

**HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS
2009 LTCCP WORKSHOP**

From Director Infrastructure Services

Item:

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CYCLE AND WALKING LINKAGES

PURPOSE

Cycling and walking is seen by central government as modes of transport to be encouraged and which if properly provided for could enhance the cities image as the cycling and walking recreation centre of the region. Opportunities exist within Upper Hutt to enhance our walking and cycling facilities and the purpose of this report is to identify those opportunities for Council and recommend actions.

BACKGROUND

Several cycle route studies (commuter and recreation) have been carried out since the early nineties and some commuter cycleways have been provided. However it has not been possible to provide a linked network because it is generally not possible to fit cycle lanes into the existing road widths and still retain current functionality such as parking lanes.

Possible recreation links were not funded by Council because of the cost. Footpaths have generally been seen as pedestrian ways for residents to move about the city and not as a linkage to recreation walkways. However there are many walkways and off and on road cycle tracks in the Upper Hutt area which the city should be taking advantage of to attract visitors to the city centre. Each weekend it is a common site to see cars with bike racks heading along State Highway 2 for cycling locations but not coming near the CBD.

Cycling and walking are seen by government as alternate modes of transport that should be encourage. Funding is available for projects that comply with criteria e.g. a cycling and walking strategy. If the city centre could be linked by a commuter and recreation cycleway and walkway that extended from Wellington through Lower Hutt to Upper Hutt and then into our many walking and cycling tracks, there could be significant benefits to the Upper Hutt CBD and the city's residents and safety gains for cyclists through a route not on the highway.

A base network already exists i.e. Wellington to Petone (which is to be upgraded) the Petone Foreshore and the Hutt River Trail. Within Upper Hutt we have many tracks that are not linked into our footpath system or to the CBD and there is no central map advertising the recreation trails we have on our doorstep.

A review of the Hutt Corridor Plan (transportation) is about to commence and will look at all transport modes in the Hutt Valley. We have convinced the Greater Wellington Regional Council to include as one of the issues to be considered, cycle connectivity through the Hutt Valley. The opportunity has therefore being laid to develop a

comprehensive cycle network which Council should be considering supporting and taking advantage of.

DISCUSSION

Council has previously focused on trying to provide cycleways within the existing roading network. However except in a few locations it is not possible to provide cycle lanes that are safe and comply with the legislation without removal of parking lanes, flush medians etc. Therefore similar to our approach with new subdivisions we have looked at possible locations that are outside the roading network but still achieve the aims of a cycling and walking network for residents and an external attraction for Upper Hutt. Also because government has now indicated willingness to subsidise walking and cycling projects, albeit if they comply with certain criteria it is now possible that opportunities previously rejected by Council may now be achievable. The principal criteria for achieving subsidy is having a walking and cycling strategy, which we currently do not have, showing health benefits and encouraging modes of transport other than the car.

Council has shown an interest in enhancing its walking and cycling network and requests are regularly received from the public for the same facility. Now that it is possible to receive subsidy for construction of walking and cycling facilities we have investigated projects that would be of benefit to the city. In summary the projects are:

1. Prepare a walking and cycling strategy
2. Upgrade the Hutt River Trail to provide a surface suitable for walking and cycling
3. Extend the Hutt River Trail along the stopbank linking to the CBD
4. Provide signage within the CBD showing the location of cycling and walking tracks with the Upper Hutt region
5. Provide a cycling and walking track within the railway corridor from Field Street in Silverstream through to the Upper Hutt Railway Station.

In detail the projects are as follows:

1. Upper Hutt Cycling and Walking Strategy:

The city does not have a formal strategy. We have many good practices but we need to bring them together into a formal strategy. This would then comply with Land Transport New Zealand's precursor for consideration of subsidy on walking and cycling projects. As an example of other benefits to the city the Regional Council, in its passenger transport role, recently carried out a region wide survey of pedestrian access i.e. footpaths to rail stations. This survey identified improvements that may be part of our footpath renewal programme. With a walking and cycling strategy in place, the opportunity arises to obtain subsidy to augment our renewals programme in those areas identified by the Regional Council survey. Without a strategy we cannot obtain subsidy. Many of the following projects may also be eligible for subsidy but again would require Council to have a walking and cycling strategy. A walking and cycling strategy would include such things as vision and objectives, policies, targets, monitoring and review, network plan/projects and implementation plan. To develop such a plan including consultation with the community, stake holders, and cycle groups regarding issues/ideas for existing and future networks and usage surveys is estimated to cost \$80,000. This

would be eligible for a subsidy from Land Transport New Zealand of 56% making Councils share \$35,200.

2. Upgrade the Surface of the Hutt River Trail Suitable for Walking and Cycling between Silverstream and Moonshine Road:

The Hutt River Trail which stretches from Petone to north of Upper Hutt has been developed by Hutt Rotary on behalf of the Hutt Valley Rotary Clubs in conjunction with the Regional Council and Territorial Authorities. The section between Trentham Memorial Park and Moonshine Road i.e. through Moonshine Park is sealed and suitable for cyclists and walking. The section from Silverstream to Trentham Memorial Park has a metal surface which would not attract road cyclists from the shoulders of the State Highway to the Hutt Trail. For this length we are not suggesting that Council considers funding but rather it acts as an advocate for an improvement of the trail between Petone and Upper Hutt and its inclusion as a project for development within the Hutt Corridor Study. To support this inclusion in the corridor plan Council should also be promoting walking and cycling linkages between the city and the Hutt River Trail. Such a linkage is outlined in Report P25 "St Pats to Silverstream Bridge Cycleway and Pedestrian Walkway". Opportunities exist for similar linkages along the length of the trail which at this stage, only require appropriate directional signage to encourage connection.

3. Walking and Cycling Linkage from Moonshine Park through to the CBD and Beyond:

At Moonshine Park the Hutt River Trail follows the bank of the Hutt River separated from the city by the State Highway and stopbank. Its surface is also not suitable for cycling. The location and surface acts a deterrent to cycling and walking within the city. As mentioned in the background section of this report council should also be trying to capture those cyclists who bypass the Upper Hutt CBD. Another consideration is how to provide a safe usable cycling network within the city given the limited ability to construct cycleways within the existing road carriageways. There are two opportunities to develop cycling and walking pathways that would provide a facility meeting the needs outlined above. One opportunity, addressed in this section, is to develop a walking and cycling pathway along the top of the stop bank and the other is a similar path within the rail corridor between Silverstream and Upper Hutt station, described in a following section. The proposal covered in this section, is a cycling/walking pathway linking the Hutt River trail at Moonshine Park through to the CBD and pathways beyond, by constructing a sealed path along the stop bank to opposite Poplar Grove, then dropping down through various city streets that have low car numbers, to a destination in the CBD in the vicinity of Logan Street. The pathway would then return back out of the CBD along similar streets to link up with the existing cycle and walking path to Totara Park and those along Fergusson Drive from Ebdentown Street heading north. The proposal is described in the attached report from Tim Kelly Transportation Planning Limited complete with a map showing the actual location of the proposed pathway. It is not proposed to construct the stopbank pathway between Poplar Grove and Ebdentown Street as this would encourage cyclists to bypass the city which would be contrary to one of the objectives of such a cycle and walking pathway i.e. to bring those people into the CBD. A cycle and walking pathway as described would provide a safe environment off the street network and also provide an opportunity to serve the various schools adjacent to the route. At the destination point within the central business district it is proposed that a large information board be erected showing all of the walking and cycling tracks accessible from this point within the city. It would include such routes as the Whitemans Valley cycle network, the incline and off road routes through to Battle Hill. The attached report makes mention of a subway under State Highway 2 to avoid the busy at grade

crossing of the Totara Park traffic lights. If this was located south off the Totara Park intersection, about opposite Ebdentown Street, it could be possible to construct a subway under the State Highway within the river corridor without breaching the stop bank. This would provide a safe crossing for both pedestrians and cyclists across the State Highway linking the paths on both sides. It would address a request that we have received many times for pedestrian access over the State Highway. The estimated cost is \$600,000, although this would need further work. As outlined in the attached consultants report, he estimates \$420,000 to form a cycle /walking path from Moonshine Park to the CBD and beyond. It is probable that a wider path would be required to prevent damage from machinery maintaining the stopbank and therefore a cost of \$505,000 should be used. To provide an information board in the CBD is estimated to cost an additional \$10,000.

4. Cycle/walkway within the rail corridor between Field Street in Silverstream to the Upper Hutt Railway Station:

Such a pathway, 5.8km long, would complement that along the stop bank allowing safe passage for walking and cycling off the roadway. Its location fits well with the catchment area on the south side of Fergusson Drive and would achieve the walking and cycling environment within the city which is currently unachievable on the likes of Fergusson Drive because of traffic and width restrictions. Such a path way has many opportunities for interconnection to city streets where it connects with them at crossings and pedestrian accessways. It would connect at Field Street to the proposed cycle/walkway between St Pat's and the Silverstream bridge, described in report P25, hence linking to the proposed pathway on the Hutt River Trail and along the stop bank, described above. At the other end it would link to the CBD exiting by the Upper Hutt rail station. His Worship the Mayor has had some discussion with railway officials who appear to be supportive and from an overview of aerial photographs there is possibly a route on the north side of the railway line for the complete distance. A new path would obviously have to be formed and sealed, fenced and provided with lighting for security and safety. No detailed costs have been prepared however construction is likely to be in excess of \$1M. To employ a consultant to establish detail of the route, identify appropriate treatment for road crossings, liaise with cycle organisations, consider security issues and review funding criteria from Land Transport New Zealand is estimated to cost \$12,000. The proposal would fit well within an overall cycling/walking network for the city serving both recreational and commuter cyclists with the safety advantage of removing cyclists from parallel general traffic routes such as Fergusson Drive.

5. General:

A cycling and walking network linked to the region by the Hutt River Trail and that had as its main pathways a path along the stop bank and another in the rail corridor providing linkage to the CBD and through to other trails shown on the information board would have benefits to local residents and the broader regional community including visitors to the region. However, for the city to gain the benefits of such a network it would need to advertise it extensively. The existing tracks, trails etc within Upper Hutt are talked about, claimed as being extensive, but very little information exists promoting their location. If a network such as described in this report is to succeed it needs to be extensively advertised through e.g. the region's cycle shops, clubs and backpackers. To produce 10,000 brochures promoting the network is estimated to cost \$5,000. In addition to advertising the network it also needs to be extensively signposted along its length indicating connecting footpaths and cycle routes. To provide 40 such signs is estimated to cost \$10,000.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The city really has no cycle and walking network. This report lays out a backbone for a cycling and walking network within the city but obviously the development costs would be significant. However, by establishing Upper Hutt as the cycling and walking destination within the region, benefits to the city could be significant. Central Government has indicated strong support for the establishment of cycling and walking facilities and some areas have already received funding. The Government Policy Statement (GPS) setting out Government's long term support for transportation, including cycling and walking, is due to be released in the near future and it is expected that this will continue the Governments support for walking and cycling. It is probable that the projects identified in this report would be eligible for some of that funding. At this stage the indications are that eligibility would be based upon projects that are included in a walking and cycling strategy, the implementation of which is supported by Council and the community. That being so, the works identified in this report would be eligible for our construction subsidy of 56% i.e. 44% of the costs would be Councils responsibility. From discussion with the Regional Council there is also the possibility that for such a significant walking and cycling project as outlined, regional funding i.e. R funding may be available, further reducing councils share. If the Council wishes to pursue the establishment of a cycling and walking network the first stage is therefore the production of a walking and cycling strategy. As previously mentioned such a strategy would also have benefits outside of the items identified in this report e.g. upgrade of footpaths linking to railway stations. A suggested funding plan is as follows:

Stage1-	Prepare walking and cycling strategy	\$80,000
	Rail corridor study	\$12,000
	TOTAL:	<u>\$92,000</u>
	Councils share:	<u>\$47,200</u>
Stage 2 -	Construct stop bank walking and cycling pathway	\$505,000
	Provide information board in CBD	\$ 10,000
	Prepare brochures and signage	\$ 15,000
	Professional fees	\$ 30,000
	TOTAL:	<u>\$560,000</u>
	Councils share:	<u>\$246,400</u>
Stage 3 -	Commence construction of rail corridor walking and Cycling pathway	\$600,000
	TOTAL:	<u>\$600,000</u>
	Councils share:	<u>\$264,000</u>
Stage 4 -	Complete rail corridor pathway	\$600,000
	TOTAL:	<u>\$600,000</u>
	Councils share:	<u>\$264,000</u>

Stage 5 - Construct subway under State Highway 2 (provisional item)	\$600,000
TOTAL:	<u>\$600,000</u>
Councils share:	<u>\$264,000</u>
Contingency sum	\$ 48,000
Councils share:	<u>\$ 21,120</u>
TOTAL PROJECT COST:	<u>\$2,500,000</u>
Councils share:	<u>\$1,106,720</u>

The construction of a pathway up the rail corridor has been preliminary estimated at \$1.2M.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

At this stage there are no obvious legal implications however, the approval of the following organisations would be required:

- Greater Wellington Regional Council for the construction of a pathway along the top of the stop bank.
- Transit New Zealand for the construction of a subway under the State Highway.
- OnTrack for the construction of a pathway within the rail corridor.

CONSULTATION

If Council agrees with this proposal the community would be consulted via the 2009 LTCCP procedure. In addition, the preparation of a cycling and walking strategy would involve community consultation.

CONCLUSION

The projects described herein meet Councils direction to improve walking and cycling linkages and connections back to the CBD. They are also supported by all community outcomes. The project addresses the Council and community concern that cycleways cannot be constructed within the existing road network. The proposal does require Council to advocate for the upgrading of the Hutt River Trail from Trentham Memorial park through to Petone, such that it is suitable for cycling. Council has the opportunity to establish Upper Hutt as the walking and cycling centre with the establishment of a network stretching from beyond Petone through to the Upper Hutt CBD.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT Council includes in the draft 2009 LTCCP for public consultation \$92,000 for the preparation of a walking and cycling strategy and a study to investigate a cycling and walking pathway along the rail corridor.**

2. THAT if Council accepts recommendation 1, it indicates within the draft 2009 LTCCP released for public consultation, a funding plan for construction of a walking and cycling network staged as follows.
 - i. Construct stopbank walking and cycling pathway including brochures and signage, CBD information board -- \$560,000 plus \$48,000 contingency.
 - ii. Construct rail corridor walking and cycling pathway over two years --- \$1.2M.
 - iii. Construct subway under State Highway 2 --- \$600,000.

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