

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on the Draft Southland Active Transport Strategy: A Strategy to advance walking, cycling and other forms of active transport within the Southland region (March 2008)

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Contact person

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About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa is a national organisation with a vision of
“More people choosing to walk more often.

The objectives of Living Streets are to:

1. promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly, and universal means of transport and recreation
2. promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
3. work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrian, and runners e.g. walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed, and safety
4. advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional, and urban land use and transport planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Southland Active Transport Strategy.

Congratulations to Environment Southland for undertaking on behalf of the Regional Land Transport Committee the development of an Active Transport Strategy for the Southland region.

This submission was prepared by Fiona Whero on behalf of Living Streets Aotearoa. We sought input from Kirsty Barr who is a cycling advocate interested in the submission with some knowledge of other Active Transport Strategies, and provided suggestions on aspects of the Southland Strategy.

We do not wish to speak to our submission. If there is anything requiring clarification please contact us.

This strategy is a comprehensive walking and cycling friendly document. Highlighted below are some of the positive aspects of the Southland Strategy and some suggested changes. The vision and goals section is quite complex, but this adds to the Strategy's robustness and aligns it well with the vision and goals of the Getting There: By Foot, On Cycle Strategy which sets the national direction for regional and local Active Transport Strategies.

Regional Walking and Cycling Forum

We seek support for Environment Southland to investigate establishing and co-ordinating a Regional Walking and Cycling Forum. Living Streets would be interested in helping with this as we have been involved in the process of establishing a forum in Canterbury.

The Southland Regional Land Transport Committee, noted in terms of potential funding for such projects [walking, cycling, and other active transport projects], *“we would encourage the community to take the opportunity to identify and prioritise proposed new projects, and draw them to its attention and seek support. Those project that on the recommendation of the Southland Regional Land Transport Committee best meet the objectives and desired outcomes of the Strategy, would likely be a higher priority for funding.”* (page 34, draft Southland Active Transport Strategy)

A Regional Walking and Cycling Forum links very strongly to the draft Southland Active Transport Strategy's priorities, under “Focus One: Strengthening foundations for effective action” where the priorities for action are listed as:

- 1) Encourage action for walking and cycling within an integrated, sustainable approach to land transport
- 2) Expand our knowledge and skill base to address walking and cycling.
- 3) Encourage collaboration and co-ordination of efforts for walking and cycling.

(Page 12)

A meeting held in Southland on the 13 March primarily to discuss forming and supporting establishing walking and cycling user groups for Southland was attended by seventeen active transport stakeholders (all four Southland Councils including engineers, the Safer Roads Project Manager, parks and recreation managers, road safety co-ordinator, planners, the Sports Trust, health people (promotion and Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA), and Heart Foundation), and Advocates (Environment Centre), with several more organisations interested but unable to attend on the day (the Cancer Society, Invercargill Police; Southland Disability Power Chair Association, Primary Principal's Association, Secondary Principal's Association, Cycling Southland, Vibrant Invercargill, and ACC). At the meeting Environment Southland presented the draft Southland Active Transport Strategy that was to go out for public consultation soon. There was an encouraging interest in sharing and hearing about Active Transport initiatives. Conversations with some attendees afterwards supported the concept of Active Transport forum.

We suggest adding wording to Environment Southland Work Projects plan as follows: “Facilitate setting up and coordinating a Regional Active Transport Forum to a) Provide opportunity for coordination, networking, upskilling, and information sharing between walking stakeholders, b) Support collaborative projects, events and campaigns, c) Inform members of upcoming opportunities to provide feedback on plans and policy documents with implications for walking and cycling.”

This is similar wording but expanded from walking to active transport, used by the Greater Wellington Regional Council in their draft Walking Regional Plan May 2008 currently out for consultation.

http://gw.govt.nz/story_images/5153_Draft_walking_p_s10359.pdf

Canterbury has a very successful and well attended Canterbury Active Transport Forum co-ordinated by Environment Canterbury; The Greater Wellington Regional Council co-ordinates a Cycling Forum and is planning a Walking Forum; Nelson and Tasman have an Active Transport Forum (previously a Cycling Forum) co-ordinated by Tasman District Council (a Unitary Authority); and The Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) co-ordinates an Active Transport Forum. For more information about these see:

<http://www.ecan.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/DAB2E287-C86B-4503-8DFC-44E552B9051D/6025/OtherRegionalActiveTransportForumsinNZ.pdf>

Photos

The photos in the Strategy, apart from the school children photo on page 29. are of recreational or sports cyclists or walkers. The photo of the skateboarder on page 27 is great, it is fantastic that Southland is progressive and embraces this often youth focused active transport mode.

Suggestion

It would be great to see more of a focus in the photos used on non-recreational walkers, and commuter or utility cyclists depicted in the Strategy, as these are the primary target group of this Active Transport Strategy.

Page 1

Suggestion

Add:

Getting There-On Foot, By Cycle Strategic Implementation Plan (2006-2009) as a third key document.

Page 3

Including public transport in the definition of Active Transport seems out of place when the strategy and work plans do not involve public transport in apart from a mention in the Invercargill City Council works/projects plan about a proposal to convert the existing Urban Passenger Transport service to superlow floor bus configuration by the year 2010. And the prams, walking frames, wheelchairs, and bicycles can also be accommodated for on the bus service (page 39). Most Regions have their own separate Public Transport Strategies.

Suggestion

While we support the public transport proposals of Invercargill City Council we consider extending the definition of Active Transport to public transport is not necessary to accommodate such works/projects, and that a definition focused around defining walking and cycling might be more useful.

For example:

For the purpose of this Strategy, the following definitions are provided

a) for pedestrians and walking, as set out in Land Transport NZ'S Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide 2008:

(i) Pedestrian: Any person on foot or who is using a powered wheelchair or mobility scooter or a

wheeled means of conveyance propelled by human power, other than a cycle

(ii) Walking: The act of self-propelling along a route, whether on foot or on small wheels, or with aids.

b) for cyclists and cycling, as set out in ...

Pages 5, 22, 25

Comments

Cycle tourists are identified in the draft Strategy as a “significant component of the tourist sector” (page 5). It is great to see Priority 6 of the Strategy, “Improve networks for long-distance cycling and walking” (page 22) and that one of the ways to achieve this is, “liaising with Otago and West Coast Regional Councils, and other relevant bodies, in order to ensure that inter-regional and any national cycle or walking networks are co-ordinated” (page 25). Environment Canterbury has a Strategy called: Cycling in Canterbury: Strategy for the development of a regional network for cycling routes (2005).

“Cycling in Canterbury is a strategy to support the development of a regional network of cycle routes. The aim of the network is to link districts, regions and places of interest in a manner that will encourage cycling and promote regional development. The Strategy is a component of the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Strategy 2005 – 2015.” (Environment Canterbury website)

<http://www.ecan.govt.nz/Our+Environment/Transport/plansandreports/Draft-cycling-strategy.htm>

The four West Coast Councils (the West Coast Regional Council, Westland District Council, Grey District Council, and Buller District Council) and Transit are currently in the process of writing a Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Suggestions

Add walkers as a significant component of the tourist sector.

We draw the attention of the Regional Council to the West Coast strategy and encourage submissions to that Strategy during its development and draft consultation to “ensure that inter-regional and any national cycle or walking networks are co-ordinated”.

An implementation plan for priority 6 of the Southland Active Strategy may find useful information in the Cycling in Canterbury strategy's work.

Page 6 (top of page)

Suggestion

Add

(to the list of Community Benefits)

“Promote people friendly environments through good urban design.”

Page 7

Correction

“the Continuous Household Travel Survey undertaken by the Land Transport New Zealand”
should be

“the annual New Zealand Household Travel Survey undertaken by the Ministry of Transport”

(note that it is correct under figures 2 & 3 on page 8)

Comments

We have recently learned that the importance of the NZ Household Travel Survey data will be enhanced by the Ministry of Transport providing a regional break down of figures from June 2008. Such data will be increasingly useful over the years as a history of regional data is gathered, and thus it will improve the data on regional walking and cycling numbers in Southland.

Suggestion

It is our understanding that the Canterbury Regional Council have discussed with the Ministry of Transport Monitoring section the possibility of extending the Household Travel Survey to incorporate a larger regional sample. They received a favourable response from the Ministry of Transport with cost estimates also provided. The Canterbury Regional Council is now discussing with the local Canterbury Councils their interest in this proposal, - Christchurch City Council is very keen to pursue this rather than what they were originally investigating which was their own Household Travel Survey. This data enhancing process might be of interest to Environment Southland and the local councils as a cost effective and collaborative project that would provide valuable data for the Region.

Page 11

Comment

We are pleased to see consultation with iwi and acknowledgment in the document/statement from iwi in the wording on “Issues of importance to tangata whenua.

Page 15

“...including as part of any request for funding of new road and bridge works, or improvements thereof, an assessment of the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, and the costs of providing for such users in determining whether such facilities should be provided.”

Comment

A recent report done by Sustrans commissioned by the UK government found the benefit cost ratio

of walking and cycling in relation to health, is 20:1, and this needs to be factored in to any cost analysis for determining whether to proceed with walking and cycling facilities.

Page 15

“advocating to ONTRACK that should it wish to close any rail line, to consult with the Southland Regional Land Transport Committee on the suitability of the line route as a cycle and/or walkway”

Comments

We commend this suggestion.

We ask if there is scope to explore possibilities for developing recreational areas that walkers or cyclists could use if developed in the long term, that is making it more pro-active than OnTrack advising council if a railway closes.

Change

ONTRACK in light of recent Government acquisition/buy back!

Page 15

“including in any public transport strategy means of integrating use by cyclists and providing for carriage of cycles where this is practical”

Suggestion

Add

“and providing for end point storage”

Page 17 – Second paragraph

re walking school bus programmes

Suggestion

Provide words that link here to how walking school buses and active transport for children in general can impact positively on road safety – both in terms of addressing the chaos at school gate scenario (still very much a factor at some rural schools if not very many are bused in) as well as teaching children vital pedestrian/road safety skills. There are other benefits (community connectedness, social interaction, learning about personal security) but the road safety ones we feel may have been missed.

Page 17

User groups (be they cycling advocates, ...)

Suggestion

Add

“walking advocates”

Page 17

“Retention of consultative links between those organisations providing for the needs of users of pedestrian and cycling facilities and the users themselves.”

Suggestion

Add

“Retention **and building** of consultative links between those organisations providing for the needs of users of pedestrian and cycling facilities and the users themselves.”

Page 19

Comment

It is really great that the issue of sharing knowledge about best practice for walking and cycling and planning between councils is acknowledged. It is also important to foster good links between councils and transit, and stronger links between departments within council to keep cycling and walking on agenda, in particular; planning, engineering, and recreational areas.

Pages 22-23

This section covers the different types of cyclists (the commuter, sporting, touring) but does not mention the types of walkers.

The Timaru District Council Active Transport Plan lists types of walkers and cyclists as:

Pre-School Cyclists, School Cyclists, Cycling for Fitness/Sports Cycling-Training, Sports Cyclists
Road Racing, Recreational Cyclists, Commuter and Utility Cyclists, Touring Cyclists.

Community Pedestrians, Young Pedestrians, Elderly and Disabled Pedestrians, Mobility Scooters,
Prams, and Wheelchair Users, Skateboarders and Scooters, Recreational Walkers.

Active Transport strategies aim to increase the numbers of walkers and cyclists. In relation to cyclists this means that we are appealing to new/novice and less confident cyclists. Depending on their level of skill, these types of cyclists probably prefer off road/separate facilities, they can be unpredictable/less skilled around traffic, so the need for education etc is different and we need to take care to nurture this group.

Suggestions

Add

Include mention of the types of cyclists and pedestrians as described above.

Include a statement about new/novice and less confident cyclists. This would also enable the Strategy to refer to children and safe routes too, as they are very much in the same category.

Page 24

First bullet point (re Otago Rail Trail) end second sentence,
“cycle8” (typo)

Page 25

“it is not safe, particularly for children and elderly;”

Add:

“and the less confident”

Page 26

“For example, within Southland it may be appropriate to promote such activities [walking and cycling] for those travelling more than a short distance as being particularly suitable transport modes over the months when day-light saving applies, rather than as an all year round activity.”

Suggestion

During the colder months it may be appropriate to encourage public transport use combined with walking and cycling short distances to and from bus networks.

Page 27

“These programmes include:
national “Cycle to Work” day;...”

Suggestion

Instead of national “cycle to work” day this should be new name for this promotion which is, “go by bike day”, and maybe better and more inclusive to refer to such promotions as,
“Bike wise activities such as “Go by bike day”

The Feet First website <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/feet-first/> refers to national figures which show that fifty percent of children are now driven to school (used to be 31% in 1990), and that a third of children get little or no exercise. A reference to this would be useful as it is an issue that has changed over the last ten years and needs recognition.

Page 30

“These issues indicate a need to educate older people about how to use their scooters safely. While many retailers teach safety tips and there are a few training courses available, more extensive and systematic education may be required.”

Suggestion

The Waimakariri District Council has an established course for training people in best practice for using their scooters safely that the Southland Councils may be interested in.

Page 36

Appendix 1: Details of specific projects/works that will be undertaken during the period 2008-2012 in relation to the 10 priorities for Action identified in the Strategy

Comment/Suggestion

This is a really detailed Appendix and it is great that the projects/works are linked to Strategy's priorities.

Having the work plans of the four councils included provides a good start to ensuring integration of walking and cycling infrastructure across the region and ensuring that the four councils work together ensures greater efficiencies.

Pages 37, 38, 40, 42, Appendix 1

An amalgamation of the wording of Environment Southland, Invercargill City Council, Gore District Council, Southland District Council Work plans is,

Attend Transportation and Traffic Engineering courses and conferences throughout the year to keep up-to-date

This clause is supported by Priority 2 (page 16)

"Expand our knowledge and skill base to address walking and cycling...encouraging advisers to decision-makers to attend conferences and other professional forums, to ensure that they are kept up-to-date with research, best practice and experiences from elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas, and to report to decision-makers as relevant."

Suggestion

Add the following clause to all four councils work plans:

"Council officers involved in the design and implementation of cycling and pedestrian facilities attend appropriate courses in cycle and pedestrian network planning and design."*

**[Reference: "Targets to Achieve", Objective 3, Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy. Tasman District Council (June 2005)]*

This specifically encourages all staff involved in implementing and designing for walking and cycling to attend courses that ensure best practice is kept up-to-date.

We encourage staff involved in the implementation of this Active Transport Strategy to attend the courses

- The Fundamentals of Planning and Design for Cycling

<http://viastrada.co.nz/fundamentals>

- The Fundamentals of Planning and Design for Walking (proposed by Land Transport NZ as a new course in 2008)

These courses are for planners, engineers, and advocates. The West Coast Councils, Transit, Contractors attended a course held on the West Coast before beginning the process of undertaking the under development West Coast Regional Walking and Cycling Strategy.

A comment by a Road controlling authority engineer on the West Coast course (August 2007), "Appreciate you guys coming over to the West Coast. Represents start of new thinking" (from Viastrada website).

Pages 38 and 40

"Form user groups within Invercargill that advocate the use of the various active transport modes- i.e. lists, pedestrians, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, skateboards"

[Invercargill City Council Work plan, pg 40, Appendix 1]

"To co-operate with user groups within Southland that advocate the use of the various active transport modes."

[Southland District Council Work plan, pg 38, Appendix 1]

Suggestion

Change wording to

"Form and co-operate with user groups within the Southland Region that advocate the use of the various active transport modes-i.e. cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, skateboards."

Comments

Invercargill City Council and Southland District Council already have wording to respectively form and support user groups (see below)*. Putting the above suggested wording in the work plans for each council encourages the resourcing for setting up and supporting user groups which supports the work of the Active Transport Strategy.

Initiative 8 of the Getting There: On Foot, By Cycle Strategy, the NZ Active Transport Strategy mandates "Strengthen User Group Networks Programme", and this is a tangible way of Southland's Councils supporting this National initiative.

Page 37

We support the progressive wording in Environment Southland's work plan that says,

"Encourage/support Environment Southland staff to reduce individual car travel for commuter and business journeys (e.g. car pooling schemes, improved passenger transport services, flexible working practices)".

(Environment Southland Work Plan, pg 37, Appendix 1)

Suggestion

Add in all councils projects/works plans

To this list of possible ways of reducing individual car travel for both commuter and business journeys, "walking, and cycling (including investigating possible fleet bicycle options)"

Page 42

Under Gore District Council works and projects **typo**

“Include in all new capital works and footpathing renewal projects throughout **Invercargill**, tactile...”

This should be “Gore” instead of “Invercargill”.

Page 44

Appendix 2: List of key stakeholders involved/consulted during the preparation of the Southland Active Transport Strategy

Remove

“Others” and list who was involved if it is known.

Pages 44 and 2

Suggestion

Add as an appendix and to the list at the bottom of page 2

A list of Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Strategy (all sectors, health, sports trusts, commercial, advocates etc).

Include in the Stakeholder list:

- Schools e.g. Primary Principal's Association, Secondary Principal's Association
- Living Streets Aotearoa*
- Cycling Advocates' Network*
- Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind

*It is hoped to set up local Southland user groups of these two organisations to contribute to the implementation of the Active Transport Strategy.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback about the Southland Active Transport Strategy.

Good luck with the implementation of this strategy, a strategy that maps out a plan to ensure walking and cycling make a significant contribution to the health, environment, and economy of Southland.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Whero (South Island Networker for Living Streets Aotearoa)