

Hutt City Council
Private Bag 31912
Lower Hutt

26 March 2019

Tēnā koe me koutou mā

RE: SUBMISSION ON THE CENTRAL CITY TRANSFORMATION PLAN

The Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group appreciates the opportunity to provide written feedback on the Central City Transformation Plan.

Healthy Families NZ is a large-scale prevention initiative that brings community leadership together in a united effort for better health. It aims to improve people's health where they live, learn, work and play by taking a systems approach to the reduction of risk factors for major health loss and to increasing equity in health outcomes.

The goal is for all New Zealanders to enjoy health promoting social and physical environments that enable healthy food and physical activity choices, being smokefree, drinking alcohol only in moderation and increasing mental health resilience and wellbeing.

Lower Hutt is one of ten chosen Healthy Families NZ communities across Aotearoa, each chosen for having some of the worst health statistics in the country. Healthy Families Lower Hutt is funded by the Ministry of Health and is being led by Hutt City Council.

The Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group is responsible for providing strategic direction and leadership using and championing a systems based approach to achieve a healthier Lower Hutt in the places where we spend our time.

The Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group is made up of representatives from across sectors and communities and includes the following members and organisations:

- Matt Reid, General Manager City and Community Services, Hutt City Council (Chair)
- Holona Lui, Director, Catalyst Pacific Ltd
- Peggy Luke-Ngaheke, Manager, Waiwhetu Marae
- Holly Novis, Portfolio Manager Healthy Families NZ, Ministry of Health
- Phil Gibbons, CEO, Sport Wellington
- Dave Appleyard, Principal, Rata Street School
- Bridget Allan, Chief Executive, Te Awakairangi Health Network
- Helene Carbonatto, General Manager – Strategy, Planning and Outcomes, Hutt Valley District Health Board

- John Anderson, Owner, New World Stokes Valley
- Kayne Good, Principal Adviser – Wellington, Ministry of Education
- Marcus Sherwood, Divisional Manager Parks and Recreation, Hutt City Council

This submission is written on behalf of all Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group members and provides the evidence and support to ensure we continue to strengthen the health, social, economic and cultural wellbeing and aspirations of our people.

We are happy to provide further advice and clarification on any of the points raised in our written submission and would also like the opportunity to make an oral submission. The key contact for this submission is:

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Healthy Families Lower Hutt
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Kind Regards



Matt Reid

On behalf of Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group

Central City Transformation Plan (CCTP)

The Central City Transformation Plan outlines Hutt City Council's intent to provide leadership and a roadmap for transforming our central city. It has the potential to create a city where our people are healthier, more prosperous and are enabled to thrive. Government is moving to ensure that wellbeing is at the centre of its approach and states that there is more to wellbeing than just a healthy economy. Through the CCTP, Council has the opportunity to put into action the intent of the [Living Standards Framework](#)¹ in order to benefit our city as a whole.

As the Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group, we support Council for showing this transformational leadership. The Ministry of Health chose Lower Hutt as one of ten Healthy Families NZ locations because our people are either experiencing or are of higher risk of experiencing preventable chronic disease. Council's vision is a great place to live, work and play; our city cannot be great if our people are not healthy.

There is an urgent worldwide call for joint action on obesity, undernutrition and climate change ([Lancet Commission Report](#)²). We have the opportunity to make a local impact on these international health issues through how we design our city. Hutt City Council with support from its partners, community and contracted experts can be bold, innovative and design the central city to directly address these big issues.

"The decisions made through planning and design have a far greater impact on the health and wellbeing of our people than the health sector can ever have" (Dr Dougal Thorburn, Tainui, MB ChB, FRNZCGP, MPH, DPH, GP at Whai Oranga o Te Iwi Health Centre).

Council's vision and expectations for how our city develops also provides the necessary direction to the private sector on what we need to thrive physically, socially, mentally and economically as a city. There is a role for Council, supported by Healthy Families Lower Hutt's partners and community to work together with private developers to ensure they are also designing for the outcomes we know we need for our people.

The circumstances are perfect **now** to demonstrate this leadership; we will have no better opportunity to make a transformational difference to the wellbeing of our people and therefore our city. Council's role is not only showing leadership and big picture thinking, we also encourage Council to work collaboratively both internally and externally to follow **through** in the detailed design to ensure we take every opportunity to make the **biggest difference** to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

The transformation of Lower Hutt is a golden opportunity to incorporate all the best in community engagement and people-centred design and build a future proof, inclusive city with and for all people.

¹ Living Standards Framework - <https://treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/living-standards/our-living-standards-framework>

² The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report - www.thelancet.com/commissions/global-syndemic

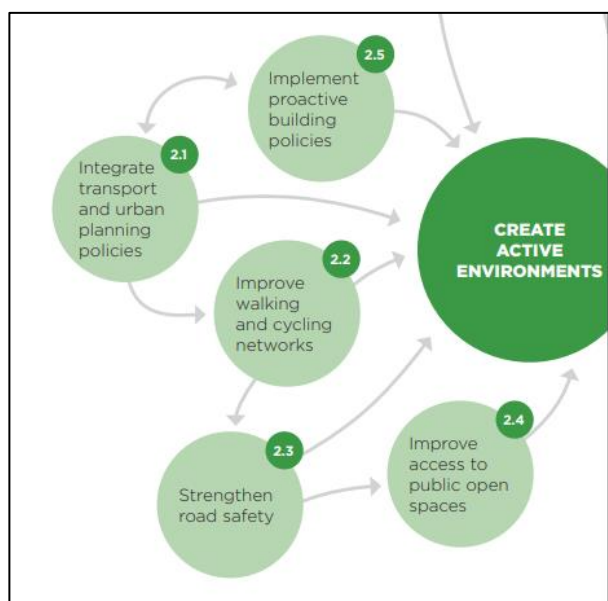
Factors to prioritise

Encouraging physical activity

Regular physical activity, limited sedentary behaviour and quality sleep have significant health benefits for people of all ages. Physically active people are at lower risk of developing heart and lung conditions, stroke, weight issues, type-2 diabetes and certain cancers ([MoH](#)³).

Physical activity most commonly takes the form of activity for recreation, active transport and play. Cities with higher levels of cycling and walking have better overall population health. We have the opportunity through the CCTP to prioritise design and infrastructure investment that encourages all types of physical activity within the central city area. By building effective links and connections to surrounding communities we can amplify the health and wellbeing impacts by enabling active travel to central destinations.

In addition to the multiple health benefits of physical activity, societies that are more active can generate additional returns on investment including a reduced use of fossil fuels, cleaner air and less congested, safer roads. These outcomes are interconnected with achieving the shared goals, political priorities and ambition of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 ([World Health Organisation Global action plan on physical activity](#)⁴). The WHO action plan highlights the following opportunities for local and central governments to **create active environments**.

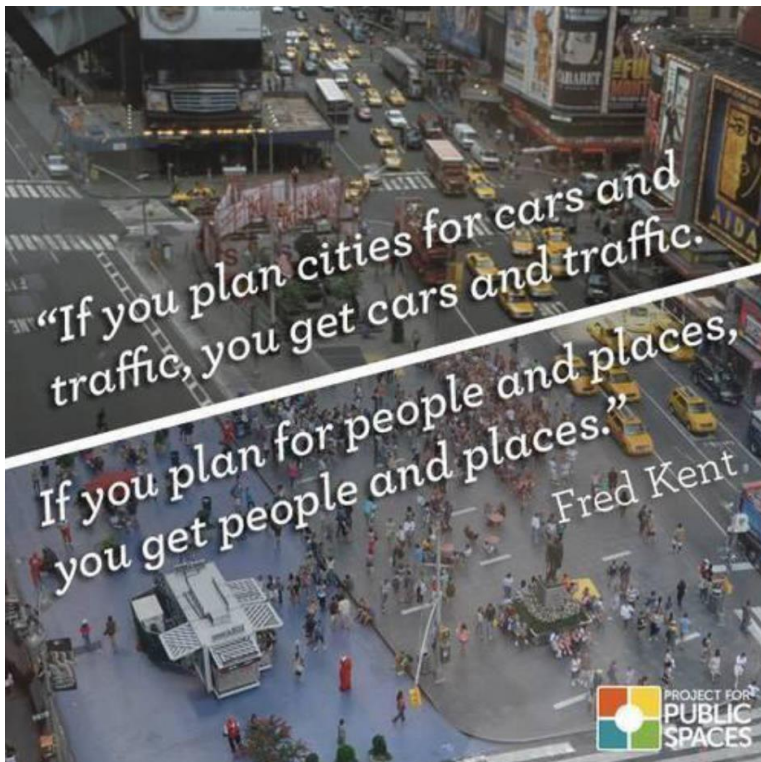


These align with the intentions documented in the CCTP. Council must consider their role in ensuring these opportunities are taken both in areas that they can directly control as well as influencing other agencies and private developers so that the full benefits for our communities are realised.

³ Ministry of Health and Sport NZ welcome WHO physical activity plan - <https://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/news-items/ministry-health-and-sport-new-zealand-welcome-who-physical-activity-plan>

⁴ Global action plan on physical activity 2018-2030: more active people for a healthier world - <https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/global-action-plan-2018-2030/en/>

Spaces that prioritise people (vs vehicles)



Opportunities for good health are reduced when urban areas are not conducive to physical activity for either recreation or 'active transport', when urban areas have fewer opportunities for **social interaction**, more motor vehicle emissions, greater risk of road traffic injuries, and differential access to healthy food ([Public Health Advisory Committee's Healthy places, healthy lives: urban environments and wellbeing](#)⁵).

The benefits of social interaction for mental and physical wellbeing are well researched and understood by both the health sector and urban planning experts. The CCTP provides the opportunity for Lower Hutt to raise the priority of creating spaces that encourage social interaction in the form of bump spaces, recreation spaces and shared pathways. Using active modes of transport increases the opportunities for social interaction, further reinforcing how critical it is to prioritise spaces for people over vehicles.

The CCTP states that cities of the future will be places where people come 'to do' rather than come 'to shop'. It is essential that 'to do' spaces are designed based on the needs and aspirations of our diverse communities and clearly mapped early in the process so that infrastructure can be planned for accordingly. There is the opportunity to prototype and experiment in our central spaces now, and the insights and learnings from these experiments can be used to inform longer term decisions and designs.

"In a society becoming steadily more privatized with private homes, cars, computers, offices and shopping centres, the public component of our lives is disappearing. It is more and more important

⁵ Healthy places, healthy lives: urban environments and wellbeing: A report to the Ministry of Health by Public Health Advisory Committee - <https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/global-action-plan-2018-2030/en/>

to make the cities inviting, so we can meet our fellow citizens face to face and experience directly through our senses. Public life in good quality public spaces is an important part of a democratic life and a full life.” Jan Gehl, world renowned Danish architect and urban design consultant based in Copenhagen whose career has focused on improving the quality of urban life by re-orienting city design towards the pedestrian and cyclist.

Maintaining green spaces

“Nearly 50% of New Zealanders will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime, and depression is set to overcome heart disease as the biggest global health burden by 2020.”

“We know connecting with nature makes us feel good, and every little bit helps us find balance, build resilience and boost mental wellbeing” ([Mental Health Foundation](#)⁶).

“City planning and design holds much promise for reducing this burden of disease, and for offering solutions that are affordable, accessible and equitable. Urban green space is a potential force for building mental health: city planners, urban designers, policy makers and public health professionals need to maximize the opportunities in applying green space strategies for both health prevention and in supporting treatment of mental ill health. ([Cities, Green Space and Mental Well-Being](#), Jenny Roe, University of Virginia Centre for Design and Health⁷).

Green spaces in urban environments also encourage positive social interactions and can contribute to building the social capital of our city. By prioritising and maintaining green spaces with natural stimuli (trees, water, light patterns) Council will be taking action to nurture the mental wellbeing of all those that use our central city spaces while building our social capital.

Keeping equity in focus

“The populations whose health is most affected by urban environments are those that are more constrained in getting around urban areas as a result of financial limitations, limited mobility or dependency on others. These populations include children, older people, people living with disabilities and people living in more socioeconomically deprived neighbourhoods.” (Public Health Advisory Committee - [Healthy Places, Healthy Lives: Urban environments and wellbeing](#)⁸). We also know that “Adults living in our most deprived areas are 1.6 times as likely to be obese as adults living in the least deprived areas, our children are 2.1 times more likely” ([MoH data](#)⁹).

The evidence strongly supports that our environment can either **enable** or **disable** our movement and access.

⁶ Mental Health Foundation media release: Survey shows strong link between time spent in nature and positive mental health - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/news/article/223/survey-shows-strong-link-between-time-spent-in-nature-and-positive-mental-health#SurveyFindings>

⁷ Cities, Green Space and Mental Well-Being - <http://oxfordre.com/environmentalscience/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389414.001.0001/acrefore-9780199389414-e-93>

⁸ Healthy places, healthy lives: urban environments and wellbeing: A report to the Ministry of Health by Public Health Advisory Committee - <https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/global-action-plan-2018-2030/en/>

⁹ Ministry of Health Obesity Statistics - <https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/obesity-statistics>

In Lower Hutt we have approximately 31,230 (population of decile 8-10 communities as at June 2018) people experiencing the impact of living in our lower socioeconomic communities. Council has a key role in ensuring that the decisions it makes through the CCTP (as well as how it influences other agencies and private developers working in this space) continue to focus on equity. Through the CCTP we need to use all our levers to create equity in access, impact and outcomes as well as equity in the process of engagement. We must take the opportunity to redesign our central city to meet the needs and aspirations of all our residents, not just those that are able to have their voice heard through traditional engagement methods.

The CCTP can challenge cultural norms, personal beliefs and choices but its success will be dependent upon full engagement with the social, political and cultural fabric of our city.

So what next...

We appreciate the challenges that come with bold transformation. It is Council's responsibility to make the decisions and set the direction for a city that is able to thrive. As the Healthy Families Lower Hutt Strategic Leadership Group we know that in order to achieve greater impact on the physical, mental, social and economic wellbeing of our city we need to partner across sectors and offer our support to Council to build a healthier more thriving future together.

We believe there are opportunities to do this through the following actions.

Build on the Streets Alive approach

Cross functional teams within Council including Healthy Families Lower Hutt are already working collectively on a Streets Alive approach. Evolving from London's [Healthy Streets](#)¹⁰ approach, Streets Alive uses a people centred framework to ensure we're taking an integrated approach to our work.

It provides a framework for growing Lower Hutt as a place where we interact with our surroundings, we are active together and feel safer, healthier, happier and more engaged with our city.

¹⁰ Healthy Streets for London - <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/health/transport-and-health/healthy-streets>



Figure 1. Draft Streets Alive Framework

Maximise the impact from Smart Cities

As well as the Streets Alive approach, Hutt City Council is exploring what it means to be a Smart City¹¹ – a place that uses technology, data and new approaches to make people’s lives better, easier and safer. There is opportunity for an even greater impact for our communities by aligning and learning from the Smart City work and applying this to our planning for the central city.

Value community voice as equal to expert voice

When preparing for this submission we were challenged to answer the question “Who is this development for?” Our collective response was **all** the people of Lower Hutt. For our city centre to thrive it therefore needs to reflect the needs and aspirations of all the people of Lower Hutt. The only way to know what the needs and aspirations are is to ask our people. We would encourage Council to ensure meaningful engagement across all our communities is part of the process under this plan. By presenting the voice of the community as of equal value to the voice of experts we’ll create spaces that truly reflect and embody our collective hopes for the future.

There is power in seeing our city from the perspective of a child, those that will inherit the benefit and limitations of decisions we make as part of this process. Hutt City Council has already signed up to be a [UNICEF Child Friendly City](https://childfriendlycities.org/)¹² which enshrines the rights of every child to grow up in an

¹¹ Hutt City Council Smart City - <http://www.huttcity.govt.nz/Our-City/smart-city>

¹² Unicef Child Friendly Cities Initiative - <https://childfriendlycities.org/>

environment where they feel safe and secure, have access to basic services and clean air and water, can play, learn and grow and where their voice is heard and matters.

“The choices we make in the built environment can help to ensure children are given respect, fair treatment, a healthy life and the best chances of tackling the challenges of tomorrow. By highlighting children’s needs, we will be helping to solve other urban challenges, leading to cities that are better for everyone.”(Jerome Frost, Director, Global Planning and Cities Leader, Arup¹³)

The traditional approach to engagement and consultation will not be enough to achieve this outcome. Designing engagement and continuing a constant dialogue with communities, including children, is a critical factor to maximising the benefits of this transformation (Natural Capitalism, Paul Hawkes, Amory Lovins and L Hunter Lovins¹⁴).

Telling the story

The Healthy Families Lower Hutt approach places a high value on impact storytelling, understanding that meaningful communications are an effective way of leading and inspiring change. We would encourage Council to invest in creating and sharing an impactful narrative to support this plan. This can be strengthened by using the voices of those that have contributed and engaged with along the way. This demonstrates that Council is listening to community and also creating shared ownership of the outcomes. Having a shared ownership and vision for this work will help mitigate barriers and potential discontent with decisions along the journey.

Prototyping and experimenting

The CCTP offers the perfect opportunity to experiment and trial some high impact short term changes in the use of urban space. This will not only prepare the public for bigger and more positive changes in the medium term but it also gives people and the CBD a chance to discover some new areas for unhurried public interface where one can sit, talk, eat, chill, watch and enjoy. Great work has already been done at the Riddiford Gardens to create these types of spaces, where generations mix and new relationships are forged. Healthy Families Lower Hutt has some resource and expertise in people centred design and prototyping of ideas that we can offer to support this work.

Utilising Healthy Families Lower Hutt partnerships

Healthy Families Lower Hutt works to bring together diverse organisations to work collectively towards better health and wellbeing for all people of Lower Hutt both at leadership and operational levels. We encourage Council to use the resource and relationships of Healthy Families Lower Hutt to help realise outcomes through the CCTP.

Together we can strengthen the health, social, economic and cultural wellbeing and aspirations of our people.

¹³ ARUP Cities Alive: Designing for Urban Childhoods - <https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/cities-alive-designing-for-urban-childhoods?query=child%20friendly>

¹⁴ Natural Capitalism by Paul Hawkes, Amory Lovins and L Hunter Lovins, 1999, Earthscan Publications.

Auckland: the economics of shared streets

Notoriously car-centric Auckland in New Zealand recently published a report showing pedestrians as the most economically important transport mode in the city. They estimated that policies which put people off walking on Queen Street, a major shopping area, cost NZ\$11.7m a year.

Shared areas were created in and around Fort Street, a mixed commercial and residential area in the central business district. The city replaced car parking on some streets with trees and outdoor seating, and removed bollards and kerbs that had separated cars from pedestrians. The moves created more space for open-air activities, and made clear accessible routes for the visually impaired.



Image 1. Fort Street, Auckland, before and after pedestrianisation

This new pedestrian network, at a cost of NZ\$23m, increased pedestrian volumes by 54% and consumer spending by 47%. Meanwhile, the number of vehicles fell by 25% – and 80% said they felt safer in the area.

Bruno Royce, who conducted a safety review of the scheme, says shared spaces aren't suitable everywhere, but can be a useful first step towards full pedestrianisation. Despite the changes he says some cars still travelled above 22kph, higher than the 10kph ideal. He would like to see the city narrowing or "kinking" the shared space to slow cars, or ban cars completely for part of the day.

A useable network of high-quality paths is key for a pedestrian-friendly city, including 1,400 safer road crossings, improved footways and 25 "filtered neighbourhoods" which prioritise people on bike and on foot over cars, and featuring places to sit, play and socialise.

The Lancet Obesity Commission Report

Publicly released: Mon 28 Jan 2019

The Lancet Obesity Commission report was authored by 43 world-leading experts co-chaired by Professor Boyd Swinburn from the University of Auckland. Professor Swinburn says Aotearoa New Zealand could become a trailblazer if the principles behind the Government's new wellbeing budget were applied across all government policies and spending. The Commission also recommends that all countries enshrine in law an overarching Right to Wellbeing, which would include the existing human rights, along with a new right to a healthy environment. "This would ensure that both human and environmental wellbeing underpin not only all government actions, but also the priorities society sets for itself," said Professor Swinburn.

"Obesity, undernutrition and climate change are usually viewed as separate, but we show that not only do they share many key drivers, they fuel each other via multiple feedback loops. For example, food systems not only drive the obesity and undernutrition pandemics but also generate more than a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions and about half of New Zealand's emissions. Car-dominated transportation systems, like we have in New Zealand, promote sedentary lifestyles and generate up to a quarter of global emissions. And climate change will increase undernutrition through greater food insecurity from extreme weather events, droughts, and shifts in agriculture." But Professor Swinburn said the strength of highlighting the shared drivers of the three pandemics is that this points to shared solutions. "These double-duty or triple-duty actions, as we call them, focus on the underlying causes rather than the symptoms to create multiple wins."

"Prime Minister Ardern challenged world leaders at Davos to be 'on the right side of history' over climate change. Talking about the wellbeing budget, she also signalled that ministers who want more money for their portfolio will have to show the spending will improve intergenerational wellbeing. Our report is all about how to apply this philosophy across governments, business and societies in general. New Zealand is well-placed to be an international leader, especially in the area of healthy, sustainable, equitable and prosperous food systems."