

Boulter Consulting
urban and transport planning

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mid-year 2015

Winter is almost upon us, I hope you're keeping warm, and hopefully your workload is in 'the goldilocks zone' – not too much, not too little.

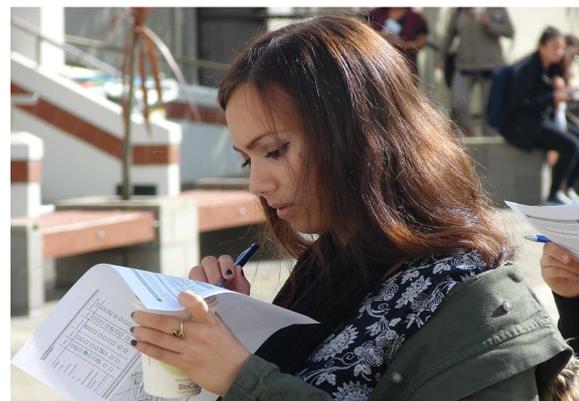
I am coming towards the end of a very interesting semester lecturing Massey University students in 'transport and urban planning'. I'm also well on the way towards a draft cycling strategy for Masterton District Council, my client of several years.

My Massey students are old hands at student life – third years – but not yet facing the pressures of finding a job (it's a four-year degree). This gives the paper some depth. I start outlining visionary ideas like garden cities (in vogue from about 1900) – and then, "something completely different", traffic-data-based forecasts of car growth and related fields like cost-benefit analysis and traffic modelling. The rest of the course fills in the gaps between these!

After a particularly gritty essay on Auckland's transport woes, the group project was a survey of student-perceived 'barriers to walking and cycling' – why, as students, don't you? Is it that you have a car? Is the free city-to-campus bus service too attractive a competitor? Is it the hill, climbing up from the river? Or the perceived traffic danger?



*Come on students! Roll up!
You get this*



. . . and we get this!

This project is actually part of something bigger, and every week I am coaching them to get as good a result as we can, to then get combined with an on-line survey and a previous survey of university staff. There's a lot of interest in government circles currently on why people don't cycle, so I hope the outcome will meet a real need. Already I've had one City Councillor tell me he's eager to see the results – it's a piece of joint research with Palmerston North City Council. One of the more 'fun' tasks was grappling with 400 sausages, accompanying bread, ketchup, mustard, paper napkins, and barbecue equipment, as well as

being interviewed by one of my students in his role as a live presenter on student campus radio. Nice work if you can get it

Meanwhile in Masterton, the Council's Cycling Advisory Group, realising it's high time for a revision of their 2009 Cycling Strategy, has charged me with writing one. The field is wide open on how to approach this! Only a few years ago, the 'rules' were quite fixed: you took the longstanding template of the "four E's" of "engineering, education, enforcement and encouragement", and fitted "strategy actions" to them, including a proposed "cycle route network" with a bit of help from others including the local Road Safety Co-ordinator. That, however, was before the days of the NZ Cycle Trail, the 2014 Cycling Safety Panel report and Urban Cycleways Fund (nothing like a funding boost to get everyone's ears pricking up) and a massive – I'd say seismic – change in how cycling is perceived publicly.

I've been writing cycling strategies for decades, and have done some innovative ones in my time – like in 2005 for the then Banks Peninsula District, which broke all the established rules because the topography, economy, pattern of settlements, and issues were so different from the typical biggish urban areas from which the traditional cycling strategy template had been drawn. Another innovative one was 2011 for Carterton, literally on my doorstep, where again I went by what was needed rather than 'how it's been done before'. Masterton's will look at the needs of 'getting around town', an urban cycle route network, and types of 'cycling facilities' we might use – but without the assumption that we need loads of engineering, because Masterton's traffic volumes and roads are generally quite small. This will then be melded with the burgeoning cycle touring which has descended on the wider Wairarapa, fuelled by the *NZ Cycle Trail* and some very successful local cycle tour companies. Greater Wellington Regional Council has also set up a 'Wai Bike' Facebook page (like the pun?), aimed at the "interested but concerned" sector – those who'd like to cycle but are concerned about the traffic – which will fuel yet more interest, as will also the Hastings-based *Bikes in School* initiative soon coming to town.

I've been getting a little bit loud in recent months, because I remember very important lessons being learnt in the 1980s and early 1990s (longer than almost anyone else in NZ has been working in this field), the most important of which was that you will not get new people cycling just by providing 'separated' or 'segregated' cycleways (an idea I and maybe you have heard recently). Rather, you get this through an appropriate range of higher-level policies and actions across the wider road network and urban form. Have a nose at my website's *News* and *Writings* pages to see what I mean.

Certainly, it is an interesting time to be working in this field! Till next time, and may your life and business go well over the rest of this year.

Roger

.and roll up they did!

