

Living Streets Aotearoa



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Submission from Wellington Living Streets on Greater Wellington Long Term Plan

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General

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Greater Wellington Long Term Plan. We support the ability of citizens and groups like ours to have direct input into funding decisions and plans that affect the places where we live.

The Regional Land Transport Plan has identified some ambitious targets for mode shift to 2030 of a 40% increase in walking, public transport and cycling mode share. Actions to meet these targets need to be better reflected in the Long Term Plan.

One key omission from this LTP is the lack of programmes to increase walk to school travel. This is an essential element together with children's use of public transport and cycling to get the mode shift and meet long term emissions reduction that is required.

Living Streets support the goal of Greater Wellington Regional Council being carbon neutral by 2030. We would also like to see an emphasis on actions that would help others reduce their carbon emissions such as how people access public transport particularly trains, or providing a bus to regional parks, both providing a choice to private vehicle use.

The four key strategic areas:

- 1 Responding to Climate Change
- 2 Improving outcomes for mana whenua and Māori
- 3 Adapting and responding to Covid19 impacts
- 4 Aligning with Government direction

Public transport investment

In line with the priorities of the Regional Land Transport Plan we support a focus on investment to increase public transport capacity and reliability.

Living Streets support increasing uptake of EV public transport to reduce the 36% contribution from PT. We support this investment in part because electric PT has a significant benefit to pedestrians by improvements to local air quality and noise reduction. We support funding for this investment in our future and assume there is a Manawatu contribution to the train network also.

We note the preferred new Ferry dock is at Kaiwharawhara and as this has poor pedestrian connectivity will expect to see the access needs of pedestrians funded and designed as a central part of this project.

GWRC has an important role in transport at the regional level, and needs to perform that role well. While we applaud the proposal to electrify all the public transport fleet, both for carbon mitigation and pedestrian comfort and health reasons, that does not solve many of the fundamental issues facing the region's transport system. The most important things GWRC can do for the climate is to ensure a robust public transport system with great accessible walking connections to get more people out of their cars, and preferably living in carless households.

A well-functioning public transport network is vital as part of creating a walkable region with low transport disadvantage. There are still serious issues in relation to the Greater Wellington PT network that need to be addressed:

- PT use is still unaffordable for many (or at least perceived as more expensive than using the car), while off-peak services are under-utilised. There are ways that GW could increase off-peak use, such as allowing a monthly train pass holder or snapper card user to take children on for no additional cost in the off peak. That would allow families to do affordable trips at the weekend, for example to Te Papa from Kapiti
- Ensuring that buses and trains connect. We are still hearing from users who cannot get from the train to the "connecting" bus before it leaves, particularly if the train is slightly delayed, but even when it is on time
- Providing better information at stations and major bus stops so passengers can orientate themselves when they alight
- Dealing with the problems facing bus drivers in the system
- Improving the experience of users when waiting for services – seating, shelter, lighting, safety. Sometimes there are major faults, such as a complete lack of any shelter, and sometimes it's the little things – the seats that are too high a person's feet don't touch the ground, trip hazards, the RTI screen not being visible from inside the shelter
- Buses are not easily used by people with large bags, children in pushchairs, etc. Every bus needs a space with no seats for those users (if seats are put in, other passengers will tend to occupy them and be reluctant to move). That would remove the anxiety of "will I be able to fit"
- The operation of the system is still not user-friendly in many ways. Too many trains don't have their "next station" audio playing, train replacement buses often don't stop at every stop and announce where they are. Bus drivers are not being trained in how to provide good customer service, etc.

The LTP needs to provide more funding to specifically tackle these problems.

A walkable region also depends on the services provided to pedestrians. That includes regional scale services such as a walkable and consistent standard of access to public transport as well as the long distance walkways. GWRC should be providing leadership for a walkable region. The LTP needs clear funding for:

- Assessing walkability, particularly major barriers to commuting walking to work and to school, and access to services, but also the way in which councils in the region are setting and meeting service level goals.
- Ensuring that there are good walking connections to all railway stations, for example across SH2 in the Hutt.
- Ensuring cities address walkability, such as the implementation of Porirua CBD improvements, Kenepuru Drive walk levels of service are maintained even after Transmission Gully opens, Knights Rd improvements to ensure access from Waterloo to Hutt City centre, and Jackson St pedestrian improvements.
- Supporting creation and management of long walkways, such as the Great Harbour Way/ Te Aranui o Poneke, the proposed walkway around Porirua Harbour, Hutt River path, Wellington to Porirua walking route and supporting Te Araroa through our region.
- Lobbying for better central government funding for pedestrian infrastructure and inclusion in all transport projects
- Ensuring, under the RMA and its replacement, that all new developments provide a walkable environment with high pedestrian service levels.

LGWM funding

Living Streets support adequate funding for the early delivery programme (1-3 years), City Streets and rapid transit projects of LGWM. We note \$45 million in years 1-3 and \$295 million in years 4-10 has been budgeted and assume this will cover all GW contribution to these essential projects.

Regional parks

Living Streets supports the long term goal to return most of regional parks to native ecosystems. We support the retention of some model farms to enable urban people to visit a farm.

Living Streets support as a priority providing public transport to regional parks so that everyone can access them. This could be a weekend only service or any number of different access options. The Palmerston North Apiti weekend van is an example of how this can be done.

Joint regional committee and secretariat

Joint regional committee and secretariat to manage spatial plans/ regional growth
Seems to be a significant lack of public input to this process already
Not clear how all the committees will work together and experience with LGWM has shown that decision-making is not straight forward, or with 3Waters that funding is not always adequate to the task

'action for the regions future' sounds like this committee is essential but its role is not clear Wellington regional growth framework – we would like to comment

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