

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Waitakere Waewae

Walking

on the draft Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) 2010 - 2040

Organisation: Living Streets North Shore
Contact person: Emma Frost
Address: 476 Swanson Road, Ranui, Auckland
Email: emma@ranui.org.nz
Phone: 09 445 6568
Date: 18 December 2009

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.

Waitakere Waewae Walking is the local affiliate group based in Waitakere City in the Auckland region, which is working to make city and suburban centres in the region more walking-friendly.

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

Comments

Waitakere Waewae Walking support the overall vision of a significantly improved system of public transport in the Auckland region. We strongly support the provision of safer access and facilities for pedestrians in places with high pedestrian counts such as bus and railway stations and other transport hubs.

In particular, we would like to see more priority given to pedestrians. We agree with the following comments made by Robert Lipka, one of our members:

“Overall, after having read through the document I believe there are a lot of good initiatives in here, particularly for public transport. It is truly a visionary document that will help push the region kicking and screaming into the 21st century.

Despite this though, I believe that there has been a major piece left out of the document and that is a discussion on the treatment of pedestrians. Sure the document mentions the importance of walking but never really goes far enough to tackle this issue of how poorly pedestrians are treated here in this region and all across NZ for that matter. Whilst I understand that the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) does not have jurisdictional powers to change the road code, I still strongly believe that a more bold discussion should be had in this document with respect to the ideas that pedestrians deserve more respect!!

When I first arrived in New Zealand in 2006 from Canada, I quickly realised that the treatment of pedestrians and cyclists was, and still is, appalling! Pedestrians in NZ are treated like second class citizens and this must change. If this does not change I suggest that all of the great things discussed in this document will never reach their truest potential.

I strongly believe that the ARC needs to raise the level of the discussion on pedestrian safety in this document and propose some changes to the Road Code to make pedestrians lives much easier and thereby make it much easier to take public transport. One example of such a change would be to add a new rule to the Road Code which would state that all vehicles turning into or out of a side road at an uncontrolled intersection must give way to pedestrians on their half of the road. Meaning, if a car was turning right into a side road and at the same time a car was turning left out of the same side road than both cars would have to give way to the pedestrian before proceeding (see Figure 1 —below). There are many countries in the world that have rules like this (ie. Canada, United States and Mexico). This new rule could change the face of NZ forever and actually make walking a more safe and convenient form of transportation.

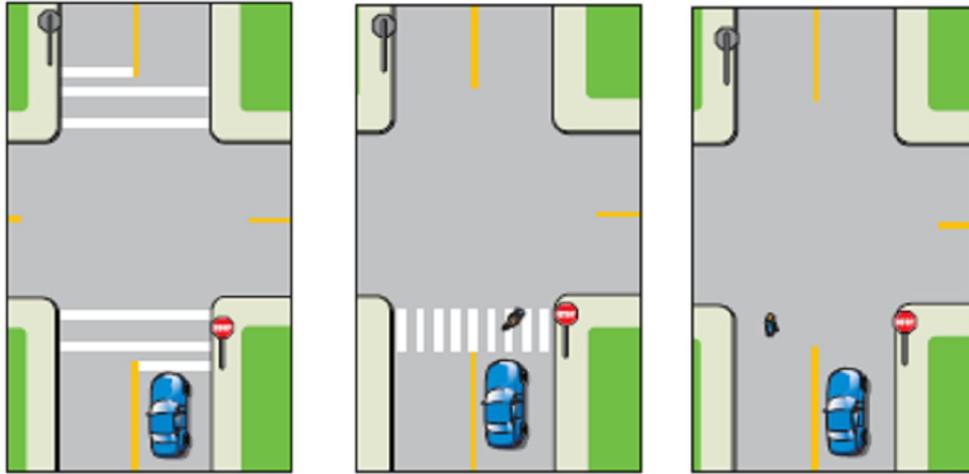


Figure 1 – Typical examples of crossings at side streets. Some have markings and some do not. All of these examples provide full priority for pedestrians crossing the side street (images from British Columbia Drivers Handbook).

Figure 2 – Typical example of pedestrian crossing in suburban Toronto, Canada. Approaching cars must stop at the limit line first, give way to any pedestrians crossing and then proceed after checking for vehicles on the through road.



Figure 6 – Typical examples of crossings at side streets. Some have markings and some do not. All of these examples provide full priority for pedestrians crossing the side street (images from British Columbia Drivers Handbook).

In Canada, every Provincial Traffic Act gives pedestrians and cyclists strong give way rules in their favour. In Canada, vehicles must yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks (if the pedestrian is close to their half of the road), at intersections (even when there is no marked crosswalk), when turning and when entering a road from a driveway or alley (as shown in Figure 2 above). Whereas in New Zealand pedestrians and cyclists are generally forced to give way to vehicles! Without changes to the road code, pedestrians and cyclists will always be at the bottom of the transport hierarchy. The current rules make it so difficult for people to walk and cycle in this country that only the most ardent walkers and cyclists use our streets for their daily commute to work or to the shops; instead they choose to drive.

While the ARC is not the roading authority, I would argue that it does have a responsibility to strongly advocate for the lowly pedestrian. If people can't safely walk to the bus stop or to the train station, than why are we wasting our time building a so-called 'world class' transport system? The road rules in New Zealand are so archaic that without these recommended changes the car will continue to dominate as the preferred means of transportation far into the future!

Here in lies one of New Zealand's greatest challenges – the recognition that people travelling on foot are as (or dare I say it even more) important than people driving in the big metal boxes. While changes like this will take many years to become reality I would strongly suggest that we must start doing something about it now! New Zealand's urban/suburban areas and its' people deserve better".

Submission to Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy 2010-2040

16 December 2009

By Robert Lipka, Team Leader – Urban Planning and Design, Waitakere City Council

Conclusion

Waitakere Waewae Walking supports the objectives and policies outlined in the draft RLTS and congratulates the Auckland Regional Transport Committee on developing a strategy for the next 30 years which recognizes the need to move the region towards greater use of public transport and the encouragement of active transport through behaviour change and the provision of improved infrastructure for those who choose to walk or cycle for all or part of their trips around the region.

Waitakere Waewae Walking would welcome any opportunity to provide any further input into the development of this strategy or in the development of implementation plans.