around buses and passengers (as in the Island Bay cycleway design),



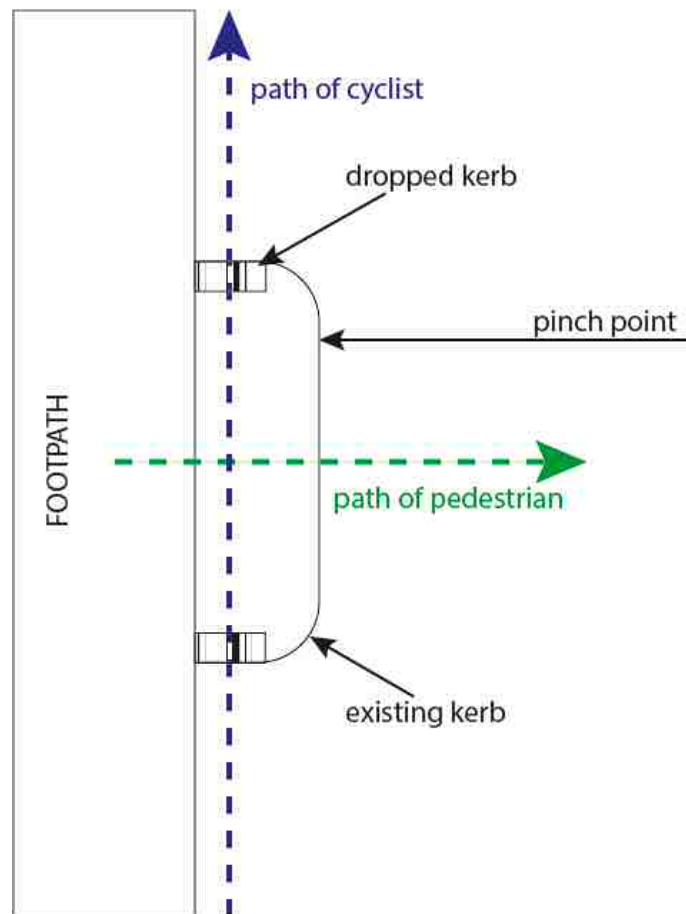
Island Bay cycle way bus stop causing cyclist diversion

but instead should be designed like this one in Brighton, England ...



Cycleway and bus stop design, Brighton, England showing levels and kerbing distinguishing road space from pedestrian space, and the gradual curve to the cycleway to accommodate a bus stop island (also note the lack of driveways disrupting the cycleway).

8. On a related matter, some proposals appear to place cycling and public transport in conflict, or disadvantage public transport (e.g. for Constable Street (Riddiford to Coromandel St)). We encourage the council to **undertake transport modelling to specifically check the impact of the proposals on public transport.**
9. The Miramar Avenue options include planting trees along the median strip of the road. As median strips can provide important transition and safe zones for cyclists turning, tree planting could impede cycling. **We instead recommend replacing roadside carparks with trees to improve streetscape** (e.g. Wilson St (one way)).
10. Several options remove car-parking. We recognise that this will be controversial for some. We support the decommissioning of free public land for car-parking. **All street car-parking must be metered.** Road-user charges pay for new roads and road maintenance, not land rental. Road-side car-parking and driveways should be removed from all arterial roads, with commercial provision of car-parking for shopping restricted to the ends of retail strips (e.g. in back alleys).
11. There is a pinch point on Rongotai Road where it meets Crawford Road. We recommend redesigning the footpath to allow both protection from cars for pedestrians crossing at this point, and space for cyclists. This could be achieved by dropping the kerbs crossing the route a cyclist would travel and retaining the existing kerb parallel to the footpath (as per the following diagram).



Rongotai Rd near intersection with Crawford Road

12. The proposal for the **Rongotai Road boulevard** (outside Kilbirnie Town Centre) appears to us to be **an amazingly missed opportunity**. The proposal seems to be utterly ignorant of the potential of the grand lawn down the middle of the street. A re-design of the entire road is needed to ensure better use of this as a recreational space. Alternatively this land could provide space for more housing, or integrate cycling with the grassed area, or locate car parking next to the grassed area to facilitate its potential as a community space. This site could be a good one to fully explore what a twenty-first-century street should be. You definitely need to go back to the drawing board on this one.
13. In addition to the above there are fundamental issues that the council does not appear to be addressing which impact of the design of cycleways city-wide. These include the following:
 - (a) The council appears to be ignoring investing (time, intellect and money) in **making the inner city viable for cycling**. Currently cycling is primarily restricted to the boundary of the CBD (Kent/Cambridge Tce and the waterfront - which is difficult to traverse at peak times and summer weekends due to pedestrian congestion). We note that the Caro Drive cycling infrastructure is incidental to traffic priorities making it an awkward (and awful) place for cyclists actually wanting to access the CBD. **Addressing the lack of east-west permeability for cyclists** needs to be prioritised (e.g. reversing the traffic direction of Jessie Street; extending Garret Street through to Victoria St could be starting points for this). Equally the detail of commuter connections to the CBD are missing from the proposals.

- (b) **How do e-bikes fit into the proposals for cycling infrastructure?** Few of the proposals have sufficient resilience to accommodate the increased difference in speed between the slowest push bike and the fastest e-bike. Already there is a significant range of speed among push bike riders. Should e-bikes be excluded from using cycling infrastructure? Should all new cycling infrastructure include passing lanes? We observe that the designs appear to be addressing current not future needs, and so ultimately are short-term solutions.
 - (c) On a similar note, there will need to be rethinking of cycling with the anticipated increase in electric cars. Cyclists take many of their cues from traffic noise in addition to visual signals. **The silence of electric cars will likely cause cycling accidents and deaths if not anticipated in road design and/or car regulations** (i.e. requiring noise to be generated from electric cars).
14. We reiterate the need for a twenty-first-century road design which truly reflects the WCC transport hierarchy. In the interim we request that the council:
- (a) meter all street car-parking.
 - (b) remove District Plan requirements for off-street carparking in suburban residential areas
 - (c) progressively remove all driveways from arterial roads
 - (d) replace some car parks in shopping areas with bike parks. These not only support sustainable transport but also enable parking for a greater number of people.
 - (e) retain median strips. These provide safety for pedestrians crossing and more options for cyclists turning right
 - (f) investigate the viability of tidal use of some roads for cars (i.e. direction of traffic changes direction to reflect direction of peak travel) with flow/counter-flow cycle-lanes on non-car-parking sides of road
 - (g) consider where traffic calming can be implemented (e.g. in conjunction with the use of sharrow road marking) to provide cycling safety and identify cycling-priority roads.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Eastern Bay cycleway options. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully



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