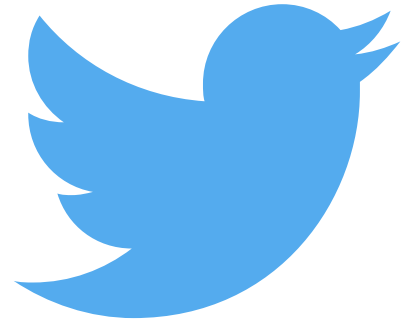


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**Pop up library opens in  
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**Armed men steal cash  
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May 12, 2019 8 comments



by *Benoit Pette*

Our city is the greatest on the planet. It has everything one can hope for, without compromise. It's compact. It is embroiled in Nature, and getting out is easy. It is peaceful, and yet, when one looks for entertainment, Wellington is spoiled with options: cafes, restaurants, concerts and events. The city is vibrant, and its communities welcoming, friendly, inviting.

Getting to another city, in New Zealand or overseas, is simple and affordable. Employment is high and there seem to be opportunities for many, migrants or natives. The melting-pot is inclusive and respectful. No wonder this capital is so sought after: it is a jewel.

But things are changing, mostly due to demographic pressure and intense economic growth. These challenges are asking for a greater understanding of what makes Wellington so wonderful, so special, to preserve this fragile balance and not becoming yet another big centre. These considerations should not get in the way of development, but demand for smart, creative ways to ensure we, as a community, do the right thing, in the right order. Timing is everything, especially considering the immense pressure humans are putting on the planet worldwide; economic growth can't afford to be at Nature's cost anymore, and Wellington should not be spared from this constraint. If anything, it should be a model, its size allowing it to be take bold decisions and show the world development can be executed in harmony with Nature, not at its expenses.

Some measures are set at a country level, and rightly so, in order to transition to a sustainable economy. Updating the building code to make houses more energy efficient, planting trees, accomplishing 100%

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## Recent comments

Brendan:

Gillian > I seriously doubt it. Has there ever been an fatal accident at the location? I'm foreca...

Gillian Tompsett:

Chris, thanks for responding but ramps separate pedestrians and cyclists from traffic, reducing the ...

Kerry:

Chris - European experience is that underpasses are fine if they are reasonably wide (especially if ...

Roger Artfield:

A pedestrian 'flyover' / overbridge could be a tourist attraction! I wonder if Peter Jackson and Jam...

TrevorH:

@Chris Calvi-Freeman: so spending \$150 million plus on a white elephant

renewable power production and tomorrow maybe, incentives for electric powered vehicles are steps in the right direction. They ensure this transition is fair and achievable, regardless of income levels.

It is utterly wrong that poorer households continue to suffer the consequences of pollution while wealthier families get access to cleaner vehicles. These programs need to be echoed at a local level to address specifics of each city and each town.

For Wellington, economic and demographic growth should be addressed in a managed and sustainable manner. To start with, a clear, transparent and solid plan for phasing out diesel buses is needed, with proper metrics for the public to measure progress. All diesel buses should be gone by 2025. Not only would such a transition be good for the environment (and for the health and well-being of residents), it would be immense opportunity for local businesses too.

All forms of active transport should be promoted and supported, such as biking. With traffic increasing, riding a bike is rightly perceived as being dangerous. Promoting cycling can easily be achieved by providing safe, protected corridors – the Wellington City Council is starting a journey to deploy more of them. Countries from Northern Europe are often cited as models which have given ample priority to this form of clean, quiet way of transportation, with countless benefits for those on their bikes and for those around them.

The runway extension should be put on hold, or simply blocked, until we get guarantees no additional kerosene-powered planes are added to the daily air traffic. Planes flying on renewable fuel or on batteries, once available, would be welcome, and the runway extension could then become relevant. Under current circumstances, the extension would come at tremendous cost to residents, with a probable lift of the curfew for international flights. Bigger, louder, more polluting planes would land and take-off, more often, creating a constant nuisance to everyone especially in the Eastern suburbs. Wellington is amongst the very few cities in the world where the airport is right in the fabric of the town. This should be acknowledged by ensuring it

convention centre is a prior...

Guy M:

Instead of saying: "We need a traffic light controlled intersection" or saying "We need a foot bridg...

Chris Calvi-Freeman:

Yes to both of those factors Andrew, plus the public's reluctance to use underpasses....

Andrew:

Thanks for the history Chris. Presumably an underpass is not possible because of cost and the water ...

Harriet Scoop Dog:

Kaiwharawhara station comes to mind and the myopic GWRC ...

Andy:

The great lane was/is Queens Arcade, and the sports store was the Sports Den, now located at the Que...

## All About Wellington

All that's on

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doesn't expand further until quieter, cleaner planes are available.

Cities worldwide have announced bans on petrol powered cars and trucks for the inner city, with clear timeframes. Wellington too should set a goal to ban all ICE vehicles by 2030. This would have unprecedented benefits for everyone: less pollution, less noise, less stress. The environment would benefit directly from these efforts and our lifestyle would stop fuelling wars in the name of oil. Because our energy is already generated 80% from renewable resources, our emissions would consequently be cut by a factor of 5, and completely disappear by the time our energy mix comes from 100% solar, wind and hydro.

Naturally, this transition to electric modes of propulsion should be extended to ships. The technology is available today and we, as a community, should signal the industry that it is time to provide electric options. There too, a ban on non-electric powered vessels should be established, as it is already the case in Europe, with a similar horizon to the one for ICE cars.

All these measures focus on transport, the biggest source of pollution and health hazard in Wellington. But of course, focus should be put on all source of pollution. Water does not seem to be much a problem in Wellington, but waste recycling is. It is important that through recycling programs appropriate to the type of waste (especially plastic and batteries), the need for landfill can almost be eliminated.

This list of policies would not be complete if it didn't touch on biodiversity. In Wellington, the rise in bird numbers and bird types is astonishing, thanks to the efforts of the communities and the council. This, however, does not happen by accident. Tighter predator control and thorough habitat protection should continue to be encouraged. It is now common to see kererus, tuis, fantails, all contributing to an enchanting soundscape we should all feel proud of. This should invite us to closely monitor building/construction plans. The fast-tracking of resource and building consent, while a response to housing needs, should not come at the expense of the biodiversity, nor Wellington's character or people's well-being.

Theatre

Travel

Wellington blogs

Light touch buildings and houses, intertwined in greens and trees, connected to a clean, sustainable, reliable and affordable public transport network should be our aspiration, should be the Wellington we are trying to build.

These objectives, while ambitious, should be embraced and supported by our politicians, thus setting clear principles, targets and framework for our city to grow. It would set an example, not only to the rest of the country, but also to the rest of the world. It would inspire residents and businesses to work towards a future we can aspire to, where we keep everything that makes Wellington so vibrant and so unique.

*Benoit Pette has been living in Miramar for 13 years. He has a strong interest in clean transport, renewable energy and sustainability.*

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## 8 comments:

Alan, 12. May 2019, 13:01



Nice sentiments but do you really think by 2025 all our new diesel bus fleet will be dumped and replaced by an electric fleet?

Keith Flinders, 12. May 2019, 14:45



Wellington eastern and western suburbs aren't enjoying a new bus fleet Alan. Karori sees 512

bus movements every business day, subject to cancellations, the majority of the buses being over 12 years old. We were promised a new bus fleet too, but ended up with buses that would not be allowed on the road in advanced-economy countries.

We of the above suburbs would be pleased to see the other 49 trolley buses converted to battery operation, albeit that they are 10 years old and older. However as long as the unprofessional public spat continues between trolley bus owners NZ Bus and the GWRC, this isn't going to happen irrespective of the pollution issues. The five Wellington ward GWRC councilors have failed to protect our environment and our health.

Paul Clutterbuck, 12. May 2019, 15:14



@Alan, I think it's not necessary to dump the existing fleet, but to retrofit electric propulsion and energy storage systems. I am working on a database of solutions for every motorized vehicle type in the Motor Vehicle Registration database. Solutions for heavy vehicles should be ready by August or September, with light vehicles to follow 3-6 months later.

Tom, 12. May 2019, 20:34



Sadly it would appear the Wellington CBD is becoming decreasingly attractive to shoppers and people dining out and generally relaxing and enjoying the city vibe.

Meanwhile the Hutt and Petone are thriving, with Wellington residents preferentially travelling to the Hutt and Petone to shop, dine, and see movies. The parking suppression in the WCC District Plan is working a treat, shops and restaurants are struggling, while the WCC is subsidising property developers to convert office blocks to apartments to prop up their ideology of no cars with ratepayer funds.

michael, 12. May 2019, 22:09



I live in the inner city and have noticed a decrease in weekend shoppers. People can't be bothered coming into Wellington anymore. Public transport is often not viable in weekends, the Terrace tunnel is backed up down the motorway, carparking is expensive. The only time the city feels vibrant these days is when we have a cruise ship in and it is great to see so many people wandering around with maps really enjoying being in the city.

TrevorH, 13. May 2019, 8:07



These days I avoid the CBD. I feel we have passed "peak Wellington" as the central city declines due to a collapsing public transport system and policies hostile to parking. There are better shopping alternatives in the suburban malls or online. Wellington's future lies in the suburban districts becoming more autonomous – we should restore the borough councils who would do a better job meeting the needs of residents.

As for the runway extension it is unnecessary, uneconomic and environmentally destructive whatever the motive power of the aircraft that may use it.

Traveller, 13. May 2019, 8:18



TrevorH and Tom: There's no parking problem in the CBD, except at weekends. In the streets around Courtenay Place and Cuba Street – always plenty of parks. But who wants to take their car to town? I mostly walk, then take the bus home. Benoit is correct: Wellington is vibrant and spoilt for options...And who would choose to go to a shopping mall?

Helen, 13. May 2019, 8:25



Trevor could another reason to avoid the CBD is because of the Council's determination to close character buildings that have stood for decades because of their pusillanimous response to over-cautious seismic engineering reports commissioned by the Council.

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