LIBERATE A LANE on the Auckland Harbour Bridge

The fast, fair, affordable fix - for a more resilient city

Bike AKL

What's the idea?

Free up one lane on the Auckland Harbour Bridge for active travel - walking, biking, scooting and other kinds of micromobility.

Why?

Currently you can't walk, bike or scoot over Auckland Harbour Bridge. That's a huge gap in our transport network.

THE LONG WAY ROUND 44km
3HR 9HR

VIA BRIDGE 1.4km
5min 15min

Fixing this gap will make the whole transport system more resilient and more accessible for everyone.

1959 Bridge built without the promised walkways and bike paths

1969 Bridge extended with clip-on traffic lanes, and no walkways or bike paths

2023 We're all still waiting for those walkways and bike paths!

When will I be able to cycle over the bridge?* *our most FAQ

Fewer vehicle trips = lower carbon emissions! = better for the climate!

- [x] Another travel option
- [x] Save time
- [x] Save money
- [x] Avoid traffic congestion
- [x] Fun and great views
- [x] Independence
- [x] Health benefits

#1 activity for visitors!

78% supported walking & cycling across the bridge in recent consultation Waka Kotahi 2020

66% of Aucklanders say they would walk or bike over the harbour Waka Kotahi 2023

Who's it for?

What about safety?

The bridge will be much safer for everyone with higher fencing along the outer edge, plus barriers for protection from traffic.

"...car commuters were overwhelmingly seen to be exposed to higher concentrations of total air pollutants than those who walk, cycle or use public transport."
2011 NZTA report

Giving a lane to active transport will extend the bridge's life. Bikes and feet = way less wear and tear than vehicles!

Fewer cars = better air quality for everyone, including those in the central city, which has the dirtiest air in NZ!

Did you know traffic fumes are *worst* inside vehicles?

There are only 3-7 days/year when wind speeds would be high enough to close a lane.
NIWA data

In 2021, Queen St exceeded WHO's pollutant guidelines by 24%. Air pollution costs Auckland an estimated $1.07bn per year.
Auckland Council Report

Biking or walking over the bridge exposes you to less fumes than in built-up areas, thanks to the constant fresh air.
2018 University of Leeds study

What about the weather?

Is there space?

How steep is it?

The uphill slope is the same as the top half of Franklin Road...

A child can handle it!

...and the other half is downhill all the way.

Got an example?

Burrard Bridge, Vancouver

In 2009, one vehicle lane was converted for a protected bike path. Fourteen years on, this is the busiest bike path in North America, with over a million trips per year.

or two?

Ian Mckinnon Drive, Auckland

In 2018, one vehicle lane was converted for a protected bike path. This led to a huge increase in bikes and scooters, with no negative impact on traffic flow.

When people have the option to get out of traffic, they grab it!

A study of 70+ projects in 11 countries found traffic levels dropped significantly when space was reallocated for public transport and/or active travel.
Cairns et al, 2002

Converting the spare space for walking, biking and scooting will give us even more choices for healthy, reliable journeys - making the bridge even more efficient.

Efficient alternatives are the key. At morning peak, around 58% of the people heading over the bridge and into the central city choose to take the bus.
Waka Kotahi, 2019

Peak traffic volumes on the bridge have been falling since 2017. And, since 2020, there's been enough spare capacity to free up a whole lane 24/7.

What about the alternatives?

Bikes on buses?

- Can't currently take bikes on AT buses
- Adding bike racks to the whole fleet would take time and money - and will only carry max 3 bikes per bus
- Getting bikes on and off impacts bus travel times
- Fixed routes, limited timetables, unreliable services

How about ferries?

- Limited room for bikes
- People with bikes are often turned away at peak times
- Fixed routes, limited timetables, unreliable services

Or a whole new crossing?

- Massively expensive undertaking
- Given current options, we'll be waiting for decades
- Huge opportunity cost for climate and health in the meantime

OK then, special bike ferries?

- Requires new ferries
- Ongoing cost of staffing and running services
- 24/7 access highly unlikely
- Not a turn-up-and-go solution

The solution is right in front of us

Freeing up a lane for walking and cycling is the smartest, simplest and speediest way to make the most of what we've got - and give Tāmaki Makaurau what it needs. Let's Liberate the Lane, NOW!

#LiberateTheLane on Auckland Harbour Bridge