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Committee Regional Transport Committee  
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## Active a2b Final Report 2013

### 1. Purpose

To provide the Committee with the 2013 evaluation report of the Active a2b programme and its Streets Alive challenge.

### 2. The decision- making process and significance

No decision is being sought in this report as it is merely providing information to the Committee.

### 3. Background

Active a2b is a health and wellbeing initiative that was delivered in 2013 by the Sustainable Transport Team at Greater Wellington Regional Council, for the fourth consecutive summer.

The goals of the programme are transport-related but the programme is promoted to workplaces and packaged as 'health and wellbeing', because a 'sustainable transport' programme was found to have limited appeal.

The programme aims to reduce congestion in urban areas by increasing travel to work by active modes. It also offers participants personalised support and resources to encourage them to walk and cycle to work. It is delivered through workplaces across the region.

Active a2b was once again delivered with support from health partners the Cancer Society, Compass Health (a primary health organisation representing 57 general practice teams) and Regional Public Health. These partnerships affirm the health benefits of active transport and also offer participants information for improved nutrition and smoking cessation.

This year, an additional branch of the programme was offered, with assistance from Regional Public Health, to non-office-based (offline) organisations such as factories and large retail outlets outside of Wellington CBD. The purpose of this was to engage more Maori and Pacific Island participants who are a target

demographic of the health sector. Offline organisations typically have a high representation of these two populations.

The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge is the competitive arm of the Active a2b initiative, which aims to promote active commuting. Promotion was primarily done via Active a2b correspondence (Facebook/Twitter, emails, newsletters). Workplaces that had participated in previous years or in the Spring to the Street challenge of 2012, were also sent information to distribute around their workplace.

This year Streets Alive invited schools to participate as well. Nine schools actively promoted it and five schools entered teams – Kapiti College, Wellington College, Wellington East Girls College, Wellington Girls College and Tawa College.

## **4. Key messages**

### **4.1 Active a2b**

The full Active a2b report is set out in **Attachment 1** to this report. The following key messages are highlighted from the attached report:

This year 81 workplaces registered for the programme, representing a total of approximately 41,000 employees. A total of 1170 individuals participated in the programme, with 294 part of the ‘Active a2b Plus’ group. These are people who normally drove to work at least twice a week.

Results showed that Active a2b achieved increases in the use of active trips to work. The increase in walking trips was not significant, however cycling trips in the Active a2b Plus group increased by 5 percentage points (from 9% to 14%). Car trips for the Active a2b Plus group also decreased significantly from 79% to 63%. This is similar to the reduction in car trips observed for Active a2b Plus participants in 2012. In 2013 there was little change in travel behaviour for the Active a2b Standard group.

Evaluation data from the Active a2b Plus group indicated that the programme led to a reduction of 3664 kilometres of vehicle travel a week. Using prices set by the New Zealand Transport Agency, the economic value of the increase in walking and cycling was \$42,602, producing a cost benefit ratio for the programme of 1:4.3.

The offline version of the programme had only a small number of participants, and failed to increase Maori and Pacific Island participation overall, however the majority of people that did participate felt well supported by the programme. The success of one particular organisation (a participation rate of nearly 25 per cent of all staff) highlighted the importance of a workplace “champion” to motivate staff to take part. The conclusion from the reports is that in future years this programme be promoted and supported by a health agency.

Active a2b continues to meet its targets of decreasing the number of people that drive to work and encouraging people to take up active modes. The Active a2b Plus group significantly reduced their car mode share by 16% with the number of participants that drove alone significantly reducing from 44% to 32%. This demonstrates that the programme continues to be successful in

prompting people to try walking and cycling in the New Year and then supporting them to keep new routines up, even when summer and daylight savings are over.

Almost half (45%) of respondents also thought that Active a2b had helped them to walk or cycle more outside of work and 61% thought that it had helped improve their health and well-being. As the most successful element of the programme, Active a2b's relationship with its health partners is crucial to providing a more holistic programme with an outward facing 'health and well-being' focus.

There was a concern by the Sustainable Transport team that being in its fourth year of delivery, Active a2b may have lost its appeal. However, this year's number of participants matched those of (the record) 2012, despite 20 organisations opting out. This indicates that participating organisations are potentially more engaged in the programme as time goes on and are able to recruit a larger number of staff internally. Active a2b is still managing to reach new participants with 72% of them being new to the programme.

#### **4.2 Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge 2013**

As stated above the Streets Alive Challenge is the competitive arm of the Active a2b initiative. The evaluation report of this challenge is included as **Attachment 2** to this report. The following key messages are highlighted from the report.

The Challenge attracted 528 registrations and 104 teams. Ninety nine teams were validated (achieved teams of four), forming a total of 396 participants, significantly more than the previous year where 255 people took part.

It was found that most participants were travelling between two and five kilometres on their active commute and the vast majority maintained or increased their frequency of active commuting as a result of taking part in the challenge. This change in frequency resulted in a 948 kilometre increase per week of active commuting. Those travelling 5-10 kilometres contributed the most to this change in kilometres travelled.

Over the month of the challenge, 6025 active commuting trips were made by participants which included 3793 walking trips and 2232 cycling trips.

### **5. Communication**

Both reports will be circulated to the participating health partners and then placed on the Council website.

### **6. Recommendations**

*That the Committee:*

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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**Attachment 1:** Active a2b Final report for 2013

**Attachment 2:** The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge 2013 Final report