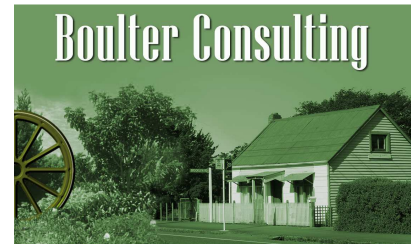


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I mentioned a few years ago I was writing a book. Well I now have a draft text.

Called *'Planning for Walking and Cycling in New Zealand'*, it recently won an award at the 9th June WSP Golden Foot Awards. These awards are presented every two years by walking advocacy group Living Streets Aotearoa.

Look elsewhere for how to design a cycleway or plan a cycle route network!

Instead this book asks why, after over half a century of engineering 'cycling facility' infrastructure and route networks, New Zealand still has a transport system underwhelming for walking and cycling, with very low uptake of these forms of transport.



Auckland's famous 'pink path' would have been unthinkable 20 years ago – a sign of how expectations have changed. It now looks set to be joined by the 'Northern Pathway' walking and cycling facility across the Auckland Harbour Bridge and onwards across North Shore, itself long the subject of aspirations and campaigning.

I'm comparing with places like the Netherlands, with its stratospherically high cycling levels. Unrealistic? Not when you look at the reasons (which are not that Holland is flat).

We need to look beyond 'cycleways' to philosophical values behind the first motorways, 'progress', 'advancement', technology, a focus on statistical data (at the expense of real-life anecdote), and reasons for the 'road hierarchy' idea, all of which culminated in clearing away the old to make way for motorway networks and dehumanising tower blocks – 1950s/60s 'rational-comprehensive' urban and transport planning. Yes, New Zealand got this, and separated bikeways were to get bikes out of the way of cars.

1960s New York and 1970s Netherlands saw enormously influential fight-back movements, sneered at by officials but which after a decade or two completely turned transport planning upside-down by elevating human beings above technical data. The New York movement, replicated internationally, led to sociology, community development and 'public participation' being recognised as every bit as important as technical science. The Netherlands movement led to different ways of planning roads and road networks which in time gave us the well-known Dutch plentiful cycling, 'traffic calming' and spaces where people on foot feel safe.

But the old ideas have remained very strong in New Zealand. Even 'integrated' transport planning studies, which grew from 1980s sophistication of modelling and continued to

today's *Let's Get Wellington Moving* and *Auckland Transport Alignment Project* exercises, have compromised difficult choices, leading to ineffectiveness. Through combining different transport measures which work against each other, the results have continued the problems we have been familiar with: road traffic congestion, insufficient public transport, unappealing 'cycling facilities', and cities not easy to walk around.

I've recounted New Zealand history of planning for walking and cycling in some detail, because lessons learnt since the 1990s have been forgotten leading to old mistakes being repeated. For example, the best way to help cycling is to reduce and slow motor traffic (in the ways the Dutch have done), not to build separate cycling infrastructure.

In this book you will read about 1980s official cycling initiatives in our larger cities (especially Christchurch); emergence of niche-area cycling expertise through the late 1990s; recognition that walking should be actively planned for (and that, unlike other forms of transport, it is more about face-to-face lingering rather than movement); work since 1999 culminating in the Government's 2005 *Getting There: On Foot, By Cycle* walking and cycling strategy; and a post-2014 official surge of interest in cycling focused on big separate bikeway infrastructure, which has left walking seriously neglected (and in some cases compromised).

I've lived through most of this history, and made some of it. Also in this book I've brought down to earth the more fanciful 'autonomous vehicles' hype – the human-scale realism of walking and cycling beat any amount of technical sophistication – and warned against an assertive insistence some of the push for cycling has come to acquire, which needs standing up to.

I close with good news! Over the last 20 years there has been a massive shift in how we see different forms of transport. We rely on cars more than ever, but (younger people especially) wish we didn't need to. Some public transport has gone up-market. Cycling has become 'the new golf'. More and central urban space has been given over to walking.



More and more urban streets and spaces, once thronged with cars, have been turned over to people on foot. Around the world, businesses which once opposed this as likely to dry up trade have instead seen trade boom, as more and more people like being there. The time may be right for walking and cycling to be more central in transport planning.

The very recent *Innovating Streets* government programme, and Covid-19 restrictions, have allowed people to experiment and envision a world where transport is a whole lot different – with walking and cycling more central. This, I suggest, is 'on the right side of history'.

If you wish our towns, cities, and transport systems could be prosperous with walking and cycling at the centre of transport planning (which is where the prosperity comes from; compare the Dutch), then look at my website and read on. While I refine the text further and add some material to bring it to final publication.

Roger