

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on Greater Wellington Annual Plan 2017- 2018

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Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the committee for this opportunity to submit on the 2017/18 annual plan.

We support the four priorities for 2017/18 funding

- investing in resilient regional infrastructure
- making sure we can cope in emergencies
- growing public transport patronage
- keeping our environment clean

Air Quality

Air quality is a very important attribute for a walkable place and despite Wellington's breeze there are occasions when the air is less than pure. We support GW doing much more research on air quality in Wellington city in particular, and along main roads in other centres, and then taking some action to improve air quality.

We support retention of Wellington's trolley bus system. This is key to keeping emissions down at least until an alternative clean public transport system is available. GW should be working actively to remove diesel vehicles from our fleet.

Walking safety and promotion

We appreciate the GW submission on the Government Policy Statement on Transport raised the significant disparity in funding between walking and all vehicle modes of travel. It is a little disappointing then to find that there is no new programmes proposed for walking in this annual plan to redress this imbalance.

Walking rates are low over the region as a whole and could be supported more to provide for the links with public transport, resilience in emergencies – we have seen that walking is the only reliable way to get around in some emergencies – and support keeping our environment clean.

Walking safety around PT vehicles should be targeted to ensure that they work well together. A safer system approach rather than a blaming one is recommended. We support a programme to improve pedestrian – passenger interactions with buses in particular (eg getting buses to pull right up to the kerb and kneel as the standard, stopping at a specific predictable point at stops so that visually impaired know where to stand).

The Walk to School programme should be significantly increased to support young people learning good travel habits. This needs to be a separate activity from bikes at schools programmes. There are a large number of programmes that could support this.

Public transport

Walking is the linking mode for all travel needs and plays a particularly important connection with public transport. Living Streets would like to see a vision for PT and walking that promotes this as the best way to get around and have fun, rather than only as an aid to reduce congestion.

We would like to see consideration of free travel for children on public transport to encourage lifelong sustainable transport use. The cost of travel with families on PT can be a significant deterrent. A variety of ways to do this could include free travel for children when travelling with a fare paying adult.

We strongly support maintaining at least current fare levels and not increasing fares.

We support a modest discount for tertiary students public transport travel. Support for more innovative travel options to university is also supported, eg an escalator from Boulcott St to the Terrace. This would encourage a certain amount of healthy activity with a short cut from one bus to another.

We support implementing free transfers and other fare initiatives this year, rather than wait to align with the new bus contracts which have been postponed.

We support implementation of the integrated ticket system as soon as possible including the bus-network-wide introduction of Snapper.

We support provision of luggage capability on all PT services including larger or bulky items – for instance work tools.

Living Streets urge GW to actively lobby the government to secure proper funding for KiwiRail and not to postpone Rail Scenario 1 work.

Door to destination planning for public transport needs to encourage and incorporate walking to and from the stops. The walk is the journey leg that adds the most health benefit for a PT trip and should not be considered as optional or an alternative to car use. To support this Living Streets would like to see a thorough review of all wayfinding at stops and stations including service information, local maps, PT maps and other information at different places, eg points of interest.

Living Streets undertook a Community Street Review at Wellington Railway Station and implementing those recommendations for wayfinding would assist greatly here. More research on understanding the PT journey in Wellington would be useful.

Bus stop standards and design are an opportunity to greatly enhance the PT experience and we would like to see more work on creating conflict free pedestrian - passenger interfaces. The new wider footpath at the Railway Station bus interchange is an example of how to improve this interaction.

Living Streets would like to see RTI screens moved so that they can be seen by people sitting inside bus-stop shelters. Adshells should be located away from PT stops so they do not obscure sight of buses, RTI screens, and so that who is waiting at the stop can be viewed for safety.

Living Streets would like to see RTI screens accurately identifying when a bus will arrive. E.g. Make RTI screens always show how many minutes before the next no. 22 or no. 23 bus will arrive. So often, the screens alternate between 'sched' and the timetable time.

Living Streets support the installation of traffic-light pre-emption systems on buses and in street-side traffic-light control units, so that buses get priority at intersections, especially in suburban shopping areas.

Living Streets supports greater coordination of timetables for buses from suburban areas to facilitate connections with train services. The entire trip should be seen as one service E.g. The December 2016 revision of the weekend no. 23 services from Mairangi are timed to arrive at Lambton Interchange one or two minutes **after** trains depart on the Hutt line! This necessitates a 28-minute wait!

We support better coordination of PT services when there are disruptions. E.g It should be easy to identify that bus replacements are operating at all train stops.

Living Streets recommend that when new bus service contracts are being negotiated, it is required that all existing advertisements be removed from bus windows, and that no more be permitted. Buses should not have tinted glass windows, this helps a sense of safety when getting onboard vehicles. Advertising, plus tinting, detracts from the enjoyment of bus travel, and after dark, especially when it is raining, the combination makes reading street signs very difficult. Advertising should be removed from the rear windows of M.A.N-brand 600-series and 700-series, where those windows are designed to be emergency exits.

We recommend the bus 'fleet number' be displayed on the panel above the front window, facing the passengers, so that passengers can easily report faulty push-buttons, tagging, damaged seats, etc.

Living Streets would like to see GW provide PT services so that it is possible to access recreational services like the regional parks, eg Baring Head which is difficult to get to without a car. These services could be weekend only, or alternate weekends, or some combination so that there is a choice of parks to visit.

Living Streets recommend that GW urges Parliament to legislate to enable cities to impose congestion-charging on commuter traffic, and other travel demand management activities, as part of implementing NZ's commitment to COP21 Paris Agreement. We would support PT credits for those that walk – ie every kilometre walked would attract a PT credit.

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