



Report 08.861
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Committee Transport & Access Committee
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Submission on “Restoring Wellington's Golden Mile”

1. Purpose

To confirm support and agree matters for a submission to Wellington City Council on the bus priority and related measures set out in their “Restoring Wellington’s Golden Mile” consultation brochure.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

On 10 September 2008 Wellington City Council (WCC) gave a presentation to the Committee on proposed changes to the Golden Mile. These changes included a new strategic approach looking the whole of the Golden Mile and the potential reopening of Manners Mall for public transport.

On 9 October 2008 WCC agreed to a high level and holistic approach to improving bus priority along the Golden Mile and agreed to consult on the potential reintroduction of public transport via Manners Mall.

Councillor Wilde led a delegation to WCC in support of the proposed bus priority and related measures along the Golden Mile and to demonstrate Greater Wellington’s dedication and commitment to improving public transport in Wellington City.

On 22 October 2008 it was reported to the Committee that preliminary planning for the Wellington bus review has included discussions with WCC regarding their proposals for the Golden Mile.

On 6 November 2008 WCC released the “Restoring Wellington’s Golden Mile” consultation brochure seeking feedback from the public on proposed changes to the Golden Mile (submissions close 5 December 2008).

4. Comment

A brief Power Point presentation on the consultation material will be given at the Committee meeting.

4.1 Main elements of Wellington City Council proposal

The aim of the WCC proposal, as stated in the consultation brochure, is “to get the best out of our bus system, and also to strengthen and improve the part of the Golden Mile between Taranaki Street and Willis/Mercer streets”.

The main elements of proposal are:

1. Reinstate the original Golden Mile by rerouting buses from Dixon Street and Wakefield Street to run through a bus only Manners Mall
2. Relocation of bus stops on Dixon Street, Manners Street and Cuba Street to what is now Manners Mall (near intersection with Cuba Street)¹
3. Signalising pedestrian crossings on Courtenay Place
4. Reducing speed limit to 30km/h along length of Golden Mile

The proposal also includes changes to Dixon Street and Cuba Street to improve pedestrian amenity and increase the number of on-street parking spaces. Further information is available in Wellington City Council’s “Restoring the Golden Mile” consultation brochure.

4.2 Proposed matters to include in Greater Wellington’s submission

Greater Wellington should continue to strongly support bus priority and related measures along the Golden Mile in line with the Regional Passenger Transport Plan policies and to help achieve the regional target of 50 million passenger trips by 2016.

It is noted that officers (and Councillor Wilde at the deputation to Wellington City Council in October 2008) have already indicated the Council’s support for the proposed bus priority measures along the Golden Mile and outlined some of this Council’s current commitments to improved public transport in Wellington City (e.g. trolley buses, real time information, Wellington bus review).

The WCC consultation brochure poses a number of questions. The following responses are proposed to these questions and will be incorporated in a submission to WCC.

1. *What do you think about the idea of opening Manners Mall to buses?*

¹ Also, potential relocation of northbound bus stop of Willis Street to align it with Chews Lane.

Greater Wellington should support the reopening of Manners Mall to buses as this will help ensure a large number of benefits including the ability for people to understand how to access bus services (as both directions will be combined) and will contribute towards more reliable and faster journey times through Golden Mile.

In conjunction with the other proposed bus priority and related measures it is expected that reopening Manners Mall to buses will also help improve efficiency and vehicle utilisation (i.e. more scheduled services from the same number of buses). These measures are also necessary to ensure a reliable real time information system along the Golden Mile as such a system relies on predictable journey times.

The reopening of Manners Mall to buses will also help ensure the future development of a high quality, high frequency public transport corridor through Wellington City, consistent with the Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Plan.

The need for a holistic view and package of solutions should be reiterated with the submission emphasising the importance of WCC continuing this approach. It should also encourage WCC to continue working in partnership with Greater Wellington, in particular with regard to future network planning including bus stop locations and other network design elements and bus operations through the Golden Mile. This work must also tie into the Wellington Bus Review.

2. *What do you think about the possible long-term changes to Dixon, lower Cuba, Victoria, Wakefield and Mercer Streets?*

Greater Wellington should support the changes in these areas but note these improvements focus on public amenity and will have no direct impact on public transport services. Nevertheless, strong public spaces will encourage people to use these areas and may have indirect benefits to public transport.

The proposed parking spaces should be used for short term visitor parking and should be designed to ensure minimum effects on public transport services.

3. *Tell us your views on the proposal to reduce the speed limit from 50kmh to 30kmh in Manners Street and Courtenay Place including the mall area.*

Greater Wellington should strongly support the proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30km/h along the entire Golden Mile. This will help make the area safer for pedestrians. It is noted that currently a large proportion of pedestrian crashes in the region occur in Wellington CBD.

4. *What do you think of the proposal to put traffic lights at the three unsignalised pedestrian crossings in Courtenay Place?*

Greater Wellington should support the signalling and coordination within SCATS (WCC's traffic light management system) of all intersections and

crossings along the Golden Mile bus routes to ensure fast reliable public transport services.

The potential impact on pedestrians from long waiting times at lights should be managed as long waiting times often results in pedestrians crossing against signals and creating safety issues in areas where both pedestrian and traffic volumes are high. Therefore, WCC should be encouraged to provide priority to public transport in the peak periods when travel time and reliability are most affected but at other times pedestrians should be given priority to help facilitate the free movement of people.

In summary, Greater Wellington should support WCC's comprehensive and integrated approach to bus priority along the Golden Mile and encourage continued partnership in delivering improved public transport services to the public. This will help ensure consideration of all relevant factors, help achieve buy in from stakeholders and the public and provide greater certainty for both public transport users and Wellington residents

5. Communication

No communications are required.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Notes** the content of the report.
3. **Supports** the proposed Golden Mile bus priority measures and related matters set out in Wellington City Council's "Restoring Wellington's Golden Mile" consultation brochure.
4. **Requests** that officers make a submission in line with this report to Wellington City Council strongly supporting the proposed Golden Mile bus priority measures and related matters.

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