

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa to Masterton District Council on Masterton long term plan 2018

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Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the Council for this opportunity to submit on the long term plan. We would like to make these proposals additional to the letter sent from Living Streets on 25 March 2018.

Firstly, can we congratulate you on having the most novel front page image it's so apt to use a potter's hands. The discussion of issues based on the foundations of sustainable development, social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects as well as education is a useful framework and we support that approach.

Good pedestrian infrastructure, slower speeds, encouraged by good urban design, make towns and cities safer and more attractive and encourage visitors and residents alike to linger, enjoy and spend. Walking is people's favourite leisure activity so better connected suburbs and parks, footpaths and reserves will be popular with residents.

Living Streets have successfully lobbied Government for a Funding Assistance Rate for footpath maintenance, this will be included in the local roads maintenance class in the new GPS on Transport. This should relieve pressure on Council budgets and allow increased spending on pedestrian infrastructure with a matched contribution. There is also available a Walk and cycle activity class for new initiatives to support more walkable places. Appropriate standards and design guides to ensure this infrastructure accessible are available with the NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide, RTS 14 for vision impaired pedestrians, and NZS 4212:2001 for accessible buildings.

Good data is the basis for good decisions and target setting. There is now an international standard for measuring walking that can assist in identifying and monitoring progress on walking initiatives <http://www.measuring-walking.org/>.

Masterton's 5 key issues

Three of the five key issues for Masterton have direct impact on supporting walking and creating great public spaces for a more liveable community.

- Creating a space for people to connect – replacing the town hall (\$15.5 million capital project).

Living Streets support the concept of providing a central place for people to connect, the facility will be a community asset making destination place.

- Creating a thriving and vibrant town centre – improvements to our town centre (\$3.63 million capital project)

Living Streets supports the grand vision of this project. The joining, greening, focus and river access will enhance the town centre and provide an opportunity to improve accessibility for all. We note that the principle to maintain traffic flows and parking is unlikely to produce the more vibrant result wanted.

- Developing our library – improving our library and archive spaces (\$8.1 million capital project).

Libraries are a key community asset that support lifetime learning in a community setting. Living Streets support development of this space.

Walk to school

Living Streets is concerned by the nationwide drop in the numbers of children walking to school. From 1989/90 to 2010-14 the numbers of 5 to 12 year-olds walking to school plummeted from 42% to 29% (MoT data). This is something we can take action on and a target to increase the walk to school mode share in the long term plan to improve the walk to school mode share is important. A useful start would be to measure the numbers currently walking to school. A school travel programme for every school in Masterton would be a step in the right direction to get students more active. Improvements in physical and mental health and alertness of students and congestion would all improve with more walking to school. Modest support for Walking School Buses for 5 to 8 year-olds helps set up a lifetime habit of walking.

Safer speeds

Living Streets support the review of speeds in Masterton and would like to see a reduction in speeds outside schools and in shopping centres to 30 km hour. We also support the reduction in speeds on all roads to an appropriate safe design speed. Speed is a key factor in reducing road crashes, and the impact of those crashes reduces with lower speeds.

More accessible streets

Living Streets sees the new GPS on Transport as an opportunity for Masterton to improve accessibility on footpaths. For instance, please ensure all intersections have drop-down kerbs from the footpath to allow easy access for buggies and wheelchair users, and all drop-down kerbs have tactile markings for vision-impaired people.

Where Queen Street meets Worksop Road is a very difficult intersection for pedestrians. More attention needs to be given to the vehicle priority here. Additionally, pedestrian crossings should be considered at roundabouts such as Kuripuni.

Accelerating footpath maintenance work should be considered in light of this new GPS on Transport funding that will be available for footpath maintenance and walking programmes. This will allow for improvements that will particularly benefit the health and safety of the ageing population.

More public seating should be provided in all towns to enable those with mobility issues to walk around being part of the community with appropriate rest stops.

Part of making streets more accessible is good wayfinding through signposting and provision of maps at appropriate high use areas. More information on walking times and a map at the railway stations would be helpful.

Living Streets is supportive of the 25% increase in funding for footpath renewal which should see MDC well-placed to take advantage of increased footpath maintenance funding in the new Government Policy Statement on Transport.

Supporting public transport use and the walk to work

Masterton has good train and bus services. Promoting use of these services reduces congestion on roads and is the safest way to travel. A target rate for public transport use (target 5%) and to increase the number who walk to work (target 10%) would be useful.

The Railway Link is a key project to improve access to the station and town centre. We support separate dedicated pedestrian footpaths and a separate bike lane as the best practise standard for achieving this. Footpaths provide the best level of service for people walking and keep the path safe from fast moving bikes for children and older people and those with special accessibility needs. This is an important design feature for future focused resilient development. Living Streets is aware of many path developments along river and sea that have generated conflict from the popularity of the path rather than providing a pleasant environment away from motor vehicles.

Living Streets would like to see Community Street Audits around train stations and main bus stops to see what improvements can be made e.g. more shelters and seating, wayfinding signs and maps for visitors, timetable information, and minimum footpath standards to access the stops.

[Community street reviews](#) are a useful cost effective tool to identify pedestrian improvements (such as those mentioned above) undertaken by users. They should include local people, those with accessibility issues and people of different ages and backgrounds to get a diversity of views.

Living Streets supports separated walk and cycle paths

Living Streets does not support the 'shared path' approach as these provide a poor level of service for pedestrians and can be a barrier to many, particularly older people. Dedicated pedestrian-only footpaths and cycle lanes should be the norm as this is best practise design. [Crashes with serious injuries](#) do occur on shared paths. The incidence of pedestrian-cyclist crashes will increase with this approach. Many Masterton streets are wide and this approach can easily be managed.

The Dixon Street footpath should be retained with a separate cycle lane. We note that the new Government Policy Statement on Transport proposes significantly more funding for walking which should enable good quality footpaths to receive funding.

One area that may need NZTA support is to ensure that all SH2 river bridges have adequate protected width for walking as well as cycling.

We also support recreational trails for walking but again, ensure separation where possible.

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