**Complexities of Active Travel to Secondary Schools in Dunedin**

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| Multiple individual, social, environmental and policy factors influence how adolescents travel to school. Therefore, understanding the local context is essential. The Built Environment and Active Transport to School (BEATS) Research Programme has been examining active transport to school (ATS) in Dunedin and the Otago region since 2013. Currently research is evaluating the effects of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure changes in Dunedin on adolescents’ transport to school behaviours (2019-2023). This presentation will provide an overview of the BEATS research findings and research directions. Travel to secondary schools in Dunedin is dominated by motorised transport. Common barriers to ATS included distance, personal factors, limited support from parents, peers and schools, the perceived convenience of being driven to school, the weather, built environment, traffic safety concerns, and school choice policies. Distance to school should be taken into account as some ATS barriers such as traffic safety concerns, convenience of driving, and convenience of trip-chaining increase as distance to school increases. Both adolescents and their parents favoured walking compared to cycling to school. Compared to walking, cycling to school was less common, perceived as less safe, and received less social and infrastructure support. Walking and cycling require distinct strategies to address mode-specific barriers. In Dunedin, more supportive physical and social environments are required for promoting cycling to school among adolescents. Strategies also need to be designed to enable adolescents living beyond walking and cycling distance to school to integrate ATS as part of their daily school journey. Parents play a critical role in ATS decision making for teenagers. Therefore, future ATS initiatives should also engage parents of adolescents, understand their ATS-related barriers and address or minimize their concerns. Taken together, the BEATS findings highlight the importance of understanding the local social, cultural, regulatory, natural and built environment context when designing initiatives to promote ATS. |