



GREAT HARBOUR WAY

TE ARANUI O PŌNEKE

NZTA Ngauranga to Petone (N2P) shared pathway

Great Harbour Way Trust public submission

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Introduction

Te Aranui O Pōneke, The Great Harbour Way (GHW), is a visionary project developed and promoted by a group of Wellington citizens, beginning with a steering group and now constituted into a charitable trust. The NZTA-proposed Ngauranga to Petone seaward walking and cycling path, currently out for public consultation, is an essential section of this path.

Te Aranui O Pōneke / The Great Harbour Way (GHW) - The Vision

GHW is the iconic harbour pathway – a continuous, signposted, 72km trail for walkers, cyclists, runners and others, touching the water around the entire perimeter of Te Whanganui a Tara/Wellington Harbour, from Orua-pouanui, Baring Head in the east to Pariwhero, Red Rocks in the west. Few cities in the world can boast such open public access to their harbours. This trail will be one of Wellington's greatest assets for recreation, commuting, tourism, education and environmental awareness. A critical element is the planned Petone-Ngauranga segment designed by NZTA.

Key points of our submission

- GHW Trust is fully, and enthusiastically, supportive, of this planned essential link between the two cities of Wellington and Lower Hutt – addressing a substantial amenity absence – *the trail between two cities*.
- GHW Trust commends and support the wonderful design and specification that has lifted the development from a utilitarian conduit to something more consistent with an experiential and recreational linear park closely aligning to the GHW vision.
- GHW Trust sees substantial mutual benefits if this critical GHW sector is developed consistent with key design elements of the GHW – e.g. the linear park concept, standard branded signage, historical and geographic reference, access to the harbour, etc. There is considerable merit in a common look and feel for all segments of the GHW. We acknowledge they will be constructed by different authorities over different time periods.

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- The current NZTA N2P shared path design closely reflects current GHW key elements.
- We consider it is important for the public to understand the investment components of this section's development. It provides not only a comprehensive shared pathway (linear park) attractive to locals, visitors and tourists, but also contributes to resilience outcomes being the protection of the road (SH2), the rail link and now this new shared pathway (able to be used by emergency vehicles if so required).
- We support and commend the 5m design width. This makes it a highly usable two-way shared pathway able to accommodate substantial traffic be it weekday commuter traffic or weekend recreational activity. In addition, as referenced earlier, it provides a safer and more resilient conduit between the two cities for walking, cycling, or access by emergency vehicles should other vehicular conduits be blocked or unusable.
- We strongly support the inclusion of wayfinding, including distance and time markers to assist navigation, (relating to the overall GHW) and education and learning boards.
- We support provisions for traffic counting, personal and property safety, the construction of mini refuge areas which will provide protection from the elements, access points to the harbour, electricity and structural bases for works of art/sculptures, and the provision of services such as water fountains, perhaps public toilets, and emergency blue light stands.
- We consider immediate work is required on the current pathway, particularly the north end by Horokiwi to enhance usability and safety, (until the new one comes into operation which at a minimum will be at least four years. During the design and build period, it will be important to retain safe walking, cycling and scooting between the two cities.
- There are many groups of potential users including walkers, runners, children, families, cyclists, scooters, skateboarders, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, to name just some. They all have separate needs and imperatives. NZTA might consider the development of a user group matrix to clarify and reconcile the different user needs.
- Agreement to fund and complete the N2P "gap" has taken a very long time. There has been persistent and prolonged public demand. The GHW Trust urges that once public consultation and the consent process has been completed, that this important project proceeds with no further delays.
- The N2P segment will provide a suite of substantial benefits including; reduction in SH2 vehicle congestion, increased walking and cycling as a commuter option, health benefits from recreational and sporting use, increased national and international tourism, and enhanced community well-being through the provision of a harbour-side linear park

How we see the G H HW and N2P visions delivering benefits

- The GHW will be comparable to popular trails like the New Plymouth coastal walkway and the Otago rail trail. The GHW will have the unique feature of being the only substantial trail that flows through two cities, coastal settlements, wilderness areas, and always adjacent to a major harbour.
- It will connect places along the route and enhance their natural, geological and human history, both Maori and Pakeha.
- Families and individuals of all ages and capabilities, will be enabled and encouraged to move, explore, recreate, fish, and swim along parts of the coastline.
- It will be a tourist destination for regional, national and international visitors.
- People of all abilities and ages will be able to safely travel along the route on foot, wheelchairs, mobility scooters or on various types of bikes and scooters without concern for vehicle traffic.
- Moving the GHW from adjacent to the busiest road in the region to the other side of the rail lines will greatly reduce motorway noise for trail users and greatly enhance the overall appeal of the GHW.

- Coastal marine life and fauna will become better known, valued and protected.

Key characteristics of the wider GHW, and the N2P trail segment

The 4.7 km N2P section sits within the 72 km GHW. There are huge benefits in each section reflecting the overall GHW concept even though they will be built at different times by different authorities. Detailed below are key elements of the GHW. Our expectation is these would be adopted where possible by each section as it is developed. The particular N2P section has the potential to be an iconic section of the GHW because of its uninterrupted harbour-side location length, and the potential for many recreational uses in addition to walking and cycling.

Design to date fits closely with the much-desired linear park concept.

1. *Touching the water* - that is, adjacent to, and facilitating access to the harbour
2. *A high safety standard* - while not all sections of the GHW trail will have complete road separation, the trail will have clear GHW directional signage throughout, be designed for maximum safety, and wherever possible be completely separated from motorised traffic.
3. *Be informative, attractive and educational* – featuring interesting interpretive signage that enhances the experience for all users by telling stories and pointing out sights of interest; highlighting artworks and sculptures; and making use of technology to provide ready access to information. For example, this could be through QR codes and a GHW app.
4. *Link to other trails in the region* - such as Hutt River and Remutaka trails.
5. *Have enough space to accommodate users of different abilities and vehicles* - including walkers, event competitors, people with prams and wheelchairs; people on mobility or recreational scooters; skateboarders; cyclists including those on e-bikes. It will be a place for all. We expect cycle pelotons and racing cyclists to continue to use the shoulder of SH2.
6. *Provide a suite of facilities* such as drinking fountains, toilets and bike repair stations at regular intervals along the route.

The N2P as a contributor to The Great Harbour Way

This is possibly the most critical and important segment of the total GHW. The full 72 km GHW will be a destination attraction - able to be walked over three or four days or cycled over one or two days. This N2P section provides enhanced and essential coastal resilience at a time of climate change; promotes free health inducing outdoor activities; adds an exciting new tourist attraction for Wellington; and allows safe non-vehicular commuting between Wellington and Lower Hutt.

GHW Standard Element specification

Some years back, the steering group for Te Aranui o Poneke/ The Great Harbour Way Trust commissioned a full scoping report on the route from landscape architects, Boffa Miskell. This comprehensive document, together with the views of the GHW personnel, suggests:

1. *Trail Width*: Where possible the trail should be 5 metres wide.
2. *Surface*: ideally should be smooth hot mix with no separations. It should be high grip, with no slippery white lines.

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3. *Gradient:* be at an easily cyclable gradient
4. *Bends:* to the extent possible have open and clear bends to avoid any traffic conflict
5. *User Protocols:* provide and communicate user protocols relative to speed, pathway sharing, and keeping to the left etc. These should be visible, but discreet, and promote without detracting visually from the environmental vista.
6. *Shelter:* while much of the shared pathway will be exposed to the elements, high use areas such as this section(N2P) should include rock formations and plantings to promote shelter in high wind areas and for protection during sudden storms
7. *Lighting:* Subtle pathway lighting is appropriate for this section to facilitate 24-hour usage. LED enviro lights may be appropriate emulating different natural sunlight phases e.g. sunrise and sunset
8. *Direction and wayfinding:* signage should be subtle, be branded with the Te Aranui O Poneke Great Harbour Way look and logo to provide consistency across the 72 kilometre trail. Signage to conform with regional and national cycleway signage, for easy navigation.
 - Distance markers would be useful, i.e. from Orua-pouanui/Baring Head in the east to Pariwhero/Red, and from the adjacent rail stations (Ngauranga and Petone). Mosaic kilometre marker insets or distances on water fountains would be good.
 - Interpretation and signage should be integrated and discrete.
9. *Supporting infrastructure and facilities:* consideration of permitting a coffee cart to be located at the halfway point which we consider would be welcome by many users. The provision of parking at either end of this segment to facilitate access. The inclusion of destination signage at Melling, Petone, and Ngauranga rail stations
10. *Desirable Fixtures (fit out)*
 - Seats and water fountains along the route.
 - Rope anchor hooks for kayakers and other boaties.
 - Reclamation should reproduce and extend existing beaches and provide access from the trail.
 - Bike and scooter stands, and ground security hoops, and fix-it repair stations at major transitions.
 - Possible scenic look-out stations and viewing platforms.
 - Provision for wildlife e.g. nesting boxes for little blue penguin/kororā.
 - Defibrillator stations or signage advice as to their location.
 - Charging stations, preferably solar-powered, for e Bikes, mobility scooters, smartphones and other equipment.
- 11 *Planting* – eco-sourced appropriate natives that attract wildlife, reduce run-off, provide habitat for penguins, lizards and invertebrates.
- 12 *Artwork* – we envisage both the Wellington and Hutt arts trusts helping make the GHW even more attractive. Even if these are not available at the opening, there should be platforms for their subsequent installation.
- 13 *Trail Transitions:*

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- Safe and easily understood and accessed transition points.
- Recognition that segments of the GHW trail will be developed at different times- stages.
- Accommodation for safe transitions to and from the water for fishers and kayakers.
- Regular resting and viewing spots with seats or ability to sit on stones, rocks and benches.