

# **Submission from Living Streets Wellington**

## **Draft Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy 2007-2016**

**Organisation:** Living Streets Wellington  
**Contact person:** Liz Thomas  
**Address:** PO Box 25 424  
Wellington  
**Email:** info@livingstreets.org.nz  
**Phone:** 04 472 8280  
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**For the attention of:** Regional Land Transport Committee  
Greater Wellington Regional Council  
PO Box 11 646  
Wellington 6142

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on this draft strategy. We would like to speak in support of our submission.

### **Introduction**

The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy is important not only for the development of regional transport, including walkability, but also for its implications in terms of broader quality of life and residents' well being. Without people walking in it, the city centre would be dead, both commercially and culturally. The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy therefore matters to Living Streets Wellington members.

### **About Living Streets Aotearoa Wellington**

Living Streets Wellington is part of Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA), an advocacy group 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 urban and regional land use and transport planning and, as appropriate, at national level.

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

### **General comments**

Over the next decade the Wellington region needs to start moving away from car-dependent transport towards more sustainable modes of transport and living. A top priority of the RLTS should be to address issues of climate change, energy use and urban design through greatly improving rail and bus public transport services and facilities, and increasing safety and accessibility for walkers and cyclists so that there is a modal shift away from private motor vehicle dependence.

As the Prime Minister has stated, “issues around sustainability and climate change have become the compelling issues of our times”, and “without a commitment to greater sustainability... we risk not only damaging our own environment, but also exposing our economy to significant risk”<sup>1</sup>. We believe this applies equally at the regional level – ie. to Wellington.

All councils’ district plans need to support land use that is compact, mixed-use and encourages accessible destinations. Such plans should consider excellent low-carbon transport systems and infrastructure as vital for sustainable land use and a high quality of life. It is of great importance that the RLTS does not simply involve the extrapolation of past transport and land use trends and instead looks to anticipate future needs and challenges.

Investment in walking, cycling and public transport options needs to be prioritised ahead of large roading projects that simply perpetuate an unsustainable dependence on private motor vehicles. Walking is an important activity to promote in light of the RLTS vision for a sustainable future for the region. There are numerous benefits of walking including

- environmental (reduced greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions)
- social (being active and feeling good, enhanced social cohesion, higher quality of life)
- economic (reduced congestion, reduction in fuel consumption)
- health benefits (increased physical activity reduces risk of obesity and related diseases).

We see a region with walking-oriented centres as a prosperous and sustainable region.

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<sup>1</sup> Rt. Hon Helen Clark. *Prime Minister’s Statement to Parliament*, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007  
<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=28357> Accessed 15/2/07

The GWRC, TLAs and Transit need to provide safe, accessible and pleasant pedestrian facilities as one part of encouraging the shift away from private vehicle dependence, as well as providing for the numerous people who already walk in the region. This is most particularly important for people who do not have access to other forms of transport (most particularly to cars) such as elderly, young, visually impaired and disabled people.

Walking constitutes an important transport mode for many people every day. While statistics such as those produced in the 2001 Census indicate that around 17% of all trips made within the Wellington region are walked, the real figure is likely to be higher. Many trips are multi-modal and surveys such as the Census only record the part of a multi-modal trip that takes the longest time or distance. Walking often makes up a substantial part of most public transport trips between railway station or bus stop and home or work but this may not be recorded. Therefore the number of people walking is underestimated, and the importance of walking as a critical element of most trips is under-appreciated.

Living Streets notes that the majority of investment under the RLTS in new transport capacity projects is to be spent on large roading projects. Living Streets strongly encourages the council to show vision and leadership and increase investment in new walking, cycling and public transport options. Living Streets Wellington calls for a much higher proportion, at least half, of the total planned investment in additional facilities and services, to be put towards active transport modes and public transport instead of increased road construction.

The forecast outcome of implementation of the RLTS is strongly negative in terms of reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and fuel consumption. This is of major concern. It means that the GWRC is unable to deliver on the outcomes sought in the Draft Energy Efficiency Strategy (2006) as required under Section 175.2(c) of the Land Transport Act 1998. It also means that the Wellington region is not adequately contributing to the Kyoto Protocol emissions targets to which New Zealand is legally bound for the period 2008-2012. Rather than seeing greenhouse gas emissions as an unfortunate by-product of the strategy, greenhouse gas emissions reduction should be a key objective and the actions of the RLTS should be aligned with this national obligation.

Living Streets Wellington recommends that the Regional Land Transport Committee consider the adoption of a road-user hierarchy, such as adopted by the City of York Council in the United Kingdom. The hierarchy is:

1. pedestrians
2. people with mobility problems
3. cyclists
4. public transport users (includes rail, bus, coach and water)
5. powered two wheelers
6. commercial/business users
7. car borne shoppers and visitors

## 8. car borne commuters<sup>2</sup>

We believe such a hierarchy would guide the Regional Land Transport Committee in terms of future resource allocation and would signal to the public a change in priorities towards more sustainable modes.

### **Summary Points**

- The emphasis in the strategy on road building, and the projected 1% decrease in modal share of walking over the next decade with the implementation of the Regional Land Transport Strategy are unacceptable. It is inconsistent with the Government's sustainability and climate change commitments and strategic direction, and will expose the region to unnecessary economic risk. In light of issues of climate change, present trends in walking, energy security considerations and a view to social, environmental and economic sustainability and health issues, the Regional Land Transport Committee needs to provide a strategy that significantly increases the modal share of walking
- Living Streets Wellington urges the Regional Land Transport Committee to show leadership and vision in ensuring the RLTS provides a long-term view on a sustainable transport system for the region that aims for economic and social prosperity, a healthy environment and an equitable and vibrant society
- While we support the basic idea behind the Vision, Objectives and Outcomes of the RLTS, there is considerable work to be done to make the RLTS more genuinely sustainable. The apparent disconnect between intentions and outcomes of the strategy needs to be addressed.
- We do not support the preferred scenario of Planned Investment and instead support the Advanced Passenger Transport scenario with some improvements
- We support the conclusions of the GWRC commissioned Health Impact Assessment of the RLTS (2005), which found that implementation of the RLTS will lead to considerable negative impacts on all determinants of health
- We note the upcoming review of the Pedestrian Plan and hope to see a consequent major uplift in investment in pedestrian services and facilities, so that the Regional Land Transport Committee creates a bold pathway to a sustainable future down which local territorial authorities can follow.

### **Pressures and issues**

While the Regional Land Transport Committee asserts that “we are unlikely to have a significant impact on national and global CO<sub>2</sub> levels” (p29), this should not be an excuse to make little effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate and adapt to climate change. Because human-induced climate change is such a ubiquitous challenge, all efforts to reduce emissions are vital both for overall reductions and for helping people change their lifestyles towards becoming less emission-intensive. In this way the Regional Land Transport Committee can play a leadership role through actively addressing changing how the transport system operates in New Zealand. Living Streets Wellington encourages the committee to be bold in taking immediate action to

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.york.gov.uk/roads/excellence/strategy.html>. Accessed 2/2/07

increase the modal share of walking and cycling, while concurrently reducing the modal share of private motor vehicles.

Furthermore, the Regional Land Transport Committee should be aware that addressing climate change now would cost considerably less than addressing greenhouse gas emissions reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation action in the future<sup>3</sup>. Though there is a time preference for receiving benefits today rather than benefits in the future, the committee needs to show courage and leadership and be prepared to address climate change issues immediately and with genuine dedication and appropriate investment [see Appendix 1 for Mayor Livingstone’s plan for London]. The Regional Land Transport Committee has a chance now to develop the Wellington regional transport network and services to be resilient, robust and sustainable in light of the future challenges of climate change.

Placing more weight on reducing carbon dioxide emissions will mean prioritising and funding more public and active transport facilities and services. The ability to reduce the region’s reliance on fossil-fueled transport also helps to protect against the impacts of energy insecurity and price fluctuations by providing attractive ways for people to move out of their cars. Furthermore, as the population ages and the baby boomers move into retirement, we can expect a greater need for good public transport and pedestrian facilities. We recommend the GWRC join Cities for Climate Protection-New Zealand (ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability) in order to share information and successful strategies among participating cities and local authorities.

### **Vision, objectives and outcomes**

Living Streets Wellington supports the basic intention of the Regional Land Transport Committee’s Vision for an integrated transport network in the Wellington Region with a major focus on social, environmental and economic sustainability. We consider that the Objectives are weak. The vision should be strengthened with the inclusion of the principle of equity, an important component of sustainability. The objectives need to have a greater focus on improving safety of all modes and the definition of environmental sustainability should excise the words about “to extent reasonable in the circumstances” and simply aim to minimise adverse effect on the environment at all times (p37).

Living Streets supports the land transport Outcomes for pedestrians but recommends that they be further strengthened through the inclusion of an Outcome that ensures pedestrians are given preference in interactions over other modes of transport. On all these points and for a fuller critique, we refer you to the Living Streets Wellington submission on the RLTS Strategic Options Consultation document (Submission 27, September 2005).

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<sup>3</sup> Stern, N. 2006. *Stern Review on the economics of climate change*. <http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk>

There are a number of ‘positive links’ between the Pedestrian Outcomes and the RLTS Objectives. Living Streets Wellington suggests that there are also further links that can be identified. Most importantly, the Regional Land Transport Committee model does not recognise the positive link between the Outcome “increased mode share for pedestrians...” and the Objective “assist safety and personal security” (Table 2). Increased safety and increased modal share are mutually supportive and can form a positive feedback loop or “virtuous circle”. Studies undertaken in a number of countries including New Zealand<sup>4</sup> indicate a link between increased numbers of walkers and cyclists on the road and increased safety for these groups. For example, a study from California found that the modal share of journeys by foot in Berkeley was 14.9% and relative risk index was 0.8 (the smaller the better). In Sacramento the walking mode share was 2.8% and relative risk index was 2.1, and Lakewood, with 1.0% walking modal share, the relative risk index was 4.5. Therefore “policies that increase the numbers of people walking and bicycling appear to be an effective route to improving the safety of people walking and bicycling”<sup>5</sup>.

As indicated by the Health Impact Assessment (2005)<sup>6</sup> commissioned by the GWRC, walkers can expect that the implementation of the RLTS will lead to negative impacts on all determinants of health due to the rise in car numbers on the road. This in turn has the potential to negatively impact physical activity levels, social connectedness and access, while simultaneously increasing the incidence of stress and accidents for pedestrians. These factors would all act in opposition to any efforts to increase modal shift towards active transport modes.

The Regional Land Transport Committee model fails to recognise any positive link between economic and regional development and the Outcomes for walking. There are a number of ways in which increased walking and increased modal share for active transport can bring economic benefits. In the most basic sense, increasing the modal share of active transport means that people move away from private motor vehicle use. This means there is less demand for road construction and improvements, with fiscal savings. Walking infrastructure is also comparatively cheaper than roading construction.

The creation of safe, attractive and accessible pedestrian facilities is vital for successful vibrant city centres for shoppers, residents, workers and visitors, and in turn brings considerable positive economic activity. The city of Birmingham, England, is an excellent example of the local council taking the lead and implementing planning strategies to rejuvenate the city centre, improving pedestrian access and constructing high quality pedestrian

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<sup>4</sup> LTNZ 2006. *Research*, Issue 8. Land Transport New Zealand

<sup>5</sup> p208. Jacobsen, P.L. 2003. Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling. *Injury Prevention* 9: 205-209

<sup>6</sup> HIA. 2006. *The Greater Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy – Health Impact Assessment*. Prepared for the Greater Wellington Regional Council by Quigley, R., Cunningham, R., Ward, M., de Boer, M. and Conland, C.

facilities<sup>7</sup>. This process has brought more people into the city centre and has had both positive economic and environmental outcomes.

There is also often a perception that most shopping in city centres is undertaken with shoppers driving to the shops. Studies have indicated that people walking and cycling or using public transport constitutes the majority of shoppers. For example, a study of the Acland Street retail area in Melbourne, Australia found that only 26% of expenditure was driven into the area and 57% walked into the area<sup>8</sup>. Hence there is considerable evidence to suggest that the provision of excellent pedestrian facilities have significant positive economic outcomes.

### **Strategic options**

Living Streets Wellington supports the Advanced Passenger Transport (APT) option, though in our opinion in its current state the option is more ‘advanced’ in name than in design.

Like the Regional Land Transport Committee, Living Streets Wellington does not support the Advanced Rooding option. Continued investment in rooding projects will lead to increased private motor vehicle use and an associated increase in carbon dioxide emissions, air pollution and other negative environmental, social and economic effects.

While it appears a better choice than the Advanced Rooding option, the Regional Land Transport Committee’s preference for the basic Planned Investment (PI) option, with the adoption of some ideas from the APT option, indicates a lack of leadership and vision. The underlying assumption that increased rooding investment will reduce congestion, as would supposedly be achieved with the Planned Investment option, is strongly negated by international experience<sup>9</sup>.

Major funding of new rooding projects would slow the desired modal shift away from private motor vehicle transport and would undermine current schemes that promote walking and cycling such as Safe Routes to School and walking school buses. As indicated in the HIA, investment in new rooding also undermines some of the Objectives of the RLTS, including ensuring environmental sustainability.

The suggestion that the second option, APT, does not “fully overcome” people’s preference for private motor vehicles is a spurious argument. Such preferences are already distorted by road provision, since rooding consumption is not priced at the point of consumption. Without serious investment in public transport to provide

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<sup>7</sup> Tolley, R. 2003. *Providing for pedestrians: Principles and guidelines for improving pedestrian access to destinations and urban spaces*. Walk21. Department of Infrastructure, Victoria.

<sup>8</sup> Tolley, R. 2006. *Why walking is critically important to the health of people and cities*. Presentation to New Zealand Walking Conference, November 2006

<sup>9</sup> Litman, T. 2006. *Smart transportation investments: Reevaluating the role of highway expansion for improving urban transportation*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute.

the Wellington region with a safe, attractive and convenient system, it will be very difficult to reduce the current modal share of private vehicles. To expect investment in the public transport system alone to increase patronage is short-sighted, as behavioural change is complex and multi-faceted. Therefore the Regional Land Transport Committee has a responsibility to undertake education and social marketing programmes, as well as increasing convenience and potential system efficiency, in order to help increase modal share of public transport and active transport modes.

Living Streets Wellington strongly opposes the Regional Land Transport Committee's chosen option of Transmission Gully for the Western Corridor route. We believe the public support for this option is falling and will fall further as the scale of the climate change issue becomes more apparent. Living Streets Wellington supports the Option 3 approach of increased rail capacity and services, greater telecommuting and improved broadband services. The Western Corridor Options 1 and 2 would bring larger numbers of cars into the Wellington CBD. This will have a considerable impact on the safety and pleasantness of walking conditions in the inner city. Option 3 would instead bring those people into the city through public transport, from which they would disembark and walk. Option 3 would mean a safer, calmer and more attractive city environment due to a greater movement of people by foot than would be the case with either Option 1 or 2.

## **Policies**

Living Streets Wellington supports a number of the policies proposed by the Regional Land Transport Committee, most particularly with regard to pedestrian network accessibility and integration and encouraging the uptake of pedestrian and cycling.

We suggest the committee needs to do more than simply "encourage" people to take up active modes of transport such as walking and cycling. The committee needs to demonstrate a serious commitment to investigating peoples' perceptions about the barriers to walking, and then work to address these specific issues so that the modal share of pedestrian trips increases. The Regional Land Transport Committee could present possibilities for promoting walking and upgrading pedestrian facilities to TLAs rather than just passing the responsibility on. For instance, the pedestrian audit of railway stations is a useful start, but its implementation should be undertaken in collaboration with TLAs and future similar initiatives should be more collaborative.

Living Streets Wellington particularly supports the inclusion of policy 7.5(h) to "encourage the use of transport modes that are not dependent on fossil fuels". We suggest that this policy not only helps ensure environmental sustainability, but also contributes positively to other RLTS objectives, including: assisting in economic growth and regional development through reduced consumption of petrol and reduced time on congested roads; assisting safety and personal security by reducing vehicle numbers on roads and increasing pedestrian and public transport passenger numbers; and helping to protect and promote public health through reduced emissions.



## **Role of transport modes**

The Wellington Transport Strategic Model predicts that over the next decade, with the Regional Transport Plan interventions, the modal share of walking in region wide trips will drop 1% by 2016 to 16%. This is disappointing and inadequate for a strategy that envisions an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable Wellington region. The RLTS needs to have a long-term horizon and consider sustainability issues that matter for the future. Living Streets Wellington urges the Regional Land Transport Committee to radically reconsider the RLTS so that the modal share of walking increases over the next decade.

With recognition that many trips are multi-modal, Living Streets Wellington is pleased to see that the committee proposes to address and improve direct and safe pedestrian access to passenger transport and parking areas. All current and future public transport facilities must be linked to high quality and readily accessible pedestrian facilities.

## **Implementation Plans**

Living Streets Wellington supports the RLTS implementation plans, in particular the Road Safety Plan and the Pedestrian Plan. We support the aims of increasing the modal share for pedestrian, improving safety and working to improve peoples' perceptions of the safety of walking. However, while this is an admirable intention, the RLTS, which implements the Pedestrian Plan, predicts a 1% decrease in walking modal share for trips around the region by 2016. It is difficult to understand how the Strategy and the Plan can therefore be reconciled.

We support the anticipated review of the Pedestrian Plan in May 2007 and hope this is an opportunity to expand the level of funding for such initiatives as the Public Transport Pedestrian Review. The implementation of a strong Pedestrian Plan needs to be closely linked to public transport facilities around the region. The level of use of public transport often depends on the ability to access public transport nodes by foot. The use and inclination to use public transport is therefore dependent on how easy to use and how attractive the pedestrian facilities are.

We expect that the review will also consider the effectiveness of targets of School Travel Plans as they stand at present. The current targets of reaching 8% of primary and secondary students in the first three years, and 34% of students in ten years, are encouraging but not high enough. A review of School Travel Plans and Workplace travel plans under the Pedestrian Plan should lead to higher target setting. Living Streets Wellington suggests that the Regional Land Transport Committee aims to have all primary schools in the region with walking school buses in the next decade. We also suggest an aim to have all workplaces with over one hundred employees with a workplace travel plan within the next five years, and all workplaces with over ten employees with a workplace travel plan within the next ten years.

Living Streets Wellington also suggests that the Regional Land Transport Committee could include in the reviewed Pedestrian Plan an upgrade of the on-line journey planner to show the best walking and cycling routes with realistic times. We also support the inclusion of way-finding signs for pedestrians and the creation of walking maps for all suburbs to be included in the Pedestrian Plan.

We note that the Auckland Regional Transport Authority has a walking and cycling group, developed to provide proactive support to walking and cycling initiatives across the region [Appendix 2], similar to a group currently being set up in the Canterbury region. Living Streets would be happy to work with Greater Wellington to set up a similar walking and cycling group in the Wellington region.

### **Corridor Plans**

As addressed above, Living Streets Wellington does not support the Regional Land Transport Committee's chosen option of Transmission Gully for the Western Corridor. Living Streets Wellington instead supports the implementation of the Option 3 plan. As noted above, this decision will have an important impact on car use and walking choices.

Living Streets Wellington supports the Regional Land Transport Committee's plan to upgrade pedestrian and cycle facilities between Ngauranga and Petone. We would expect that these facilities would be safe, well lit, easily accessible and attractive. The vision of the Great Harbour Way lifts these possible aspirations<sup>10</sup>.

In general, any activity on the Corridor Plans needs to ensure that any improvements in public transport facilities are coupled with high quality pedestrian infrastructure and access.

### **Regional Transport Plan**

Living Streets Wellington notes that under the Regional Transport Plan Passenger Transport Programme there is no funding directly specified for walking projects. We would assume that any upgrading of public transport facilities would include provision of safe and convenient pedestrian access. The pedestrian audit of all stations produced a wishlist, and we would like to see the creation of an implementation plan to be jointly undertaken with TLAs and OnTrack, depending on ownership.

We also ask what the Cycle promotion (Ref. 21) funding activity of the "implementation of regional council cycling responsibilities" means (p125). Is such funding also available for the implementation of GWRC's responsibilities to walking?

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.greatharbourway.org.nz/> Accessed 12/2/07

We would also recommend that the council take time to check the figures of investment in the Regional Transport Plan. The third paragraph of Section 11.5 (p121) states that \$1.3 billion will be invested in passenger transport per year for the next ten years (if only!). We suggest that the council means to say that they will spend \$1.3 billion over the whole ten year period from 2006/07-2016, matching the earlier figure given in Table 15.

Thank you for considering this submission

**Living Streets Wellington**

## Appendix 1

### Press release from Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London - excerpt

#### Mayor sets out extra £47 million for greenest ever budget to tackle climate change

23/1/2007 032

Assembly members are currently debating whether to back the Mayor's annual budget.

Included in the Mayor's package are a series of measures to tackle climate change - these will be detailed in a Climate Change Action Plan for the capital which will be launched by the Mayor later in the year:

- £8 million to increase the energy performance of London's buildings
- £8 million from Transport for London to establish a Climate Change Mitigation Fund mainly to support energy efficient technology in transport (£25 million over three financial years)
- An additional £16 million for cycling over the next year (a total of £40 million for cycling over the next three financial years)
- An additional £4.6 million for walking
- An additional £5.5 million in 2007/2008 to support travel demand management to encourage people to switch to sustainable travel
- Work to ensure that the vast majority of new developments are low or zero carbon
- Measures to promote decentralised energy through the work of the London Climate Change Agency
- A public information campaign to encourage Londoners to reduce CO2 emissions

'Tackling climate change is the number one priority for my administration. This set of measures will deliver real reductions in Co2 emissions.

'Londoners will see increased investment to help improve energy efficiency in homes, low carbon electricity generation and in non-polluting transport such as cycling and walking.

Accessed 12/2/07

[http://www.london.gov.uk/view\\_press\\_release.jsp?releaseid=10574](http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=10574)

## **Appendix 2**

### **Membership of the ARTA Regional Walking and Cycling Group**

*Adopted terms of reference October 2005, Walking and Cycling Group, Auckland Regional Transport Authority*

#### **1. Representatives from key agencies**

- Regional Land Transport Committee
- EECA
- Land Transport NZ
- Accident Compensation Corporation
- Auckland Regional Public Health Service
- SPARC
- Ministry of Transport
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- NZ Police
- Transit NZ

#### **2. Local and Regional Councils**

- Auckland Regional Transport Authority
- Auckland City Council
- North Shore City Council
- Waitakere City Council
- Manukau City Council
- Papakura District Council
- Franklin District Council
- Rodney District Council

#### **3. Key interest and advocacy groups**

- Walk Auckland
- Living Streets Aotearoa
- Cycle Action Auckland
- Cycle Advocates Network
- Bicycle Industry Association
- Bike NZ

Accessed 12/2/07

<http://www.arta.co.nz/arc/xxarta/plans-and-policies/walking-and-cycling-group.cfm>