

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa to Let's Get Wellington Moving

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### Submission

1. Living Streets Aotearoa welcomes this opportunity to contribute to making Wellington a better city to be in. We appreciated the chance to talk to your team before making this submission, and we would like to discuss our submission and details of how walking is to be improved with you.
2. Wellington is a great place to live especially because of our small, compact well-defined city. This makes it relatively easy to walk around with plenty of interesting routes.
3. Wellington has the highest, and increasing, rate of adults walking to work in New Zealand, and walking is the preferred recreational activity of 60% of New Zealanders.
4. There is nothing 'broke' about Wellington from a walking perspective but we believe it could be much better with even more people out enjoying walking by reducing the frustrations for commuter walkers among others (e.g. at road crossings).
5. Public transport is the natural partner to a great walking city and Wellington has some of the best in New Zealand with high patronage rates and a great culture of using buses and trains. There are however, identified issues with public transport and these should be addressed urgently to maintain and attract more users.
6. We note that the Wellington City Urban Growth Plan adopts the sustainable transport hierarchy. We believe LGWM should also explicitly adopt that. This means that pedestrian considerations should come first by encouraging more walking in a more walkable environment.

7. Current regional roading projects will place even more pressure on Wellington's public transport and walking environment. More private vehicles will be easily able to access Wellington with the concomitant pollution, noise, and pressure on our road space. Induced traffic quickly negates the short-term benefit of increased road capacity as has been seen in many places. This is a significant concern and LGWM must adopt measures that will directly counter that and reduce traffic.

### **Support Scenario A**

8. Living Streets supports Scenario A because:
  - It has a priority and focus on walking, public transport and cycling. This is the focus identified as important in all public consultations
  - It will help address bus congestion, which has been identified as the key transport problem in Wellington
  - This scenario supports sustainable transport and healthy activity, and will produce at least as much GHG emission reductions as other options.
9. Living Streets supports the lowering of the speed limit across the city to 30km/hour. Lowering speed is well known as the major factor to improve road safety. Thirty kilometres an hour should become the standard speed across the city with, strong reasons required to increase speed on any road. This will require an equal amount of enforcement to make it work.
10. Living Streets is in favour of an integrated (rather than one mode) and incremental (rather than large one-off) approach to improving our great city. We support an approach that trials solutions before committing to permanent infrastructure build. We support direct investment in what we want. We do not support investment in more roads (scenarios B, C or D) in the hope that will deliver better walking and public transport.
11. Living Streets challenges the assumptions that each additional option improves on the previous ones. Options B, C and D all build more roads and assume a trickle-up effect will improve walking and public transport. There is plenty of international evidence that more roads create more vehicle traffic. The slight improvements of pedestrian crossing times at some intersections will be offset by a decrease service in other places as traffic is moved across town. We find this is a misleading approach likely to influence peoples decisions on which options is preferable. Living Streets wants to see the principles achieved to improve public transport in particular, which will require improvements for walking. The following additions to scenario A are recommended.

### **Scenario A plus**

12. There are further actions that should be added to Scenario A to provide the needed improvements in walking and public transport required to address the lack of investment and inconsistent application of standards across the system.
13. We have identified some key issues with proposed solutions below.

## **Golden Mile public transport congestion**

14. Bus congestion on the Golden Mile is a key constraint on the whole bus network and is well understood.
15. The following are some suggestions to greatly improve the central city environment for pedestrians and public transport users. These can be implemented immediately on a trial basis with minimal investment:
  - Close off all Lambton Quay side roads to improve bus flow and pedestrian amenity. Move all car and taxi parking from Lambton Quay to side roads, and ensure disabled parks and freight drop-off parks are closest to Lambton Quay. Use of Lambton Quay for major deliveries, construction work, etc should be by permit at specified times only.
  - Remove all private vehicles from the Golden Mile, making Manners St bus only at all times. Willis St, Lambton Quay and Courtenay Place should be car free at least during the peak.
  - Carry out a re-design of all the footpath spaces within the area, to ensure there are wide, uncluttered footpaths throughout. That will require moving things like bike parking into what is currently road space.
  - Implement more [Jan Gehl ideas \(2004\)](#) to make better connections with the waterfront.
  - Create a cycle lane on the quays, and get most cyclists off the waterfront. Commuting cyclists moving at speed prefer not to be sharing space with pedestrians on the waterfront.
  - Implement improvements from the recent Golden Mile Safety Review study (Bullen Consultancy, January 2016) so that it is safe to walk along and cross over the Golden Mile. This may require a reduction in bus speed.
  - Ensure bus-only lanes remain bus-only and extend these along Kent and Cambridge Terrace and through the Basin Reserve and along Adelaide Road. Provide safe dedicated lanes for cyclists separate from bus lanes (not shared paths).
  - Make Willis St two-way for buses to Brooklyn and Aro St, so the public transport system becomes more legible.
  - Make Featherston St two-way to cater to private vehicle travel, with improved pedestrian crossing times.
  - Make Karo Drive two-way and encourage all cross-city vehicle traffic to use it.
  - Use parking policies and other travel demand management measures such as congestion charging to reduce private vehicle use in the city.

## **There is low pedestrian priority on the entire network**

16. Road-space allocation and traffic signal times favour vehicle movements. LGWM's proposals must include the following:
  - Implement the sustainable transport hierarchy as adopted in the Urban Growth Plan.
  - Identify a standard minimum Level of Service for signalised pedestrian road crossings (recommend LoS C or better) and stop vehicles turning through crossing pedestrians at traffic lights.

- Remove slip lanes from Courtenay Place, Aitken/Hill and Molesworth St, Mulgrave and Thorndon Quay, Bowen and Lambton Quay, and at the Cobham Drive – Evans Bay Parade intersections.
- Set an acceptable average travel time for key pedestrian routes and use that as an indicator of whether road management and space allocation is successful.
- Make The Terrace more pedestrian friendly by providing raised platforms at all intersections and improve footpaths to meet the minimum standard.

17. Speed limits are too high in many places and not enforced. Speed is the key contributing factor in injury outcome so slower speeds in the central area are essential. Slow speeds are needed (as a minimum) in the central city, shopping centres, near schools, along key pedestrian routes and areas near green spaces that are used for recreation. An initial programme would be:

- reduce speed in central area to 30km/hour
- reduce speed in all suburban centres, near schools and in select compact suburbs (eg Mt Victoria)
- reduce all 70 km/hour areas to 50km/hour

18. Footpath infrastructure does not meet the NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide guidelines in many places, which has significant effects on both accessibility for vulnerable users, and attractiveness of the walking mode. We have noted that even many new footpath developments fail to meet basic standards. LGWM should set a target for bringing footpaths up to the minimum standard set out in the Guide, and propose controls to ensure new footpaths are not substandard and a fund to improve existing footpaths. Examples of the problem are:

- Accessibility is compromised in many places around Wellington because a consistent good standard is not met. Featherston Street, a main route from the Railway Station, was identified in a Community Street Review as an example of a narrow, cluttered, and substandard footpath that lacked good kerb dropdowns.
- Shared paths provide a low level of service for pedestrians and should not be used anywhere in the area of interest of this project. There has been a gradual increase in shared path creation, often using existing footpaths to 'solve' cycling problems.
- The busy footpaths along The Terrace are substandard both in terms of surface and size. They should prioritise pedestrian movement. This route is likely to be used as a vehicle bypass of the Golden Mile, and should have a cycleway added.

19. Wayfinding is important, and inadequate. There should be clear proposals and targets for improving legibility of both the walking environment and the public transport system. Things that would assist are:

- Use of a wider range of wayfinding methods. For example we have suggested using stencils as a cheap way to indicate that a route is a shortcut, not a private property entrance.
- Put maps of the surrounding area at major bus stops and stations throughout the public transport network, and include a map of the bus network.

- Create “branded” walking routes (e.g. the Great Harbour Way) with simple signage to show people that they are still on the route.
  - Improve wayfinding at Wellington Railway Station so that routes to Lambton Quay/ Parliament, Featherston Street and the waterfront are clearly indicated including accessible paths.
20. There needs to be major improvements around Wellington Railway Station to accessibility and pedestrian priority. A series of improvements were identified in the 2015 Community Street Review [Wellington Railway Station](#) (Living Streets Aotearoa and WCC Accessibility Advisory Group), and others by the Thorndon Transport Working Group. Bunny St in front of the station should be closed to all vehicle traffic.
21. Cuba Street should become a fully pedestrianised area with removal of all vehicles. This would declutter the tiny footpath and allow a better, more accessible through-route under the verandahs, with other activities taking over the road space. This is an approach very successfully used in many other cities
22. Tory St has become a major residential and popular retail area, but there have not been the necessary improvements in the street environment. It needs to become more walk-friendly and have a bike lane. Lower Tory Street and the link to Tasman St across Pukeahu) should be closed (the city did not come to a halt when they were closed after the earthquake or during construction) and ambitious amenity work implemented.
23. LGWM should propose a programme to develop more smart crossings with longer green 'man' time and longer cross times (Puffin or similar crossings), and more use of countdown clocks. For example, the pedestrian crossing at Lambton Quay - Brandon Street gives only 20 seconds crossing time and this has been observed as too short a time for all people to cross. The Willis/Manners Street Barnes dance pedestrian crossing is only 20 seconds and this is too short even for fast walkers to cross diagonally before the lights change. Puffin crossings automatically allow the right amount of time for users to cross.
24. As part of implementing the modal hierarchy, decision making always needs to explicitly identify and provide for the most sustainable and efficient way for people to access their daily activity. This will require a substantial increase in analysis of pedestrian activity and provisions to incentivise those choices.
25. There are a number of significant barriers to pedestrian cross-town movements that need to be addressed:
- Hutt Road – there are multiple places where safe crossing is needed
  - Cobham Drive – provide safe crossings along this busy road and reduce the speed limit. A proper beach access for Kilbirnie residents and link to central Miramar are needed
  - Ruahine St – there needs to be better connections between Hataitai and the Town Belt, and a safe crossing of Ruahine Street to access Constable Street
  - Kent/Cambridge Terrace - need to complete all pedestrian-crossing legs at intersections and decrease wait times

- Basin Reserve - needs to prioritise school children's walk and bus use
  - Taranaki St needs to prioritise bus, walk and cycle use with dedicated bus, and cycle lanes and reduced wait time for pedestrian crossings
  - Jervois and Waterloo Quays need to significantly reduce wait time for pedestrians
26. There needs to be significantly improved walking access to the Interislander ferry and to the airport – both are poorly signposted, and need to meet a better standard. There should also be better information on bus connections to the airport, clearly labelled stops, and signage at nearby stops for the final walk.
27. The Great Harbour Way work has identified improvements needed around the harbour. As well as basic access improvements, there needs to be improved amenity – at least meeting standard footpath requirements, more shade, seats and drinking water.
28. Wellington must have a complete cycle network, plus on-road bike parking and cyclist education, to ensure that existing conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists are resolved. Decision-makers must stop treating use of footpaths as an answer to cycling safety issues.

### **Basin Reserve area**

29. The Basin Reserve is used daily by many school children, yet this is not recognised in the way the public space around the Basin is allocated between users.
30. The Basin is also a key route for buses to the southern and eastern suburbs, and for people walking from Newtown, Hataitai and Mt Victoria. These users need to be given priority over private vehicles.
31. Living Streets supports an at-grade solution to improve bus movement through this area and improve pedestrian amenity. This will require dedicated pedestrian footpaths all around the Basin with at least LoS C to ensure an accessible path.
32. We would like to see dedicated bus lanes through the Basin trialled with a two-way Karo Drive taking all through traffic to a revamped Basin Reserve roundabout. Vivian Street would become a two-way local road. The Hataitai bus tunnel should continue to be used with the bus route through Mt Victoria suburb improved.

### **Climate change impacts**

33. Promoting and prioritising vehicle use has increased our transport GHG emissions. LGWM must propose a preferred scenario that will address this, including by promoting and prioritising walking and public transport. Key steps needed are:
- Set a GHG reduction target for transport in Wellington that is included in planning by other regional centres.
  - Increase use of 'stride and ride', bus feeders and bike to ride access to regional railway hubs to reduce car reliance. Remove subsidies for 'park and ride' by charging for parking and allow the valuable land near stations to be used for other purposes.

- Reduce private vehicle use through measures such as congestion charges, road 'diets', and removal of 'free' parking.
- Integrate urban planning requirements with transport planning to create compact communities with proper services (not dormitory or green-field suburbs). Creating a great city is the vision, not an optimised vehicle transport system.
- Improve public transport service (frequency, cost, weekend and later service) with good bus to train connections to encourage more users.
- Ensure that public transport is fully electric, to reduce emissions, impacts on adjacent land uses, and passenger amenity (particularly in relation to noise and vibration, and fumes at bus stops).
- Improve walking routes to the other cities (and the suburbs along the way), including by addressing disconnects across wide busy roads, noise, and pollution. Shade and noise reduction plantings are needed with ample good crossing points. A target of increased use of these routes is required to monitor outcomes.
- Close one lane on each side of Aotea/Waterloo/Customhouse/Jervois Quays to make a dedicated cycle lane, to both move cyclists off the waterfront and reduce traffic capacity as a TDM measure. This was promised in the inner-city bypass hearings as a consequence of that development.

### **Serious public health issues**

34. There are well-recognised serious public health issues with promoting vehicle use, including air pollution, crash death and injury, obesity, stress, loss of social connections, and a rise in many diseases associated with inactivity (especially lack of weight-bearing activity). Transport can become a positive public health measure if LGWM provides the following:

- Increase walking as a transport mode, through improved accessible infrastructure and amenity, and events that encourage walking. Set an ambitious target for increase of walk-only and public transport mode share.
- School travel plans implemented at all schools
- Workplace travel plans at all local and central government, health and education places, and support for businesses that wish to do workplace travel programmes.
- Improve suburban walking opportunities by improving connections to suburban centres and local destinations (eg Kilbirnie pedestrian crossing opportunities on Cobham Drive to the beach and central Miramar, better PT stops, narrower roads)
- Change the Basin Reserve layout to provide pedestrian priority for the large schools in the area, bus priority through the roundabout and no shared paths.
- Introduce a "safer street" approach so all users can be safe on our streets.

### **Public transport**

35. We support:

- Providing a high-quality public transport network across the city and region
- As part of that network, providing a high-capacity public transport spine through the Golden Mile, connected to high capacity services to other Wellington City suburbs and the rail network

- Moving to light rail as soon as possible. Light rail provides better accessibility for users (e.g. guaranteed level boarding) and can be better integrated with amenity features (e.g. can operate through lawns and gardens).
- Implementing and progressively improving the PT network improvements that have been identified in the past – network design, lower and fairer fares, integrated ticketing, improved comfort at stops and stations, reliable RTI.

### **Key performance indicators**

36. We recommend using the International Walking Data Standard to provide comparable performance indicators. The following key performance indicators should be part of LGWM outcomes:

- Increase walk mode share by 2025 to at least 30%, with 50% walk mode share from all inner city suburbs
- Increase PT (and walk) mode share to 30% by 2025
- Increase number of school children walking / or busing to school around the Basin
- Decrease amount of public space given to car parking by at least 3% per year
- All signalised pedestrian crossings provide a LoS C or better
- No public transport vehicle is delayed by private vehicle traffic
- Set a GHG emission reduction target for transport in Wellington, so that we return to 1990 levels by 2030

### **About Living Streets**

37. 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”.

38. 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)