

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Submission from Living Streets Wellington

### on Restoring Wellington's Golden Mile

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#### About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA) is a national organisation 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 LSA 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.

For more information, please see: [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## **Submission**

We would like to present our submission to the Committee considering the proposal.

### ***1. What do you think about the idea of opening Manners Mall to buses?***

There was initial support from Living Streets on the basis that the proposal was for buses, not general traffic. This appears to be the case with respect to the mall itself, but not with respect to Manners St (which is central to the proposal, but is not mentioned on the submission form).

We support the Mall being opened for buses provided that:

- there are street trees and wide pavements throughout;
- there is opportunity and provision for increased cycle use;
- there is a dedicated public transport route both ways, at both peak and off-peak times;
- the layout is designed to provide the same level of service to buses at peak times (currently at the rate of over 100 buses per hour each way) as at off-peak times, including sufficient space at bus stops to minimise dwell times and bus-on-bus congestion (lengthy and slow queues of buses at stops are common) - this may require separation of stops by bus destination (as used to be the case at Courtenay Place and still applies at the northern end of Lambton Quay), with provision for buses to overtake.

We oppose Manners St being available to general eastbound traffic, because:

- it is not wide enough for both buses and general traffic;
- Manners St west (between Willis St and Victoria St) would provide a direct general traffic route from The Terrace motorway exit and Boulcott St to Victoria St, which would obstruct bus flow, particularly at peak times.

### ***2. What do you think about the possible long-term changes to Dixon, lower Cuba, Victoria and Mercer Streets?***

We support having more street trees and more pedestrian space to compensate for the loss of Manners Mall.

We oppose the provision of more car park spaces.

We suggest that lower Cuba St (between Manners St and Wakefield St) be closed to traffic completely, making it a pedestrian mall, or at least be closed to vehicles at the Manners St end (access/exit solely from/to Wakefield St), making a better pedestrian environment and giving more space for bus stops. Dixon St should be traffic-calmed and the footpaths widened, in particular at the Cuba St crossing.

### ***3. Tell us your views on the proposal to reduce the speed limit from 50 km/h to 30 km/h in Manners Street and Courtenay Place, including the mall area.***

Good idea - slower, safer, more pleasant and consistent with Lambton Quay/Willis St. Roads intersecting this route should also be 30 km/h.

### ***4. What do you think of the proposal to put traffic lights at the three unsignalised pedestrian crossings in Courtenay Place?***

A good idea for anyone with a vision impairment, but depends on appropriate priority being given to pedestrians, and short traffic-light cycles - badly-phased lights encourage jaywalking. Reducing car traffic would mean less conflict between traffic and pedestrians.

### ***5. Other comments***

- Newer dropped kerbs are less effective from a wheelchair user's point of view than the older ones such as those at Manners/Victoria - all dropped kerbs in this proposal should be to the higher standard.
- Alternative provision needs to be made for the jugglers/entertainers who currently perform in Manners Mall.
- The use of trolleybuses should be maximised - they make for a much more pleasant urban environment than diesels.
- Bus boarding should be speeded up by improving the Snapper system (3 or 4 seconds per passenger is much too slow) and improving access for passengers with disabilities - currently a slow, manual process.
- Good traffic light timing is essential at intersections: public transport should follow the example of Zürich, where buses and trams do not stop except for passengers - bus/tram pre-emption applies at all traffic lights.
- The proposal must take into account the potential for light rail along the Golden Mile.
- The entire length of Manners St and Mall should be buses-only both ways: the presence of general traffic in this narrow street will have a significant impact on buses.