

Living Streets Aotearoa



Submission from Living Streets Wellington on the Proposed Regional Land Transport Programme 2009-12

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About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

Our objectives 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

The purpose of the Regional Land Transport Programme is to put into effect the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Of particular interest to Living Streets are the RLTS key outcomes of:

- increased peak-period passenger transport use
- increased use of walking and cycling
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- improved regional road safety
- improved land use and transport integration.

Looking at the list of third-priority projects, numbers 2,3,6,13,14 and 16 are the key ones from this perspective. Unfortunately it appears to us that many of the other projects, and elements of 2 and 14, run counter to these outcomes. They appear to us to be creating road capacity, with the likely consequence of inducing traffic, which would run counter to most of the desired RLTS outcomes. Our concern is that these capacity increases will increase the pressure of motor vehicles, particularly on urban streets. This will make the walking/cycling environment more dangerous and unpleasant.

What we propose is a change of emphasis, to tackle the main issues.

As envisaged in the RLTS, improvements to the walking and cycling environment and to public transport (PT) must come before increasing road capacity. More people walking and cycling short distances, and using PT for longer journeys, will take vehicles off the road and reduce congestion.

Key improvements that we look for are:

- a high-quality PT spine through Wellington city, improving access and mobility and the city environment. Projects that increase commuter car capacity, such as Melling interchange, SH2/58 grade separation and Waterloo Quay, will all tend to bring more cars into the city. That is the last thing that the city and its citizens need.
- Wellington's walkability is one of its key attributes. Top Priority should be given to projects which make walking safer and pleasanter. Every public transport trip begins and ends with walking, so improving the walking environment will encourage the use of public transport.
- projects such as bus lanes on Hutt Rd, Adelaide Rd, and Cambridge/Kent Terraces can be implemented quickly and easily, and do need to be linked with expensive roading schemes – mode change can achieve the same results.
- safe and pleasant walking/cycling routes, including the Great Harbour Way, need to be a high priority so that travel by active modes, for example between Petone and Wellington, is possible. At present there is no safe route by foot or cycle between the Hutt Valley and Wellington.

We strongly oppose a fly-over at the Basin Reserve.

We ask that the projects identified above be given higher priority, and in addition we request that the following be added to them:

- specific initiatives to make walking and cycling safer and pleasanter

- extension of rail through Wellington CBD, increasing rail patronage by approximately 10-15% (according to Works-MVA 1995 figures), reducing the number of commuters on the roads
- removal of non-integrated ticketing and other barriers to interchange between vehicles or modes; as Professor Neilsen from Norway demonstrated recently, interchanges are key elements
- increase in reliability, frequency and spread of PT - all of these need improvement.

Proposals for bus service improvements are excellent, but "to meet demand" is less good: they should be used to generate demand, as they can do - the Northern Express service in Auckland and the Christchurch Orbiter bus are spectacular examples of this. The same principle should be applied to train services - it is not good enough to stop rail network improvements at the projects included in RS1.

Of the photographs in the RLTP brochure, two are centred on train travel, two on cycling, one on walking, one on bus travel and one on roading. We would love to see a similar balance in the projects included in the brochure, remembering, of course, that PT travel depends on having good, safe walking access to it.

In answer to the questions on the feedback form:

1. We support the projects that do not encourage private vehicle use. We would like to see the changes identified above.
2. We believe that projects that encourage mode change from private vehicles to active and sustainable modes, with the corresponding safety benefits, should take priority over other projects.
3. State Highway projects that improve safety are desirable, but not at the expense of increasing capacity or encouraging use.
4. Our other feedback is included above.

We would like to be heard in support of this submission.