

Living Streets Aotearoa



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New Zealand Walking Conference 2006

Getting There on Foot in NZ Cities and Towns – Taking the Next Steps

3 – 4 November 2006

ABSTRACT

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| Phone number | 09 921 9999 X7307 | Fax Number | |
| Presentation topic | Urban design and physical activity | | |
| Presentation title | Physical Activity and built environment in New Zealand: What's the evidence? | | |
| Presentation Style | Presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | Interactive Workshop <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Time Required | 0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/> | 10-20 mins <input type="checkbox"/> | 20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Presentation

Physical (in)activity is now a leading modifiable burden of disease in most developed countries, and as such increasing physical activity is a national health priority in these countries (including New Zealand). Yet, social marketing and other strategies heavily invested in nationally have had limited to low efficacy in increasing physical activity at the population level. Internationally, there is increasing evidence for the link between urban form and increased habitual physical activity and a healthier weight status. Higher residential density, high street connectivity, and mixed land use amongst other variables, have all been associated with increased physical activity especially walking. There has been little research specific to New Zealand environments however. This presentation will review the scientific evidence for 1). Physical activity and health, especially accumulated walking; 2). The link between physical activity and urban form published internationally; and 3). Look closely at the "Active Friendly Environments" project, a three-year collaboration between SPARC, AUT, North Shore City Council, and Harbour Sport to understand physical activity and urban form in a New Zealand context. This is presently the only population-level New Zealand-based project to look at overall physical activity levels including walking, and objectively-measured urban form using geographic information systems. Overall, physical activity, walking, and transport-related physical activity will all be examined in relation to urban form. As well, the gaps in the body of knowledge for urban design and physical activity will be examined with a specific interest in the differences between urban form which helps adults achieve more health-related physical activity and the environment which best promotes children's' physical activity.