

11th December 2003

Getting there – on foot, by cycle
Strategy Submissions
PO Box 3175
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir or Madam:

Submission to "Getting There - On Foot, By Cycle"

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the draft national walking and cycling strategy "Getting There - On Foot, By Cycle". On the 9th December the Environmental Management Committee reviewed the draft strategy and made the following comments:

The Committee fully supports the development of the strategy, and supports the holistic approach that has been taken (incorporating health, promotion, safety and as well as other areas).

However, even though a holistic approach has been taken the strategy is more focused on walking and cycling as transport. It needs to be strengthened in areas such as recreational walking and cycling. It recognises recreational activities as important but does not go into much detail in these areas. The strategy seeks to have a holistic approach, which includes social, health etc as part of the mix. Recreation is closely related to these areas and should be reinforced further in the strategy. Recreational cycling is also an important step to teach and raise confidence with new cyclists. It is also suggested that the strategy expresses linkages to tourism.

The Committee noted that the current strategy is in the form of a framework for developing the strategy. It is missing set targets, monitoring programme and implementation plan. It is understood that these will be developed over the next 24 months and included into a reviewed strategy in 2006. The Committee seeks to express the importance of these areas in making the strategy successful.

Further to this, the targets that are developed need to be rigorous, quantitative and clearly define the direction the government wishes to take, for example, the strategy states that it seeks to increase walking and cycling but it is the targets (for example, doubling walking and cycle use over the next 10 years) that are more effective and powerful than an ambiguous 'increase'.

More research and data is required to help planning at national, regional and local levels. Although much of the detail and implementation needs to be developed at the local levels, it is suggested that the national strategy could provide some better guidance and set national policies/guidelines where appropriate. This would help avoid Council's and other bodies conducting separate research to develop the same or similar policies, enabling them to concentrate on more locally orientated issues. This would also provide better consistency across New Zealand.

For example, Waitakere City Council currently encourages bike training in primary schools (theory and practical skills), however discourages cycling to school for ages under ten. This is based on international research, which has found that children have the inability to judge the speed of cars. Further to this children are less likely to have adequate road rule knowledge, or cycle skills – even if the majority of the trip is made off-road.

But other Council's are encouraging cycling at a young age to capture future cyclists. "Getting There - On Foot, By Cycle" could provide a national policy or guidance in areas like these.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the draft national walking and cycling strategy. If you have any questions related to the submission please contact Gyles Bendall (836 8000 ext 8424, or gyles.bendall@waitakere.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely

Penny Hulse
Chair, Environmental Management Committee