

To: Hamilton City Council
From: Bike Waikato

Subject: Bike Waikato's submission on the Hamilton City Council 2021-31 Long Term Plan

1 April 2021

Tēnā koutou e Te Kaunihera o Kirikiriroa,

Bike Waikato has a vision where Hamilton is the best metro city in the country for biking. A place where:

- Our loved ones always make it home safely, with no serious injuries or deaths caused by our transport system;
- People are eager to get out on their bike because they have safe, enjoyable, convenient, and consistent experiences for any journey they wish to make;
- People's transport needs and their different safety requirements are met;
- People can easily choose a low carbon emissions mode of transport centred around active transport; and
- We have less transport inequalities - transport is not a barrier to education, employment, healthcare, or community in our city;

BIKE WAIKATO'S PRIORITIES

There are a number of projects and programmes that will make Hamilton a great city for biking and give people more transport options. Our top priorities from what Hamilton City Council (HCC) have proposed are:

1. Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme (including additional opportunities)
2. Eastern Pathways (including additional opportunities)
3. Low Cost Low Risk Programmes (delivering benefits for biking)
4. Walking and Cycling Bridge
5. Te Awa South River Ride
6. Ruakura Road Urban Upgrade
7. Intersection Upgrades Programmes (delivering benefits for biking)
8. Central City Intersection Upgrades
9. Ward Street - Tristram to Anglesea
10. Rostrevor Street - Tristram to Norton

20 MINUTE CITY

We believe that the Bike Waikato vision aligns with all five long term plan priorities outlined by HCC. By investing in biking we will be able to create on-road and off-road biking networks that allows residents and visitors to the city to appreciate how green and sustainable we are in Hamilton. People will be able to easily live in and explore all that Hamilton has to offer, including easy access to a vibrant central city that is designed for people. Getting outdoors on a bike creates positive lifestyle changes for many people, forming a thriving community where fun can be had in places around every corner.

To support the five priority areas developed alongside the community, HCC needs to implement the 20 minute city concept as part of the 2021-31 Long Term Plan. HCC has already agreed¹ that a 20 minute city is necessary for the future transport needs of its residents. There is no need to delay the roll out. Developing and implementing the 20 minute city is a key driver to encouraging people to change their transport habits.

To measure our progress towards this vision, Bike Waikato wants HCC to set a mode share target for 2050 where at least 15% of all trips are by bike (with interim targets for the end of each decade). Recommended in the 2019 report, 'Turning the Tide - from Cars to Active Transport'². This position is supported by Cycling Action Network - a national bike advocacy group. Similarly ambitious targets for walking and public transport should be set by HCC.

Adopting this approach would enable the community and HCC to move beyond familiar conversations about what change should look like and how fast it should happen, and get on with a plan of action. Setting targets would enable an understanding of whether investments are achieving the desired mode shift and enable programmes to accelerate where required. This could be further supplemented by targets specifically related to travel to places of work and education, with programmes of work designed with a clear target audience in mind.

BIKING AND MICRO-MOBILITY PROGRAMME

We support Option 1 to invest \$55 million over the next 10 years, with \$24.5 million to be spent in the first five years and \$30.7 million in the second five years.

HCC cannot achieve the priorities and vision it has outlined unless there is significant investment in safe and connected infrastructure for people on bikes. An estimated 1% of trips in our city are currently completed by bike, despite a 2018 survey revealing 78% of respondents from Hamilton are supportive of biking. Recent engagement on the Biking and Micro-Mobility

¹ A 20-minute life-changer, Our Hamilton

<https://ourhamilton.co.nz/growing-hamilton/a-20-minute-life-changer/>

² Turning the Tide - from Cars to Active Transport, Otago University, <https://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710135.pdf>

Programme showed 67% of people are keen to bike, but are unwilling to due to the lack of safe and connected infrastructure. This is consistent with international research³.

Further feedback from the same engagement showed more than 80%⁴ supporting both cross-city bikeways and connected neighbourhoods. This requires providing separated infrastructure dedicated to people on bikes and micro-mobility devices that allows them to move safely between key destinations without delay. These cross-city bikeways then need safe and cohesive connections to local neighbourhoods, with suitable low speed treatments, to enable safe door to door rides for people of all ages and abilities.

The proposed \$55 million investment over 10 years under Option 1 is the bare minimum of what is required to bridge the gap between interest in biking and the number of trips currently being taken by bike. There is a clear community desire for separated and connected biking infrastructure to make people feel safe and regularly use a bike. While the level of proposed investment is substantial compared to previous long term plans from HCC, this is more of a reflection of significant underinvestment for biking in previous transport budgets.

Bike Waikato would like to see a more ambitious programme of work to retrofit the city and correct a poorly designed network with inadequate infrastructure. To that end, we are concerned that the proposed option funds less than 20% of the total investment required to complete the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme (with \$270 million of “additional opportunities” unfunded). Continuing at this current rate of investment, the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme would not be completed until around 2080 - which is simply not good enough.

Firstly, we would encourage HCC to ensure any transport investment across the city incorporates the themes supported by the community as part of the consultation on the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme. Every investment should move towards an equitable transport network, with space for all people regardless of their preferred transport choice. This will ensure that every opportunity is taken to make it easier for everyone to get around the city within 20 minutes. To this end, redirecting funding for unsubsidised projects towards the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme would enable HCC to increase overall investment in the transport network, taking advantage of the 51% subsidy from Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency.

Secondly, HCC Elected Members need to continually engage with the Minister and Ministry of Transport to convert their rhetoric for active transport into action for our communities. We support the HCC submission on the Government Policy Statement for Land Transport but are yet to see sustained efforts to place Hamilton’s need for transport change on the national stage

³ Four Types of Cyclist, Roger Geller, Portland Office of Transportation
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/44597?a=237507>

⁴ Hamilton City Council, Infrastructure Operations Committee meeting minutes, 23 February 2021
<https://www.hamilton.govt.nz/AgendasAndMinutes/Infrastructure%20Operations%20Committee%20Open%20Agenda%20-%202023%20February%202021.pdf>

alongside the Auckland Transport Alignment Project (ATAP) and Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM).

EASTERN PATHWAYS

We support the funding of Eastern Pathways to create the school and university links in Hamilton East. This project is long overdue, supported by the community, delivers on HCC's investment priorities and aligns with Bike Waikato's vision.

As with the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme, we are concerned that \$34 million of additional opportunities unfunded for Eastern Pathways means people moving around Hamilton by bike are not going to have a connected and safe network. Feedback from the engagement on the Biking and Micro-Mobility Programme made it clear what is required to get more people on bikes with more than 80% supporting connected neighbourhoods. This is exactly what the \$34 million of additional opportunities would deliver. By joining up local neighbourhoods to the school and university links, the additional funding would boost usage of these cross-city bikeways by making it easier for people to safely get anywhere on the east side of Hamilton.

As mentioned above, we would encourage HCC to ensure that all expenditure on the transport network delivers equitable multi modal outcomes for everyone that needs to travel across our city.

LOW COST LOW RISK PROGRAMMES

Bike Waikato supports the funding allocated for all Low Cost Low Risk Programmes and the benefits that can be implemented for improving active modes, particularly biking. Having the ability to deliver minor improvements across the city improves connectivity and safety for many active transport users.

The current approach of treating sites spread across the city does little to enhance the consistency and viability of routes. This results in improvements that do little to encourage more people to ride more regularly or get new people out on bikes. Bike Waikato is supportive of the safety benefits for existing users that arise from these programmes of work. However, the entirety of a route needs to be safe enough for those who are "interested but concerned" in order for less confident or experienced riders to start using them, and start using them regularly.

Bike Waikato wants a more collaborative and strategic approach for the low cost low risk programmes. Instead of identifying individual sites or projects, we would prefer to see a set of routes selected - with minor improvements made along the length of each route for vehicles, people on bikes and footpath users collectively. This would create a minimum level of safety and accessibility for people from the beginning to end of their journey.

As part of a more strategic approach, we would like to see three principles underpin decision making on the low cost low risk programme:

- 1) Investments contribute to a connected and cohesive bike network
- 2) Investments maximise the value of existing biking infrastructure
- 3) Investments deliver outcomes that encourage a target audience to bike more frequently

WAIKATO RIVER WALKING AND CYCLING BRIDGE

We support Option 1, where HCC contributes \$11 million to the new walking and cycling bridge out of a total of \$28 million. Bike Waikato agrees that a new bridge would make it easier for people to get into our central city. The key element for this bridge is having it located to provide a safe, convenient and direct way for people to walk, bike, scoot or skate between both sides of the river to places where they love to be.

However, a new bridge dedicated to active modes, and embracing the river, does not address the existing bridges across the river and their lack of safe and convenient facilities for people to move about by bike. In order to provide true transport choice, Bike Waikato would like to see improvements carried out on all bridges in the city so people can safely get across the river on a bike or by foot.

By securing funding for a new walk and cycle bridge, the options for connectivity - particularly on the east side of the city - increase. Connecting the communities between the central city, Hamilton East and the University of Waikato will allow more people to thrive and enjoy what Hamilton has to offer. Taking such an approach would also be a cost effective solution for addressing the peak hour congestion in the morning and afternoon that currently occurs on our bridges.

CENTRAL CITY BIKING INFRASTRUCTURE

With more intensified development occurring, active transport is going to be key for people to move around the central city. There is a lack of safe, connected corridors through the central city for people on bikes or micro-mobility devices. Road space is currently dominated by the movement and storage of motor vehicles and footpaths should be protected for people walking or with disabilities. The long term plan is void of any projects to improve accessibility and safety for people on bikes and micro-mobility devices within the central city. In addition, there is no safe infrastructure proposed to connect the Western Rail Trail into the city centre and out to Claudelands Bridge.

If HCC wants a central city where people love to be, then the transport network within it needs to be redesigned for people. Bike Waikato applaud the improvements to Claudelands Bridge and the ongoing improvements on Victoria Street. However, without addressing some of the

fundamental infrastructure gaps in the central city there is a real risk of continuing the errors of the past where the full benefits of biking improvements fail to realise. Connectivity is key to progress and creating a central city that puts people at the centre.

The Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency Innovating Streets programme will be a great way to build a city that is easy for people to live and where they will want to spend their time. Bike Waikato supports the design work carried out on both Ward Street and Rostrevor Street. In order for the city to benefit from the inclusive nature of the co-design approach both projects need to be funded following the trial periods. Bike Waikato would like to see a cost effective solution that would allow the innovations for both streets to become permanent after the trials are completed.

PARKS CONNECTION PROGRAMME

Using a bike as a means of transport is not restricted to the road. Cycleways and paths through parks and open spaces provide well placed connections for people getting about on bikes. Having the opportunity to leave the traffic behind for an attractive and direct route appeals to many people. Bike Waikato supports investment into building new path connections within select parks across the city to improve and/or link up some open spaces with existing transportation networks across the city, helping to promote alternative transportation modes for local residents and the wider community.

VERBAL SUBMISSIONS

Bike Waikato would appreciate the opportunity to talk about our submission in person.