

24 July 2020

Let's Get Wellington Moving
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Tēnā koe

Re: Submission on the Golden Mile consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission on this consultation document.

Regional Public Health serves the greater Wellington region, through its three district health boards (DHBs): Capital & Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa and as a service is part of the Hutt Valley District Health Board.

We work with our community to make it a healthier safer place to live. We promote good health, prevent disease, and improve the quality of life for our population, with a particular focus on children, Māori and working with primary care organisations. Our staff includes a range of occupations such as: medical officers of health, public health advisors, health protection officers, public health nurses, and public health analysts.

We are happy to provide further advice or clarification on any of the points raised in our written submission. The contact point for this submission is:

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Ngā mihi

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CONCEPT THREE

What do you like about this concept? Why?

Regional Public Health (RPH) supports the move towards quicker and more reliable bus journeys and a better walking and cycling environment which would be implemented in concept three. Evidence shows that active transport is beneficial for physical health and wellbeing, as well as having economic and environmental benefits.

Concept three provides an opportunity for better access to active transport, such as walking/ running and cycling. Currently only 55% of adults in the greater Wellington region meet the recommended New Zealand physical activity guidelines (1). Cycling, walking and jogging/running are becoming increasingly popular in New Zealand, with both walking and cycling among the most popular sports for tamariki and whānau from low and medium economic backgrounds in urban areas. Active modes of transport increase levels of physical activity and reduce instances of long-term health conditions, some of which are the leading causes of health loss in New Zealand (2). Additionally, active transport helps to alleviate traffic congestion, saves energy, reduces air and noise pollution, conserves land, and produces various other environmental benefits.

Concept three aims to improve speed and reliability of bus journeys. Delivering quality public transport that is affordable, reliable and convenient is important for providing personal mobility and freedom for people to get to the places where they live, learn, work and play. Public transport plays an important role in the health and wellbeing of whānau as it is key to accessing almost all services, such as education, employment, and social activities. RPH supports the implementation of more connected public transport routes so that those in peripheral areas have reliable, affordable and sustainable options for accessing employment, education, social activities and other amenities, without relying on a personal vehicle.

RPH supports the Golden Mile closing access to cars/trucks between 7am and 6pm. This will reduce congestion for buses and provides a better environment for people on foot or on bikes. Removing cars also promotes walking and cycling in the community (3). Additionally, when more people start to bike, there are fewer cars on the road, which reduces the rate of cyclist and pedestrian injuries (3).

Transport planning decisions have a significant impact on health and wellbeing by reducing traffic accidents and vehicle emissions, and improving physical activity, access to services, and mental health. By adjusting the bus network in response to public concern, Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) has the opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of its population.

References:

1. Ministry of Health. 2018. Regional Data Explorer 2014–17: New Zealand Health Survey.
2. Ministry of Health. 2013. Health Loss in New Zealand: A report from the New Zealand Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study 2006-2016. Wellington: Ministry of Health.
3. [Alexandra](#) Macmillan, Jennie Connor, Karen Witten, Robin Kearns, David Rees and Alistair Woodward. The Societal Costs and Benefits of Commuter Bicycling: Simulating the Effects of

What don't you like about this concept? Why?

Transport planning decisions have the potential to positively address equity or exacerbate inequity. Although RPH supports the range of key themes identified, RPH is concerned that the voices that have influenced the content of the themes are from more articulate, advantaged and younger communities. Without effective engagement with the disability community, elderly, and those who are less advantaged, there is risk that the Golden Mile decisions may have unintended consequences that may exacerbate inequities.

LGWM's development of the Golden Mile provides a unique opportunity to improve the movement of buses within the corridor and make the Golden Mile a safer, and a more pleasant place in which to walk and spend time for many able-bodied people. However, there is a risk that the closing of key roads and side roads to taxis and parking may inadvertently reduce access to key services for those who experience significant mobility challenges. RPH recommends that LGWM carry out a co-design process with the disability community to ensure the final concept is an innovative and inclusive transport solution that Wellington can be proud of and that meets the needs of all. The 'Enabling Good Lives' approach provides a groundwork from which to consider and evaluate how LGWM proposals are inclusive and supportive of those living with disabilities (1).

Speed limits play a crucial role in safety for cyclists and pedestrians. Specifically, research has found that when traffic volumes are lower and speeds slower, streets become safer and more inviting places to meet, and are more liveable and communal (2). The more people use streets and interact with one another, the more likely they are to walk or cycle. Living in a neighbourhood with more traffic calming features, or fewer bicycle lanes was associated with whānau being less likely to engage in cycling for transport.

References

1. <https://www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz/>
2. [Alexandra](#) Macmillan, Jennie Connor, Karen Witten, Robin Kearns, David Rees and Alistair Woodward. The Societal Costs and Benefits of Commuter Bicycling: Simulating the Effects of Specific Policies Using System Dynamics Modelling. Environmental Health Perspectives; 2014.

CYCLING AND SCOOTERS

What do you think about having a dedicated or shared space for people on bikes and scooters on Courtenay Place?

RPH recommends that there is a dedicated space for cycling and scooters on Courtenay Place. There is currently no dedicated space for cyclists/e-scooters. The roads through the Golden Mile are narrow with buses coming and going, making it difficult for cyclists/e-scooters to navigate the area.

User-safety is paramount for usability; therefore, RPH recommends that the Golden Mile prioritises a pedestrian-only zone, particularly where there are high numbers of pedestrian users.

If LGWM decides on having shared spaces, they need to ensure that these are well-designed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable road user e.g. children, disabled people and the frail or elderly. RPH recommends that LGWM consult with disability communities to allow for careful consideration to the design of these lanes. Research to date suggests that purpose-built bicycle-only facilities such as bike routes, bike lanes/bike paths, and cycle tracks at roundabouts reduce the risk of crashes and injuries compared to cycling on-road with traffic or off-road with pedestrians (1). Creating a clear separation between cyclist and pedestrians is highly attractive for both cyclists who are travelling significantly faster, and for pedestrians who may be worried about being hit by a cyclist. Both concerns can be a deterrent for using the path. Should the path not have a clear separation, then it will be important to have clear signage and messaging on appropriate behaviours on shared pathways such as pedestrians having priority and speed restriction guidelines, such elements contribute to building a culture of consideration in shared spaces. Paved surfaces and low-angled grades improve cyclist safety. Adequate lighting will be important especially for commuters during winter months. Clearly sign-posting all entry ways to the path, along with providing distant markers, will also improve usability. RPH recommends a clear demarcation of the entrance to shared space area to ensure that everyone, those with vision and the visually impaired are able to identify the transition into the shared space and feel comfortable navigating the area (2).

References

1. Alexandra Macmillan, Jennie Connor, Karen Witten, Robin Kearns, David Rees and Alistair Woodward. The Societal Costs and Benefits of Commuter Bicycling: Simulating the Effects of Specific Policies Using System Dynamics Modelling. Environmental Health Perspectives; 2014.
2. Else Havik, Bart Melis-Dankers, Frank Steyvers. Accessibility of Shared Space for visually impaired persons: An inventory in the Netherlands. British Journal of Visual Impairment; 2012.

PUBLIC SPACES

What do you like about the design of these streets?

RPH supports the inclusion of the 'Healthy Streets indicators' to the design of the Golden Mile. The impact of the built environment on health and wellbeing has been well demonstrated.

To successfully deliver LGWM's outcomes; a faster, more reliable bus system; improved pedestrian safety; improved pedestrian convenience; and increased amenity value, the design will need to require additional features to ensure it attracts users beyond those who already cycle and walk/run along the existing pathway.

Key elements of the healthy streets indicators that are important to consider and include in this area would be:

- Ensuring people feel safe day and night with adequate lighting, clear visibility and sight lines;
- Pedestrians from all walks of life feel welcome; young children through to elderly are able to access and use this space comfortably;
- Opportunities to stop and rest contributes to building community. Additionally, it is important to provide appropriate shade and shelter, as well as places of rest, along the Golden Mile to protect users from weather extremes, such as sun, wind and rain to protect people at bus stops;
- Increasing the width of the footpath and therefore the proximity to large moving buses allows people, especially those with reduced mobility or children, to feel more relaxed in walking or running. Additionally, ensuring that the streets are free of debris and rubbish improve accessibility to footpath space.

Changing how a space is used, encouraging increased interaction and building a culture can be facilitated in multiple ways. Currently the north end of Lambton Quay is often very quiet outside of working hours. WCC could contribute to changing how the space is used. One example of how changing streets encourages public engagement is how Hutt City Council closed a short section of Andrews Avenue to vehicles between 9 January and 31 March 2020 to make this space friendlier for users. This initiative came from growing public desire for increased opportunities to walk and cycle. Activities like lunchtime music have been scheduled to increase engagement and utilisation. In Christchurch, residents reported improvements to recreation and found it more pleasant to walk on the street in closed residential roads (1).

References

1. Witten K, Hilscook R, Pearce J, Blakely T. Neighbourhood access to open spaces and the physical activity of residents: a national study. *Prev Med*; 2008.