

## **Kei te rangatira, tēnā koe,**

We are writing on behalf of the Rūnaka Taiohi o Ōtautahi / Christchurch Youth Council, a group of rangatahi volunteers aged 12 - 24 from across the Ōtautahi region. As representatives of the Christchurch Youth Council, we wish to emphasise the importance of an effective and sustainable public transport system, particularly for young people. Many young people rely heavily on public transport as a primary mode of transportation, and we are committed to promoting environmentally friendly options.

This submission is based on the Youth Takeover survey responses (over 450 rangatahi responded to the sections on Transport in the first quarter of 2024 - see attached), a quick poll of our instagram (see attached), as well as discussions and surveys conducted internally with our membership of 22 volunteers aged 14 - 24. We acknowledge that we are not representative of all young people in Christchurch. Young people may disagree with the statements made throughout this submission, and we would expect and value this, as no two people have the same voice or opinion.

Some members of the Youth Council found the goals of the transport strategy to be somewhat vague and lacking in clarity regarding concrete actions and measurable outcomes. While the overarching objectives are easy to understand, such as ensuring a well-managed, resilient, and efficient transport network, the specific steps to achieve these goals were not always communicated clearly. More examples and detailed explanations of how the plan will be implemented would help young people and the wider community better understand and engage with the strategy.

The implementation ideas and specific actions outlined to meet the transport goals were not always clear. For instance, while the goal of reducing emissions and improving public transport was mentioned, there was little detail on how this would be achieved in practice. Additionally, more focus on the real-world application of these ideas, particularly how they will directly benefit youth and how younger generations will engage with them, would make the plan more tangible and relevant.

Climate resilience, road safety, and congestion are issues that deeply affect young people, both now and in the future. As we transition to adulthood, we will be more dependent on the transport system, and having a climate-resilient, safe, and efficient network will directly impact our ability to get around. Furthermore, the inclusion of climate resilience is vital for preparing Christchurch's transport infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change in the long term. Addressing congestion and road safety is equally critical, as they affect the daily mobility of youth, especially as we look to move away from cars and rely more on public transport and other low-emission options.

## **Feedback on Goals**

- 1. A safer transport network**  
Safety is a top priority for young people, whether as pedestrians, cyclists, or passengers on public transport. Improving road safety, particularly for vulnerable users such as cyclists and pedestrians, is essential.
- 2. A more resilient transport network**  
Given the long-term nature of transport infrastructure, preparing for climate change is a crucial aspect of ensuring that our system remains functional and sustainable in the future.
- 3. Genuine transport choice for everyone**  
Having a wide range of transport options that are affordable and accessible is vital for young people, especially as we may not have the financial means to own a car.
- 4. An efficient transport network**  
Reducing travel time and making transport more efficient benefits young people in particular, who rely on public transport to get to school, work, or social activities.
- 5. A vibrant, healthy, and liveable city**  
A well-connected and vibrant city can create spaces that young people can engage with. This will make public transport more attractive and reduce reliance on cars.
- 6. Well-managed transport assets**  
While this goal is important, it ranks lower for young people compared to the immediate need for safer, more efficient, and more accessible transport options.

One area that could benefit from more attention is **genuine transport choice**. While the plan touches on providing more options, it lacks clear action steps for achieving this, particularly when it comes to low-emission transport alternatives. For instance, expanding electric vehicle options, integrating electric bike and scooter sharing schemes, and developing more public transport options, like light rail or trains, would make a significant difference for young people. These types of investments are important for future-proofing Christchurch's transport network, especially as we face increasing traffic congestion and a growing demand for sustainable options.

Additionally, the issue of **safety** needs more attention. Young people are particularly vulnerable when walking, cycling, or using public transport. More well-lit areas, safer bus stops, and additional security measures such as cameras or emergency call buttons at transport hubs could make a huge difference in the safety and confidence of young people using the system, particularly at night.

To make the transport strategy more relevant to young people, we suggest focusing on **future-proofing transport** with an emphasis on **low-emission, affordable, and efficient transport**. This could include the expansion of **light rail or train systems**, as these would provide young people with more affordable and faster ways to get around, reducing the reliance on cars. Moreover, ensuring that **public transport options are more frequent and accessible** in all areas, including the outer suburbs, would help young people who rely on public transport. Additionally, incorporating more **youth-friendly spaces** near transport hubs and **safe bike lanes** would help build a stronger connection between young people and the city's transport options.

Young people in Christchurch are deeply concerned about the environmental impact of transport, and many of us are already making choices to reduce our carbon footprint, such as using public transport, walking, or cycling. However, we need more **convenient, affordable, and safe** options to make sustainable transport choices more accessible to everyone. We urge Christchurch City Council to consider future transport options like **light rail** and **electric bike/scooter sharing systems**, which are gaining popularity in other cities around the world. These alternatives could provide a significant boost to Christchurch's public transport network, particularly for young people who are less likely to own cars.

In addition, improving **real-time bus tracking apps** and **bus frequency** would make public transport a more attractive option. For young people, reducing wait times and ensuring routes are more direct and well-connected to key areas such as schools, universities, and job hubs would make a huge difference.

Finally, as **safety** is a key concern for many young people, we urge the Council to focus on improving the **lighting and security** of transport hubs and key pedestrian routes, particularly at night. Safe travel options allow young people to move around the city with confidence, contributing to a more vibrant, inclusive, and connected community.

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**Thank you for considering our submission. We hope to see the voices and needs of young people reflected in the final transport strategy for Christchurch.**

**Ngā Mihi,**

**Caroline Read (Chairperson)**

**On Behalf of Rūnaka Taiohi o Ōtautahi / Christchurch Youth Council Incorporated  
Executive Committee**