

Supporting cycling and walking in your city:



A toolkit for submissions to Local Government Annual Plans



This toolkit aims to encourage individuals and agencies from the health sector to support cycling and walking in their city via submissions to Local Government.

City and Regional Councils have a substantial role in developing policy, programmes and infrastructure to support cycling and walking in their communities. One avenue for the health sector to support this is via submissions to Annual Plans and Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP) that highlight the potential gains in community health and well-being that could be enjoyed.

The toolkit provides:

- information about making submissions to annual plans
- general advice about submission content
- key references from the research evidence supporting the promotion of cycling and walking for good health.

1. Annual Plans and LTCCPs

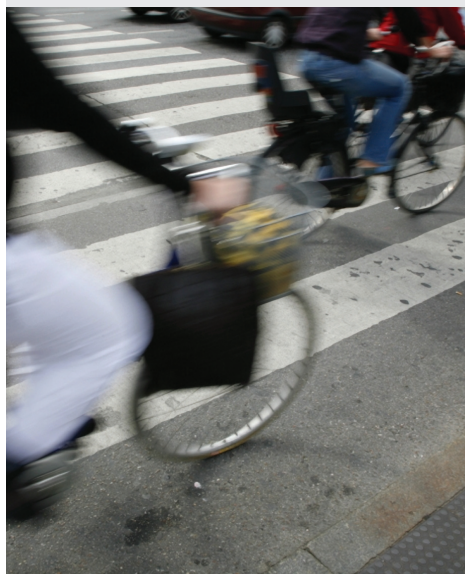
Each year City and Regional Councils develop draft Annual Plans or LTCCPs that describe upcoming spending and initiatives in their area. The community is then invited to comment on the draft plan. In 2009, draft Annual plans and LTCCP's are being released in March/April (see council websites for due dates and copies of the plans, www.localgovt.co.nz). The initial submission is in written form, with the option to speak in support of it at a later date. While the written submission is an important contribution, appearing in person gives an additional opportunity to reinforce messages and show your organisation's support.

2. Submission content

What to communicate in your submission:

- The extent and urgency of the issue of physical activity and health:
 - An estimated 2100 deaths each year in NZ are due to physical inactivity.¹ Health benefits from physical activity include reductions in cardiovascular disease, some cancers, diabetes, musculoskeletal problems, obesity and poor mental health.^{2,3}
 - Local focus: Activity profiles for your region are available on the SPARC website.⁴ Depending where in NZ you live, between 46-65% of the population of your region are currently not meeting recommended levels of physical activity for health.





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- **The role that cycling and walking plays, for example:**
 - Active commuting is associated with lowered all cause mortality,⁵ increased fitness, decreased body weight and diastolic blood pressure among adults^{6,7}
 - Active commuting is associated with greater physical activity among children⁸
 - **Local focus:** Also included in SPARC regional profiles is the proportion of the population in each region who walked or cycled in the past year. On average across the country, 64% of people reported walking and 23% reported cycling in the past year. Including local figures gives councillors and council staff a useful indication of the potential voter base that is affected by their decision making in this area.
- **What you are asking for. The level of detail that you go into depends on your organisation and the issues in your area.**
 - A general approach may include offering your support for current cycling and walking initiatives or asking for greater commitment to encouraging cycling and walking in your city. In the latter case this may be asking for increased funding for infrastructure, promotion programmes or staff-time.
 - A more specific approach may address on a particular hot topic in your city, for example, a problematic bridge or intersection, or the need to complete a planned cycling network or walking trail. In this case it may be useful to speak to local cycling and walking advocates as they may be aware of progress (or lack of progress) on specific issues and can link you in with others who may be making similar submissions. Local cycle and walking advocates can be found on the websites of the Cycling Advocates Network (www.can.org.nz) and Living Streets Aotearoa (www.livingstreets.org.nz), as well as a range of resources and up-to-date information. A copy of this resource has been sent to all local advocates to let them know that local health sector people may be in contact.
 - Finally, if you wish to include some of the broader arguments for promotion of cycling and walking that related to health, economic, environmental and community wellbeing, these are well summarised elsewhere.^{9,10}

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