

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Wellington

on the Safer Roads Newtown and Berhampore Proposal

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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

Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. We would like to present our submission orally to the committee, if this is possible.

Living Streets generally supports these initiatives to make streets safer for pedestrians and to make them more liveable; to encourage the use of buses rather than cars; and to encourage cycling (but not at the expense of pedestrians).

Speed Limits

Living Streets supports lower speed limits on roads in Newtown and Berhampore, to reduce the number and severity of crashes. It is well known that the faster traffic travels, the more crashes happen, and the more severe the injuries, particularly for children.

We would like the speed limits reduced to 30 kmh on residential streets, and 40kmh on arterial roads such as Adelaide Road, Constable Street, Riddiford Street, Russell Terrace and Rintoul Street. Arterial roads around schools should have a 30 kmh speed limit, perhaps using the example of the Australian school zones which operate in daytime during school terms.

A limit of 30 kmh on residential streets is in keeping with the “Home Zone” limits in the UK. Residential streets should be used only for traffic to the area, and as safe, alternative routes for children walking to school, out of the way of fast traffic. A 30 kmh speed limit, along with traffic calming devices, such as speed humps of cushions, and give way signs, will reduce the amount and speed of non-residential traffic on these streets.

We also agree with increased parking enforcement, particularly parking on footpaths. It is safer for pedestrians and cars if cars park on the road, where they are supposed to be. If this reduces the width available for cars to drive on, then they have to drive more slowly, which increases safety.

We also support more enforcement of driving speeds, using driver feedback signs, speed cameras and red light cameras. Red light jumping has become prevalent in recent times, with drivers accelerating when lights turn orange, rather than slowing down. This is particularly dangerous for pedestrians stepping onto the road when the green light shows.

Engineering

We support the engineering measures proposed, including give way markings and signs at junctions. We agree that kerb extensions and pedestrian refuges increase safety for pedestrians, and we support them. However, they must be designed so they don't create dangerous pinch points for cyclists. The Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide, section 15.8 and 15.9 addresses the issue of ensuring they are safe for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Education

A large number of crashes are caused by drivers who seem to believe that roads are for motor vehicles, and that people using other transport modes such as walking and cycling, have less right to use the roading network. There needs to be much better education for new drivers, and those who have been driving for years need to be reminded that they must share the road safely with all users.

We strongly support the Council promoting the safer routes to school programme, auditing streets to identify and remedy hazards, and enforcing parking regulations around schools. Making streets safer will encourage more children to walk to school, thus cutting the number of cars causing a hazard around schools.

Signs

We would like to see all pedestrian shortcuts, steps and walkways clearly sign posted so that people on foot can find them easily. There are many such pedestrian ways in Newtown, and they are safer, more pleasant and quicker for people walking. Roads which are sign posted "No Exit" but have a pedestrian exit at the end, should be marked "No Exit for Cars" or "Pedestrian Exit Only"