

14 August 2022

Let's Get Wellington Moving – Golden Mile consultation

By email: goldenmile@lqwm.nz

About the Chamber

The Wellington Chamber of Commerce and Business Central (the Chamber) is a business membership association, representing around 3,600 members throughout Central New Zealand (Gisborne to Taranaki and down to Nelson). We have represented business in the Wellington Region for 165 years, and advocates for the interest of business, and the development of our region's economy.

The Chamber works closely with the Wellington City Council (WCC) to ensure Wellington's business community is consulted on the changes that impact them. Our advocacy remains consistent, and we continue to play a constructive role in the future development of our city.

Our Comments

The Chamber writes to offer constructive feedback on the proposed changes to the Golden Mile.

We wish to reflect and support the submission of RetailNZ, as retail businesses will be at the forefront of impacts of this proposal. We, like RetailNZ, note that the fundamental flaw of these proposals is that business is given insufficient to no consideration (for example in the weightings for decision making) nor is there due consideration of the economic impacts for the city. Taken objectively, this is extraordinary given the commercial ratepayer base and potential impact on the city.

The Golden Mile, and the businesses that operate along it, make up the core of the Wellington Region's GDP and ratepayer base, so it is essential any renovations get the settings right and allow the Golden Mile businesses to flourish.

These businesses are diverse, as are their needs, but most pressing across all sectors is the ongoing shortage of labour, and ability to attract talent to Wellington. Central city businesses are strained for staff – so any changes to the Golden Mile should make it more accessible for those working in the CBD.

We are concerned by the scale of carpark removal and apparent limited gains for bus access. Cars and buses are the most common forms of commuting into Wellington yet will benefit little from the proposals. This risks helping only a small section of Wellington's population while making the central city less accessible to many.

We also wish to note inconsistencies with the consultation process. Specifically – the ‘transform’ option as initially described did not include the dedicated cycle paths now outlined in the draft designs. The inclusion of changes that appear later and without true and sufficient explanation sets a bad precedent for consultation and risks further alienating business along the Golden Mile, who feel their views have not been considered on the project.

The Chamber recommends:

- A robust economic analysis that considers the experiences of businesses, and how the changes will impact their customer base and business model.
- Further modelling of the impact on public transport numbers, courier and freight access.
- A full city car parking plan, that outlines how many CBD carparks will be removed between LGWM, and intersecting Council initiatives.
- That bus accessibility is prioritised, and parking access is considered in the planning, so the changes help get Wellington moving and benefit commuters and businesses in the CBD.
- LGWM strongly consider compensation for businesses whose operations will be disrupted by the high level of disruption, and changes to the CBD.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit on this important project. We look forward to further engagement on behalf of the Wellington Business Community.

Ngā mihi nui,

The Advocacy Team,

Wellington Chamber of Commerce