

Submission to Hutt City Council

2014/2015 Annual Plan

8 May 2014

Introduction

1. My name is Graeme Hall and I am making this submission as an Eastbourne resident, cyclist, and Trustee of the Great Harbour Way – Te Aranui o Poneke Trust. I am also a member of Eastern Hutt Rotary. I would also like to make a personal verbal submission as part of the Council annual plan consultation process
2. As you may be aware the Great Harbour Way – Te Aranui o Poneke Trust has, as its objectives, the development of a walkway/bike way from Pencarrow lighthouse to Red Rocks past Island Bay.
3. This submission notes and acknowledges:
 - i. The Hutt River Trail has provided Lower Hutt with excellent recreational and commuter cycling.
 - ii. The Rotary initiative has been well supported by Council over 18 years and supplemented by Council investment in linking pathways and signage.
 - iii. A pathway around Wellington's harbour coastal perimeter is not as easily or cheaply created.
 - iv. The recent sealing of Marine Drive in hot mix has brought the road up to a good standard with improved appearance, adhesion, and lower road noise levels.
 - v. The historical investment in Marine Drive cycle and pedestrian infrastructure has been piecemeal, annual investment being small and being seen as conditional upon receipt of an NZTA subsidy.

Submission

1. The definition of a community surely includes its physical linkage with other parts of its own, and adjoining communities, be that to other residences, schools, churches, shops, etc.
2. The Eastern Bays has a good road connection and a good bus service. There is not a viable continuous footway/pathway for Eastbourne Bays residents passage to their community's centres be that Days Bay or Eastbourne, Mahina, York, or Lowry Bays. You cannot safely walk within the community, being part of Hutt City. (See photos).
3. The growth in cycling (driven by a range of factors - environment, commuting, recreation preferences, personal health, demographics, & technology) particularly by the baby boomers, has resulted in high interest and high need for appropriate infrastructure. Indications are pathways of this type are becoming a key dimension of any city infrastructure. Within virtually any city in the world there are extensive pathways/cycle ways for recreational, community, and commuting purposes, e.g. Lyon, Barcelona, Vancouver, New York, with national examples including Nelson, Dunedin, and New Plymouth.
4. One of the stated key objectives for the Hutt City is to rejuvenate the city and make it more attractive to benefit from growth. Evidence of pathway/cycleway infrastructure attractiveness is best illustrated by the Central Otago rail trail (Clyde to Middlemarch inclusive). The solution to their population and visitor loss was to invest in what is now a hugely popular multi-day outdoor experience (the Otago Rail Trail). It has 15,000+ cyclists per annum with all the social and economic benefits that entails. Over \$10 million p.a. of direct economic benefits are received every year, before the multiplier effect is considered.
5. Investment in the pathway can be justified from a range of perspectives. They include:
 - i. The provision of what is a standard community facility, i.e. footpath/bike way for Eastern Bays' residents.
 - ii. The use of that infrastructure to facilitate activities such as:
 - a. Commuting,

- b. Recreational
 - c. Social, and
 - d. Tourism
6. The significant cost of investing in this marine border infrastructure is acknowledged. However it also has high attractiveness to Hutt citizens and beyond. It is a little like building a bridge. There is little benefit in part investing in a bridge if it does not link the two sides. Similarly there is little benefit in having part sections of the pathway developed, e.g. York Bay, without them being linked to other similar quality pathway provision.
 7. We challenge the view that it is logical to build such a pathway in this piecemeal fashion. Until the full pathway is developed the benefit dividend is suppressed. We consider a solid investment is required to link Eastbourne through to Point Howard with its linkage to the Hutt river trails and beyond.
 8. You will be aware of recent tourist activity relative to what was known as The Big Coast, being the route from the Hutt Valley through the Rimutaka Incline to the Wairarapa, and then back round the coast westward. This is currently being terminated at the Wainui Coast Road. Once resolution of access issues has been achieved, the opportunity exists for the addition of an extended and more attractive component being to return past Pencarrow Lighthouse to Eastbourne. The return into the Hutt, or back to Wellington can be via either the trail or by ferry from Days Bay.
 9. The Great Harbour Way- Te Aranui o Poneke Trust considers there is an opportunity here to greatly rejuvenate our city recreationally, socially, and economically. The citizen benefit and impact from such an investment are considered to be many times that arising from, for example, a revamped Riddiford Park. Failure to invest in such infrastructure will in time have an adverse impact on the city, with potential Hutt City inhabitants or visitors preferring more enabling infrastructures. The Eastern Bays are very much a recreational domain of Hutt City residents, as summer traffic congestion attests.
 10. One can see the immediate logic in not investing until NZTA invest. We all appreciate a subsidy or discount. However this is only at one level. It is the inability to get a continuous NZTA subsidy which has led to the very sporadic and piecemeal investment to date. It has the impact of denying a community its own pavement/pathway/trail. It is also denying Hutt City from branding its city and gaining all the benefits of such a brand, as a cycling friendly city, seamlessly linking its tremendous river and coastal attractions. Such a stance has a very high community cost and needs to be revisited.
 11. Much of the Annual Plan process is about opportunity cost and alternative investment; whether these are the Civic Centre, the Riddiford Gardens, the sports centres, etc. It needs to be noted a large bulk of the Annual Plan investment is Council centric, i.e. being either the buildings or amenities close to the Civic Centre. A broader reflection of need is required.
 12. As technology and other influences take hold, human habits change. The role of a Civic Centre is far less what it would have been traditionally, many decades ago. The investment in the Hutt Main Street came too late and even if earlier may not have been able to resist some of the changes in human habits, e.g. internet shopping. It is important that Council invest not so much in traditional or historic ways but in something new, attractive, and vibrant. These are likely to have substantial and long lasting impact not only on all residents of the Eastern Bay but also on Hutt residents and their visitors who very regularly travel to this part of their city for social and recreational purposes.

Summary

13. That Council review and reprioritise its infrastructure investments and resolves to complete the Eastern Bay pathway/cycleway in the coming year to provide the infrastructural rejuvenation necessary for a modern city to remain attractive and competitive. (cf.) Wellington (WCCs) cycleway investment expanded by \$3+ million in 2014/15.)

Graeme Hall

On Behalf of: Great Harbour Way Trust

Photos 1, 2, and 3 show the walkway at Mahina Bay moving from a non-curbed low viability position to an impossibly narrow, and road marker impeded sliver of a passage unsafe to anybody
 Photos 4 & 5 show the walkway/cycleway, the first in Mahina Bay and the second in Lowry Bay



Photo 1

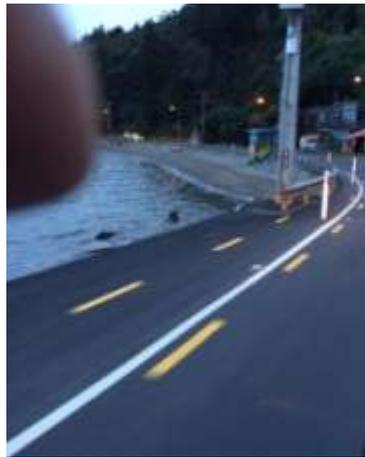


Photo 2

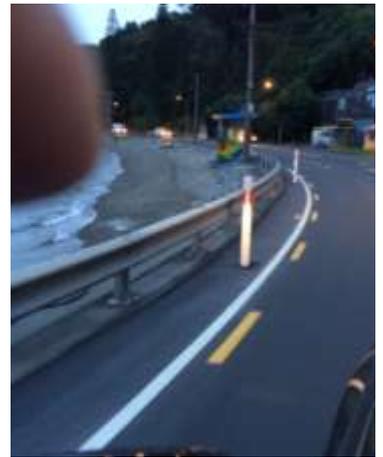


Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5