Workplace and Business Travel Programme
2006-2014
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Executive Summary

Greater Wellington Regional Council has a number of transport objectives, including targeting the trips made in peak periods each weekday where congestion is at its greatest. The wider strategy is to reduce the number of private vehicles on the road, by increasing active modes, public transport use, and vehicle occupancy.

Campaigns that directly target the wider population can be costly and/or ineffective at bringing about behaviour change for individual travel choices. However, workplaces can have a strong influence over employee behaviour, and can often be instrumental in encouraging employees to try new modes of travel. Workplaces have the ability to show leadership in promoting health and wellbeing, and can often incentivise sustainable travel at little or no cost.

The Workplace and Business Travel Programme has been in operation since 2006, and has evolved over that time. From initially focussing on workplace travel plans, its major focus now is on a range of challenges, health and wellness programmes, workshops, training and safety initiatives, newsletters and a carpool matching service. It is clear that the programme continues to achieve demonstrable results. This includes benefits for the workplaces engaging with the programmes, and for the region by way of increasing levels of sustainable travel.

Below are some of the results outlined in more detail in this report.

- Census data for the region are recording positive trends, particularly for the active modes. Cyclist numbers are increasing rapidly.
- More than 3,000 commuters are registered in the region on Let’s Carpool, with a notable increase in carpooling after registering.
- Competitions and programmes regularly attract more than a thousand participants, and record significant changes in commuting patterns.
- Workplaces which have formally developed travel plans and done before and after travel surveys have reduced drive alone trips by around 4%, over some 9,000 employees.
- Several Benefit-Cost calculations have shown good returns for the money spent on these programmes.

There is plenty of room for expanding the reach and resourcing of these programmes. Doing so will help us meet the objectives set out in the Regional Land Transport Strategy, and the forthcoming Regional Land Transport Plan, and keep the region’s transport network efficient and effective.
Figure 1 - An overview of the initiatives aimed at a broad approach to behaviour change
Introduction

Working with businesses to manage the demand for travel

Greater Wellington Regional Council has been implementing the Workplace and Business Travel Programme under the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS) since 2006. The Regional Travel Demand Management Plan which sits under the RLTS provides the directives for this work. The strategy, along with the other implementation plans (Regional Road Safety, Regional Walking & Regional Cycling plans) are soon to be superseded by the Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP), which is expected to be finalised by mid-2015. This plan is expected to have similar policy directions as the RLTS. Below are the draft objectives and outcomes in the RLTP that will most relate to the Workplace and Business Travel Programme.

- A high quality, reliable public transport network (objective)
  - Increased public transport use (outcome)
- A reliable and effective strategic road network (objective)
  - Reduced severe road congestion (outcome)
- An attractive and safe walking and cycling network (objective)
  - Increased mode share for pedestrians and cyclists (outcome)
- An efficient and optimised transport system that minimises the impact on the environment (objective)
  - Reduced harmful emissions from transport (outcome)
  - Increased private vehicle occupancy (outcome)

While new infrastructure projects can address several of these objectives, they do little to encourage mode shift away from private vehicle use. Providing alternatives to private vehicle travel is the most direct way to achieve the stated objectives of the RLTP. Even a small reduction in single occupancy vehicle trips on the road network can result in reduced congestion (increased network optimisation), fewer carbon emissions and increases in walking, cycling, public transport use and carpooling, as people move into these modes.

Despite alternative (non-private vehicle) transport modes being viable in most parts of the region and offering benefits to the individual including cost savings and mental and physical health improvements, people do not always assess their travel patterns in a rational way. Providing information about public transport and active transport is usually insufficient to change a person’s travel mode, especially for their commute – the most habitual of journeys.

A large body of transport behaviour change research suggests that a robust travel demand management (TDM) plan is crucial for achieving outcomes like those outlined in the RLTS and RLTP. With no single initiative providing a ‘silver bullet’ for mode shift, best practice indicates a comprehensive programme or ‘toolkit’ of initiatives, covering a variety of modes (walking, cycling, public transport and carpooling) and audiences (workplace, schools and communities) has the best chance for success.
Background to Greater Wellington’s Workplace and Business Travel Programme

Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) established a Workplace and Business Travel Programme in 2006. It was initially set up to assist large employers develop, implement and monitor internal workplace travel plans that were mandated for the public sector as part of the Govt³ sustainability initiative. Govt³ was a central government programme aimed at reducing the environmental impact of the public sector and had four work areas: sustainable building, office consumables, waste, and transport.

With assistance from the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), GWRC developed survey templates and administered a survey software programme that collected baseline and follow up travel data on behalf of workplaces to monitor any mode shift that occurred as a result of the programme. GWRC coordinated the network of workplace travel planners and held quarterly meetings for them to share ideas and knowledge about the travel planning process.

Large employers such as Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB), Hutt Valley District Health Board (HVDHB), Victoria University and Massey University received significant assistance from the GWRC workplace travel plan coordinator, to develop their travel plans and roll out sustainable transport initiatives to encourage behaviour change away from peak hour, single occupancy trips.

In 2009, after a change of government, the Govt³ initiative was abandoned and there was no longer an official mandate for employers to implement travel plans within their workplace. Since then, the shape of the Workplace and Business Travel Programme has continued to evolve, moving away from working intensely with individual workplaces. Instead, a sustainable travel toolkit was developed, aimed at reaching a broad audience of employers by providing attractive initiatives that offered benefits beyond those of carbon emission reductions. These initiatives included a regional carpooling website, a health and wellbeing programme promoting walking and cycling to work and sustainable transport workplace competitions.

What is Travel Demand Management? (TDM)

TDM is a collection of measures used to make best use of the existing network and reduce the demand for travel, particularly by single occupancy vehicles. TDM measures also seek to modify travel behaviour and mode choice decisions so as to reduce the negative impacts of car use. Measures include road network management tools, land use policies, behaviour change tools, economic pricing measures and new technology.

What are the Benefits?

TDM can have a wide range of benefits relating to transport efficiency, economic growth, relief of severe traffic congestion, journey time reliability, travel choices, environmental sustainability, public health, and improved road safety.
While some workplaces still undertake travel plans they are now less of a focus for the programme, and various initiatives are often promoted in a workplace without an approved travel plan in place.

**Greater Wellington’s workplace TDM ‘toolkit’**

The Sustainable Transport team now delivers a diverse range of services and assistance to employers across the region. Workplaces ultimately choose which aspects they would like to use or promote. All of the programmes listed below are consistent with best practice and have been developed to align with our goals and objectives under the Regional Land Transport Strategy (RLTS), with input and feedback from employers across the region.

**Major Programmes**

**Active a2b**

Active a2b is a sustainable transport programme but is marketed as a health and wellness programme. It has been running for five consecutive years and has had more than 4,000 people through the programme. It offers a range of tailored individual support to encourage walking and cycling to and from work.

The programme builds on the favourable summer weather and New Year’s resolutions to help individuals develop habits of active commuting. It runs for three full months, and allows for the dissemination of relevant information, events and motivating examples of others, thus normalising the walking and cycling culture. Tools, resources and workshops aim to reduce or remove barriers to active commutes.

The main target group for Active a2b are those participants who drive (or are a passenger) to work in a vehicle three times or more a week at the time of registration. This ‘Active a2b Plus’ group receives a higher level of personalised support than other participants. All other participants are part of the ‘Standard Group’ who receive the same tools and resources, but do not receive phone call support.

Active a2b finishes with a ‘Go Well Through Winter’ safety campaign, promoting visibility for the winter months. A quiz was undertaken by 800 people in 2014, who then received a discount voucher for Best in Test bike lights, and other free reflective gear. About 100 people collected reflective material following the promotion.

In 2011, GWRC received recognition for the Active a2b programme when it was awarded the New Zealand Traffic Institute (Trafinz) Leadership Award. It also received the Golden Foot Award from Living Streets Aotearoa in 2010 for Best Walking Promotion in New Zealand.
Spring to the Street

Spring to the Street is Greater Wellington’s fun, three week sustainable transport challenge. It is now in its fourth year.

Spring to the Street happens in September in the lead up to daylight saving, and encourages people to maximise their sustainable travel over a three week period. Points are given per kilometre for walking, cycling, public transport use or carpooling. People can compete as individuals or in teams.

More than 2,000 people took part in 2013. The competition was highly promoted within workplaces, so that even those not taking part are more aware of how many people are using sustainable modes of travel. It rewards good behaviour and draws attention to the various options for sustainable commuting.

Spring to the Street is the only challenge that covers all forms of sustainable transport, and being the largest, it is also a good opportunity to get people trying new journeys. There are various nomination prizes available and participants are encouraged to share their stories and experiences. The scale of the challenge gives sustainable travel additional visibility where teams are encouraged to compete against others from within their workplace.

Let’s Carpool

Low vehicle occupancy rates contribute to peak hour congestion. Improving the efficiency of existing infrastructure, by increasing vehicle occupancy rates in the case of carpooling, has shown to have strong economic benefits (Hulten, 1996.). At an individual level, carpooling is also becoming an attractive transport solution. Saving money is the main motivator for people to join a carpool in New Zealand (Abrahamse, W & Keall, M., 2012).

Until 2009, there was a lack of tools available for workplaces to promote carpooling among their staff. Let’s Carpool was initiated by Greater Wellington Regional Council to fulfil this role. In partnership with Auckland Transport it has since been expanded as a national website and adopted by seven other regions across the country. It specifically targets the regular commute (where congestion is most severe) and is most suitable for those people who live further away or don’t have access to good public transport.

A research report undertaken by Victoria University for the Greater Wellington Regional Council in 2012 found that for those registered on the site, the numbers of people carpooling increased from 13.5% (at time of registration) to 28.5% when the evaluation was undertaken. There are now more than 3,000 registrants in the Wellington Region, and 10,000 nationally.
Various workplaces promote the website internally to their staff. Nineteen employers in the region have set up a direct link for their workplaces on the Let’s Carpool website to make it easy for their employees to register. Some workplaces have gone on to adopt stronger incentives for staff to carpool. Transpower for example, has a dedicated carpool parking space, drawn through a lottery to carpoolers registered on the Let’s Carpool website, while Kapiti Coast District Council has eight carpool parking spaces available.

In 2014, the Sustainable Transport team partnered with the GWRC Rail Operations team to trial carpool parking at two regional Park & Ride stations. Five preferential parks were installed at Waikanae Station and 10 preferential parks were installed at Petone Station. The trial aims to encourage people to carpool to the station in order to catch the train. This helps to integrate travel modes and reduce pressure on parking facilities which are beyond their capacity. It also promotes recognition and acceptance of carpooling as a travel option and encourages solo drivers to give it a go.

Let’s Carpool was awarded a Trafinz Achievement Award in 2010, and received a very positive, independent evaluation.

Other Supporting Initiatives

The ‘Get Your Workplace Moving’ guide
This document outlines a wide range of best practice low cost measures available to workplaces to promote sustainable travel within their organisation. It is available both electronically and in hard copy, with case studies from across the region. Advice increasing carpooling, public transport use, and active travel are included. In addition, flexible working hours have been promoted as part of workplace travel planning because they have the potential to smooth the morning peak time travel demand and reduce congestion. Many large organisations in the programme, including Greater Wellington and other councils across the region, have developed policies or actions supporting flexible working hours.

Cycle Skills Training
In partnership with Pedal Ready, GWRC promotes and provides adult cycle skills training to help people increase their safety and feel more comfortable cycling to work. This training is provided free to workplaces when six or more people can attend.

Bike Buddies
Experienced cyclists (volunteers) are partnered up with new riders to accompany them on their regular commute until they are comfortable with the route they take. This is promoted annually, particularly through the Active a2b programme. In 2012, our Bike Buddies programme was used as the basis for creating a similar programme in Ottawa, Canada.

Staff Travel Surveys
GWRC provides workplaces with a standardised travel survey and administers the survey software to make it easy for employers to undertake staff travel surveys. The information obtained from the survey can assist employers in understanding their staff travel patterns and then measuring progress after identifying a range of strategies to encourage their staff to adopt new travel patterns. The data also allows GWRC to measure progress across the region, and help to calculate the benefits of the WTP Programme.

**Public Transport Taster**
Through our workplace contacts, and in partnership with NZ Bus and Snapper, bus cards pre-loaded with three days of free travel are offered to people who drive alone to work to encourage them to try out public transport. Results from this initiative suggest that many participants use the cards and go on to top up their new Snapper card and continue using public transport. CCDHB, Transpower and Victoria University have all arranged Public Transport Tasters within their workplace.

**Support for events**
GWRC supports various events that help to promote and celebrate sustainable transport. Many of these events are organised by other groups or organisations, with GWRC sometimes supporting with design, promotion and resources. Examples include Go By Bike Day, Walk 2 Work Day, Ciclovia, Open Streets or Car-free days. Workplace contacts are also encouraged to run their own promotions on these days, or to promote external events, making them visible and accessible to staff.

**Networking and partnerships**
Greater Wellington Regional Council coordinates the quarterly Workplace and Business Travel (WTP) forum to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experience amongst participating workplaces in the region. The quarterly forums are an opportunity to inform workplaces of upcoming sustainable transport initiatives and include presentations from keynote speakers and round-table updates from attendees.

As well as a quarterly forum, where participants meet in person, the WTP contact database allows for the sharing of relevant information and events as they come up throughout the year.

**Participating Workplaces**

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**Victoria University of Wellington (VUW)**
The cost of parking was under market rates when VUW began its travel plan process in 2007, effectively providing a major subsidy for car drivers.

Over seven years parking charges have more than doubled, and parking supply has been reduced as demand fell. Both students and staff have been encouraged to find other modes. Bus patronage and active modes have risen significantly.

VUW has monitored its progress with 3-yearly travel surveys, assisted by GWRC in 2007, 2010, and 2013.
To date (October 2014), there are approximately 60 contacts on the email list for the WTP Forum, from about 40 organisations.

The most active organisations over recent years include:

1. **Councils** - Upper Hutt City Council, Hutt City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Wellington City Council, and Greater Wellington Regional Council

2. **Tertiary Institutions** - Victoria University, Massey University, Weltec, Open Polytechnic


4. **Government agencies** - Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Transport, Department of Conservation, Department of Corrections, New Zealand Defence Force

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**Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC)**

KCDC is one of the more recent organisations to join the forum. It started with a baseline travel survey in 2013. With free parking and less PT options, most staff drove alone.

Since then, KCDC has focused on carpooling and cycling. Parking is scarce around its new building, so eight priority carpool parks were created for carpoolers. Morning teas were arranged to introduce staff from similar areas, successfully generating new carpooling groups.

Employees have also shown interest in getting back onto bikes. New cycle racks have been installed, pool bikes made available to staff, and cycle skills training provided during work hours, which was promoted for staff wellbeing. This has given staff the confidence to begin cycling to work.

A follow-up survey in 2014 showed that single occupancy car trips to work had fallen by 9%, cycling numbers had more than doubled to 13%, and carpooling had increased by 1% (likely to be higher due to follow-up initiatives since the survey).

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5. **Other Workplaces** - Transpower, Capital and Coast District Health Board, Hutt Valley District Health Board, National Institute of Water and Atmosphere, New Zealand Post, PowerCo, Z Energy, Meridian

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**Partnerships**
Through the workplace travel planning programme, Greater Wellington has been able to forge strong relationships with external organisations to extend the reach of our programmes and increase awareness of sustainable transport options in the Wellington region.

Through the WTP programme, Greater Wellington has established partnerships with the following organisations:

- Regional Public Health – Sponsorship for Active a2b, knowledge sharing, conference attendance
- Cancer Society – behaviour change training, sponsorship for Active a2b
- Compass Health – sponsorship for Active a2b
- Sustainable Business Network – networking, best practice
- Auckland Transport – Let’s Carpool partnership
- CityHop and Shyft – promotion and support for carshare schemes
- Pedal Ready – expansion and promotion of cycle skills programmes.
- NZ Bus and Snapper – free travel and bus cards for Public Transport trials
- Victoria University – research assistance and internship provision
- Z Energy – campaign support for Kiwi Carpool Week
- Nutrition and Physical Activity forum – best practice sharing and promotion

Partnerships such as those listed above help to keep GWRC informed about developments relating to the transport, travel and health sectors.

**Workplace Actions**

GWRC shares information and best practice with participating workplaces, but it is ultimately the workplaces that put in the effort to bring about change. Often workplaces will choose tools to suit their needs and those that have the most impact.

The text boxes displayed show a selection of case studies which aim to highlight a variety of ways that organisations have benefited and implemented programmes with aid from the WTP Programme. Between them, many creative ways have been found to encourage sustainable transport, generally with the support of staff and management.

**Department of Conservation (DoC)**

DoC has been promoting sustainable transport since 2008, and has a very low rate of commutes to work by private vehicle (see ‘Results’ section).

Along with supporting their staff to be active through various means, DoC has made the Airport Flyer the norm for trips to the airport. With easily accessible bus tickets (at $8 per trip), and more than 2,000 trips made in a year, the Department has made substantial savings in taxi fares, and also helped to minimise emissions and congestion in Wellington.

DoC also promotes video conferencing which minimises the need for air and business travel, reducing the overall emissions from the organisation. They furthermore encourage flexible hours and working from home where possible.
Results

Workplace Travel Planning

Nearly all of the organisations which have actively committed to developing a travel plan and initiatives to promote sustainable travel have succeeded in reducing car trips and increasing sustainable modes. Figures 2 and 3 show the results achieved since 2006 and onwards. While a few percent may not seem large, several of these organisations are some of the biggest employers in the region, with total staff numbers of approximately 9,000.

![Percentage of staff that drive alone to work before and after travel plan](image)

**Figure 2 - Changes in ‘drive alone’ trips to work**

The above chart shows that many organisations have achieved around five percent (or more) reductions in drive alone trips to work. The chart below shows changes in travel behaviour, averaged out across all the organisations above.
Figure 3 - Percentage point changes in each mode share

Figure 4 gives further perspective in demonstrating that these organisations are generally well ahead of the regional average for sustainable travel when compared with the latest (2013) census results. While this may in part be attributed to them being larger organisations that are generally more accessible by sustainable modes than many other smaller employers, it does show that participating employers are ahead of the regional average. Note that the census results have been scaled to adjust for those who did not work or travel to work on census day, to make them comparable to workplace travel survey results.
High BCR
In 2012, a consultant was hired to evaluate the Workplace and Business Travel programme using the SP12 worksheets from NZTA’s Economic Evaluation Manual. Workplaces were categorised into medium and high travel plan benefiting organisations according to how many travel planning activities were taking place. This study found annual present value benefits from the programme to be estimated at $5,843,718 versus an annual cost of $320,000, which results in a benefit-cost ratio for the programme of 18.3. This figure is necessarily based on some assumptions, but the high figure shows that the benefits of the programme are easily justified by the costs.

In advance of the next round of NZTA funding for the 2015-2018 period, a new BCR has been calculated for the overall Workplace and Business Travel programme. Using NZTA’s procedure from the Economic Evaluation Manual, a BCR for future spending over the next three years has been estimated at 4.9, which again shows a strong return on investment for the region.

With good before and after travel data for participants in Active a2b, it is also possible to estimate a BCR for this particular programme. Benefits derive from the increase in kilometres travelled by active modes, and are calculated according to NZTA values. The 2014 programme created estimated benefits of $92,560 during the length of the programme (13 weeks) and produce a benefit cost ratio of 11.6.

Major Programme Results

Active a2b
In 2014, which was the fifth year of the programme, 1,132 people participated in Active a2b. The programme demonstrated large shifts in mode, away from the private vehicle and towards the active modes.

Figure 5 shows the most recent results, which include a growth in active modes from 39% of trips to work up to 46% at the end of the programme. Journey to work by car had reduced from 28% to 26% of trips among participants.
Spring to the Street

In 2013, Spring to the Street had a record 2,074 people participating. The before and after travel surveys showed a small reduction in car trips (both drive alone and carpool), a small reduction in cycling, and an increase in the number of people taking the bus and train/ferry.

Figure 6 shows the results for the 2013 Spring to the Street programme. It shows a small but noticeable shift from car use, predominantly towards public transport.
Let’s Carpool
Let’s Carpool has been in operation since 2009. An evaluation undertaken by Victoria University in 2012 compared travel mode at the time of registration to the site, with respondents’ current travel. It found an increase in carpool use amongst registered users. This evaluation was done over the Wellington region, before the site expanded to other regions. There is currently a major survey of the entire database underway, for which results should be available later in 2014.

**Figure 7 - Main mode of travel before and after registration on the Let’s Carpool website**

As can be seen in Figure 7 above, carpooling increased significantly from 13.5% to 28.6%. While some of these carpoolers had previously been using public transport, there was also a drop of around 7% of drive alone trips.

**Effective marketing channel**
Marketing behaviour change programmes without a network of workplace contacts would be expensive, and would struggle to get the same uptake without a far more significant investment in advertising. Evaluations from our campaigns such as Active a2b, Spring to the Street and Kiwi Carpool Week show that many registrants hear about the initiative through their employer.

Without the Workplace Travel Planners Network, any initiative to promote sustainable transport would face higher costs to achieve the same result. When workplaces are able to distribute event and programme information among their staff, other GWRC initiatives (such as the Walking and Cycling Journey Planner, Be Safe Be Seen, Pedal Ready) also benefit.

**Indirect or intangible benefits**
Our programme benefits are often assessed according to fairly narrow criteria. Comments received during evaluation often point to other intangible benefits, from social comradery with colleagues, more motivated to stay healthy in other areas (such as nutrition), or feeling more awake and refreshed when arriving at work (productivity). A healthier workforce is less accident
prone, and can recover more quickly than an unhealthy workforce. Cyclists or walkers may feel more connected with their local neighbourhood, helping to build community and trust among residents. Such impacts cannot readily be measured or assessed, but the full social benefits of increased use of sustainable modes is likely to go beyond the narrower metrics assessed.

**Wellington - becoming a cycling city**

Results from the national census and annual Wellington City Council cordon counts show that Wellington has shown a significant increase in cycling levels since 2006. Cycle numbers have increased 73% in Wellington city according to census data, and the cordon counts have recorded a doubling of numbers. These trends have occurred despite little investment in the city’s cycling infrastructure. The trend from 2006 reversed previous years of cycling decline in Wellington and went against the general trend seen nationally of continued decline.

While increasing petrol prices, the rise of groups such as Cycle Aware Wellington and Frocks on Bikes, and the spread of slower speeds around the city are likely to be partly responsible for this trend, it would also seem likely that GWRC’s Workplace and Business Travel Programme and other active transport programmes have also contributed to the increase in commuter cycling.

**Conclusion**

The Workplace and Business Travel Programme continues to achieve its aims of increasing the amount of active modes, carpooling and public transport use and decreasing car usage. It provides a wide range of tools, events, resources and workshops, which a wide range of people participating. Over 80 workplaces participate in the programme representing over 40,000 people. The results from the different programmes continue to be positive and show the benefits of a range of behaviour change elements. New workplaces join the programme each year and new opportunities for encouraging travel behaviour change are being adopted.

The programme contributes to more active commuting which can help to minimise congestion in the region and reduce air pollution and emissions. The wider health benefits from the programme help to maintain health, raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and

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**Hutt City Council (HCC)**

To counter the effect of free or very cheap parking, HCC implemented a travel plan which gave employees up to $30 a month off public transport costs, making it a much more attractive option for their travel. This has led to an increase in patronage from 10% to 16% of trips to work.

For staff who walk or cycle to work, a subsidy for bicycles or equipment was also offered, up to $200 in value a year.

Carpooling has been encouraged where people continue to drive, with priority carparks offered. In case of emergency, for all sustainable modes, a ‘Guaranteed Ride Home’ scheme gave assurance that staff would not get left out of pocket by leaving the car at home.
promote the commute to work as a valuable time for fitting in exercise into a busy lifestyle. The health and wellness approach to some aspects of the programme proves to be a valuable channel for promoting sustainable transport, due to the overlapping goals and benefits.

Positive qualitative feedback

Softer, qualitative feedback from workplace contacts confirms the above assertion that the workplace travel planning programme provides real and valued benefits to organisations within the region. Here is a selection of quotes received from participants over recent years.

“We got bikes! Thanks!!! Couldn’t have done it without you and the WTP forum for your inspiration and support!”

“Programmes work well with motivated participants and provide good targeted assistance”

“Thank you for letting me attend the last couple of Workplace travel planning forums. The ideas which I have got through attending – are fantastic.”

“…good news, Corrections have just built a brand new secure bike park ;-) Your efforts with us are starting to pay”