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To Wellington City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Thorndon Connection

For any further inquiries, please contact:

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# Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

**We work on systemic change for the equity of disabled people**

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a not-for-profit pan-impairment Disabled People’s Organisation run by and for disabled people.

**We recognise:**

* Māori as Tangata Whenua and [Te Tiriti o Waitangi](https://www.archives.govt.nz/discover-our-stories/the-treaty-of-waitangi) as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand;
* disabled people as experts on their own lives;
* the [Social Model of Disability](https://www.odi.govt.nz/guidance-and-resources/guidance-for-policy-makes/) as the guiding principle for interpreting disability and impairment;
* the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html) as the basis for disabled people’s relationship with the State;
* the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](https://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/) as Government agencies’ guide on disability issues; and
* the [Enabling Good Lives Principles](https://www.enablinggoodlives.co.nz/about-egl/egl-approach/principles/), [Whāia Te Ao Mārama: Māori Disability Action Plan](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/whaia-te-ao-marama-2018-2022-maori-disability-action-plan), and [Faiva Ora: National Pasifika Disability Disability Plan](https://www.moh.govt.nz/notebook/nbbooks.nsf/0/5E544A3A23BEAECDCC2580FE007F7518/%24file/faiva-ora-2016-2021-national-pasifika-disability-plan-feb17.pdf) as avenues to disabled people gaining greater choice and control over their lives and supports.

**We drive systemic change through:**

* **Leadership:** reflecting the collective voice of disabled people, locally, nationally and internationally.
* **Information and advice:** informing and advising on policies impacting on the lives of disabled people.
* **Advocacy:** supporting disabled people to have a voice, including a collective voice, in society.
* **Monitoring:** monitoring and giving feedback on existing laws, policies and practices about and relevant to disabled people.

# The Submission

DPA welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Wellington City Council’s plans for the Thorndon Connection.

There is much to commend in this plan given that it focuses on ways to improve accessibility for walkers, cyclists and motorists, including disabled people.

DPA is very pleased to see that the following features have been incorporated into the plan:

* New separated bike lanes on right side of the road
* New raised pedestrian crossings
* New car share spaces
* New mobility car parks
* Bike parking, seats, and planters in Tinakori Village
* Extending safer speed zones through Tinakori Village to Botanic Garden and through to Hill Street
* Removal of two bus stops to improve bus travel times
* Reduced on-street parking and changed parking restrictions in the area

These elements will improve the safety and accessibility of this important central transit corridor in Wellington.

DPA received some very positive feedback on this proposal from members, who agree with the changes - one of them walks quite frequently in the area and feels intimidated by the high number of vehicles which pass through it when they do so. For this reason, they have tended to avoid roads and use safe crossings to get into town. They see the proposed changes as positive given that it will create more pedestrian crossings and lower traffic volumes.

They also highlighted the Thorndon Connection proposals as important for everyone as this will provide an opportunity to remedy issues including where e-scooter riders should go. One member is a disabled e-scooter user and believes that there is currently a great deal of risk involved for motorists, e-cycle users and pedestrians in having to navigate around one another safely due the narrowness of the streets.

 In order to address this issue, DPA recommends that a separate cycle lane be created around the Molesworth and Murphy Street areas.

Our members also commented on the issue of mobility parking. They noted the negative commentary emanating from some corners of the community about people needing to drive and park everywhere, including disabled people. These members pointed out that there were already sufficient mobility parking spaces around the five schools, supermarkets and childcare centres in Thorndon which could all be utilised, alongside the new mobility car parks being added. Another positive that was noted by them was that children could get themselves more easily to schools and people with mobility impairments could get around more safely without having to navigate ‘wall to wall cars.’

Other DPA members have recommended the need for Tactile Surface Ground Indicators (TGSIs) at all pedestrian crossings (with Blind and Low Vision New Zealand best able to advise on this), and to ensure that the camber of any raised pedestrian crossings and the one raised bus stop being proposed isn’t too steep for wheelchair users.

DPA would like to see the Thorndon Connection proceed as planned with the inclusion of the recommended changes below.

## DPA’s recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** that the Thorndon Connection proceeds as planned on the proviso that the recommendations for change we have made are incorporated into the final plan.

**Recommendation 2:** that a separate cycle lane is added in the Molesworth and Murphy Street areas to accommodate cyclists, e-scooter and other micro-mobility vehicle users.

**Recommendation 3:** that TGSIs are placed at all pedestrian crossings after consultation with Blind and Low Vision New Zealand.

**Recommendation 4:** that the camber of any raised pedestrian crossings and the one raised bus stop being proposed isn’t too steep for wheelchair users.