



Cycle Action Waikato  
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Hamilton  
NEW ZEALAND

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## **HCC draft River Plan feedback**

**From:** - Rob Davidson and Peter Bos, for Cycle Action Waikato.

**To:** - Jacob Quinn and the River Plan Team

### **What do we like about the proposed River plan?**

#### **1. The River Corridor Map is Great**

It clearly indicates access of both the riverpath and the river bridges, throughout the whole length of the area covered by the River Plan.

It is vital that people get the River Plan's 'Key Themes' from the River Corridor map. This is essential information, which needs to be quickly accessed.

For clarity we request that the **River Corridor Map's Key includes the label ('Key Themes')** above the six theme logos of: - Access, Recreation, Development, Natural Environment, Arts and Culture, and Tourism (shown vertically).

#### **2. The proposed idea for "pedestrian bridge zones" is a great idea. Furthermore, the proposed idea to "Develop a plan to become a city of bridges" is a good one.**

These two proposals together have a huge capacity to alleviate the **River's existing Community Severance Effect**, experienced by walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired.

The river currently separates the eastern residential areas from the CBD commercial and employment zone.

The river is a huge barrier to cycling access as the majority of Hamilton City's bridges are **not safe for cycling, nor cycle friendly** (not comfortable to ride), as described below: -

- **Whitora Bridge** (in the past, when 2-laned) was safe with wide road shoulders to cycle in. However, HCC has recently done a huge amount of damage to cycling safety and connectivity, in three-laning the Whitora Bridge by removing the bridge's road shoulders (cycling space) to fit an extra vehicle lane. **Whitora Bridge has been made the most**

**difficult and dangerous Hamilton Bridge to cycle**, due to the lack of dedicated cycle space, and the high pressure from impatient motorists who bully cyclists off the road. Many cyclists avoid the Bridge, while others ride illegally on the footpath, which is not good due to the high pedestrian pressure. **This needs to be urgently remedied.**

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows: -

Short Term Projects (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan: - Investigate the long-term motor vehicle layout options of the Whitiora Bridge: - (i) Either 3-laned with no on-road cycle space, or (ii) **4-laned** (via the proposed second bridge span) and **with on-road cycle lanes provided**).**

If 3-laned is to be long-term motor vehicle layout option, then we request **Cycleway Plan - Pedestrian / cycle link across Whitiora Bridge.**

- **Cobham Bridge** is **highly dangerous to cycle on-road** due to high number of heavy truck trailer units, high traffic volume, and the lack of dedicated cycle space.
- **Claudelands Bridge** is **not safe to cycle on-road** due to the lack of dedicated cycle space, and the high pressure from impatient motorists.
- **Fairfield Bridge** is **not safe to cycle on-road** due to the lack of dedicated cycle space, and the high pressure from impatient motorists.
- **Victoria Bridge's on-road cycle lanes are of inadequate width**, and **scary for novices to cycle**. Many novices ride illegally on the footpath, which is not good due to the high pedestrian pressure. The footpaths only on one side of the bridge cause pedestrians to dangerously cross the road at the bridge, endangering both themselves and the cyclists using the on-road cycle lanes.
- **Pukete Bridge** can be legally and comfortably be cycled on using the shared-use pedestrian / cycle space provided, which is just as well as the recent four-laning the Pukete Bridge has created a narrow pinchpoint for cyclists by removing both 1.5m road shoulders (on-road cycling space). This is **very dangerous to cyclists** due to the high motor vehicle speeds (80kph).
- **Braithewaite Bridge** can be legally and comfortably be cycled on using the shared-use pedestrian / cycle space provided and is likely to currently be the **safest bridge to cycle across**.

We Request that the River Plan-proposed pedestrian / cycle bridge zone projects are specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows: -

**Cycleway Plan - Pedestrian / cycle link across Claudelands Bridge.**

**Cycleway Plan - Ferrybank pedestrian ('and cycle') Bridge Zone.**

Note - this project is not currently listed in any Implementation Timeframe.

**Cycleway Plan – Days Park to St. Andrews pedestrian ('and cycle') Bridge Zone.**

**Cycleway Plan - Pedestrian ('and cycle') link over the river into Peacocks.**

# Parts of the River Plan we wish to see changed

## **3. ACCESS THEME - Pedestrian-only access on Braithewaite Garden Bridge**

Given the lack of northern Bridges, and the growth of the City boundary to the north, the Braithewaite pedestrian / cycle Bridge is of very high strategic importance for cycling. Banning cycling from it will have a huge negative impact on cycling commuting, which is inconsistent with ACCESS Hamilton policy which states that: -“*Council needs to use every means available to encourage commuters to use alternative modes of transport*” (to the car).

After the HCC cycling-disaster of three-laning the Whitiora Bridge, which is no-longer safe to ride, we have no faith that Braithewaite Garden Bridge will be cycleable! **This is not acceptable and must be remedied.**

We are greatly concerned by the pedestrian-only concept drawing of the Braithewaite Garden footbridge, which falsely advertises a pedestrian-only environment, which is not rideable by bike. This is inconsistent with the River Plan access aim, which states: - “*Adapt bridges for improved pedestrian and cyclist access*”.

The River Plan (page 62) notes that the Conceptual images: - “*...provide an understanding of the River Plan’s direction, and examples of project ideas to create an aspiration...*” We wish to see the concept drawing’s ‘direction and aspiration’ for the Garden Bridge to be for both walking (and cycling).

Cycle Action Waikato has had a mayoral assurance that the Braithewaite Garden Bridge will be rideable by bike. We are asking for further commitment of this, (i) via the River Plan Team, and (ii) via the Concept Drawing within the River Plan document.

We request that the **Concept Plan drawing of Braithewaite Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge, be redone to clearly demonstrate that the bridge is both rideable (has space to ride) and show cyclists riding on it.**

We Request that the Braithewaite Garden Bridge project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows: -  
Projects to commence immediately: -  
**Cycleway Plan - Braithewaite Pedestrian (*‘and cycle’*) Garden Bridge.**

## **4. ACCESS THEME - Stairs (Lack of mobility scooter, wheelchair/cycle/ pram access)**

The River Plan is an excellent initiative from HCC, unfortunately, the Access Theme seems to be designed from an ‘able bodied’ walking perspective, and so caters very poorly for the mobility impaired and for cyclists. **The ‘Access Theme’ requires significant further development to make it work well for both mobility impaired and cyclists.**

It is greatly disturbing to see in the Concept Drawings that three of the following Sites proposed to be developed have stairs, but no access ramps: -

- Ferrybank deck.
- St Andrews golf Course.
- Wellington Street Beach.

**The Stairs ‘direction and aspiration’ of the Concept Drawings is not acceptable for an HCC document, and must be remedied.**

Stairs are inconsistent with the River Plan access aim, which states: - *“Improve access for people with disabilities.”*

We wish to see the concept plan’s ‘direction and aspiration’ for the Ferrybank Deck, St Andrews Golf Course, and Wellington Street Beach, to be accessible by all including the mobility impaired.

We request that the written ‘Access Theme’ have a section specifically on access for all, including acknowledging the need and provision of ramped access for mobility scooter, wheelchair/cycle/ pram.

We request that the ‘Concept Drawings’ for Ferrybank Deck, St Andrews Golf Course, and Wellington Street Beach, be redone, with 3.0m wide ramps for mobility scooter, wheelchair/cycle/ pram access.

#### **5. ACCESS THEME - Ramped access**

We are greatly disappointed that for access, the River Plan has lots of warm fuzzy statements that are far too vague to ever achieve anything. **This is not acceptable and must be remedied.**

The River Plan states of Victoria Bridge to Claudelands Bridge: - *“...improved pedestrian / cycle links.”* **It is meaningless.** How will HCC know when that has been achieved??

**The River Plan must tangibly guide the HCC Cycleway Plan.** By clearly specifying a description of each of the proposed River Plan infrastructure projects included in the Cycleway Plan, the progress of each project can be readily measured and tracked.

This is consistent with ‘The second purpose of the River Plan’, which states: - *“Provide a framework to guide transformational change along the river”*.

We Request these projects be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Projects (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – 3.0m wide Ramped Access from the riverpath to the CBD.** This is consistent with (page 18 and 19, which states: - *‘Links between the city and the river’*) and consistent with the River Plan Access aim, which states: - *“Improve access for people with disabilities.”*

**Note -The Garden Place / CBD Riverpath access is currently stairs-only.**

Short Term Projects (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – 3.0m wide Ramped Access from the riverpath to the Claudelands Bridge.** This is consistent with (page 29, which states: - *“Provide an improved connection to Claudelands Bridge to complete a river’s edge walking and cycleway circuit.”*) and consistent with the River Plan Access aim, which states: - *“Improve access for people with disabilities.”*

**Note -The Claudelands Bridge Riverpath access is currently stairs-only.**

## **6. ACCESS THEME - Claudelands Bridge**

We wish to see the whole of the Bridge become a 30kph zone as a gateway to the Central City Heart's 30kph zone. This would enable a raised tabletop pedestrian crossing to connect the existing Pedestrian Promenade, with the north-side footpath (which is proposed to have the City-Heart pedestrian/cycle bridge clip-on), so strengthening the connections between Claudelands Bridge and the Riverpaths.

This is consistent with the River Plan access aim, which states: - *“Adapt bridges for improved pedestrian and cyclist access”*.

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Projects (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – Investigation and design of a 30kph low-speed-zone for the whole length of Claudelands Bridge.**

**Cycleway Plan - Investigation and design of a raised tabletop crossing connecting the existing Pedestrian Promenade to the North side of Claudelands Bridge.**

## **7. Tourism Theme - Connecting our Hamilton City with the River Plan**

The River Plan states that: - *“The Waikato River will be the defining heart of Hamilton.”*

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Project (start in 1-3 years): -

**Investigate linking the name of our City with the river (i.e. ‘River City Hamilton’ or ‘Hamilton – River City’).**

## **8. Tourism Theme - Recognition of Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway**

There are three International Tourism experiences that have an integral connection with the Hamilton's River Plan: - The Hamilton Gardens, Te Awa Ride, and Te Araroa Walkway. Only Hamilton Gardens has the River Plan recognition it deserves.

**The River Plan should be proudly and actively promoting both Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway**, as they are both an integral part of the existing riverpaths. The lack of mention of these is an appalling oversight of the River Plan's ‘Tourism Theme’.

To plan and provide for growth of riverpath users, the River Plan needs to acknowledge that Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway are significant tourist experiences, which will bring both New Zealand and International Tourists to Hamilton City and to the riverpaths, as well as the predicted population growth increasing Hamiltonian's riverpath numbers over the next 30 years.

We request that **Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway be proudly and actively promoted** through the River Plan Tourism Theme, and through the Riverpath Signage Plan.

**9. ACCESS THEME - Signage**

The River Plan must clearly specify each of the **Signage Plan projects**.

We Request these projects be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Projects (start in 1-3 years): -

**\*Signage Plan - Exit Signage from the Riverpath to streets and bridges.**

E.g. Exit to CBD, exit to Pukete Bridge, etc.

**\*Signage Plan - Signed Riverpath Pedestrian and Cycle Routes, loops, and sculpture walks, etc.**

**\*Signage Plan - Street Signage to the Riverpaths – The Brown advisory roadside signs urgently need to be upgraded from the existing ('Riverside walk') to ('Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway').**

**10. ACCESS THEME - River Plan Pedestrian labeling**

The draft River Plan's '**River Corridor**' **drawing** (made specifically for comment) gives the public a completely misleading false-advertising impression of being totally 'pedestrian-focused'.

**This is not acceptable for an HCC document, and must be remedied.**

As the Hamilton Riverpaths have been shared-use for 10 years (2004-2014) it is most appropriate to be fostering and promoting the shared-use aspect of the pathways throughout all of the River Plan.

Many families with young children use the riverpaths with the kids riding bikes and the parents walking, or pushing toddlers in pushchairs.

The River Plan is sending out very ambiguous mixed-messages. **The River Plan lacks credibility**, as the River Plan **pedestrian** terminology of "*Pedestrian Links*", "*pedestrian loops*", "*proposed pedestrian bridges*", and "*walkways*", is **inconsistent** with the **following River Plan aims stated for both walking and cycling**: -

- "*Victoria Bridge to Claudelands Bridge – improved pedestrian/cycle links*".
- "*Hamilton Gardens – Improve links along the river for boats, cycles and pedestrians.*"
- "*Medium and Long Term projects – construct a pedestrian and cycleway link across Claudelands Bridge.*"
- "*Opoia and Jesmond Park – Better public access, a stronger connection to the river, the city, and the river walkways and cycleways.*"
- "*Opoia and Jesmond Park – “Provide an improved connection to Claudelands Bridge to complete a river’s edge walking and cycleway circuit.”*)
- "*Ferrybank – Promote the use of alternative modes of transport, such as bicycles, boats, and water taxis.*"
- "*River Connect – Connection loops - for walking, running and cycling*".

The HCC Planners and Engineers, and their Consultants need to have it absolutely 100% clearly-spelt-out, which parts the River Plan, are proposing to be (**‘Shared Use’ for both walking and cycling**), and which parts are to be (**‘Walking Only’, Not for cycling**).

Furthermore, the ‘River Corridor’ Map is **not consistent with the Operative Riverside Reserves Management Plan labeling**.

The RRMP is the HCC Policy document, which clearly defines the riverpaths use as: - ***“Shared Use Routes”*** for both walking and cycling. The River Plan **must** be consistent with this.

We request the ‘River Corridor’ Map is relabeled using the Operative Riverside Reserves Management Plan labeling which states : - ***“Shared Use Routes”*** (for walking and cycling), and ***“Walkway Only (Hamilton Gardens)”***.

We request **the following cycle labeling (in brackets) be added in, for all parts of the River Plan document** (especially the River Corridor Map and the Implementation Timeframe) as follows: -

**Walking and cycling**

*“Existing River (‘pedestrian /cycle’) pathways.”*

*“Possible future riverside (‘pedestrian and cycle’) connections.”*

*“Pedestrian / cycle link across Claudelands Bridge.”*

*“Braithewaite Pedestrian (‘and cycle’) Garden Bridge.”*

*“Ferrybank pedestrian (‘and cycle’) bridge.”*

*“Days Park to St. Andrews pedestrian (‘and cycle’) bridge.”*

*“Pedestrian (‘and cycle’) link over the river into Peacocks.”*

*“Proposed pedestrian (‘and cycle’) bridge zones.”*

*“River Connect’ - Key Pedestrian (‘and cycle’) loops.”* (Page 41 states it’s for walking, running and cycling).

*“The Sculpture Walk (‘and cycle’).”*

Sections of the CBD Pedestrian promenade that are (‘shared-use pedestrian / cycle paths’).

Sections of the Opoia Promenade-style boardwalk that are (‘shared-use pedestrian / cycle paths’).

**Walking only**

Sections of Pedestrian promenades that are (‘walkway only’).

Sections of the Hamilton Gardens that are (‘walkway only’).

**11. ACCESS THEME - Cycle Parking at key destinations and necessary sites**

Cycle Parking Racks are an essential connecting element for cycling, which links the riverpath access with the riverpath destinations. **Unfortunately, this does not seem to be covered adequately in the River Plan. This must be remedied.**

For bike security, where possible cycle racks need to be positioned so that the cyclists using the facility can see their bike from there (e.g. on the Ferrybank Deck).

This is consistent with the Danish Cyclists Federation ‘Bicycle Parking Manual’ Fundamental principles of good bicycle parking, which states that racks should be: - *“Close by, sufficient capacity, accessible, safe, secure, and visible.”*

The River Plan’s ‘Implementation and Timeframe’ has: -

*“Develop a Toilet facility location map and timeline for construction of public toilet facilities on the river walkway.”*

And *“Develop a drinking fountains location map and timeline of installation of drinking fountains on the river walkway.”*

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Project (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – (‘Cycle Parking Rack Location Map and timeline of installation of cycle parking racks on the river walkway.’)**

**We Request the provision of cycle parking racks at the following sites: -**

**By Toilets.**

**By Seating.**

**By Artworks.**

**By Sculpture Walks.**

**By Maori Landmarks.**

**New Waikato Tourism Centre.**

Hamilton Gardens.

Roose Commerce Park.

Ferrybank.

Museum and Artspost.

St Andrews Golf Course.

Wellington Street Beach and the Swimming area.

Memorial Park.

Parana Park.

Opoia and Jesmond Park

Days Park and St Andrews Landing.

Braithewaite Garden Bridge.

## **12. ACCESS Theme – A Riverpath Safety Upgrade is Vital**

We are greatly disappointed that the safety of riverpath users does not seem to have been addressed through the River Plan. **This is not acceptable and must be remedied.**

The Hamilton Riverpaths were officially opened to cycling in 2004. During the 10 years to 2014, they have become very popular, and are widely used by both walkers and cyclists, for both recreation and commuting.

The Hamilton Riverpaths are officially recognized as a cycle commuting route, leading directly into the Central City. Newly constructed sections of riverpath, and riverpath widening (from pedestrian-only 1.8m to shared-use pedestrian/cycle 3.0m) have received 55% Government funding



subsidy for transportation through the HCC's 10-year walking and cycling program, which is an integral part of ACCESS Hamilton.

With the Hamilton Riverpaths becoming an integral part of both the Te Awa 'River Ride' and the 'Te Araroa Walkway', numbers of walkers and cyclists are increasing significantly as the each new section of path is added on, extending the path out in both directions - to Ngaruawahia in the North, and to Cambridge in the South, which will soon connect with the 'Waikato River Trails' which are being constructed as far as Taupo.

**As the density of people on the riverpath increases, so the need for safer interaction of walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired also increases.**

Some years ago there was a pedestrian fatality from a pedestrian / cyclist collision on the shared-use path of Wairere Drive / River Road underpass. The fatal accident led to the HCC Transportation Unit contracting Tracy Trigg to do a safety review and upgrade of the Wairere Drive pedestrian / cycle paths.

**John Meekings and Rob Davidson (from Cycle Action Waikato) participated in the onsite review, from which the following physical safety upgrade measures were installed: -**

- i. Painted white center lines on blind corners to naturally guide path users to keep left.
- ii. Building out traffic islands (areas of low fenced garden) to increase sight lines at blind corners.
- iii. Pairs of Chicane bars mounted 2.5m apart to slow cyclists down to walking speed, where there is a combination of steeper gradients and blind corners.

**It was proposed that these safety upgrades also be applied to the riverpaths, but unfortunately the Parks and Gardens Unit were not ready to adopt safety measures at that time. Now, many years later, we are asking that this decision be reviewed.**

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Project (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – Parks and Open Spaces Unit to do a Riverpath Safety Review and Upgrade, including utilising the three physical safety upgrade measures: -**

\*Painted white center lines on blind corners to naturally guide path users to keep left.

\*Building out traffic islands (areas of low fenced garden) to increase sight lines at blind corners.

\*Pairs of Chicane bars mounted 2.5m apart to slow cyclists down to walking speed, where there is a combination of steeper gradients and blind corners.

We request that **HCC give away free bike bells for use on the riverpath**, during the **Bikewise month events**, along with education on the appropriate use of bells on bikes on the riverpaths, to warn pedestrians of approaching cyclists when 20-30m away. Local Bike shops often take bells off new mountain bikes, and may well be willing to donate them free for Hamilton Bikewise month.

At the Pre-Hearing Resource Consent meeting (2001/02) of the Ann Street Walkway through the Matakano Reserve, the **HCC Manager of Parks and Gardens Unit (Mr Bill Featherstone)** made **Cycle Action Waikato** a **promise** that the HCC would **Future Proof the 2.0m Ann Street Walkway for cycling.**

During the Resource Consent Hearing Meetings for the Ann St Walkway, the Applicant Mr Patterson (working on behalf of Parks and Gardens) invited Rob Davidson to walk with him through the bush Region where the walkway was to be constructed, specifically to ascertain which parts of this proposed walkway could be widened to 2.5m to allow safe passing areas for cyclists.

**The letter from Mr Patterson to Cycle Action Waikato (dated 8 January 2002) states that:-**

*“Potential areas for development up to 2.5m were identified on site.”*

*“These are located at*

*Chainage 0-100m -area within open reserve north of Ann Street (100m)*

*Chainage 200 -potential for 30m of widening prior to 25m bridge*

*Chainage 320 -potential for 20m of widening through open area*

*Chainage 650-700 -potential for 50m of widening through open area”*

*“The access from St Andrews Terrace and the cutting through St Andrews Golf Course will be developed to accommodate 2.5m width.” (At chainage 700m, heading inland for 100m to St Andrews Terrace).*

**Of the Ann Street walkway’s 800m total length, there is potential given here for 300m to be 3.0m wide. Thus enabling sufficient areas throughout the length of the Ann St walkway to allow cyclists to pass safely.** (Note - 3.0m is the riverpath widening standard now being used).

These cyclist-passing bays could work the same as motor vehicle passing lanes do, by the use of appropriate signage (e.g. ‘Cyclist passing bay 50m ahead’).

There is a website map of running and cycle-use on the Hamilton riverpaths: - (<http://labs.strava.com/heatmap/#15/175.21836/-37.72151/yellow/both>). It shows heavy running and cycle use from the CBD north to the Pukete Mountain Bike Park.

These statistics clearly demonstrate the need for widening all of the Ann Street Walkway paths as much as possible, and as soon as possible to reduce conflict between recreational users and faster users (both runners and sport cyclists).

**Despite the riverpaths being officially open to cycling for 10 years (from October 2004 to August 2014) The 2002 HCC promise to widen the Ann Street Walkway paths for cycling has not been fulfilled. We request that it be done.**

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

**Immediate Projects: -**

**Cycleway Plan, - Widen from 2.0m to 3.0m Ann Street Walkway pedestrian / cycle path (as much as possible for the whole length of it).**

(Note - 3.0m is the riverpath widening standard now being used).

### **13. ACCESS THEME – Growth of Riverpath numbers**

River Plan data of walking and cycling numbers is vital to plan and provide for River Plan use of both Te Awa Ride and Te Araroa Walkway.

Unfortunately **HCC riverpath data** over the last 3 years is **highly unreliable** due to long-term riverpath slip closures, and the closure of the pedestrian / cycle bridge over the Waitawhiriwhiri Stream (by the Victoria Bridge).

We Request this project be specified in the Implementation Timeframe as follows -

Short Term Project (start in 1-3 years): -

**Cycleway Plan – HCC contact Labs Strava and purchase access to the last 3 years of data on runners and cyclists.** We are aware that Auckland City Council has done this for their region.

### **14. Other New Zealand City River Plans**

What can our Hamilton River Plan learn from Christchurch's Avon River project for walking and cycling ?? Please see the website below.

<https://ccdu.govt.nz/projects-and-precincts/te-papa-otakaro-avon-river-precinct/>

**We request that this be looked into for suitable ideas for Hamilton's River Plan for walking and cycling.**

### **15. Request for HCC feedback on Cycle Action Waikato Submission**

**We request a written response to each of the issues raised in this submission.**

We are keen to see how they are to be addressed.