

Submission notes shared pathway

Good afternoon. I'm Geoff Rashbrooke, a resident of York bay for the last 50 years.

I'm a runner, walker, and occasional cyclist, and have a close & direct knowledge of the existing route. I was also a regular user of the bus to commute to work in Wellington. I have some familiarity with the resource consent process, having assisted in an appeal against Hutt City's Plan Change 36.

By occupation I'm an actuary. A big part of that is using data to assess & mitigate risk, and there's some important data missing from the application. In particular, any evidence that people not already doing so will get out of their car and commute to work on a bicycle, and any evidence that moving bus stops in the bays will not adversely affect use of public transport.

I appreciate that progress often requires trade-offs. But it seems to me that inadequate attention has been given to making sensible compromises.

There are two main issues for me with this application that I'd like to talk about.

The first is the proposed path width along beach areas; I can understand why a wide path is desired, but the trade-offs required in relation to environment and amenity should mean anything greater than 2.5 m where there is beach should be prohibited.

And the second issue is the offhand treatment of bus stop locations. There is nothing offered to improve the use of public transport as an offset to the relocation and downgrade of facilities on the coast side.

I'll talk first about path width. Historically the project was to improve the walking experience, which we all supported. Then improving storm resilience was added, and we've been mostly ok with that, despite some adverse environmental effects. But adding cycling has added a huge amount of complexity, and things have got out of hand.

Please don't get me wrong – I'm in favour of getting people out on bikes for exercise, as long as they let me know when they're coming when they overtake me when I'm running or walking. But we don't need 3.5 m for recreational cycling, and places like Pt Howard to Port Rd seem to work ok where it's less than 2 m.

So we come to commuter cycling. Currently those who commute by bicycle are fit, hardy types who love cycling. My guess is that there are very few people left, if any, who will now get out of their cars with a better path around Windy Point and then from the south end of Sunshine Bay to Pt Howard; particularly in wet or windy days, which are not unknown. I may be wrong – but where is the research? Much better for commuter cyclists would be to reduce the 70 km/h speed limit – I'll come back to that.

And everyone loves the idea of kids being able to cycle to school. I have two granddaughters who are very keen. But I don't recall seeing a safety assessment of

that in the proposal. There would be no protection riding into and through Days bay, and kids would need to cross a very busy road with a 70 km/h speed limit. My recollection is that generally parents are not supposed to let their kids on urban roads unsupervised until they are 12. All the issues of kids on footpaths ... And I've already mentioned weather. If you want to stop parents driving their kids to school, for heavens sake do more to encourage them to use the bus, as many children in York bay now do.

Which is a good segue into my second concern. Good public transport is the main way to reduce car use. Encouraging cycling is good, but commuter cycling to Wellington or even central Hutt requires real dedication, and where's the evidence of actual potential growth beyond current levels?

Now its really difficult to know what is planned, beyond requiring people to walk appreciably further in exposed conditions. If for example the pathway is going behind the bus stops, as seems to be proposed, it will put the stops close to the road, and presumably only one person deep. This is ludicrous.

Yes, the proposal says there will be "discussions". But these should have happened already. It is not a minor detail – it is an essential part of what you should be considering for approval.

I would guess that one reason for moving the bus stops is to reduce the reduction in beach area that the 3.5 m path width entails. But if so, a different and better trade-off would be to reduce the path width. And speaking as a bus user, the space between the road and bus stop is essential, so there needs to be a rethink of how to control speed across the front of bus stops, as I said in my submission.

I really hate to point out problems without proposing solutions. You may well be constrained as to what you can do with this. But here is what I would like you to do:

- Restrict path width to no more than 2.5 m along beach areas
- Reject re-location of bus stops, and get a proper report done including consultation with bus users, oriented towards encouraging greater public transport use
- Request Hutt City to reduce the speed limit around the bays to 50 km/h. I have asked that the NZTA speed zoning report from 2009 be placed in front of you, so you can see it is not a silly idea, but one for which there is a good evidence-based case. My own belief is that Hutt City are anxious not to incur the anger of people who want to drive faster than 50 km/h, even though there is no demonstrable need. Be that as it may, a reduction would make the walking & cycling experience much more attractive, improve safety for children on bikes (although Days Bay remains a problem), improve the commuter cycling experience, and perhaps be a trade-off to the bays communities who despite all will lose amenity with the proposed wall.