

Funding boost fast-tracks cycleways

By John Maslin

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Cycling in Wanganui is soon to become safer, easier and more enjoyable following the announcement. Government is investing more than \$1 million into two major cycleways.

The funding will enable construction of Te Tuaiwi (The Spine) and City to North Mole shared pathways with work to start over the next two years.

Te Tuaiwi will provide a new, separated 2.3km cycleway linking two existing cycleways and providing safer access to the inner city area for students and workers.

The cycleway, estimated to cost \$1.98 million, will avoid busy

intersections, driveways and parking spaces and is expected to attract around 1000 users each day.

The \$1.29 million City to North Mole shared pathway is a 5km route through the Heads Rd providing a riverside link to the city centre for residents of Gonville, Tawhero and Castlecliff, and is the final section of the Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail.

This connection offers a commuting option and will revitalise and improve the liveability of the city. The cycleway is expected to attract about 800 users each day and is a key component of the National Great Rides Mountains to Sea Cycle Trail.

Construction of both routes is expected to start mid-2017 and be

completed a year later. Urban Cycleways is providing \$1.09 million for the project, NZTA a further \$1.37 million, and Wanganui District Council \$810,000.

Mayor Annette Main said the funding was "tremendous news" for Wanganui.

"Projects like these ones will improve our community and provide safe cycling in a way that will be much better than before," Ms Main said.

She said the Somme Pde shared pathway, constructed several years ago, had been a success, attracting lots of users and she expected the new routes to encourage more people to start cycling.

Raewyn Bleakley, NZTA central regional director, said the

projects will give workers and school students a safe and healthy alternative and also help to get cars off the road, improving traffic flow, particularly during busy peak times.

"With 80 per cent of the population living within 4km of the CBD, Wanganui has real potential for cycling to take off," Ms Bleakley said.

Whanganui MP Chester Borrows said funding for the two routes had come sooner than previously planned, because of \$3.27 million of funding being made available through the \$333 million urban cycleways programme.

"The extra funding will fast-track the build, meaning we'll be able to take advantage of the

cycleway earlier", he said.

The routes

■ Te Tuaiwi — will follow the railway line from the top of Victoria Ave, crossing Glasgow St and Liverpool St then turning toward Wanganui Intermediate where Nelson St joins with Dublin St. It then runs down St Hill St, turn left into Taupo Quay to join the City to North Mole cycleway at the City Bridge.

■ City to North Mole — runs from the City Bridge down Taupo Quay, along Bedford Ave, before keeping to the Whanganui River bank, linking back onto Heads Rd at the Mosston Rd-Wharf St intersection, then into Bryce St before turning left into Short St and finally the North Mole.