

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

Date

PO Box 25 - 424
Panama Street
Wellington 6146

Dear Mayor or CEO,

Kia ora and greetings on behalf of Living Streets Aotearoa, the national voice for people on foot.

Mayors are currently leading Councils' ten-year plans and we urge you to make sure people on foot are well catered for. Footfall is the economic lifeblood of retail, an ideal activity for physical and mental health with low impact on infrastructure. People of all ages can travel in a pushchair, wheelchair, stroll, march, jog or run on footpaths, crossings, tracks in reserves. Good pedestrian infrastructure also means public transport is easier to access. Slower speeds, encouraged by good urban design, make towns and cities safer and more attractive and encourage visitors and residents alike to linger, enjoy and spend.

Does your Long Term Plan budget include funding for road safety for people on foot, slower speeds, making crossings accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs, audits for bus exchanges or train stations, urban design of laneways, travel plans for schools or hospitals or simply more footpaths on more streets? In rural areas, are there roads near schools that need some treatment? Are there roads or bridges that completely limit safe access on foot? Walking is people's favourite active leisure activity so better connected suburbs and parks, footpaths and reserves will be popular with residents.

We realise Council budgets are always under pressure so the Living Streets executive are lobbying for the Government Funding Assistance Rate for footpath maintenance, currently zero, to be at least the same as the rate for local road maintenance.

Good data is the basis for good decisions. There is now an international standard for measuring walking. Please encourage your staff to look at <http://www.measuring-walking.org/>. In particular, we are concerned by the nationwide drop in the numbers of children walking to school. From 1989/90 to 2010-14 the numbers of 5 to 12 year-olds walking to school plummeted from 42% to 29% (MoT data). Congestion, physical and mental health and alertness would all improve with more walking to school.

There are also a number of policy decisions which would be low or zero-cost to Councils and achieve important outcomes for walkers. Asking questions and changing priorities about the length of time and share of phase for signalised crossings costs nothing. Sceptical citizens and business people can often be involved when streets are calmed as trials; often cheaper and less disruptive than permanent changes.

When you next amend your District Plan, please consider removing minimum parking requirements, increasing density where there's good public transport and requiring new subdivisions and developments to have decent provision for people on foot and SEPARATE infrastructure for cycling.

Living Streets Aotearoa supports everyone on foot, for short journeys or longer expeditions, for pleasure, leisure or commuting. We can provide speakers and experts on health and transport to your Council.

Please treat this letter as a formal submission to your Long Term Plan. We would appreciate a reply detailing what walking investment is planned over the next decade.

If you are proud of a project your Council has implemented that helps walking, please nominate it for a Golden Foot Award by 25th May 2018, forms available on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Smith, President
Ellen Blake, Tumuaki tuarua
Celia Wade-Brown, Executive Committee member