

# Living Streets Aotearoa



[www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa to Wellington City Council on the Wellington City Council Long-term Plan 2018-2028

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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.

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 active 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 an increase in funding for the Walk and Cycle Activity Class for new initiatives to support more walkable places.

As this is newly announced GPS funding we have provided a list of suitable projects to be included in the long term plan that can make use of this increased funding. These projects will be a step in the right direction to make the sustainable transport hierarchy adopted in both Our City Tomorrow and the Urban Growth Plan a reality. Living Streets encourages the rapid uptake of this funding with bold projects to make pedestrian infrastructure and support for walking better.

Living Streets supports setting some bold targets to help focus effort on desired outcomes. Good data is the basis for good decisions. 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/>.

We support the proposals in the Long-Term Plan to the extent that they will make Wellington a more liveable city. Particularly those measures addressed at improving the natural and street environment, being the City of Culture (including strengthening the Town Hall), becoming more resilient, and becoming the low-carbon capital. We support the improvement of existing infrastructure and the use of trials to test out ideas and make best use of the assets we have.

Living Streets embrace the vision expressed by Wellington people who want a compact walkable city as demonstrated in every consultation over at least the last 20 years.

### **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 in the long-term plan to improve the walk-to-school mode-share is important.

A school travel programme for every school in Wellington would be a step in the right direction to get students more active. We would like to see an ambitious target for children walking to school in Wellington. Improvements in physical and mental health and alertness of students and congestion would all improve with more walking to school.

Living Streets expects LGWM to deliver a child-friendly Basin Reserve with pedestrian priority to cater to the large schools in the area. Bus priority through the Basin roundabout with no shared paths will all assist improve the environment for walk to school in this area.

Living Streets offers our experience and enthusiasm to work more closely on this initiative with WCC.

- Target to improve walk to school

### **Safer speeds**

Living Streets support a review of speeds in Wellington to reduce 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. Initiatives will include

- a reduction in speeds outside all schools to 30 km/hr.
- reduced speed in the central area to 30 km/hr
- reduce speed in all suburban centre shopping areas and pedestrian high-use areas

- reduce speed to 30km hour in select compact suburbs (e.g. Mt Victoria)
  - reduce all 70 km/hour roads to 50 km/hour, e.g. Ohiro Road, Cobham Drive, Wellington Road, Ruahine St
  - reduce speed to 30 km hour on roads through parks to enhance the natural outdoor experience and connection across parks, eg Alexandra Road through the Town Belt
- Review and make appropriate speeds

### More accessible streets

Living Streets sees the new GPS on Transport funding as an opportunity for Wellington to improve accessibility on all footpaths. Accelerating footpath maintenance work should be considered with the footpath maintenance FAR as part of the local road maintenance class. Any improvements will particularly benefit the health and safety of our ageing and growing population.

Use of appropriate standards and design guides as a minimum to improve accessibility is required. These guides are available with the NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide, RTS 14 for vision-impaired pedestrians, and NZS 4212:2001 for accessible buildings.

Projects include:

- Featherston Street footpaths need improvement, 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.
- The Terrace busy footpaths require upgrading both in terms of surface and width. This area should prioritise pedestrian movement<sup>1</sup>. An uphill cycleway is needed.
- Remove slip lanes from Courtenay Place, Aitken/Hill and Molesworth St, Mulgrave and Thorndon Quay, Bowen St/the Terrace, and Lambton Quay, to improve safety and connection for pedestrians
- Trialling of **temporary street improvements**, using street furniture such as bollards, planters and seats to create space for people. At places such as side streets connecting with the Golden Mile; reducing the road width at the corner of Aurora Tce and Clifton Tce to make crossing the street easier; reducing the width of Maginnity St; enhancing the area under the motorway bridge over Thorndon Quay, including the (unsigned) walkway to Hobson St.
- Review of and better control and management of facilities **occupying pedestrian space**, such as restaurants/cafes (all of which should be required to be non-smoking) and advertising signs, chairs and tables
- Improvement of **pedestrian crossing timings**, with a standard minimum level of service for pedestrians;

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<sup>1</sup> There is good economic evidence to show that improved pedestrian connectivity in areas with high job numbers pays dividends <http://knowledgeauckland.org.nz/assets/publications/Measuring-pedestrian-delay-Auckland-MRCagney-2017.pdf>

- Improvement in pedestrian crossings, complete the missing sections of uncontrolled crossings e.g. at Oriental Parade/Cable St, and at the Abel Smith St/Cuba St intersection
- Review all signalised intersections to remove vehicles turning through crossing pedestrians, e.g Lambton Quay – Bowen St
- Develop more smart crossings with to allow longer green 'man' time and longer cross times for those that need it (Puffin crossings)
- Increase use of countdown clocks
- Review suburban and side street crossings to use more raised pedestrian crossings, such as those on Main Road, Tawa.
- Review all intersections to ensure they all 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 to meet minimum standard requirements.

- **Age friendly city – for both young and old require:**

- More public seating in all areas to enable those with mobility problems to walk around, thus remaining active and being part of the community with appropriate rest stops
- More drinking fountains
- Shade trees and well designed shelters
- Greenway development to provide alternative pleasant walking routes away from vehicle traffic
- Pedestrianise Cuba Street along its entire length 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.
- Tory St has become a major residential and popular retail area, and more improvements in the street environment are required with better crossing points. An uphill bike lane is needed. The link to Tasman St across Pukeahu should be improved or closed.
- We support the trial in lower Tory Street and look forward to its final improved design. It has been a great success and got a lot of discussion going.
- Close one lane on each side of Aotea/Waterloo/Customhouse Quays to make a dedicated cycle lane – try this as a trial if necessary. Creating a cycle lane on the quays, so that most cyclists are off the waterfront will significantly improve the waterfront experience. Commuting cyclists moving at speed prefer not to be sharing space with pedestrians on the waterfront. Pedestrians certainly prefer safe vehicle-free environments.

- **Wayfinding – essential for accessibility**

Good wayfinding through innovative design, signposting and provision of maps at appropriate high-use areas and for recreational walking includes:

- Wellington Railway Station street maps and signposting with walking times included
- Crofton Downs Station indicating the route to Huntleigh Park and the Outer Green Belt
- Pedestrian exit roads require proper signposting. These 'No exit for cars' roads are often incorrectly labelled
- Ngaio Station indicating the way to Heke St Reserve
- Awarua Street Railway Station indicating the way to the Outer Green Belt
- Khandallah Station indicating the way to Khandallah Park
- Raroa Station indicating the way to Johnsonville Park
- Redwood Station indicating the way to the Forest of Tāne, Larsen Crescent Reserve and Redwood Bush
- Warwick Street bus stop indicating the way to Otari-Wilton's Bush
- Norway Street bus terminus indicating the way to Otari-Wilton's Bush
- 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 with simple signage to show people that they are still on the route, e.g. the Great Harbour Way, the Commonwealth walkway could be further enhanced
- Improve wayfinding at Wellington Railway Station so that routes to Lambton Quay/ Parliament, Featherston Street and the waterfront are clearly indicated including the accessible paths.

- **Connections**

Improve suburban walking opportunities by improving connections to suburban centres and schools, including:

- Kilbirnie requires several safe pedestrian-crossing opportunities on Cobham Drive to the shore, combined with lower speeds on this road
- improve walking routes to Johnsonville, Porirua, and the Hutt. Improvements are required to address disconnect across wide busy roads, eg Ngauranga Gorge Road, last 800 metres to Petone. Noise and pollution from busy roads need amelioration with shade and noise reduction plantings with ample good crossing points and seating
- The new footpaths around the access to Porirua across the Transmission Gully road need to be well designed and implemented
- Mt Victoria tunnel footpath needs to be improved
- Narrowing roads and other safety improvements at intersections and crossing points, eg like Tawa raised pedestrian crossings
- Pedestrian steps, zig zags and shortcuts maintenance and improvements can be increased and include seats and better lighting.

### **Supporting public transport use and the walk to work**

Wellington has great train, bus, Cable Car and cross-harbour ferry services. Promoting use of public transport services is the safest way to travel and reduces congestion on roads. Public transport is important for and extends walking trips. A target rate for public transport use (target 18%) and to increase the number who walk to work (target 25%) would be useful.

Living Streets would like to see WCC do audits around train stations and main bus stops to see what improvements can be made e.g. more shelters, seating, wayfinding signs and maps for visitors, timetable information, and minimum footpath standards to access the stops. (NB Adshel structures do not provide adequate shelter in windy, wet weather, and the advertising hoardings block views and detract from our city-scape).

Provision and improvement of wheelchair access to public transport stops, such as was done with the northbound platform at Takapu Rd Station.

[Community street reviews](#) are a useful cost-effective tool to identify pedestrian improvements (such as those mentioned above) undertaken by users.

Living Streets supports more spending on bus lanes

Other improvement for public transport, include such things as traffic light pre-emption for buses, offsetting the use of diesel buses, including mitigating the increased emissions and noise, particularly along the Golden Mile.

- The Golden Mile is a well understood constraint on the whole bus network. Improvements can be made without major works. Our suggestions include:
  - Close off more Lambton Quay side roads to improve bus flow and pedestrian amenity,
  - remove car and taxi parking to side roads, and ensure accessibility parking is closest to Lambton Quay
  - remove bike parking from the footpath and reduce other clutter
  - Implement more Jan Gehl ideas (2004) to make better connections with the waterfront
  - Implement improvements from the recent Golden Mile Safety Review study (Bullen Consultancy, January 2016)
  - During the morning and evening peaks, ban all vehicles along The entire Golden Mile, moving and parked, except buses

### **Promoting walking**

An area with high potential for development is to encourage more walking and help to increase walk mode share. Initiatives include:

- Workplace travel plans starting with the Council
- More school travel planning
- More walk events in parks and public spaces, and
- Challenges that appeal to younger people.

### **Parking review**

Living Streets support the work to review and improve vehicle-parking policy. This has potential to significantly improve footpath space and make public space allocation on roads more fair.

Bicycle parking should be provided on-road (and off footpaths), and in more places.

While EVs are welcome they should not impinge on footpath infrastructure and a careful design for EV charging should be developed on-road. There is no need for further footpath clutter.

### **New housing and subdivisions**

Good provision of affordable social housing means that it must also be walkable with good public transport connections. Housing that requires high use of private vehicles is not affordable and would not be consistent with the Urban Growth Plan principles of the sustainable transport hierarchy. Accessibility is compromised in many places around Wellington because a consistent good footpath standard is not met. Living Streets supports development of appropriate guidelines to direct affordable housing with walkable design.

### **Recreational walking provision**

Walking is the most significant recreational activity of all New Zealanders and a particular favourite for women. Wellington is well-placed to build on this strength but needs to show more leadership in this area. Recreation walking routes need to focus on improving the walking experience and provide an opportunity for residents and tourists alike. Two significant developments would be to better support and progress Te Araroa and the Great Harbourway.

### **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.

Wellington needs to ensure that its transport assets support **carbon efficiency**, for instance

- by promoting walking
- by optimising bus stops to ensure operational efficiency and increased patronage
- by better use of roadspace through footpath widening, bus lanes, and separate cycleways
- by integrating the cable car with the Metlink public transport network
- reviewing intersections so pedestrians crossing have a good level of service
- include emissions from the airport and its operations (including the effects of any runway extension) in the picture.

Most of these projects are likely to be low cost and are potentially transformative, with scope for carbon reduction and environmental improvements at least as great as is likely to be achieved by small-scale changes to parking provision.

Living Streets are very keen to work with Council on initiatives such as these.

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](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)