



Media statement

Let's Get Wellington Moving – walking the talk

More than 10,000 people joined the recent Let's Get Wellington Moving conversation.

Let's Get Wellington Moving is a joint initiative between Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the NZ Transport Agency, to find good transport solutions that keep Wellington City vibrant and one of the best places in the world to live.

Jim Bentley, director of Let's Get Wellington Moving, says the public response to the engagement campaign was very positive.

“The Wellington region has spoken, telling us what makes this a great place, what's working and what's not, and what we need to do to keep the city one of the best places in the world to live and work.”

The community engagement exercise in April and May, which included online surveys, Council research panels, street polls, telephone surveys and face-to-face meetings resulted in several common themes that have been released this week.

“People told us that they love that Wellington is a compact, vibrant city and that it's easy to get around. They also love the harbour, our natural environment and diversity. But traffic congestion, slow and unpredictable journeys and parking are significant causes of frustration,” says Jim.

“The survey results also point to a number of tensions, highlighting the complexity around developing a transport system that is about more than just moving vehicles and people around the region.”

“For example people rated public transport as very good but it was also identified as a frustration and a top priority for improvement because people want more choice, more reliability, increased frequency and cheaper fares. People also want fewer cars in the CBD, but at the same time better and more parking.”

As well as seeking public opinion the Let's get Wellington Moving team has been undertaking one of the biggest ever transport data collections in Wellington, tracking real time traffic movements across all modes between Ngauranga and the Airport. While analysis of this massive data set is still in progress some early insights and common themes are also emerging.

“What's interesting and reassuring about these early findings is that they back up what people are saying. We can see, for example, that delays, variability and congestion are worse in 2016 than 2015 and that a 5-minute CBD trip on a good day can take 30+ minutes on a bad day. Sometimes it will be quicker to walk through the city than to drive.”

The team has taken all these insights and used them to develop a set of 12 guiding urban design and transport principles to set a course for the next phase of the programme. The draft principles, which have also been released this week via the Let's Get Wellington Moving website will form the basis of criteria to be used in assessing potential solutions.

"People sit at the heart of our guiding urban design and transport principles. The principles will guide and encourage us to look wider than just the transport network for solutions and point us to the people, places, land and sea that surround us for inspiration and answers. In other words, while developing transport solutions we need to be mindful of what people love about Wellington."

Following a detailed round of briefings the three partner agencies are aligned on these principles with Chris Laidlaw, Chair of Greater Wellington Regional Council saying, "we are really pleased to see that so many people from across the region have provided their input to these principles which received strong support from the whole Council."

Celia Wade Brown, Mayor of Wellington agrees, saying "these principles reflect what is important to the people of Wellington and provide us with the opportunity to Get Wellington Moving for all who live, work and play in our city while respecting our natural and built environment."

And, Raewyn Bleakley NZ Transport Agency Regional Director agrees saying, "the NZ Transport Agency is pleased to see the strong support given by both Councils to these principles and looks forward to continued close partnership between our organisations as we move into the next phase of the programme."

Jim Bentley says, "There won't be one individual project that achieves everything we need. We're looking at a range of initiatives, not only building infrastructure, but also at demand side opportunities to improve movement around the city and region, and support what people value about Wellington."

The team is now developing potential scenarios, each containing a range of initiatives. Later in the year the potential scenarios will be assessed and the preferred options will be consulted on early next year. They continue to welcome any ideas people want to feed into this process.

In the meantime, several quick wins have been identified and are being carried out to make it easier for people to get around and through the city. These include the placing of countdown pedestrian timers at key crossings in the CBD and installing traffic signals at key intersections to improve traffic and pedestrian flows.

Got something to say and want to get involved? The team welcome ideas and continue to answer questions through the Let's Get Wellington Moving website and invite you to join the conversation online or in person through a series of social media and public events that will kick off in July.

Check out getwellymoving.co.nz for information over the next few weeks.

For media comment, call 021 914 266