

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL CYCLING POLICY

PURPOSE OF THE CYCLING POLICY

The Cycling Policy (the policy) forms part of the overall transport planning for Wellington set out in the Transport Strategy 2006. It provides more detail on cycling in Wellington and the context set by other policies and strategies. It also creates a framework for the development of infrastructure and measures to improve the safety and convenience of cycling and cycling facilities throughout our city.

In order to create an effective framework to provide a basis for action, the policy sets out objectives and policies on how implementation should be approached. These include emphasising the importance of quality and continuity of cycle routes, including provision of consistent signage and recognising cycling as a means of commuting and as a form of recreation.

The policy also details proposals both in general terms for ongoing support (e.g. promoting the health and recreational benefits of cycling) and as location-specific improvements to infrastructure. The focus of the latter is to create a safer and more convenient network in areas where existing provision is disjointed or does not allow access to key destinations. Providing better facilities for cyclists is also a key objective of the policy.

BACKGROUND

Whether as a means of commuting, access to activities like any other transport mode or as recreation, cycling is non-polluting, quiet, and has minimal effect on the built and natural environment. It is also a healthy form of personal exercise. Moreover, cycles can be relatively cheap and simple to maintain and can therefore offer mobility to most sections of the population, including those without access to a car, thereby contributing towards greater social inclusion. Overall, it can offer a widely accessible, convenient and environmentally-friendly means of making local journeys, especially in urban areas like Wellington.

There are a number of different types of bike user which must be considered when considering a Cycling Policy that caters for all, bearing in mind that people are often in more than one category. These categories are:

- Primary school children - skills aren't fully developed, little knowledge of road rules, generally will ride with an adult off-road or on quiet streets
- Secondary school children - skills and confidence more developed. Generally will ride on the road
- Recreational cyclists - vary greatly in age, skill and experience. Generally prefer off-road paths and quiet local streets. Will almost always require on-road connections to off-road paths and places to stop and rest on route
- Commuter cyclists - generally more experienced and prefer the direct road network. Generally are able to handle busy traffic conditions but do require space and smooth even surfaces and require appropriate end-of-trip facilities
- Utility cyclists - very few in Wellington but will ride for various purposes including shopping, visiting, and travelling to community facilities. Generally need less stress routes and require appropriate end-of-trip facilities

- Sporting cyclists - travel long distances for training, often in groups and ride two abreast or in a peloton. Routes often include challenging terrain in rural/outer urban areas. Primary requirements are smooth, even surfaces and adequate space
- BMX and mountain bikers - BMX riders often use skate parks and require connections to these facilities. Mountain bikers are generally off-road riders and use formal and informal tracks.

This policy recognises there are many different types of cyclists with many different needs. It endorses an interlinked network of on-road lanes and off-road paths in conjunction with other Council policies, such as the Open Space Access Plan, and emphasises that quality, well-located facilities is key to making cycling safer, more convenient and fun in Wellington.

Nationally, cycling has been identified as an important mode in the New Zealand Transport Strategy it is further supported by the *National Walking and Cycling Strategy: Getting there – on foot; by cycle and more recently by the Governments Policy Statement on Transport*. Regionally the Regional Land Transport Strategy and the subsequent Draft Regional Cycling Plan (2008) advocate that Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency develop strategies and review programmes to improve the pedestrian environment. Council is committed to working in partnership with these organisations, and this policy will serve as a framework for initiatives to collaboratively improve the cycling environment.

As set out in the Council's Transport Strategy 2006, the emphasis for travel demand management in the City is to encourage walking and public transport as the foremost modes of transport but recognises some people prefer to cycle. The policy aims to support these people through the promotion of a safe and convenient network but also aims to ensure conflicts between different groups is managed appropriately.

The objectives set out in this policy are closely linked with those of the Walking Policy. The policy reflects this link while also recognising that promotion of cycling can sometimes cause conflicts with pedestrians. In particular, shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists are not always appropriate.

Other areas where Council is focusing its education promotion include the roll-out of new bus priority measures. Council is undertaking a significant programme of bus priority measures over the next 10 years. This includes the progressive rollout of bus priority through the Golden Mile, arterial routes and suburban centres (as proposed in the Draft Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan) and presents an opportunity to create an extensive network of shared bus/cycle lanes. This policy capitalises on the existing and proposed bus infrastructure and will ensure cyclists will have access to and be encouraged to use as many bus routes as possible and the design of new bus routes will cater for the needs of cyclists.

Over the last 20 years we have seen a steady increase in the numbers of cyclists choosing to cycle to work. This goes against the regional trend and is a result of the intensification of Wellington's inner city and surrounding suburbs along with improvements to cycle technology and an awareness of health and climate issues. More people now live closer to their work and see cycling as a viable transport alternative.

Cycling as a commuting choice is far cheaper than vehicle travel given that there are no fuel costs, no parking costs, no registration fees and less maintenance costs.

With rising fuel costs, it is important alternatives to vehicle travel like cycling are made safer, more convenient and enjoyable.

Unfortunately, the risk involved with cycling is high. Cyclists are many more times likely to be involved in a road crash than a vehicle occupant, pedestrian or bus passenger. Cyclists account for 2.6% of commuter trips but account for 14% of all road casualties. As a result, one of the objectives of this policy concentrates on reducing cycling casualties. Making cycling safer and more convenient is expected to increase its popularity. If successful, future plans will then be able to set targets for increasing cycling numbers. The NZ Transport Strategy objective is for active mode journeys to achieve 30% of all trips by 2040. Target levels will be driven to a considerable extent by the level of investment allowed for.

HOW DO WE MEASURE TARGETS?

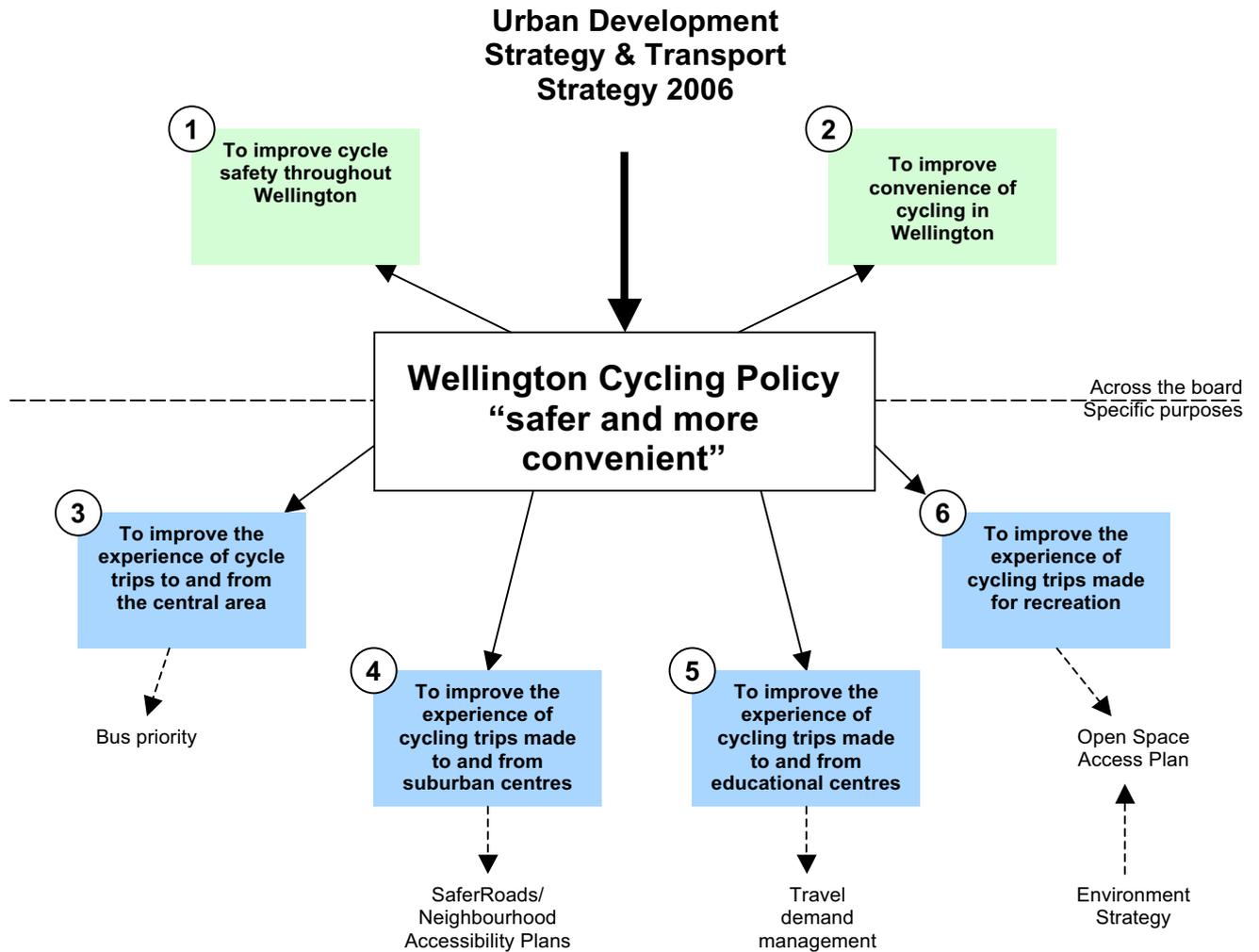
It is important that information about the cycling environment and cycle movements is gathered regularly to inform planning decisions. Analysing changes and trends in provision and perception aid the policy implementation decisions.

Types of data collected and used by the Council include:

- The nationwide census - carried out every five years by Statistics New Zealand, it gives specific geographical information about the means of travel to work - including cycling
- Cycle counts – the Council periodically surveys the number of cyclists in various areas related to specific projects
- Crash database - this is held by the Land Transport New Zealand and contains annual reports of all road crashes
- Feedback from the public - there is ongoing feedback gathered from public enquiries and requests, particularly related to the provision of infrastructure
- Annual Resident Satisfaction Survey - this survey covers residents' perception of Council services and can be used to assess opinions on the quality of the cycling environment
- Annual Monitoring Transport Survey Report - a tailor-made survey to assess the quality of the transport and pedestrian environment

Data trends from the above sources assist with the evaluation of projects and inform where more work is required.

OVERALL APPROACH



STRATEGIC INTENT

To make cycling in Wellington safer and more convenient for those who choose to cycle