



**Living
Streets
Canterbury**

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Submission to Draft Christchurch City Council 2010-2011 Annual Plan

Introducing Living Streets Canterbury

Living Streets Canterbury is a Christchurch-based pedestrian advocacy group established in 2004 as a branch of Living Streets Aotearoa. Our vision is "More people walking more often." For more information about Living Streets Canterbury see <http://www.livingstreets.org.nz/regions/canterbury>

We wish to speak to our submission. Please send Living Streets Canterbury a copy of the Officers' Report as soon as it is available.

Pedestrians are a widely varied group and include: commuters, recreational walkers, runners, and people who use wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards, or walking frames and other walking aids. Another important group are those with a visual impairment who *must* use walking and public transport if they are to travel independently. People who use public transport also walk to get onto a public transport route. Furthermore, everyone uses footpaths at some stage of their travel around the City even if it is simply to walk from the car to the shops or to the office.

Inviting people to walk rather than use their cars makes the streets more alive and interesting – more "happening," pleasant places. The more alive and interesting our streets are, the more likely people are to want to walk, and spend time and money. Walkability improves property values, health outcomes, community coherence and community resilience. Research in the United Kingdom shows people who walk into business districts spend more than people who have travelled there using other modes of transport. In fact, people using cars spend less than cyclists and public transport users (Litman 2007, 2009). Thus, encouraging pedestrians and decreasing the use of cars has benefits on all levels over and above the well-documented benefits for transport congestion, safety, noise pollution, air pollution, community cohesion, and physical and mental health. The more attractive and lively the City the more likely that Christchurch is the preferred New Zealand city to live, work, and do business in. As the Greater Christchurch Travel Demand Management strategy (2009, p1) notes:

One fewer trip by car, each week, per household, is enough to stop traffic growth. If we travel differently – walking, cycling, public transport, car pooling, combining trips, shortening vehicle journeys or travelling outside of peak hours - our roads will not be as congested, and we can reduce the environmental and health impacts of motorised travel.

Christchurch City Council is a signatory to the International Walking Charter and its objectives, a Charter promoted by Living Streets Aotearoa <http://www.livingstreets.org.nz/ICCharter.htm>. The CCC's Draft Climate Smart Strategy also indicates that active transport forms such as walking will be encouraged by the Council. The Jan Gehl (2010) report also focuses on creating a more walking friendly city.

Maintain or increase spending on Active and Public Transport

Living Streets Canterbury strongly support spending on active transport and public transport, and naturally would like to see more rather than less. We are deeply concerned at the lack of transparency in this plan, around funding for pedestrian and cycling facilities. The plan notes a two million dollar decrease in spending for active travel, but the active travel budget appears not to differ from the LTCCP. It appears that the cut in spending is through deferring roading projects that would have greatest benefits for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users. This shows a blatant disregard for documents such as the draft Climate Smart strategy (2010), the CCC Pedestrian strategy (), or the Greater Christchurch Travel Demand Management strategy (2009), or the recent 2010 Jan Gehl Report. One might assume from this, that the Council is wasting money producing good strategies that are not to be implemented.

We recommend that a small proportion of money from roading projects be put into walking, cycling and public transport despite the decrease in NZTA subsidy for some roading projects. As the GCTDM implies, expenditure on cycling, walking and public transport is likely to decrease the need for expenditure on more roads whilst expenditure on roads creates major costs and does not cure congestion for long.

Add in targets for bus and pedestrian travel times

We note that there is a target in this plan for travel times by private motor vehicles. Please include similar targets for bus travel times and pedestrian travel times in the City. The Gehl report (2010) noted that the pedestrian travel time was an issue that needed addressing. Walking, the use of public transport and cycling should be encouraged. Planning in the City must ensure these modes are catered for at least as well as, or even better than those using private cars because pedestrians, cyclists, and bus users are contributing more towards decreasing traffic growth and congestion on the roads, improving their own health outcomes, and contributing less to air pollution, traffic noise, and to CO2 emissions.

Implement recommendations from the Jan Gehl report

We strongly support expenditure on the recommendations of the Jan Gehl report and recommend increasing it, both this coming year and in the 2011-12 year. A budget of \$150 000 looks likely to relegate the Gehl Report to the realms of the other strategies being ignored through lack of Council expenditure.

As the pedestrian advocacy group for Christchurch, we want to be involved in implementing the Jan Gehl report. The CCC Pedestrian Strategy (2001) recommended setting up a pedestrian advocacy group. We believe it is important that CCC works with the group it helped to set up to ensure pedestrian facilities for the city meets the needs of users. We have a wide variety of members including many professionals who are able to offer advice and support.

Increase parking charges

Central city parking charges should be starting to increase, particularly for on-street parking in 2010-11. The Gehl Report recommends discouraging the use of private motor vehicles in the City Centre, and removing car parks as suggested in the Gehl Report is a start towards this. Revenue generated from increasing parking charges could then be put into active transport initiatives such as improved footpaths quality, seating, lighting, and additional off foot path bike parking. For people with a disability who really need to use their car to get into the central city, it is important to have some kind of concession system so this group are not penalised.

Increase targets for pedestrians and cyclists

In addition, the Gehl Report makes clear recommendations about the need to encourage walking and cycling and for Christchurch City to become less subservient to the car. Given these recommendations, and the fact CCC are interested in implementing the recommendations of the Gehl Report, Living Streets Canterbury suggests walking and cycling targets involve *increasing* the number of pedestrians and cyclists.

Improve signage and maintain Hagley Park cycling and walking tracks

There is work to do maintaining surfaces and improving signage on the cycle and walking tracks in Hagley Park. These tracks are well used by many throughout the day, and encourage people living in the Riccarton and Fendalton areas to walk or cycle into town. These paths are also often used by visitors to the City and are well worth maintaining and widening. Signage would make them easier to use. We outlined our suggestions in significant detail in a letter sent to the Botanic Gardens staff in November 2009.

Yours faithfully,

Chrys Horn

Living Streets Canterbury Co-convenor

References

Litman, Todd Alexander (2007, 2009) *Economic Value of Walkability* Victoria Transport Policy Institute Victoria, BC, V8V 3R7, CANADA. (www.vtpi.org).

The Greater Christchurch Travel Demand Management Strategy (2009, www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz)

The Draft Climate Smart Strategy (CCC 2010)

The Pedestrian Strategy (CCC 2001)

Living streets Canterbury submission on Hagley Park shared paths (2009)

<http://www.livingstreets.org.nz/node/3458>