



Cycle Action Waikato
 Box 19-251
 Hamilton
 NEW ZEALAND

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From: - Name and Organisation: - Rob Davidson, Peter Bos, and Claire Sherrington,
 (On behalf of Cycle Action Waikato)

Contact address: - P. O. Box 19-251, Hamilton. Postcode 3244.

Email: - cawaikato@can.org.nz

Phone 856 5217(Rob), or 850 8835 (Peter), or 021 907787 (Claire)

To: - HCC, districtplan@hcc.govt.nz and sam.leheron@hcc.govt.nz

Cc HCC Transportation Unit Manager info@hcc.govt.nz (Attention Jason Harrison)

Cc AgResearch, Claire Dowsett

Cc Living Streets, Judy McDonald

Cc CCS Disability Action, Gerri Pomeroy

Cc RNZFB, Fiona Green

Cc Generation Zero, Aaron Wong

Yes, We do wish to be heard in support of our submission.

Cycle Action Waikato Submission to draft HCC Ruakura District Plan Variation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the publicly notified draft 2015 Ruakura District Plan Variation.

Introduction

Successful Structure Planning of the Ruakura growth area must provide well-developed transport networks including the provision of safe and accessible routes for people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired, thus fulfilling the ACCESS Hamilton goal of reducing car dependency.

The walking and cycling provision proposed within the Tainui Ruakura Plan Change Area is relatively good. However, the connections from this area to the rest of the neighboring Ruakura area, and throughout the wider Hamilton City as a whole are very poor, with many blackspots being both difficult and very dangerous, thus creating community severance barriers to people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired.

These blackspots need better and safer access solutions developed through Transport Planning specifically done for walking and cycling, and applied through the Ruakura District Plan Variation.

From our Cycle Action Waikato work done through the (EPA) Hearings for the Tainui Ruakura Plan Change Development, **we know that Tainui will not be providing any additional walking and cycling infrastructure outside of the Tainui Development, hence No pedestrian crossing of Ruakura Road).**

It is up to HCC to recognize and acknowledge the walking and cycling blackspots, and to make a commitment within the Ruakura District Plan Variation to set short-term targets (of up to 2-years) to construct walking and cycling facilities to fix them.

Our requests in detail

1. We Request that the Ruakura D.P. Variation adds the ‘Safe System’ approach as set out in the Government’s Safer Journeys strategy. (Reference: - Ministry of Transport 2010). The appropriate place for this in the Ruakura D.P. Variation is alongside the Waikato Regional Plans and Strategies, which provide important direction for this District Plan.

Reasons: -

(i) The Ruakura Area currently is very dangerous for people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired.

(ii) The Ruakura D.P. Variation is an appropriate policy for safer transport planning to be developed for walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired in the Ruakura Area, through the ‘safer systems’ approach.

2. We request that the Ruakura D.P. Variation adds the ‘Hamilton Biking Plan’ to the list of HCC documents (along with ACCESS Hamilton, etc), which provide important direction for this plan.

Reasons: -

(i) Sustainable transport cannot be achieved without additional new strong provision being constructed for walking and cycling within the Ruakura Area.

(ii) This Ruakura District Plan Variation must be up to date with the other existing Policy and Strategies, i.e. The HCC Biking Plan.

3. We request that the following be marked onto the HCC Ruakura District Plan Variation drawing Fig 2.18 Cycle and Pedestrian Network: - The 2015 Operative Biking Plan – proposed pedestrian/cycle path (Major Project # 5 – the University Route to the Central City).

Reasons: -

(i) This Ruakura District Plan Variation must be up to date with the other existing Policy and Strategies, i.e. The HCC Biking Plan.

(ii) The HCC Biking Plan Goals state that: - *“The biking plan is integrated into transport and city planning”,* and *“More people biking more often”*.

4. We request a written commitment through the Ruakura D.P. Variation that HCC will construct the missing link of the Ruakura Road walkway / cycleway path from Wairere Drive to the Business Innovation Park (within 5 years).

Reasons: -

(i) We are very pleased to see that HCC has proposed the continuation of the existing HCC-constructed Ruakura Road shared-use pedestrian/cycle path (from Peachgrove to Wairere Drive), onwards East of Wairere Drive to join the Tainui proposed pedestrian/cycle path which stops at the boundary between Transpower and the Business Innovation Park. **Well-done HCC!**

(ii) D.P. Section 3.7.1.7 Transportation Network, section (g), states that: - “Ruakura Road (urban) will continue to function as a two-lane minor arterial road between the Wairere Drive Ring Road and the Spine Road. The corridor provides for public transport and shared footpath and cycle path.”

(iii) Many people working at both the Business Innovation Park and the Ruakura Campus would welcome safe walking and cycling commuter access from Wairere Drive walkway / cycleway path for healthy active travel.

5. We request that the Ruakura District Plan Variation Drawings (Fig 2.18 Cycle and Pedestrian Network) be marked and labeled with a safe push-button traffic-light pedestrian and cycle crossing of Ruakura Road (at the AgResearch entrance).

6. We request a written commitment through the Ruakura D.P. Variation that HCC will construct a safe pedestrian-controlled traffic light crossing of Ruakura Road at the AgResearch entrance (within 2-years).

Reasons: -

Cycle Action Waikato, Living Streets, and CCS Disability Action all agree that this intersection is deadly for people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired to cross, and that **a safe pedestrian-controlled traffic light crossing point needs to be planned by HCC in this Ruakura District Plan Variation for the following reasons: -**

(i) Ruakura Road is currently difficult and dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists to cross to get to AgResearch and the Business Innovation Park. Sadly this was graphically demonstrated by the July 2011 death of a 13-year old Boys High student crossing Ruakura Road near the entrance of the Innovation Park. Had a safe pedestrian-controlled traffic light crossing been in place at that time, it could have prevented this needless death.

(ii) The Tainui Ruakura Development will increase the number of people needing to cross Ruakura Road to attend the Tainui-proposed Knowledge Zone, and to travel between the different sections of the larger Knowledge Zone (which includes the University of Waikato, AgResearch and Waikato Innovation Park areas).

(iii) The Tainui Ruakura Development will likely bring many more heavy trucks and trailers along Ruakura Road heading to Wairere Drive. This will make Ruakura Road even more dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists

(iv) From our Cycle Action Waikato work done through the (EPA) Hearings for the Tainui Ruakura Plan Change Development, **we know that Tainui will not be providing any additional walking and cycling infrastructure outside of the Tainui Development. (So Tainui will Not provide a pedestrian crossing of Ruakura Road).**

(v) In the future many people using the HCC Biking Plan's proposed 'University to CBD Rail Link' will need to cross Ruakura Road to get from the University to the Uni – CBD route.

(vi) This low cost HCC project (\$100k) comprising an at-grade push-button traffic light crossing, would create significantly safer access for commuters walking and cycling to the Business Innovation Park, AgResearch, and the Tainui Knowledge Zone, and children who attend either the Tai Wananga School or Melody Childcare Center.

(vii) The Long-term Infrastructure Strategy states that: - *“Improving Hamilton’s Safety Record”, ‘Principal options’ – “Promote Safe use of the network”, with the corresponding ‘Implications of options’ – “Supports the physical works undertaken, and supports the use of alternative modes by reducing the perception that they are unsafe.”*

(viii) **HCC needs to apply the ‘Safer Systems’ approach through the Ruakura D.P. Variation**, to ensure the provision of a much, much, higher level of safety for people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired in the Ruakura Area.

The Coroner-formed National Cycling Safety Panel recommends the Safe Systems approach. It states that: - SAFE SYSTEM ENABLERS - “Give greater priority to active transport needs (cycling and walking) in all land transport planning and investment decisions”. (Reference: ‘Safer Journeys for people who cycle.’)

(ix) **HCC has received a petition from Claire Dowsett of AgResearch (through the 2014 Annual Plan submissions), requesting a safe crossing of Ruakura Road at the entrance to the Ruakura Campus and the Business Innovation Park.** At the time of the 2014 submission 392 people supported the petition. The petition is ongoing. **Now in December 2015 there are 523 signatures of support of a safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists of Ruakura Road at the Ruakura Campus. This petition clearly demonstrates the need for safe access across Ruakura Road.**

(x) Claire Dowsett states of the Ruakura Campus that: - ‘The Site Service's Manager, Mike King, has already raised concerns around this entrance and are in discussions around development’.

(xi) The HCC Biking Plan Goals states that: - *“The biking plan is integrated into transport and city planning”, and “More people biking more often”.*

(xii) **The Ruakura District Plan Variation needs to mitigate these extra dangers to people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired, that are being caused by the growth and Development of the Ruakura area within Hamilton City.**

7. We request that the Ruakura District Plan Variation Drawings (Fig 2.18 Cycle and Pedestrian Network) be marked to show the South-side of Ruakura Road (between Wairere Drive and Knighton Road) as “Future off-road shared-use pedestrian/cycle path” to indicate the future Widening of the pedestrian-only footpath to 3.0m shared-use pedestrian/cycle path width.
8. We request a written commitment through the Ruakura D.P. Variation that HCC widen the South-side Ruakura Road pedestrian-only footpath (Wairere Drive to Knighton Road) to 3.0m shared-use pedestrian/cycle width (within 2-years).

Reasons: -

(i) This is needed to provide safer cycle access between Wairere Drive and **the University, which will soon be putting in place car parking charges for all students.** Please note, that while huge numbers (15,000) of University students (and staff) have and can ride a bike, many are not competent enough to brave it out and cycle on a very busy arterial road with lots of truck trailer units. Students and Staff need to be actively encouraged to take up regular daily cycle commuting by providing a much, much safer off-road path between the University and Wairere Drive.

(ii) This is a low cost project (\$20k to \$40k) comprising path widening and two chicanes 20m apart (to slow cyclists) at the narrow point of path near Wairere Drive. It will then provide a safe cycle commuting route to University via Wairere Drive.

(iii) **This short-term project is needed right now (within 2 years).** The longer-term University-CBD route proposed in the HCC Biking Plan, may take up to 15 or 20 years to be built. **Both are needed, as the University is a major walking and cycling destination.**

(iv) This project enables HCC to meet the 30-year Long-term Infrastructure Strategy goal, which states of Transport that: - *“Before resorting to new infrastructure, one of the key approaches is to manage the demand and to ‘make best use of existing capacity’.”* HCC must widen this path for cycling to reach this major destination (The University), to make the best use of the Millions of dollars spent on the network of Wairere Drive walkway / cycleway paths and underpasses.

(v) The HCC Biking Plan Goals states that: - *“The biking plan is integrated into transport and city planning”,* and *“More people biking more often”.*

(vi) The Ruakura District Plan Variation needs to mitigate these extra dangers to people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired, that are being caused by the growth and Development of the Ruakura area within Hamilton City.

9. We request that the **Ruakura District Plan Variation Drawings (Fig 2.18 Cycle and Pedestrian Network)** be marked and labeled at Fifth Ave large multi-lane roundabout; - with either an underpass or pedestrian-controlled traffic lights **along the Wairere Drive pedestrian/cycle path ACROSS Fifth Ave Extension.**
10. We request a written commitment through the transport section of the Ruakura D.P. Variation, that this safe pedestrian/ cycle crossing (push button traffic light, or underpass) will be constructed (by Tainui) (i) before the construction of the Fifth Ave Extension, and (ii) before any onsite construction (for either buildings or roads) within the Tainui Development requires heavy vehicle movements across the existing Wairere Drive walking and cycling path at Fifth Ave.

Reasons: -

(i) The HCC Biking Plan Goals states that: - “*The biking plan is integrated into transport and city planning*”, and “*More people biking more often*”.

(ii) As the Ruakura area is being developed by Tainui, where the Wairere Drive pedestrian /cycle path crosses the arm of the Wairere Drive / Fifth Ave roundabout (currently a safe cul-de-sac), will become heavily used by motor vehicles, **initially** by heavy-duty construction machinery building Fifth Ave Extension and Spine Road, and **later** by heavy truck and trailer use of freight movements to and from the Tainui Inland Port. **Please Note, that the Ruakura Plan Change applicants (Tainui) have accepted responsibility for provision of a safe pedestrian / cycle crossing (either push-button traffic lights, or underpass) of Fifth Avenue Extension at Wairere Drive, as noted by para 932, despite not showing it in the Cycle and Pedestrian Network drawing of Ruakura Plan Change.**

(iii) All of the major intersections along the Wairere Drive City Arterial Ringroad have safer crossings provided for walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired, i.e. push-button pedestrian crossings at the traffic-light intersections at Te Rapa Rd, Pukete Rd, River Rd, Powells Rd, and Ruakura Rd. Furthermore underpasses are provided **along the Wairere Drive pedestrian / cycle path** at all the large multi-lane roundabouts of Resolution Drive, Hukanui Rd and Crosby Rd. Fifth Ave Extension / Wairere Drive will become a major intersection needing a safe crossing for walking and cycling.

(iv) When the Ruakura area is developed, Fifth Ave will be exceptionally busy, carrying much of the Ruakura Development traffic: - (a) onto the City Arterial Ringroad (Wairere Drive) to go right to and from the Te Rapa Base, left to and from the Hospital, Melville, and Ohaupo, and in both directions to and from residential areas throughout all of Hamilton, and (b) straight via the Cross-City-Connector of the City Arterial Ringroad (Fifth Ave / Boundary Rd) to the Central Business District for employment, business, banking, medical (Anglesea Specialist Clinics) etc.

(v) All of this high volume of motor vehicle traffic will cross the off-road pedestrian/cycle path, which is positioned on the east-side of Wairere Drive, thus the Ruakura Development is creating a big new hazard for walkers, cyclists, and the mobility impaired traveling along the Wairere Drive path.

(vii) The Ruakura District Plan Variation needs to mitigate these extra dangers to people walking, cycling, and the mobility impaired, that are being caused by the growth and Development of the Ruakura area within Hamilton City.