

# Memorandum

|         |                                               |                                |                              |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| To      | <b>Auckland Transport</b>                     | From                           | <b>Aurecon, Steve Dudley</b> |
| Copy    |                                               | Reference                      | <b>530992</b>                |
| Date    | <b>2026-06-22</b>                             | Pages<br>(including this page) | <b>24</b>                    |
| Subject | <b>Wellesley Street Cycle Connection Memo</b> |                                |                              |

## 1 Background

Wellesley Street has been identified in the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) and all supporting transport planning work as a major bus corridor and part of a critical east-west traffic route across the city centre. It has also been identified in published planning documents as the preferred route for a “Major” (second tier) east-west cycling connection between the Grafton Gully Cycleway and Te Hā Noa. As a result, there are a number of conflicts in the allocation of space for various modes in this corridor.

A cycleway on Wellesley Street between the Grafton Gully Cycleway and the intersection with Princes Street has been proposed as part of the Auckland Network Optimisation (ANO) programme. The decision to proceed with this cycleway and the onward connection to Te Hā Noa needs to be considered in the context of the role of Wellesley Street as a critical public transport and traffic route.

In this regard, there are related issues that will influence the cycle route choice and function of Wellesley Street:

- There is a need to advise NZTA on whether to proceed with building a separated cycle facility on the north side of Wellesley Street between the Grafton Gully Cycleway and the intersection with Princes Street as part of the Auckland Network Optimisation (ANO) programme.
- There has been a concept developed to widen the eastbound ramp connecting Wellesley Street to Symonds Street to provide an additional bus lane to enable buses to turn right into Symonds Street and create efficiencies in bus operations.

The above two improvements would occupy the same, currently landscaped road space on the northern edge of Wellesley Street and as a result, a decision is required.

- There is a need to define the function and form of Wellesley Street between Princes Street and Queen Street to ensure that its traffic and public transport functions can operate effectively. This, along with an assessment of viable cycleway options should inform the route choice for the proposed cycle connection to connect with Te Hā Noa.

This memorandum considers the currently proposed Wellesley Street cycle route alongside alternative routes to provide a safe east west cycle route between Grafton Gully and Te Hā Noa and connect the university precinct. In doing so, this memo is intended to:

- Identify a recommended route (or routes), outlining key trade-offs, dependencies, and residual risks, including matters requiring resolution in future stages of work.
- Take a whole-of-network view including all transport and place outcomes.

Any recommendations from this investigation would have to be worked through with Learning Quarter groups, precinct planning and any decisions ratified by Council as part of reviewing the transport network in the city centre.

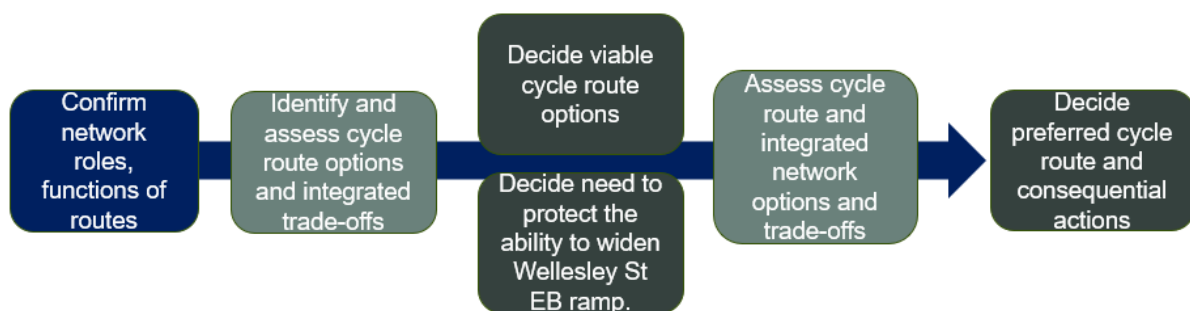
## 2 Decisions required

To guide the next stages of work, the following decisions will be required, informed by the analysis presented in this memo and further work and engagement:

- Confirm available safe and effective cycle routes available to make the required connection.
- Decide the need to protect the future ability to widen the Wellesley Street eastbound ramp to Symonds Street.
- Decide on a preferred cycle route – informing Future Connect and corridor planning/design – based on a balance of all transport and place requirements and/or any further work required to confirm this and/or any further work required to confirm this.

## 3 Methodology applied

Figure 3-1 summarises the process adopted for this study. An important first step in the study has been the confirmation of network roles and function. The criticality of this section of Wellesley to traffic and buses means that there is a need to ensure that the preferred cycle route and any proposed investment in cycle facilities considers the trade-offs with the performance of other network functions.



**Figure 3-1: Methodology**

The method also needs to consider the potential to widen the eastbound ramp connecting Wellesley Street to Symonds Street. This link current only allows left turns only into Symonds Street and has some resulting inefficiencies in the bus network. Any widening of this ramp, should it be proposed, would occupy same space as the proposed NZTA/ANO cycle connection.

The work to deliver this assessment has included obtaining input from a number of subject matter experts from across AT and Council, including:

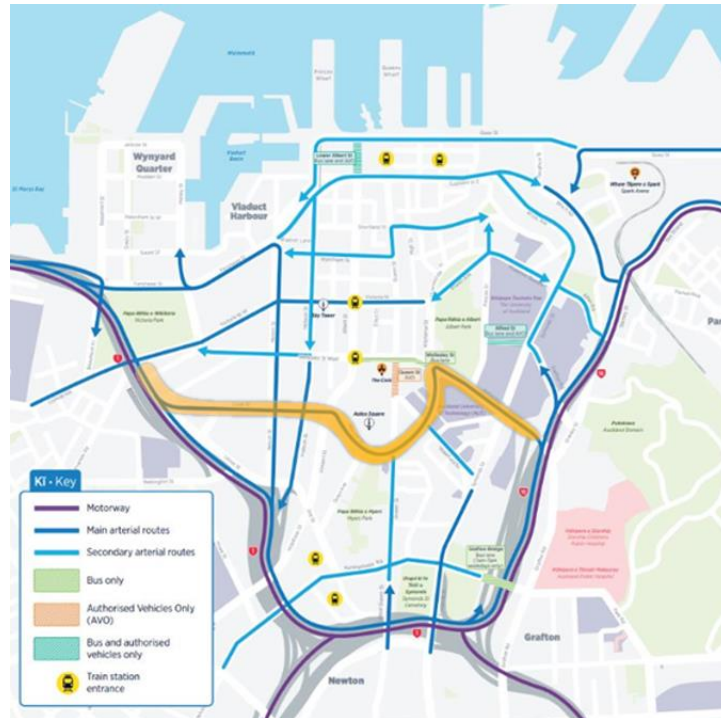
- Council – AUDO
- Cycling design and planning
- Traffic/network operations
- Public transport operations
- Transport Strategy, including parking and servicing

## 4 Network assessment – confirm network roles and functions

### 4.1 Traffic, goods and services

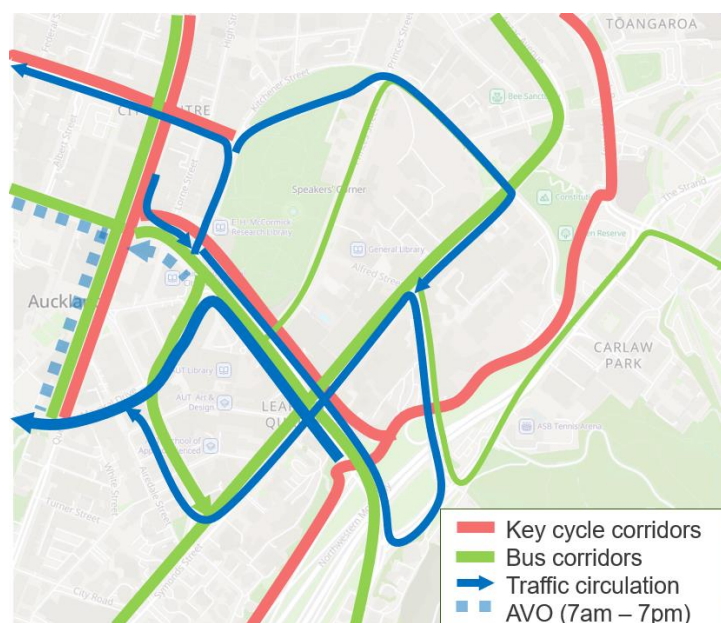
Under the CCMP, the Cook/Mayoral/Wellesley route (Figure 4-1) is the only prioritised east–west traffic corridor through the city centre which places a high reliance on the route for important functions, noting other routes also retain a traffic function. Its role is critical for servicing, deliveries, access to parking and mobility spaces, and pick-up drop-off due to its connection with State Highway 1 and State Highway 16

ramps and its link with Grafton Road, Hobson Street and Nelson Street. The intention of this corridor is to be designed and operated as a general traffic-oriented route, generally with four lanes in each direction, plus turn lanes. The efficient operation of this route is essential to enable other east-west routes to be prioritised as bus corridors and for places for people walking, cycling and local traffic access to parking.



**Figure 4-1: Main east-west traffic route**

The section of Wellesley Street considered in this memorandum is also an important outlet for traffic diverted from Queen Street as a result of the AVO on Queen Street and Wellesley Street West. With the AVOs in place on Queen Street and Wellesley Street West, traffic southbound on Queen Street is forced to turn left into Wellesley Street. Without a right turn into Mayoral Drive, the required routes for people to make their journeys is complex (Figure 4-2).



**Figure 4-2: Traffic circulation with no right turn from Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive**

However, there is also a high volume of buses using Mayoral Drive between Wellesley Street and Wakefield Street, with a bus-only right turn from Wellesley Street into Mayoral Drive. This provision for buses clashes with the identified traffic function. This conflict between bus and traffic networks results in some general traffic travelling further and on lower-volume local streets, undermining the network planning and reducing the ability to enhance those local streets.

## 4.2 Buses

Wellesley Street is a bus corridor of the highest order, being one of two east-west corridors provided for in the City Centre Bus Plan (CCBP). In this regard, with the reliance that the city centre has on buses as the largest public transport mode and limited additional capacity in the road network serving the city centre, the efficient operation of Wellesley Street is critical to the city centre's overall transport capacity and ability to grow.

Wellesley Street provides direct access to the Te Waihorotiu Station, Universities as well as bus and rapid transit services on Albert Street (Figure 4-3).

Due to the inability to turn right from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street, there are compromises in the bus network shown in Figure 4-3 which are relevant to this investigation.

However, the arrangement of the network in the area means not all routes are able to solely follow Wellesley Street as set out in the CCBP. High volumes of buses currently need to use parts of the network not previously envisaged – Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street – for movement, stops and layover. This is due to a Grafton Gully bus facility not proceeding, and a planned Quay Park bus facility unable to accommodate Midtown buses. No other viable alternative arrangement has been found.

This is contrary to Mayoral Drive's role as the key east-west traffic corridor under the CCMP, and the CCBP network.



Figure 4-3: Bus corridors in the city centre

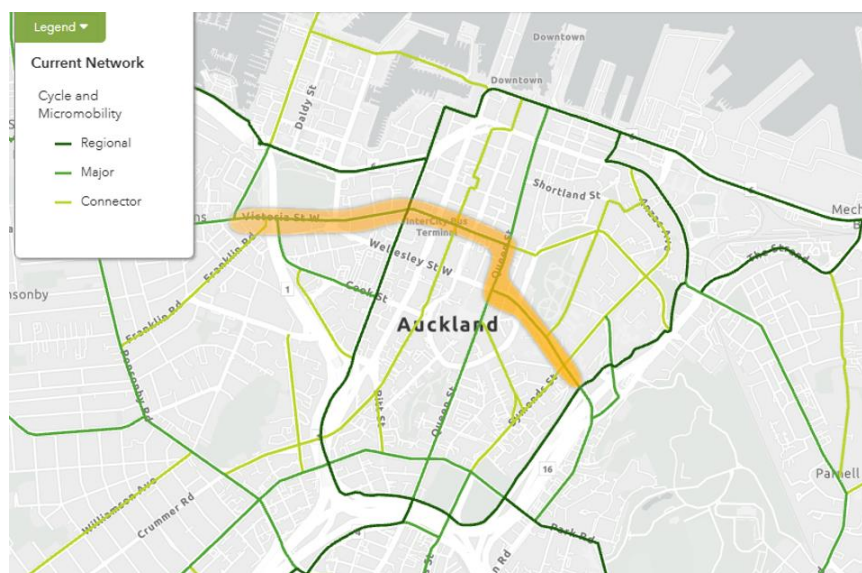
The width (and intersections) of the eastbound ramp connecting Wellesley Street and Symonds Street means buses cannot use it to turn right onto Symonds Street. It only allows low bus volumes to turn left, and if there was a need for buses to turn right from the ramp, it is likely to need to be widened, which risks clashing with adjoining space a cycle facility may use.

However, the ramp arrangement does not currently preclude bus operations, nor would introducing a right turn help to re-route buses off Mayoral Drive. The benefit of a future widening of the ramp is unclear at this stage.

### 4.3 Active modes

Pedestrians are considered a priority in all places in the city centre with major routes being identified in the City Centre Master Plan on Te Hā Noa, Queen Street and the laneway network. Major public transport routes and streets within the city centre are key pedestrian generators, bringing high volumes of people into the city as bus passengers and creating strong pedestrian movement and access demands along these corridors.

Cycle routes are proposed in a hierarchy from Regional (highest), Major and Connector (lowest) routes. Regional cycling connections are available on the northern and southern edges of the city centre on Quay Street and through Central Motorway Junction connecting north-south routes on Nelson Street and Grafton Gully. Queen Street provides a mid-town north-south Major connection and Te Hā Noa provides a mid-town east-west Major connection between Nelson Street (and areas to the west) and Grafton Gully. Due to the topography of the area and the location of Albert Park, the “Major” cycle link between Te Hā Noa’s eastern extent and Grafton Gully is shown as a Queen Street-Wellesley Street link, noting other routes are also proposed.



**Figure 4-4: AT Future Connect Strategic cycle network showing “Major” east-west connection**

In the context of the wider proposed cycle network, the “Major” link shown between Grafton Gully and Te Hā Noa is likely to serve:

- Key catchments to the east and west of the city centre for those travelling to/from a midtown and Learning Quarter zone
- People trying to access Victoria Quarter and destinations from Parnell

These are important movements, with most other trips would be met by other elements in the proposed cycle network (Figure 4-5). Note that from a journey (origin/destination) perspective, this link does not have to be on Wellesley Street.

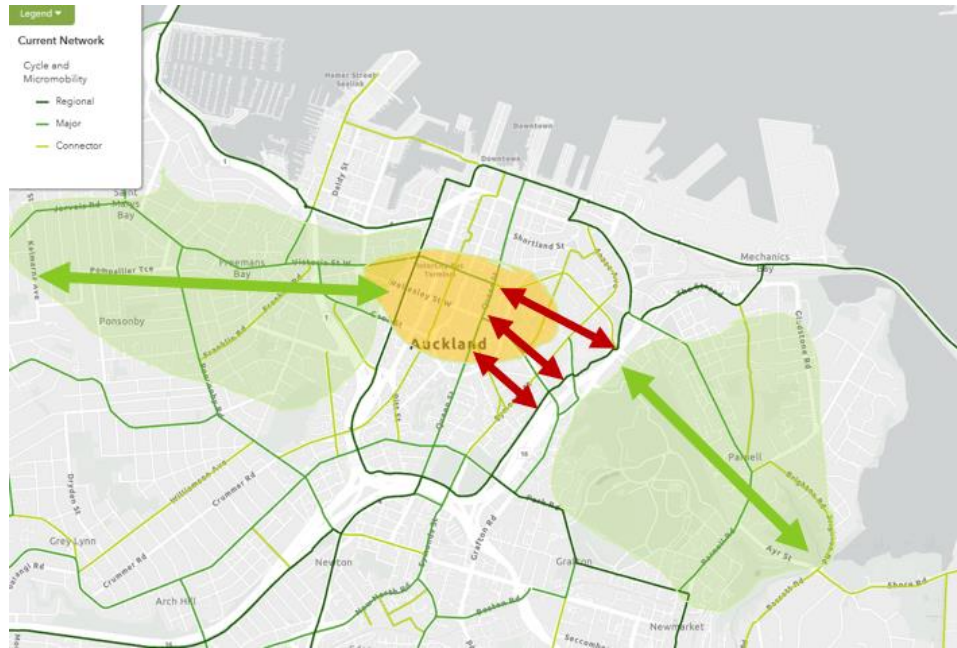


Figure 4-5: Cycle catchments and journey connections

**In summary the Network Assessment concludes:**

- There is a moderately important “Major” east-west cycle connection needed between the very important “Regional” connections on the north and south edges of the city centre, linking Midtown and the Learning Quarter with catchments east and west. This needs to link the Grafton Gully “Regional” link with Victoria Street (Te Hā Noa)
- Wellesley is a very important bus corridor – one of only two east-west corridors in the city centre and its function is compromised to an extent by the inability of buses to turn right from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street.
- Wellesley is a very important traffic corridor – the only prioritised east-west corridor in the city centre.
- Of note, there is no cycle route proposed on Wellesley Street, west of Queen Street, meaning options other than Wellesley Street are possible to connect Grafton Gully with Te Hā Noa.

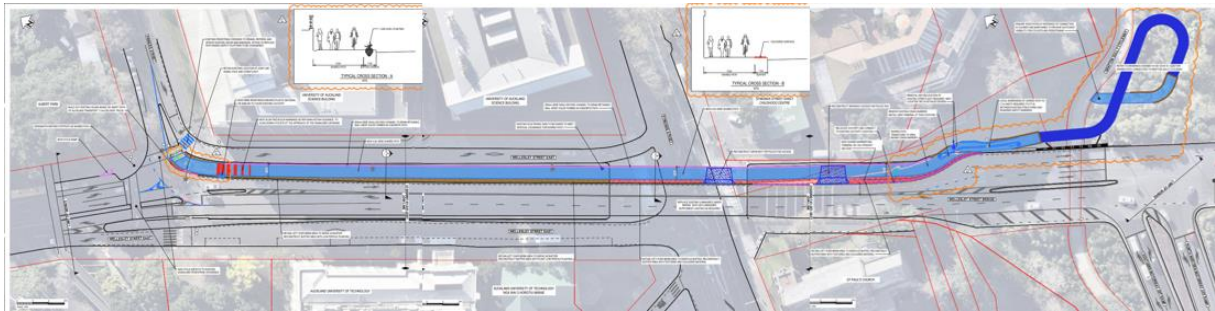
So, a cycle connection is important, but Wellesley Street’s importance as a bus and traffic corridor is critical, and options other than Wellesley Street can be considered for the cycle link, in part or entirely, as well as Wellesley Street.

## 5 Wellesley Street proposed improvements

### 5.1 Grafton Gully Cycleway Connection

NZTA has proposed building (but has not yet attained funding for) a separated shared path facility on the north side of Wellesley Street between the Grafton Gully Cycleway and the intersection with Princes Street as part of the Auckland Network Optimisation (ANO) programme which will give effect to the planned cycle route. The proposed design is shown in Figure 5-1.

Given the conflicts outlined in section 4 and the possible future need to widen the eastbound ramp connecting Wellesley Street with Symonds Street, this memorandum is intended to provide information to support a decision on whether or not to advise NZTA to proceed with this new section of cycleway.



**Figure 5-1: Proposed NZTA/ANO Grafton-Wellesley Cycleway Connection**

## 5.2 Wellesley Street Bus Improvements Stage 3

The continuation of the Wellesley Street Bus Improvements project east of Queen Street (Stage 3) is a vital part of the city centre's overall transport capacity and efficiency. An early concept is shown in Figure 5-2, with design work expected to commence in 2027.



**Figure 5-2: Wellesley Street Bus Improvements Stage 3 Concept (note - early concept only)**

This plan, while very early and conceptual, illustrates the conflicts and constraints in this section of Wellesley Street. For example, considering the needs outlined in section 4, the plan includes:

- The strategy to provide a cycleway (shown in yellow)
- The need to provide a bus right turn into Mayoral Drive from Wellesley Street to accommodate the inability for buses to turn right at Symonds Street
- A westbound continuous bus lane
- Pedestrian and passenger waiting spaces

This arrangement also illustrates the challenges with providing for all required functions in the space available, in that it does not provide:

- A continuous eastbound bus lane
- A traffic right turn into Mayoral Drive to provide for traffic diverted by the Queen Street AVO
- Two lanes of traffic in and out of Mayoral Drive to allow this important traffic route to be effective.

Resolving these issues and finding an optimal solution is complex with the need for design, operational modelling and clear assessment of trade-offs.

## 6 Options assessment

### 6.1 Recognising traffic and bus network functions

This options assessment focuses on options for a safe cycle route. This is because the Network Assessment in section 4 indicates that there are two critical functions of Wellesley Street that are of high importance and that are supported by committed service and infrastructure delivery. The assessment considers the following functions essential:

- The effective function of this section of Wellesley Street as a traffic route
- The effective function of Wellesley Street as a bus route

Options assessment, as a result has focused on the cycle route options to determine:

- If viable alternatives exist that deliver in the cycle network function; and
- whether, on balance considering all modes and functions, the alternative cycle routes are preferable; or
- whether it is best to accommodate the cycle route on Wellesley Street.

### 6.2 Considering the route in two sections

For the purposes of this assessment, Wellesley Street improvements can be broken into two sections (Figure 6-1) as the decision on the east section enables different options for the west section.

- West (Queen Street to Princes Street); and
- East (Princes Street to Grafton Gully) – the section where ANO propose to implement a new cycle facility.



**Figure 6-1: Wellesley Street proposed works**

The two sections are related as there is a continuity of functional requirements described in section 4, but can be considered distinctly because:

- There is greater urgency in the need to make a decision on the eastern section due to the potential Grafton Gully Cycleway and the intersection with Princes Street as part of the Auckland Network Optimisation (ANO) programme.
- There are differing alternatives for a safe cycle route depending on decisions for each section, described in section 7).

The west section involves Wellesley Street Bus Improvements (WSBI) Stage 3. The design for this Stage 3 is unlikely to begin prior to 2027, currently envisaged to include a cycle path along the northern side of Wellesley Street.

The east section of Wellesley Street has two main influences:

- A conceptual proposal to provide a bus link via the eastbound ramp from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street in the future, to allow buses to turn right onto Symonds Street and improve outcomes for bus operations in the area. A significant capital cost would be required to move the retaining wall for the off-ramp expansion.
- The NZTA proposal, in detailed design phase for a Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection, a shared path link from Princes Street to Grafton Gully. Space is available alongside the Symonds Street underpass carriageway for this expansion.

The proposed Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection and the widened ramp noted above would occupy the same road space. As a result, the decision regarding need to protect the ability to widen the Wellesley Street ramp plays a crucial role in which cycle route is preferred.

### 6.3 Cycle route assessment

Five options were considered during the options assessment. Options 1,2 and 3 tie into the Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection whilst options 4 and 5 provide alternative routes through the Learning Quarter. All options form part of the planned Future Connect cycle network, some as part of the Major network and others as part of the lower order Connector network.

The cycle route options also sit within the Learning Quarter and consider streets that are important in precinct plans being developed by Council and universities.

#### Currently proposed east-west cycle connection:



Figure 6-2: Option 1 (Wellesley Street)

### Cycle routes that utilise the Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection:



Figure 6-3: Option 2 (Wellesley, Princes, Bowen)



Figure 6-4: Option 3 (Wellesley, Princes, Albert Park, Bowen)

### Cycle routes that do not use the Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection:

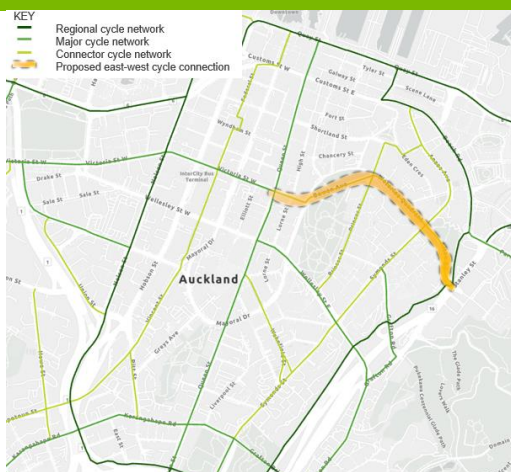


Figure 6-5: Option 4 (Alten, Waterloo Quadrant, Bowen)



Figure 6-6: Option 5 (Grafton, Alfred, Princes, Bowen)

#### 6.3.1 Multi-criteria assessment criteria

A Multi-criteria assessment (MCA) was carried out and assessed each option against the following criteria:

- **Level of service for cyclists:** gradients, length of climbs, legibility, conflicts, connectivity to Strategic routes and destinations, facility type, and accessibility for a wide range of users.
- **Impact on bus network and operations:** effects on reliability, layover locations, out-of-service movements, passenger experience, and future network flexibility.
- **Impact on traffic circulation:** consistency with CCMP intent, effects on key east-west movements, and servicing access.
- **Connectivity and land-use integration:** access to University precincts, Learning Quarter destinations, and consistency with precinct plans.
- **Impact on parking and kerbside use:** scale of parking removal, loading impacts, and business effects.

- **Other issues:** heritage, constructability, staging and interaction with committed projects (WSBI Stage 3, Te Hā Noa, ANO).

The outcomes of the MCA can be seen in Figure 6-7.

| Assessment criteria                  | Measures                                                                                                 | Option 1 | Option 2 | Option 3 | Option 4 | Option 5 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Level of service for cyclists        | Gradients                                                                                                |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Legibility                                                                                               |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Connectivity                                                                                             |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Type of facility that can be provided, consistency with AT/Future Connect standards, safety performance. |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Accessibility for people of all ages and abilities                                                       |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Interaction with vehicles                                                                                |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Cycle parking                                                                                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| Impact on bus network and operations | Bus network impacts                                                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Bus passenger experience and safety                                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Future network flexibility                                                                               |          |          |          |          |          |
| Impact on traffic circulation        | Alignment with planned future network (CCMP)                                                             |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Impact on general traffic routes, turning movements                                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | Impact on servicing, deliveries, mobility and PUDO access                                                |          |          |          |          |          |
| Connectivity impacts                 | Land use and place considerations                                                                        |          |          |          |          |          |
|                                      | University precinct planning                                                                             |          |          |          |          |          |
| Impact on parking and kerbside use   | Number of parking spaces removed/retained; impact on loading, mobility parking, servicing                |          |          |          |          |          |
| Any other issues                     | Heritage considerations, constructability, interaction with committed projects                           |          |          |          |          |          |

Figure 6-7: MCA summary

|       |                |  |  |  |                |
|-------|----------------|--|--|--|----------------|
| Scale | Large positive |  |  |  | Large negative |
|-------|----------------|--|--|--|----------------|

### 6.3.2 Option 1 – Grafton Gully to Queen Street via Wellesley Street



Option 1 connects Grafton Gully to Queen Street/Te Hā Noa via Wellesley Street and Queen Street.

It utilises the proposed ANO shared path connection up to Princes Street and then joins the proposed WSBI bidirectional cycle path on Wellesley Street before joining Queen Street.

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Considered the best safe and accessible cycle route (ANO and WSBI designs)</li> <li>■ Most direct and shortest route for cycling</li> <li>■ Avoids the steepest sections in other options</li> <li>■ Good connection to Grafton Road and the Auckland Domain</li> <li>■ Has the lowest delivery risk – part of planned works</li> <li>■ The WSBI design aligns with the city centre approach for slower cyclist speeds due to a mix of activity through these areas, as seen on Queen Street</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Universal design/accessibility concerns regarding conflicts with cyclists and bus passengers – University bus stops by Albert Park are an important boarding/alighting location</li> <li>■ Reduces capacity for general traffic on Wellesley-Mayoral-Cook EW traffic route – poor CCMP alignment</li> <li>■ Reduces capacity for bus movements through Wellesley – negative impacts on bus reliability with current WSBI design</li> <li>■ Steep gradients limit access for all ages and abilities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ This is the current strategy</li> <li>■ Leaves the eastern extent of constructed Te Hā Noa disconnected from a protected facility</li> <li>■ Does not allow for Wellesley Street ramp – impacting bus reliability and routing options through Wellesley Street, Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street</li> <li>■ There is already some level of cycle provision on Wellesley Street (painted cycle lane)</li> </ul> |

### 6.3.3 Option 2 - Grafton Gully to Victoria Street via Wellesley Street, Princes Street and Bowen Avenue

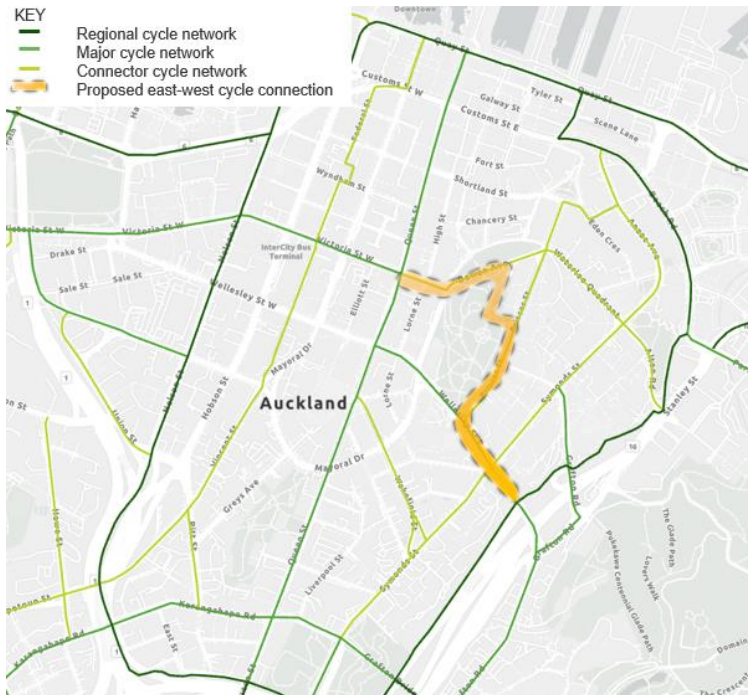


Option 2 connects Grafton Gully to Queen Street/Te Hā Noa via Wellesley Street, Princes Street, and Bowen Ave.

It utilises the proposed ANO shared path connection up to Princes Street and then joins a proposed bidirectional cycle path on Princes Street and Bowen Ave (park side) before connecting to Te Hā Noa.

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopts the best alternate cycle alignment west of Princes Street (grades, quality)</li> <li>Provides good access to key University areas/Albert Park and good connection to Grafton Road and the Auckland Domain</li> <li>Aligns with future University Masterplan concept for Princes Street (parking removal)</li> <li>Avoids Wellesley Street between Princes and Queen to provide more capacity for key bus and general traffic movements (in alignment with the CCMP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep connection to Victoria Street with existing/constructed Te Hā Noa connection (although this is already in place)</li> <li>Steep corner connection Princes/Bowen</li> <li>Steep gradients limit access for all ages and abilities</li> <li>Space constraints at the end of Bowen – rework of Kitchener Street intersection required</li> <li>Significant parking removal – Princes, Bowen (note this is potentially a short-term issue as it is aligned with Strategy)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses the eastern extent of committed Te Hā Noa</li> <li>Does not allow for Wellesley Street ramp widening in near term</li> <li>Princes Street is expected to continue accommodating in-service and out-of-service bus movements in the medium term.</li> <li>Confident cyclists will Still use Wellesley Street to travel to/from Queen Street</li> </ul> |

## 6.3.4 Option 3 - Grafton Gully to Victoria Street via Wellesley Street, Princes Street, Albert Park and Bowen Avenue



Option 3 connects Grafton Gully to Queen Street/Te Hā Noa via Wellesley Street, Princes Street, and Bowen Ave via Albert Park.

It utilises the proposed ANO shared path connection up to Princes Street and then joins a proposed bidirectional cycle path on Princes Street which traverses through Albert Park onto Bowen Ave before connecting to Te Hā Noa.

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides good access to key University areas/Albert Park and good connection to Grafton Road and the Auckland Domain</li> <li>Aligns with future University Masterplan concept for Princes Street (parking removal)</li> <li>Avoids Wellesley Street between Princes and Queen to provide more capacity for key bus and general traffic movements (in alignment with the CCMP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep connection to Victoria Street with existing/constructed Te Hā Noa connection (although this is already in place)</li> <li>Steep gradients limit access for all ages and abilities</li> <li>Space constraints at the end of Bowen – rework of Kitchener Street intersection required</li> <li>Significant parking removal – Princes, Bowen (note this is potentially a short-term issue as it is aligned with Strategy)</li> <li>Uses a key Step-free access into Albert Park, reducing availability for park users and creating potential conflicts</li> <li>Lower route legibility in park/shared spaces, requiring greater reliance on wayfinding and user behaviour</li> <li>Heritage impacts in Albert Park from use of existing paths</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses the eastern extent of committed Te Hā Noa</li> <li>Does not allow for Wellesley Street ramp widening in near term</li> <li>Princes Street is expected to continue accommodating in-service and out-of-service bus movements in the medium term</li> </ul> |

### 6.3.5 Option 4 – Grafton Gully to Victoria Street via Alten Road, Waterloo Quadrant and Bowen Avenue

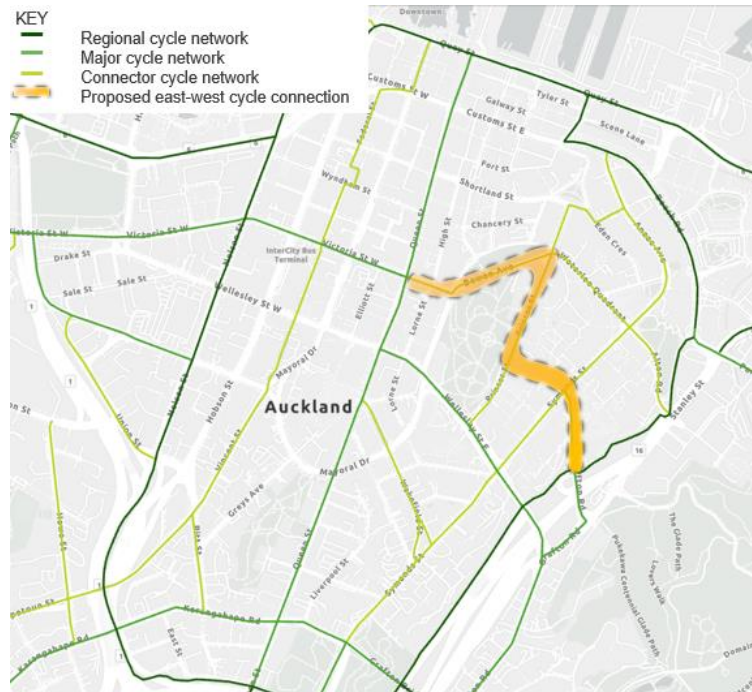


Option 4 connects Grafton Gully to Queen Street/Te Hā Noa via Alten Road, Waterloo Quadrant, and Bowen Avenue.

The proposed protected bidirectional cycle facility begins at Alten Road, continuing along Waterloo Quadrant and Bowen Avenue (park side) before connecting to Te Hā Noa.

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopts the most direct route (fewer turning moments)</li> <li>Avoids Wellesley Street between Princes and Queen to provide more capacity for key bus and general traffic movements (in alignment with the CCMP)</li> <li>Aligned with future reduced traffic function of Alten Road and Waterloo Quadrant in the CCMP</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alten Road connection is steep but similar to the existing/in construction Te Hā Noa and existing connection between Beach Road and Grafton Gully Cycleway</li> <li>Steep connection to Victoria Street with existing/constructed Te Hā Noa connection (although this is already in place)</li> <li>Steep gradients limit access for all ages and abilities</li> <li>Less direct connection to Grafton Road and the Auckland Domain and further away from AUT and UoA facilities</li> <li>Constraints at the end of Bowen – rework of Kitchener Street intersection required</li> <li>High delivery complexity, requiring wider network and circulation changes before implementation due to significant Street changes required (parking and traffic lane reallocation)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses the eastern extent of committed Te Hā Noa</li> <li>Allows for Wellesley Street ramp widening in near term providing flexibility in bus network operations and opportunities to take bus services off Mayoral Drive and Wellesley Street</li> <li>Alternative Grafton Gully connection via Constitution Hill possible (some heritage sensitivity to be further reviewed)</li> <li>Alten currently plays a significant role in connecting car parks on High Street to the motorway network</li> </ul> |

### 6.3.6 Option 5 - Grafton Gully to Victoria Street via Grafton Road, Alfred Street and Bowen Avenue



Option 5 connects Grafton Gully to Queen Street/Te Hā Noa via Grafton Road, Alfred Street, and Bowen Ave.

The proposed protected bidirectional cycle facility begins at Grafton Road, continues through the Learning Quarter via Alfred Street, Princes Street (park side), and Bowen Avenue before connecting to Te Hā Noa.

| Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good access to the Learning Quarter, UoA City Campus. Limited access to AUT. Good connection to Grafton Road and the Auckland Domain, future cycle facilities on Symonds Street</li> <li>Aligned with Strategy for Alfred Street - expected to be pedestrianised under future University Masterplan</li> <li>Avoids Wellesley Street between Princes and Queen to provide more capacity for key bus and general traffic movements (in alignment with the CCMP)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steep connection to Victoria Street with existing/constructed Te Hā Noa connection (although this is already in place)</li> <li>Steep gradients limit access for all ages and abilities</li> <li>Pedestrian–cyclist conflict risk in shared and low-legibility environments (e.g. Alfred Street), with greater reliance on wayfinding and user behaviour</li> <li>Constraints at the end of Bowen – rework of Kitchener Street intersection required</li> <li>Significant parking removal – Princes, Bowen (note this is potentially a short-term issue as it is aligned with Strategy)</li> <li>Difficult to accommodate cycling within the constrained road reserve, as lane removal would conflict with Grafton Road's traffic role and require significant tree removal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses the eastern extent of committed Te Hā Noa</li> <li>Allows for Wellesley Street ramp widening in near term providing flexibility in bus network operations and opportunities to take bus services off Mayoral Drive and Wellesley Street</li> <li>Grafton Road is noted as a Major cycle route, but our assessment indicates this would be difficult to implement in alignment with the wider CCMP Strategy</li> </ul> |

## 7 Findings and trade-offs

### 7.1 Preferred cycle route options

In a precinct like the university area, with numerous dispersed destinations for people on cycles across the universities and midtown, it is likely that users will, in practice take a range of the routes considered, depending on where they are going and their level of confidence and ability. The focus of this work is to identify a safe, all ages and abilities route that can be used as a spine for people to make a range of journeys and importantly to connect the Te Hā Noa cycleway with the Grafton Gully Cycleway.

Overall, **Option 1 (Wellesley Street)** is the most direct, least steep and most legible for cyclists.

However, the route has the following risks and trade-offs:

- West of Princes Street the route has potential conflicts between cyclists and bus passengers and pedestrians at busy bus stops and on pathways.
- West of Princes Street, this option introduces limitations to the space available in the street to provide for important traffic and bus functions.
- East of Princes Street the option may reduce the potential performance of Wellesley Street, affecting one of the city's busiest bus corridors with potential wider network impacts on buses and traffic.
- The option would not protect the future ability to widen the eastbound ramp from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street with consequences for ongoing bus operations on Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street.

**Option 2 (via Princes Street and Bowen Avenue)** better aligns with future traffic and precinct plans and improves access to the university, but involves steep gradients, parking removal, and still does not enable the future ramp widening and its ongoing consequences.

**Option 4 (via Alten Road and Waterloo Quadrant)** is a planned "Connector" cycle route and provides a reasonably direction connection.

This would be the preferred route should the decision be made to retain the ability to widen the eastbound ramp from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street. Option 4 has some potential risks:

- Steep gradients and legibility issues for users.
- It is longer than Option 1 and Option 2.
- Delivery, design and acceptance risks including loss of significant kerbside parking on Waterloo Quadrant.

### 7.2 Non-preferred cycle routes

Routes assessed that are not considered preferred are:

**Option 3** through Albert Park due to potential impacts on the park and park users. Option 2 achieves most of the benefits of this option and does not impact the park and its users.

**Options 5** using Grafton Road and Alfred Street due to the important traffic function and constrained form of Grafton Road, steep grades and potential conflicts with people in Alfred Street which is intended to function as a shared space.

### 7.3 Direction with regard to the Wellesley-Symonds eastbound ramp

The operational and physical outcomes of widening the ramp were investigated in 2025 (Wellesley Street off-ramp (Long-Term layout), 526568-050DRP-NOT-MC-0003) as part of the City Centre Bus

Plan (CCBP) business case. This paper identified the possible physical solution and operational performance associated with buses turning right from and widening of the ramp.

This report confirmed that the ramp is suitable, with minor alterations at Princes Street for only a low number of bus movements per hour, and only for services turning left into Symonds Street. If a higher number of buses or right-turning was required, it is expected that the ramp would need to be widened, which is expected to cost in the vicinity of \$17m<sup>1</sup> and impact on the space available in the adjoining underpass for other uses, including the proposed NZTA/ANO shared path project. There would also be potential impacts on the layout and operation of the Symonds Street/Wellesley Street ramp intersection which may impact efficient bus and traffic movements.

### CCBP service pattern

Figure 7-1 shows the proposed service pattern for buses with the eastbound ramp from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street remaining its current width. Of note, the key compromises are:

- The NX2 route using Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street to complete its route and commencing again on Wellesley Street; and
- The 70 and 75 routes having a different route to enter and exit the city centre.



Figure 7-1: CCBP Service pattern

### NX2 Services

The NX2 service had previously been expected to utilise an off-street layover, either Quay Park which is considered too far away and with insufficient capacity or a Grafton Gully facility no longer planned. The interim arrangement is for NX2 buses, as well as 82, 802, 923, 924 buses to use Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street to complete their route and access layovers and the westbound ramp to Wellesley Street to commence their return route. This has some conflict with the strategic intent of Mayoral Drive being the main east-west midtown traffic route. There appears to be no viable alternative to this arrangement within the next 10-year horizon with no planned infrastructure solution

<sup>1</sup> Wellesley Street off-ramp (Long-Term layout), 526568-050DRP-NOT-MC-0003, May 2025.

and no economically sustainable alternative termination location. Therefore, although not originally part of the CCBP, AT is of the view that the current NX2 route/layovers should be adopted as the ongoing operational arrangement, acknowledging that this is not as legible for customers and represents a compromise on the CCBP.

### **930 and OuterLink Services**

It is expected that there will be increasing pressure and desirability to move the 930-series services and OuterLink away from their current routes within Auckland University's precinct and instead use the eastbound Wellesley Street slip lane ramp, with a left-turn into Symonds Street. As this is a low number of buses per hour, and on the basis that other vehicle traffic on the ramp will be low or manageable, AT intends to open discussions with the University of Auckland about when and how this could occur, in support of campus improvements planning. This arrangement would also be adopted in the CCBP.

### **70 and 75 services**

There is the potential for the 70 and 75 services to use the eastbound slip lane ramp, which would simplify the network, however, there does not currently appear to be sufficient patronage benefit to justify the likely associated infrastructure costs as a widening of the eastbound ramp for the additional bus volumes and right-turns would be required. It is recommended the current 70 and 75 routes remain and be confirmed in the CCBP.

### **Future WX2 services**

There is also the potential for a future WX2 (service to Westgate) service to similarly use the eastbound ramp. As with the 70/75 routes, this additional volume of buses would likely trigger infrastructure to widen the ramp, to create more space. Whilst a new WX2 service is expected in the future, there is no confirmed date for this, as it relies on the implementation of significant enabling infrastructure around Ian McKinnon Drive and State Highway 16. Even when this is in place, there are several options for the WX2 routing within the city centre, so it is not considered that a future WX2 service can be relied upon as requiring the use of the ramp. It is recommended that the WX2 routing be considered in more detail once a likely start date is known.

### **Summary**

While there are some benefits in the widening of the eastbound ramp to allow 70, 75 and possibly in the future, WX2 buses to turn right, the direction is that the widening of the ramp is not currently considered necessary, given the low level of benefits that have certainty, compared to the high cost and high degree of certainty associated with the NZTA/ANO proposal to implement the Wellesley Street Active Modes Connection. This is further supported by the assessed advantages for cyclists in the Wellesley Street option (east of Princes Street) and risks with the Alten Road option (Option 4) which would be required should the ramp be widened.

For clarity, there are trade-offs in this direction as the ramp widening would reduce reliance on Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street for bus circulation.

## **7.4 Preferred cycle route east of Princes Street and implications**

Given the above assessment, the preferred cycle route between Grafton Gully Cycleway and Princes Street is Wellesley Street.



**Figure 7-2: Recommended route for eastern section**

The main reasons for this are:

- It is the intended route in published planning document and strategies.
- It is most direct for cyclists with most manageable gradients.
- There is a project to implement the cycle route with a high level of confidence which would improve cycle access and safety in a part of the city centre that has a current gap in provision.
- The benefits resulting from a potential widening of the ramp for buses are not considered significant in the foreseeable future and larger future benefits are uncertain.

This requires a compromise with the intended CCBP bus pattern – although as noted above, this is considered acceptable and as a result the issue is less complex than the Princes Street to Queen Street section. The decision on this section of the route is also more urgent with the potential for the proposed NZTA/ANO cycleway connection and specific direction is required.

#### **7.4.1 Remaining issues and risks resulting from this direction**

While the compromise in the CCBP noted above is acceptable in principle from a bus operational perspective, this direction creates greater pressure on:

- The eastbound right turn for buses from Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive – also possibly required for southbound traffic forced to turn left from Queen Street into Wellesley Street.
- The section of Mayoral Drive between Wellesley Street and Wakefield Street – part of a critical traffic route and would need to retain some bus priority.
- Wakefield Street, as it would need to continue to function as an important bus connector with layover for end of route buses.

These issues would need to be resolved and are discussed further in section 7.5 and 8.

### **7.5 Preferred cycle route west of Princes Street and implications**

The direction above to implement a cycleway from Grafton Gully as far as Princes Street on Wellesley Street leaves two options open for consideration for the remainder of this cycle connection:

### Option 1 – Wellesley Street to Queen Street, using Queen Street to connect with Te Hā Noa

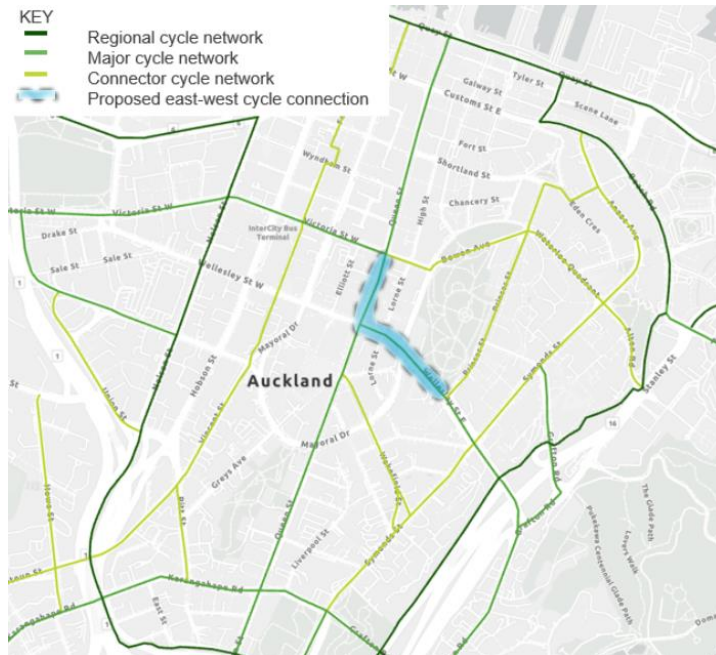


Figure 7-3: Option 1 - Wellesley Street to Te Hā Noa via Queen Street

### Option 2 – using Princes Street and Bowen Avenue to connect with Te Hā Noa



Figure 7-4: Option 2 - Wellesley Street to Te Hā Noa via Princes Street and Bowen Avenue

Key trade-offs in this decision are:

**Option 1** is the preferred route from a cyclist's perspective with lesser gradients, less distance and more directness. However, this route would require street space that places considerable pressure on the core function of this section of Wellesley Street (refer section 4). While some of these issues could be resolved through further design, there is at this time, considerable unresolved risk in relation to the following functions:

- Space for a continuous bus lane eastbound between west of Lorne Street and east of Kitchener Street.

- Space for a possible traffic right turn from Wellesley Street eastbound into Mayoral Drive, noting the diversion required by the northbound AVO on Queen Street north of Wellesley Street.
- Space for adequate traffic capacity and performance connecting Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive as part of the Mayoral Drive east-west traffic route.
- Conflicts between cyclists and bus passengers at the busy bus stop outside Albert Park on Wellesley Street.

**Option 2** is a good route for cyclists that avoids the issues noted above and provides better access to key university destinations on Princes Street. A cycle route on Princes Street is well aligned with the University of Auckland's intended future function of Princes Street as a park-edge street for active modes.

An advantage of this option is that it would use the eastern extent of the recently constructed Te Hā Noa cycleway (east of Queen Street) improving legibility and avoiding the Te Hā Noa route terminating abruptly at Kitchener Street.

This option leaves more space in Wellesley Street, west of Princes Street for accommodating important traffic and bus functions.

This option has the following risks and issues:

- It is not completely aligned with the previously published planned cycle route.
- It is a longer route than Option 1 for cyclists accessing midtown and Te Hā Noa.
- There is a steep grade at the eastern extent of Te Hā Noa/Victoria Street – although it is noted that this section of cycleway is already constructed.
- There is some parking removal required on Bowen Avenue with associated risks.

#### ***7.5.1 Remaining issues and risks in the section west of Princes Street and surrounding area***

There are some significant trade-offs outlined above and unresolved risks inherent in any recommended direction in this section. The issue is complex and any decision as to the preferred outcome will need to include analysis and design to ensure that the risks and issues have properly considered as well as stakeholder engagement, particularly with the universities.

The need to resolve this issue is less urgent than the section of Wellesley Street east of Princes Street and there is time to carry out the required assessment and design to develop an optimal solution.

Resolution of these issues will need to include the effective function of this section of Wellesley Street as a traffic route and bus route, specifically:

- Space for a possible traffic right turn from Wellesley Street eastbound into Mayoral Drive, noting the diversion required by the northbound AVO on Queen Street north of Wellesley Street.
- Space for adequate traffic capacity and performance connecting Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive as part of the Mayoral Drive east-west traffic route.
- Conflicts between cyclists and bus passengers at the busy bus stop outside Albert Park on Wellesley Street.
- The effective function of Wellesley Street as a bus route, including space for a continuous bus lane eastbound between west of Lorne Street and east of Kitchener Street and capacity for buses to turn right from Wellesley Street to Mayoral Drive.
- The implications on Mayoral Drive of the ongoing need for buses to use Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street to accommodate the inability to turn right from Wellesley Street to Symonds Street (a result of the proposed direction in the section east of Princes Street in section 7.4)

## 8 Draft recommendations and actions

As a result of this work, there are a number of recommendations to be consulted on and advanced.

### 8.1 NZTA cycleway project proceeds on Wellesley Street, east of Princes Street

#### Reasons:

Between Grafton Gully and Princes Street, Wellesley Street remains the preferred and the most viable option for cycling, because:

- This is the route identified in published planning documents.
- It is the most direct and legible for cyclists with the most manageable gradients.
- There is greater certainty that cycling facilities can be delivered (NZTA proposal exists).

#### Trade-offs:

- There is no futureproofing for ramp widening for potential future right turning bus movements.

#### Recommended action:

- NZTA to proceed with their project.
- NZTA project is scoped to ensure a practical and safe tie-in for buses, traffic, pedestrians and cyclists at the Wellesley Street and Princes Street intersection.

### 8.2 Wellesley Street ramp widening for buses is not futureproofed for

#### Reasons:

Future proofing to widen the ramp is not required because:

- There is uncertainty about future bus operational requirements.
- Benefits for buses being able to make a right turn onto Symonds Street are unclear. This appears useful but creates challenges, and the operational movement has alternatives in the network.
- Left turns by buses onto Symonds continue to be enabled, allowing a potential shift of buses off Alfred Street, aligning with University of Auckland proposals.

#### Trade-offs:

- Risks being unable to achieve future bus right turn, if needed.
- Buses on the ramp pass close to sensitive University of Auckland Science building.

#### Recommended action:

- Use of the ramp and left turn onto Symonds Street by buses to be enabled.
- Discussions commence with the University about buses using the ramp, with potential removal from Alfred Street.

### 8.3 Continue bus movements on Mayoral Drive and Wakefield Street

#### Reasons:

- Buses need to use Mayoral Drive because there is a lack of alternative layover locations in Learning Quarter/Grafton Gully.
- This is not due to the lack of a right turn on the Wellesley Street eastbound ramp.

#### Trade-offs:

- Conflicts and allocation of space between traffic and bus movements on Mayoral Drive.

**Recommended action:**

- The CCBP and related workstreams are to be updated to recognise this requirement.
- Investigate and confirm ongoing bus layovers in the area, identify opportunities to remove buses from Mayoral Drive.

**8.4 Investigate remaining modal priority challenges on Wellesley Street between Princes Street and Queen Street**

**Reasons:**

- Significant unresolved network conflicts remain on Wellesley Street west of Princes Street, due to multiple modes sharing the limited space and the need for movements not currently provided.
- Resolving this is a key enabler for upcoming work – e.g. WSBI Stage 3 and DDP.

**Trade-offs:**

- Current strategic plans may have to be amended for one or more modes, or a desired modal outcome may be unable to be achieved.

**Actions:**

- Investigation to confirm how bus, traffic, and cycling provision can be viably made in the section of Wellesley Street between Queen Street and Princes Street.
- For cycling, this includes identifying a preferred cycle route between Princes Street and Te Hā Noa.

This investigation should result in an updated concept for Wellesley Street Bus Improvements Stage 3 and inform relevant strategies and operational plans.

This investigation should consider:

- Traffic circulation from Queen Street southbound, including into Mayoral Drive.
- The performance of the Wellesley Street-Mayoral Drive connection for traffic.
- The performance of Wellesley Street and the Wellesley Street-Mayoral Drive-Wakefield Street circuit for buses.
- The operation, safety and customer experience for users of the eastbound bus stops on Wellesley Street.
- The safety and experience for pedestrians in this area.
- The experience, safety and effectiveness of the route as a cycleway.