
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

THORNDON QUAY – PROPOSED CYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Committee with a range of options for consideration to improve the safety of cyclists travelling between Kaiwharawhara and the Central Business District (CBD).

2. Executive Summary

In October 2008 officers reported to Committee on the proposed Cycling Policy, the report included a recommendation to investigate the conversion of Thorndon Quay to a peak hour, peak direction cycle lane, with consultation in early 2009 and report back before June 2009.

The Committee amended this recommendation and sought a further report outlining the options for Thorndon Quay.

This report presents options and recommends consultation be carried out on the preferred option of a morning peak clearway using the southbound lanes of Thorndon Quay.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree that the long term option for cycling between Kaiwharawhara and the Central Business District is via a new shared footpath along Aotea and Waterloo Quays as part of the Great Harbour Way.*
- 3. Agree that the long term option for Thorndon Quay is for dedicated bus/cycle lanes.*
- 4. Agree that in the interim officers proceed with consultation on a traffic resolution for a 7-9am weekday clearway on the southbound lanes of Thorndon Quay and the associated parking changes. This is to include a new pedestrian crossing on Thorndon Quay, approximately midway between Tinakori Road and Davis Street.*

4. Background

Councils' 1994 Transport Strategy identified a key goal for the city was to provide a cycle route between the CBD and Petone. In 1995 the first stage of this was put in place by designating the Hutt Road footpath between Thorndon and Ngauranga as a shared cycle facility.

In 2000 Council funded an upgrade of the then impassable and disused cycle track between Horokiwi and Ngauranga. This provided a cycle way at minimal cost but is still substandard in width and poses difficulties for northbound cyclists.

In 2001 Council agreed to consult on proposed alterations to Thorndon Quay to facilitate a dedicated cycling facility. This proposal drew many submissions from Thorndon Quay businesses concerned about the removal of 40 carparks along the 1.3km length of Thorndon Quay. As a result of the submissions Council did not proceed with the proposed changes.

In 2002 Thorndon Quay was resurfaced. The opportunity was used to alter the roadmarking layout. The traffic lanes were narrowed and an edgeline installed. This provided an enhanced buffer area between angle parked cars and the traffic lane for cyclists to use.

Cycle Aware Wellington (CAW) has continually advocated for improvements to cycle provision along Thorndon Quay. In 2005 they set as one of their strategic objectives to work with Council to reduce risk to cyclists along Thorndon Quay.

In April 2007 Council agreed in principle to a citywide programme of bus priority measures that included bus lanes on Thorndon Quay. When introduced these will also provide benefits to cyclists.

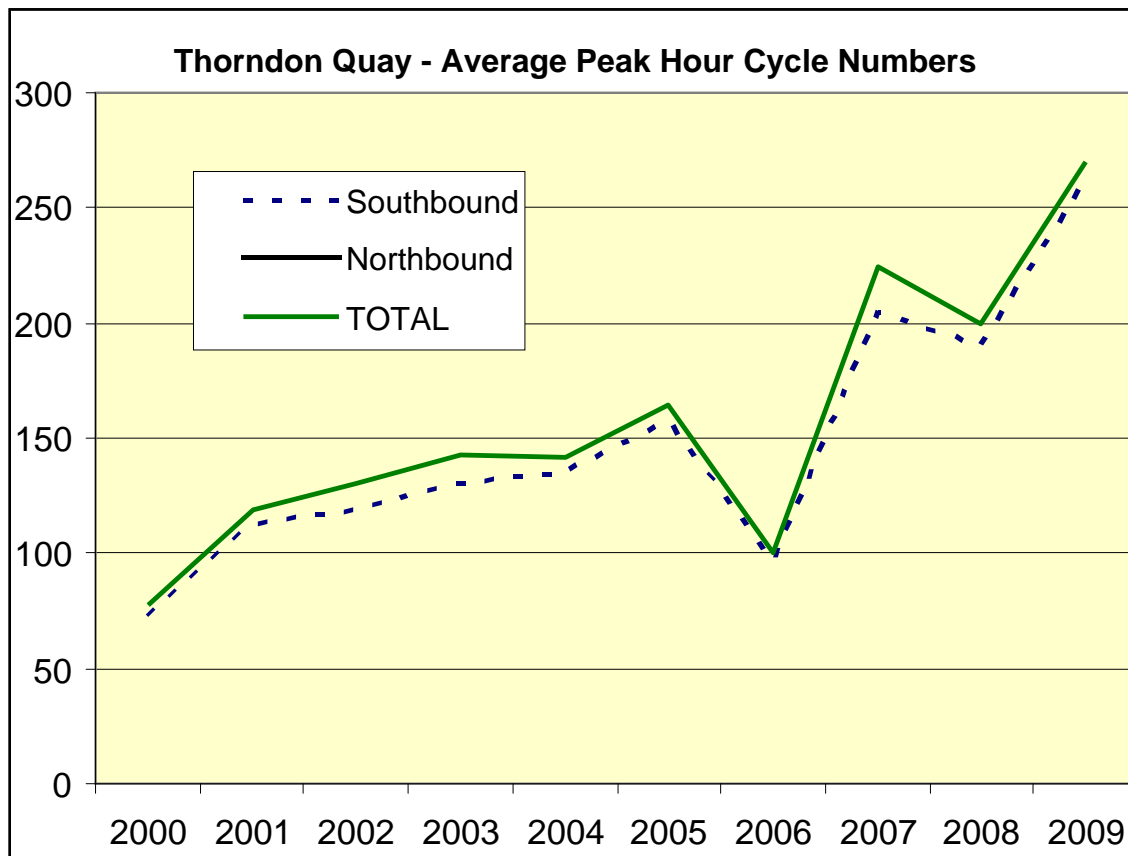
In November 2008 Council adopted a Cycling Policy that has a strategic intent to make cycling in Wellington safer and more convenient for those that choose to cycle. There are also a number of objectives applicable to Thorndon Quay:

1. To improve cycle safety throughout Wellington
2. To improve convenience of cycling in Wellington
3. To improve the experience of cycle trips to and from the central area

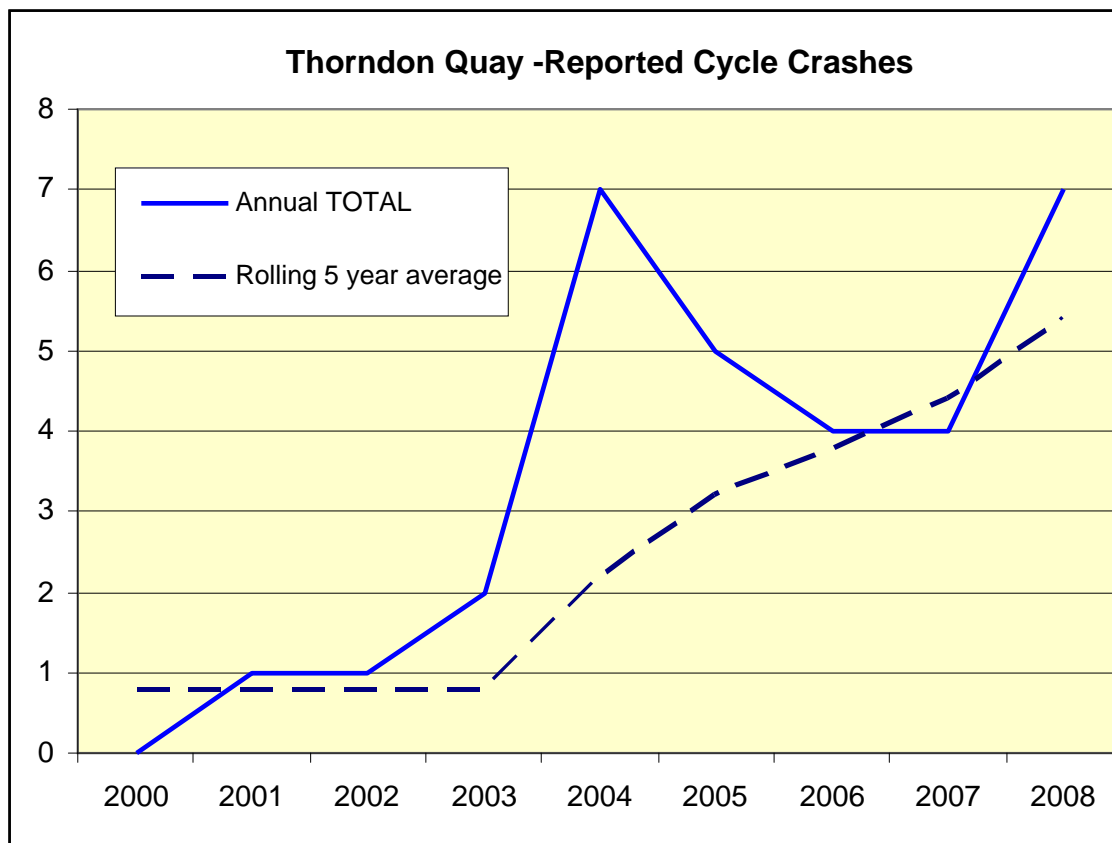
Under each of the relevant objectives there are a number of actions required to assist in achieving the objective. Council prioritised these actions with the following being high priority.

- Improving difficult and dangerous parts of the road network
- Providing clearways and bus lanes as a mechanism to establishing a citywide cycle network

Over the last ten years commuter cycle numbers on Thorndon Quay have almost quadrupled as can be seen in the graph below. This is consistent with other parts of Wellington City where we have seen a large uptake of commuter cycling.



Reported crashes involving cyclists travelling on Thorndon Quay have also increased. The graph below shows that they have risen from no reported crashes in 2000 to 7 in 2008. More important is the rolling five year average which takes out the statistical yearly aberrations and clearly shows an emerging trend of poor safety since cycle provision on Thorndon Quay was last considered.



A detailed look at cycle crashes on Thorndon Quay over the five year period 2004 to 2008 shows that over 1/3 of all reported crashes involve a cyclist while 2/3 of injury crashes involve cyclists.

The majority of cycle crashes occur in the southbound direction between 7 and 9am.

Reported Crashes Thorndon Quay 2004-2008

	All Crashes	Cyclists only			
		All Cycle Crashes	Southbound 7-9am	Northbound 4-6pm	Other times
Injury	35	26	17	3	6
Non-Injury	40	1	1	0	0
Total	75	27	18	3	6

5. Discussion

5.1 Options for consideration

There are a number of options for improving the cycle trip between Kaiwharawhara and the CBD.

- Status Quo – Cyclists continue to use the space behind the angle parked vehicles on Thorndon Quay
- Change Thorndon Quay parking - one side angle the other side parallel
- Clearway – Parking stays as is, but no stopping in peak hours

- Bus Lanes – Parking changes to parallel both sides with two traffic lanes plus two full time bus/cycle lanes
- Widen footpath – create a shared pedestrian/cycle facility on the Thorndon Quay footpath.
- Redirect all cyclists to Aotea and Waterloo Quays
- Create an off road facility through the rail yards.

Each of these options are explored below.

5.2 Status Quo

It is possible to leave the parking arrangements as they are, improve signage, and perhaps use coloured surfacing. However with Thorndon Quay being the busiest cycle commuter route into and out of the CBD and one of the worst performing in terms of reported crashes, we will continue to receive criticism and requests from users and transport agencies for better cycle facilities.

5.3 Change Thorndon Quay Parking

If parking was altered, changing one side from angle parking to parallel parking it would free up 2.5m of road space. That space could be dedicated to cyclists, however this will require a reduction in the number of parking spaces.

This option was proposed in 2001. It provides the best overall option for full time cycle lanes while maximising parking numbers, however there will still be a net loss of 40 parking spaces. At the time it was previously considered the Committee felt that the loss of parking spaces outweighed the benefits to cyclists. Since then we have seen a two fold increase in cycle numbers and an eight fold increase in reported crashes.

The cost of implementing this option is estimated at \$10-\$20,000. This cost includes the removal of a significant amount of road marking and a new layout installed.

While this option gives cyclists a useful dedicated facility, we can expect the concerns of those businesses that submitted in 2001 to still be raised. It is therefore not recommended to go back to the same community with the same proposal that was considered unacceptable eight years ago.

5.4 Clearway

A clearway in peak times would provide an enhanced facility for a significant number of cyclists and addresses the majority of reported crashes. The clearways could also provide sufficient space for peak hour bus lanes. Outside peak hours parking would revert to the current arrangement and cyclists using Thorndon Quay would have the use of the current arrangements.

Cycle crashes on the south bound lanes between 7-9 am account for 18 of the 27 reported crashes.

A morning clearway from 7-9am on weekdays for city bound traffic will affect 218 parking spaces of which 127 are 90min maximum parks, 82 are 10 hour long stay commuter parks, eight 15min loading zones and one motorcycle space. Surveys undertaken of the occupancy of these spaces shows that between 7-9 am there is little use with a maximum of 54 spaces being occupied at 8.50am and 35 of these being the 10 hour commuter spaces.

A clearway would require the few drivers that are using these spaces to visit premises to park on the southern side and cross the road on foot. An additional pedestrian crossing is proposed to assist in safely crossing the road.

A clearway in the evening peak for northbound motorists will affect 203 spaces with 186 spaces being 90min maximum parks. Detailed surveys have not been undertaken, however there is heavy demand for parking between 4-6pm.

Cycle crashes on the north bound lanes between 4-6pm account for 3 of the 27 reported crashes. On this basis it is considered that a dedicated cycle facility is not warranted at this time given the likely disbenefits to businesses.

Together with the morning peak clearway in the south bound lanes it is proposed to install a new pedestrian crossing near the Bordeaux Bakery. This is to assist an increasing number of pedestrians wanting to cross the road at this point and to complement the clearway which will require more pedestrian movement across the road.

The cost for this option is estimated at \$80,000 as it includes the construction of a new pedestrian crossing, new signage and green cycle lane markings. Funding is available this financial year from CX112 for construction.

5.5 Full Time Bus Lanes

In April 2007, Committee approved in principle a package of measures to improve bus priority throughout the city. The package focused on implementing improvements within or close to the central city and then radiating out. The proposal for Thorndon Quay has a full time bus lane running between a full time traffic lane and a permanent parallel parking bay on each side of the road.

The proposed layout will provide sufficient width for cyclists to share the bus lanes and be able to ride clear of general traffic. This is a good solution for cyclists as it provides for full time use and will likely lead to a significant reduction in crashes.

The introduction of full time bus lanes will require the existing two pedestrian crossings be signalised and it is likely that at least one new crossing will be needed mid way between Davis Street and Tinakori Road.

Parking will be significantly reduced with a loss of around 100 of the 421 spaces. The cost to implement this option is estimated at \$450,000 and includes signalised pedestrian crossings and replacement of all the roadmarkings.

Funding is budgeted for in 2014/15 within the bus priority project for this work. There is not sufficient justification for advancing the implementation of bus lanes on Thorndon Quay at this time, nor is it felt that the clearway option proposed in 5.4 will hinder the introduction of full time bus lanes at a later date.

5.6 Widen Footpath

It has been suggested by some Councillors that we should continue the Hutt Road shared footpath along Thorndon Quay towards the railway station. To enable this, the footpath will need to be widened from the existing 3.0m to 5.0m. The additional 2m in width would need to come from the carriageway, which could be achieved using the existing buffer area behind the angle parked vehicles.

While there would be no loss in parking it is expected that this proposal would cost \$600,000 including a new footpath and relocating all street lighting columns to the new kerb line so they are not in the middle of the new footpath.

While there may be some safety benefits to some cyclists there will also be disbenefits to pedestrians using the footpath or stepping out of doorways. The identified safety problem of vehicles turning into and out of driveways would still exist as drivers would still find it hard to see cyclists. This problem is prevalent on the adjacent Hutt Road shared facility.

Many cyclists that travel along Thorndon Quay travel at speed. It would not be appropriate for them to use a shared footpath and they would most likely choose to stay on the carriageway. By narrowing the carriageway to accommodate the widened footpath will make the existing situation considerably worse.

It is not recommended this option is pursued any further.

5.7 Aotea / Waterloo Quays

The current LTCCP has a project CX493, Port and Ferry Access that has allocated funding to improve access along both Aotea and Waterloo Quays. It is proposed that a high quality shared cycle path be included as part of this project.

This would join the existing Hutt Road shared footpath with the waterfront promenade. The concept plans for the Great Harbour Way indicate that this is the preferred route as ultimately it would provide a continuous off road facility from the Hutt Valley to the Miramar cutting.

While the Aotea/Waterloo Quay option provides a high quality facility, it is thought that a large number of commuters would continue to use Thorndon Quay as it provides more direct access to Featherston Street and The Terrace. It is therefore recommended that even with the construction of an alternative route there will be a need to improve Thorndon Quay.

5.8 Rail Yards

There has been no formal approach made to Kiwirail/Ontrack to establish an off road cycle route through the rail yards. The cycle community have expressed concerns about personal security in being out of sight of the general public. There would also be similar cost to that of widening the existing footpath of \$450,000, plus the cost of fencing between the new path and the operational rail yard.

There is also currently no suitable land to accommodate a cycle path as there is an active rail line immediately behind the Thorndon Quay properties that would need to be relocated.

It is not recommended to pursue this option further.

6. Conclusion

The number of cyclists and reported crashes involving cyclists supports the need to improve cycle facilities along the length of Thorndon Quay.

Long term it is proposed to move towards a shared off road cycle route from the Hutt Road along Aotea and Waterloo Quays to the Lambton Harbour waterfront promenade and to provide cycle facilities on Thorndon Quay as part of full time bus lanes.

In the interim it is proposed to install a clearway on the southbound traffic lanes of Thorndon Quay between Tinakori Road and Mulgrave Street on weekdays between 7 and 9am. With the agreement of Committee this will be progressed by way of a traffic resolution.

Associated with the clearway will be a new pedestrian crossing near the Bordeaux Bakery.

The traffic resolution can be advertised in February 2010 and the outcome reported to committee for consideration in April before implementation of the project. It is likely there will be objections to the proposal and these will require SPC to hear them prior to making a formal decision on whether or not to proceed.

Contact Officer: *Paul Barker, Safe and Sustainable Transport Manager*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The proposals support the Council's Transport Strategy outcomes that Wellington will be pedestrian and cycle friendly, more sustainable and healthier.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The project is contained in the Council Plan # CX112. the recommended clearway and associated pedestrian crossing has been budgeted for in this years programme

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

N/A

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

All affected parties will have an opportunity to submit on the Traffic Resolution as is required under the Wellington City Council Bylaw. We propose a letter box drop to all businesses on Thorndon Quay and to advertise in the Dominion Post to engage with the wider community.

b) Consultation with Maori

Mana whenua will not be consulted separately.

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report focuses on a key outcome identified in the city's Cycling Policy. It is also consistent with other Council policy including the Walking Policy, Open Spaces Access Plan, SaferRoads/Neighbourhood Accessibility Plans, the Bus Priority Programme, the Footpath Management Plan, and the Climate Change Action Plan.