

SUBMISSION OF KATE WILSON

Kiaora,

Why does someone in Middlemarch Otago want to be involved in this hearing?

By way of background I am the Chair of the Otago Central Rail Trail Trust and ,have been involved for the past 13 years as a Councillor with the Dunedin City Council (Chair of Planning Committee for 3 years, and Chair of Infrastructure , Network and Services Committee for 6 years) and Otago Regional Council for 1 year, with a combined 7 years on the Regional Land Transport Committee.

But I am speaking in my personal capacity as someone who in Oct/ November 2019 rode the length of the NI from Cape Reinga and finished in Lowry Bay where my sister lives – congratulations to GWRC and Lower Hutt City Council– essentially the local trails are great trails - and I know those tight spots are being fixed - congratulate on ongoing enhancements. I totally understand that you get that cant do everything at once BUT you need to plan to be able to enhance trails and add onto them to go from OK, to good, to great – in the same way NZ Cycle Trails all continually strive to get better – it is not a case of build it and the job is complete.

I drive a car 35000-40000km a year – I am not a hard out biker –but my experience has led me to look at a trail from eyes of all age of users and all types – from seeing grandchildren sharing memorable holidays with grand parents and parents together , to Tony Christenson a double leg amputee on a low hand bike on the rail trail coming to a sign asking riders to ‘dismount’, to riding a cycle way in Nelson where the trail ended at a busy intersection with no way of crossing the 5.15pm traffic – and if I did having to conquer a 1 foot drain rise and lift my bike up over a safety fence. I could go on.

These experiences make me very aware of what good design is, and how hard it is to retrofit fixes, compared to adding planned for enhancements.

I have just listened to Robert Ashe present who is prepared to ride on the current road – that makes him – in the context of the attached graph a strong and fearless rider that represents in NZ studies about 1-2 % of the population.

Four Types of Transportation Cyclists in Portland By Proportion of Population



(from <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/article/158497> - I understand these figures are comparative in NZ)

I consider myself an enthusiastic and confident rider but riding into Lowry Bay at the end of my trip was scary – it was not intuitive – the cycle option, if you can call it that, disappeared with no alternative. The constant weekend traffic made cycling impossible, but nor could I cross the road, and oncoming walkers left me separated from my friends. It was a lowlight of my ride.

Good design requires front footing issues and planning. It is not good enough to say we can address some issues later. Having lived politics with stressed budgets, if this projects potential gains – social, cultural and economic are to be realised to justify the cost and environmental losses, that requires the path to provide the best, safest commuter and recreational experience it can, eventually. The target should be to ensure the path provides for the needs of the interested and concerned, not just the enthused and confident. The strong and Fearless will do as they do and are probably best on the road as their speed is not conducive to narrow shared paths.

What would good design look like? It would include provision of infrastructure like water fountains (the beaches need no more plastic water bottles), toilets, bike parking, ebike chargers. Wellington Water want to use the path – use that as an opportunity to provide some of these as a condition. And the Council may not have to provide everything – but it needs to make provision for space for these. They can be installed later over time, albeit consideration of reducing costs should be at the forefront.

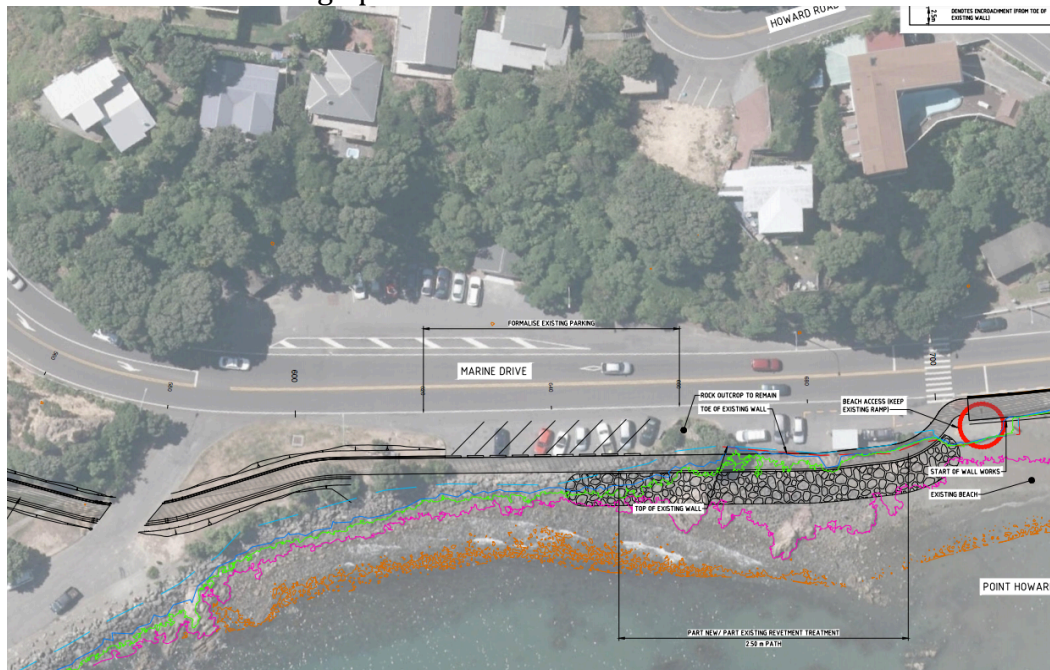
There are, however some things that need to be invested in at the start, such as, good quality signage that makes use of the shared path intuitive in the same way driving a car on the road is with a plethora of signage for them.

To do that we need to recognise the needs of the users – who are they?

Potentially there are many commuters that will be travelling North to Petone and perhaps further to Wellington to work. These are long rides that will be time critical, equally in the other direction children will be commuting south to schools.

As I look through the design I see little connectivity to the residents who I envisage using the path, or management of points of conflict. This is not a shared path just for Eastbourne residents but for all residents, adults and children, to be linked to each other, bay by bay.

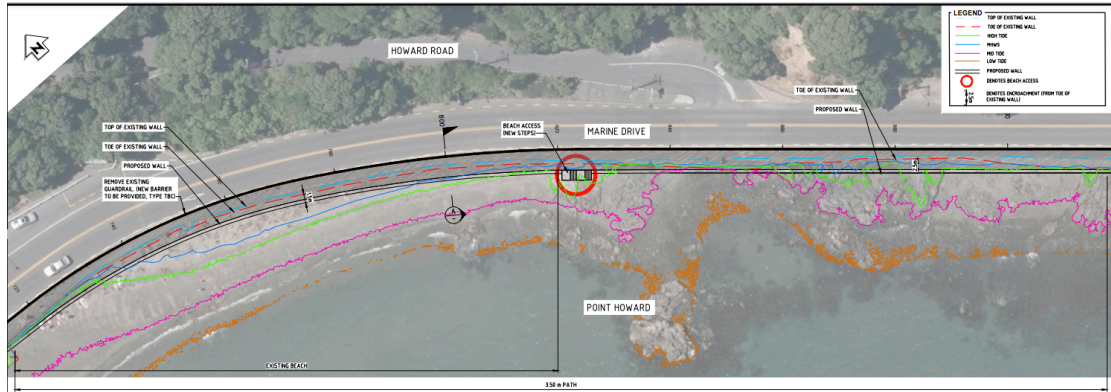
If I look at the first design plan:



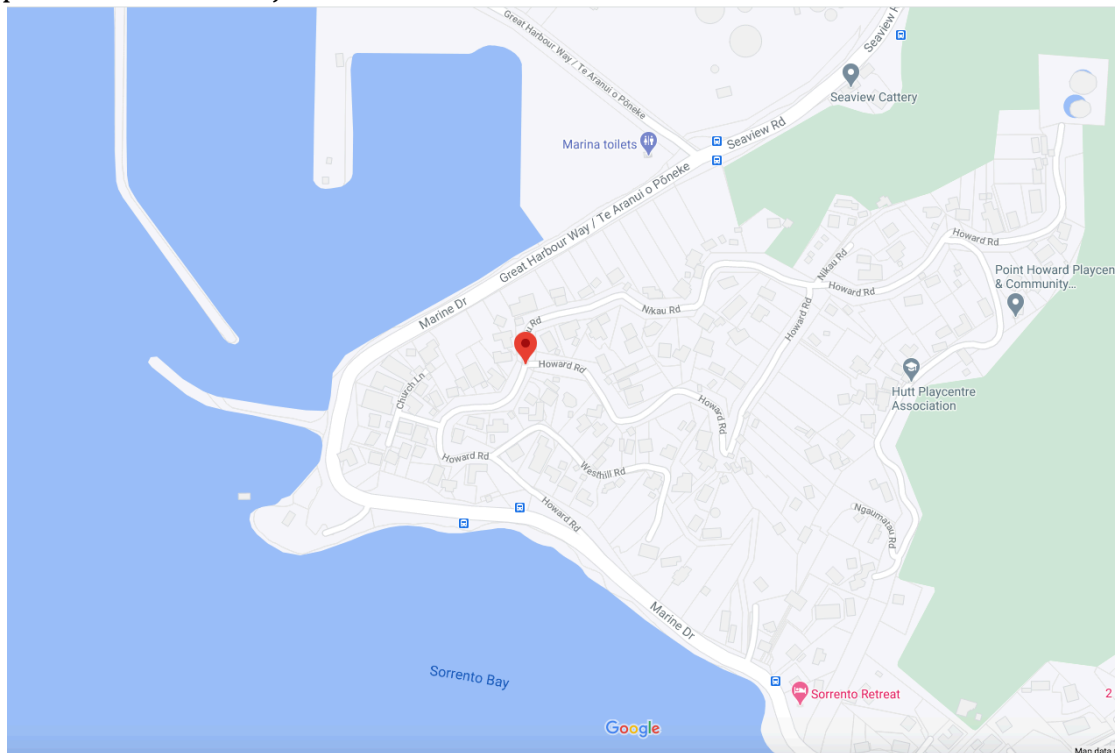
In the area to the left where the path crosses the access to the wharf there is a discontinuance of the trail prioritising, I presume, the access to the wharf business. This is not safe nor does it recognize a similar priority the person commuting by bike or walking would be given if they were in a car. Why? Why can we not message that priority, if given to the purpose rather than the mode, and with all respect there is plenty of room for a give way for even a long truck to be designed into this area, and they are invariably in a better position to address the potential conflicts of a crossing. Signage is required here to moderate vehicles crossing the path and coloured concrete or surface treatment that clearly shows that a shared path is crossing. I note you will be hearing from the energy company representative – I wonder at their conflict of not seeking a priority turn for trucks over the generally petrol fueled vehicles on the road at this point, yet they suggest they should get priority for walkers and bikers. We should be discussing people, not the mode. If priority is to be given to commuters, then the shared path users should be given priority. Anything else will not address the 60% interested but concerned potential cycle users.

To the right I note one of the very few pedestrian crossings along the whole route that connects the residential area to the trail. Yet it appears to be at a point where the trail is at its narrowest, on a bend and also where there is an access

point to the beach – which makes me wonder about people crossing with paddle boards, kayaks or prams. While those crossing are given priority over the road, the conflict with path users has to be addressed in the planning – and with consistency.



The next page of the plan shows Howard Road. I have never been up it and presumed it served just a few houses.



But it provides access to many houses and with eBikes is very accessible to the trail – for commuting, but I cannot see how it connects. Are these people meant to cross the main road at the bottom of their street or go back to the crossing referred to in the first plan? If it is at the crossing then a cyclist coming from Petone needs to know about this with good intuitive signage back at the crossing, not when they arrive at Howard Road. I do not know what is the best solution at this site, but they need to be designed at the start, with modal shift and safety being at the heart of the design.

I am not going to go through the plans one by one. But there really is only one chance to get this right. One or two bad experiences by those willing to try the

path as an alternative will have long standing detrimental effects on peoples use of it.

Other types of infrastructure that I have not seen is lighting – potentially up lighting, reflectors on the divisions as examples that need to be considered to keep both people driving cars, and those riding bikes safe at all times of the day and night. This should not be considered only a daytime use.

Moreover, the opportunity, in time to develop interpretation and signage that creates a sense of place needs provision of space now for it to be developed in the future. I did not see clarity around this, and leaving it to planning in the future makes it very hard for communities to hold the Council to account for it later.

Another infrastructure issue is the ongoing maintenance, especially given the likelihood of sea borne debris. It should be ensured, by condition if necessary, that the design can be maintained by appropriate means – I have seen cycle ways developed that make cleaning them difficult and few options but manpower to do that. That is probably unsustainable and not best practice. I wonder at the lack of an edge on the outer wall whether Health & Safety would allow a motorised cleaning vehicle along the path.

I support Geoffry Rashbrooke about pedestrian focus/priority – and that can be done in a number of ways, for example in Palmerston North along their trails they have signage painted on the surface messaging behaviour and how to treat others. Other trails I have done have a middle line painted to encourage people keeping left . While this is a level of detail, ensuring funding and ongoing maintenance of this type of messaging is important and could be done as a term of condition of consent.

I cannot overemphasise the opportunity of this section of the bigger trail – providing what should be the best section that has the broadest number of people riding both for commuting and recreational use.

In response to other submissions I do not support that cyclists be prevented from riding on the road – essentially at times the weather may stop people walking/riding on the path, or if their access is off the shared pathway

I am concerned about the outer lip. I refer to the photos attached of the Otago peninsula new path and note the edge is grass. While I appreciate the necessary design could not have grass, the edge should not look like it is rideable – it should look like an edge, and ideally in some areas I think a fence should be considered, which might also help protect the penguins. I also note the different separation mechanisms. I am concerned with those that look like a car could drive over them, but also the spacing in the visualizations provided that the barriers could provide cars to drive onto the pathway. There needs to be a barrier that deflects cars away from the path, but also allows people to exit and cross the road as they reach their destination.

I was asked at the hearing about design plans Bay by Bay being designed at a later stage. The problem I have with that is the consent terminology suggests that consent be granted in general accordance with the plans submitted. The suggestion seems to be in conflict with that provision. However, if the condition were such that certain matters needed to be addressed in each Bays plan, such as road crossings, signage, barriers to manage/ minimise conflicts .

I congratulate again the team for the proposal, but urge the Commissioners to ensure that safety is addressed and enhancements provided for at consent stage to empower the project team to realise the full potential of the proposal.

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