

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on Wellington City Council Annual Plan 2016 and Low Carbon Plan

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Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the Council for this opportunity to submit on these important proposals.

Proposal 1 Low carbon plan

We support the WCC plan to lower Wellington's Carbon Footprint and see this as an urgent priority.

We applaud the WCC for providing the website Climate Calculator that allows people to assess different options for climate mitigation and adaptation. This is a really important tool to help people appreciate what actions will be required. We look forward to the impact of more walking on climate change mitigation being included in the calculations.

The plan identifies that housing, transport, and water infrastructure will still be in use in 50 years and the need for good maintenance and design is supported.

We support WCC targets for carbon reductions both for the council and the city.
We applaud the CEMARS certification of WCC.

- Pillar 1

We support review of Minimum parking requirements in all areas with a view to their removal.

- Pillar 2

These proposals are very weak.

More people walking can contribute to lowering carbon emissions.

WCC has a role to ensure carbon reduction by all developments having good walking access that encourages walking, good public transport provision and safe cycleways. The northern suburbs have been identified as a high car use, poor sustainable transport area and should be a priority to improve the poor design and service. All roading contracts should include proper quality standards for pedestrians (based on the NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide) with proper supervision of the contracts.

The Urban Growth plan adopted the sustainable transport hierarchy and so we would expect this plan to support that with some bold new walking initiatives. A priority to investigate the impact of walking initiatives on lowering carbon emissions in Wellington should be a priority. There are no proposals to increase walkability being considered – this should be a priority as the most important aspect of the transport hierarchy.

What steps are WCC taking to encourage staff to walk around our compact city?

A significant increase in school travel planning with a focus on walking and public transport use is urgently needed and should receive dedicated funding.

WCC should be ensuring that its transport assets support carbon reduction, for instance

- by optimising bus stops to ensure operational efficiency and increased patronage;
- by better use of roadspace through footpath widening, bus lanes, and separate cycleways;
- by maintaining the trolleybus overhead network so that it is still capable of being used if the Regional Council changes its short-sighted trolleybus abandonment policy;
- by integrating the cable car with the Metlink public transport network;
- by signposting all walking tracks, rather than hiding many of them behind “No exit” signs that apply only to vehicles, not to people;
- reviewing intersections so pedestrians crossing have a good level of service
- include emissions from the airport and its operations (including the effects of any runway extension) in the picture.

Car sharing and electric vehicles are way down the priority and this should be reflected in the actions – we hope footpaths are not considered for EV charging stations; this pedestrian space is already too crowded.

Public transport does not enjoy sufficient road space to make it the premier mode for travelling longer distances. Proper bus priority needs to be developed and should be part of this plan – WCC determine road space allocation and priority. We urge Council to introduce traffic-light pre-emption equipment on buses and on traffic-light control equipment. Once commissioned, this system will enable buses approaching red traffic lights to have them go green. This will speed the movement of buses, especially through intersections such as those along the Golden Mile. We recommend that Council check if this equipment is already fitted to buses and traffic-light control equipment, and ask that it be commissioned urgently. We urge WCC to declare the Golden Mile car-free, truck-free, and van-free, in the morning and afternoon peaks, to facilitate the movement of buses.

Proposal 2 Urban development agency

One month to consult on this significant change is not enough.

The ‘barriers to development’ are not well explained, there is a lot of rhetoric and not enough detail to properly consider this proposal.

What policy would constrain the Board, and be the blueprint for action?
Is affordable housing going to be quality housing – many apartment developments were not?
Large scale council projects – what are these?
We would be concerned at a loss of democratic representation with the creation of another Council Controlled Organisation – what will elected councillors role be?
Would be very concerned if this becomes a regional agency – is this amalgamation by stealth?
Attracting the right talent – what constraints on foreign and non-Wellington developers being part of this?
Who would be on the Board? Will there be a gender balance? Wellington people?
And an independent review group – who will be on that?
Council has not been good at picking development opportunities – there is not a good case put forward for Council involvement.

Proposal 5 Kilbirnie Business District

Seems like a good local initiative – we look forward to improved walkability which is shown to increase retail competitiveness.
What will the rate money be used for?

Proposal 6 New initiatives

- Ngauranga to airport \$375,000

Repurpose money from bus priority to walking.

It is unclear what this is about – we need both bus priority, and walking in CBD.

- Middleton Road

Is this a 'shared path'?

We do not support shared paths, they are not as safe for pedestrians and they are a disincentive to walking.

Spend the money on quality footpaths and safe cycleways.

- Place-making

We support the place-making initiatives

Long term plan implementation

We support fencing dog exercise areas – these help keep dogs under control while off the lead – a win for dog owners and pedestrians.

- Harbour Escarpment Walkway - Waihinahina to Kaiwharawhara

We support the new path for walkers – but is this actually a walkway, or is it 'shared'?

- North Kumutoto area

How will these design improvements occur?

- Safer Speeds

We support this initiative

- Urban Activation Fund

We support this fund and look forward to good pedestrian design principles being used including improvement in wayfinding

- **Operational projects – improvements**

We support the Te Mahana project to address homelessness in Wellington – liveable cities don't have 'homeless' people.

- Trails upgrade

We note tracks are no longer referred to as walking tracks. Local trail users - We expect that these upgrades will be consulted on with the significant majority walking users before plans are finalised, not as we have recently seen. Catering to the minority on our walkways will reduce their amenity for walkers. Beginning riders do not have the skills to use walking tracks. There is a serious gap in knowledge of track users – a robust review of current and potential users needs to be undertaken by someone who is not wedded to mountainbiking

- Budget

Identifies over \$7 million for pedestrian network opex and \$4.6 million for capex
What do we get for this?

We would like to be heard in support of our submission.

About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- 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 including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: www.livingstreets.org.nz