

Ana Nicholls

From: BUS: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 21 February 2019 7:50 AM
To: Soon Teck Kong
Subject: FW: Response letter

Morning Soon,

I have received another email (below) from [Withheld under section 7(2)(a)] about whether there has been any discussions about if we would consider reassessing the traffic timing signals at the Victoria Street and Karo Drive intersection.

Do you have any time today to meet and discuss options? I am happy to come over to MOB.

Please let me know.

Thanks

Ana Nicholls

Assurance Advisor | Wellington City Council

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Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

From: [Withheld under section 7(2)(a)]
Sent: Wednesday, 20 February 2019 3:59 PM
To: BUS: Assurance; Justin Lester; Councillor Sarah Free
Subject: Re: Response letter

Hi, as I'm yet to have any decent response in over a week, I'm now cc'ing in Sarah Free.

Sarah, I'm now emailing you as the portfolio leader of cycling. Sorry for the lengthy email, but it has been a long process. I've tried to summarise it as best I can.

Over the past several years, I've occasionally had experiences while cycling through intersections where I enter on a green, then the light turns red while I'm travelling through, and other cars then get a green light and come towards me while I'm still in the intersection. I've told the council about this, and no action has been taken.

Recently I met with [Withheld under section 7(2)(a)] who I believe is in charge of planning the traffic light timing at WCC to discuss this problem. I showed him some videos of it happening, to which he ignored and said there was no issue. After

talking a bit more, and showing the videos more, he finally agreed that there may be an issue, but then said "we can't cater for minorities". To be clear here, minorities means "cyclists" to [redacted] as I understood it. At that point I left the meeting in disgust, then Tim chased me through the council buildings clearly unaware that what he said had caused offence.

Since then I have made requests under the LGOIMA about any policies that WCC had on cyclist speeds. The official response was none. I also made requests about the traffic light timing and length of the Victoria St/Karo Dr intersection, which I got a result back. As the WCC had no policies covering cyclist speeds, I used the wikipedia pages average speed of 15km/h. I used this speed to show that if a cyclist entered that particular intersection at 15km/h when the light was green, and the light turned orange/amber shortly after the cyclist entered, then the lights would continue to change to red, then other vehicles get a green light. At this point the cyclist would have made it only 75% of the distance of the intersection. I then told the council this, as I thought that seemed like a valid safety concern backed up with facts.

The council came back and suddenly seemed to have policies on cyclist speeds, taken from the AUSTRROAD traffic engineering practical guide, which dictates that all light sequences should be programmed for a cyclist travelling at at least 20km/h. They also defined the intersection I mentioned as a "mixed environment".

Personally, I find 20km/h quite fast, especially on an incline. I requested that the council ask their staff whether they ever travel less than 20km/h (note that any speed less than that could mean that the cyclist has opposing traffic gets a green light before they exit the intersection). The council declined that request as substantial to collate. I also have suggested that the council may have details on the bike share ONZO which I have personally ridden, and struggle to get 20km/h (very sweaty hard work).

I should note that the intersection I am discussing with the council was just purely an example, there are plenty more around Wellington that have much more substantial inclines, and all of which are expecting cyclists to travel 20km/h at minimum.

I then asked the Cycle Aware Wellington group whether anyone had had similar situations to myself, or whether they ever cycled less than 20km/h, or **always** travelled above it (which is the speed that the council uses to determine safety). You can find the results of the poll at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/> (I believe you have to have a facebook account, but not necessarily join the group, but it is a good group). For clarity, majority of the responses said they travelled **below** 20km/h.

I then told the council, so they have a bit more of an idea of whether the designs of traffic signal timing is indeed safe. They then finally came back to me what "mixed environment" means. From the Austroad standard on cycling aspects, it means that cyclists have an operating speed of "< 20km/h"

Table 2.3: Bicycle network functions

Network	Movement and place type	Network function	Cyclist operating speed
Regional bicycle network ⁽¹⁾	Significant movement with some place aspects	High-quality, high-priority routes to permit quick, unhindered travel between the major regions of cities, towns or urban areas	25–40 km/h
Local bicycle routes	Some movement with some place aspects	High-quality routes with seamless connections to regional routes. These routes connect the local street system to the major regional routes	20–30 km/h
Mixed environments	Some movement with some place aspects	Low speed, low volume local access to residential destinations in a 'low stress' shared environment	< 20 km/h
	Significant movement with significant place aspects	Low speed, high volume access to key destinations (such as within a CBD) often shared with other users such as pedestrians and motorised vehicles	
	Some movement with significant place aspects	Low speed, high volume access to key destinations often used for other uses (e.g. strip shopping centre)	

Now, at this point, I was quick to point out to the council that their assumption that cyclists travel **at least 20km/h** is wrong, and is clearly backed up by the same standards they use. I have requested that they go and fix the light sequences to be safe for all road users (ie, those minorities such as cyclists). This I would have thought would be something the council would treat seriously, especially given all the promotion about cycling around town and how safe and quick it is. Turns out the council's reaction to that was ... to simply ignore me, and not do anything still. I have tried contacting the Mayor, but have had no response.

So Sarah, if you have made it this far, I thank you for your time. I understand that you are most likely busy. I would like you to speak with your fellow councillors and discuss this, and the responses that I have been given by the council. I believe you are the best suited for this as the portfolio leader of cycling. I look forward to hearing back from you. I'm happy to discuss this via email, phone, or in person.

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Tue, 19 Feb 2019 at 09:23, **Withheld under section 7(2)(a)** wrote:

Hi Ana,

Any update on these discussions? I'm a bit confused why after I pointed out that WCC aren't actually following the standards properly I get radio silence. I'll reiterate my concerns again:

I requested the intersection length and timing of a single intersection, and showed that travelling at 15km/h a cyclist would only make it 75% of the way through if they entered on a green, before other vehicles get a green light in opposing traffic flows.

The 15km/h was based on various sources on the internet from around the world. This was because WCC officially said they had no speed policies for cyclists.

WCC then said they actually did have policies, under the austroad standards, where all cyclists are expected to travel at minimum 20km/h. With this response I was given the jargon "mixed environment" which I did not get told where that was defined for several weeks.

I then asked questions of WCC to make sure they were aware that not all cyclists actually travel over 20km/h. This included asking for any data notified to WCC, any cyclist speeds of WCC staff, and also any speeds discovered while consulting with ONZO about the bike share programme they run. Most of this was refused, or shown that WCC did not hold the data.

I then ran a facebook poll which showed that *the large majority* of responses (over a hundred) travelled below 20km/h, and only 1/3 actually always travelled above 20km/h. This was told to the council.

At this stage, the council should have been thinking, mmm, maybe that austroad standard might not be as safe as it could. I mean, maybe have a bit of buffer, just incase right...

Soon after I told the council of the facebook poll, I was then finally told what "mixed environment" meant. This meant that cyclists travel **less than 20km/h**. This is a gross contradiction to the councils assumption that all cyclists travel **more than 20km/h**. I'm sure anyone can see that you can't travel both less than, and more than any speed ever. It is simply impossible, you have to choose one or the other. I would expect the council to pick the safest option, and that happily aligns with the austroad standard for "mixed environments".

After that, I simply get no meaningful responses, just that "discussions" are still taking place. Taking note of your response at <https://fyi.org.nz/request/9377-any-correspondence-relating-to-traffic-light-timing-issues#comment-2700>, this seems that there are simply no discussions going on, apart from filing a ticket away in your system then letting it rot.

I will note, this is something that I have told the council about over **several years**, and to date, the council has made no effort to actually fix the problem. Even worse, I was verbally abused by one of the council's staff and told that my safety doesn't matter because **I am a minority**. Yes thats right, WCC do not care about the safety of minorities. Is this the councils official view on the subject? I am guessing so, as that staff member still works there, and I believe is still in charge of this very case where **absolutely nothing** has been done.

Come up everyone, lets just move forward, start putting an effort into cycling safety, instead of just dismissing it as not a problem. I have proved to you that this is a meaningful problem, and has safety concerns. I really really really hope that the council actually steps up and does something meaningful about the safety of cyclists (especially given all those fancy billboards and posters you are putting up around the city promoting cycling, I wonder what everyone will think if they knew that internally you have completely the opposite opinion).

As for having a call, I'm more than happy to have a call if you have something to say other than "discussions are happening". Perhaps if we set up a meeting with myself and the people having the discussions. I will even be happy meeting with Withheld under section 7(2)(a) again at this stage if others are present. I'm extremely disappointed how this has been dragged out so long. The council should surely just be able to admit that perhaps they were wrong...

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Fri, 15 Feb 2019 at 08:45, BUS: Assurance <Assurance@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Morena Withheld under

As previously stated, the relevant teams are in discussions about the traffic signal timings in relation to cyclist speed.

I will be in contact shortly to answer your concerns and if you would like to talk over the phone, I am happy to call you.

Thanks

Ana

Ana Nicholls

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Me Heke Ki Pōneke

From: Withheld under section 7(2)(a)

Sent: Wednesday, 13 February 2019 4:22 PM

To: BUS: Assurance; Justin Lester

Subject: Re: Response letter

Just another update. 115 people say they occasionally travel less than 20km/h, 13 people say they always travel less than 20km/h, and 46 people say they always travel *above* 20km/h.

I really hope that this shows the council that there are a non negligible amount of people that travel at a slower speed than 20km/h. As discussed before, this means that there are plenty of intersections that would mean that the cyclist can enter on a green, and still be inside the intersection when the "all-red" phase ends,

and other vehicles have a green light to enter the intersection. This is utterly unsafe, as it is encouraging other vehicles to go into the intersection while a cyclist is still attempting to get across safely.

I will re-iterate. I'm incredibly upset at the council's attitude towards this. I have mentioned this many times before, got told that I'm a minority that safety doesn't matter by a staff member in charge of designing safe intersections. I then worked out how the intersection is not safe given the timings and distances provided by the council. From that, I was told that the council would not do anything. I was told the standard the council is following to design these intersections, but many of the references were left out. After finally getting the appropriate references, I noted that the council is not implementing the standards they follow correctly. Then I get radio silence, which I assume once again is the council refusing to do anything to improve the safety standard.

The Victoria St/Karo Drive intersection is currently unsafe for cyclists. I would like to see the council fix this ASAP. This fix should take into account of cyclists travelling below 20km/h (as it is defined as a "mixed environment", which defines cycle speed as "< 20 km/h"). This fix could be done quite easily by increasing the all-red time to adequately meet the needs of all road users so they can get across the intersection fully without other vehicles coming towards them.

I should note, the council has repeatably pointed out that they are attempting to promote a cycle safe culture. This discussion and actions from clearly show that this is not the case, and is most likely a publicity stunt for the council's upcoming election which is utterly terrible. You were voted in to make a difference to the people in Wellington Justin, not to just sit back and say you care and do absolutely positively nothing. This is your chance to make a serious impact towards the safety. This is not a single issue with myself as shown by the facebook comments (which has only been up a few days and already has hundreds of interactions...).

Look forward to a response, from anyone. Please do not treat this as an LGOIMA request. I am not requesting any information. I am making a complaint about safety concerns, backed up by real evidence. I would expect a response as such, and actions to resolve the safety concern.

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Tue, 12 Feb 2019 at 09:26, **Withheld under section 7(2)(a)** wrote:

Hi Ana,

Just to give an update on the results I've got via facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/>), which again is information I believe the council could have proactively got themselves. Would be interested in the councils comment to my previous email as well and whether any action is now being taken.

100 people say that they travel below 20km/h at some point, or have entered an intersection on a green and exited on a red while cars coming towards them.

12 people say that they *always* travel below 20km/h.

41 people say that they always travel *above* 20km/h.

In addition, some of the comments I would say would be beneficial for the council to read and comprehend.

- Many comments are relating to going uphill, that is the most common time people say they go slow (makes sense).
- A few mention that along Waterloo quay the intersections are very difficult for cyclists to go through (and many opt for the pedestrian instead). This is because from a standstill, the lights turn orange, then red far too quick for the cyclists to make it
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198234073569392&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%2312%22%7D, [https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198277726898360&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R6%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198277726898360&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R6%22%7D), [https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198655906860542&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D](https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198655906860542&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D))
- Struggling to gain more than 20 km/h on an onzo
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198451553547644&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R0%22%7D, https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198262036899929&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R9%22%7D)
- People actively slow down for intersections due to more accidents happening there
(https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198518956874237&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D)

One in particular that I thought was a really novel idea that is probably in that Austroad standard somewhere. https://www.facebook.com/groups/cawgtn/permalink/2198221406903992/?comment_id=2198665953526204&comment_tracking=%7B%22tn%22%3A%22R%22%7D

In Chch on one of the wide avenue crossings (made worse by being slightly on an angle) an additional set of detectors were installed in the middle of the intersection, placed such that only a bike would trigger both. If a bike is detected still crossing when

the lights change, an extra long all-red phase is introduced before the next green starts. Quite clever as it only needs to operate when needed, and no special knowledge is required by a rider to make it work. Worth trying in a few places?

If Chch can do it, why not Wellington? Have the council ever considered this?

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Mon, 11 Feb 2019 at 14:37, **Withheld under section 7(2)(a)** wrote:

Why thank you Ana.

I've cc'd in the Mayor again, as I believe that this has been handled very poorly by the teams involved (apart from the assurance team have been very good at dealing with my many emails), and there is an extreme lack of safety culture at the council that should get resolved.

Can you confirm that the council is aware that the Victoria/Karo intersection is classed as a "Mixed environment".

Can you also confirm that the council has explicitly only programmed the light sequence for cyclists travelling at 20km/h or above?

Can you also confirm that the council is aware that in a "Mixed environment" that the "Cyclist operating speed" is "< 20 km/h".

I would say given the above, the council can surely see that they are not following the standards they claim to follow to the letter. Can this intersection please be fixed at the earliest possible time to ensure the safety of cyclists travelling at speeds lower than 20 km/h.

Can the council then go and find any other intersection that has been termed "Mixed environment", and ensure that the light timing is appropriate for cyclists travelling at speeds lower than 20 km/h.

I should note, the council really should have put all this data together themselves. I had reported this many times over the years, included videos of it happening, requested the data, observed that it was unsafe, gave concrete examples of how it was unsafe. The councils' reaction to this was ... to do nothing. Now that we have gone back and forward for several months, I'm glad the council should now be able to see the error of their calculations, and look forward to seeing the safety of cyclists improve drastically throughout the city.

Cheers,

Withheld under
[Redacted]

On Mon, 11 Feb 2019 at 14:21, BUS: Assurance <Assurance@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi [Redacted]

It is on page 9 Table 2.3: **Bicycle network functions** of the Cycling Aspects of Austroad Guides.

Ana Nicholls

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Me Heke Ki Pōneke

From: Withheld under section 7(2)(a)
Sent: Monday, 11 February 2019 2:18 PM
To: BUS: Assurance
Subject: Re: Response letter

Hi Ana,

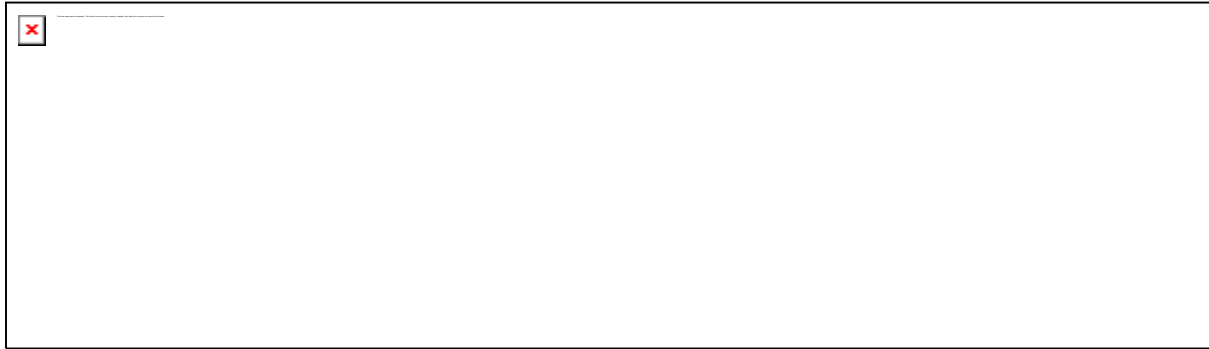
Thanks for that. Can I ask where that reference was? Or at least what the heading above "< 20 km/h" is? Kinda seems like you should be taking into account speeds less than 20, which is kinda what I've been saying all along.

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Mon, 11 Feb 2019 at 14:03, BUS: Assurance <Assurance@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi Withheld under



The term 'Mixed Environment' is quite broad as details above. The key is that the facility is not separate from other road users therefore you are correct in how you interpreted it . This is why Victoria Street would sit within this category.

Thanks

Ana Nicholls

Assurance Advisor | Wellington City Council

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Me Heke Ki Pōneke

From: Withheld under section 7(2)(a)

Sent: Monday, 11 February 2019 12:00 PM

To: Ana Nicholls

Subject: Re: Response letter

Hi Ana,

Thanks for that. What would make my request for council staff cycling less substantial? I was imagining an email to all staff asking the question of whether they are a cyclist, and if they travel less than 20km/h ever. You would get responses back either yes or no, which could be simply counted.

As mentioned above, I'm trying to get the council to realise that not all cyclists can maintain a speed of over 20km/h, and would hope that the council cares about its staff members (so would hopefully make the intersections safe for them, if not for Wellington residents). If you could help me with my request to get *some* data of council staff members travelling slower than 20km/h on a bicycle then that would be great. Otherwise if that is not possible, my next plan is to ask for a list of staff members who cycle, then a follow up request asking for a subset of those staff members whether they cycle at less than 20km/h ever.

Also, I'm very glad that the council is now discussing possibilities of slower cyclists. From the responses before today, it seemed as if the council had made its mind up to ignore any cyclists that can't travel at minimum 20km/h. I would be interested in being kept in the loop for these discussions (ie, whether the council is sticking with the 20km/h minimum and any reasons for that, or whether they are considering fixing the traffic light timing).

Cheers,

Withheld under
[Redacted]

On Mon, 11 Feb 2019 at 11:43, Ana Nicholls <Ana.Nicholls@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Hi [Redacted]

I have forward on your concerns and points about the maximum speed of 15km/h for the onzo bikes and how we are assessing some intersections based on a cyclist speed of 20km/h. I agree that there are different types of cyclists with different speeds that we need to consider.

The relevant teams are going to be meeting to discuss this and I have asked to be kept in the loop so I am able to report back to you.

As for your request to ask all Council staff if they are cyclists and travel less than 20km/h – I will have to decline under section 17(b) as this information does not exist. This would involve substantial time to retrieve and collate the data.

I have asked the Team about what 'Mixed Environment' refers to again to make sure that I understand it correctly and will get back to you.

I will be in touch.

Cheers

Ana Nicholls

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Me Heke Ki Pōneke

From: Withheld under section 7(2)(a)

Sent: Monday, 11 February 2019 11:19 AM

To: Ana Nicholls

Subject: Re: Response letter

Hi Ana,

Have you had a chance to process my remarks about the internal correspondence (verbal), the evidence of bikes going less than 20kmph, the onzo details. Also an acknowledgement that the request for all WCC staff member bicycle speeds would be good just so I can keep track of it.

Cheers,

Withheld under

On Thu, 7 Feb 2019 at 08:27, Ana Nicholls <Ana.Nicholls@wcc.govt.nz> wrote:

Morena Withheld under

Thank you for sharing what you want to achieve. This helps a lot.

I am on a course today and will address you questions and request when I am back in the office tomorrow.

Thanks
Ana

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.

----- Original message -----

From: **Withheld under section 7(2)(a)**
Date: 5/02/19 5:18 PM (GMT+12:00)
To: Ana Nicholls <Ana.Nicholls@wcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Response letter

Oh and just realised you didn't mention onzo speeds in your response. A prime example of bikes that *struggle* to get to 20km/h, and that sort of bike share scheme was not present back when austroads was developed.

On Tue, 5 Feb 2019, 4:47 PM **Withheld under section 7(2)(a)**

Withheld under section 7(2)(a)

Thanks for that Ana, outlines a lot.

As for my angle. I am all for cycle safety. I have brought up concerns about entering on a green and getting bombarded with cars coming towards me in the past, which I now know is because I travel less than 20km/h sometimes (up hill, after exercise, night time when less visibility, traffic, all sorts of things factor into my decision to travel at slower speeds in order to increase my safety). I am fully aware that if a light turns orange then I should stop, and I like to think I'm one of the good cyclists that actually does that (I see many that don't, or even run through a red). I'm more interested in the case where a cyclist enters on a green and gets caught out. We have narrowed that down to because you use the Austroads standard which appears to have a blanket rule of 20km/h for cyclists.

As for comments on your requests:

- * Twice you have referred to a "mixed environment", but I haven't found that in any of the references you've provided (or online in other austroad documents). I'm assuming it is because there are both cars and cyclists involved and no cycle lane at that point. If this is correct then we can call that finished.

- * You also originally referred to the incline being taken into account for the all red timing. From the austroad reference you provided last time, it appears that the incline is only taken into account for the yellow/amber timing, not for the all red timing, and not specifically for cyclists. Can you confirm that incline is not taken into account for cyclists during the all-red timing, and that all cyclists are assumed to travel at 20km/h no matter what the incline.

In the email, paragraph "Between the time you sent your email on 10 January – 11 January all the internal discussions have been verbal."

I request this information, and have requested this information originally as "internal correspondence", and I would regard that as information as held by the agency under s 2(4) of LGOIMA.

As for the paragraph started "In response to your request to have any evidence of any cyclists travelling at the speed

lower than 20km/h on any intersection without the Council's control".

I would have thought the evidence I've provided over the years (showing screenshots with speed information on them, or actual videos which you can gauge timing information) would have fallen under that. I had a feeling that other cyclists may have been caught out similar to myself, so any reference to cyclists entering on a green and exiting on a red would also fall under that (by definition they are not travelling 20km/h, otherwise they would exit before red). If no other cyclists have reported

any of that, then we can leave it with that, though I would hope that the council takes it on board that at least one person travels slower than 20km/h, which could indicate that more do as well.

As for the paragraph started "To answer your question about any submissions from public and internal employees

regarding cyclist speeds under 20km/h, in order to collate this information we would have to go through each submission individually."

Can we limit this to just council staff. This can be done with minimal time via an all staff email asking for responses on whether they are a cyclist, and if so whether they ever travel slower than 20km/h. Note that this information should be deemed to be held as per s 2(4) of LGOIMA.

The point I am trying to make here is that it is possible for cyclists to travel less than 20km/h, and maybe the standard you use could be wrong. I understand it is a national standard, but it was also designed a long time ago, before cycling was such a big culture. Now all sorts of cyclists ride on roads, including children (seen via personal experience, and many photos of the island bay cycle way debarkle), elderly (ditto), and just plain unfit (I've been caught behind them sometimes, and sometimes I am one of those people, and what better way to get fit than cycle!). I am hoping from this continual pressure to the council that they might put a tiny amount of resource into researching this, deciding for themselves that 20km/h is either perfectly fine (absolutely no cyclists travel less than 20km/h), or it might need changing (council could use their own policy, or push back to the national standard providing them with research).

In terms of the other intersection I requested timing for (and heavy vehicle stopping time) at the Willis/Chews intersection. You may have noticed that there was an article in the paper today (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/110350912/bus-drivers-running-red-lights-attract-almost-200-complaints-in-a-year>) about buses running red lights. Some top comments on that was that the orange light was too short for the buses to safely stop in time. I understand that you have probably designed that intersection (and others in the area) for the speed limit of 30km/h, however, when a bus has standing passengers they have to reduce their stopping time to ensure passenger safety and comfort. In the austroads references I've read on traffic signal timings, there was no indication that this is taken into account.

I hope that makes sense, and you can acknowledge my clarifications on the gathering of cycle speeds under 20km/h.

Cheers,

Withheld under
[Redacted]

On Tue, 5 Feb 2019 at 15:37, Ana Nicholls

<Ana.Nicholls@wcc.govt.nz<mailto:Ana.Nicholls@wcc.govt.nz>> wrote:

Kia ora Withheld under
[Redacted]

Attached is your response which addresses multiple requests and the concerns you have raised regarding cycle speeds and traffic light timings.

Between the time you sent your email on 10 January – 11 January all the internal discussions have been verbal.

I have worked with multiple Council networks to collate this data and I am comfortable with Councils decision. I have asked if I could call you to talk to understand what you want to achieve and I am still

happy to do this. It will help with understanding your why and can better help provide what you need.
Please let me know when you are available.

Cheers
Ana

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