



**Submission to Wellington City Council on
Polhill track proposals**

Contact person: **Ellen Blake**
Email: **wellington@livingstreets.org.nz**
Phone: **021 106 7139**
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Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the Council for this opportunity to submit on the Polhill track proposals.

Living Streets supports the findings in the officers' environmental assessment report that more tracks are not needed in Polhill and will cause detriment to the natural environment, and therefore this proposal to create new tracks should not proceed.

Living Streets supports extension of bike tracks at Makara Peak Mountain Bike park to cater to mountain-bike demand.

Living Streets supports use of existing dirt roads (i.e. four-wheel-drive roads) as the best way to extend cycle reach rather than further use of tracks in parks.

Please note that bicycles are 'vehicles'. There is some confusion in this document.

Living Streets would like to see a proper standard being applied consistently in our parks and on our footpaths. This would include a clear requirement that where tracks or paths are 'shared' mixed use they must meet a consistent standard that allows for safety and amenity of experience for all users.

Clearly in Polhill this is not the case. For example, the Highbury Fling track is a one-person-wide path with no room along much of its length for passing. This means that walkers are required to constantly watch out for and give way to bikes, which diminishes the experience of being in a natural park environment for all users.

There are a range of available standards for shared use paths, so a new standard does not need to be developed. We note that the WCC standards are for walk or bike paths but not for shared mixed users.

The proposal is to close two areas of track. Both of these are pedestrian-only sections. Both of these areas (the steps and the old steep path to Waimapihi - Aro St) should be retained for pedestrian-only use.

The old walking-only track from George Denton Park to Brosnahan Street and Holloway Road should be re-signposted as walk only. There seems to be mountain-bikes using it, which the map indicates should not be the case (although we did find the map in the consultation document difficult to follow).

The entrance to the park on Aro Street needs to be clearly marked to indicate where the 'shared' mixed-use section stops and the pedestrian-only footpath begins. We note there are conflicts at this point.

The signage and maps for Polhill need to reflect that this is a long-standing walking area. It would be encouraging to see the WCC promoting walking in this area as vigorously as they do biking.

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