

## Appendix 7: Analysis of, and Report on, Submissions Received on the First Draft of the Strategy

### Report by Dean Scanlen, Engineering Outcomes Ltd

The following consultation was carried out:

- Council had a stand at its Expo in April 2007 at which walking and cycling issues were canvassed and the strategy was discussed with interested people;
- A meeting with various Stakeholders including Land Transport NZ, other divisions of Council (Parks, Wastes & Drainage & Policy), Transit NZ, Department of Conservation, Northland Health, Northland Regional Council, Manaia Primary Health Organisation, Sport Northland.
- An evening public meeting;
- Council's Roopu Kaumatua; and
- Council's Iwi liaison committee.

At all of the meetings, the strategy was presented, questions were answered and a discussion was facilitated. Council also ran a full-page "Council Connections" on the strategy in April and there was a public notice in local newspapers. At all meetings and Council Connections and in the public notice, submissions were called for on the strategy. Those submissions have now all been received and analysed, and changes drafted to the strategy as a result.

In total, forty eight submissions were received by Council. They covered 270 issues. A detailed analysis of the submission can be obtained from Council on request.

In general, the strategy has been well received and supported. There is a commitment to collaboration by the most stakeholder agencies including Land Transport NZ, Transit NZ, Department of Conservation, Northland Health, Northland Regional Council and Manaia PHO. There is strong support for the proposed offroad network, the improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities in urban areas and for the proposed education and road safety programmes.

Many submitters consider there is a need for adequate and sustained funding to implement the strategy. The costs of implementing the strategy, the implications of the existing level of funding on options for differing levels of funding will be provided in detail in the network study that will arise out of action item 1.3 and which is currently in preparation.

Several submitters consider that a comprehensive, well-integrated network of walking and cycling paths will be essential infrastructure for Whangarei District, especially when the cost of fossil fuels and/or vehicle ownership increase significantly and/or the use of motor vehicles is severely curtailed by things like New Zealand's obligations under protocols like Kyoto and/or economic downturns. Some of those submitters also spoke of the need to improve the "comparative advantage" of walking and cycling over cars. That is, to give a higher priority to projects or programmes that make walking or cycling more attractive to more people than the use of motor vehicles.

Furthermore, several submitters believe that, in addition to transport benefits, a comprehensive off-road network of walking and cycling paths will have significant economic and tourist potential and will provide benefits to health, fitness and community cohesiveness. Many submitters expressed the belief that such benefits are as least as important as transport benefits.

Several submitters consider there is a need for a dedicated person, either a Council officer or consultant, to manage all of Council functions in relation to walking and cycling, including the administration of the walking and cycling reference group, maintaining dialogue with community groups who already carry out functions relating to walking and cycling and facilitating support of them as appropriate, coordinating the various divisions of Council who have roles in implementing the strategy and facilitating the use of local community and neighbourhood action as appropriate. However, this is essentially already the case -

responsibility for the implementation of the strategy currently rests with the Roding Manager who is able to delegate the various functions and tasks as he see fit. As such, there no actions or changes are considered necessary to address this submission point.

Several submitters seeks stronger or more positive wording in the Vision, goals and objectives. The Vision has been amended in response to this, but no changes are proposed to wording of goals or objectives (although one new objective is proposed in response to other submissions).

In particular, Goal 2 is for the historic decline in the rates of walking and cycling to be arrested. Several submitters consider that the goal should be for an increase in both modes. However, given the time it will take to implement sufficient facilities and programmes to achieve a significant increase in the rates of walking and cycling, a goal of increasing those modes is not considered realistic within the life of this plan.

Goal 3 is for a street environment that is similar for pedestrians and cyclists, in safety terms, as that of Whangarei's peer group of local authorities. While that also does not sound ambitious, Whangarei has the worst record of pedestrian safety among its peer authorities. To achieve a safety record equal to the average of those authorities, our record would have to "leapfrog" that of half of our peer authorities. That is a very substantial improvement and anything further is likely to be unrealistic at this stage.

These are the key points made by submitters for which it is agreed that significant actions and/or amendments to the strategy are warranted. A discussion and recommended actions or alterations are given with each key point.

## Key Point 1

The vision should be significantly strengthened

### Discussion

The previous proposed Vision was:

**A district where walking and cycling is encouraged and is enjoyable, safe, convenient, and easily accessible as a transport option.**

There were concerns from submitters about the moderate language in this vision statement (especially the word "encouraged"), its emphasis on walking and cycling as transport and, consequently, how the other benefits of more walking and cycling are not mentioned. Some submitters consider that this vision is not exciting or "visionary" enough and others seek a vision that, if achieved, will greatly improve access to public places for all residents including those without motor vehicles.

### Recommendation

That the following amended vision be adopted:

**A district where walking or cycling are easy and enjoyable everywhere in the public domain, are the preferred means of access and are a lifestyle or tourist attraction.**

## Key Point 2

That the strategy be district-wide and cover access to the entire public domain.

### Discussion

The strategy is district-wide. Most of the submitters who made this comment were reading the maps as part of the strategy. It will be made clearer in future versions of the strategy that the maps and proposed

offroad network are, in fact, the result of one of the strategy's action items and are not part of the strategy itself.

Furthermore, to ensure there is less focus on the maps, they will be relegated to an appendix and a note added as to their status and relationship to the strategy. The maps will be extended to cover other parts of the district as time and resources permit.

Reference to the "public domain" has been included in the vision. That includes all public roads whether formed or not, parks and reserves including esplanade reserves and the foreshore.

### **Recommendation**

That the maps of the proposed network of walking and cycling pathways be included in the strategy as only an appendix and their status as merely a "work in progress" that has arisen from the strategy (and not part of the strategy itself) made clear.

### **Key Point 3**

That the benefits of walking and cycling to community, social, economic and environmental wellbeing should be emphasized much more in the strategy.

### **Discussion**

These submissions are essentially referring to the four wellbeings in the Local Government Act 2002. The strategy should include a brief assessment of those wellbeings, so such an assessment has been added to Part II. It is the same as that given at the beginning of this agenda item. More emphasis has also been given in the Vision to benefits other than transport.

### **Recommendation**

That the assessment of the strategy against the four wellbeings (Local Government Act 2002), as included at the beginning of this agenda item, be added to Part II of the strategy.

### **Key Point 4**

There is a need for land use consents to have, as conditions, increased provision for walking and cycling 'connectivity' and, as appropriate, the preparation and implementation of travel demand plans.

### **Discussion**

"Connectivity", in the context of walking and cycling, refers to the ability for all residents of the district to have access to areas they wish to travel to, by way of routes that are suitable for walking and/or cycling. Ideally, such routes will be much shorter and quicker on foot, or by bike, than road routes and the use of motor vehicles.

There are numerous existing alleyways between residential streets and to/through many reserves, but no provisions in the district plan that gives Council the power to require more such alleyways. Furthermore, there are numerous locations in the district in which pathways, that are frequented by pedestrians and cyclists, cross privately owned land. The owners of that land are generally very accommodating of the use of their land for that purpose. However, when the land is subdivided or otherwise developed, the connections are often lost. The result is often an increased need for residents to use motor vehicles and/or a decrease in the trips made by people who previously used the pathways, to the detriment of their wellbeing and that of their community.

Provisions in the district plan that give Council powers to require walking and cycling pathways through such land at the time of its development would address such losses of access and connectivity.

Travel plans aim to maximise the efficiency and sustainability of travel to and from places to which significant numbers of people regularly travel. They are most typically prepared for workplaces, schools

and large sports grounds. Travel plans aim to minimise the number of trips that need to be made to and from a place and/or increase walking and cycling, carpooling and the use of public transport. They may include financial or other incentives for workers, for example, subsidies for bus usage or reimbursement for employee transport by walking or cycling that is at least equivalent to the use of motor vehicles. Travel plans may also include facilities that make walking and cycling more attractive including secure bicycle parks, showers, or employer-funded bicycles.

The benefits of successful travel plans include reduced congestion at peak travel times and reduced parking demand. In many large cities, parking dispensations are given to consent applicants who prepare and maintain travel plans under specified guidelines.

### Recommendation

That another action be added to objective 5 of the Walking and Cycling Strategy, seeking amendments to the district plan that will give Council's consents division the power to require conditions that maintain or enhance walking and cycling connectivity for residents and/or require travel plans.

## Key Point 5

There should be a stronger link in the strategy with 'Public Transport' and/or support for increased public transport.

### Discussion

There are several ways to link walking and cycling with public transport including improving walking and/or cycling connectivity to bus stops or fitting bicycle racks on all buses.

The strategy will already facilitate better connectivity through the network studies. However, public buses in Whangarei are currently unable to carry bikes. As such, the fitting of bicycle racks to all existing and new buses is included as a new action.

There would obviously be a cost associated with this. However, funding is already available in the LTCCP for improvements to cycling facilities and bicycle racks should be a suitable candidate for that funding.

### Recommendation

Add the following new action under objective 1:

*"Investigate the feasibility and cost of installing bicycle racks on all public buses. Subject to a positive report on the feasibility and agreement from Council:*

- 1. Apply to Land Transport NZ for a subsidy to install racks on existing buses and, within the existing public bus contract, racks on new buses, as recommended in the feasibility study report; and*
- 2. In all future public bus contracts, require bicycle racks to be provided on all buses used under the contract as recommended in the feasibility study report."*