

## Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Waitemata and Counties Manukau

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### Submission on walking and cycling path connecting Northcote Point with Esmonde Road in Takapuna

1. Thank you for the opportunity for the Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) to provide a submission to the walking and cycling path connecting Northcote Point with Esmonde Road in Takapuna project.
2. The following submission represents the views of ARPHS and does not necessarily reflect the views of the three District Health Boards it serves. Please refer to **Appendix 1** for more information on ARPHS.
3. The primary contact point for this submission is:

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane McEntee".

Jane McEntee  
**General Manager**  
Auckland Regional Public Health Service

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Hale".

Dr Michael Hale  
**Medical Officer of Health**  
Auckland Regional Public Health Service

## **Executive Summary**

4. Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) strongly supports the proposed 3km separated walking and cycling path to connect Esmonde Road in Takapuna with Northcote Point at the northern base of the harbour bridge.
5. Our support is primarily based on significant public health benefits arising from the creation of an integrated network of safe walking and cycling paths. We agree that safe walking and cycling paths are essential to increase the use of active transport modes and to increase choice and accessibility for people not using cars.
6. We endorse the use of off road cycle ways or cycle paths separated from vehicle traffic to enhance safety, confidence and use.
7. This path will become an important component in the further development of the Auckland Cycle Network as the SkyPath over the harbour bridge is also completed and further links through to key destinations and routes on the North Shore are completed.

## **Introduction**

8. ARPHS is Auckland's regulatory public health agency serving Auckland's diverse populations through health protection, prevention and promotion.
9. ARPHS appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed 3km separated walking and cycling path to connect Esmonde Road in Takapuna with Northcote Point.

## **Public health outcomes**

10. ARPHS's interest in the cycle improvements project is because of the connections between active transport (such as walking and cycling) and improved public health outcomes. The contribution of active transport to public health is evident in World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines that emphasise the importance of prioritising active modes of transportation.<sup>1</sup>
11. The World Health Organisation has further determined that providing safe and accessible active transport opportunities, like what is proposed in this walking and cycling path, offers a significant return on investment in terms of reduced

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<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization. 'The Solid Facts.' Accessed from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/98438/e81384.pdf)

health costs arising from obesity and other weight or fitness related conditions.<sup>2</sup>

12. Access to social facilities and opportunities, including work, is one of the key determinants of physical and mental health. This proposed path, when effectively joined with the SkyPath and other local connections, will make it feasible for people from a range of suburbs on the North Shore to access the opportunities available in the city centre and surrounds at very little cost. It will also provide for very low cost access for people on the southern side of the Waitemata Harbour to the opportunities on the North Shore, including AUT.

### **Auckland Cycle Network**

13. ARPHS supports these proposed improvements as an integral component of a joined up cycle network to increase safe, accessible and healthy transport choices throughout Auckland.
14. The Auckland cycle network is a key component within an integrated network of active transport modes and public transport. A well connected and multimodal transport network provides real transport choices for Aucklanders. It assists in improving public health outcomes for Auckland people through promoting increased physical activity, increased social connectivity, and reducing air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions. It contributes to better traffic flow for those trips that require motor vehicles.
15. ARPHS's support for active modes of transport within the Auckland region can be summarised as follows:
  - Physical activity such as walking and cycling can protect against obesity and cardiovascular disease.<sup>3</sup> Evidence suggests that active transportation and changes in urban design can lead to changes in how people commute and are an effective way of combating obesity in developed countries.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe: The case for investing in public health 2014 p4

<sup>3</sup> Joyner, Michael J. and Daniel J. Green, Exercise Protects the Cardiovascular System: Effects Beyond Traditional Risk Factors, *Physiol* (2009) pp 5551–5558.

<sup>4</sup> Built environment, physical activity, and obesity: What have we learned from reviewing the literature? Authors: Ding Dinga, Klaus Gebelc. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1353829211001614>

- Increasing active transport options contributes to Auckland Plan targets which place strong emphasis on increasing levels of physical activity.
  - Cycling and walking have the potential to reduce motorised transport congestion, lower energy use and environmental impact, improve access to community facilities, improve health and fitness, and are affordable forms of transport that promote social inclusion.
16. To remove the danger associated with vehicles passing cyclists on a carriageway with a narrow shoulder, we advocate for a comprehensive linked network of continuous cycle lanes that are off road and separated from vehicle transportation paths in order to protect cyclists.
17. Design of shared cycle/pedestrian paths should be sufficiently wide and ensure clear visual and physical cues to demarcate and differentiate pedestrian and cyclist interactions.

**Support for the proposed walking and cycling path to connect Esmonde Road in Takapuna with Northcote Point.**

18. We support the proposed walking and cycling path. We especially value any routes that will support high concentrations of pedestrians and cyclists, such as routes associated with commuters, schools and public amenity areas.
19. We consider the following outcomes should be primary considerations:
- Walking and cycling paths should link to existing (and any proposed) bus routes and ferry terminals.
  - At the northern end of the path, we recommend the creation of protected crossings to allow walkers and cyclists to safely cross the path of the traffic coming off the motorway onto Esmonde Road and through traffic on Akoranga Drive.
  - In particular, the path to the Akoranga bus station on the Northern busway connection needs to include protected crossings at each area where walkers and cyclists need to cross traffic.
  - Access into AUT campus for walkers and cyclists should be provided directly from the proposed SeaPath.
  - Any required crossings at Onewa Road and Stafford Road also need to be provided in a safe manner, ideally with grade separation, to

compensate for the increased safety risk at road crossings where vehicles are leaving the motorway.

- The adequacy of cycle parking facilities at key locations like ferry terminals, bus stations and AUT should also be reviewed in light of this greater connectivity.
  - A wide path (greater than or equal to 5m wide) to provide for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety.
20. Kaipatiki Local Board has developed a Kaipatiki Connections Network Plan to provide for a comprehensive network of paths and tracks within the area.<sup>5</sup> We note that SeaPath will provide valuable connection points and complement this Kaipatiki Connections Network.
21. Electric bikes are rapidly becoming more available and affordable.<sup>6</sup> Increasing use of electric bicycles creates considerable scope to increase the estimate of the average distance people are happy to ride. Providing it is made safe, people from many suburbs on the North Shore may be able to use this route cycle or walk to and from work, educational institutions and recreational areas in the city.
22. Providing off road cycle and walking paths creates safe options for active transportation users, by removing them from the road transportation system. It reduces the likelihood of accidents. For cyclists, off road paths reduce the potential to be hit by a car door opening when passing.
23. This project is an important component within the wider Auckland Cycle Network. Effective cycling infrastructure needs a coordinated, connected network, enabling safe riding throughout the trip.

## CONCLUSION

24. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the proposed walking and cycling path to connect Northcote Point with Esmonde Road in Takapuna.
25. In addition to this written submission, we would be happy to meet and discuss any other transport initiatives that NZTA are investigating where it considers

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<sup>5</sup> [www.johngillon.co.nz/pdf/KLB\\_Connections\\_Network.pdf](http://www.johngillon.co.nz/pdf/KLB_Connections_Network.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> See for example <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/festival-of-business/11440527/Charging-ahead-the-electric-bike-revolution-has-arrived-in-Britain.html>

ARPHS may have a particular interest, or be able to provide some assistance.

## **Appendix 1 - Auckland Regional Public Health Service**

Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) provides public health services for the three district health boards (DHBs) in the Auckland region (Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata District Health Boards).

ARPHS has a statutory obligation under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities in the Auckland region. The Medical Officer of Health has an enforcement and regulatory role under the Health Act 1956 and other legislative designations to protect the health of the community.

ARPHS' primary role is to improve population health. It actively seeks to influence any initiatives or proposals that may affect population health in the Auckland region to maximise their positive impact and minimise possible negative effects on population health.

The Auckland region faces a number of public health challenges through changing demographics, increasingly diverse communities, increasing incidence of lifestyle-related health conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes, infrastructure requirements, the balancing of transport needs, and the reconciliation of urban design and urban intensification issues.