**Working with communities to develop infrastructure for people**

Developing cycling cities very often encounter the same difficulty: how to sell a cycling infrastructure project to local residents and businesses, when a majority of them does not think they will use it. We are getting more used to dealing with cycling advocacy groups and with vocal cycling opponents. They are however only a small part of the wider community. A bigger focus needs to be on the group in between: the group that does not mind cycling infrastructure, but who are not necessarily supportive of changes to their area.

Taking this group along on the journey, understanding what their concerns are for their community, and incorporating those concerns – even if they are not cycling related – into projects helps to create a wider support base. Rather than aiming to deliver active mode infrastructure, it is focussing on delivering infrastructure for people – with active mode infrastructure part of the solution to the concerns. This does require a change in approach from the more traditional ‘make a detailed plan and consult widely’ to ‘listen to people, understand the issues, and provide solutions’.

A change of skill-sets in projects is needed. Projects require better management of the ‘project environment’, incorporating three main aspects: information, integration, and participation. Early engagement through regular discussions and workshops with stakeholders and local residents has shown to get projects ‘on the road’ better, with support from others than just cycle-minded people.

In Auckland, the learning curve for working with communities has been steep, learning on the way what works and what does not work in discussions. However, the overall response is positive and working with communities, rather than just consulting communities, has helped with the delivery and acceptance of active mode infrastructure.