

The Wellington Regional Pedestrian Strategy

The Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy recognises the importance of pedestrian travel if the region is to have a network that manages demands effectively and efficiently. Walking is an important peak period transport mode in its own right and it has important links to public transport use.

Data from the 1996 census indicates that 10% of people travelled to a place of work in the Wellington CBD where walking was the means of completing the major part of their journey. A further 28% of people used public transport as their main means of travelling to work in the Wellington CBD which usually requires a walk trip from their stop to the place of work.

The Regional Council, in conjunction with its colleague organisations, is particularly concerned that walking is encouraged as a convenient and attractive alternative to car use. To this end the Regional Council is convening an initiative to promote walking.

Policy Basis for Promoting Greater Use of Walking

The Regional Land Transport Strategy 1999-2004 makes a number of statements related to walking. The *Roles of different modes* section says:

In urban areas and for short journeys walking will remain as a major mode both in its own right and for access to and from public transport ...

Walking and cycling is available to all people, is an essential part of all transport movements, has a highly positive effect on community cohesion, has few adverse effects on the environment, is safe and has positive health benefits.

The Strategy encourages the increased use of walking and cycling for short journeys and policies are proposed which should make these modes more attractive and safer.

There are six policies in the Strategy that relate to walking and they are:

1.1.6 - Improve pedestrian access to key public transport nodes

1.3.2 - Promote land development that ensures that public transport, walking and cycling are convenient alternatives to the private car

2.2.4 - Promote supporting measures which will help reduce peak demand

4.1.2 - Plan development, design and improve road infrastructure to provide improved safety

5.1.1 - Promote environmentally benign transport mechanisms

5.1.2 - Make cycling and walking more attractive.

The thrust of the strategy is that walking is important, has important links with public transport and that its use should grow. Walking has synergies with land use and is an element in managing the demand for road space. Walking needs to be an attractive option which raises issues of safety, comfort, convenience and amenity. Walking has environmental, health and social cohesion benefits.

Outcomes

The Regional Council's primary interest is to promote walking as an alternative means of travel. This includes peak period and off peak travel.

One of the key tasks will be to determine what issues are important to pedestrians and how should pedestrian proposals be evaluated? The intent of this exercise is to put in place facilities and measures that will make walking a convenient and attractive alternative to car use. This will require a thorough investigation. These measures will need to be audited once they are in place to confirm that they have achieved the outcomes they were designed to achieve.

If pedestrian projects are to be progressed not only do schemes need to be identified but sufficient work needs to be undertaken to ensure that they will be successful and that the investment produces sufficient benefits to justify the cost. This raises the question - what are the features that pedestrians value and what value do they have?

Road schemes are evaluated using a cost-benefit methodology where time savings, operating costs and accident savings are compared to the scheme cost. The pedestrian may value different features. Such features may include the amenity of the walk route, its directness and comfort factors. Pedestrians also gain health benefits.

In essence the outcomes of this exercise are to identify:

- The issues facing pedestrians in the region
- What attributes are important in a pedestrian journey
- A set of prioritised and costed schemes that will enhance walking trips to be attractive and convenient alternatives to car travel and will complement public transport travel
- A means to monitor the successfulness of proposals
- Develop a pedestrian strategy to provide a framework for identifying projects
- How the planning environment can recognise the synergy between land use development and walking.