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The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the development of a pedestrian strategy for Christchurch.

**INTRODUCTION**

Walking is possible for almost everyone, regardless of income, age, or location and has many advantages for all of us, especially for access and recreation. However walking has the disadvantages of limited distance, feelings of a lack of security, especially at night, susceptibility to the surrounding environment (eg vehicle noise, fumes, and weather), time constraints, and difficulty of carrying loads any distance.

The Council carries out many activities that make provision for pedestrians such as pedestrian malls (City Mall, New Regent Street), footpath widening (Oxford Terrace, Colombo St), footpath improvements throughout the city, and lighting. Over recent years the Council has recognised the importance of footpaths by substantially increasing the funds for resurfacing and encouraging the use of pedestrian ways to link reserves and streets in new subdivisions.

However as the city grows and there are more cars, cycles and pedestrians on the streets it is becoming increasingly difficult to simultaneously meet the needs of these different forms of travel. This can be seen particularly in terms of space, such as where some roads are widened by having the footpaths narrowed, thus reducing the available space and amenity for pedestrians.

**WHY A PEDESTRIAN STRATEGY?**

The Council, through a number of statutory processes and resource allocations, has made a commitment to pedestrians. These commitments include:

**City Plan**

The City Plan in Volume Two, Chapter 7 contains a specific objective relating to Pedestrians; “7.5 *The safe movement of pedestrians in a pleasant environment*”. This objective is supported by policies dealing with pedestrian facilities, pedestrian links, provision for the mobility impaired and safety. These policies are being implemented currently, but it is intended that the pedestrian strategy would be a means to coordinate the implementation methods listed for pedestrians.

**Annual Plan and City Streets Unit Objectives**

The 1998 Annual Plan refers to Pedestrians in the Strategic Objectives in Volume 1 and the City Streets Unit objectives are derived from these.

The objectives include:

*“A city which has a sustainable, safe, convenient and efficient system of roads, cycleways, footways and passenger transport services so that:*

*1 People are satisfied with the level of service for personal mobility and have freedom of choice of transport mode - by car, bus, cycle or foot...*

*6 Christchurch is regarded as a pedestrian friendly city - especially for children, the elderly and the disabled”.*

The pedestrian strategy would be a means to identify and address the issues involved in making the city pedestrian friendly.

The pedestrian strategy would help to provide direction and assist to coordinate implementation by giving a framework to planning and including legislative and “best practice” methods for the City Streets Unit and developers to carry out their intended work for pedestrians. City Streets, in its last reorganisation, created the position of a pedestrian advocate. A pedestrian strategy would be a critical document and policy base for the success of this position.

The pedestrian strategy would also fill one of the “missing links” in terms of transportation strategies. The Council now has strategies for Central City Parking, Cycling, Public Transport, and Road Safety, and associated policy statements, a roading hierarchy and a prioritisation process for capital works, but nothing that directly addresses pedestrians and implements the City Plan intentions. The strategy would be carried out as a joint process between the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit and the City Streets Unit - liaising with other Units and groups as appropriate.

## **STRATEGY PROCESS**

The objectives for the process are:

- To involve the public in identifying and planning for pedestrian needs and desires around the city.
- To investigate ways to meet community needs related to walking and make the city a more “pedestrian friendly” place.
- To build linkages:
  - to integrate with the City Plan, bylaws and Council policies
  - to support associated strategies eg public transport, cycling
  - to act as a “building block” of the overall Transport Strategy
  - to interact with other government agencies, road user groups, etc.
- To develop a comprehensive document that will include;
  - **strategic policy** (providing a framework for future provision for pedestrians), and
  - **implementation planning and guidelines** (in terms of legislative requirements and best practice, to guide development and design of facilities for pedestrians and to integrate with all works that affect pedestrians eg roading improvements).
- To encourage walking as a recreational activity.
- To raise public awareness of pedestrian issues through education and involvement.
- To improve safety for pedestrians.

The aim is to complete this process by the end of 1999, but that the work will continue to adapt as situations change and best practice is improved. The process will involve stakeholder input, public consultation, data gathering and research. It is envisaged that an advisory group made up of people with a variety of viewpoints will be used to guide the ongoing development of the strategy. Reports will be provided to the committee at regular intervals.

Some funding will be required for the process, especially for the consultation and promotion aspects and this should be considered for the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit and City Streets Unit budgets for the 1999/00 financial year.

#### **PROGRESS TO DATE**

Work is progressing on gathering background data on pedestrian activity in the city and best practise nationally and internationally.

As a part of the initial data gathering process, focus groups are being carried out during January and February 1999. These focus groups will look specifically at key issues eg. Children, elderly, and safety, as well as general needs for access, recreation, and development and will give more specific background information on these issues that will help to guide the strategy formulation.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The development of a pedestrian strategy will help to coordinate the commitments made to pedestrians at both Council and staff levels, and will provide a framework to make provision for all pedestrians. This strategy will help to create a more pedestrian friendly city.

**Recommendation:** That the Committee support the development of a pedestrian strategy for Christchurch.

#### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.