

Wellington City Youth Council

Submission on the Regional Land Transport Plan mid-term review 2018

Wellington City Youth Council is pleased to submit on the GWR Transport Plan update, particularly as young people are uniquely affected by regional transport systems. Young people are less likely to own cars; they effectively pay rates through rent, but are excluded from using many forms of transport because of the prohibiting costs; and as the generation that will live to see the impacts of climate change, it is in the sincere interests of young people to have an environmentally sustainable transport system. The housing crisis also affects the way that young people interact with the Wellington region's public transport networks. Young people without cars are limited to residing in areas where they can reach their places of work or study by foot, bike, or public transport. Pressure on housing is exacerbated when it is too inconvenient or expensive to live far from the inner cities. In light of these factors, Youth Council feels that many of the public transport, cycling, and walkway projects in this consultation document show immense potential but have not been prioritised highly enough. Given how critical it is for the Wellington region to reduce its carbon emissions, young people should be encouraged to utilise these modes of transport rather than be deterred. The ranking of these projects do not always reflect this need, and Youth Council would love to see the Regional Land Transport Plan give priority to more public transport, cycling, and walking initiatives.

The main project that Youth Council would like to see move further up on the GWRC's priority list is integrated ticketing for public transport. This year during our engagement events we have spoken to hundreds of young people about what they would like to see improve in Wellington. Time and time again a more efficient, integrated, ticketing and fares system has stood out as a key wish. Many young people have expressed confusion over the way that Wellington's ticketing systems work, particularly those who have moved to the city recently for study. This confusion often prevents students from catching public transport, and causes them to choose private transport instead. Frustration was also expressed over the number of transport passes required to travel reasonably short distances, with reports of having to use three different transport passes on daily commutes to educational institutions. Not only is the Wellington region's fragmented ticketing system frustrating, it is also expensive. The cost of keeping multiple transport passes topped up, without access to free transfers, seriously prohibits young people from being able to access public transport. Integrated ticketing and fares is listed as only priority 22 in the Transport Plan, which does not reflect the importance of the project.

It was pleasing to see a number of projects focussed on the development and upkeep of cycleways and walkways in the Wellington region. The Youth Council believes it valuable to encourage modes of transport that can benefit the health of young people, and agrees with the need to increase the safety of these transport modes. Again, it would be reassuring to see these projects listed as higher priorities so that they could be carried through with proper care and consultation. Cycleways and walkways will obviously be most effective if communities are asked for their input during the implementation process, and prioritising them enough to give the projects the attention they deserve would ensure this could happen. Additionally, while Youth Council is pleased to see plans for increased capacity on the Metlink rail network, we believe that promoting the use of diesel-electric trains to achieve this is not sustainable longterm. Because of this, we question whether diesel-electric trains are a worthwhile investment rather than electrifying greater distances of the railway line instead, so that fully electric trains can be used.

To conclude, Wellington City Youth Council believes that public transportation, walking, and cycling, could and should be better prioritised in the Transport Plan. Many of these projects would make excellent additions to the Wellington region's transport network, and we wish to see them reach their full potential.