



The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge

2013 Final report

An active commuting challenge from Greater Wellington Regional Council and sponsors



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1. Overview

The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge 2013 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. Due to the cancellation of the BikeWise event, Streets Alive expanded the challenge to include cycling this year. The event was run over a four-week period from Go by Bike Day (Wed 12th Feb) until Walk 2 Work day (Wed 13 Mar). Over this month, 6025 active commuting trips were made by participants – 3793 walks and 2232 cycles.

The Streets Alive Challenge is the competitive arm of the Active a2b initiative, which aims to promote active commuting, thereby reducing traffic in suburban areas. Promotion was therefore primarily done via Active a2b correspondence (Facebook/Twitter, emails, newsletters). Workplaces that had participated in previous years or in Spring to the Street were also sent information to distribute around their workplace. Streets Alive posters were developed and sent to schools and workplaces to display and schools were specifically targeted and called to engage them in the challenge. A DL flyer was printed and distributed to active commuters at several key areas in Wellington prior to the start date and also at Go by Bike Day.

Eighty two workplaces promoted the event, with 54 workplaces forming valid teams. 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 and Tawa College.

2. Changes for 2013

The key changes implemented this year were:

- Team numbers were fixed to four per team
- Schools were invited to participate
- Only active commuting trips were counted
- One trip equalled one point (kilometres travelled were not recorded)
- Cyclists were included as well as walkers.

3. Sponsorship

A number of organisations contributed to the event by providing prizes. Sponsorship for the event was as follows:

- Top Team – a \$200 [shoe clinic](#) voucher for each member
- Second Team – an annual [Zealandia](#) membership for each member
- Top small, medium and large workplace – a [Microscooter](#) each for the office
- Top school – a [Wholly Bagels](#) breakfast or \$1000 towards a sustainable transport event and free cycle skills training.

Spot prizes included: Four commuter packs for school participants (made up of Active a2b and BikeWise tools – key ring torch, manky, drink bottle, bike seat cover, bag cover, reflective gear, bell), four day passes to [Zealandia](#), a [Beautiful Bike bag](#) and a men's and a women's cycling top from [Ground Effect](#).

4. Data Collection and Evaluation

Data was collected on participant behaviour and feedback from the Journey Planner quiz and the final evaluation. The final evaluation was completed by participants after the challenge had finished. The Journey Planner quiz was completed by participants at the start of Streets Alive. There were three questions of import. One was pertaining to the kilometres travelled by participants.

4.1 Distances of Active Commutes.

Users of Streets Alive were given the opportunity to participate in a bonus point Journey Planner quiz, which asked them several questions including the distance travelled on their active commute. It was found that 57 % of participants travelled for less than 5km on their active commute. Twenty eight percent travelled between 5 and 10km and 15% travelled for over 10km on their commute (Figure 1)

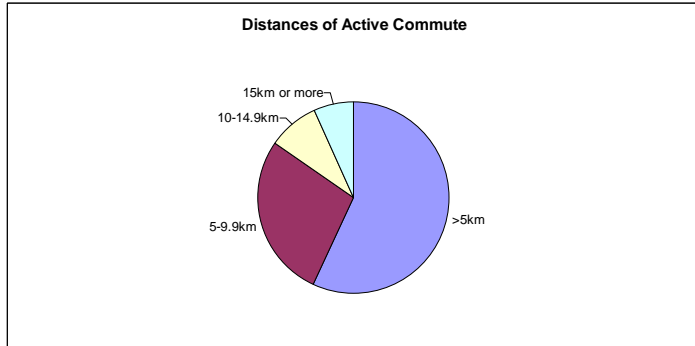


Figure 1. Distances of Active Commute of Streets Alive Participants.

4.2 Frequency of Active Commutes

Both the Journey Planner quiz and the final evaluation asked participants about their frequency of travel prior to and after the Streets Alive challenge, respectively. Data from both surveys was matched using email addresses as identifiers. It was found that overall, 51% of participants did not change the frequency of their active commutes (compared to 79% who claimed that this was the case in the final survey). This trend was found only slightly more so in the active commutes to work/school (59%) than the active commutes from work/school (57%).

Forty one percent of participants were found to have increased their weekly active commutes and this trend was found to be slightly more prevalent in the trips from work/school returning home (36%), compared to the trips to work/school (33%). This was significantly more than the self-reported increase in weekly active travel collected in the final evaluation alone (18%). Around 8% of participants decreased their active travel according to the matched quiz/evaluation results. This was more so than the data collected in the evaluation alone (3%).

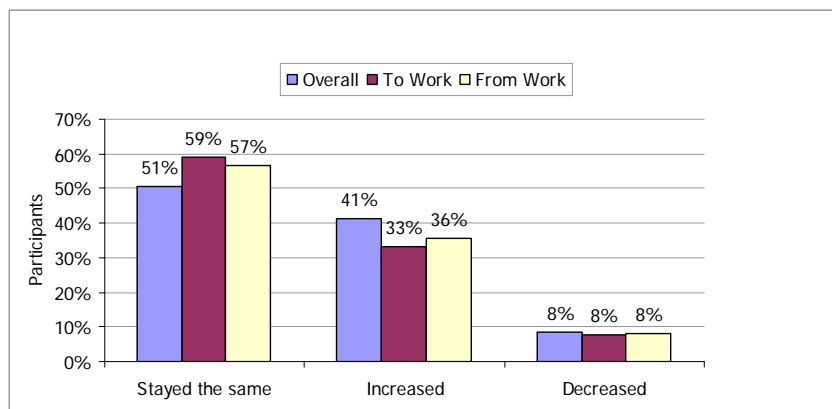


Figure 2. Changes in Frequency of Active Commuting Before and After Streets Alive.

4.3 Frequency of active commutes and the contribution to change in total active kilometres travelled.

The 41% of participants that increased their active travel contributed to a weekly increase of 948 kilometres of active travel overall. Looking more closely at this, it was found that those who travelled once or twice a week (15.8% of participants), contributed to the change in total active travel kilometres the most (44%). Those who travelled 3-4 times a week contributed to 33% of the change in active travel

kilometres, while those who actively travelled 5-6 or 7-8 times per week each contributed between 17-18 % to the increase in total kilometres travelled. Not surprisingly those who were already actively travelling 9-10 times per week (38% of participants), contributed to a decrease in active kilometres travelled (-11.6 %) (Figure 3). This makes sense, as those who actively travelled less frequently to start with, had more opportunity to increase their frequency, while those who were actively travelling for most of their trips, would more likely stay the same or decrease slightly.

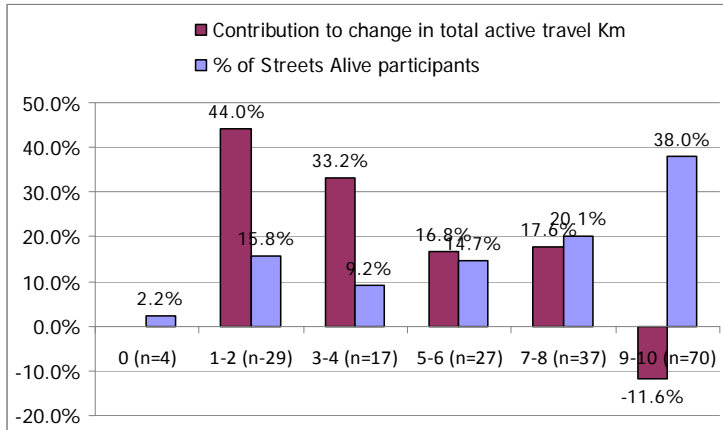


Figure 3. Participants’ frequency of active travel and the contribution to the change in total weekly active travel kilometres

4.4 Distance of active commutes and the contribution to change in active travel kilometres and frequency.

Looking again at the increase in active travel, it was found that over half (47.1%) of the contribution to change in total weekly active travel was from participants that actively travelled between 5-10 kilometres per day. This group represented 29.5% of all participants. The small amount of participants (7.7%) that travelled 10 kilometres or more contributed 27.5% to the increase in active travel. The majority of participants actively travelled between 2 and 5 kilometres per day (46.4%), however they only contributed 22.8% to the increase in active travel, with the least contribution (2.6%) coming from the participants who travelled for less than 2 kilometres on their active commute (16.4%) (Figure 4).

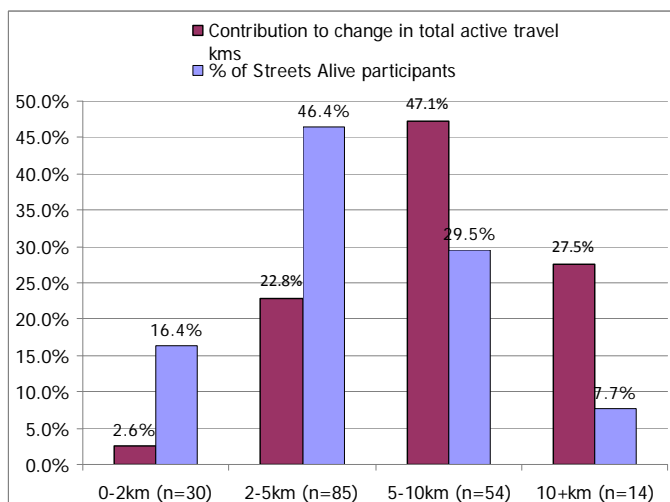


Figure 4. Active commuting distances (kms) and the contribution to change in total weekly active travel kilometres.

Looking at the increases in frequency of travel versus the kilometres travelled, it was found that the 10km+ group had the least increase in their frequency of travel than the other groups (representing 8.2 % of the total increase). With most participants travelling between 2 and 5km for their active commute, it is unsurprising that the greatest increase in frequency of travel was attributed to this group (39.3%). The participants in the 5-10km group represented only 26.8% of the total increases in frequency, while the 0-2km group represented 25.7% (Figure 5).

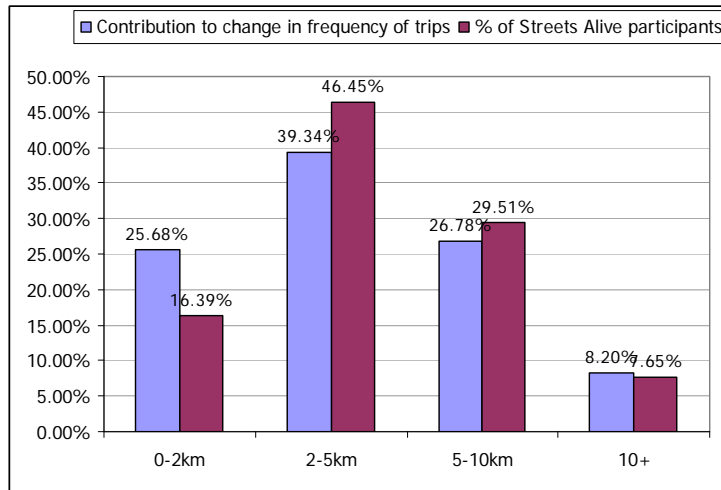


Figure 5. Active commuting distances and the contribution to changes in frequency.

Looking at the data in Figures 4 and 5, the data could seem confounding. However the 47.1% contribution to change in total active travel to the participants travelling 5-10km can be explained by the large difference in distance between groups. For example, one extra active trip in the 5-10km group may equate to 9 kilometres, while for example, two extra active trips in the 2-5km group may equate to only 4 extra kilometres. So fewer changes in the frequency of travel in the 5-10km group can still mean a greater overall contribution to changes in total active travel.

5. Participant feedback

5.1 Reasons to recommend the challenge

Feedback for the event was mixed. Only 72% of participants would recommend the challenge to others. Themes for recommending the challenge included:

- The sense of camaraderie in the workplace - “good chance to build camaraderie with co-workers”
- The challenge provided motivation and incentives to exercise – “great motivation to cycle and walk everyday”
- The challenge promoted active commuting - “ups the profile of sustainable ways to get to work”
- The fun aspect

The 20% who answered “maybe” and 8% who answered “no” had similar reasons as to why they would not recommend the challenge:

- The exclusion of kilometres travelled meant that those who lived further away were disadvantaged
- The exclusion of partial trips again meant those who lived further away were disadvantaged.
- It didn’t change behaviour in their team or workplace.

5.2 Registering, logging trips and receiving assistance

Looking at the ease of registration and the ease to log active commutes, most participants (78% for both) found it to be a simple process. It appears that only a few participants (just over 20% for both) found it hard to register and/or log walks.

Sixty six percent of participants did not need any assistance during the challenge. But out of those who did, 60% found it easy to get help, 32% found it ok, and just over 6% found it difficult to receive assistance.

5.3 Bonus point challenges

Just over 55% of participants found the bonus point challenges added an element of fun. Thirty percent of participants would “take it or leave it” and just over 11% found the bonus point aspect distracted from the challenge itself. Looking at comments pertaining to the bonus point challenges, the negative comments were largely due to access problems to social media due to workplace firewalls. This meant some teams were not able to participate in the challenges. It was suggested that challenges were either put up on the website or emailed. Other comments consisted of bonus point challenges needing to be more activity-based (e.g. a physical challenge), group activities rather than solo endeavours (e.g. a group ride along Petone foreshore) and there was also the comment that the challenges needed to be for a longer period of time and less of them (eg. one bonus point challenge a week).

Others really enjoyed the bonus point challenges with comments such as:

“ More bonus point challenges!” and “Bonus point challenges [were] fun”.

5.4 Participant Experience and General Feedback

Sixty eight percent of participants rated their overall experience of the Challenge as being a good one. Just over 25% thought it was ok, and around 6% found their experience to be poor.

The remainder of comments could be categorised under the following themes:

- Displeasure at the lack of recognition of distance of active commutes.
- Displeasure at not being able to log partially active commutes and/or recreational active trips
- Displeasure at not being aware or fore-warned of the closing date of the challenge
- Displeasure at restrictions to team numbers (4 maximum) – should be flexible to encourage more participation
- Logging of trips – disliking retrospective logging and the inability to log multiple trips.
- Making point allocations more transparent to give more integrity to the challenge

5.4.1 Engaging high school participants

There were a number of school-specific recommendations including:

1. Engaging schools sooner to increase participation
2. Developing a YouTube clip to show in assemblies to promote the event to students
3. Involve goal setting or allow students to choose out of a set of pre-determined goals.

6. Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations for the future including:

- Develop a weighted points system to include distance travelled
- Adopt past challenge rules, where kilometres travelled are a separate category
- Include partial commutes (this would work if distance travelled was adopted)
- Open team numbers to 2-6 participants again
- Enable system to allow multiple logging of trips (retrospectively)
- Consider pushing back start date to allow more time to engage schools
- Develop an active commuting YouTube clip featuring high school students – or perhaps open this up as a separate competition during the challenge to all high school teams
- Maintain the bonus point challenges with a few changes. Add a dedicated bonus point challenges webpage, restrict challenges to one a week, email challenges to participants and consider including some physical challenges as a group.

7. Conclusion

The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge had a record 528 participants sign up with 396 participants taking part in the 99 valid teams. This was the first year that Streets Alive included cycling and the first year that colleges were invited to take part. There were a number of other changes to the event this year including: the discarding of kilometres travelled, the inclusion of full active commuting trips only and restricting numbers to 4 team members.

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.

Some key criticisms of the event suggest several recommendations for the future including recognising kilometres travelled, allowing partial active commuting trips, being flexible with team member numbers and communicating bonus point challenges through the website and emails. Engagement of colleges at an earlier date and using social media is recommended to increase participation from this group. Despite these grievances, the majority of participants enjoyed the challenge overall and would recommend it to others as it was fun, encouraged camaraderie in the workplace, supported active transport and provided motivation to exercise.