Promoting active transport in Palmerston North – working across boundaries at the nexus of transport, health and urban planning

Adam Jarvis, Palmerston North City Council
Christine Cheyne, Imran Muhammad, Resource and Environmental Planning programme Massey University

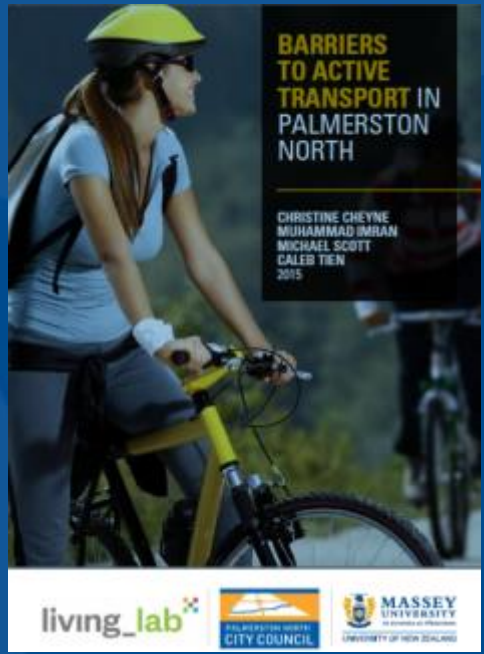
A joint project – Massey University Living Lab and PNCC

(PNCC LTP funding for sustainabiltiy initiatives and Massey summer scholarships with academic supervision)

- A key challenge for PN: numbers walking and cycling are flat-lining (not increasing)
- Also, PNCC has a goal to be “the best place in NZ to ride a bike”
- Anecdotal evidence of increasing participation in walking and biking for recreation – good for health – but what about for transport
- Active transport a key mechanism for NZers to meet guidelines for physical activity (at least 30 mins 5 days a week) for very little cost (and will even save them money!)

Overview of research

- Two summer scholars – Massey Planning students who had studied urban and transport planning with A/Prof Imran Muhammad
- Reference group – key staff of both organisations
- Literature review and survey in summer of 2014/2015
- Further survey by Massey Planning students (3rd year) in April 2015
- Main report launched October 2015 – a lot of community interest including from health sector
- Further Massey Planning students doing Honours projects in 2016
- Massey Planning students (3rd year) conduct focus groups with secondary school students



Key findings from Literature review on barriers to active transport

- Physical
- Safety
- Infrastructure
- End-of-trip facilities
- Personal
- Interpersonal

Brief overview of survey

- Online survey of staff over two weeks of two organisations (city council and university)
  - 42.5% response rate
  - 57% female, 43% male
  - 60% aged 40-59 years

- Student survey – of students by students to capture younger age group
  - 432 questionnaires in 2 hours survey on 22nd April 2015
  - 7% response rate

Scale - 1:55,000

0 1.25 2.5 5

Kilometers

Geographic distribution of respondents

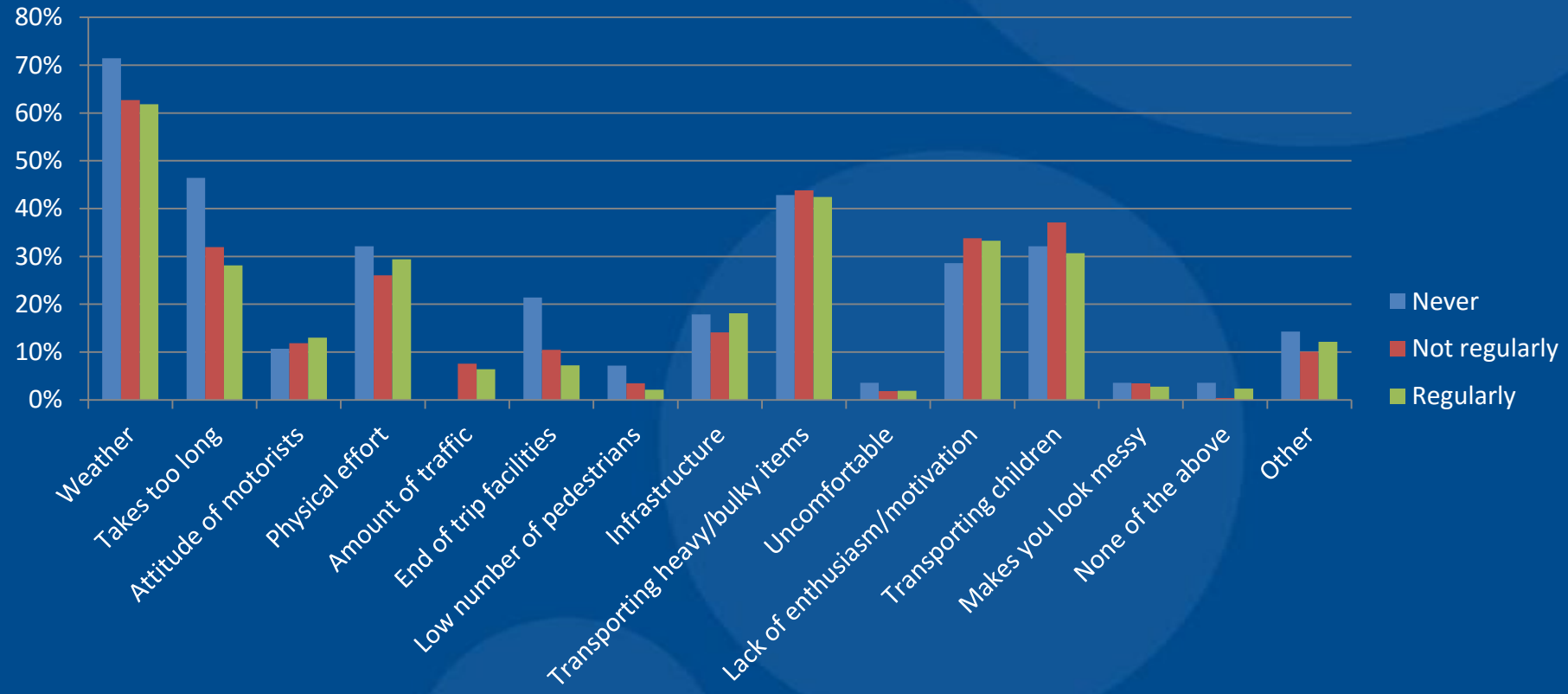
Legend

No. of respondents

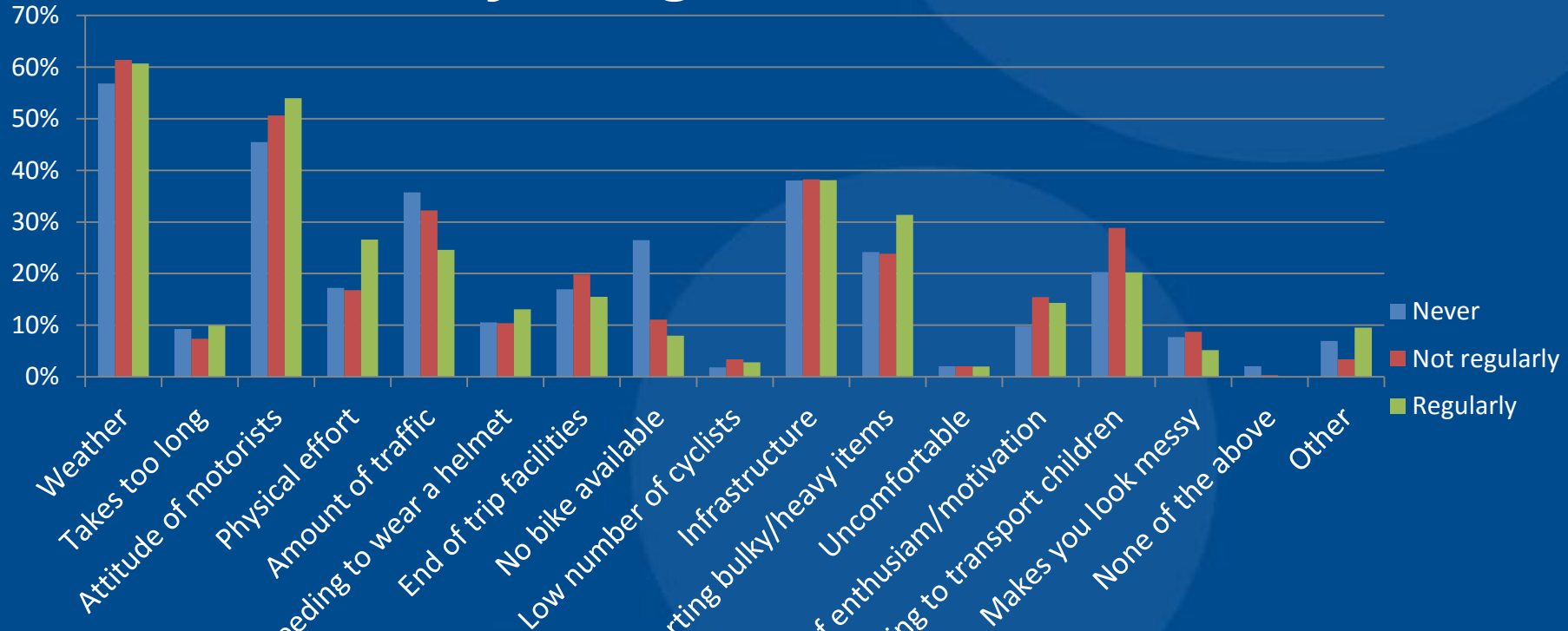
- 1 - 3
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 9
- 10 - 12
- 13 - 15
- 16 - 20
- 21 - 26
- 27 - 41
- Areas

NEW

Barriers to walking



Barriers to cycling

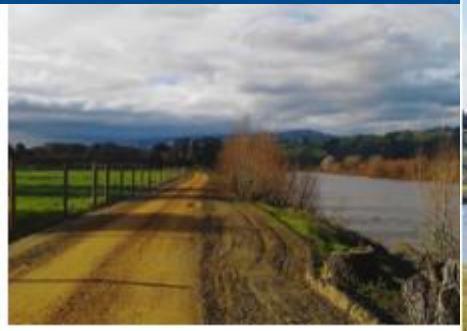


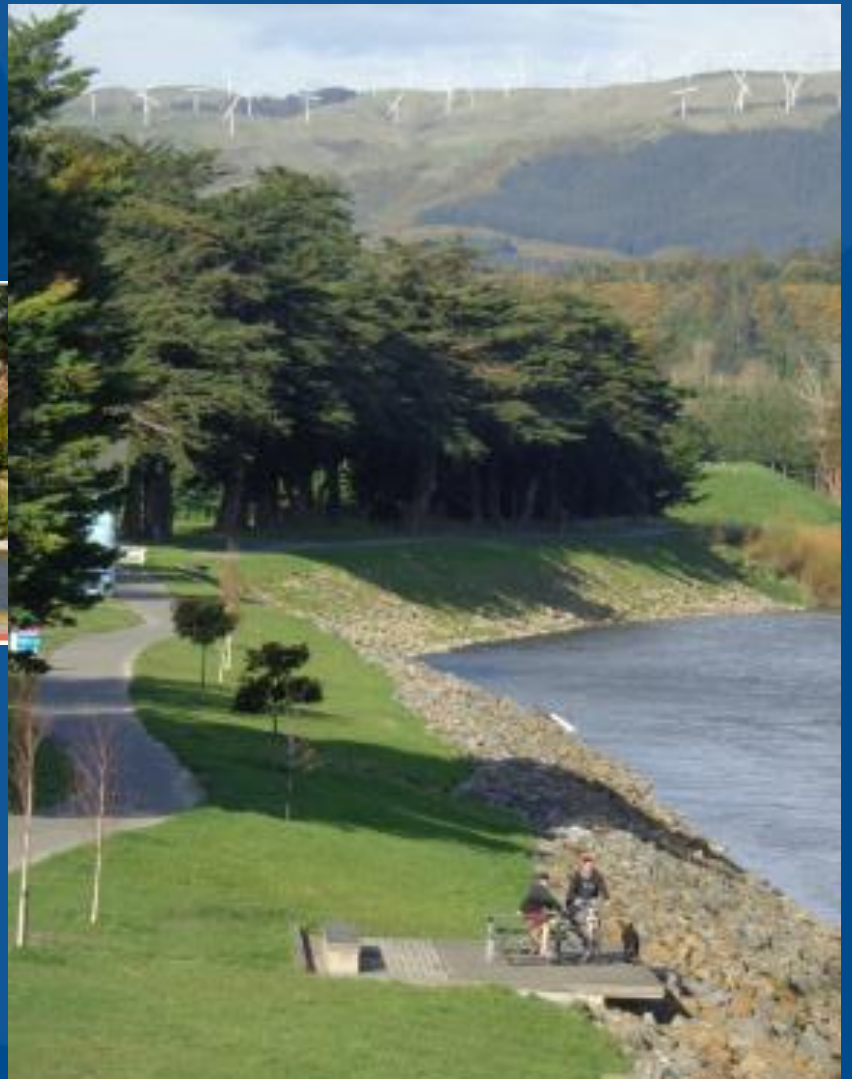
Going to work in the City of Copenhagen

WEATHER

Weather seems to be a big issue for people. On reflection though I don't think the weather has been a huge issue for me. Over the last year I walked home about 3-4 days a week and I think the weather only proved to be a problem about 10% of the time. I walked to work maybe 10% of the time and I only turned up to work wet once in the past 2 years. Because we traditionally have cloudy weather, people seem to equate that with a high risk of rain. My experience seems to suggest otherwise.

Manawatū River shared path – our local icon to increase walking and biking?





Health Benefits

$82m to get kids moving

TRACY WATKINS

THE Government is backing school sports with an $82 million funding boost – but Labour warns it will do little to get couch potato children into physical activity.

Prime Minister John Key announced the boost to school sport funding yesterday, saying money cut from "social marketing" campaigns such as the multimillion-dollar Push Play and Mission On campaigns – which combined healthy eating and physical activity messages – was better used on school sports teams and equipment.

The funding is spread over four years, with $24m going to primary schools, $21m to secondary schools and $37m to sports clubs and community groups through new regional sports trusts.

The extra money to schools works out at about $13 a child at primary school level and $20 a child at secondary school level.

Mr Key said it recognised that sport had "undeniable benefits" in terms of physical fitness, teamwork and leadership. "Getting more Kiwi kids involved at school level can lead to a lifetime of involvement in organised sport."

The money will be paid to schools by the Education Ministry on a per pupil basis, the only requirement being that they use the funds to promote sport.

Principals Federation president Ernie Buutveld said the programme opened the door to greater involvement by communities in their local school sports.

It would also benefit rural schools, or schools located away from facilities who had found travel and transport to be a barrier to greater participation in sports.

But Labour MP Chris Hipkins said there was nothing to stop schools pocketing the extra money if they were already putting funds into sport, or pouring the money into better uniforms and coaching for their high performance sports teams, rather than spending it on getting more children into physical activity.

"It's basically putting all your eggs in the sports basket and ignoring the fact that a bunch of kids actually don't do sports, won't do sport, no matter how hard you try and push them.

"By cutting all of the other programmes they might have been interested in you're basically writing them off."

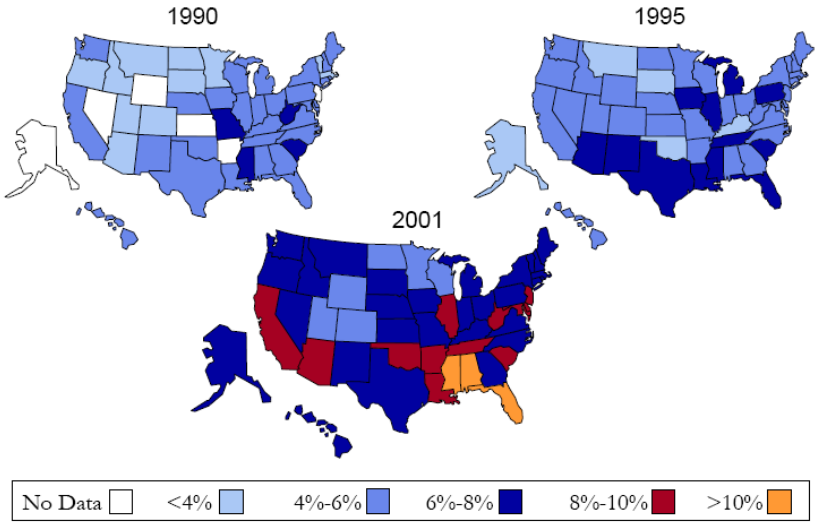
But the plan had the backing of Olympic champion Sir John Walker. "I would hate for these kids to get to the age of 25 and say, 'I never participated in sport'."

Getting active: Prime Minister John Key in a game of tug of war with pupils of Bairds Mainfreight Primary School, Otara, yesterday. Photo: GETTY IMAGES

FAT STATS

- One in 12 Kiwi children (8.3 per cent) are obese.
- A further 20.9 per cent are overweight.
- New Zealand has the third-highest rate of obesity in the world (26.5 per cent) after the US (34.3 per cent) and Mexico (30 per cent).

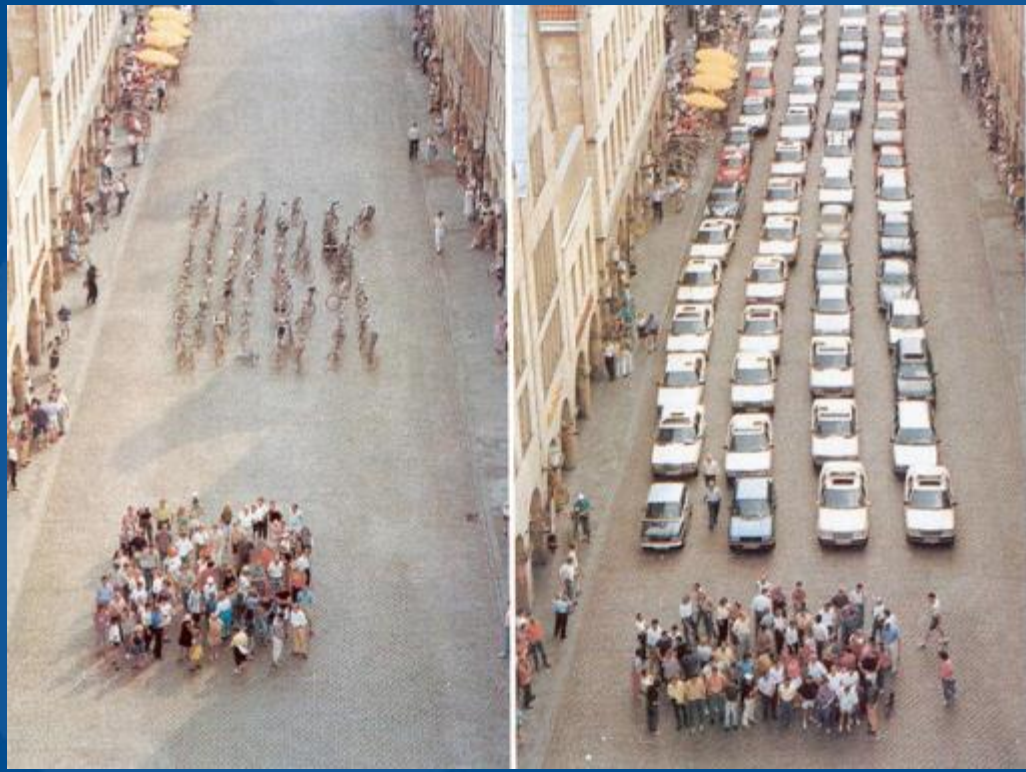
Diabetes trends, US



Source: Mokdad et al., Diabetes Care 2000;23:1278-83; J Am Med Assoc 2001;286:10.

Wider Benefits

- Significant health benefits
  - Getting people moving
  - Air quality (production and exposure)
- Space efficiency
  - Ease congestion
  - Less money on roads/parking
- Energy efficiency
  - Carbon emissions
  - Low running costs



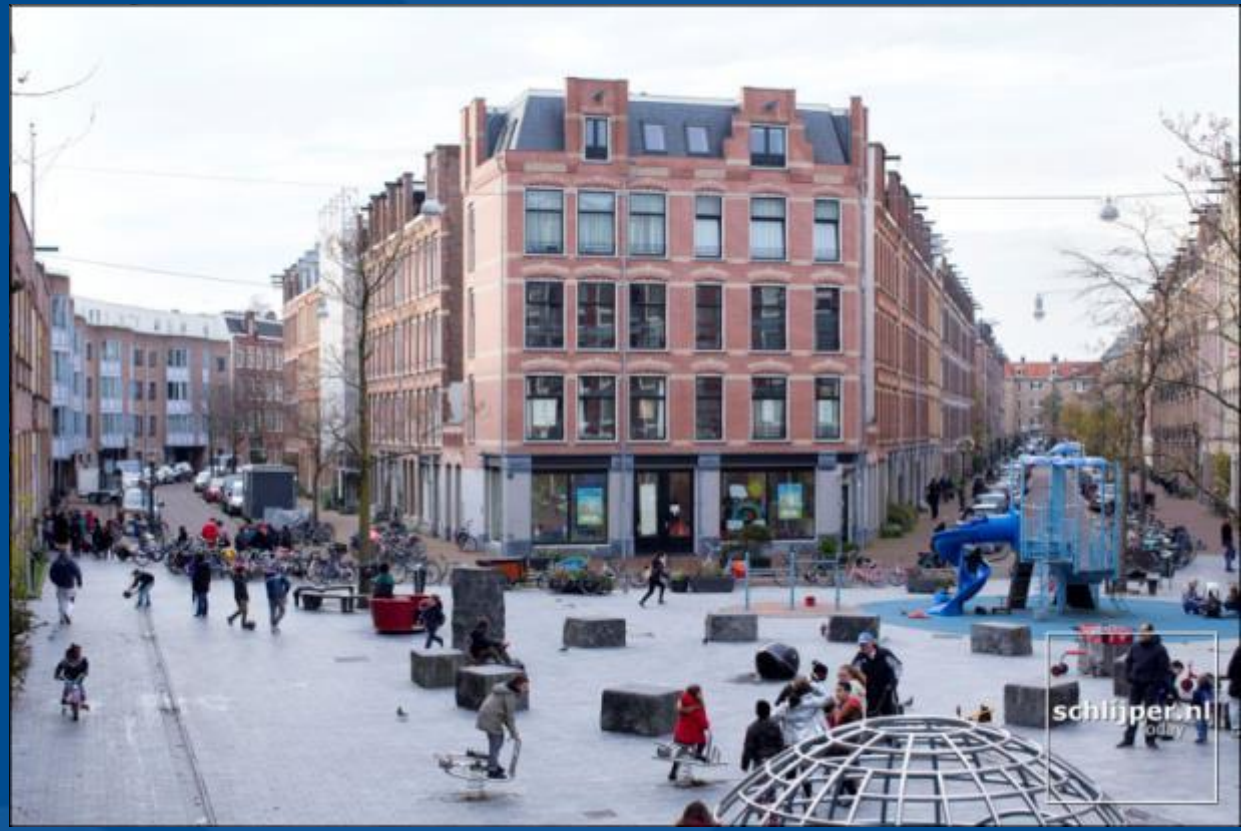
Space comparison – Münster, Germany 1991

Transformations

- Cycle infrastructure
  - More extensive
  - Better quality
- Connected streets
  - Eschew cul-de-sacs
- Denser urban form
  - Connected communities
  - Destinations nearby
    - Shop, Work, Play, Pray, Eat

Transformations

- Urban design informs what is possible
- Diversity of uses
  - Social benefits
  - Health benefits
  - ‘Green’ architecture
- Connects users to space and other users
  - More life and activity in the street
  - More care



New Zealand Context

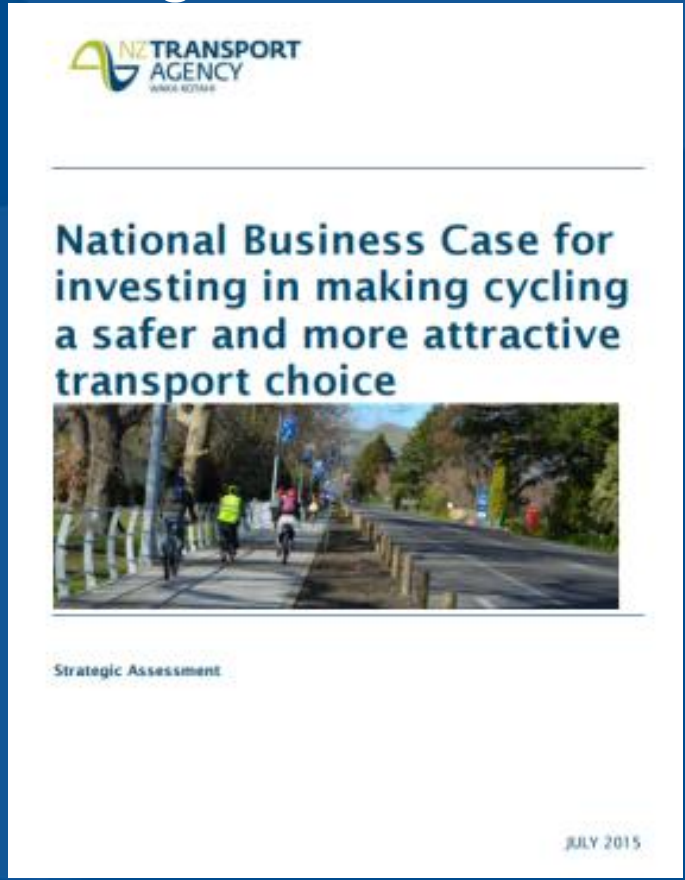
- National trend to safer, more walkable streets
  - Good for people, good for business
  - E.g. AKL, CCH, Tauranga
- Palmerston North
  - Flat, compact, connected
  - City Centre
  - King, Cuba, Campbell St
  - Cycle Lanes & Shared Pathways

Wider Context

- No problem exists in isolation
  - Culture
  - Physical Landscape
  - Systems (e.g. Climate, Transport, Economic)
- Need holistic solutions
  - Direct initiatives important
  - Need to be part of a wider strategy
  - Need to transform way we live and interact with city

The transport/health/urban planning nexus

- Historical links between urban / environmental planning and public health in late 19th century
- Growing awareness of impact of transport on land-use in 20th century
- Need to move away from dependence on SOVs for environmental reasons
- Active transport increases liveability and also improves health status
- Nutrition without physical activity will not achieve health outcomes

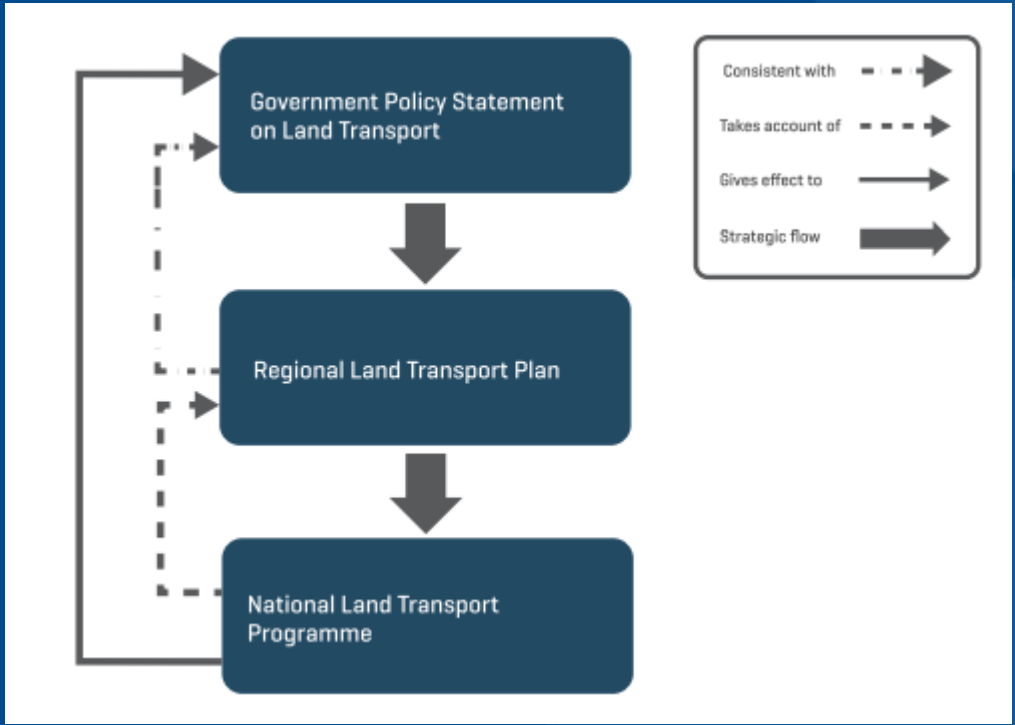


Connecting transport/ health/ urban planning

1. Connections between political leaders and chief executives/senior managers
2. Plan alignment and integration
   - horizontal integration between land use and transport agencies and health agencies within a city administration
   - spatial integration between adjacent local authorities
   - vertical integration between local, regional and national
3. Funding of joint projects

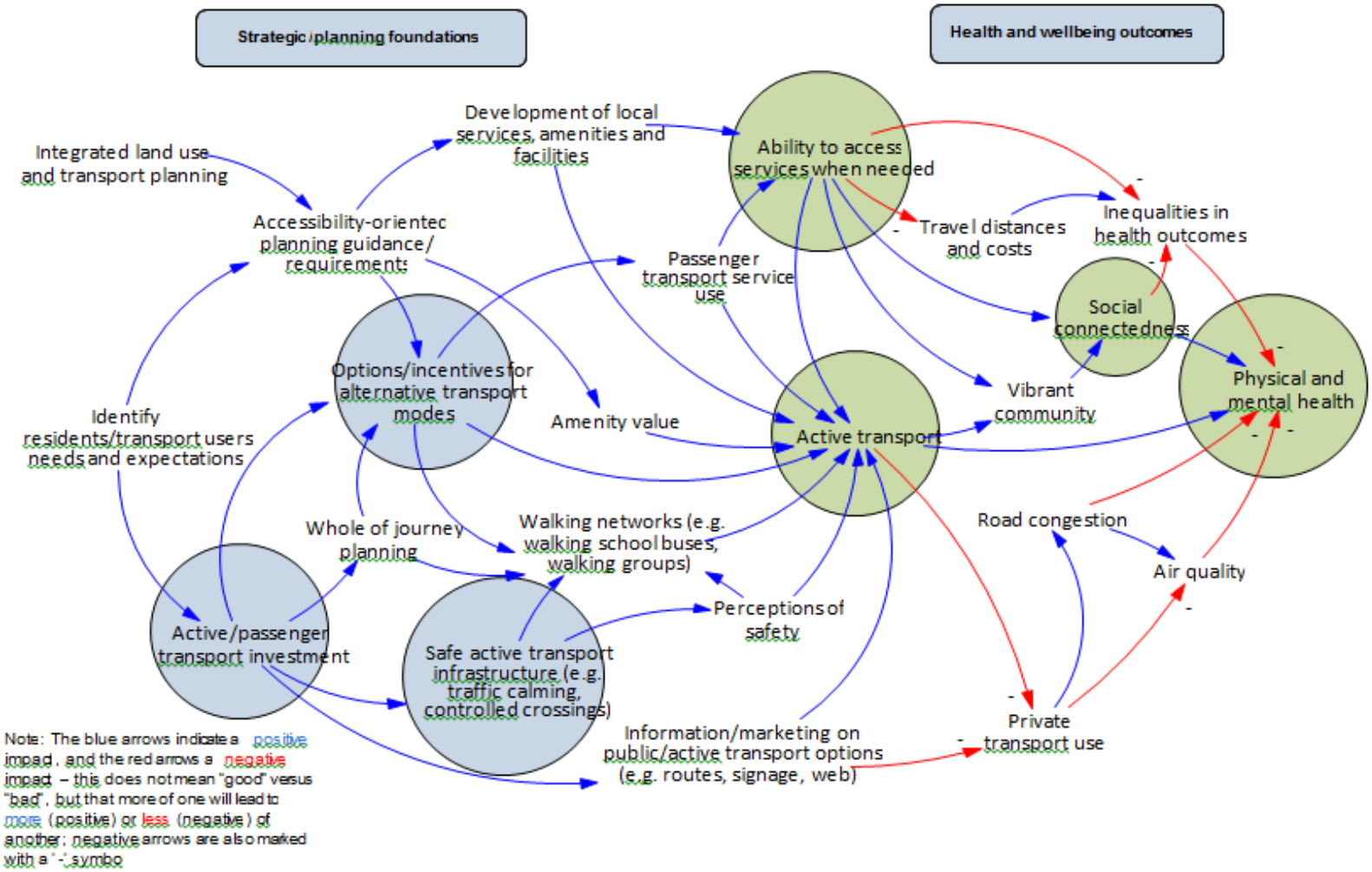
Source: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/pdf/aces-workingpaper2.pdf

The transport/health/urban planning nexus



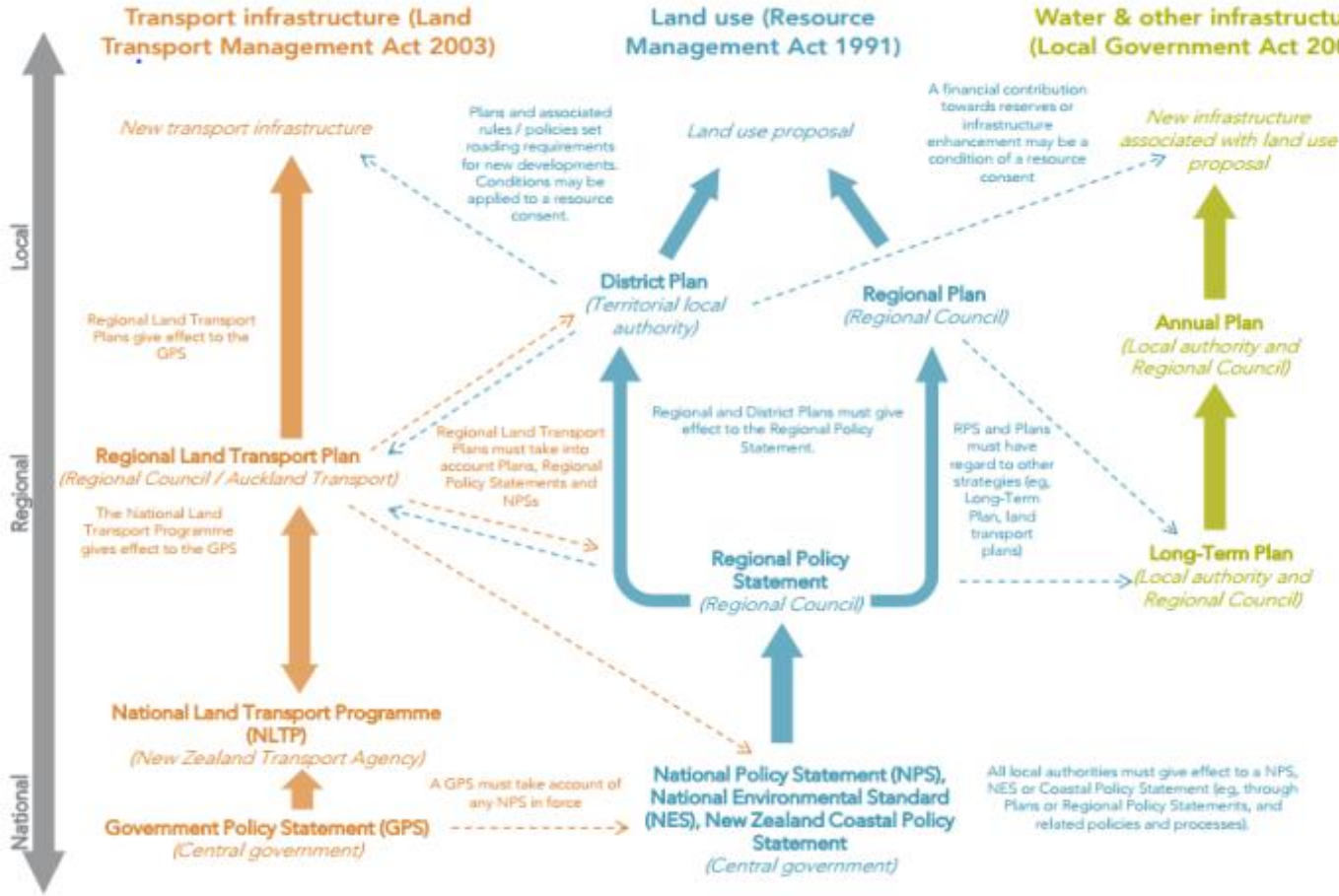
Relationship between Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding and land transport planning documents

Causal pathway – Active transport



Note: The blue arrows indicate a positive impact, and the red arrows a negative impact – this does not mean "good" versus "bad", but that more of one will lead to more (positive) or less (negative) of another; negative arrows are also marked with a '-' symbo

The land-use and transport planning framework in NZ



Source:
Productivity Commission, 2015, *Better Urban Planning issues* paper

Next steps

- Further data collection and analysis - including working with other agencies
- Working with other agencies to understand barriers and create opportunities for increased participation
- Incremental OR quantum improvements to quality of infrastructure?
- Incremental growth in participation in active transport in PN OR a quantum leap to become the best place in NZ to ride a bike and walk for transport as well as recreation?