

## **Submission on Marlborough District Council**

### **Middle Renwick Road, Blenheim – Proposed cycle facilities**

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## Introduction

1. Nelson Marlborough Health (Nelson Marlborough District Health Board) (NMH) is a key organisation involved in the health and wellbeing of the people within Te Tau Ihu. NMH appreciates the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on the Marlborough District Council (MDC)'s Middle Renwick Road Project.
2. NMH makes this submission in recognition of its responsibilities to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and the Health Act 1956.
3. This submission sets out particular matters of interest and concern to NMH around pedestrian and cycle safety and has a number of recommendations for consideration which would further improve health outcomes for the community.

## General comments

4. NMH strongly supports the development of good quality active transport infrastructure for cyclists of all levels, which is known to encourage physical activity and be beneficial to population health. Active forms of transport, such as walking and cycling, have a range of environmental benefits, including producing no air pollution, noise pollution or greenhouse gases. NMH is pleased to see the Marlborough District Council (MDC) is working towards making improvements to its cycling networks, however NMH would like to see MDC to see greater investment in providing infrastructure for a broader range of cyclists.
5. NMH understands from the ViaStrada report that these new cycle facilities are intended for "*Enthusied and confident cyclists*" rather than the "*Interested and concerned cyclists*", and there may be future plans on adjacent sections to provide for the "Interested and concerned cyclists". NMH recommends that consideration is given to creating a design that caters for all cyclists noting that research<sup>1</sup> shows generally "*Riders across all cyclist types prefer dedicated cycling facilities and are opposed to high speed traffic and high volume traffic*". In addition, women express stronger preferences for greater segregation from motor vehicles than men. In terms of catering to the ageing population, evidence suggests that older people may have stronger preferences for separated infrastructure<sup>2</sup>. By catering for the "enthused and confident cyclist", MDC is limiting the cycling options for other groups. NMH recommends that consideration is given to reviewing the design of the proposed cycleway so that a broader group of users feel safe to use it.

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<sup>1</sup> Aldred, R., Elliott, B., Woodcock, J., & Goodman, A. (2017). Cycling provision separated from motor traffic: a systematic review exploring whether stated preferences vary by gender and age. *Transport reviews*, 37(1), 29–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2016.1200156>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



6. NMH does support the upgrading of cycle facilities but the proposed design does not seem to go further enough to protect cyclists from possible conflicts with motor vehicles. NMH notes that the width of the proposed cycleway would be 1.7m plus .4m buffer. However it is noted that in NZTA guidelines for cycle lanes, the recommended width for cycle lanes adjacent to parallel parked cars is 1.8m.<sup>3</sup> As noted in the Via Strada report, the door zone of parked vehicles is an actual safety concern for people on bikes. NMH recommends the following options are considered so the risk of cyclists being hit by doors is mitigated.

- a. The cycleway is placed next to the kerb and that parking bay is placed between the cycleway and the traffic carriageway.
- b. Physical protection is added to the buffered cycleways. Evidence shows that buffers with some sort of physical protection, even as minimal as a plastic flexpost, yield significant increases in perceived comfort for potential cyclists with safety concerns (the Interested but Concerned demographic).<sup>4</sup> The figure below illustrates what these changes could look like.

(b) Albert Street (East Melbourne)



7. The current design shows two cycleways (1.7m wide) on either side of the road. A second design option to consider is a wider 3.4m cycleway on one side of the road with a .8m buffer area. Flexposts could be used to discourage parking and protect cyclists. Parking could be retained on the other side of the road. This would give greater protection to cyclists. This approach has been taken in Nelson on St Vincent Street (See figure overleaf).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/cycling/cycling-standards-and-guidance/cycling-network-guidance/designing-a-cycle-facility/between-intersections/cycle-lanes/>

<sup>4</sup> McNeil, Nathan; Monsere, Christopher M.; and Dill, Jennifer, "The Influence of Bike Lane Buffer Types on Perceived Comfort and Safety of Bicyclists and Potential Bicyclists" (2015). Civil and Environmental Engineering Faculty Publications and Presentations. 221. [https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cengin\\_fac/221](https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cengin_fac/221)



Both options offered above provide safer options for cyclists using the existing road widths. These would encourage more people to cycle and this aligns with the Government's Position Statement on Land Transport to *enable transport choice and access* as well as *providing a safe system free of death and serious injuries*, and the Road to Zero's *Road User choices: encourage safer choices and safer behaviour on our roads*. NMH recommends that that design of the proposed cycleway is reviewed to incorporate safety features which would encourage a greater number of people to cycle.

### **Conclusion**

8. NMH thanks MDC for the opportunity to comment on the proposed cycle facilities for Middle Renwick Road, Blenheim.
9. NMH strongly supports MDC's investment in better cycle facilities for Blenheim. However, NMH believes that in finalising the design, consideration should be given to designing the cycleway to ensure better safety outcomes for a range of cyclists.

Yours sincerely

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