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OVER, NOT UNDER: Bevan Woodward takes the Birkenhead ferry to work but he would rather be able to cycle across the bridge.

Cyclist itching to ride on b

TRANSPORT: Petitioners want Govt to look at adding cycle lane and walkway to landmark

by Mathew Dearnaley

Bevan Woodward is a commuter whose frustration comes from having to go to work under — rather than over — the Auckland Harbour Bridge.

He interrupts his cycling journey from his home in Pt Chevalier to work in Birkdale by hitching a ride with his bike on a ferry for the under-bridge sector.

"Each time I pass under the bridge, it drives me crazy that I can't get over it," said Mr Woodward, director of an environmental restoration project.

"It breaks my momentum. You get all sweaty then have to cool down waiting for the ferry before heating up again."

He is one of 5813 Aucklanders petitioning the Government to co-ordinate a feasibility study between

Transit NZ and local authorities on adding a cycle and walkway to the 45-year-old bridge.

Mr Woodward and the petition's main organiser, Glenfield joinery manufacturer Graeme Knowles, are seasoned multisport athletes for whom the bridge is a barrier to freedom of movement.

But they and Northcote Labour MP Anne Hartley, a cheerleader for the petition who will join a parliamentary select committee in Wellington tomorrow to hear it, believe thousands of Aucklanders would relish the ability to walk or cycle across the harbour.

Although Transit says potential users will be too few to justify a costly and structurally difficult addition to the bridge, Mr Knowles counts the Auckland Regional Council, North Shore City Council and the Auckland University of Technology among sup-

porters. He said generations of Aucklanders had been cheated by a short-sighted decision to axe footpaths and cycle tracks from the original design on cost-cutting grounds.

"If Aucklanders had been able to walk or cycle across the harbour bridge from the start, some people wouldn't have needed to buy a car."

Mrs Hartley, a keen walker, said the time was ripe to correct the omission now that the Government was allocating money for walking and cycling alternatives to motor vehicle congestion under the new Land Transport Management Act.

She said Transit was required to make provisions for cycling and walking with any new highway project, and these would eventually have to be added to the existing bridge if a tunnel were to be built in 15 or so years as the next harbour crossing.

"So why not just do it now?"

Transit chief executive Rick van Barneveld, an avid mountain-biker who occasionally cycles to work, said the cost of cycle and pedestrian paths would be "enormous for the volume

of use" and encouraged.

His Auckland City Council Wayne McCann, 10 years ago of new structural concerns.

Transit is building six new bridges to improve access to North Shore, but none will carry any more than 100 cars.

He says there was enough room on the bridge to fit a cycle lane.

But Mrs Hartley says it is a matter of priority. "We need to consider a power cable rather than a power line, rather than a power line rather than a power line."

Mr Knowles says the lack of cycle paths across iconic Auckland landmarks such as Syd-

opens the door to transport cu



Bevan Woodward takes the Birkenhead ferry to work but he would rather be able to cycle across the bridge.

PICTURE / BRETT PHIBBS

list itching to ride on bridge

Petitioners want Govt to look at cycle lane and walkway to landmark

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"So why not just do it now?" Transit chief executive Rick van Barneveld, an avid mountain-biker who occasionally cycles to work, said the cost of cycle and pedestrian paths would be "enormous for the volume

of use" and more cyclists should be encouraged to use ferries.

His Auckland regional manager, Wayne McDonald, said an Auckland City Council cost estimate several years ago of \$25 million for adding a new structure to the bridge was probably conservative by now.

Transit was committed to saddling six heavy power cables to the bridge to improve electricity supply to North Shore City, and the structure was at the limit of its capacity to carry any more substantial loads.

He disputed a suggestion there was enough room on the existing bridge to fit cyclists and pedestrians.

But Mrs Hartley said it was a matter of priorities, and wondered what consideration was given to laying power cables under the harbour rather than to keep denying Aucklanders free movement from one side to the other.

Mr Knowles compared Auckland's lack of provision for foot travellers to cycle and walkways across iconic bridges in other cities, such as Sydney and San Francisco.

the door to transport success