



For **Cycle Action Auckland**
contact details, please
see the undersigned

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Whangaparaoa Rd Submission

Summary

Cycle Action has a number of significant concerns regarding Auckland Transport's proposed Whangaparaoa Rd dual-laning between the Hibiscus Coast Highway and Red Beach Rd.

We note from AT's documentation that the key objectives of the project are to:

- 1 Provide improved traffic access onto the peninsula
- 2 Future-proof for improved public transport (bus lanes)
- 3 Improve walking and cycling facilities, and build on the regional walking and cycling network
- 4 Improved utility services through undergrounding power and providing new water reticulation and Telecom services
- 5 Reduce congestion and driver frustration.

While we are pleased to see public transport, walking and cycling referenced in the key objectives, the current design is strongly biased towards catering for peak hour motor vehicle traffic, and is in fact a retrograde step for cycling. Given that Whangaparaoa Rd is designated as a component of the Auckland Cycle Network, we regard this as an unacceptable outcome.

It is also worth noting that the width of the kerbside lane will be 3m, which will lead to serious conflicts between cyclists and buses using this lane, impeding the efficient movement of buses and threatening the safety of cyclists.

Our submission proposes changes to the design to better balance the needs of all transport modes along this busy corridor.

Current cycling environment

The Whangaparaoa Peninsula is essentially residential, with a small amount of recreational and light industry. Given the environment, one would expect it to be a mecca for cyclists, but this is not so as cycling infrastructure is poorly developed. The potential is obvious when one looks at the shared walking and cycling path around the nearby Orewa River Estuary, which is very popular with cyclists.

The section of Whangaparaoa Rd in project scope is a case in point as an unpleasant environment for cyclists. There are no on-road cycle lanes, and the footpath is narrow and disappears in places. Despite the strong cycling desire lines between the Peninsula and Silverdale, Millwater and Orewa, there is relatively little cycling traffic on this stretch of road.

The only mitigating factor is that the wide single lanes in each direction, coupled with a generous central flush median, make the road adequate for experienced road-going cyclists. Even so, its designation as a completed section of the Auckland Cycle Network has to be questioned, as it is otherwise hostile to all other cyclists, especially beginners and children.

Proposed Design

Due to the difficult terrain and high cost of extensive retaining walls, the design is width-constrained. We understand that the project becomes uneconomic (excessively low BCR) if additional width is provisioned.

The design team has chosen to sacrifice the width of the shared walking/cycling path in favour of dual-laning with a flush median, optimised for motor vehicle traffic. We consider this to be an unacceptable design decision:

- This section of Whangaparaoa Rd is designated as a key cycling route on the Auckland Cycling Network. As such, cycling facilities must be provisioned to the highest design standards
- Dual-laning will make the road even more dangerous for on-road cyclists, as the narrow lane widths will make it impossible for vehicles to overtake safely within-lane. The danger increases substantially due to the 60 kph speed limit. These concerns have bearing on the wider delivery of integrated transport options for the Peninsula; in particular, linking improved bus services operating with and accessed by cycling.
- The proposed 'shared walking and cycling path' is not worthy of this name as it is too narrow and inconsistent in its width to serve this purpose. (Parts are also vulnerable to blocking by rubbish wheelie bins). It is, in effect, a rebranding of an existing inadequate path for a purpose that is unable to serve with reasonable safety or convenience.
- Cyclist safety will be severely compromised by the design, and it is debatable whether it would pass a safety audit in its current form.

We therefore request Auckland Transport to review and improve the design to better cater for cyclists.

Recommendations

Revisit the overall concept

It is clear from the design that Key Objectives 1 & 5 are the primary design drivers. In an age of increasing fuel costs, environmental degradation and an increasing focus on public transport, we question whether a design which facilitates the movement of greater numbers of private motorised commuters at peak hour is feasible. We suggest that the entire concept be revisited, with a view to enhancing public transport to a Silverdale PT interchange, while walking and cycling facilities are upgraded to a high standard throughout the Peninsula.

Remove the central flush median

If the project is to proceed in its current form with no increase in available width, then the central flush median should be removed. The reclaimed width should be used to maximise:

- The width of the shared path to at least a 3 metre design standard
- Increasing the width of the kerbside lanes to better accommodate on-road cyclists, particularly as they must co-exist with buses. A 4.2m width should be provisioned if at all possible
- Ideally providing a grassed buffer of at least 0.5m between the shared path and the roadway. Not only does this provide greater separation between cyclists and 60 kph opposing traffic, it also provides a place for residents to locate rubbish bags, wheelie bins, recycling etc without blocking the shared path.

In general, flush medians are indicated when:

- 1 Right turning traffic is interfering with through traffic
- 2 Pedestrians are having difficulty crossing a busy road
- 3 The carriageway is excessively wide.
- 4 Property access needs to be maintained and any of the above conditions exist.

Items 2 & 3 are not relevant, and we question whether 1 & 4 are significant, given that adverse effects for residents at peak hours can be mitigated by providing U-turning capability at various roadway intersections along the route.

We consider that the benefits in cycling safety and amenity outweigh local resident convenience in this case.

Flush medians also have some benefit in separating opposing traffic streams, although their efficacy in terms of reducing crashes is marginal. Suitable mitigation in this case would consist of:

- Heavy rumble strips on the centre line/no-overtaking lines
- Extension to plastic bollards if separation is seen to be crucial
- A speed limit reduction to 50 kph, which would also improve co-existence of on-road cyclists with motorised traffic.

In conclusion

Thank you for considering this submission. Cycle Action has a long history of working constructively with Auckland Transport on cycling initiatives. We welcome the opportunity to be involved with this project as a key transport stakeholder as the high level design is reviewed, and it progresses through detailed design to construction.

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Auckland Transport Project Reference

<http://www.aucklandtransport.govt.nz/improving-transport/smaller-projects/Pages/Whangaparaoa-Upgrade-to-Red-Beach-Road.aspx>