

Living Streets North Shore

Submission on Northcote Cycle Route – walking and cycling improvements – August 2014

Living Streets Aotearoa is the national New Zealand organisation for people on foot, promoting walking-friendly communities.

Our vision: We want more people walking and enjoying public spaces be they young or old, fast or slow, whether walking, sitting, commuting, shopping, between appointments, or out on the streets for exercise, for leisure or for pleasure.

Living Streets North Shore is the North Shore branch focusing on walking issues in the North Shore ward area.

Living Streets North Shore welcomes Auckland Transport's attention to the walking and cycling environment from Taharota Rd to Northcote Point.

We **support improvements to intersections** which will make these safer for pedestrians of all abilities to cross. This should include marked pedestrian crossings or signalised crossings at all left turns off or on to major roads (including motorway ramps), and standard features such as ramps and tactile paving to assist disabled people.

Splitter islands must be large enough to accommodate the expected users: caregivers with pram and children, cyclists, groups of teenagers.

Pedestrians should also be able to cross any side of an intersection, that is, they should not be forced to make unnecessary road crossings to get to the desired destination. It is not clear from these plans that these principles are reflected in all locations on this route.

One feature of this plan which particularly concerns us is the implementation of "shared off-road cycle paths". These will clearly benefit cyclists who do not feel safe using the on road facilities, but in effect shared paths diminish the walking experience. Pedestrians have right of way and near exclusive use of ordinary footpaths. Turning these into "shared paths" changes the environment for pedestrians who then need to be constantly vigilant for cyclists which can travel silently and at significant speed. Current legislation does not give pedestrians priority on "shard paths" despite this being the most vulnerable mode. While pedestrian/cycle crashes are rare, pedestrians, particularly those with vision and/or mobility impairments, and the elderly are unnerved by speeding cyclists. We **do not support the use of shared paths as a solution for "safe cycling" where on road cycle lanes are an option**. Shared paths should not be implemented on the sections of the route where cycle lanes are proposed. Resources may be better spent on providing continuous segregated cycle lanes along this route.

If shared paths must be implemented, they must be of sufficient width to cater for the level of foot and cycle traffic and to allow pedestrians to continue to use the footpath at their preferred pace. We would recommend 4m where heavy and diverse use is anticipated (particularly in Section 1 and 4, and in the vicinity of the Northcote Shopping Centre).

The Taharota Rd to Akoranga Drive section of this route is of particular concern due the variety and density of foot, cycle and vehicle traffic in this area. The southern side is dominated by Takapuna Normal School, the North Harbour Netball Centre, cricket and rugby grounds and Onewa domain. We believe key stakeholders need to be

engaged to improve the layout of pedestrian and vehicle entrances, car parking and pick up areas associated with these sites and to ensure this is integrated with improved footpaths and cycle lanes. On a recent visit it was noted that many netballers congregate on the currently very narrow footpath waiting for arranged pick-ups. Seating has been provided and is used. A shared path in this area would need to accommodate these uses and be over 4m wide. Alternatively, by working with the stakeholders better configurations could be achieved.

On the northern side the interface between access to Smales Farm Bus Station and the well landscaped pathway to Northcote Rd needs to be improved, including crossing points matching the desire lines of those wishing to reach the school and sporting amenities on the other side of the road.

Walking and cycling improvements at the Northcote Point (Queen St) end of this route must be designed to integrate with usage of the Northcote Ferry Terminal and with connections to the proposed SkyPath. Again any shared paths in this area should a minimum of 4m, the proposed width of the SkyPath facility.

We would like to be considered a stakeholder in this project and to be consulted as detailed design decisions are made as this project progresses. We would also like the opportunity to audit completed work for pedestrian safety and amenity once works are completed and before the project works are signed off.