

PART TWO ■ BACKGROUND

9.0 CURRENT CONTEXT

9.1 National Trends

Thousands of households around New Zealand were sampled during a travel survey in 1989/1990 and again in 1997/1998. The results were analysed and expanded using known demographics to provide national estimates of household travel. Comparison of the 1989/90 and 1997/98 estimates indicate that nationally:¹⁰

- ▶ Walking trips dropped from 21% to 19% of household travel trips, with the decline largest in 'walk only' trips.
- ▶ 'Walk only' trips dropped from 36% to 26% of all school trips.
- ▶ Taking into account population growth, New Zealanders undertake approximately 400,000 fewer 'walk only' trips daily than was the case in 89/90.
- ▶ Cycling trips have dropped from 3.6% to 1.8% of household travel trips.
- ▶ Trips among 5-20 year olds dropped by around 50%.
- ▶ Trips among 20-24 year olds rose slightly, and trips among those 40+ remained relatively stable.

9.2 Gisborne City Cycling and Walking Survey 2004

9.2.1 Background

A public survey was carried out in 2004 to help understand current walking and cycling behaviour as well as community attitudes to a number of issues.

The survey involved two samples, these being:

- ▶ A random sample of 200 respondents aged 15 or older from Gisborne City, Makaraka and Wainui. These respondents were recruited using DigPoll's random phone number telephone interviewing system.
- ▶ A sample of 19 school children volunteers. Data received was weighted to correct over-representations in location of residence, gender, age, ethnicity and household income.

9.2.2 Participation

Respondents were asked how often they had ridden a bicycle in the last year. 30% of the random sample rode a bike at least weekly (10% rode daily); while 45% said they had not ridden a bike in the last year. For the school sample 69% rode a bike at least weekly (nearly a third of the school children rode daily) and only two of 19 school respondents did not ride a bike.

¹⁰ LTSA, *Travel Survey Report 1997/1998* (LTSA, Wellington, June 2000) in *Getting there – on foot, by cycle: A draft strategy to increase walking and cycling in New Zealand transport* (October 2003)

Respondents were also asked how often they had and walked more than a kilometre in the past year. 72% of the random sample walked over a kilometre at least weekly (38% of the sample walked daily). A further 4% walked about every 6 months and just 8% said they had not walked more than a kilometre in the past 12 months. The school sample had fewer respondents who walked more than a kilometre weekly and more who did this monthly but the rest of the profile is similar to the random sample.

The vast majority of respondents undertake some form of exercise on a regular basis. In total, 80% of the respondents from the random sample either walk, bike or play sport on at least a weekly basis. Only 6% of the sample did not undertake any of these activities in the past year. Nearly all of these 12 respondents mentioned health problems or age as their reason for not participating.

As would be expected there are clear trends of involvement with older respondents generally being less active than the younger respondents. However, with bike riding it appears that there is an anomaly in this trend with respondents aged 26-35 participating less than the under 25s or those aged 36-50. This possibly reflects that as young adults become more mobile then biking becomes less appealing until they have children or the economics of the family motivate them to ride again.

There is also a significant difference in the proportions that ride a bike based on gender. 43% of men ride a bike at least weekly and only a third do not ride a bike, while 17% of women ride a bike at least weekly and 57% do not ride a bike.

9.2.3 Reasons for Participating

Respondents who had ridden a bike in the last year were asked: "What is your main reason for riding a bike?" The most common reason given by those in the random sample was fitness. This was mentioned by 49% of the bike riders from the sample but this accounts for 62% of the over 36-50 age group. That a high percentage of respondents that ride for fitness infers that the majority of the respondents are aware of the health benefits of this activity. Another quarter said they rode for recreation, 17% said they rode for fun and 9% to do things with their children. Conversely 26% said their main reason for cycling was as a means of transport. The school sample bike riders were more likely to ride as a means of transport (47%), for recreation (41%) or for fun (29%).

Those respondents who had walked more than a kilometre in the last year also gave a variety of reasons for their participation. In the random sample, the most common reason was again for health (73%), a quarter of the respondents said they walked for recreation and a further quarter said their main reason was as a means of transport to school or work. The school sample walkers were most likely to walk for fitness (37%) or as a means of transport (37%).

9.2.4 Reasons for Not Participating

Respondents in the random sample who had not ridden a bike in the last year were asked: "What are your main reasons for not riding a bike?" A variety of reasons were given but the most common was in regard to age concerns. This was mentioned by 26% of the non-bike riders and accounted for 70% of the over 65 age group.

A quarter said they were not interested in riding bikes – this was mainly mentioned by those working full time. A further 24% said they preferred other means of transport. Smaller groups of respondents commented that they did not own a bike (8%), did not have time (7%) or they did not think it was safe (6%) and health reasons (3%).

The reasons for not participating were similar for walking, with interest, age and preferring other means being common reasons. Safety was a much bigger issue for those who do not walk than for those who do not cycle, but the numbers of non-walkers are too small to be able to draw any reliable conclusions.

9.2.5 Where Walking / Cycling occurs

Most bike riding is done on the roads of the city. Respondents who had ridden a bike in the last year were asked: “Where do you normally ride your bike?” (more than one answer could be given). 74% of the bike riders in the random sample respondents ride on the roads and 94% of the school sample. About a fifth of each sample said they rode on off-road tracks or beaches.

In contrast most walking is undertaken in the respondents’ own neighbourhood, shopping centres, on paths and tracks and at the beaches of the city.

9.2.6 Current Facilities – User Satisfaction

Most of the random sample respondents are not very satisfied with the current cycling facilities and many are dissatisfied. This is reflected in the satisfaction index of 50.7 out of 100 (calculated from the spread scores given by the respondents from 0 to 10, 0 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied). To put this result into perspective in the Local Body arena for non-elective services a satisfaction index of 61 is deemed to reflect a need for significant improvement while a satisfaction index of 73 reflects a very good service. Therefore this satisfaction score infers the respondents see a need for significant improvement in cycling facilities. Those who ride daily to monthly are more dissatisfied with the current facilities than the more infrequent riders and those who do not ride. The school sample had a slightly higher satisfaction index of 53.3.

Walkers from the random sample are significantly more satisfied with the current walking facilities (satisfaction index = 63.0) but this score also reflects some serious concerns. The satisfaction profile of the school sample is different, with a much higher satisfaction index of 75.8. This difference probably reflects that school respondents have more modest expectations and are less worried about safety.

9.2.7 How to Improve Walking and Cycling?

Respondents were asked what Council could do to improve cycling and walking in Gisborne (each respondent was able to make more than one suggestion).

The main suggestion from the random sample was to provide cycle lanes. 65% of the bike riders in the sample and 53% of the total sample mentioned this, a quarter wanted better, smoother or safer roads (often mentioned as wider roads), a fifth mentioned improving the safety of cyclists, 12% suggested more off road tracks and 18% did not know. Only 3% of those who ride thought there was nothing to improve.

The school sample respondents tended to follow a similar pattern with 58% suggesting cycle lanes while 26% suggested improving cyclists safety and 21% wanted more off road tracks. The roundabouts and narrowness of some Gisborne Street were clearly issues.

The picture is not as clear in relation to walking facilities with a third of the random sample wanting better paths while a similar proportion wanted footpaths in their area and over a quarter of the sample wanted more walking tracks. A fifth of the random sample mentioned better safety for walkers and it appears that this safety refers to personal safety (e.g. from thugs) rather than safety from tripping etc.

9.2.8 How to Encourage Walking and Cycling?

The survey also questioned respondents on how Council could encourage more people to cycle and walk.

A third of the random sample did not know what Council could do to encourage more people to ride bikes and 13% said there was nothing more Council could do. The remaining 55% of respondents made a range of suggestions with the main suggestions being to provide cycle lanes (19% of the random sample), to improve road safety (14%), to run promotions (10%). Over half of the school sample did not know what Council could do to encourage more people to ride bikes. The main suggestions tended to mirror the random sample and covered cycle lanes and improved road safety.

A third of the random sample also did not know what Council could do to encourage more people to walk and 19% said there was nothing Council could do. Fifty percent of respondents made a range of suggestions. Almost half suggested some sort of promotion, 20% suggested better footpaths and tracks, 12% suggested making walking safer, 3% better lighting, 7% greater dog control and 8% suggested more scenic tracks.

9.2.9 Safety

Respondents were asked to rate the safety of cycling and walking in Gisborne on a scale from 1 to 10.

Only a third of the random sample felt that Gisborne was safe to cycle around (scores 8-10), 16% felt Gisborne was unsafe to cycle around (scores 0-3) while 39% rated this as neutral with (scores 4-6). The safety index for the random sample was 55.6. Those who felt unsafe tended to mention poor driving, lack of cycle lanes, roundabouts, traffic and narrow roads as their main concerns. The school sample respondents appeared much more positive about the safety of cycling in Gisborne and this probably infers that many young people do not recognise the dangers around them. Almost half felt Gisborne was safe and only 5% felt Gisborne was unsafe to cycle around.

By comparison walking safety was rated significantly higher than cycling safety with 62% of the random sample feeling safe walking while only 7% felt unsafe. Personal safety was the main concern of these respondents although footpaths needing repairs were also of concern.

9.3 Road Safety Record

Statistics show that road safety is a major issue for cyclists in the Gisborne District. Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) reports:¹¹

- ▶ In 1999-2003 18% of the casualties on Gisborne urban roads were cyclists, compared to only 9% in the rest of New Zealand and 12% in a peer group of similar districts. It is noted however that LTSA reports for 1997/1998 indicate that a relatively high percentage of total trips are made by cycle in the Gisborne District (3.3%) compared to national average (1.9%).
- ▶ The proportion of all road casualties in the Gisborne District made up by cyclists has increased from approximately 5% in 1994 -1999 to 11% in 2001-2003.
- ▶ While casualty rates for other road users have been declining, the number of cyclist casualties on roads in the Gisborne District generally increased at a rate of approximately 0.4 casualties per year in the period 1994-2003. It is not known whether there has been a concurrent increase in cycling in this period. National trends show a decrease in cycling trips from 3.6% to 1.8% of household travel trips.

Intersections, other vehicles and children have been the main trouble areas for cycle safety:

- ▶ 87 crashes involving cyclists in Gisborne District were reported to the police in 2000-Dec 2004;
- ▶ 95% of these reported crashes also involved a motor vehicle;
- ▶ 62% of these crashes occurred at intersections.
- ▶ 53% of these crashes were “crossing/turning”, 25% were rear end obstructions and 13% were overtaking crashes;
- ▶ LTSA reports that cyclists were at fault or partly at fault in only 43% of the crashes, motor vehicle drivers were at fault or partly at fault in 63% of the crashes;
- ▶ 42% of the cycle casualties in the Gisborne District in the period 1999-2003 were aged 10-14 and 13% were aged 15-19. It is expected that the statistics will be similar for the period 2000-2004.

Pedestrian road safety trends are perhaps not quite as worrying, although there is room for significant improvement. Again, children are a major “trouble area”. LTSA reports:

- ▶ 63 pedestrians were involved in crashes in the Gisborne District in 2000 - 2004;
- ▶ Approximately 13% of the casualties on Gisborne urban roads in 1999-2003 were pedestrians. This percentage is comparable with the rest of New Zealand;
- ▶ The proportion of all road casualties in the Gisborne District made up by pedestrians has been relatively constant in the period 1994-2003;
- ▶ 29% of pedestrian casualties in the Gisborne District in 1999-2003 were aged 5-9, 12% were aged 10-14 and 10% were aged 15-19;
- ▶ The number of pedestrian casualties on roads in the Gisborne District generally decreasing at a rate of approximately 0.6 casualties per year in the period 1994-2003. It is not known whether walking has also decreased in this period however LTSA reports indicate that nationally walking trips dropped from 21% to 19% of household travel trips in the period 1989 to 1998.

¹¹ LTSA, *Travel Survey Report 1997/1998* (LTSA, Wellington, June 2000), LTSA, *Gisborne District 1999 to 2003 Road Safety Report* (Engineering Section LTSA, Napier, June 2004) and LTSA, *Crash List Detail Report*, Gisborne 2000-2004, 10 September 2004.

9.4 Existing Facilities

9.4.1 Cycling Transport Network

Most cycling for transport in the Gisborne District occurs along roads administered by the Gisborne District Council, with some routes taking advantage of links through Gisborne District Council reserves and across foot/cycling bridges. Transit highways also form part of the network, for example State Highway 35 between Wainui and Gisborne City is an important commuter route and State Highway 2 between Napier and Gisborne and State Highway 35, which follows the East Coast, are touring routes used by cycling tourists.

Although roads are an important part of the cycling transport network the majority are designed first and foremost for motor vehicles, rather than to provide the highest levels of service for cyclists in terms of safety, convenience and comfort. In some areas, such as the Gisborne City Central Business District, the roads are so unsuited to cyclists that most cyclists avoid riding in these areas and they effectively do not form part of the existing cycle network.

9.4.2 Walking Transport Network

The walking transport network is similar to the cycling transport network: most walking for transport occurs on roads administered by Gisborne District Council, with some routes taking advantage of links through Gisborne District Council reserves and across foot/cycling bridges. However in obvious contrast to cyclists, walkers use footpaths where available.

Council's standard is to provide footpaths on both sides of the road in commercial shopping areas and in residential areas on well trafficked, connecting routes; otherwise a footpath is provided to one side of the street. Funding of \$100,000 annually was allocated in the 2004/2005 LTCCP for footpath upgrading, which is double that of the funding for previous years. Funding will increase to \$180,000 in 2007/08.

9.4.3 Facilities for Cycling as a Recreational Activity / Sport

Road Cycling Facilities - Roads are important not only for cycling as transport but also for cycling as an active recreational activity or sport. Roads are available to a wide range of users, from those out for a leisurely ride and spot of fresh air to the serious "roadies" who participate in sporting events. Some of the most popular routes at present are:

- ▶ Through Kaiti Hill / Titirangi Domain along Queens Drive and Titirangi Drive.
- ▶ The Route along Valley Road, Barkers Hill Road and down Balance Street.
- ▶ Riverside Road.

Mountain Biking Facilities - Langford Fallon Reserve contains a network of tracks that are used for mountain biking as well as walking, running, family activities and exercising dogs.

Langford Fallon Reserve is only about 22 hectares. As a “mountain bike park”, this is very small. Eskdale Mountain Bike Park near Napier for example is set amongst 600 hectares of forest. The reserve also does not cater to advanced riders and opportunities to provide more advanced tracks are limited by the potential conflict with and danger to other users of the reserve. The reserve management plan envisions that this mixed use will continue in the future.¹² The reserve is not well suited to hold even small events because of limited parking, short length of tracks and lack of flat areas for participants to congregate.

Other mountain biking opportunities do exist on unsealed roads, forestry tracks and private land. However their attractiveness and potential use is limited by the need to obtain permits or other permission, seasonality, that they are promoted mainly by word-of mouth, and that the tracks are not designed specifically for the needs of mountain bikers.

BMX Facilities - Gisborne District has the following BMX facilities:

- ▶ A BMX track has recently been built on Council land in Lytton Road. The track was built and will be maintained by the Gisborne BMX Club. The new facility is built to international standards and will therefore has the potential to host national and even international competitions;
- ▶ There is also a BMX track in Alfred Cox Park, which is maintained by Gisborne District Council for public use;
- ▶ The skate parks in Alfred Cox Park and in Tolaga Bay provide some facilities for freestyle BMX riding.

Track Cycling Facilities - Gisborne District does not have a velodrome (an oval cycling track) to cater for the sport of track cycling.

Non-Technical Off-Road Recreational Cycling Areas - Several leisurely routes such as the Riverbank Walkway, along the tracks in the Botanic Gardens and through the open spaces in Council reserves are available to cyclists without mountain biking equipment or technical skills. Other than for families with young children, these areas are likely to provide only part of a recreational route (in conjunction with the road network) rather than a complete route.

9.4.4 Facilities for Walking as Recreational Activity / Sport

Recreational Walking Routes within (or primarily within) the Road Network - The road network provides recreational walking routes. Routes with hills such as Queens Drive - Titirangi Drive, through the back of Mangapapa along Hauora Road, Riverside Road and Lysnar Road are popular. The Central Business District is also a significant recreational walking area (in conjunction with shopping or window shopping). High amenity routes such as the route from the Esplanade to Anzac Park, through Lovers' Lane are also important.

¹² Langford Fallon Reserve Draft Management Plan, Gisborne District Council, 2001.

Off-Road Walking Tracks - There are a number of off-road public walking tracks within the Gisborne District administered by the Department of Conservation or Gisborne District Council. They consist of:

- ▶ Well-maintained city walks in areas of high amenity, which provide important activities for visitors to the District as well as pleasant recreational routes for locals such as the Riverbank Walkway and the Elizabeth Williams Walkway.
- ▶ More challenging fitness routes, for example through Matokitoki Valley and up over Hospital Hill.
- ▶ Long and challenging wilderness tracks for trampers, for example the Mount Hikurangi Track and Rua's track.
- ▶ Shorter scenic tracks such as Kaiti Hill and Titirangi Domain walks, Makorori Headland, Okitu Domain Walkway, Gray's Bush Walking Track, Te Kuri Farm Walkway, Whinray Scenic Reserve Tracks, Otoko Walkway, Cook's Cove Walkway and Anaura Bay Walkway. These range in length from 15 minutes to several hours.

Gisborne District Council administers approximately 370 hectares of amenity, esplanade, recreational and other reserves in Wainui and Gisborne City. It might be said that there are a relatively small number of off-road walking tracks within this huge resource of open space.

Beaches - Beaches are an important area for recreational walking. Most walking occurs along the sand (when tides permit) but there is also a formed walkway along Waikanae Beach.