

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

7 May 2007

Draft Community Plan
Hutt City Council
Private Bag 31912
Lower Hutt

Submission on the Hutt City Council Draft Community Plan 2007/08

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on this draft strategy. Living Streets Wellington would like to speak in support of this submission if the opportunity arises.

For any further clarification the contact point is:

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Introduction

Living Streets Wellington is a branch of Living Streets Aotearoa, Inc. Formed in 2002, it is an advocacy group with a vision of "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places – young and old, fast and slow, walking, sitting and standing, commuting, shopping, between appointments, for exercise, for leisure and for pleasure."

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are as following:

- 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
- To advocate for greater representation of walker and pedestrian concerns in urban and regional land use, urban design and transport planning and, as appropriate, at national level
- To education national, regional and local authorities, drivers, pedestrians and others on the benefits of walking, in order to improve road safety for pedestrians
- To foster consideration for people with special mobility needs

This submission emphasises the importance of walking as both transport and recreation, as well as improving access and conditions to create pedestrian-friendly environments.

Planned Activities

People:

Activity 4: Parks and Reserves

Living Streets Wellington supports the provision and maintenance of street gardens, parks and reserves. These areas contribute to a more pleasant environment for pedestrians, whether for recreation, transport or both.

Utilities:

Activity 7: Roading and Traffic

The Ministry of Transport reports walking as our second most common travel mode.¹ Walking is also an important contributing mode to other forms of transport eg. public transport and even driving. It is also the only cheap and independent mode of transport for some people eg. children, those living in suburbs with limited/infrequent public transport and those without private vehicles and/or licenses. We are all pedestrians at some point and so planning needs to take this into account as a priority, rather than an adjunct. The following is a suggested hierarchy for road user planning:

¹ Ministry of Transport. Getting There – on foot, by cycle. A strategy to advance walking and cycling in New Zealand transport. 2005.

1. people with mobility and sensory impairments
2. pedestrians
3. cyclists
4. public transport users
5. powered two wheelers
6. commercial/business users (including delivery vehicles)
7. car-borne shoppers
8. car-borne visitors
9. car-borne commuters²

Living Streets Wellington supports improvements and maintenance of footpaths, signs, street lighting and other safety aspects such as pedestrian crossings. We support several of the projects outlined in the plan. This includes footpath resurfacing and replacement as well as footpath construction where necessary. We also support pedestrian crossing renewal as well as new pedestrian crossings to enhance safety of pedestrians.

We support street name sign replacement, but also urge that consideration is given to walkway/cycleway shortcut and connection signs such as for the Hutt River Trail.

We support the development of an Eastern Bays walkway/cycleway to allow better access for pedestrians to enjoy the coastal scenery.

We also support the provision for new bus shelters to encourage greater public transport use. However we would also like to see, in collaboration with Greater Wellington Regional Council and Ontrack, improved access to railway stations as another important public transport mode, especially Naenae and Epuni stations.

Projects Currently Excluded from the Plan

Activity 4: Parks and Reserves

Wainuiomata Mountain Bike Facility

This project would enable greater activity for both walkers and cyclists in an area entirely suitable to such a project.

Activity 7: Roading and Traffic

Wainuiomata Hill Road Footpath/Cycleway

Currently this road is the only link between Wainuiomata and Lower Hutt and it is important to consider that not all people have access to or are able to drive regularly. Other people would benefit and enjoy the opportunity to utilise cycling and walking for recreation and/or transport. A shared walkway/cycleway would improve safety for cyclists and enable walkers to utilise this road also.

² Land Transport New Zealand. Pedestrian Network Planning and Facilities Design Guide. Draft 2007.

Walking and Cycling Strategy Implementation

This project is important for establishing walking and cycling as priority modes within Hutt City in a safe, accessible way. It would also contribute to the Wellington Urban Regional Physical Activity Strategy 'At the Heart', currently being completed. We support implementation of the strands of this project in order to encourage more people to walk and cycle.

Activity 14: Local Urban Design

CBD Masterplan – Full Implementation

The New Zealand Urban Design Protocol recognises that "urban design has a significant influence on people and how they live their lives."³ Living Streets Wellington supports the development of initiatives to improve the CBD, assuming that this takes into account the need to provide high quality pedestrian linkages and opportunities to maintain active transport as the primary mode of transportation between the key CBD locations.

Summary

Living Streets Wellington supports the proposals within the Draft Community Plan, however we would like to emphasise the importance of careful planning to prioritise walking as an essential contributing transport option and recreational activity. We would like to see Hutt City Council acknowledge walking as an integral component in its planning, and in its consideration of projects currently excluded from the plan.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Living Streets Wellington

³ Ministry for the Environment. New Zealand Urban Design Protocol. 2005.