



**SUBMISSION ON THE OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL
OTAGO SOUTHLAND REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLAN 2015-2021**

To: Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2021,
Otago Regional Council,
Private Bag 1954,
70 Stafford Street,
Dunedin 9054.

Details of Submitter: WellSouth Primary Health Network

Due Date: 29 January 2018

Introduction

This submission was developed by the Health Promotion Team at WellSouth Primary Health Network (WellSouth).

WellSouth is a charitable trust funded by the Southern District Health Board to provide primary health care services to residents enrolled with general practices in Otago and Southland. These services include first contact support to restore people's health when they are unwell, as well as range of programmes to improve access to health care services to promote and maintain good health. The health promotion programme facilitates the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. One aspect of health promotion is to advocate for healthy social, cultural and physical environments.

Background

Local government is an important and powerful influence on the health and wellbeing of communities and populations. One of the principles local government should act in accordance with is *the social, economic, and cultural interests of people and communities*,¹ and to take a role in meeting the current and future needs of their communities².

The decisions local government makes affect the determinants of health – public policy has a profound impact on health status – in fact, some of the most profound health improvements of all time are due to public policy changes. As such, local government has the ability to improve population health, and reduce inequalities. A population that is healthy is more able and more likely to fully participate in employment, and contribute to a vibrant and productive local community.

Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed variations to Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2015-2021. WellSouth would like to provide feedback on the overall goal and the prioritisation of projects

The Overall Goal

WellSouth feels the overall goal could be more encompassing of the diverse and multi-modal aspects of regional transport, such as transport providing individuals and whānau with access to their basic needs to maximise hauora Māori outcomes (physical, mental, social and spiritual).

WellSouth recommends a more holistic goal, which encompasses a safe, resilient, environmentally sustainable transport system, which protects public health, and is accessible for all of the Otago Southland Population. The RTCs can look to the Canterbury Regional Transport Plan 2015-2025 as an example of holistic and achievable goals and objectives, which address public health concerns³.

Prioritisation of projects

WellSouth recommends prioritising projects, protecting and promoting public health as a key consideration for the RTCs. There are many positive outcomes associated with a healthy population, such as better job and life satisfaction, which results in increased productivity, which positively impacts the regional economy⁴. WellSouth recommends considering the urban form of the Otago and Southland region, and the way land use patterns and the transport system inter-relate; as this plays a fundamental role in influencing the effectiveness and efficiency of transport and health.

¹ Section 14 *Local Government Act 2002* post 2012 amendments.

² Section 3 *Local Government Act 2002*.

³ Environment Canterbury Regional Council. 2016. Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2025. Christchurch: Christchurch Regional Council

⁴ Halkos, G., Bousinakis, D. 2010. The effect of stress and satisfaction on productivity. *International journal of Productivity and Performance Management* 59(5):415-431

The RTCs could consider creating and improving infrastructure and social environments, and expanding community resources to enable all its citizens to be physically active in day-to-day life⁵. By making active transport, such as walking and cycling, more accessible, this increases the overall accessibility of the transport system for the community.

WellSouth commends the council for including Dunedin Urban Cycleways and the city to harbour cycle/pedestrian connection and improving walking and cycling in the Wakatipu district. This will provide a safer, better integrated walking, cycling and public transport network in these areas. Cycling reduces greenhouse gas emissions, which can help the Council in achieving better quality air in the Otago and Southland region, as stated in the Regional Plan: Air for Otago.

While Southland cycleways have not been prioritised in the 2018-2021 plan, WellSouth would support consideration of Southland cycleways and consultation with Ride Southland in future regional Land Transport plans.

Alongside this, WellSouth recommends the RTCs consider the implementation of motor-free streets within cities and townships. Motor-free streets encourages the public to walk past local outlets, giving them the opportunity to linger for a greater duration, and potentially resulting in their patronising local businesses, improving the local economy⁶. These recommendations are in line with Objectives 4.2 & 4.3 in the Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plan.

Summary

- WellSouth recommend the RTCs changes the overall goal of the Regional Land Transport Plan,
- WellSouth urges the RTCs to create and improve infrastructure and social environments, enable all the community to be physically active in day-to-day life,
- WellSouth commends RTC for improving cycleways in Otago and Wakatipu,
- WellSouth recommends the RTCs implement motor-free streets.

We do not wish to be heard by the Hearing Committee in support of this submission.

⁵ Edwards, P., Tsouros, A.D. 2008. *A Healthy City is an Active City: A Physical Activity Planning Guide*. Geneva: World Health Organisation

⁶ New York City Department of Transportation. *The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets*. [Internet] Available from: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/dot-economic-benefits-of-sustainable-streets.pdf> (accessed 9/5/17)