

School Travel Planning in Dunedin

some reflections on adapting national and international practice to achieve value for money results...



STRENGTHENING *families*
W h a k a k a h a W h ā n a u



MWH

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

we will look at...

- Child health, safety and daily travel choice – why is it important to us all - worldwide?
- The role of School Travel Planning and Safer Routes to Schools programmes
- The importance of wider community engagement in successful school travel planning in Dunedin
- Links to the NZ road safety strategy to 2020 - *Safer Journeys*
- How Dunedin City Council is adapting national and international best practice with its own new programme for a cluster of schools alongside North Road, Dunedin





Children today-what's wrong with them?



School meals

Cola, crisps and sweets banned as Kelly declares war on junk food

Proposals to take effect
from next September
Headteachers and food
industry criticise plans

Rebecca Smithers
Felicity Lawrence
Matthew Taylor

The extent of the ban on junk food and drink in schools emerged yesterday as the education secretary, Ruth Kelly, pledged to end "the scandal" of poor-quality meals and snacks served to hundreds of thousands of children in England.

The Guardian has learned that under the proposals, children will only be able to drink water, skimmed and semi-skimmed milk, pure fruit juices, certain types of smoothies and yoghurt and milk drinks made with less than 10% added sugar.

Cola, all other fizzy, sugary drinks, and drinks with artificial sweeteners, will have to be removed, whether from canteens or vending machines. Sweets, chocolate, chewing gum, cereal bars, fruit bars and chocolate-coated biscuits will also be banned. Salty snacks such as crisps and salted nuts will go and salt will not be allowed on the table in school canteens.

A long list of junk food has been drawn up by a government-appointed expert review panel. White report will be published in full next week. Ms Kelly will review the recommendations, which include the stipulation that certain foods should only be used sparingly.

Processed meats made of reformed or reconstituted meat will be banned, although sausages and burgers made from meat must still be allowed. Other items...



First person
'Overnight change
doesn't work'

Dinner lady Jeanette Orrey was one of the catalysts for the campaign led by Jamie Oliver over school food. She had transformed meals at her school, St Peter's primary in Nottinghamshire, in 2000, replacing processed food with freshly cooked meals.

"Ruth Kelly's ban on junk food is a good start but it's going to be difficult. We've lost two generations who don't know how to cook. Children need to be given time to eat and socialise.

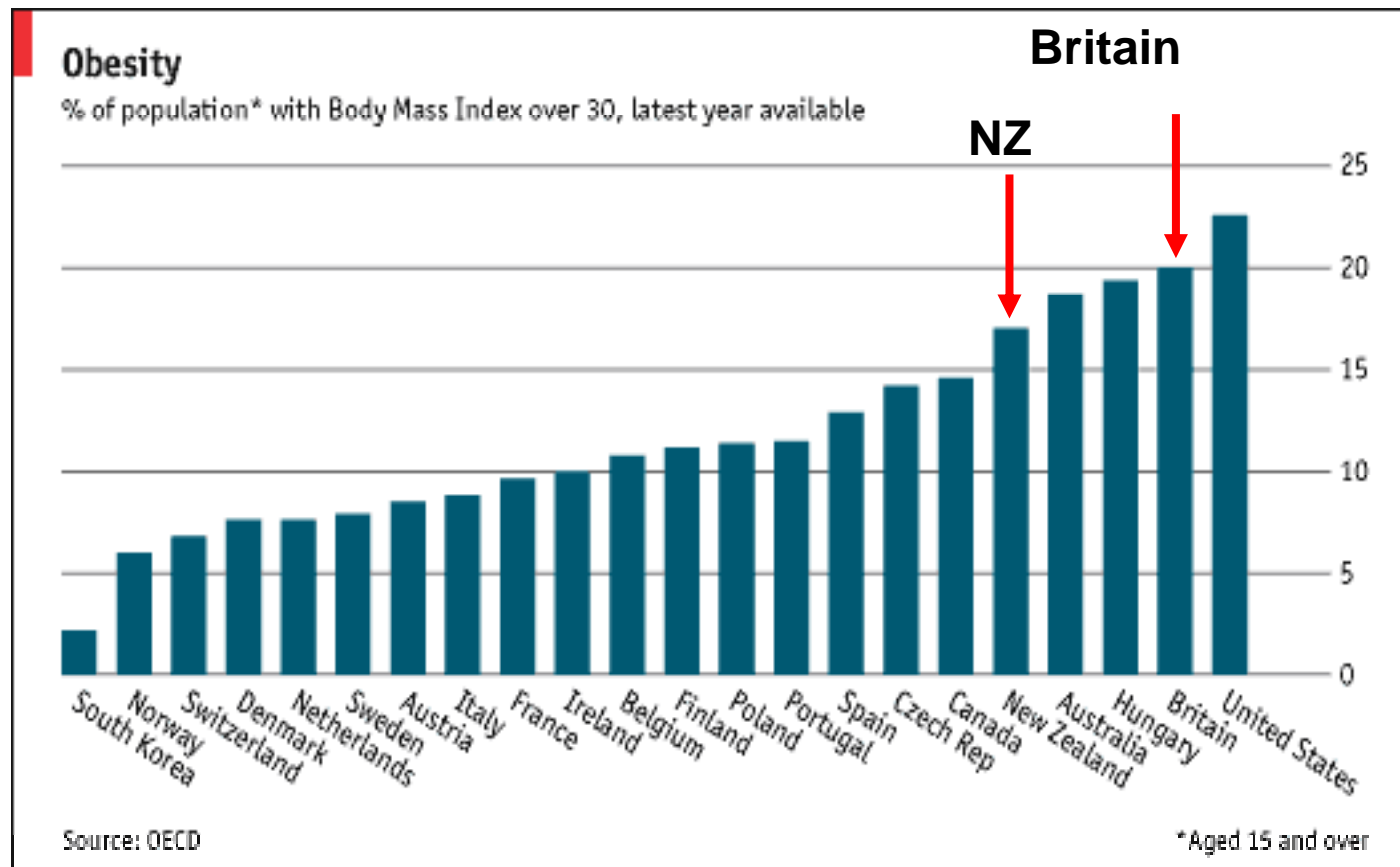
Some parents will resist. Adopting the Caroline Walker Trust guidelines will be a start towards good quality food that will improve not just children's health but their behaviour and concentration. People have to realise it's not just the food on the plate that matters, it's the whole approach in school to food. We have to re-educate people that real food doesn't come out of plastic containers.

"Overnight change doesn't work. You introduce something, you ask the kids, 'Do you like it?' You have got to have a conversation. You have to get the kids into your way of thinking, but also engage with them, explain to them why you are doing it. It's no good saying to a child, 'There's your dinner' and that's it."

Felicity Lawrence



Obesity - a common problem worldwide



Health benefits of physical activity over a lifetime

Tackles:

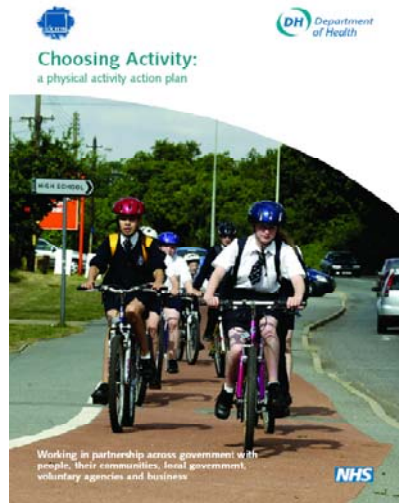
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Mental health and well-being
- Cognitive function / independence



Source: UK SE Public Health Observatory/ Hill/Cavill/Rutter

Part of the solution?

Active travel and schools...work in the UK



10% of UK 10-year olds are “obese”

79% primary school journeys were under 3 km

42% of pupils “would like to cycle to school”

Children and young people: starting on an active path

Healthy schools
School travel plans
National standard for cycle training

Physical activity and child health

At least five
a week

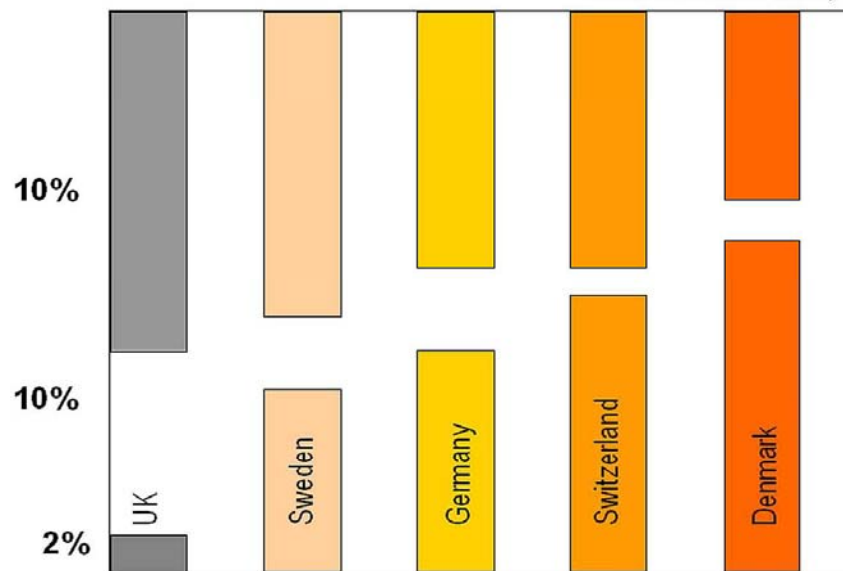
Evidence on the impact of physical activity
and its relationship to health

A report from the Chief Medical Officer

“at least 30
minutes of
moderate
intensity physical
activity at least
five times a
week”

Prevalence of overweight children aged around 10 years

Source: International Obesity Taskforce 2002



Levels of cycling in selected countries

Source: DfT 1996

Cycling at 15km/h = walking at 6km/h

Health benefits of active travel outweigh
risks by 20:1

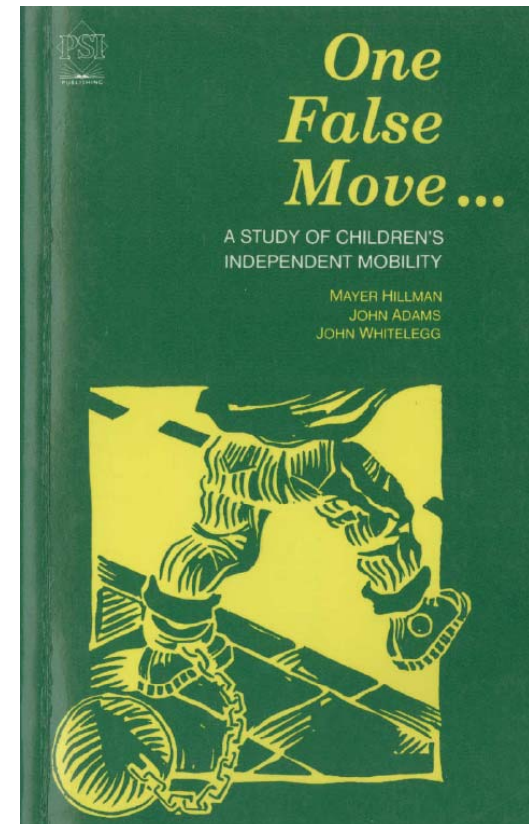
Changes in Child Travel Freedoms

A dramatic change in commuting habits of children across OECD countries in last few decades

In UK for instance, between early 1970's and 1990, children travelling to school alone (walking) dropped from 80% to under 10%¹

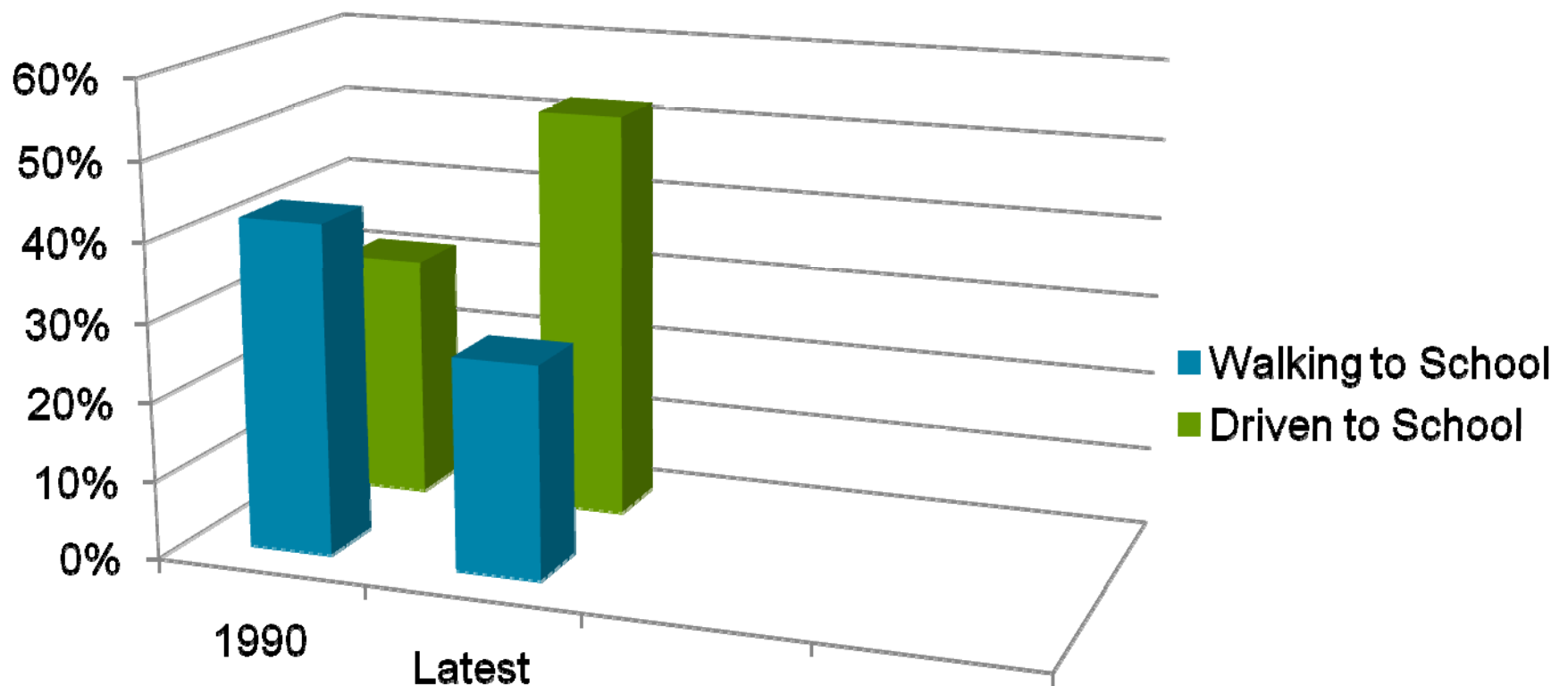
Similar figures for NZ and Dunedin...

Source: One False Move, Hillman, Adams, Whitegg (UK Policy Studies Institute, 1990)



Changes in Journey to School Travel Habits

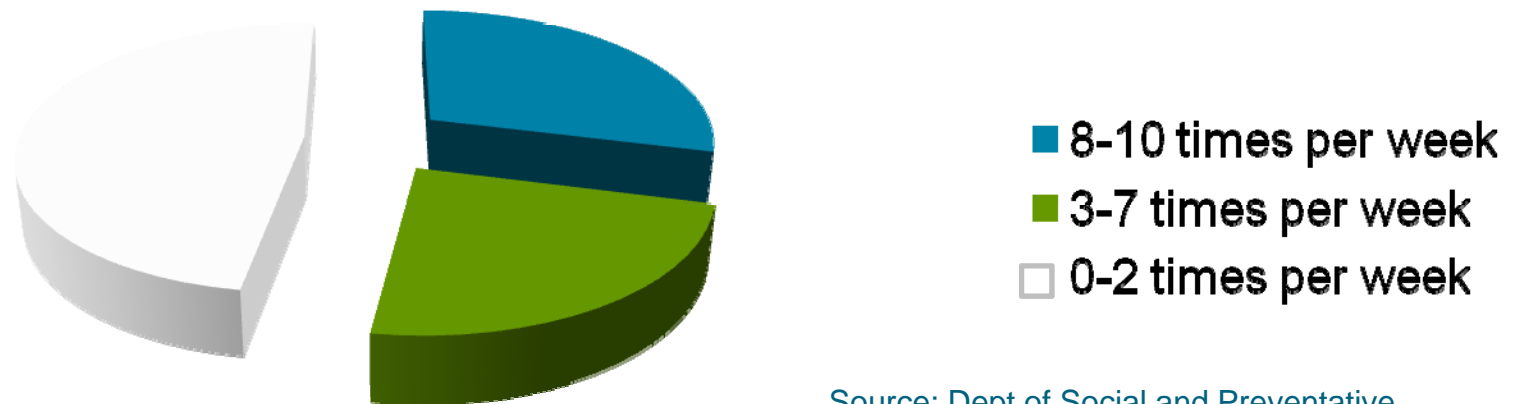
New Zealand Primary Age Range Children



Source: MoT Household Travel Survey

Child Travel in Dunedin

Frequency of Primary Age Children Walking to School - Dunedin (2005)



Source: Dept of Social and Preventative Medicine, Otago School of Medicine

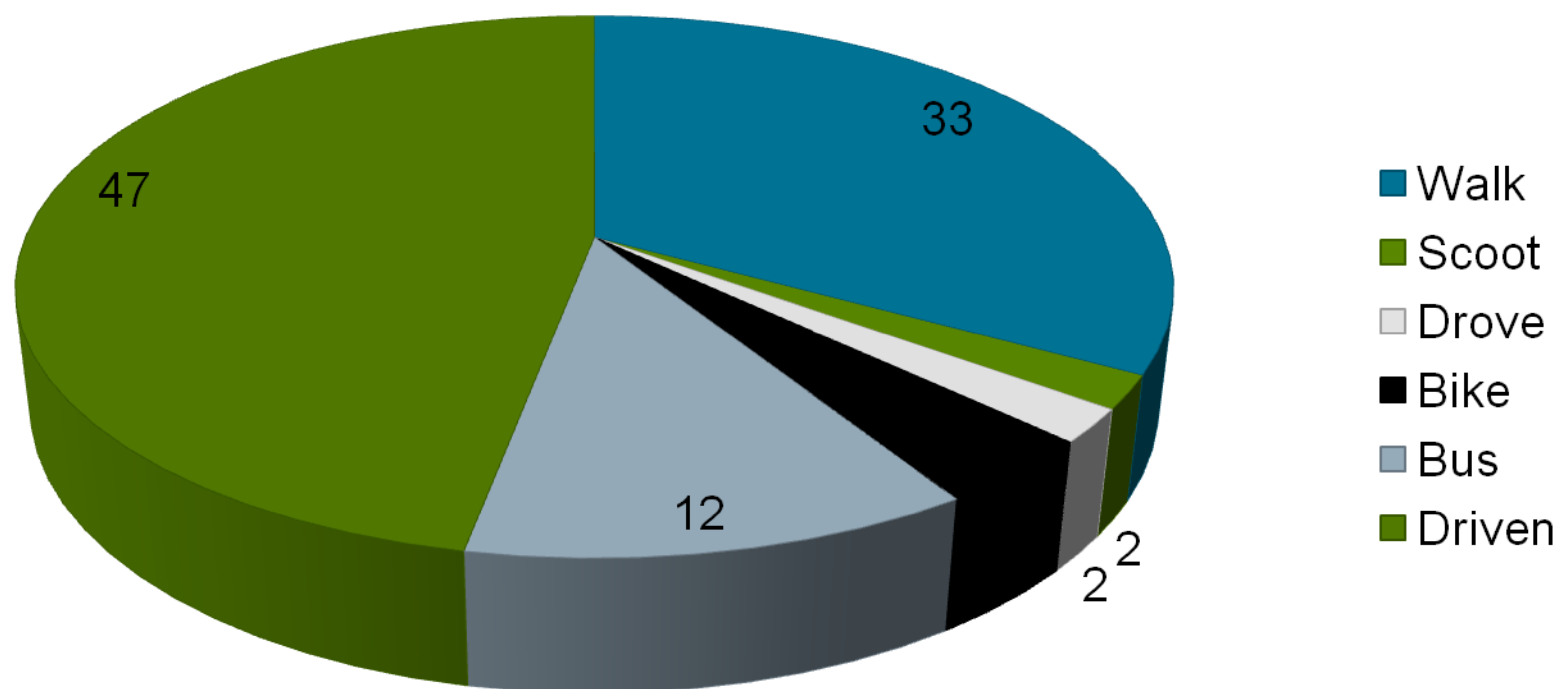
Latest Walk n Wheel results (38 contributing schools city – wide):

- Only 5 schools typically with >50% of students using active travel
- Some recoded typical active travel proportion as low as 12%
- **WnW results** showed active travel used at some point by 60% of children, with some schools as high as 90%

Child Travel in Dunedin – All Schools

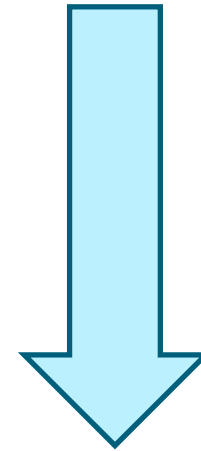
Source: 2008 Ministry of Education survey of 82 Dunedin Schools (Year 1-13)

Percentage of all students by Mode



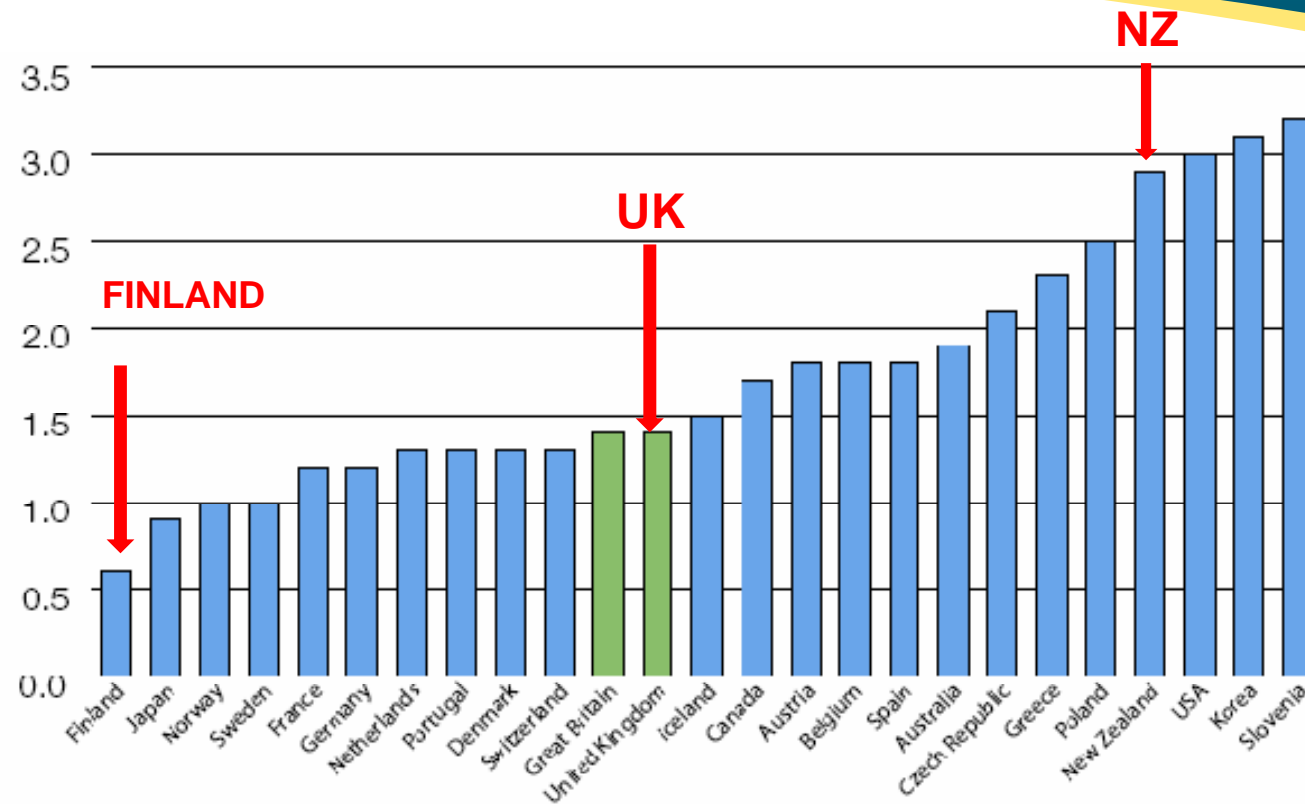
Why? Parental views on child travel to schools in Dunedin..

- Factors influencing Dunedin parents of primary age range children willingness **(or not)** to allow them to walk to or from school included (in order):
 - Road safety fears
 - Traffic speeds
 - Health benefits
 - Stranger danger fears
 - Numbers of cars around the school...



...the weather was low down the list!

child casualties...

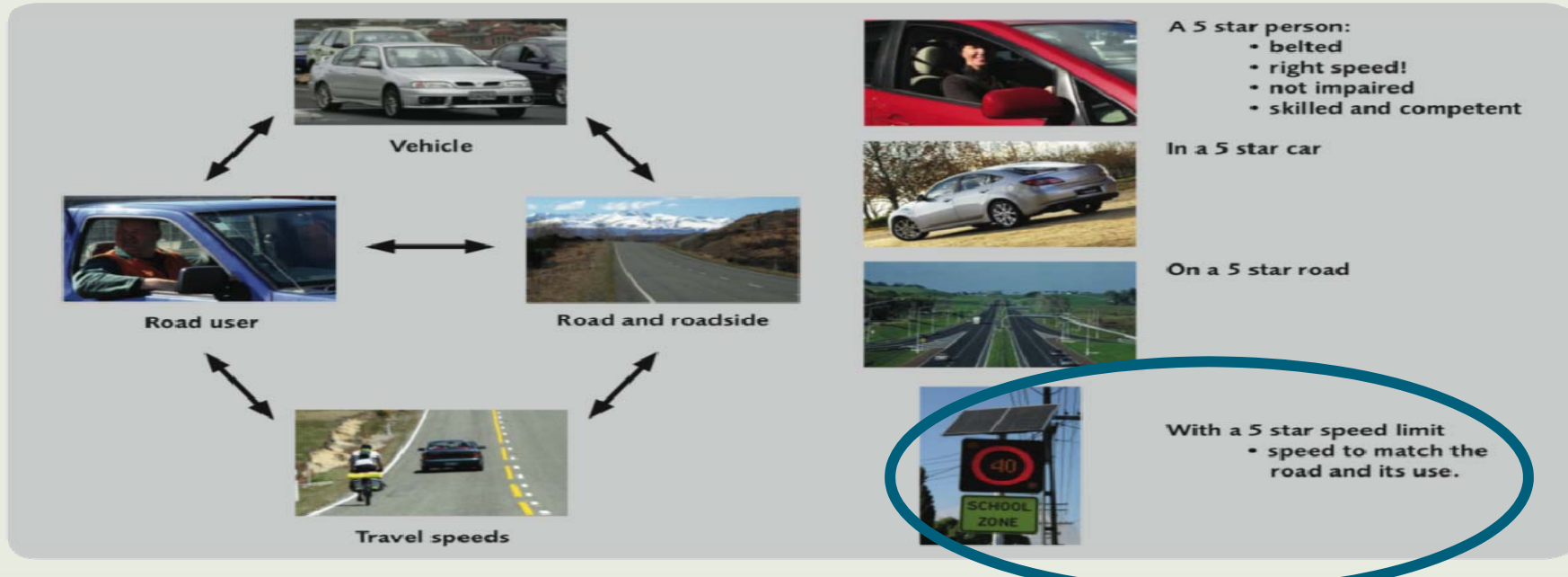


Child (aged 0–14) road deaths per 100,000 population: 2006
Source: A Safer Way DfT (UK)

NZ 'Safer Journeys' Proposed Vision to 2020

“A safe road system that is increasingly free of death and serious injury”

The safe system approach



Dunedin City Council's STP approach

Underpinning principles

- Council has prioritised **sustainable development and transportation solutions** to support social, economic and environmental well being for its citizens
- Transportation Strategy (2006) also addresses:
 - Likely **declining peak period levels of network service** with traffic growth
 - Increased priority towards **safety and needs of vulnerable road users**
 - Promotion of travel demand management, making **best use of existing infrastructure and network capacity**
- ...with Pedestrian Strategy also aiming to increase the number of children walking to school

Dunedin City Council's STP approach

Underpinning principles

- Council, with Sport Otago saw key role for providing **improved travel choice for children**, to:
 - **Improve child health and well being**
 - **reduce impact of the school journey** on child safety and the local environment
- Good **alignment with Transport GPS objectives** - using reserve network capacity released with fewer school car journeys to help **improve peak period network efficiency**
- Good alignment with the safe system approach of the new *Safer Journeys* NZ road safety strategy



Dunedin City Council's STP approach

Key programme planning aims

- To form **effective partnerships** with enthusiastic, committed **school communities**, and in turn the wider **North East Valley community**
- Foster **multi sector engagement**, including Police, DCC Community Advisors, Sport Otago (Active Travel Education Advisor)
- To ensure that it **delivers against wider city – wide community outcomes** for economic, environmental, social and cultural wellbeing
- To **reflect** current international and national **best practice** in Travel Plan development and implementation



Community Engagement

- North East Valley Community Development Project (est 2006/07) had identified:
 - Improving road safety
 - Improving local transport
 - Improving the local environment...as key outcome objectives



- Otago Youth Wellness Trust had also **identified child health related attendance issues** at school as a key community issue to address
- Wider community support for School Travel Planning therefore seen as a good way to meet those key objectives
- **Local School Council** formed as part of the community project, and is **now coordinating the School Travel Plan programme** development for local schools and kindergartens



Dunedin City Council's STP approach

Key programme implementation aims

- To ensure that each Travel Plan is accompanied by a **sound, realistic programme of partnership action**
- **Harness and enhance existing** city – wide **programmes** including Walking School Bus, Frequent Walker programme, Walk Wednesdays, Walk n Wheel Week etc...for **efficiency and value for money**

That STP action plans should therefore:

- contain **value for money** solutions
- achieve maximum alignment with wider **transportation, road safety and speed management goals and programmes**
- at the local **and** national level



Key STP Programme Steps

Secure Partnership Commitment

- Secure commitment from contributing schools
- Secure commitment from key stakeholders, **including wider community**
- Establish Working Group(s)

Data Collection and Engagement

- Surveys and consultation
- School Profile and Existing Travel Survey
- Mapping for Real Days
- Traffic and Access Site Assessment – especially for walking and cycling

We are here now

Implementation

- Schools prepare **own Travel Plan(s)**
- **Agree Action Plan of realistic, fundable multi agency actions**
- Agree monitoring arrangements inc key targets, results, outcomes

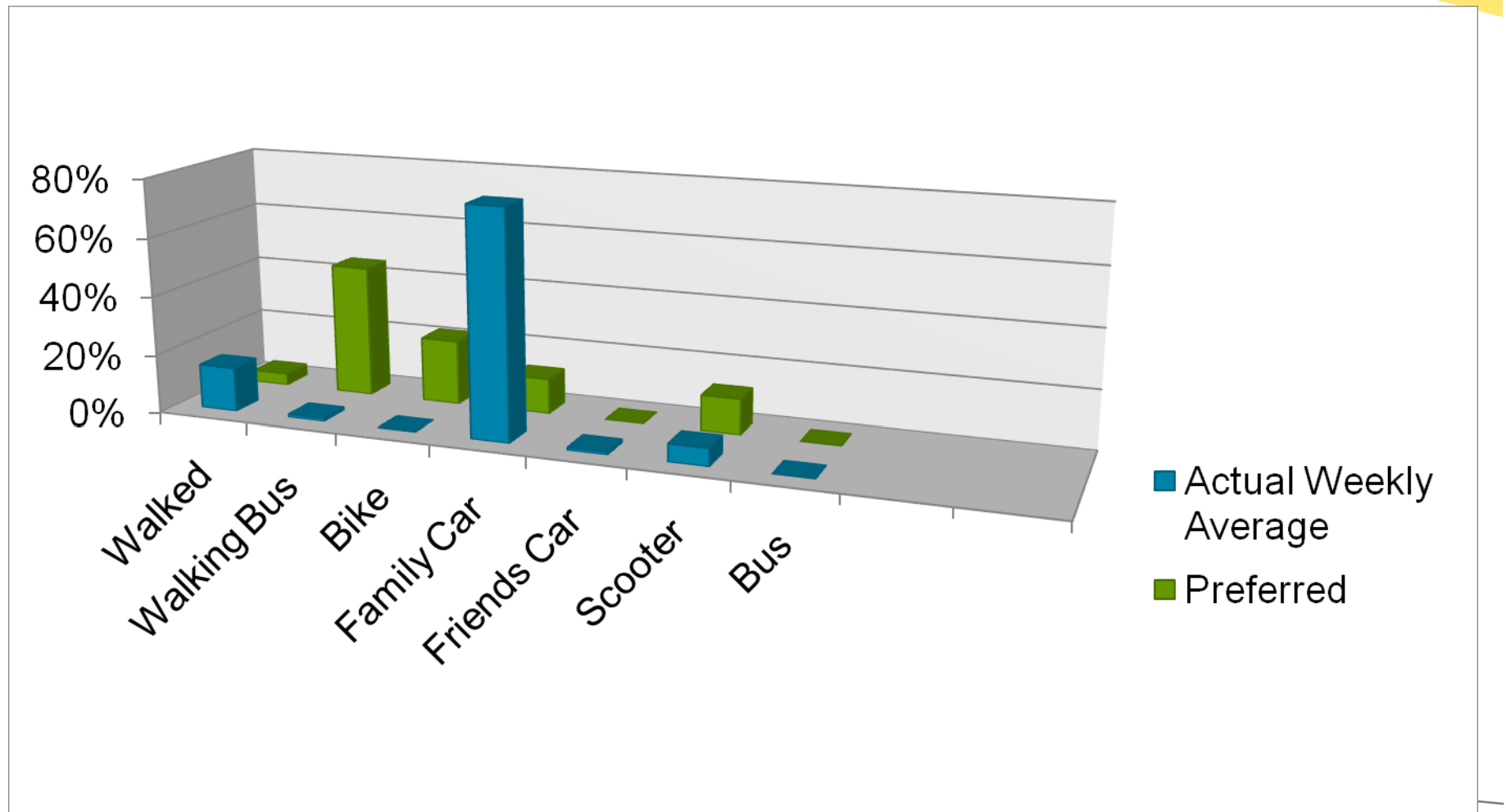
Monitoring

- Monitor implementation of individual Travel Plan for school or cluster
- Conduct regular city – wide Dunedin School Travel survey – to assess city wide travel results and effectiveness of STP programme

So, what have we discovered so far?

Existing and Preferred School Journeys

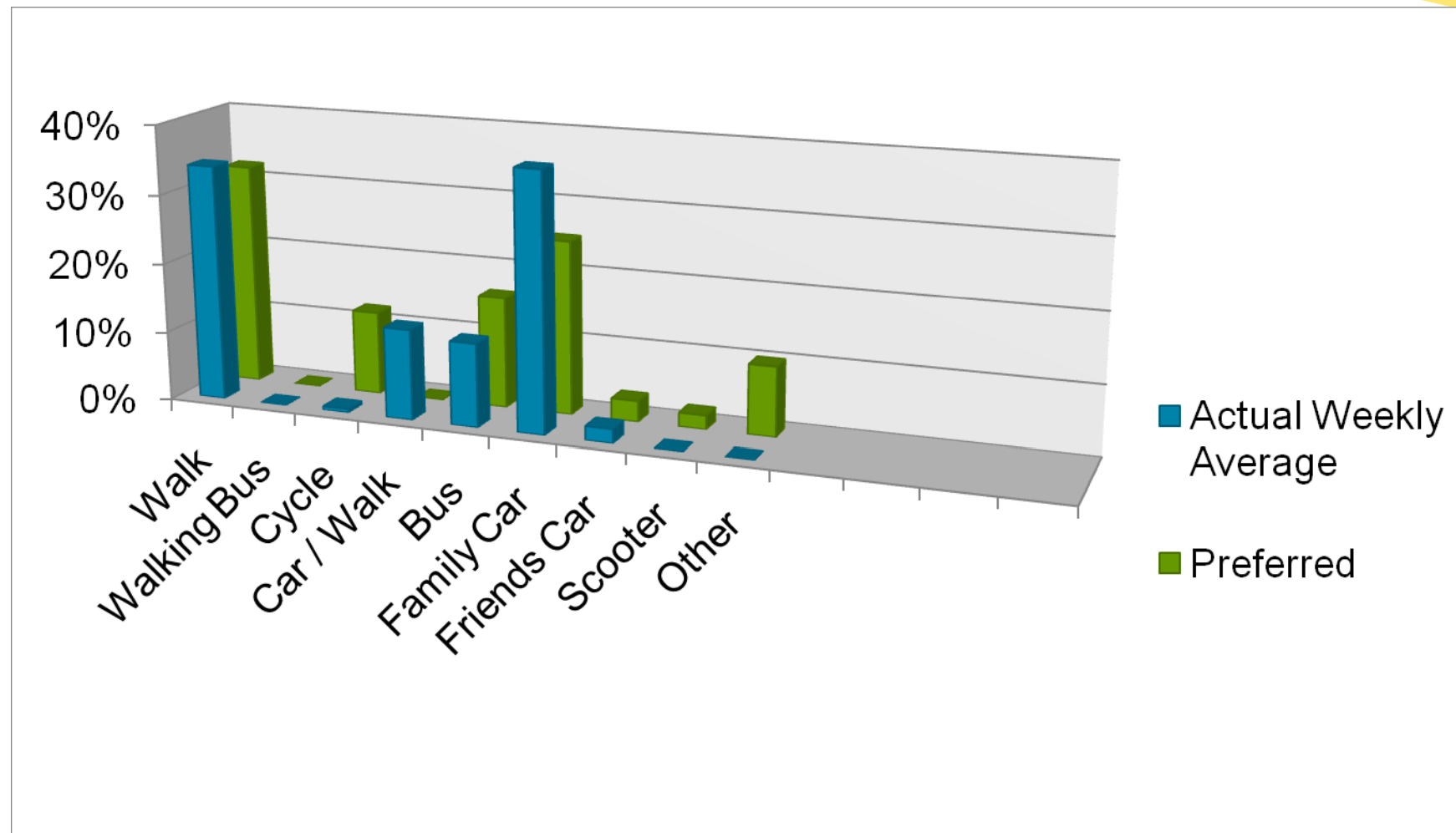
Sacred Heart Primary School



What have we discovered so far?

Existing and Preferred School Journey

Dunedin North Intermediate



Early Feedback

Sacred Heart Primary

- “
- ...Walking School Bus great, but only on Wednesday and doesn't suit days needed...
 - ...**there are not enough safe places to cross...**
 - ...20 min drive from school – would consider car pooling...
 - ...**if traffic speed reduced, would be much happier letting children walk by themselves...**
 - ...**reduction in traffic would be a solution to some of the problems...**
 - ...if cycle safety training was available I would let my child cycle to school...
- ”



Early Feedback

Dunedin North Intermediate

“

- ...if it was safe I would let him walk or bike – **its frustrating for him because he wants to get to school independently...**
- ...we have devised the safest route for our child to and from school away from the busy North Road – no issues to date...
- ...**daughter has wanted to cycle to school**, but refused due to traffic danger....**work around making safer would be fantastic...**
- ...if it was safer and there were more crossing points I would let my child walk...
- ...there are not enough safe places to cross...



”

Early Feedback

North East Valley Normal (inc site traffic assessment)

“

- ...pedestrian access routes mix with busy vehicle access...
- ...separation of parent waiting areas from vehicle movements...
- ..site signing (within and close to school) does not minimise vehicle / pedestrian conflicts...
- ...vehicle parking restricting safe use of footpaths...
- ...lack of parental parking control inside and close to school premises...
- ...better manage speed on North Road...
- ...better manage traffic turning close to school...

”

Way Forward

- Issues from parent surveys, mapping for real and site traffic assessments being studied
- Action Plans to inform School Travel Plans to be considered early September
- **Good alignment between issues Council sees necessary to address on North Road and schools accesses, and feedback being received**
- Every chance a realistic, affordable programme of multi – agency action in education, training, enforcement and engineering will have been agreed by the end of the year



but we still probably have a bit more to do yet...

“
...I have a
car, so they
don't need
to walk...
”



A parent's feedback – Dunedin North
Intermediate School Travel Report