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Submission to Selwyn District Council's draft Annual Budget 2010-2011

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>

Providing for pedestrians is important

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 townships even if it is simply to walk from the car to the shops or to the office.

Catering for pedestrians contributes to most community outcomes. Increasing the number of pedestrians is an important element in making Selwyn's towns more attractive, lively, and safe. Inviting people to walk rather than use their cars makes the streets more alive and more interesting – more "happening," pleasant places. Likewise, the more alive and interesting our streets look, 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. It contributes to a cleaner environment. Research in the United Kingdom also shows pedestrians spend more money than people using other modes of transport, including cars (Litman 2007, 2009). Thus, encouraging pedestrians has social, environmental and economic benefits, including decreasing transport congestion and improving public health.

Selwyn District Council's great work supporting walking

As advocates for active and public passenger transport, Living Streets Canterbury thanks Selwyn District Council for the work it is doing furthering walking as a means of travel. We strongly support the wide range of work that Selwyn District Council does in this area and we recognise that at this time the political and funding environment is particularly difficult for staff. We strongly support Selwyn District Council funding active transport projects and promotions.

We were particularly pleased to see the recent Model Community application the Council submitted to NZ Transport Agency. It is unfortunate this was not successful, however, it shows how proactive the Council is in supporting walking and cycling. We also want to commend the staff, Andrew Mazey and Lee Wright, that our organisation works with. We support the existence of the Walking and Cycling Strategy implementation group and would like to see that continue.

Living Streets Canterbury request that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are considered carefully in all of the community service projects listed on P27. Each of these presents opportunities to encourage and increase in the use of active transport.

Likewise, Living Streets Canterbury notes that there are opportunities to consider active transport in many of the projects outlined in the transport and townships section of the budget. We support expenditure on the Wrights Road footpath in Sheffield.

We are concerned with some of the issues arising in some recent housing developments where large fences have been erected around the development. In some situations (such as in some of the new subdivisions in Lincoln), these fences can discourage pedestrians and cyclists by requiring to walk much further than necessary to access the township and its facilities. Whilst most of the new subdivisions offer good walking within them, a few do not connect well with the places around them. Whilst residents may feel more secure if there are limits on the number routes motor vehicles can use to get into the township, every effort should be made to ensure that people walking and cycling can utilise shortcuts to adjoining developments and town centres.

Community Street Reviews

Councils need to measure resident's satisfaction with footpath quality to determine if what is provided is meeting the needs of its residents.

We propose a more effective way of monitoring satisfaction with footpaths would be Selwyn District Council undertaking "Community Street Reviews", to monitor resident satisfaction with footpath quality, either to supplement or replace the current monitoring tool. Community Street Reviews are a tool developed by Living Streets Aotearoa, and further developed and supported by the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), see www.levelofservice.com

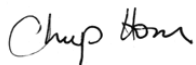
Living Streets Aotearoa as a national organisation is keen to offer their services to Selwyn District Council for running Community Street Reviews. Living Streets piloted part of this tool with Wellington City Council in November 2007, see <http://www.livingstreets.org.nz/pdf/Brooklyn2007.pdf>

Thank you for your consideration of our submission. We look forward to working collaboratively with Selwyn District Council to help increase the numbers walking in the Selwyn District.

Speaking to our submission

We wish to discuss the main points in our written submission at the hearings. Please send Living Streets Canterbury a copy of the Officer's report to assist with preparation of our presentation. Our preferred day for speaking is at the Council Chamber at Rolleston is the afternoon on Monday 31 May afternoon

Yours faithfully,



Dr Chrys Horn
Living Streets Canterbury Co-convenor