

MODEL COMMUNITIES - MEDIA QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SHEET

What is a model walking and cycling community?

Model communities are urban environments where walking or cycling is offered to the community as the easiest transport choice.

Why is the NZ Transport Agency embarking on model communities?

Through its Government Policy Statement on Land Transport Funding the government requires that walking and cycling improve their contribution to the reduction of congestion in urban areas.

How much money will be invested in model communities over the three years from 2009-12?

The NZTA has allocated \$7m to the walking and cycling activity class in the 2009/2012 National Land Transport Programme (\$2m for the period 2010 to 2011 and \$5m from 2011 to 2012).

What are some of the pre-requisites for a community to be a model walking and cycling community?

Model communities are about delivering safe environments that are suitable for novice users commuting to school or to work. Model community candidates had to demonstrate that a range of community destinations (business, schools, retail) are within 'easy' riding or walking distance from large residential population centres. The proximity of destinations to each other, the density of the urban form and a range of land-uses (residential, commercial) are important considerations. Climate, topography and demographic factors also have to be considered.

In deciding which local authority to award the model community funding to, what were some of the factors taken into account by the NZTA?

Model community applicants had to show considerable progress with walking or cycling mode share, and where for example:

- a walk- and cycle-friendly culture already exists;
- a vision to support walking and cycling has been established and communicated to the community;
- the approach is driven by a robust strategy and that the strategy is being implemented;
- components of the network are in place, which can be built on and expanded;
- community engagement mechanisms and user group networks are in place; and
- the community already has a track record of walking and/or cycling.

What will determine future success of model communities?

The future success of model communities will depend on how successfully a council can integrate walking and cycling with their other strategies, policies, programmes and activities. Examples of these are land use, maintenance, other capital works, parking and vehicle access.

How was selection and recommendation for funding approached?

In January 2010 local authorities were invited to express their interest in becoming a walking and cycling model community. Applications involved a two stage process. The NZTA initially received 22 proposals

from interested councils. Overall, the majority of all the proposals were of a high standard and clearly demonstrated their commitment and passion to become a model community.

Four councils, Nelson, New Plymouth, Hastings and Taupo were short listed to proceed to stage 2. Following assessment, New Plymouth and Hastings were identified as the preferred model community candidates.

Why were New Plymouth and Hastings the preferred candidates?

Overall New Plymouth and Hastings demonstrated the best alignment with the model community goals, objectives and criteria. Their integrated packages of activity had good policy alignment, strong leadership and commitment, and a passion to develop their communities as great places to live, work and play, and make walking and cycling the easiest transport choice.

How much funding has been approved for each of the successful councils?

New Plymouth District Council will receive \$3.71m and Hastings District Council's allocation is \$3.57m. . The funding applies to the 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial years.

What are some of the key activities included in the successful proposals?

The package of activity in the **New Plymouth District Council** proposal includes:

- Shared pathway projects prioritised for maximum impact
- Complimentary local and state highway on-road cycle improvements
- Ongoing opportunities for expanding the network – Waitara and beyond
- An active transport hub
- The New Plymouth "Dream street" concept and shared space within the city centre
- A complimentary education programme including cyclist skills training, kids involved in driving down speed, Share the road, Pathways and Captain Car Door campaigns, Wild West Bike Fest, car free days, school gateway projects, travel planning, surveys, modal mapping and a new movement web site.

The package of activity in the **Hastings District Council** proposal includes;

- A focus on four key arterial routes into the city centre, completing routes and linking communities and modes
- Complimentary on-road cycle improvements on key collector routes
- Shared pathway projects
- Footpath renewal, connectivity and lighting
- A network of information signs, bike stands and seats
- A complimentary education programme including cyclist skills training, Share the road, campaigns, promotional campaigns for 'Walk and cycle to school', 'Walk and cycle to work', 'Walk and cycle to the shop' and 'Walk and cycle for fun', and safety programmes.

What was the NZTA's rationale for investing in two model communities?

Investing in two model communities has the advantage of spreading the investment wider while retaining the ability to make a tangible difference. By spreading it much wider there is the risk that substantial step changes might not be achievable or visible. Additionally, investing in two locations with slightly different

packages of activity not only enables them to build on each other's programmes but also provides the opportunity to trial a wider range of components and for shared learnings to help stimulate future investment in other areas.

What were some of the particularly strong aspects of the successful applicants' proposals?

Both proposals intend to engage, educate and encourage their respective communities through a range of media and tools to insure they are fully informed of the project and on board.

Both councils are willing to work with another model community and are keen to share the success with other locations. This means there is a high degree of transferability. Both proposals put forward the concept of a research programme to ensure the key success factors and lessons learnt are captured and made available to others.

Both councils identified good monitoring and evaluation frameworks and alignment with the Ministry of Transport's Integrated Monitoring Framework. This will ensure that good data is collected and success can be measured.

Where to from here?

The NZTA will be working closely with the two councils to progress their approved package of activity. As the model community project is a pilot there will be a strong emphasis on a partnership approach. A governance group will be set up with both councils to ensure the proposed programme of activity is implemented in a timely manner. NZTA representatives will participate in this group, and will continue to assist and advise where appropriate.

The NZTA's focus in the next two years is about learning as much as we can about investing in a model community in the New Zealand context, so this learning can be shared with other communities enthusiastic about moving in this direction.

The NZTA will also continue to work with the two other short listed councils, Nelson and Taupo, and the other 18 councils from stage 1 to assist them on their model community journey.