



Artists impression of seaside option

Seaward side option preferred for Walking, Cycling Resilience project

The Transport Agency and key stakeholders for the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking, Cycling and Resilience Project are now able to confirm that a seaside option is their preference for the section between Petone and Ngauranga.

This decision follows announcements earlier this year about Government funding for the northern and southern sections – Ngauranga to CBD and Melling to Petone – as part of the Urban Cycleways Programme, where \$9m was made available for early construction of these sections.

The decision to proceed with a seaward option is positive news for many who advocated for this option since work began in 2013. When options were publicly discussed in early 2014, feedback demonstrated people felt a seaside option was the only choice. Few preferred a roadside alternative and those who did, preferred this because it could be built sooner.

Selecting a seaside option was based on consultation outcomes and feedback from stakeholders, user groups, iwi representatives, community groups and the general public. It is also based on an assessment of the wider benefits this option can provide, including safety, look and feel and resilience for both the highway and the rail corridor between Wellington and the Hutt Valley.

Key elements included in a seaside option are:

- a **consistent 3m wide shared path** with 1m shoulders on the seaward side of the rail tracks for pedestrians and cyclists between Petone and Ngauranga
- the whole platform for the project is likely to be 5m, which will be confirmed by key stakeholders, including clearance from the rail line and room to maintain the new shared path and KiwiRail rail tracks
- **Heading east from Petone** the shared path will link with the Petone Esplanade and join the existing cycling and walking network through to Seaview
- **Heading north from Petone** pedestrians and cyclists will travel along the new path to connect with Petone station via an overbridge. We are considering options for the Petone to Melling section of the project as part of the Government's Urban Cycleway Programme.

From Ngauranga towards the Wellington CBD the new path will connect with the existing path, although there are proposals to upgrade this section also through to Wellington railway station.

Getting clarity on the Petone to Ngauranga section of the Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking, Cycling and Resilience project is a positive step, representing a \$35m investment in improving walking and cycling between Wellington and the Hutt Valley.



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When combined with Urban Cycleway Programme funding, the whole project between the two cities, which includes further improvements between Petone and Melling and Ngauranga to Wellington CBD, represents a \$54m investment – the greatest single investment in walking and cycling in the region not tied to major roading improvements. Overall, walking and cycling will be receiving a massive boost in the region over the coming years when this project, Urban Cycleway projects across the Wellington region and other transport improvements being carried out by the Transport Agency are completed.

Further announcements about Petone to Melling and Ngauranga to Wellington CBD sections of the full Walking, Cycling and Resilience project will be made this summer, either before Christmas, or in the New Year. These sections are being funded as part of the Government's Urban Cycleways Programme. More information about this funding, and other walking and cycling investment in the region can be found at www.nzta.govt.nz/ucp.

→ How your feedback influenced the decision

Public submissions demonstrated there was significant support for better walking and cycling facilities, which was important in making our decision because of the costs involved. When we asked if you preferred a seaside or roadside option, you were clear that it should be built on the seaward side of the rail corridor.

Your comments, responses to two surveys and feedback at workshops indicated your preference was because a seaside option had the potential to provide wider benefits to the region for tourism, recreation and health. You also said it had the ability to future-proof for potential improvements to the railway line, if that's desired.

Feedback highlighted this option's potential to mitigate the impact of major events, like an earthquake or storm on the transport network. It would also be a consistent width and people viewed it as safer and more pleasant.

People told us that by creating this new path more would choose to walk or cycle. As a key objective, this helped, along with the project's wider benefits, cement our preference for a seaside option.

Feedback also indicated your interest in the Petone to Ngauranga section working with broader walking and cycling improvements as you wanted to see a more comprehensive package to encourage more people to walk or bike to work or for recreation. This is a key component of what we are considering. Urban Cycleway Programme funding is considering improvements for the northern and southern ends of the full Wellington to Hutt Valley Walking, Cycling and Resilience project, meaning the entire route will be well-integrated with both existing and future paths.

→ Thanks for your help

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who gave their time and provided their thoughts on our proposals. This was particularly helpful in the decision making process as it was clear that people were unified in their preference for a seaside option being selected.

The next steps for the project will be to prepare the necessary consent applications and seek approval to construct a seaside option. Community and stakeholder support will be critical in this part of the process for the project to become a reality. When the call goes out for submissions or feedback as part of the consent process, we need you to respond.

Consent applications are expected to be lodged next year and, if consent is granted, construction would begin in 2019. More information on the consent process and how you can stay involved will be provided next year, but please talk to us if you have any queries.

We appreciate that people are eager to see walking and cycling improvements made as soon as possible. Opportunities to advance construction will be considered, particularly for the northern and southern sections while we apply for consent for the Petone to Ngauranga section. We will also look at opportunities to align the Petone to Ngauranga section with potential construction of the Petone to Grenada Link Road. This could limit construction disruption to cyclists, pedestrians and road users and facilitate reclamation of the foreshore for the new shared path.

For more information about the Walking, Cycling and Resilience Project and to view maps and diagrams, please visit the project website at www.nzta.govt.nz/w2hmlink



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