

WELLINGTON TO HUTT VALLEY WALKING AND CYCLING LINK

Report summary as at 11.02.15

A consultation report summarising key feedback about the proposal for a new Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking & Cycling Link has been released. The Walking and Cycling Link is part of a suite of projects that can vastly improve the way people travel between the eastern and western sides of the Wellington region and make the Capital more accessible.

When combined, the Walking and Cycling Link, Petone to Grenada Link Road, State Highway 58 Safety Improvements and Seaview Link have the potential to not only significantly improve the way we travel in the Wellington region, but can also transform our future because of the way they support future growth from a personal, business, residential and freight movement perspective.

Consultation report release

The Walking and Cycling Link consultation report summarises feedback from consultation and engagement carried out with key stakeholders, landowners, interested user groups and the general public between November 2013 and March 2014.

The Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking and Cycling Link project is being jointly carried out by the NZ Transport Agency, Hutt City Council, Wellington City Council, KiwiRail and Greater Wellington Regional Council. It aims to deliver a safe and efficient, dedicated route for cyclists and pedestrians primarily along SH2 between Petone and Ngauranga Interchanges and is also investigating connections through to Wellington City and Melling at either end.

A key element of the project is a wish to close the current “gap” in the existing cycleway along SH2, but also to improve current facilities with the aim of encouraging more people to walk, run or cycle between the Hutt Valley and Wellington, particularly during peak hours.

Submissions showed significant support for improving the walking and cycling link with 778 responses received, only three of which opposed any investment.

Submissions helped define the current issues and concerns people have with the existing shared path along SH2.

By far, the feedback demonstrated significant support for a seaside walking and cycling option because it would be a consistent width and people viewed it as safer and more pleasant. Feedback also demonstrated this option has the potential to provide wider benefits to the region for tourism, recreation and health, while key stakeholder feedback highlighted its potential to boost the transport network’s ability to recover from major events, like an earthquake.

Those in favour of a roadside option did so because of its affordability, that it could be built sooner and because it separates pedestrians and cyclists from traffic. However, some raised its proximity to highway traffic and its inconsistent width as key issues.

Some concern was raised about the Walking and Cycling Link being tied to the development of the Petone to Grenada Link Road, which could potentially delay the timing of construction of the cycleway. However, people have acknowledged the benefits of linking the construction of one to the other because of the potential need to use surplus spoil from the Link Road to reclaim the foreshore for a seaside option.

KEY FACTS

Other key facts from the report include:

- The majority of responses came from eager/confident cyclists (368 or 57% of 643)
- Responses were mainly from men (471 or 74% of 635)

- Biggest age groups were the 36-45 and 46-55 (204 and 168 of 637 respectively). Age range of responders went from 18 to 66+ (NB 37 responders were from the 66+ age group).
- The people who provided feedback were largely those who already cycle all or part of the route (381 of 578) and 130 of 293 use the SH2 shoulders as opposed to the existing path

NEXT STEPS

The next steps are for a Detailed Business Case for the Walking and Cycling Link to be finalised and for the Transport Agency and its partners to agree on a preferred option. This is expected to be completed early this year.