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Oriental Bay Biking Connections Consultation (114); Thorndon Quay Biking Connections Consultation (114); Evans Bay Parade (Kilbirnie) Biking Connections Consultation (114)

Freepost
Wellington City Council
P.O. Box 2199
Wellington 6140
transport@wcc.govt.nz

Oriental Bay



When Lemuel Gulliver awoke tied to the earth by the threads of Lilliput, little did he know that 320 years later he would re-awaken in Cycletown, plonked in the middle of Oriental Bay's coastline ducking thousands of speeding cyclotonians. No one had legs. There were no cars, no pedestrians - just an endless sea teeming with zooming velos. He could stand - but only just. The speeding wheels went this way and that. His body reacted, swaying as the air zapped by. As for walking, just trying to imagine that was exhausting.

Three hours later, arms, legs, ears, eyes dreary, what appeared like common sense prevailed - but, as he gingerly flexed his quadriceps in preparation to escape a seemingly impossible encyclement, a loud voice boomed from the pohutukawa: "Freeze pedestrian." What was he to do, starve on the spot? This way, that way - still they zapped, weaving in and out of the throbbing torrent of other cyclists. A tear tried to run down poor Gulliver's cheek, but even that was whisked away in the velotopian airstream. If only this was Wonderland and a cake with the words "EAT ME" appeared so he could grow so large and stomp out these damn mechanical mosquitos. It was, he pondered, a strange paradox to be so immersed in speed and yet unable to be anything but stationery.

The sun retreated from daytime. Night, more beautiful in the spectacle of flying headlights, was as perennially tiresome. Gulliver consider verticality - but, while digging through asphalt might theoretically be possible, as a destination its appeal was underwhelming. The sun rose, and it was as if, with that blast of light (it was a rather speedy star), he could see beyond the vehiculating stream to PEDESTRIANS. Cheery, relaxed, meandering PEDESTRIANS. Lavish in their perambulatory ways, the sun shone down and they beamed back. Gulliver looked with joy at his leather-clad metatarsals and filled his glance with the potential of movement. He yearned to be over there, but, while the intermitting velocidic



the architectural centre inc.
PO Box 24178 Wellington

wall was as an opaque barrier as ever imagineable, his desire tilted him off balance - face first into mobility. Now the hard reality of asphalt met him while the knife-thin tyre-treads of lyra-bound road biking pinned him down as effectively as any Lilliputian might wish.

He had cherished the well-laundered absoluteness of his crisp, white shirt. Face full of 2.5m of counterflow cycleway, that scented joy of perfumed laundry detergent was progressively whittled away, each tyre-tread rendering his body securely earthbound. As he had fallen the turbulent eddies aerodynamically twisted his body away from a full view of paradisial pedestriana, and realigned him to automotive mania. He now had a kerbside vision of burning rubber and exhaust fumes perforated by a thin line of high heels and angled car parking. As another cyclist's tyres cut into his once white shirt, Gulliver mused that these strips of former footpath and road sliced into selfish modal apartheid might be the epitome of territorial action. He had observed (and viscerally felt) the abuse and physical aggression shown to anyone who dared infringe on another's space. In fact several of the pedestrians were limping as a result. One cyclist was wearing a wheel around his head, but the CARS ... and here was the deep dark secret of Cycletown. While propaganda illustrating happy, smiling cyclotonians was dutifully and liberally distributed, all the while car parking progressively increased every half hour.

Apparently it had begun back in 2018 when 61 car parks mysteriously multiplied into 64, under the illusion of a pro-cycling council. Sustainability was also heralded to be big. But - behind the headlines and photographs of gleaming dental work - an anorexic cyclepath was given the tick. The median strip, where pedestrians were squeezed between increasingly overweight SUVs, was asked to shrink 10%, and pedestrians required to tuck their stomachs even further in. Gulliver, musing on the idiosyncratic ironies, platitudes and unhelpfulnesses of past local governments, under the strain of unsubstantiated climate change rhetoric, was about to pull out a sketchbook as a prelude to a solution, when one of those damn pohutukawa cracked and fell, and sent him deep into unconsciousness, or so he wished when he next awoke on Thorndon Quay.

Thorndon Quay



As night is to day, and black is to white, such was the severity of contrast that Gulliver experienced as he gained consciousness lying in the taudry gutters of Thorndon Quay. And it was night too, or so it seemed, until a voice spoke: "I'll just reset the VR goggles, won't be a minute." The centrifugal force of a blast from the past soon followed. Dark transmitted to light via a heady synesthetic blur of colour, smell and noise. It took a split second to adjust to the sensory overload of intoxicating exhaust fumes, the melodic chug of Matangi trains and the intermittent squeal of cyclists, fearing their lives, as they wove in and out of car doors opening symphonically to the senselessness which determined the perilous combination of cyclelanes sandwiched between moving and parked automobiles. So real did this visage appear that Gulliver coughed, and unconsciously felt in his trouser pocket for an aspirin.

Rivalling Dickens' drab depiction of Victorian London in its precision, the scene had the queasy unease of something akin to a horror film, a perverse scientific experiment maybe?.

or perhaps a reality TV set? Oh yes I know now, it conjured an aesthetically-enfeebled *Truman Show* - too surreal to feel true, but so comprehensively accurate its surreality was inescapable.

"Sorry, forgot the nostalgia filter was in." Sepia faded through the malcontent of Kodachrome to Technicolour grey, as the twenty-first century settled firmly into its illusion. This was indeed the barren wasteland of parallel parking and nondescript architecture that largely compromised the city-side of Thorndon Quay. It smelt, sounded, felt, and seemed - to the uttermost degree of accuracy - to be. This was history at its most alive, rendered so vividly that its antiquations quivered with disbelief. It was a startling lesson which heightened our sense of progressiveness and moral superiority. How far we had come from those dismal days we thought proudly.

"You can take it off now. You can really see the difference can't you?"

Indeed. Sitting atop of the old cylindrical car park ramp, we now occupied the elegant VRTR (a.k.a. Virtual Reality Tea Rooms). It had a splendid view over a twenty-second century "Te Tiriti Kākāriki" - the renamed "Thorndon Quay," following the overthrow of streets named after New Zealand Company directors (Thorndon deriving from Lord Petre's Essex Home "Thorndon Flat"). The green boulevard stretched elegantly insync with the high speed autonomous amphibious mass transit corridor, its homonym "tiriti" conflating "street" and "treaty" suggesting an avenue committed to a new ("green") way. Huge investment in rail and amphibious mass transit in 2018, and the brave redeployment of roads as green corridors, threaded with footpaths and cycleways, resulted in this resplendid image and a net reduction of carbon emissions in Te Whanganui o Tara of over 50%. Ngā taurangi (fairies) danced among giant panakenake (*Lobelia angulata*) and koromiko (*Hebe stricta*), their sweet waiata meeting the karanga of tūi, kea, kākā, and the recently revived huia and moa.

It was a wondrous vision, only possible with the foresight of gutsy political will and foresight, helped along by midnight mayoral vaping sessions as the council weaned itself off a financial dependency on car parking fees to mitigate rates hikes. Car parking, vanquished to suburban garages, enabled a vegetarian takeover of city spaces. Shared spaces supported people, laughter and the occasional day off work, as the lack of segregated mode apportioning of road corridors (confining pedestrians, cyclists and car-drivers to competitive rat-race tracks) became a distant and discredited memory.

Reassured by this manifest vision of utopian proportions, Gulliver sunk back in his hemp-woven recliner, the scent of his kaputī kākāriki wafting aromaticly. Rip van Winkel watched knowingly as Gulliver meandered into unconsciousness for a second time.

Evans Bay Parade (Kilbirnie)



"Ouch!" "Shush!" Cold metal met Gulliver's nose. The light rail car blinked, then frowned: "They don't know I'm here. Be quiet you blundering fool!" Hiding in the corner of the old tram barn, Thomas the Tank Engine's second cousin glared with all the fervour that aspirational light rail (disconnected from any energy source) might muster. "They know I can. They know I can" he grumbled under his breath, sans serif stencilling: "LRT reduces CO₂ emissions" still clearly readable along his slim lined chassis from years of his closetted existence, waiting ... The existential angst of an under-appreciated LRT car required more etiquette training, good manners and patience than Gulliver had ever exhibited at any point in his life to date. He suspected things would not suddenly change now.

"Is that the time?" - an oldy but a goody, and he shamefully slipped away, out of psychological discomfort and into the bright lights of Kilvegas.

Ahh Kilvegas - surpassed only by Ashvegas (... and Rotovegas and Vegasvegas), Kilvegas was one of those happening places still yet to happen. It was suburbia magnificentia. Its only remnant of formal townplanning was a meek strip of Rongotai Road, forever under threat by council proposals for asymmetry. More generally the township excelled in perpetual informalities, seas of off-street parking and carousels of houses. Spun by car-fed roads, these proliferated; a ballet of urban-scaled, lazy-Susans to rival the Bolshoi.

It was this stunning illustration of rotation that struck Gulliver as idiosyncratic. The spine of cars generated a centrifugal hierarchy, where those lower in the transport hierarchy (public transport, cyclists, pedestrians and recessed trees) were restricted to fitting in around the predominant automobilia mostestia, with only the occasional road too sharrow for exclusive car use. Even the painted median strip between Kilbirnie Crescent and Kemp Street was sacrificed to the dominance of the car. But this marginal space was where the beauty of the dance lay, in restricted eddies, swirling through the reflected glories of very shiny motor cars. Stripes of counterflow cycle lanes were seemingly operatic in intent - the glorious repetition, that can only survive in dulcet Italian tones, culturally infused with dervish sensibilities. Round and round and round they went, cyclists of all hue and cry, caught between well-intentioned counterflowing and the upstream of gas-guzzling Honda Civics.

This visual feast of circumspection was dizzying to say the least, causing Gulliver to be moved to sedentary tendencies more than once. He even accidentally found himself rotating in a bus hub and reading its graffiti. An arrow caught his eye and led it along an inexplicable I-beam. It was, for an instance, as if he had pulled a thread and the architecture of the bus shelter had begun to unravel. At this point he realised that unlike the shameless adshelling of the other structures, he occupied a glowing colour field of burnished orange. James Turrell beamed.

The arrow grew bigger and its pointedness became more insistent. "Design makes Wellington" it impressed, as it let slip a faded yellow page. Scrawling pencil wrote in assertive upper case "DRAFT SUBMISSION: MARCH 2018: WCC CYCLING THINGS." Words were misspelt, crossed out and underlined. There appeared an over use of imperatives. "MUST" was a favourite, surpassed only by "UNACCEPTABLE!!!!." "NOT" was recurrent. He wiped the dust from beneath the capitalised title: "1. Segregation is NOT a sustainable transport strategy. Segregation breeds hatred and selfishness between modes."

Hmmm. It looked like no. 2 had been victim to strawberry jam - an unrecoverable pearl of wisdom no doubt.

"3. This ad hoc and piecemeal approach to transport, urban design and city-making is RETROGRADE and economically short-sighted" the next line yelled at him.

He sat down - this was going to be psychologically draining by all accounts.

Another row of majuscular characters thundered through one set of crossing outs and smudgings: "ARCHITECTURAL CENTRE TRANSPORT MANIFESTO???" followed in quick succession by:

"1. NO LIGHT RAIL IS SHORT-SIGHTED - NO VISION."

"2. INCREASING CAR PARKS IS UNACCEPTABLE."

A calmer typescript, assisted by a less heated lower case, conveyed an intellectual introspection (or so it liked to think): "maintaining the current regime of free or underpriced car parking to store stationary vehicles is an inefficient use of space - weird that council seems to keep on doing this while saying they are pro-sustainability etc. etc. How do they think they'll get those carbon emissions down? deluded all."

More arrows, indented circling and a big tick:

"6. Rigidity restricts. Fewer cars is the ONLY answer"

"9. Car sharing MUST replace private cars in the CBD. More road space MUST be given over to PT and cycling. Strategic use of properly-designed shared space MUST ..."

A daisy chain of blue roses seemed to suggest that the scribe at this point had drifted off into a more poetic space, but the roses morphed into bicycle wheels, hot rods and smiling elephants. The outline of a shoe appeared titled "Eat your heart out Adolf Loos."

Gulliver looked up. If only Kilvegas had the answers. The orange glow that surrounded him surged into a flashing neon sign: "Up your game WCC - BE ~~BRAVE~~ BRAVER!"