

**SUBMISSION ON**            **PROPOSED VARIATIONS TO THE OTAGO SOUTHLAND  
REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLANS 2015-2021 (RLTP)**

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**Details of Submitter:**   **The Southern District Health Board**

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### **Introduction**

Southern District Health Board (Southern DHB) presents this submission through its public health service, Public Health South. This Service is the principal source of expert advice within Southern DHB regarding matters concerning Public Health. Southern DHB has responsibility under the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 to improve, promote and protect the health of people and communities. Additionally there is a responsibility to promote the reduction of adverse social and environmental effects on the health of people and communities. With 4,250 staff, we are located in the lower South Island (South of the Waitaki River) and deliver health services to a population of 319,200.

Public health services are offered to populations rather than individuals and are considered a “public good”. They fall into two broad categories – health protection and health promotion. They aim to create or advocate for healthy social, physical and cultural environments.

This submission is intended to provide general commentary to the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees (RTCs) relating to the consultation document 'Proposed Variations to the Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2015-2021'.

## General Comments

Public Health South (PHS) thanks the RTCs for the opportunity to provide comment on the consultation document.

### New projects proposed for Otago/Southland 2018-2021

PHS is pleased to note that the RTCs have taken customer feedback into account and plans to provide better mode choice, including better public transport and safe walking and cycling linkages. PHS supports these active transport solutions as they will encourage people to be more physically active.<sup>1</sup> Currently physical activity levels are low with only 50% of the adult population reported to be physically active in the most recent NZ Health Survey, and only 44.5% of children use active transport to get to and from school.<sup>2</sup>

Encouraging better use of public transport and safer walking and cycling linkages should also reduce reliance on individual cars, resulting in improved air quality, fewer greenhouse gas emissions and improved road safety.<sup>3</sup> These benefits, along with increased physical activity from doing more walking or biking, will translate into many positive physical, mental, social and environmental health outcomes. These include a reduced risk of obesity and chronic disease (for example, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer), depression, road trauma and premature deaths from air pollution.<sup>3,4</sup>

PHS is also encouraged to see that a number of the new projects being proposed are focusing on safety and resilience. The emphasis on safety should help reduce fatal and serious injury crashes while the focus on resilience will help ensure access to goods and services, including health care services and food supplies, in times of emergency.

### Opportunities the RTCs intend to pursue

PHS is encouraged to note that the RTCs have identified the opportunity to pursue better integration of rail and coastal shipping into the transport network in the future. PHS supports moving freight from road transport to rail and shipping as this shift should increase network resilience thus helping keep supply chains open in times of emergency. It will also improve road safety and reduce emissions in the transport sector, which will have a positive effect on health outcomes.

In addition, PHS is pleased that the RTCs have identified the opportunity to create a network of cycle rides for the future. The proposed infrastructure will encourage people to engage in more physical activity in a safer environment resulting in improved health for the community. When planning cycling infrastructure, PHS urges the RTCs to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for cyclists. Examples of this are separated cycling

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<sup>1</sup> Litman, T. Transportation and public health. *Annual. Rev. Public Health.* 2013, 34, 217-33. Downloaded from <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114502> (accessed Dec 20, 2017).

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Data Explorer 2016/17: New Zealand Health Survey.* Ministry of Health: Wellington, 2017. Downloaded from <https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2016-17-annual-data-explorer/> (accessed Jan 8, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Litman, T. Transportation and public health. *Annual. Rev. Public Health.* 2013, 34, 217-33. Downloaded from <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031912-114502> (accessed Dec 20, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> *Physical activity and health conditions.* Ministry of Health: Wellington. 30 March 2017. Downloaded from <http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-and-physical-activity/physical-activity/being-active-everyone-every-age/physical-activity-and-health-conditions> (accessed Feb 8, 2018).

facilities in high volume traffic areas, and where paths are to be shared with pedestrians to ensure all users, including the elderly and those with disabilities, are safe and comfortable using the network.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

## **Summary**

PHS supports the variations proposed for the Regional Land Transport Plan for 2018-21. The emphasis on walking, cycling and improving public transport will have positive health outcomes as will the projects designed to make transport safer and more resilient.

We do not wish to be heard in regards to this submission.

Yours sincerely

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<sup>5</sup> *Christchurch Cycle Design Guidelines 2013*. Christchurch City Council, Christchurch, 2013. Downloaded from <https://www.ccc.govt.nz/assets/Documents/The-Council/Plans-Strategies-Policies-Bylaws/Strategies/ChristchurchCycleDesignGuidelinesWEB.pdf> (accessed Jan 10, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> *Creating Age-Friendly Cities*. POSTNOTE 539 October 2016. Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, Houses of Parliament, London, 2016. Downloaded from <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0539/POST-PN-0539.pdf> (accessed Jan 10, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Sze, N.; Christensen, K. Access to urban transportation system for individuals with disabilities. *IATSS Research*. 2017, 41, 66–73. Downloaded from [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0386111217300444/1-s2.0-S0386111217300444-main.pdf?\\_tid=86895f6e-f584-11e7-995f-00000aab0f01&acdnat=1515533700\\_eb633faf958b40f3fccd98768e7592cd](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S0386111217300444/1-s2.0-S0386111217300444-main.pdf?_tid=86895f6e-f584-11e7-995f-00000aab0f01&acdnat=1515533700_eb633faf958b40f3fccd98768e7592cd) (accessed Jan 10, 2018)