



**Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on
Hutt City Annual Plan 2017 - 18**

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Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the Council for this opportunity to submit on the 2017-18 annual plan.

Walking is the universal travel mode and the premier recreation of choice, with over 60% of New Zealand adults enjoying it. As people age they increasingly rely on walking to get around and like children, need dedicated footpath space to be, and feel, safe. Access to daily services and recreation needs good walking connections.

Connections

The annual plan proposes spending to improve the Lower Hutt events centre, maintenance for the Dowse art gallery, Naenae community hub and pool improvements and for the Petone library. These are great initiatives that need to have great walking connections to ensure they give the best value. Good walking connections are important to provide accessibility for an ageing population, to improve safety and health, and to support increased walking rates.

In the Annual Plan 2014-15 a one-off \$250,000 was included for 'Wheelchair friendly footpath routes'. Areas such as the Hutt Hospital neighbourhood, shopping centres (Naenae, Taita, Epuni, Wainuiomata, Fairfield, High St at Park Ave) and routes used by residents of major retirement villages were audited with users consulted. This identified footpath defects and substandard kerb dropdowns that were a barrier or hazard to wheelchair and other users: kerb dropdowns that are too steep, or with a lip or deep gutter area, are a barrier to many pedestrians. These were improved with smoothing, and tactile pavers for vision-impaired pedestrians.

This small amount of funding achieved good results for the areas covered, but there are other areas that also need these improvements. Living Streets understands Council has a priority list of locations that need attention.

Living Streets would like to see a dedicated budget of \$50,000 per year to continue this good work and improve walking links from the major projects noted above.

Riverlink plan

Living Streets supports investment in this important project that will improve the city centre and provide a river-facing space. The pedestrian links to Melling station will support and promote healthy walking and the use of public transport. It is important that any changes do not jeopardise the potential for extending the Melling line across the river into the Lower Hutt CBD and beyond, as was investigated in some detail about 20 years ago.

To future-proof this project and improve walkability Living Streets suggest investing in separated pedestrian and cycle paths. Walking and cycling do not mix well in busy urban places - conflict issues are already apparent on many shared paths. Use of the New Zealand Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide would assist in investing in good-standard facilities, getting it right the first time.

Council-owned wharves

Living Streets supports the retention of council-owned wharves. They provide significant recreation opportunities and are iconic places. The Days Bay and Petone wharves are important parts of the regional public transport network. Improving walking access to these wharves would enhance their value.

Increase walk mode share

Living Streets supports investment in Walk to School initiatives that work with school communities to identify ways to improve pedestrian and public transport access to schools.

Performance measures

Living Streets supports robust measures to monitor success for improved pedestrian amenity and increased rates of walking. We suggest Hutt City include improved performance measures for walking including the total spent on, and number of, walking improvements; detail on how footpaths have performed against the service standard; and, how many children have participated in walk to school activities.

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