

## **12.0 NEEDS OF WALKERS and CYCLISTS**

In terms of the purpose of the Strategy, there are two key groups of people in our community:

- ▶ People who do not participate in walking and / or cycling activities.
- ▶ People who do participate in walking and / or cycling activities.

Each group identified issues that need to be addressed, in order to achieve the vision of the Strategy.

There are two components that need to be considered to increase the uptake of walking and other sustainable transport options like cycling. The first is the environment and the second is human behaviour. Thus it is not enough to address just one of the key components in isolation. Both environmental and social issues must be targeted simultaneously.

Better public transport, safe routes, pleasant surroundings and small to medium distances are all key environmental elements of making walking and cycling attractive. There is a need for education and promotion so that people want to participate and understand the benefits of walking and cycling. These benefits are not just around health outcomes. They also include a greater sense of community, less traffic congestion, greater economic benefits and an increase in creativity, particularly in children. The benefits are detailed further in Part II of the Strategy.

### **12.1 Fundamental Environmental Needs**

Whether riding on the road carriageway or an off road cycle track, cyclists have four basic requirements, which apply equally for walkers, as follows:

- ▶ They require a safe space within which to ride or walk.
- ▶ A smooth riding surface is needed in order for bicycles to be ridden effectively, comfortably and safely. The exception is recreational facilities such as mountain bike tracks.
- ▶ In order for bicycles to be an attractive means of transport, cyclists must be able to maintain speed without having to slow or stop too often and be provided with routes that are direct, continuous and consistent.
- ▶ Cycle routes should combine to form a practical and user-friendly network on which bicycle trips can be made effectively conveniently and safely.

### **12.2 Non Participants**

A mild climate and relatively flat urban topography make Gisborne potentially an attractive location for cycling and walking. Why do more people not take advantage of this opportunity to walk or cycle as transport or for leisure?

There are many reasons given in the 2004 Walking and Cycling survey<sup>14</sup> by those who do not participate in walking or cycling activities. These include:

- ▶ Not interested in walking or cycling as activities.
- ▶ Preferred other means of transport.

- ▶ Age was a reason given for not cycling but not a concern with regard to walking.
- ▶ Need to use the car anyway because other people or goods have to be transported.
- ▶ The weather is a concern.
- ▶ Do not have sufficient time, it takes too long.
- ▶ The hills or distances are a concern.
- ▶ School age participants mentioned helmets interfering with their hairstyles or just look bad.
- ▶ Safety was a reason for not walking.
- ▶ Did not own a bike.

### **12.3 Participants**

Despite the reasons given by those who do not participate, many people choose to walk and cycle for fitness and recreation, as a family activity and as a mode of transport. For these people there are issues of safety caused by the existing traffic conditions and the absence of or state of disrepair of facilities which might prevent them from participating more in these activities.

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<sup>14</sup> Gisborne District Cycling and Walking Survey as Digi Poll Ltd survey conducted by International Research Consultants Ltd, prepared for Gisborne District Council in July 2004.