

**Waka Kotahi NZ
Transport Agency:
Richmond Transport
Programme Business Case**

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Submitter details

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 o Te Waka a Maui. NMH welcomes the opportunity to comment from a public health perspective on the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's Richmond Transport Programme Business Case.
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, particularly in relation to promoting active transport modes and prioritising safety for all modes of transport.

General Comments

4. NMH commends Waka Kotahi for the introduction of short-term package that aims to improve safety and accessibility for people using active modes (including public transport). There are numerous benefits in promoting active transport. Increased numbers of walkers and cyclists can stimulate economic activity, promote accessibility and community cohesion, reduce congestion, improve safety, reduce transport emissions and improve public health.
5. NMH supports initiatives that make streets safer and more inviting places for people. Creating places that are attractive and safe for people to use means that more people will walk and cycle in the area which will decrease car dependency. This is both good for mental and physical health and has environmental benefits. In addition, local area traffic calming measures will reduce the number of accidents on the roads.
6. NMH supports the marketing and promotion of school travel planning. Walking and cycling rates have declined considerably for school trips since 1989.¹ For children, using active transport to and from school is an important way to get some physical activity each day. With the high child obesity rate in New Zealand, this is a relatively easy way to increase physical activity in children. Moreover there are

¹ <https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Import/Documents/RaisingtheProfileWalkingCyclinginNZ.pdf>

well established cognitive and learning benefits to walking and cycling to school.^{2,3} Research has also shown that most children that walk and cycle to school will maintain this behaviour as they get older, therefore it is important to establish early habits for active commute.⁴

7. There are at least fourteen schools (including early childhood centres, play-centres) that are within the Project Area that will be directly affected, to a lesser or larger extent. Research has shown that "schools will only embrace strong and consistent support for active school travel if school leadership teams, teachers, and parents are confident that it is safe to *promote* active travel to school, because it is safe"⁵. Therefore it is vitally important that the transport infrastructure surrounding schools ensures that children are able to walk and bike to school safely.
8. Over the past 40 years, transport budgets have focused predominately on improving the road carriageway rather than pedestrian and cycling facilities, it is only within the last decade that substantial investment has occurred for cycling facilities. Cycling has increased in areas with improved cycle infrastructure. Recent rapid technology change has resulted in the advent of a raft of micro-mobility options and now there is a broader range of users wishing to use footpaths and cycleways. Conflict has arisen between different users. NMH continually advocates for the prioritisation of safety for all modes and that further investment is given to encouraging active modes to enable people to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of these activities.

Specific Comments

Short-term emerging programme

Public Transport:

9. NMH supports improving existing Queen Street bus stop, new bus network and fare structure changes.

² Hillman, C. (2009) *The effect of acute treadmill walking on cognitive control and academic achievement in preadolescent children* Neuroscience Volume 159, Issue 3,

³ South Australian Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (2016) *Walking, riding or driving to school: what influences parents' decision making?*

https://www.dpti.sa.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0020/513506/Walking_riding_or_driving_to_school-what_influences_parents_decision_making-Focus_group_discussion_report.pdf

⁴ Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research(n.d) *What Influences whether children walk or cycle to school*. Deakin University

⁵ Ibid.

Non Infrastructure:

10. NMH does not support the extension of the designation period of the Hope Bypass. A new road is likely to increase the following public health harms: increase in noise and air pollution, increase in carbon emissions and community severance, an increased risk of traffic injuries and road injuries and a reduction of recreational walking/cycling paths. This is further discussed in the *Long-Term Emerging Programme* section of this submission (paragraphs 41-45).

Richmond wide:

11. NMH supports creating residential slow speed neighbourhoods. Speed affects the likelihood and the severity of its consequences. Small reductions in impact speeds greatly increase the chances of surviving a crash. World Health Organisation states that an increase of 1 km/h in mean vehicle speed results in an increase of 4-5% of fatal crashes.⁶ International studies⁷ have shown that most traffic deaths, especially the easily preventable pedestrian deaths, occur on a small percentage of arterial streets. These streets are rendered dangerous by design as the streets are wide and invite speeding, lack safe crossings and have substandard footpaths. When vehicles move at or below 40 km/h, potential conflicts take place at lower speeds, dramatically increasing the chances of survival in the case of a crash⁸.

12. NMH supports more parking facilities for bicycles. Providing good quality bicycle parking that is accessible by a wide type of users helps encourage more people to cycle to a destination, and thus makes it more accessible.⁹

Town Centre:

13. NMH is supportive of an introduction of a user-pays system for long-term parking within the town centre as this incentivises alternative modes such as active and public transport which in turn has better health outcomes.

14. NMH supports extending the shared zone in Queen Street to the surrounding side roads.

15. NMH recommends that the crossing point at the intersection of Cambridge and Queen Street is improved for pedestrians so that pedestrians are given priority over turning traffic. This would lower the number of conflicts between cars and pedestrians and would also indicate that Queen Street is a slow speed zone.

⁶ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/254760/1/WHO-NMH-NVI-17.7-eng.pdf?ua=1>

⁷ <https://globaldesigningcities.org/wp-content/uploads/guides/global-street-design-guide.pdf>

⁸ [Ibid](#)

⁹ [Bicycle Parking Facilities: Updating the Austroads Guide to Traffic Management](#)

Initiatives indicated on the Short-term map

16. NMH continues to support the lowering of speed limits on SH6 between Hope and Wakefield.
 17. NMH supports an improved crossing to the Hope Recreation Reserve to enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely and access the Great Taste Trail.
 18. NMH supports intersection improvements at McShanes/Pugh/SH60 Roads
 19. NMH strongly supports the creation of a shared path along Potama Creek that connects to Gladstone Road. The roading network around the Berryfield subdivisions do not easily connect into Richmond Town Centre. The creation of a shared path will provide easy access for those wishing to use active modes.
 20. NMH strongly supports an improved crossing point at Church Street and Gladstone Road to ensure people can easily access the new shared path. Consideration also needs to be given to lighting on this path as a lack of lighting deters people from using the route especially in winter. NMH recommends that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Audit needs also to be completed on this route to address any safety concerns.
 21. NMH strongly supports a cycleway on Church Street.
 22. NMH supports the 30km/h speed zone around Queen Street. NMH recommends the zone is slightly extended to encompass the area surrounding Richmond School. In addition, NMH recommends the pedestrian crossing on Oxford Street is given the same treatment as the Salisbury Road in order to reduce the risk of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
 23. The priority lane proposed on Gladstone Road is very short, consideration should be given to lengthening this route so that public transport modes can easily pass passenger vehicles. Prioritising bus travel enables more people to travel in fewer cars thus reducing vehicle emissions and leading to healthy environments. Giving buses priority also means that bus journey times are lower making it a more attractive mode of transport. Buses are a safe way to travel, researchers from the Universite de Montreal Public Health Research Institute found that the bus was a safer travel option than driving a car and showed that the risk of injury is four-times greater for drivers compared to bus occupants.¹⁰
- NMH recommends that the following points are taken into consideration

¹⁰ <https://www.earth.com/news/taking-bus-safer-car/#:~:text=Researchers%20from%20the%20Universite%20de,drivers%20compared%20to%20bus%20occupant>
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- Parking in the priority lane is regularly enforced

- Considerations is given to managing left turns to/from the central lane into businesses/residences.

24. NMH supports intersection improvements at Berry Field Dr and Lower Queen Street

25. NMH supports crossing improvements at Talbot and McGlashen to make it easier for local residents to access schools and the town centre

26. NMH supports an improved crossing at Salisbury and Talbot Street. The current layout at the T-intersection means that pedestrians need to undertake two crossings if they are travelling from the school precinct to the town centre. Moving the traffic light crossing to the southern side would result in pedestrians only needing to cross once.

27. NMH is very supportive of the improved pedestrian crossing along Salisbury Road, these crossings enable traffic to slow down considerably and allow pedestrians to easily cross the road. NMH would support reduced parking to enable the installation of separated cycle lanes. It is important that secondary students and intermediate students have safe cycle routes around schools. Salisbury Road is an important road within the cycling network so it is vital that cycle infrastructure is improved along this route.

28. NMH also supports the reduction of speed to 30 km/h for the reasons given above.

29. NMH supports the introduction of a shared path along William Street, this provides safe access into Henley School and Waimea Intermediate. NMH recommends the crossing at William Street and Hill Street is reviewed to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can easily access the shared path.

30. NMH supports the installation of on road cycle lanes on Wensley, Hart, Champion Road and Hill Street in the short term.

31. NMH recommends that an additional pedestrian crossing is placed on Queen Street between George Street and Hunter Avenue. Anecdotal evidence has shown that parents of school children are wary of crossing the road at the current crossing point. A pedestrian crossing would give more priority to active modes.

Medium-term emerging programme

Public Transport:

32. NMH supports a new bus terminal and the continuation of bus stop upgrades

Initiatives indicated on the Medium-term map

33. NMH supports the intersection improvements proposed in the programme.

34. NMH recommends that Wensley Road/Oxford Street intersection improvements and the Queen Street/ Salisbury Road intersection improvements are brought forward to the Short-term emerging programme. These intersections are very difficult for pedestrians to navigate especially those who are more vulnerable road users. Anecdotal evidence has shown that elderly people with walkers have extreme difficulty crossing these roads. Safety is a priority therefore it is necessary to bring these two projects forward.
35. NMH supports the introduction of a park and ride service. NMH notes that there are no cycle paths connecting the Park and Ride at McShane Road. This Park and Ride is adjacent to the Connings Block which is a popular shopping area. Consideration should be given to creating a cycle route from Berryfields to the McShane Park and Ride. This would provide an active transport link for those wishing to drive from outer Tasman and then finish their journey to Richmond or Nelson by bike.
36. NMH supports the extension of the shared walking and cycling path along Borck Creek and the additional Gladstone Road crossing proposed.
37. NMH supports the separated cycleways proposed for Hart, Wensley, Champion Roads, Lower Queen Street and for Queen Street.
38. NMH recommends the separated cycleway proposed for Champion Road is extended to the Silvan Forest Recreational Area.
39. NMH notes that these are a series of indicative walking and cycling route subject to development. NMH recommends that these walking and cycling routes are a requirement as part of the development construction.
40. Lower Oxford Street is to be redesigned to improve traffic flow in the medium term. There are medical facilities and schools along this road therefore it is important that pedestrians are still able to safely cross this road to access facilities.

Long-term emerging programme

Public Transport:

41. NMH supports increasing bus frequency

Initiatives indicated on the Medium-term map

42. NMH supports the proposed on road cycle lanes on Hill St South and Gladstone Road.
43. NMH does not support the creation of a new car park building. The Richmond Parking Strategy states that "*creating new parking areas and parking buildings can alleviate parking demands, but it also encourages vehicle use...Any proposal to*

construct a private parking building on council land is inconsistent with this strategy, but will be considered on its merits". The Richmond Parking Strategy's timeframe is from 2018-2038 and the timeframes of the Richmond Transport Programme Business Case would cover a similar period. Therefore NMH sees that proposed new parking building as being inconsistent with current TDC policy. Considerable investment is being made into improve active and public transport modes which will lead to additional use of these facilities which lead to corresponding health and environmental benefits. NMH recommends that consideration is given to further expanding active and public transport infrastructure rather than constructing a new car parking building.

44. NMH strongly advocates for the retention of the Great Taste Trail between Hope and Richmond in its current form. NMH does not support the Hope Bypass as the creation of a new road does not align with Waka Kotahi's vision for a "low carbon, safe and healthy land transport". NMH does not support the Bypass for the following reasons:

- that increased capacity on the network is likely to increase harm to public health in regards to
 - i. *Noise*: Noise can cause a number of short- and long-term health problems, such as for example sleep disturbance, cardiovascular effects, poorer work and school performance, hearing impairment.^{11,12}
 - ii. *Air pollution*: Vehicle engines produce a number of air pollutants that may pose risks to health either as acute effects or through chronic exposure. These pollutants include Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}) that can penetrate the respiratory system, ozone (O₃), sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NOs) which include nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which can contribute to increased morbidity and mortality particularly for asthmatics and young children, and carbon monoxide (CO). Some groups are more susceptible to pollution e.g. children, the elderly, people with pre-existing medical conditions and people who are actively exercising. The removal of the Great Taste Trail and the installation of a new separated cycle route adjacent to the Hope Bypass will result in more cyclists and pedestrians being exposed to air pollution.
 - iii. *Carbon emissions*: carbon emissions impact public health adversely mainly by the following two ways. First, inhalation of high concentrations of CO₂

¹¹ [WHO/Europe | Noise - Data and statistics](#)

¹² [What the science says | Transport & Environment \(transportenvironment.org\)](#)

directly harms people's respiratory system, causing breathlessness, headache, and even delirium. The second way is indirect and related to climate change.

- The new road will negatively impact recreational walking and cycling. While the current shared path along the Great Taste Trail is a well-used recreational resource, the replacement facility is likely to be unattractive for recreational use being alongside the new road. The current path can be used by people of all ages and abilities however more vulnerable users may be less inclined to use the new route, this would therefore reducing active transport.
 - It significantly results in community severance as the new Berryfields development will be separated by both the Hope Bypass and Gladstone Road. Community severance arises when roads carrying high levels of traffic cut through residential neighbourhoods. Community severance produces a range of direct negative impacts on health, including reduced social support, reduced access to facilities and restricted access which increase the level of stress for some groups of the community. Severance could also result in reduced access to cycling and pedestrian networks resulting in fewer people wishing to use these active modes to travel.
 - The Bypass would be expected to result in an increase in the number of cars, and therefore increase in the numbers of kilometres travelled which can lead to more traffic crashes and road injuries.
45. NMH recommends that if the Hope Bypass is considered then a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is undertaken. A HIA is a practical approach used to judge the potential health effects of a policy, programme or project on a population, particularly on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Recommendations are produced for decision-makers and stakeholders, with the aim of maximising the proposal's positive health effects and minimising its negative health effects. The approach can be applied in diverse economic sectors and uses quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques. An HIA was completed in 2021 for the Southern Arterial Options and looked at community severance, safety, noise and air quality.¹³ NMH recommends that a similar HIA is undertaken on the Hope Bypass which includes the above elements along with effects on active transport modes.

Conclusion

46. NMH thanks Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency for the opportunity to comment on the Richmond Transport Programme Business Case.
47. NMH recommends that the Healthy Street Indicators¹⁴ are used to design long-term packages. These indicators are based around designing streets so that they improve air quality, reduce congestion and help make diverse communities greener, healthier and more attractive places to live, work, play and do business.
48. NMH is supportive of proposals that aim to improve safety and accessibility of the public and active transport network as this investment can promote accessibility and community cohesion, reduce congestion, improve safety, reduce transport emissions and improve public health. These initiatives align with the Government's overall transport objectives. NMH is happy to be contacted to provide additional feedback on our submission if required.

Yours sincerely



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¹⁴ <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets>