



# Key Policy Recommendations for Active Transport in New Zealand

We welcome this Government's increased focus on wellbeing, walking, cycling, public transport and a Vision Zero approach. It extends previous efforts to promote active transport in New Zealand, including the National Walking and Cycling Strategy (2005),<sup>1</sup> a Guide for Decision Makers (2008)<sup>2</sup> and a Cycling Safety Panel's action plan (2014).<sup>3</sup> Despite these efforts, rates of active transport in New Zealand have continued to decline,<sup>4</sup> with negative impacts on health and the environment.

We need to set ambitious goals and monitor progress to ensure that any changes made are connected and effective. The Key Policy Recommendations for Active Transport document is a summary of multi-sectoral discussions held at The Active Living and Environment Symposium (TALES)

2019<sup>5</sup> in Dunedin, New Zealand on 13-15 February 2019. Our report is not intended to be a comprehensive and systematic review. Our goal was to establish a set of priority recommendations to guide decision-making in central and local government, public health units and regional sports trusts in New Zealand and any other organisation that may have a mandate around transport and environment. Recognising that some of our recommendations may be in progress, we urge more rapid implementation in those cases.

The document outlines key policy recommendations and associated actions grouped across four broad categories (Figure 1). The full report<sup>5</sup> is available on the TALES Symposium 2019 website.<sup>6</sup>

## A Evaluation, Governance and Funding

- A1. Set and monitor shared targets for the proportion of trips by active modes and public transport
- A2. Ensure that the value of active transport is recognised in policies and investment decisions to allocate the necessary funding for this task
- A3. Continually update the information available on health and economic impacts of specific active transport interventions

## B Education and Encouragement/Promotion

- B1. Promote active transport to and from schools
- B2. Promote active transport to and from workplaces
- B3. Make public transport more affordable and accessible
- B4. Improve motorist education

## C Engineering (Infrastructure, Built Environment)

- C1. Require and fund a universal, interconnected active transport network
- C2. Design and transform towns and cities for people to ensure positive health and environmental outcomes

## D Enforcement and Regulation

- D1. Change the decision making framework/planning rules (that affect transport options) to enable good health and wellbeing at a population level
- D2. Change regulations to improve road safety for active transport
- D3. Regulate for healthy transport options to and from schools
- D4. Improve and enforce regulations for better air quality

Figure 1. Summary of key policy recommendations for active transport in New Zealand

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## A EVALUATION, GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

Objectives, policies and related targets should be reflected in the Government's Policy Statement on Land Transport, Ministry of Health's Statement of Intent and national physical activity strategies, and relevant policies by the Ministries of Social Development, Housing and Urban Development and the Environment. Achieving modal shift requires collaborations and partnerships across multiple sectors. Therefore, forming a high level cross-sector oversight group is essential for monitoring the implementation and outcomes.

### A1 Set and monitor shared targets for the proportion of trips by active modes & public transport

- Set national targets for proportions of trips made on foot, by bicycle and by public transport.
  - Double the proportion of trips walked to 25% by 2050.
  - Double the proportion of cycling trips in each of the next decades, with the ultimate goal of 15% of all trips being on bicycles by 2050.
  - Increase the proportion of all trips by public transport to 15% by 2050.
- All levels of government should set separate mode shift targets for walking, cycling and public transport use, taking into account urban/rural and quality of service factors, and regularly monitor progress.
- Establish a high level cross-sector group to oversee progress against the targets annually and report progress at a national event chaired by Ministers and Mayors and/or as part of other existing events such as 2WALKandCYCLE Conference or ongoing TALES Symposia.
- Track mode shift, health, active transport infrastructure development, emissions and related investment as part of the next update to the Living Standards Framework influencing Treasury's Wellbeing budgets.
- Adopt the International Standard for measuring walking in the National Household Travel Survey and local/regional monitoring.

### A2 Ensure that the value of active transport is recognised in policies and investment decisions to allocate the necessary funding for this task

- Recognise both positive and negative externalities of transport modes in the New Zealand Transport Agency's Economic Evaluation Manual and the Business Case process.
- Require Health Impact Assessment (HIA) during transport planning processes.

### A3 Continually update the information available on health and economic impacts of specific active transport interventions

- Develop a New Zealand-calibrated Integrated Transport and Health Impact Modelling Tool (ITHIM) that uses propensity to walk and cycle sub-models from best-practice transport modelling and the World Health Organization's Health Economic Assessment Tool.
- Building on existing repositories, create an online and continually updated repository of examples of successful national and international interventions that have led to increases in rates of walking and/or cycling for transport.
- Create a toolkit (or adapt existing tools) that enables us to design and measure interventions that will lead to a healthy land use and transport system.
- Encourage and support evaluation of innovative initiatives, pilot projects or active transport infrastructure improvements across New Zealand in a way that allows greater rollout of successful interventions.

## B EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT/PROMOTION

### B1 Promote active transport to and from schools

Active transport to and from schools is a convenient way to integrate physical activity into everyday life. There are many examples of successful school interventions including New Plymouth's Let's Go, Auckland's Travelwise, Hastings' MoveIt, and South Australia's Way2Go. A New Zealand Travel Planners group has been set up by practitioners to disseminate best practices.

- Promote age-appropriate walking to school initiatives such as walking school buses for children, walk to school days for both children and adolescents and mapping of safe routes to/from school.
- Promote cycling to and from school by accelerating the rollout of cycle skills training at schools (Bike Ready programme), organising cycle to school days, cycling group rides in the school neighbourhoods, and providing safe storage of bicycles and helmets at school.

## B2 Promote active transport to and from workplaces

There is an increasing emphasis in the workplace on health and safety. To date much of the focus has been to reduce risks associated with easily identifiable proximate causes (i.e., the safety aspect of health and safety). This needs to be reframed to look at the positive health benefits of walking and cycling to work, including the potential short term and long term health consequences. In addition, the perceived risk of getting injured or a fatal event as a result of cycling on the road is much higher than the actual risk. Many countries (for example, Ireland, UK, France, Belgium) have schemes to incentivise active transport to and from workplaces.

- Incentivise/encourage workplace travel plans, including incentives to staff and a guaranteed ride home policy.
- Incentivise businesses to promote active transport choices for their staff by exempting active transport benefits from the Fringe Benefit Tax. For example, aim to adjust policies which result in a negative financial impact to employers who incentivise active or sustainable transport.
- Make bicycles more affordable through interventions such as bicycle subsidies.
- Support community-level interventions (such as low cost bike library or volunteer bicycle repair shops) to incentivise active or sustainable transport among individuals who are unable to access incentives offered through employment schemes.
- Set a higher budget for travel demand management, including initiatives such as Feel More and fund a campaign of regular positive stories associated with non-motorised travel with coverage on TV shows and respected figures seen using non-motorised modes.

## B3 Make public transport more affordable and accessible

People who use public transport walk on average twice as much as those who rely on motorised transport since they walk to and from the bus or train stop. Therefore, investment in public transport brings the additional benefit of improving health outcomes as well as reducing congestion and providing wider access for those who cannot afford a car. Public transport is more expensive in New Zealand than in many other countries. We need to ensure that public transport in New Zealand cities is available, adequate, accessible, affordable and appropriate, and represents a convenient transport option that is competitive compared with driving.

- Reform public transport farebox recovery rules; consider a subsidy or free service for all students.

## B4 Improve motorist education

At present, much of the conversation about pedestrian and cyclist safety puts the onus on the vulnerable road users. Campaigns emphasise the need to be visible (e.g. passing out free high-viz vests) or give way to motorists at courtesy crossings. We recommend that more should be done to educate motorists as well:

- Promote the Give Me Room campaign and the “Dutch Reach” - where people open their driver’s door with their left hand so that they look over their right shoulder before opening their car door. Add instructions regarding “don’t park on the footpath” and “let the bus go first” to drivers’ education.
- Include more information about active transport users in the graduated driving licence programme and in ongoing education programmes.

# C ENGINEERING (INFRASTRUCTURE, BUILT ENVIRONMENT)

## C1 Require and fund a universal, interconnected active transport network

Significant steps have already been taken to ensure that safe infrastructure is in place which will encourage us to walk and cycle. It will be critical that attention is paid to the details associated with these investments to make them work. These include parking and changing facilities, ensuring the right road surfacing for safe cycling and adequate cover and crossings for pedestrians. This must be backed up with long term funding for the development and maintenance of this infrastructure.

- Build (and maintain) an interconnected network of cycleways linking cities and suburbia.
- Through the school travel plan audit process, ensure availability and infrastructure of safe routes to school, with drop-off zones being located a reasonable walking distance from the school.
- Through the Signals New Zealand User Group, (a) advocate for a change in signal timing that improves the level of service for pedestrians (especially for older and/or mobility impaired), and (b) change the flashing red person symbol to a flashing green symbol (and/or implement more countdown timers).
- Include bicycle parking requirements in District Plans reflecting planned outcomes, not historic parking demand; establish a crowdsourced national bike parking locator app and encourage councils to add their asset data; invest in and promote high quality bike parking design.
- Improve walkability for the 200 m (bus stops) and 400 m (train stations, bus exchanges/hubs) radii around public transport with a higher Funding Assistance Rate (FAR) and a requirement for Councils to address.
- Encourage the New Zealand Transport Agency to add pedestrian priority measures such as raised zebra crossings, traffic lights and/or illuminated Belisha beacons (not discs) in towns where their state highways create severance.
- Local governments should prioritise elderly, people with disabilities, caregivers with prams and school children when developing new infrastructure (e.g. crossings, kerb ramps, path and street surfaces, parking).

## C2 Design and transform towns and cities for people to ensure positive health and environmental outcomes

To support the great work of the NZ Urban Design Forum, Auckland Conversations, Canterbury Housing and Transportation (CHAT), and many others, we need to:

- Integrate “Complete Streets” requirements in the Resource Management Act and transportation plans. New developments should also require public transport infrastructure.
- Update the Setting of Speed Limits Rule and New Zealand Transport Agency school speed zone guidance to emphasise 30 km/h in urban areas and create a Targeted Enhanced Funding programme to implement them more widely.
- Explicitly include local area traffic management in the current and any future Targeted Enhanced Funding to reduce traffic speeds in neighbourhoods.
- Encourage car-free or car-light town and city centres and low-speed (maximum 30 km/h) shared space zones in residential areas especially on roads nearby and around schools.
- Consider means to provide greater effect to the Urban Design Protocol and incorporate the Healthy Streets indicators in new land use developments, encouraging higher density to support active and public modes.

## D ENFORCEMENT AND REGULATION

### D1 Change the decision making framework / planning rules (that affect transport options) to enable good health and wellbeing at a population level

Rules should enable effective participation and evidence-based decision making. While the link and place based One Network Road Classification (ONRC) has improved consistency across New Zealand and includes consideration of users in addition to traffic volumes, it may not be helping to achieve multi-modal outcomes. This, and the distinction between “streets” and “roads”, should also be considered in other relevant policies, guidelines and standards.

- Recognise the term “street” and the user hierarchy (pedestrians first) approach in the access through arterial classes of the national One Network Road Classification system

### D2 Change regulations to improve road safety for active transport

Numerous rules have been changed in response to the recommendations of the Cycling Safety Panel, but additional interventions are necessary (including for pedestrians):

- Fund and prioritise police enforcement of rules to protect people who walk and cycle. Train police to minimise a pro-motorist bias in enforcement and crash investigations. Pass a “minimum passing cyclists gap” rule to communicate to drivers what a safe gap is and enforce it.
- Consider legislative changes to explicitly give pedestrians priority at side road junctions and once they have entered the carriageway to cross the road.
- Provide guidance to improve value and consistency of Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) required reporting on footpath Level of Service (LOS), currently defined locally.
- Fund and install more red-light cameras.

### D3 Regulate for healthy transport options to and from schools

Active transport to school can help maintain or increase physical activity levels, improve cardiovascular fitness and may have benefits for maintenance of body weight in children and adolescents. Shifting from passive to active transport to school also reduces congestion (especially around schools) and the associated air pollution.

- Require every school to have a school travel plan.

### D4 Improve and enforce regulations for better air quality

New Zealand tends to lag behind the world in the regulatory standards we set for vehicles that enter our markets. We need to catch up and ensure that such vehicles are of a standard as high as that found in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development (OECD) countries.

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**Note:** The authors are willing to be involved in further development of the recommendations, the development of a new active transport strategy for New Zealand, and the monitoring of progress and outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Transport. Getting there - on foot, by cycle: A strategy to advance walking and cycling in New Zealand transport 2005. The strategy was published in 2005 and the action plan in 2006 (no longer available on government website).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Transport. Raising the Profile of Walking and Cycling in New Zealand. A Guide for Decision Makers. 2008. Wellington. Available at: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Import/Documents/10eb32e1cd/RaisingtheProfileWalkingCyclinginNZ.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Transport Agency. Cycling Safety Panel.

Available at: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/walking-cycling-and-public-transport/cycling/investing-in-cycling/cycling-safety-panel/>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Transport. 25 years of New Zealand travel: New Zealand household travel 1989–2014. 2015. Wellington.

<sup>5</sup> Mandic S, Jackson A, Lieswyn J, Mindell JS, García Bengoechea E, Spence JC, Wooliscroft B, Wade-Brown C, Coppel K, Hinckson E. (2019) Turning the Tide - from Cars to Active Transport. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago ISBN: 978-0-473-47794-3 (PDF), 978-0-473-47793-6 (softcover); Available at [www.otago.ac.nz/active-living-2019](http://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living-2019) and [www.otago.ac.nz/active-living](http://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living)

<sup>6</sup> The Active Living and Environment Symposium. Dunedin, New Zealand, February 2019. Website: [www.otago.ac.nz/active-living-2019](http://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living-2019)