

Living Streets Aotearoa



Living Streets Dunedin submission on Draft Otago Regional Land Transport Programme, 2009-2012

Name of Submitting Organisation	Submitted by Judy Martin (Living Streets Dunedin Co-ordinator) on behalf of Living Streets Dunedin
Postal Address	Living Streets Dunedin C/O of Judy Martin 207 Forfar St DUNEDIN 9011
Phone	453 4619
Email	jmartins@ihug.co.nz

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Introducing Living Streets Dunedin

Living Streets Dunedin is a pedestrian advocacy group established in 2007 as a branch of Living Streets Aotearoa. Our objective is to support Dunedin walkers and make our city a great walking environment for all.

Living Streets Aotearoa's vision is "More people walking more often".

For more information about Living Streets Aotearoa see www.livingstreets.org.nz

We wish to speak to our submission. Please send us a copy of the Officer's report as soon as this is available to help with the preparation of our submission.

Submission layout

- **Issue(s) for the Committee to consider**
- **Specific Action(s) we suggest the Committee should take**
- **Why the Committee should take that/these action(s)**

In all cases, "the Committee" also refers to the organizations who contributed and/or are responsible for any relevant proposals or activities.

Submission Point 1. Lookout Point Safety work

Re: Draft Otago Regional Land Transport Programme (RLTP), p.46. Caversham Corridor Improvements, stage 1.

Issue(s) for the Committee to consider: The upgrading of the Southern Motorway at Caversham has been identified by the ORTC as a project of potential national importance, which suggests that it predicts that a significant increase in traffic density and flow will result. The intersection at Lookout Point is already extremely difficult to negotiate for pedestrians, cyclists, and cars and any increase in traffic flow is likely to accentuate that, effectively severing easy connectivity between the Hills suburbs and Corstorphine.

Specific Action(s) we suggest the Committee should take: Highway and Network Operations (NZTA) must ensure that the corridor improvements from Caversham Valley road to Lookout Point with their plans for improved foot and cycle access across State Highway One at Lookout Point are undertaken before the widening of the Highway between Barnes Drive and Anderson's Bay Road. This is the order planned, and is the correct order for this project.

Why the Committee should take that action: In the Otago Daily Times on March 26, an article quoted the Chairman of the ORTC, Steven Woodhead, musing whether they should not carry out the widening of the lower part of the Highway before the Lookout Point upgrades, putting efficiency before safety.

<http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/48978/headache-over-bypass-options>

He asked the public to submit on the RLTP, which we are now doing, and we want to make clear our absolute opposition to Woodhead's proposal. If the lower road were widened first, and its purpose of increasing the flow of traffic were successful, this would place yet more pressure on an extremely difficult active transport crossing, and destroy the connectivity between the Hills suburbs and southern suburbs even more than is currently the case.

Submission Point 2. The importance of factoring active transport, including walkers, into projects designed to benefit motorists, using the proposed seal extension of Leith Valley Road as an example.

Re: Draft Otago Regional Land Transport Programme, Table 12, p. 54-55

Issue(s) for RLTP to consider and take back to contributing bodies: The Committee is not consulting directly on the details of the projects in Table 12, but we wish to use the proposed Leith Valley Road Seal extension as an example of a proposal and rationale where the needs of walkers (and cyclists) have been ignored. It is important that the Committee and its transport planners acknowledge that some measures to improve accessibility for motorised transport, such as seal extension, road and bridge widening, and road straightening, make the situation much worse for pedestrians and often deter them from walking, even when this is important for their health, social support, and mobility.

Specific Action(s) we suggest contributing bodies should take: Consider all potential projects for seal extension, road and bridge widening, and road straightening for the impact that increased traffic volume and velocity might have on the community and non-motorised road users, and reject or modify those where road "improvements" make the road more dangerous and less attractive to pedestrians.

There is a budget line from the Dunedin City Council regarding the Leith Valley Road seal extension in the RLTP that illustrates how discounting active transport needs reaches inaccurate conclusions (RLTP, table 12, p. 54-55). It is argued that sealing the road is justified by improved safety and security, but this begs the question, safety and security for whom? (see Appendix 2) We would strongly oppose this seal extension, especially for the full length of the road to the motorway

junction. Walkers and cyclists are currently high users of this pleasant, low traffic volume road and for them safety will decrease rather than increase. If the road were sealed from the motorway saddle, the number of motorists seeking an alternative “scenic” route would increase sharply, along with the speed of the cars, and most of the thousands of cyclists, runners and walkers who use this road for recreational purposes, would cease to do so. The last section of sealing that was done catered very poorly for walkers, with the seal margin ending sharply over steep slopes into ditches, and it is only the relatively low traffic volume that allows walkers to walk on the tarmac and avoid this hazard.

Any perceived increase in safety objectives would only be at the expense of these vanished active transport users, who would lose one of their most valued roads, where they currently improve their health and contribute to a reduction in health spending. None of this equation is even considered in the discussion.

See Appendix one for illustrative material regarding Leith Valley Road

Submission Point 3. Neighbourhood connectivity: Usable footpaths beside primary interconnecting routes as a component of Walking projects

Re: RLTP, p.7; section 4.4; section 4:8; p. 98, target 2

Issue(s) for the Committee and contributing bodies to consider: It is good to see the Committee asking for feedback on the relative importance of walking as well as cycling in the Transport Programme. This reflects the new mood that acknowledges active transport as an inherent component of the transport system in its own right, as well as recognizing the environmental and health benefits of each compared to private motor vehicle use. A recent NZTA study has recently estimated a benefit of \$4.27 to the health system alone from each kilometre walked by a new walker. We think new footpaths are essential along busy roads that link adjacent communities, *in particular where there is no other convenient way of traveling by foot between the two.*

Specific Action(s) we suggest the Committee and contributing bodies should take: Please make the funding of usable footpaths between adjacent neighbourhoods a funding priority to be added to the walking budget, especially where these are currently only connected by high speed roads. Two local examples for illustrative purposes are:

- a) Brighton road, between Friendship Drive, Waldronville, and Allen Road South
- b) Waikouaiti-Waitati Road (SH1) between Waitati and Evansdale

Why the Committee should take that /these action(s): If walking is now re-recognized as an intrinsic part of the transport system, as well as a recreational good, it must be made possible for walkers to travel from one adjacent community to another by their preferred mode of transport. The two stretches of road given as examples are both reasonably short stretches, a manageable walk for most people. and they each provide the only practical pedestrian link between two adjacent communities – Waldronville and Green Island, and Waitati and Warrington. In effect, neighbours in these communities have to either drive, brave an unpleasant environment on bicycle or foot, or not visit at all. This violates the transport planning principle of enhancing neighbourhood connectivity, and could be remedied for a reasonably small outlay. One of the examples is a Dunedin City Council responsibility, the other the primary responsibility of NZTA, and this difference highlights the importance of strong leadership from your overseeing body.

Design for all roading and footpath projects must include using best practice which includes using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles as well as NZ Standard 4121, the NZTA Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide (2007), and Road and Traffic Standard 14: Guidelines for facilities for blind and vision-impaired pedestrians 2003 (currently under revision).

Intersections and crossing points are of particular concern for pedestrians in the urban situation, and ensuring adequate footpaths on both sides of the roads is of particular concern for rural residents.

NB: It is very pleasing to see such initiatives specifically proposed by the Central Otago District Council in Table 15

See Appendix 2 for illustrative material regarding the pedestrian situation on Brighton Road.

Submission pt 4. Support for an Otago Regional Active Transport Forum

Issue(s) for the Committee to consider: Living Streets Dunedin supports the formation of an Otago Regional Active Transport Forum (possibly to also include Southland) to better co-ordinate Active Transport activities in Otago. Such a forum increases intersectoral and interregional support, networking, and information sharing so ensuring better Active Transport outcomes for Otago.

Several such Forums exist in many regions throughout New Zealand. The Canterbury Active Transport Forum established late in 2007 has contributed to better regional co-ordination and understanding and of best practice in Canterbury including through presentations on new Active Transport developments and Government initiatives and requirements.

Specific Action(s) we suggest the Committee should take: We request that the Regional Transport Committee shows leadership and support through mandating the setting up an Active Transport Forum in Otago in the current or early next financial year, with assistance to be sought from Councils in the Region, including the Otago Regional Council,

Submission point 5. Support for demand management and other active and public transport initiatives outlined in the programme.

We support the walking, cycling, and bus Activities (Tables 13, 14 and 15) and also the Travel Demand Activities in Table 16 in this priority list, as these will all improve conditions for Active Transport users. We believe these type of activities should be the highest priority. In particular walking projects that help implement Local and Regional Councils Walking or Active Transport Strategies should be high priority.

We also support any Active Transport Strategy Reviews such as, the review of the DCC Pedestrian Strategy currently underway and ask that the RLTP ensure that the implementation resources for its implementation are a priority. We consider developing, reviewing, monitoring, and implementing Active Transport or Walking Strategies are critical, and should be high priority line items.

We want Otago to become a regional leader in New Zealand, by prioritising sustainable transport options such as walking and cycling for shorter trips. By shorter trips we mean within 2-3 km for walking and within 10 km for cycling. For longer trips excellent Public Transport options are important. If we need to “build our way of the recession” then let’s do it with huge walking, cycling, and Public Transport projects, in that order.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission. We look forward to working collaboratively with Councils to help ensure Dunedin is walking friendly and the preferred city to live and work.

See Appendices below

Appendix One: Photos of Leith Valley Road, taken by a Living Streets member



Figure 1: A car accident on the then recently sealed stretch of lower Leith Valley Road, on a frosty day



Figure 2: Walkers heading towards Nicholls Creek on a 100kph section of road without footpath or other pedestrian refuge. This is a quiet road only because unsealed further up.

Appendix Two: Information relating to Brighton Road pedestrian access

From: Gail Arthur <gail.arthur@otago.ac.nz>
Date: 18 March 2009 11:38:27 AM
To: "jmartins@ihug.co.nz" <jmartins@ihug.co.nz>
Subject: Living Streets Dunedin

Dear Judy

My family and I live in Waldronville. I would love to be able to walk to Green Island with my children but feel the Brighton Road between Green Island and Waldronville is not safe for young children as there are no footpaths and the speed limit is 80 kmh. Having grown up in Green Island I am aware this stretch of road has always been an issue for pedestrians and am sure others have brought this to your attention.

Kind regards
Gail Arthur

And
Hi Judy

I am happy for you to use my email and can add in the six years I have lived in Friendship Drive, I have not walked the road to Green Island as having daughters, aged ten and five, I feel the road is not safe to negotiate with children. The last time I walked the Brighton Road stretch, I was in my teens (I am now 43) when traffic was much lighter than it is now. My daughters have friends (11 and 8 years of age) who also live in Waldronville who attend St Peter Chanel School in Green Island, their Mum has echoed my sentiments about the safety of the road and drives them to and from school each day as she is also conscious of the safety issues for pedestrians using this road.

Kind regards
Gail



Figure 3. Adult pedestrians braving the road verge on Brighton Road.



Figure 4. A closer view of the corner they were walking, showing narrow verge, uneven surface and steep unstable slope.

NB: This mature couple said they sometimes walked from Waldronville to Green Island to see family members, but found the traffic very fast and close. Also, they had to walk on the same side of the road going in both directions. I met another mature couple on Allen Road South, who say they walk on the section of road between Brighton and Allen Road South (which has a much flatter slope from the road to ditch, and even a rudimentary gravel footpath) but have never ventured south of Allen Road South on foot. Even on the section they walk on, the closeness of cars and protruding truck mirrors make the walk uncomfortable.



Figure 5: An example of the narrow verge and very steep unstable slope which face would be walkers between Waldronville and Green Island.