

APPENDIX: Articles and letters as background to submission

New circuit plans for roundabout

AARON LEAMAN Last updated 05:00 19/04/2014

One of the most poignant reminders of Hamilton's V8 street circuit will be erased following an upgrade to the city's Norton roundabout.

The Hamilton City Council will spend \$185,000 sprucing up the busy roundabout, including restoring the central island, which was paved over in 2008 to accommodate the street circuit.

Councillors agreed to fund the roundabout improvements from the council's safer speed area programme, which was put on hold in February.

City transport manager Phil Consedine said the roundabout would be planted and grassed.

The "splitter" traffic islands will also be upgraded to provide safer crossing for pedestrians.

"The exact details of the work have not yet been determined but the intention is to have the work completed around September/October so the planted areas can be established in time for the summer season," Consedine said.

He said the council was not planning to make any significant changes to the way the roundabout operated.

"We will be upgrading the pedestrian facilities for each of the roads feeding into the roundabout which will require changes to the splitter islands but . . . exact details have not yet been determined."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2014

LETTER OF THE WEEK
Pens generously supplied by
• DirectGroup •
Stitch it Embroidery

Intersection dangerous

I am writing in support of Shane Carmichael (*Waikato Times* April 12) who is bringing the plight of road crossings (particularly near schools) to the attention of Hamilton City Council, the authority in charge of our city roads.

In my case I wish to raise concerns at the long standing issue of Te Aroha St.

I live in Claudelands and currently two (soon to be three) of my children walk to Hamilton East School as part of a walking school bus. That journey involves crossing one of the busiest peak hour intersections in the city. If you stood at that intersection for just a few minutes to observe how children (and their parents) cross the street then you would be mortified at witnessing one of the most intense Russian roulette shows in town. This street is dangerous and is in urgent need of a properly installed crossing, even if it was located down the street a short distance from the intersection. It's time to act before someone gets hurt or killed. I implore other residents to join me in making a submission on the HCC Draft Annual Plan seeking action.

ADAM MUNRO
Hamilton

Positive response to pedestrian precinct (Dunedin)



An artist's impression of what a pedestrian zone in lower Stuart St and the Octagon might look like. Image by Nick Denton.

Two University of Otago students are rapt with the council's response to their idea to block off traffic to part of Dunedin's CBD.

Alexis Belton and Georgina Hampton (both 25) are calling for the lower half of the Octagon and lower Stuart St, to the Moray PI intersection, to become a pedestrian zone.

This area could become the "heart" of Dunedin's CBD and act as a "visual showpiece" for the city, they argued at last Friday's annual plan hearings.

Their call, backed by a 36-page proposal, for the council to trial the idea and consult local businesses before making a permanent decision, was warmly received by councillors, particularly David Benson-Pope.

"I am delighted to see this proposal. I would like to compliment you, as I am sure my colleagues would, on the amount of work you have put into [the proposal].

"I think strategically it is time for the city to pick up the pace in terms of the street works and urban design," Cr Benson-Pope told the pair.

Ms Hampton told the *Otago Daily Times* yesterday they were pleasantly surprised by the response from councillors, which gave them hope the council would pick up their idea.

Both were keen to emphasise it was not a new concept and other cities around New Zealand and the globe had pedestrian areas.

In response to questions from councillors on Friday, Mr Belton said the "shared space" in lower Stuart St would include a one-way exit for cars leaving Bath St.

They had explored the option of blocking off some of George St, but this would be more difficult as it involved disrupting bus routes, he said.

As part of researching their proposal, they consulted local businesses and council transport planners.

Rebecca Priestley: Hit the brakes

There's good evidence that car use may have peaked and other forms of transport will take its place.

By [Rebecca Priestley](#) In [Science](#)

3rd April, 2014

One of this country's so-called Roads of National Significance passes close by my house, where the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) proposes to widen a two-lane stretch of State Highway One to six lanes as part of a plan to "improve Wellington's transport network".

As someone who commutes daily from an eastern suburb to a western suburb, I'm one of the people they're building the road for, but I don't need or want it. I usually catch a bus to work and sometimes walk. When I do drive the family car, the roads can be busy, but not so much that it bothers me.

The smartphone, along with free Wi-Fi on public transport, is a game changer. Photo/Thinkstock

The NZTA's highway-building programme assumes that car use will increase, but there's growing evidence that we have already passed "peak car". In line with an international trend, our per capita car ownership and annual travel distance have declined since a peak in 2005.

Some pundits pin this decline on the economic downturn and increased fuel prices, but academics from the University of Otago's Energy Cultures research programme, who presented at an Energy Conference in Wellington last month, say it's also because of changing mobility practices.

International trends suggest that "transport will shift quite dramatically over the next 20-30 years," said Janet Stephenson, who leads the Energy Cultures team. Fossil-fuel price and availability, along with the global imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, are already driving moves towards more efficient vehicles, alternative fuels and transport alternatives. There are also "big changes in the way younger people are using and perceiving transport ... they get licences later if at all, are less likely to purchase cars, and if they do own a car they use it less."

Why? Blame the smartphone. People can be socially connected now without having to drive to each other's houses. They can communicate with friends or consume entertainment while using public transport in a way they can't while driving. Smart technology is also making it easier to have an integrated public transport system, where people can get from one part of the city to another, using three or four different types of transport that link up.

New technologies might also be changing notions of what constitutes a desirable object. "In the past people looked forward to owning a vehicle. Now, potentially, they want to own a nice phone or a nice tablet," said Debbie Hopkins, also one of the Energy Cultures team.

When I was a teenager, getting a driver's licence was a rite of passage, but Hopkins is seeing young people choosing to save money for an OE rather than spend it on a car. Overseas experience, particularly in Europe, where public transport is a social norm, is perhaps one of the reasons it is becoming more socially acceptable here. It's not just becoming more normal to use public transport, but also increasingly common to ride a bicycle in business clothes or join a meeting via Skype.

Despite all this, over the next decade the Government plans to spend some \$14 billion on new state highways, compared with only \$500 million on new infrastructure for public transport, walking and cycling. Generation Zero is leading a campaign to split transport funding 50-50 between new roads and what they call "smart transport options".

Many public transport systems in Europe are now offering Wi-Fi as a way to attract users. With that kind of budget, rolling out free Wi-Fi to improved public transport could be part of a more creative and cost-effective transport solution than all those new highways.

Teens turn off driving (Sunday Star Times, March 2, 2014), by Kirsty Johnston

Growing numbers of teens are refusing to get behind the wheel, because they think cars cost too much, they're worried they might drive into someone, or they just can't be bothered sitting their licence.

A worldwide trend known as "driving ambivalence" has hit young people in New Zealand. Figures show the number of teens getting their licences has dropped drastically in the past five years.

Experts cite a variety of reasons for the decline, from the expense of maintaining a vehicle to the dangers of driving.

They also say smartphones and social media have rendered the need for teens to get behind the wheel less important.

"I think more people should put in a bit more consideration into driving . . . it's a tonne of metal going at 100km per hour, and it's intimidating," non-driver Jay Lichter, 17, told the Sunday Star-Times.

Both rural and urban New Zealand are affected by the trend, New Zealand Transport Agency statistics show. Of the cities, Wellington shows the biggest decline, with the number of licensed drivers aged 16 to 19 falling by as much as 75 per cent.

Dunedin and New Plymouth both had at least a 20 per cent drop, while smaller towns like Opotiki on the North Island's east coast and Gore in Southland showed a 10 per cent slump.

Figures for 15-year-olds were not included because the licence eligibility age shifted in 2011, meaning teens now have to wait until they are 16 to apply for a learner's permit.

The change appears to also have affected older teens, with some who may have got their licence at 17 now waiting until 18.

University of Otago PhD student Aimee Ward, who is studying the travel behaviour of young people, says research shows the lack of interest in driving is occurring all over the world.

Ward said it was possible that some people would never get a driver's licence, leading to a rise in public transport use.

Focus groups had overwhelmingly told her that cost was an issue - licence cost, vehicle prices and maintenance fees all came into the equation.

"But they are also ambivalent about driving," Ward said.

"Their parents or friends will drive them around so they don't need a licence. I said to them, what if you get a job? And they reply, it would need to be at the weekend so my parents could drive me."

A recent international study showed a correlation between internet use and licensure rates in Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, Canada, Japan, South Korea and Germany.

The study found "access to virtual contact reduces the need for actual contact among young people".

End.