



DOUBLE THE FEET ON THE STREET

NZ Walking Conference 2008
4-5 August, Auckland

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Presentation topic	The economics of car dependence			
Presentation title	How to make pedestrian friendly communities an economically rational choice			
Presentation Style	Presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workshop / Walkshop <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>			
Estimated Time Required	0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Abstract Remit				
<p>There are two common myths used to argue against attempts to reduce car dependence in cities and towns. The first is that public transport is uneconomic and impractical compared to cars. The second is that people love their cars too much to give them up, that is, that the majority of New Zealanders had freely chosen the quarter acre section and a half hour daily commute by car, solely because they love driving and the lifestyle that the suburbs provide.</p> <p>However, the history of transport and land use planning suggests a different narrative. Transport funding decisions and planning requirements — notably minimum parking requirements and single use zoning — have created a number of market distortions that subsidise motor vehicles considerably more than sustainable alternatives, and encourage urban sprawl that further inhibits the development of pedestrian friendly communities. The full costs associated with car dependence demonstrate that cars are far less practical and economic than compact, walkable and transit-oriented development. Moreover, it is entirely likely that New Zealanders would like to live in walkable communities, however they have not truly been given an economically neutral choice for over 60 years.</p> <p>Local and central government currently have development goals and walking and cycling strategies that seek to increase pedestrian friendly communities. However, the underlying funding structures and land use regulations have not changed. Thus, while households are told to walk, cycle or take PT to be better citizens, there are rarely shops and services within easy walking or cycling distance, and the perceived cost of driving is still less than taking PT. Cycling and walking strategies, and PT investment, will not be enough on their own to create pedestrian oriented communities. The underlying planning and funding framework must be changed to unsubsidise private motor vehicles, permit mixed use development, and remove minimum parking requirements. Only removing subsidies to cars will support the economic development that will in turn make walking communities an economically rational choice for developers, businesses and households.</p>				
Author Profile				
Julie Anne Genter				
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Julie is a recent graduate of the University of Auckland Masters program in Planning Practice and now works for MRCagney in land use and transport planning.				
She is the author of a chapter on strategic transport policies to reduce car dependence, called "Thinking outside the car: how we can achieve carbon neutral transport", in Carbon Neutral By 2020: How New Zealanders can tackle climate change. 2007. Craig Potton Publishing; Nelson. She has also undertaken post graduate research on the robustness of the LTNZ benefit cost framework for evaluating urban motorway projects.				
Julie commutes by bicycle and is passionate about sustainable transport and finding the most equitable and effective means of reducing car dependence in towns and cities in New Zealand.				