



Public Participation Comments from Living Streets Aotearoa (Wellington Branch) on the Wellington City Council Long Term Plan Amendments – Decisions on Capital Projects

Introduction

Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA) is the national organisation for pedestrians. We want to see more people walking more often. We believe that footpaths are for feet, and users of low-speed mobility devices such as wheelchairs. Therefore, we support safe, separated pedestrian infrastructure, safer speeds, and better connections between walking and public transport. We want to see escooters and bikes have their own safe, separated routes, and we do not support their use on the footpath or on shared paths.

We are deeply concerned that the proposed changes to the Capital Works Programme show a pattern of either reducing, or cancelling altogether, projects that will benefit pedestrians. This is especially disappointing considering that, in 2023, 18% of Wellingtonians travelled to work on foot, while 21% preferred to be able to do so¹ – and, of course, many Wellingtonians walk in our city for other purposes.

Wellington City Council Long Term Plan Amendments – Comments on Transport Projects

In our view, these projects should be retained in the Capital Works Programme:

T13 Safer Routes to Schools: Getting more students walking to schools is especially important to reduce emissions, reduce congestion and make our communities safer. Therefore, we think this initiative is a high priority, and should be retained in full.

T20 Golden Mile Upgrades: We believe that the proposal to limit the project to Courtenay Place is highly likely to result in the loss of NLTP funding, thus leading to the failure of the whole project. Below, we propose ways in which costs can be reduced while keeping the project to its original scope.

T22 Eastern Corridor Upgrades: As noted by Greater Wellington, the No. 2 route is Wellington's busiest public transport route, and services a wide catchment of people whose journeys have both walking and public transport components. We support the retention of this project, and disagree with the proposed removal of bike, pedestrian and place improvements.

¹ See <https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/parking-roads-and-transport/transport-insights/20240708-wcc-pwts-2023-traveltowork-briefreport.pdf>

T23 Central City Upgrades: We support the continued inclusion of this project, in particular the Dixon St and Cuba St pedestrian improvements, but acknowledge that the Cuba St improvements should be considered alongside the purchase of 155 Cuba St.

T21 Harbour Quays Corridor Upgrades: Establishing bus lanes on the Harbour Quays is an important complement to the Golden Mile route. Given the mode conflict at peak hours along the waterfront, in which pedestrians are put at risk by fast-moving commuter bikes and scooters, we would also like to see cycle lanes established on the Harbour Quays, so that the waterfront is prioritised for pedestrians.

T10 LED Street Light Transition: Better street lighting enhances both actual and perceived pedestrian safety, and we support this project.

More on the Golden Mile Upgrades

The Golden Mile improvements were originally conceived as bus and pedestrian improvements, but subsequently suffered from scope creep. Now, we risk years of work being wasted unless Council acts wisely to preserve the project.

We propose that the scope of the project should continue to be from Courtenay Place to Lambton Quay, rather than being restricted to Courtenay Place – both to maximise benefits, and to minimise the risk that NTLF funding will be lost. We further propose that:

- In the interests of accessibility, equity and usability, the existing number of bus stops should be retained.
- If stops are to be removed, improving pedestrian priority and reducing dwell times at road crossings is vital for pedestrians who will have to travel further to catch the bus.
- Tactical urbanism should be used to allow more to be done for less. For example, when closing off the roads that feed into Lambton Quay, planter boxes and seats can be used in the short term. A lot of the project's benefits can be realised by means of some traffic resolutions, some paint, and some useful street furniture.
- A connected network of protected cycle lanes should be provided on nearby streets, not on the Golden Mile (and in particular, not on Courtenay Place and Lambton Quay).

In conclusion, we appreciate that the Council has difficult financial decisions to make. We have recently submitted against the proposed demolition of the City to Sea Bridge, and we suggest there is room for substantial savings in the Te Ngākau project (UD04). The option to not demolish the bridge should certainly be considered in these discussions.

Meeting the needs of Wellington's current and future pedestrians is a core Council function. We urge you not to abandon projects that will benefit so many of your constituents.

Ngā mihi nui
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for Living Streets Aotearoa Wellington Branch