

Living Streets Aotearoa



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Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on Porirua Long Term Plan to Porirua City Council

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Long Term Plan.

There are five main issues we will comment on:

Three waters

Living Streets supports the being work done on 3 waters infrastructure issues, and recommends the introduction of water sensitive urban design approaches that will improve amenity for pedestrians as well as reducing the long term costs and increasing the long term resilience of the system.

Living Streets also note that poor stormwater management (impervious surfaces, lack of catchment management, lack of stormwater retention systems) means that some pedestrian routes flood, for example the walkway from Mephram Place. Ensuring pedestrians have safe routes should be a high priority in managing flood effects.

Overflow of sewage during floods and lack of prompt clean-up is also putting young pedestrians at risk. Where it is known that sewage is likely to overflow, the area should be quickly cleaned up before it can affect people using public spaces.

Protecting our harbour

Living Streets support improvements to the harbour and its catchment. We note that riparian plantings and related catchment works, and the involvement of communities in that, can and should be designed to also encourage walking, outdoor recreation and residents' connection with streams and the harbour. It is essential that ecological and engineering works are designed together, just doing riparian planting on its own won't help if stormwater inputs are not dealt with.

The harbour and streams are great assets but difficult to access due to busy roads, lack of road crossings and poor walking infrastructure. We recommend Porirua City Council develop a long term programme to address this, including:

- A legal rail crossing at the north end of Paremata Station to allow residents to easily access the harbour edge
- The proposed round-the-harbour walkway, separate from a cycleway

- Working with Waka Kotahi to make un-used motorway land accessible for people, such as around lower Kenepuru Stream
- Seating around the harbour
- Steps down to the foreshore, for example near the CBD

Community centres, culture centre, village projects

Living Streets strongly supports the provision of community infrastructure that encourages people to meet, carry out collective activities, and also allows individuals to undertake activities that their homes are not suited to (e.g. large tivaevae projects).

We have no view on whether the funding signalled will be adequate, nor a view on the precise proposals. We would, however, request that Porirua City Council ensure that:

- community facilities are, where possible, co-located so people doing one activity can be exposed to other community members and activities and overall costs of things like security are reduced
- facilities are near public transport hubs and town centres, and connected by high quality walking routes.

People should be able to walk to facilities and not have to use a car for access. Poor walking infrastructure will exclude people who don't have access to a car and discourage carless activities. We recommend that footpaths and walkways be assessed to ensure they meet a good standard, for example smoothness.

Living Streets supports ongoing funding of community projects that improve community cohesion and resilience, and encourage people to undertake activities in their own neighbourhoods rather than by travelling to another location. We don't have a view on how that funding should be sourced. Affordable housing is important, but poor quality community infrastructure and functioning is also a major problem for low income communities. PCC's village approach has been successful and should be continued. It is important that there is a funded position in council to help communities develop projects, otherwise the likelihood is that those communities that most need them will be least likely to apply for funds.

One of the things that all villages and communities should have is a regular street audit to identify low cost fixes that would improve walkability. Living Streets can support that work or run community street reviews.

Parking

Living Streets strongly supports making changes to parking in the CBD to discourage use of cars and raise funds that can be used to improve walkability. The Porirua CBD, as you have long recognised, is car-dominated, with poor walkability and long distances between shops. We would like to see the parking charges be part of a broader programme to improve walkability. That does not necessarily require the full CBD fix that was discussed in the past – there are a number of low cost changes (using moveable infrastructure and paint) that would make a difference immediately.

Measures and performance standards

We would like to see the council adopt some clear standards for the level of pedestrian service you would like to deliver, and annual measurements of improvement towards that goal.

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