

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa - Wellington

Contact person: **Ellen Blake**  
Email: **wellington@livingstreets.org.nz**  
Phone: **021 106 7139**  
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**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](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## **Submission**

Living Streets Aotearoa is keen to support Kapiti to achieve over the period of the LTP a key goal of your council and the objective of our organisation – more people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places.

Walkability is an essential element in achieving many of the objectives of the draft LTP

- Creating a vibrant, diverse and thriving area
- Improving resilience
- Enhancing connectedness
- Economic growth
- Environmental sustainability
- Affordability of service and infrastructure provision

We would like to see the LTP clearly identify as outcomes in 2025

- There are fantastic walking routes throughout the district, connected to public transport, with all residents able to carry out all their social and economic activities using just those modes (if they choose).
- The streets are vibrant open spaces, and people of all ages and abilities are using those spaces as walking corridors, places for socialising, and places for recreating.
- Footpath design, road crossing arrangements, and other infrastructure and services have achieved an attractive and safe walking environment, with high service levels, in all town centres and all new subdivisions. Opportunities to improve existing facilities are always taken, and service levels in all locations are progressively improving.
- There are be a variety of walking environments from urban macadam (Coastlands) to 'natural' surfaces (Waikanae river walkway) that are well signposted.
- Walking is a safe and easy mode to all educational institutions, and most users travel by walking, cycling or public transport.
- Town centres are highly walkable, with necessary car infrastructure (e.g. main roads and parking) designed to minimise negative effects on walking and urban design. Town centres are connected to their public transport hubs and adjacent residential areas by attractive walking routes with high pedestrian service levels.
- The wonderful coast is easily accessible by walking and public transport, with seating and toilets provided to enhance the experience of users (particularly the elderly).
- A range of methods have been used to provide wayfinding information for residents and visitors, including signs, digital information, self-explaining streets, etc.
- The transport system is managed as an integrated system, and transport decisions are integrated with decisions on matters such as community resilience and economic development. The aim of the transport system is to enhance accessibility for all users, to encourage the use of the most efficient mode (e.g. walking for short distances and public transport for longer distances), to encourage increased physical activity, to encourage social mixing, and to reduce environmental effects of transport. The overall cost of the system will be progressively reduced by achieving a shift to lower cost modes (walking, cycling and mass transit). Active transport would be favoured over passive private modes, with a range of incentives to get people onto their feet. Pedestrian ease rather than vehicle congestion would be a key indicator of transport success.

We would like to see the following provided for every project proposed in this plan before it is adopted:

## **Performance measures**

These should measure whether the project will meet the goals of the project and contribute to the broader objectives in the LTP.

There should be performance measures for the overall LTP related to the priority given to walking (e.g. proportion of transport funding). There should also be measures of effects of projects on walking.

Possible performance measures include:

- Measures of crashes and footpath falls
- CPTED measures
- Numbers of seats, shade/shelter, and toilets per km footpath
- Measures of specific footpath/crossing design matters, such as gradient-slope/crossfall standards met 95%, crossing delays acceptable
- Degree of access to public transport and local services
- Extent of barriers to walking for at risk groups (e.g. mobility scooter users, elderly walkers, pre-school children).

## **Goals/targets**

We would like to see measureable goals or targets for each project. For walking that should include:

- an increase in walk2work mode share to 10% over the 10 years to 2025,
- 100% of short trips (under 2 kilometres) done on foot
- 100% of schools with a school travel plan that encourages walking
- A comprehensive survey of region-wide walk activity completed to identify opportunities and barriers to walking

## **Minimum footpath standards**

We would like the LTP to require that all projects meet the standards of the NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide, NZS 4121 Design for access and mobility, and RTS 14 Guidelines for vision impaired pedestrians, for all pedestrian facilities and infrastructure (roads, walkways, town squares, etc). Pedestrians include all people on foot or in wheelchairs/mobility scooters, whatever their age, physical, visual or hearing abilities.

## **Funding for walking projects**

We would like the plan to include a small fund for 'quick fix' pedestrian projects (that meet NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide).

We would also like the council to actively support walking promotion activities such as Walk2Work Day and recreational walking events.

## **Public transport interface**

- improve wayfinding information at all public transport stops
- we support improving walk access from Waikanae and Paraparaumu railway stations to the town centres
- provide toilets at Waikanae and Paraparaumu railway stations

## **Paraparaumu Town Centre**

We strongly support the proposals to improve the town centre for pedestrians.

The current arrangements do not encourage the use of public transport and walking. For example it is clearly undesirable to make people arriving by train walk through a subway and then across a carpark to get to the main shopping areas. Walking links between the town centre and residential areas are also far from ideal.

### **Using streets as open space**

While we support the creation of additional green spaces, we would also urge you to also make better use of street spaces to improve the town centres and residential areas.

One paper at Walk21 in Sydney in 2014 (the international walking conference) had the title “Streets are not small roads”. That paper emphasised the fact that streets are the predominant public open space in our cities, and need to be designed primarily for that purpose, rather than simply as ways to move cars around. Small, low cost changes can make a huge difference to the quality of the street environment, and those types of activities allow more to be done with limited budget (and with community contributions also boosting budgets).

Transforming streets into mixed use open space has major benefits. Community resilience relies significantly on people knowing their neighbours, and a key place to meet neighbours is in the street. Streets that are attractive for people to walk, sit, and chat will help create a sense of community. They will also encourage exercise (for transport or recreation), which will have health benefits, and reduce traffic. Pedestrian safety is significantly affected by the number of pedestrians in the streets, so every extra walker will make the streets safer for other walkers. It also makes walking feel safer, thereby helping to overcome one of the barriers to walking (e.g. for elderly people and children walking to school). Increased foot traffic also contributes to business income (it is no coincidence that the highest value retail spaces are those with the highest foot traffic), and reduce anti-social activities and crime.

Small “waste” spaces on private land (e.g. in front of buildings and around other structures) can also add significantly to the quality of town centre environments. A square metre of unused land can become a small green oasis, or house a seat that allows an elderly shopper to rest, or contain a small artwork. Without such transformations, they will become dominated by weeds, litter and (all too often) tagging. In our experience, private landowners are more than happy to have the community transform those spaces.

### **Approaches to town centre improvements**

We would recommend, particularly given the tight budgets signalled in the LTP draft, that you consider the approach developed (and run) by David Engwicht, the Australian who invented the “walking schoolbus”. That approach was highly successful in Paihia, and has more recently been used by Porirua CC for its canopy project.

The process involves the following steps:

1. David’s expert team helps to carry out a professional problem assessment of the space. For example that might identify issues like poor connections, CPTED issues, lack of vibrancy, gloominess, etc. The team also provide some broad ideas for what might overcome those problems, such as turning a large space into “rooms”.
2. That assessment is presented to a community workshop. The workshop then accepts or modifies the problem statement and broad goals, and identifies what changes could be made to the space in the short term using available resources. David argues against developing a “big plan” that will be built someday. Instead, he helps the workshop identify a broad goal, and then affordable projects that will help move towards that goal. He talks about developing projects that “carry the DNA of the long term goal”.

3. A project that is popular with workshop participants is then chosen, and volunteers sought to lead its implementation. For the canopies project about 12 people volunteered. A short timeframe is set for doing that project, and the rest of the workshop is asked to contribute to implementation (e.g. by donating labour or goods). Installation is then done by a community working bee (for the Canopies project that took about half a day, and the space was being used by families before installation was even complete). A key aim of the first project is to shift the community's view of the space from it being a problem to being an area with potential.
4. A further project can then be chosen and implemented. In Paihia the community were so excited by the first project that they set up an op shop, raised significant money, and took on (and completed) a very ambitious project to re-connect the town centre to the beach and tourist wharf.

David also argues for changes that are low cost and adjustable. Lower Cuba Street is a good example of why that approach is important. In that case he had recommended starting with some moveable furniture, so that if the initial arrangement of walking space/road space/parking space didn't work well, it could be changed easily. Instead, a lot of money was spent on permanent features. While WCC admits that those did not create a well functioning public space, they cannot be affordably changed, so we are now stuck with "workarounds".

Living Streets is more than willing to offer our expertise for town centre projects, including undertaking street audits to help identify aspects of street design that negatively affect walkability.

### **Waikanae Town Centre and SH1 changes**

We would like to see the LTP more explicitly identify the changes that will be made to the Waikanae town centre to make it more walkable, and to identify the walkability goals of changes to the existing SH1. In particular, there is an urgent need to address pedestrian access from the rail to the town centre at Waikanae, and to ensure efficient walking routes to town centres and recreational destinations from residential areas.

### **Replacing the Paekakariki seawall**

The current seawall reduces significantly the use of the coast for walking at high tide. It is important that a pleasant walking environment is created along the coast as part of an major changes.

### **Other projects**

With any infrastructure project, it is important that the opportunity is taken to identify and address walkability issues. We are happy to contribute by undertaking street/facility audits to identify issues, and help design cheap ways to resolve those. With any facility, it is important to encourage public transport and walking as key modes for getting to the facility, to reduce the cost of carparking, the negative effects of traffic on users of the facility, and to improve accessibility for those who cannot easily or prefer not to travel by car (e.g. those who not have a drivers licence, can't afford to run a car, wish to fully utilise their public transport pass, wish to get exercise, do not wish to be dependent on a caregiver for transport).