

# MT COOK! MOBILISED

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15 July 2010

Stuart Bullen  
Senior Traffic Engineer  
Wellington City Council  
P.O. Box 2199  
Wellington

Dear Mr. Bullen,

## **Bidwill Street-Wallace St Intersection**

I am writing on behalf of Mt Cook Mobilised to convey some reaction, primarily from residents of Bidwill Street, to the proposals in your letter to residents of 25 June for improvements to the Bidwill Street-Wallace St Street intersection. This submission is intended to accompany the responses that individual residents are also sending to you.

In your letter you propose two main changes:

1. a change to the phasing of lights at the intersection to provide pedestrians with a dedicated six seconds of 'green' time before vehicles can exit Bidwill Street;
2. removal of six kerbside parking spaces in Bidwill Street adjacent to the intersection (three each side of the street) to allow for the creation of an extra lane of traffic and both left and straight ahead/right turning lanes.

Residents of Bidwill Street are generally supportive of the first proposal but have strong misgivings about the removal of parking spaces to enable creation of left and right-turning lanes. This may have the effect of encouraging even more traffic to use Bidwill Street, an outcome that we definitely do not want, and the removal of parking spaces will in fact detrimentally affect the residents in the houses near them. Availability of parking is already a difficulty in the street, and this proposal will just add to that.

The residents of Bidwill Street would however wish to point out that the most important problem that needs to be addressed is that of traffic flows and speed in the street. We consider that the difficulty being experienced in terms of driver impatience at the foot of the street is in large part a consequence of the amount of traffic in the street, something that the street is not designed for, or capable of easily handling.

We consider that there is an urgent need to implement every practical, legal means of reducing non-resident, migrating through traffic and resultant congestion. Second, we want to see safe,

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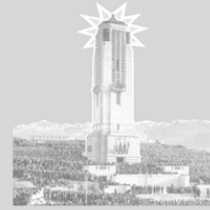


unimpeded pedestrian and traffic conditions throughout Bidwill Street and its intersections, and ability of all residents to access their properties safely and with minimal hindrance.

Residents of Bidwill Street are divided on the question of whether the removal of six parking spaces at the foot of the street will relieve traffic pressure at the lower end of the street. Some residents view the removal of parking spaces as a price that probably has to be paid to achieve safer traffic flows and pedestrian access through the street. They point out that upper Bidwill Street residents already live without the benefit of any on-street parking outside their properties. Clearer visibility and sight lines for motorists and pedestrians may be another beneficial outcome of the proposed deletion of parking spaces at the lower end of the street.

Other residents, particularly those of us who live at the foot of the street, are opposed to the proposal. I set out below the points that have been raised in support of this view:

1. The proposal will potentially create a higher-speed roading solution than currently exists. What is currently proposed will make the street more attractive to those who use it as a 'rat run' to avoid having to go down to Vivian Street before they can head south or East from Brooklyn Road.
2. The creation of left and right turning lanes would only make sense if left or right turn signals were included in the traffic lights phasing. This would however add a possible further waiting period for drivers and impede traffic flows.
3. At present the vehicles turning left from Bidwill Street into Wallace Street need to give a wide berth in order to avoid colliding with the power pole on the outer edge of the intersection. If two traffic lanes from Bidwill Street are implemented the vehicles turning left will stray into the new right turning lane in order to avoid hitting the power pole. As well, the left turn is already tight in order to avoid the cars in Wallace St waiting to turn right into Bidwill Street.
4. This difficult manoeuvre also applies to the left turn into Bidwill Street from Wallace Street which necessitates a wide swing to make the turn (as the vehicle turning left from Wallace Street in your photo shows).
5. The presence of the six on-street car parks does result in narrow lanes on Bidwill St, forcing a slower speed negotiation than the proposal would create. The parked cars act as a form of chicane, particularly when there are eastbound cars queued, and most drivers slow appreciably to traverse the area.



6. The proposal removes the total quantity of on-street coupon car parks in lower Bidwill Street, where there is already difficulty in parking. Both the resident car parks and coupon car parks in this part of the street are well utilised during the day and the night.
7. The removal of car parks reduces the ability for properties to density, which is a WCC objective in the District Plan for existing residential areas. Bidwill Street lies in the "Inner Residential" zone. Existing property densities already rely on the on-street provision of car parks. Some houses have already densified their properties, and the additional household units may have relied on the on-street car parks for their Resource Consents.
8. The proposal does not comply with the Wellington Region's travel demand management objectives (District Plans & Regional Land Transport Strategy objective 9) or meet the environmental objectives set out in RLTS 8. The proposed changes do not appear to be in line with regional transportation policies.
9. The proposed changes could be termed "predict and provide" which continuously expands the roading network, and entrenches private vehicle use. Mt Cook Mobilised by
10. contrast would prefer to see more constraints on through-traffic in residential areas such as Bidwill Street, and generally favours measures to increase the use of public transport.

Nevertheless, we do also agree that something needs to be done to improve pedestrian safety and to deter cars from exiting Bidwill Street too quickly.

Residents are concerned at the sheer volume of traffic in the street, especially in peak hours. Those living at the lower end of the street report that when the traffic gets backed up in the mornings, they cannot even move their cars out of their ( off street) car parks for two or more phases of the lights due to the backlog of cars coming down Bidwill Street. This is also in part due to the left turning cars needing to give way to cars coming out of Wellington High School and turning right during school drop off times. When this happens even the front car on Bidwill Street cannot get through the green light phase.

We have therefore considered the actions that might be taken to resolve the general traffic difficulties in Bidwill Street. You talked about several of them at the recent Mt Cook Mobilised meeting.

The most important step that we believe needs to be taken is to investigate ways of reducing the traffic flows on Bidwill Street:

1. You have informed us that the Council will undertake traffic modeling on the effect of possible changes to traffic directions at adjacent intersections (e.g. the Willis St/ Webb

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St / Aro St intersection) and ascertain whether these might help to reduce the traffic flows on the street. We support that and are keen to see the results of this work;

2. We are also interested in looking at the introduction of some traffic calming measures such as planting of trees along the verges of the street at certain intervals;
3. We would support further investigation into making the upper part of Bidwill Street a one-way street. Not all residents are keen on this but it needs to be looked at as a possible solution to the traffic problems being experienced.

We would propose the following additional actions for your consideration in terms of the overall traffic problems:

4. Reinstate and enforce the signage at both ends of the street that no trucks are to transit Bidwill Street unless they are conducting business in the street. Residents report that many trucks (including the Council's own vehicles) are ignoring the current restrictions and are transiting through Bidwill Street without business reasons to be there.
5. Consider whether other measures that will denote Bidwill Street as a residential area, not a through-route, are feasible. Residential signage or other road treatment should indicate a slow speed zone.
6. Install "School" signs on Bidwill Street indicating the presence of Wellington High School. School signs are intended to alert drivers to the presence of the school and pedestrians, and would alert drivers on Bidwill Street to the greater requirement for pedestrian safety.

In respect of the actual situation on the pedestrian crossing on Wallace Street, I would note that during the meeting that I had with you, Stavros Michael, and your other colleagues on 17 June, there were also some other actions that you proposed could be taken. As these are not specified in your proposal I wonder if these might be worth considering as well:

7. I understand that it would be feasible to upgrade the actual traffic lights. Your colleagues advised that newer versions have better light visibility (including the pedestrian signals).
8. Investigate whether the street lighting at the intersection may need some attention/upgrade.

We would also request the Council to give further consideration to installation of a specific pedestrian phase allowing crossing in all directions (Barnes Dance). You indicated in your preliminary advice to Mt Cook Mobilised that Council experience is that such phasing creates a risk that an increased number of drivers will 'run the lights'. Residents are however still keen that this option be fully investigated at this intersection.

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Mt Cook Mobilised, and the residents of Bidwill Street, looks forward to your response to these proposals. As noted earlier, several of the resident families will be writing to you individually. May I repeat my offer to you to coordinate a meeting of Bidwill Street residents to discuss any proposal that Council may bring forward to resolve the general traffic problems in the street.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Tanner', with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Ross Tanner,  
31 Bidwill Street  
for Mt Cook Mobilised