

Proposal for the Variation of the City Mall Special Order - Received by Email

Name:	Axel Wilke [axel@viastrada.co.nz]
CC:	
Sent:	Sun 20/04/2008 9:25 pm
Your Submission:	<p>Proposal for the Variation of the City Mall Special Order</p> <p>Dear Dave,</p> <p>I would like to make a submission as an individual & private resident on the proposal for the variation of the City Mall Special Order.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am not in favour of the tram route extension, and thus• I am not in favour of the Special Order be amended to include: "(f) Trams".• I submit that the Special Order be amended to include: "(f) Bicycles". <p>Background:</p> <p>About 10 years ago, I undertook work for the then cycle planner Alix Newman on bicycle crashes on the (back then reasonably new) tram tracks. If I recall correctly, there was very little in the LTSA crash database (mainly because LTSA is instructed to only record crashes in the national crash database that include a motor vehicle – this is still the case these days with the CAS database). I also recall that through 'word of mouth', we managed to compile a list of some 30 bicycle crashes on the tracks. None of those crashes involved another vehicle. All cyclists had 'come off' crossing the rails at some angle. The existing tram route is inherently dangerous to cycling, as there is a requirement to cross the tracks at an acute angle in numerous places. The basic design flaw is that the tram stops are located along the kerbside, where the tram deviates from a position in the centre of a traffic lane to a kerbside position. Cyclists have no alternative but to cross the rails in these locations. Other dangerous locations are where cyclists turn onto the corridor used by the tram from a side street, or vice versa.</p> <p>Hence, the proposed tram extension will exacerbate the existing problem by adding more locations to the road network where cyclists will have to cross the tram tracks at an acute angle, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Cashel Street near Manchester,• In Manchester Street near High,• In High Street near Cashel,• At the Colombo / High / Hereford intersection, and• Where Colombo and Worcester intersect behind the Cathedral. <p>I read in the report that the consultant "has recommended that cycles not be permitted in the vicinity of the tram tracks in the Mall". Does this confirm my concerns above? So if tram tracks are dangerous to cyclists, why should we exclude cycling from Cashel Mall only? Shouldn't we be including the whole route extension, e.g. parts of Manchester St, Cashel St and High St? Why not in fact ban cycling on Armagh Street 'for their own safety's sake'? Surely, this is a ridiculous argument. It's either considered safe enough for cyclists and thus, cycling in City Mall is also ok, or it's not safe enough and therefore we shouldn't be extending the tram network at all.</p>

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

I cannot see the benefit of extending the tram on the route as shown. In my opinion, that people have said "wouldn't it be nice to have the tram go through City Mall" is in itself not a benefit. In extending the tram route:

- **Do we make the tram route more interesting to tourists?** No, in my opinion.
- **Will the extended tram route attract higher patronage?** I couldn't imagine why this would be the case.
- **Will it become more expensive to operate the tram?** If the operate the same number of trams, it will be more expensive, as it runs a longer route. But as such an operation would increase the headway between trams, which will make the tram less attractive, as one has to wait longer on average before the tram arrives. If the annual mileage of the trams will be kept the same, the headway would be even longer, making the tram even less attractive. If we want to keep the headway the same, then we will increase the mileage of each tram by the extended route, which increases the operating costs. There is a significant dis-benefit one way or another. The tram will be more costly to run, or be less attractive to patrons, or both.
- **Does the extended tram route fulfil a transport function?** Due to the introduction of the 'Figure of 8' movement, the rather limited transport function that the existing tram may fulfil is further eroded, in my opinion.

For the record, I am very much in favour of extending the tram network.

Suitable objectives for such a project would be:

- Provide people with an attractive choice of reaching the central city by tram.
- Provide high capacity tram transport on corridors that are currently used by cars. Minimise car use on such corridors by suitable measures (e.g. road closures, one way restrictions). Exclude cyclists from those measures.
- Provide priority at intersections to achieve fast running speeds.
- Minimise the risk for cyclists by stopping the tram in the middle of the traffic lane.

As such, the only benefit that I can see in including rail tracks in the current reconstruction of High St is if those are used for a future light rail system that has a transport function. But for this to be meaningful, it might well be required for this to be a double track, which the current construction hasn't allowed for.

Regarding the Special Order, I have never understood why cyclists are excluded from using City Mall. Often, there are more trucks and cars in the Mall than people, but it is illegal to cycle even during those times. Traffic free corridors are attractive for cycling because they are just that – traffic free. There are hundreds of examples around the world where pedestrians and cyclists, or pedestrians and cyclists and trams happily co-exist. Whilst the proposal is now to allow mixing of trams and pedestrians, cyclists are still not included. Why? The current cycle strategy has the vision that 'Christchurch is a cycle friendly city' – why not actually do something that is meaningful on the journey towards making this vision a reality?

I appreciate being given the opportunity to make this submission.

Regards,

Axel Wilke

Ph 03 343 8221 (day) 03 366 9493 (evening)
axel@ViaStrada.co.nz