



Introduction

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 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 e.g. 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.

Living Streets Wellington is the local group based in the Wellington region, which is working to make city and suburban centres in the region more walking-friendly.

Living Streets Wellington arose from an early pedestrian advocacy group Walk Wellington, set up in the late 90s. We saw a lack of voice for this mode.

For more information, please see: www.livingstreets.org.nz

We welcome this opportunity to submit on the draft Regional Walking Plan and generally support the Plan. We also acknowledge and welcome the Regional Council's signature of the International Walking Charter.



General comments

The background issue paper provides a useful context.

We note that while we are pleased to be referred to as having “an important role in contributing to the understanding of walking issues and in raising the profile of walking as a valued and important mode of transport”, we were not considered a primary stakeholder in the recent Ngauranga to Airport Corridor Study.

Responsibilities

We welcome Greater Wellington’s advocacy to territorial authorities to develop walking strategies and, equally important, monitor progress. The Regional Land Transport

Committee’s monitoring reports do show that sometimes no reports are given on authority or agency progress on pedestrian matters. Liaison between Councils is important for region-wide issues and for cross-boundary connections e.g. Tawa to Porirua walking tracks.

We’re pleased to see SportWellington included in this list and wish to encourage that agency to include promotion and advocacy for physical activity through active travel as well as organised sport and recreational activities.

As well as agencies’ responsibilities, there are responsibilities that workplaces, schools, households and individuals need to assume. Communication, leadership and a pedestrian-friendly walkable environment make people’s choices easier.

Targets

If the RLTS doesn’t break down the targets by mode and geographically (i.e. 15% total across the region), then the Regional Walking Plan must set disaggregated targets. We suggest an increase in each active mode’s share per annum. For walking, we suggest journey to walk % in the following table – and would like targets to be set for education and leisure journeys too.

Walking Action Programme

We would like to see Transit and Land Transport NZ produce either a regional walking strategy or a combined active modes plan, as well as the TAs and GW Strategy. This could be well achieved by the new Transport Agency. We note the new AT The Heart Strategy and emphasise that it is as much about urban transport modes as about recreational leisure choices.

Pedestrian Network

We agree with the need to review the pedestrian network and offer our support in reviewing key routes, for example between suburbs and town centres. However people wish to walk everywhere and the presence of some well-managed key routes doesn’t obviate the need for overall improvement to zigzags, keeping parking off footpaths and adding footpath extensions until all residential streets have one. Reviewing and monitoring the developing network is essential. This should identify where there are gaps. The



network must include off-road routes where appropriate such as Hataitai to Courtenay Place. We hope the monitoring will note positive achievements, such as the Plimmerton underpass, as well as the issues needing further attention.

While most infrastructure for walking is within one TA's territory, the Great Harbour Way proposal is a suggestion that needs to be considered by HCC, WCC, Transit and Rail.

Pedestrian Access to Railway Stations

This is important and an example of the symbiosis between walking and public transport. We were pleased that our 2004 suggestion of a pedestrian audit of railway stations was taken up but the implementation of recommendations is slow. Some targets of numbers of stations while park and ride may be beneficial, it should not be at the expense of direct, well-lit, overlooked accessible walking routes. Car parks themselves need good paths through them to be safe.

Access should include signage. For example there are several culs-de-sac in Tawa that lead to railway station access but there is no sign. Similarly, there's poor signage at the end of the road to Kaiwharawhara station – a useful stop for people visiting those shops from Porirua, Hutt Valley or City in their lunch hour.

One way of significantly improving safety at minimal cost would be to explore using railway land for some medium density apartments, possibly combined with shops, which would overlook the stations. This could be similar to the Waitakere City Council offices at Henderson Station.

We suggest that the access to bus exchanges and bus stops in general also be assessed, starting with the busiest routes.

Provide for Pedestrians in Land Development

We support the requirements for District Plans and the subsequent resource consents to require good streetscape, active edges and physical accessibility in new developments but the issues of location, distance to community and retail facilities, density and connectedness are even more important.

Encourage Walking to School

We firmly support this and request some targets e.g. 50% of students by 2012 or 50% of schools have travel plans or 60% of primary schools have at least three walking school bus routes. Sufficient research needs to be undertaken to provide statistics to set targets from. We also suggest you include secondary schools. A recent presentation from West Auckland students suggested that adult-free walking school buses were an attractive proposition. We believe that closer liaison between TAs and GW is necessary here. We would like to emphasise use of the Walking Map Toolkit for Schools as a valuable resource.

As well as the benefits to the students from alertness, socialisation, physical fitness and less danger at the school gate, we believe there are further benefits to the community from



families getting to know one another, parents/caregivers feeling free to proceed to work or study or return home again by active modes or PT and the inculcation of “the walking habit”.

Influence Central Government policy

Tax policies, remuneration of mileage or car parking and carbon-neutral government agencies are probably as significant as funding decisions. However, allocation for infrastructure for walking may be partially hidden in the design of roads. For example, red light cameras or traffic lights may be primarily helpful to pedestrians while part of a “roading” budget. We support involvement of Regional Councils and all the other walking stakeholders in Transport and Physical Activity policy making and lament the infrequency of the National Advisory Group on Getting There: By Foot, By Cycle.

Seek Adequate Funding

At a national, regional and local level, re-allocation of funds may be sufficient rather than asking for more. Walking promotion, infrastructure, signage and improved maintenance are considerably cheaper than building more road capacity and should save on the national health bill eventually.

Advocacy for higher density living in appropriate places, beautification of suburban centres, location of schools, lower speeds and street tree planting may be as important as advocacy for street crossings or footpath maintenance.

Facilitate Information Sharing

We support a Regional Walking Forum and look forward to participating. The Canterbury and Auckland Forums are valuable.

We are not sure when the Information Centre will be realised and suggest that each authority/agency take responsibility for putting its own walking information, including maps and survey data on its website in an easily found form.

We recommend staff from all agencies attend the biennial Walking Conference (August 2008 in Waipuna, Auckland) to share information and knowledge from NZ and further afield.

We recommend that Land Transport NZ run some seminars for staff on the new Pedestrian Planning Guide for staff and some briefing sessions for decision-makers and communicators.

Promotion of walking

We're not sure why this would only be Regional Public Health. Surely SportWellington could be promoting walking through Green Prescriptions and all TAs and GW giving examples of walking access to events and destinations would re-establish the importance of the first mode. The “time to unwind” message is as applicable to the daily commute walk as to a weekend ramble. Our pilot Walk2Work Day story collection showed that key advantages were perceived to be relaxation, views and fitness as part of their daily routine.



Due to the regional reach of radio and daily newspaper, promotion can be achieved more cost effectively by combining agency budgets from time to time.

We see a role for Living Streets in expanding the Walk2Work Day in coming years and seek supporting funding.

We expect each partner agency to have their own internal travel plan for staff and customers/ visitors. This would also involve promotion.

Improve information for walking

We're pleased at the mention of improving the online Journey Planner. Please don't develop a separate one – integration with PT is useful. We suggest that people are able to choose a maximum amount they're willing to walk and any other issues such as accessibility restrictions. More work is necessary to include all destinations. While Metlink has been a good start, we would like to see resources combined with Maxx and other systems to provide a national journey planner for all modes that combines fare, CO2 and distance information for different options as well as the time taken. Many journeys cross regional boundaries.

Greater Wellington and all other agencies could work on ensuring that any meetings and events always have a link to an online map that shows surrounding pedestrian routes.

Other matters

Climate Change

The Stern Report emphasises the economic benefit in addressing Climate Change earlier than later and growing scientific consensus suggests immediate action is necessary. Emissions from the Transport sector form 32% of the Wellington sector emissions profile.

Driving a small car such as a Honda Jazz, emits ca 130g per km. Driving a large SUV such as a Landrover Discovery, produces more than 250g per km whereas walking and cycling produce none, given food is our fuel. ¹ These are low figures for short journeys given the likelihood of inefficient cold starts for short journeys.

Surveys and measures

The perception surveys and journey to work data are useful but we would also like more information on how many people walk/cycle to other destinations than work since the off peak traffic growth is high in the region. Walk to school numbers are a good example. Further, off-peak non-work transport journeys are growing and the idea of sports and events location and travel management needs more attention.

¹ www.rightcar.govt.nz



Motivation

While the barriers to walking and cycling listed form a reasonable list, they are not prioritised, nor are the motivations for walking and cycling explored. AN example from Copenhagen, where 36% cycle to work, their primary (54%) reason for cycling is because it's fast and convenient rather than because they're martyrs to saving the planet. Our recent Walk2Work survey showed that

Running

Commuting and recreational joggers and runners use the same facilities as walkers. These faster people on foot often don't identify as pedestrians but have similar needs of continuous routes, safe traffic crossing, smooth surfaces and clear signage. We suggest GW Travel Planners and other transport staff work to create dialogue with this sector. Living Streets Wellington will do our best to engage with runners too.

Cycling

Generally, Living Streets members support cycling and providing for cycling. Many members are also cyclists. We note that people wish to cycle since they cover more distance than time permits on foot so can actively commute further than by walking. However, increasing cycling by encroachment onto footpaths is a negative strategy and will cause unnecessary friction. Shared paths can work if sightlines are good, the paths are wide and well surfaced but most existing footpaths are insufficient.

Public Transport

We support greater provision of public transport but also suggest that the speeds of buses on arterial routes need to be calmed for people to be able to cross on foot or cycle in bus lanes. Bus timetable displays at bus stops could be combines with a walking map of the surrounding 200m radius, including pedestrian short cuts. Similarly, railway stations need maps of the surrounding areas showing access to shops, suburbs and bus services rather than just a blank and smelly subway.

Private vehicles

We recognise that private vehicle use is part of Wellington's transport mix but believe that over time its mode share can decrease. If more walk, cycle and use public transport then the journeys (private or commercial) that need to be undertaken in a private vehicle will be easier too. While motorbikes and scooters reduce CO₂ emissions per km, we note they emit more particulates and much more noise in many cases.

Land use planning

Regional form – destination distance is critical for mode choice. Land use planning decisions now will shape transport choices for decades. We support the separate Regional Policy Statement's emphasis on regional form and wish it strengthened to avoid sprawl and over-development of rural areas resulting in car-dependency.

Medium density cities allow us to enjoy both the benefits of civilisation such as galleries, festivals, libraries and concerts, exchange of ideas and products in the social and economic realm while retaining productive agricultural land and restoring surrounding



biodiversity. Unfettered sprawl diminishes the social, economic, cultural and environmental wellbeing of the region.

Lobbying from Greater Wellington on issues for people on foot

We would appreciate your lobbying on national transport policy, funding decisions and advocating to local councils on behalf of people on foot

Changes to mileage allowances paid by all sectors and to salary package provision of cars and car parking would have a critical effect. Levelling the playing field so that walking and cycling allowances at a similar level are payable without disadvantage would alter behaviour by choice rather than compulsion. For example, since July 2003, the Remuneration Authority has steadfastly refused to alter the mileage allowance for elected local government members so walking or cycling allowances could legally be paid. Given a free car park and a 70c car allowance per kilometre, it's financially attractive to drive rather than cycle, walk, take the train or bus. We hope that Greater Wellington will consider altering its mileage allowances, lobbying the Remuneration Authority and ending the practice of including cars and car parking in staff or elected members' packages. We note that Tasman/Nelson Council apparently already does this.

Advocacy for the effective continuance of the National Advisory Group on the Getting There Strategy would be helpful. It has only met once so far this year and we also believe it's an essential networking tool across different central and local government agencies together with NGOs.

On behalf of Living Streets Wellington, P O Box 25-424 Wellington 385 8280

