

Living Streets Aotearoa



7 May 2007

Annual Plan
Wellington City Council
PO Box 2199
Wellington

Submission on the Wellington City Council Draft Annual Plan 2007/08

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on this draft strategy. Living Streets Wellington would like to speak in support of this submission if the opportunity arises.

For any further clarification the contact point is:

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Introduction

Living Streets Wellington is a branch of Living Streets Aotearoa, Inc. Formed in 2002, it is an advocacy group with a vision of “More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places – young and old, fast and slow, walking, sitting and standing, commuting, shopping, between appointments, for exercise, for leisure and for pleasure.”

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are as following:

- To promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- To promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- To work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners
- To advocate for greater representation of walker and pedestrian concerns in urban and regional land use, urban design and transport planning and, as appropriate, at national level
- To education national, regional and local authorities, drivers, pedestrians and others on the benefits of walking, in order to improve road safety for pedestrians
- To foster consideration for people with special mobility needs

This submission emphasises the importance of walking as both transport and recreation, as well as improving access and conditions to create pedestrian-friendly environments.

Proposed Activities

Living Streets Wellington supports several of the new proposals including:

- Proposal 3: Protecting the city's streetscapes from graffiti
- Proposal 5: Enhancing and extending the network of Town Belt and Outer Green Belt tracks
- Proposal 8: Redevelopment of the 'city gateway' including street improvements

1. Urban Development

Urban Planning and Policy

As Wellington city expands, adequate infrastructure must be put in place to ensure the increasing population has easy access to suitable transport, public and green spaces, amenities and community services. The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol recognises that “urban design has a significant influence on people and how they live their lives.”¹

Living Streets Wellington supports the encouragement of 'high-quality urban development,' assuming that this takes into account the need to provide high quality pedestrian linkages and opportunities to maintain active transport as the primary mode of transportation, as well as open spaces which encourage walking for both transport and recreation purposes. Developing this along the 'growth spine' is particularly important and we support this.

¹ Ministry for the Environment. *New Zealand Urban Design Protocol*. 2005.

Living Streets Wellington would like to see the development of Lincolnshire Farm as a model of true pedestrian-centred urban design. This includes efficient, safe and accessible transport systems as well as a prioritisation of people on roads. A suggested hierarchy is:

1. people with mobility and sensory impairments
2. pedestrians
3. cyclists
4. public transport users
5. powered two wheelers
6. commercial/business users (including delivery vehicles)
7. car-borne shoppers
8. car-borne visitors
9. car-borne commuters²

Living Streets Wellington also supports the proposal of developing plans to 'enhance public spaces in the city centre and other areas of the city.'

Public Spaces Development

Public Spaces are an important aspect for encouraging more walking and creating pedestrian-friendly environments. While applauding the new Footpath Management Policy, we are sceptical that the needs of pedestrians will be enforced against poorly placed outdoor café furniture and sandwich boards. We suggest owners paying higher fees in order to cover effective enforcement.

Living Streets Wellington supports the development of 'street environments' to encourage more safety, liveliness and attractiveness. We would suggest that this take a community involvement approach to allow those using the areas regularly to have substantial input into the best use of resources. There are some good examples of projects throughout New Zealand that have expanded on the 'Safer Routes' concept and included communities throughout the planning and implementation.

2. Transport

Transport Planning and Policy

We support a priority on planning and in particular, the promotion of walking as a transport mode. The Ministry of Transport reports walking as our second most common travel mode.³ Walking is also an important contributing mode to other forms of transport eg. public transport and even driving. It is also the only cheap and independent mode of transport for some people eg. children, those living in suburbs with limited/infrequent public transport and those without private vehicles and/or licenses. We are all pedestrians at some point and so planning needs to take this into account as a priority, rather than an adjunct. We do not support a

² Land Transport New Zealand. *Pedestrian Network Planning and Facilities Design Guide*. Draft 2007.

³ Ministry of Transport. *Getting There – on foot, by cycle. A strategy to advance walking and cycling in New Zealand transport*. 2005.

reduction in capital spending for footpath renewals by phasing this work over a longer time period.

We support the continuation of Safer Roads, with some modifications to the programme to encourage more people to be involved.

We support urgent development of the Wellington Walking Plan given that it is a prerequisite for further Land Transport NZ funding to initiate walking improvements.

We suggest that Wellington City Council more effectively accesses Land Transport NZ community project funding in collaboration with community groups such as Living Streets Wellington. We also support the need for increased funding for signage of pedestrian shortcuts to make these more readily accessed and easier to use. Funding for a comprehensive set of Wellington walking maps would also be beneficial and should cover all suburbs (similar to the Newtown and Berhampore walking map).

We suggest that Walking School Buses require stronger monitoring and support. Alongside this, we support the addition of the number (percentage) of children walking to school as a transport performance measure.

Transport Networks

We acknowledge that Wellington already has the highest proportion of people utilising public transport in New Zealand as well as a high proportion using other active modes of transport⁴ – due partly to the compactness of Wellington City and also the public transport system.

However there is also significant room for improvement, particularly the provision and maintenance of footpaths as well as emphasis on footpaths being for people, not vehicles. We urge for more enforcement to reduce footpath parking, alongside appropriate prior education campaigns. Footpath parking is an issue both in the city and also the suburbs, however parking wardens do not actively patrol most suburbs and it is often difficult to see any change in vehicles that are regularly parked on footpaths or yellow lines even when Wellington City Council is notified. Enforcement is important to encourage and enable more walking, from both a convenience and safety aspect.

There is also the need to ensure public transport systems are maintained and alternatives sought as it is recognised that areas such as Lambton Quay are currently almost or at peak capacity during peak times. Access to some suburban rail stations eg. Tawa and Linden, is unattractive, unsigned and potentially dangerous. We support a joint approach with Greater Wellington Regional Council to making improvements to ensure safety and easier access to rail stations. It will be important for the future development of the 'city gateway' to incorporate these points.

⁴ Statistics New Zealand. *2001 Census Data*.

3. Environment

Green Open Spaces

We support the upgrading of walkways and tracks for both recreation and transport purposes. Open spaces and tracks often serve as short cuts for commuters, whilst providing recreational walking opportunities as well as enhancing the environment. We support the increased CAPEX and OPEX funding for the Open Space Access Plan implementation.

Summary

Living Streets Wellington supports the proposals within the Draft Annual Plan, however we would like to emphasise the importance of careful planning to prioritise walking as an essential contributing transport option and recreational activity. We would like to see Wellington City Council acknowledge walking as an integral component in its transport, recreation and urban development strategies.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Living Streets Wellington