



Cycle Aware Wellington

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Shape your region - GWRC 10 Year Plan 2015-2025 – Cycle Aware Wellington submission

We would like to make an oral submission. Please contact Alastair Smith agsmith37@gmail.com
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Cycle Aware 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 have worked constructively with local and central government, NZTA, businesses, and the community on a wide variety of cycle projects. We represent around 750 members and supporters.

Key points of our submission

- Increasing cycling mode share benefits the environment and all transport users
- GWRC should work with local bodies to create an attractive and efficient cycling network in the Wellington Region
- Existing educational and promotional activities should be expanded
- Cycling should be integrated with public transport
- eBikes should be promoted

Increasing cycling mode share benefits the environment and all transport users

Cycling is more than "getting out and about" (the phrase used in the Plan) - it's an increasingly important part of the transport network.

If the cycling mode share is increased this has benefits for Wellington as a whole, particularly if the move is from private motor vehicles. Congestion and competition for parking is reduced, and active transport contributes to a reduction in obesity and other diseases related to inactivity. We accept that some journeys will need to be made by cars, but these will be facilitated by increased provision for cycling.

The International Panel on Climate Change shows that the main environmental threat to humanity

is climate change, primarily caused by fossil fuel emissions. This makes it imperative that Wellington's transport system should be planned to reduce fossil fuel emissions, encouraging transport modes such as cycling, and discouraging use of private cars. Transport project evaluation should include consideration of the impact of the project on fossil fuel emissions. Note that Vancouver plans to eliminate fossil fuel use completely [<http://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/climate-leadership.aspx>]

The Plan states: "The Regional Land Transport Plan aims to increase journey to work trips for walking and cycling by 17% by 2025." Assuming this is not a misprint, it is a remarkably unambitious target. Wellington region has a cycling mode share of about 3% [Draft Wellington Regional Land Transport Plan 2015, p40]. Portland in the US has already achieved a cycling mode share of 6%, and Bolzano in Italy (a city with topography similar to Wellington) has a cycling mode share of 29%. [<http://www.cityclock.org/urban-cycling-mode-share>]. Although these are cities, rather than regions, Wellington should be working to achieve comparable figures.

A 20% cycling mode share across the region would be a good aspirational target for 2025.

What we should expect to see by 2025

Transport in Wellington will have low or zero carbon emissions, due to the high mode share of active transport such as cycling. People who need to use cars will experience low congestion, and be able to find convenient parking. Compared with 2015, diseases of inactivity will be much reduced.

GWRC should work with local bodies to create an attractive and efficient cycling network in the Wellington Region

We are pleased to see that GWRC will "contribute to building a new walking and cycling link between Wellington and the Hutt" but are keen to see faster progress on this and other strategic links within the Wellington Region. The Ara Tawa path, for example, does not yet link with cycling paths in Porirua City, or with a route south to link to the Wellington CBD. Planning for the Haywards Hill SH58/SH2 interchange does not include adequate provision for cycling.

NZTA and local bodies also bear responsibility for lack of progress on the regional cycling network. However given the rising demand for cycling routes, and the benefits of cycling discussed above, Wellington needs to progress cycling much more rapidly, and GWRC is in a position to lead this.

The regional cycling network needs to be:

- **attractive**: encouraging people to use bikes for trips because they are perceived to be safe, for example by using separated cycle paths and low traffic routes.
- **efficient**: providing routes that are fast and do not require excessive effort

What we should expect to see by 2025

A high quality regional cycling network will exist, enabling commuters, tourists and recreational users to travel by bike through the region on routes that are perceived to be safe, and provide efficient linkages between desired destinations. Due to congestion on the cycle/ walking path

between Petone and Ngauranga, the 2025-2035 Regional Plan will propose moving motor traffic to the seaward side of the railway line, allowing use of the existing SH2 by cycle traffic.

Existing educational and promotional activities should be expanded

GWRC's educational and promotional initiatives are strongly supported by CAW. These include Pedal Ready training and support of promotional events such as Go By Bike Day and Ciclovía. We believe these can be expanded, for example by ensuring that all school children in the Wellington Region have cycling training, along the lines of the Bikes in School programme. Investment in cycling training for young people is likely to both encourage more use of cycling in adulthood, but also create better drivers.

Regular Ciclovía events [<http://www.ciclovía.org.nz/>] should occur throughout the region, helping people realise the benefits of a motor free environment.

What we should expect to see by 2025

Educational and promotional activities will have been scaled back, since intensive efforts in 2015-2020 mean that Wellington is the "Copenhagen of the South Pacific" where cycling is a normal transport choice for many journeys.

Cycling should be integrated with public transport

People do not live and work at bus stops and railway stations. Public transport should help people to get from A (e.g. their home) to B (e.g. their workplace). If people can use bikes in conjunction with public transport, the utility of public transport is much facilitated, and the catchment area for a transport node is increased - a 10 minute trip is 3km by bike, less than 1km if walking.

We are pleased that GWRC has improved accommodation of cycles on trains, and is exploring provision of bike racks on buses. However the rigid limit of three bikes per Matangi unit, and restrictions on peak services, limits the efficiency of combining bikes with trains. Progress with bike racks on buses is far too slow. Christchurch already has bike racks on almost all bus services.

What we should expect to see by 2025

It will be normal to use a bike in conjunction with public transport on journeys in the region. On peak train services, special "bike carriages" will provide convenient bike storage, and work stations with pumps and tools so any mechanical problems can be fixed during the journey. All buses (including those in the BRT system) and light rail units will carry bikes.

eBikes should be promoted

Electrically assisted bicycles, called eBikes or Pedelecs, are increasingly popular. Benefits include:

- They can attract "interested but concerned" potential cyclists, overcoming doubts about physical abilities.
- They allow existing cyclists to continue cycling despite age, health etc
- They make cycling easier in hillier and windy areas, such as Wellington.

- Because of their convenience, ability to carry loads, and lack of need for physical effort, eBikes provide a realistic alternative to motor cars in many situations.

GWRC should promote eBikes as an alternative to cars, and for people less able to ride standard bikes. Subsidies could be offered on eBikes in the same way the GWRC has subsidised folding bikes for use on public transport. People should be able to ride eBikes on off road routes where gradient and sight lines allow, e.g. the Rimutaka Incline and Hutt River trail. Consideration should be given to providing charging points in central areas. eBikes should be carried on public transport on the same basis as standard bikes.

What we should expect to see by 2025

A significant proportion of bikes used in the region will be electrically assisted, particularly those used by older riders. Charging points will be provided at main bike parking areas, and on trains. High use routes on the regional cycling network will incorporate solar panels, allowing wireless charging of eBikes using the route.

[\[http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/05/worlds-first-solar-cycle-lane-opening-in-the-netherlands\]](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/nov/05/worlds-first-solar-cycle-lane-opening-in-the-netherlands)

Conclusion

2015 is likely to be a watershed in the development of cycling as a viable transport choice in the Wellington region. There is increased interest in everyday cycling, and central government support through for example the Urban Cycleways Programme. We trust that GWRC will play a leadership role in ensuring that the next decade will be transformational for cycling.

Nā mātou noa, nā Cycle Aware Wellington
20 April 2015