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2021 Long Term Plan

Cycle Wellington submission

We would like to make an oral submission. Please contact alex.m.dyer@gmail.com

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Concerns regarding the Long-Term Plan engagement process

1. We don't understand why cycling has been identified as a key issue to consult Wellingtonians on. The 2018 LTP consulted on essentially the same decision and was supported by 65% of respondents.
2. We note that multiple options put forward for the cycleway program are clearly inconsistent with existing council policies committing the council to delivering cycling infrastructure, such as the Cycling Policy (2008), Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital (2015), Wellington Urban Growth Plan 2014–2043 (2015), Wellington Cycleways Master Plan (2015) and Te Atakura: First to Zero (2019).
3. In our opinion the LTP consultation document fails to identify and explain the consequences of the presented decisions on cycling as it omits information regarding the financial benefits of investing in cycling infrastructure.
4. In our opinion the LTP consultation document fails to identify and explain the consequences of the presented decisions on cycling and Te Atakura as it omits information regarding the effects on emissions of each option.

Cycling

Investing in Wellington's future

5. We support option 4 as the only option presented that has a chance of delivering a fully connected network by 2031. The council's preferred option exposes the cycleway programme to the risk that it will be financially constrained, and fails to invest adequately in the first three years of the plan.
6. Delivering a connected network is key. Currently cyclists in Wellington have some access to safe, separated cycling facilities such as in Island Bay, or Rongotai Road, but these short lengths do not connect to many peoples destinations meaning that many potential cyclists will not use them. Miramar to the city via Cobham Drive and Evans Bay, and the future Cobham drive crossing will deliver Wellington's first example of a section of connected network. The council's preferred option will not deliver the level of connectivity required to facilitate enough modal shift to meet target emissions reductions. This first example needs to be replicated across the entirety of Wellington City by 2030.
7. The council has an ethical responsibility to Wellingtonians to take action on climate change. The council has a mandate from Wellingtonians to take action on climate change. Not investing adequately in cycling infrastructure as a key measure to reduce emissions potentially exposes Wellington City Council to legal risks. In the event that legal action becomes likely, Cycle Wellington would look to be a part of it.
8. Cycling infrastructure is an investment that will deliver incredible returns for

Wellington ratepayers. Chapman et al. (2018)¹ found that investing in active travel interventions in a New Zealand context delivers a benefit/cost ratio of over 10:1.

9. The city council's own website² cites Auckland research showing that for every \$1 spent on cycle improvements, more than \$20 is saved due to fewer road traffic injuries, reduced emissions, health benefits of increased exercise, and savings on fuel. We believe that not maximising the potential returns on this investment is a missed opportunity.
10. With a 20:1 return on investment on cycling infrastructure and education campaigns the lost benefits of not investing in Option 4 (compared to Option 3) are over \$2B. It is important to also acknowledge that these are only monetary figures that symbolise avoided costs. It is difficult to quantify the full benefits of lowering car dependency by enabling more people to lead healthy, active lifestyles. The rewards of doing so are diverse and complex, but the co-benefits are a proven means of significantly improving overall wellbeing and population health.
11. The proposed budget relies heavily on Let's Get Wellington Moving to fund and build key parts of the network. We are concerned that if LGWM fails to deliver key routes then the council could be required to significantly reprioritise its delivery schedule and not complete its planned schedule of projects. Providing an increased budget gives more leeway to deliver projects in this eventuality.
12. The City Council has an extremely poor track record of implementing and delivering on cycling projects. Waka Kotahi's 2021 Investment Audit Report – Technical and Procedural Audits of Wellington City Council shows that Wellington constructed only 16 km of cycleways between 2010 and 2020. In the report WCC was graded as "significant improvement needed" for road safety. Cyclists and pedestrians are over-represented for serious injuries and deaths on the road and WCC should be pushing harder to improve safety for all road users.
13. We are not confident that this issue is addressed adequately in the long-term plan given its continued focus on a schedule of expensive projects with long delivery times.

Increasing deliverability

14. When lobbying the council for cycling projects we have been constantly told that the council does not have the financial capability to deliver them. We are not sure why we are expected to believe this is no longer a key limitation. WCC is surely quite familiar with the constraints placed on projects by limited funding.
15. This is most evident in the cycling minor works budget. Option 4 does not provide any increase to this budget over previous years despite the rise in demand for cycle parking and other minor works. We think this budget should be at least doubled from it's proposed amount in order to deliver more improvements that are quick and easy.

¹ Chapman, R., Keall, M., Howden-Chapman, P., Grams, M., Witten, K., Randal, E., & Woodward, A. (2018). A Cost Benefit Analysis of an Active Travel Intervention with Health and Carbon Emission Reduction Benefits. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(5), 962. doi:10.3390/ijerph15050962

² <https://wellington.govt.nz/parking-roads-and-transport/transport/cycling/we-support-cycling/facts-and-figures>

16. We're concerned about the inclusion of tactical "innovating streets" style projects into the minor works budget, as this new category of works will put further strain on an already limited budget.
17. We think cycle lanes could be delivered quicker, easier and cheaper with the addition of a dedicated fund for this type of work. We think the scale needed to deliver a connected cycle network over the next decade requires a well-resourced and dedicated fund. This fund would also deliver public space improvements outside of cycling such as low-traffic neighbourhoods and parklets.
18. The Brooklyn cycleway is an excellent example of how WCC can deliver cycle lanes quickly and cheaply, as well as make adjustments on the fly to things that aren't working. We think that the council should focus on implementing similar projects across the city before investing in more long-term changes.
19. The council has made it harder to deliver cycleways by focusing on creating new space for cycling rather than reallocating existing road space. Prioritising on-street space for moving people over the storage of private vehicles can be done quickly and cheaply, improving on the councils capacity to deliver projects.
20. A lack of commitment and vision from WCC is the prime obstacle to progress. Rather than trying to cater to a minority of residents that make a lot of noise, WCC needs to recognise it's responsibility to drive change and provide leadership.
21. In order to consult on and design cycling projects it is essential that the council hires and invests in staff. Council staff are overworked and this leads to loss of talent and failure to deliver to an appropriate standard. WCC should increase its operational expenditure to improve in this area.
22. Additionally, the council needs to send a strong signal to the private sector that it is committed to a serious and long-term investment in building cycling infrastructure. This will enable private companies to invest in the employees and equipment needed to deliver projects.

Prioritisation of routes

23. Cycling infrastructure in Wellington to date often focuses on commuting journeys. These journeys are the most visible today and do need support. But from an equity point of view, commuting journeys should not be the only focus for the cycling network.
24. The city needs a cohesive plan that improves cycling on all streets, not just key corridors. This means that a comprehensive city-wide safer speeds program, traffic calming and low-traffic neighbourhood program are key elements to a safe cycling network in the same way as the identified cycling corridors.
25. There's also a danger of catering to existing cyclists instead of potential cyclists. For a more equitable approach the network should take into account the needs of those currently most excluded. One of our supporters said, "put the last first' in your decision-making and you build a genuinely more equal city.'

26. We support prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure that supports journeys by people with disabilities. Cycle Wellington is not currently able to best represent the interests of the disabled community so we support consulting disability advocacy groups around the prioritisation of projects.
27. We support prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure that supports children to travel safely to and from school and other activities. We are disappointed that a network of cycle lanes in the northern suburbs has been given a lower priority in this LTP than it was previously. The northern suburbs network would allow over 2500 children to cycle safely to school at Newlands College, Newlands Intermediate and four primary schools in the area. Encouraging children to travel actively reduces traffic congestion and improves children's independence, physical and mental health, and decision making, risk assessment and road safety skills.
28. We support prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure that supports journeys made by women. Women are more likely than men to make multi-stop trips, cycle outside traditional commuting times, and ride with children as passengers.
29. We support prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure in suburbs with higher levels of deprivation. This should mean a prioritisation of routes connecting suburbs such as Strathmore, Berhampore, Newtown, Johnsonville and Newlands.
30. We support prioritising investment in cycling infrastructure in areas with high levels of car-dependency. Suburbs such as Churton Park and Strathmore have the highest levels of car usage in Wellington³. The high use of cars by residents in these areas has run-on effects across the whole city, contributing to congestion and creating unsafe streets for people walking and riding bicycles. Residents in areas of high car-dependency often have little choice of alternate travel modes and the council needs to support mode-shift in these areas.
31. Previous consultations on other matters have brought up the issues around wheeled devices operating in pedestrian spaces. We supported making the use of bicycles by adults on footpaths legal only as a temporary safety measure while the council implements a safe network for cycling. We acknowledge that the use of e-scooters and bicycles in pedestrian spaces adversely impacts on the use of those spaces by people walking and other vulnerable user groups such as disabled persons, the elderly, and young children. Our position is therefore that WCC has an obligation to provide space off footpaths for bikes and scooters as rapidly as possible.

Holding Wellington City Council accountable

32. The council has engaged with Wellingtonians about improving the Island Bay Cycleway and building Newtown Connections. It is essential that WCC delivers on these projects or it will further lose Wellingtonians' trust. This harms engagement and the democratic process.
33. The draft statement of service provision includes a single performance target for cycling, and does not set a target. We think WCC should set a target number of kilometers of cycle lanes to deliver as well as a modeshift and safety targets. These

³ 2018 Census data

targets should be ambitious. We also think it's key that the council sets satisfaction with the cycling network and cycle network condition as targets in the same way it does for walking.

34. Previous LTPs included a breakdown of cycling capital expenditure by project. The removal of this data is a reduction in WCC accountability and transparency.
35. WCC has a track record of allocating funding for cycling that then goes unspent. In the last LTP more than \$16 million was assigned for Newtown Connections, the Parade Upgrade and Miramar networks. A commitment was made to invest this money but Wellingtonians are not told what happened to this funding and why such projects now need to be reallocated funding in this LTP.
36. We expect that when the public is consulted on cycling expenditure through the LTP consultation process that the funding proposed is actually spent on cycling.
37. Therefore, we believe WCC should ring-fence cycling funding. This would act as a mechanism to ensure that WCC spends its cycling budget on the projects it has consulted on.
38. The cycle of promise followed by failure to deliver is a major disappointment to the many people who would like to cycle in Wellington.

Te Atakura First to Zero (Climate Change)

39. Cycle Wellington supports fully funding the programme.
40. Wellingtonians overwhelmingly support action on climate change. In consultation on Te Atakura 92% of respondents stated that prioritising making Wellington city zero carbon by 2050 must be done "no matter what".
41. Fully funding Te Atakura is not enough. The implementation plan results in a 19.6% shortfall by 2030. In order to make up this shortfall it is essential the council provides increased funding for further measures to reduce emissions.
42. Te Atakura's Travel behaviour change action will not be effective unless the council invests in the infrastructure required to enable behaviour change. Programs such as Bikes in Schools and Movin' March are limited in their effectiveness if children are not provided with safe infrastructure to cycle to school on.
43. Te Atakura identified shared mobility options as a key action. Despite being short lived and plagued with issues, ONZO bikeshare provided an affordable mobility option that introduced many new people to cycling, and enabled mobility for low-income individuals. We think that a council-owned and run bikeshare service would deliver the same benefits to Wellingtonians. Publicly owned bikeshare services are highly successful overseas. London's public bikeshare scheme has an annual membership cost of 90GBP (172NZD) and offers free journeys up to 30 minutes, operating with a 16.9% subsidy of operating costs⁴. Public ownership gives the council

⁴ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/santander-cycles-transparency-to-end-of-september-2017.pdf>

the ability to finely control the service and provide easier access to certain groups (London’s scheme offers free membership to NHS employees).

44. Electric cars fail to deliver the co-benefits present with supporting cycling, such as improvements to health, safety and reducing congestion and parking demand.
45. Road transport is the largest source of emissions in Wellington. Supporting cycling is the cheapest, easiest and most effective lever the council has control over to reduce emissions.

Investment in three waters infrastructure

46. Cycle Wellington supports the Accelerated (\$3.3b investment – higher rates and debt) option for investment in three waters infrastructure.
47. Failing to adequately maintain and repair our three-waters infrastructure has resulted in increased costs for the council, making it more difficult to invest in other critical infrastructure, such as cycle lanes.
48. Moving kerbs and making changes to stormwater infrastructure is a significant cost for some cycling projects. We think WCC should make sure that any maintenance or changes made in such infrastructure be done in cooperation with potential improvements to cycling.
49. We note that significant attention has been given to the issues arising from the poor quality of three waters infrastructure. Issues with the safety of roading infrastructure are given less attention as they are often viewed as a ‘necessary cost’, rather than an issue that can be addressed. The amount of money required to provide cycling infrastructure is significantly less than that required to fix three waters infrastructure, while the potential benefits of increased investment are likely much broader.
50. We think that the council should increase rates or take on additional debt in order to fund critical three-waters infrastructure.

Fixing the Central Library

51. Cycle Wellington supports strengthening the library but not though the council’s preferred option of temporarily exceeding its debt limit. We think that the strengthening of the library should be funded through other means.
52. Mitigating the breach of the debt level through the allocation of capital underspend from other areas is unacceptable, as this could result in money intended for climate-mitigation projects such as cycling being reallocated to the strengthening of the Central Library. We are especially concerned about this possibility given the council’s current issues with inability to deliver on planned cycling projects.
53. Our preference would be that the council pursue an alternative option that delivers a strengthened central library through increased rates or raising the debt limit. Alternatively the mitigation of the breach could specify that it will not reallocate any underspend from the cycling budget, or other capital expenditure intended for projects intended to reduce emissions.

Reducing sewage sludge and waste

54. Cycle Wellington supports investing in sludge minimisation as part of Te Atakura and to avoid a repeat of the recent situation that put cyclists at risk with the use of sewage trucks to transport sludge to the landfill.
55. We think that using a special purpose vehicle to deliver this project exposes it to unnecessary risks and complications when the project could more easily be funded through debt.

Proposed 10-year budget

56. Cycle Wellington strongly opposes the proposed budget as it fails to meet the councils legal and ethical responsibilities to Wellingtonians.
57. Cycle Wellington supports increasing spend in the current budget. By increasing its investments in infrastructure the council will ensure that it is maximising the returns on investment for all Wellingtonians.
58. We believe that the council is being more fiscally conservative than it needs to be. We acknowledge the future risks posed by climate change and natural disasters, but also point out that we are in a disaster right now (pandemic) and that investing in infrastructure now is one of the best things we can do to mitigate the effects of these financial risks.
59. WCC's chosen debt-to-asset ratio is much less than the maximum allowed by the Local Government Funding Agency, and is lower than some other councils.
60. We understand the need to allow for future uncertainty, but feel that the council is being too risk-averse. We support the council lifting the debt limit more, especially as borrowing is historically cheap. This will ensure that Wellington does not miss out on the enormous physical, mental, social, environmental and financial benefits of investing in cycling.

Other Feedback

Other Projects

61. We oppose funding new roading projects such as Ohariu to Westchester Drive that will enable new greenfield developments. We note that this project alone has a higher cost than the entire preferred cycling option budget and yet it has not been included as part of the consultation process.
62. We oppose the council's plan to defer \$7 million on upgrading footpaths. Providing good infrastructure for all active modes is vital to achieving modeshift.
63. We oppose using lower cost treatments to achieve targeted levels of road resurfacing as poorer quality road surfaces are less comfortable for cycling. Freshly installed chip seal is dangerous for cyclists. Where separated cycling facilities are provided with high

quality surfacing, we are less concerned about the adjacent road surfacing used.

Council Fees and Charges

64. We support increasing parking fees as a method of encouraging mode-shift, and compensating for revenue loss as on-street parking is reduced.

About Cycle Wellington

Cycle 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've worked constructively with local and central government, NZTA, businesses, and the community on a wide variety of cycle projects. We represent around 2,000 members and supporters.

Nā mātou noa, nā Cycle Wellington
10 May 2021