

Safer Journeys – Conversation paper survey

This survey form accompanies the Safer Journeys Conversation paper. The Conversation paper is not government policy.

After reading the Safer Journeys Conversation paper we'd value your opinion based on the questions asked throughout the paper. The questions are to guide your feedback and you are not required to answer them all. So that your viewpoint is clearly understood, please give reasons for your answers.

You can provide written comment directly into this document by downloading it and saving it to your computer.

Please email this document with your comments to:

saferjourneys@transport.govt.nz

or post it to:

Safer Journeys
Ministry of Transport
PO Box 3175
Wellington 6140

The deadline for receiving feedback is 5pm, Friday 9 November 2012.

Confidentiality

Please note that comments received about this conversation paper will be subject to the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. This Act requires information to be made available on request unless there is good reason to withhold the information.

If you do not wish any material you provide to be released, please specify the material that you wish to be withheld and the grounds (as set out in the Act) for withholding. The decision on whether to release the material under the terms of the Act rests with the Ministry of Transport. Any decision regarding withholding information is subject to appeal to the Ombudsman.

The National Road Safety Committee agencies identified fourteen possible actions that not only meet the standard *Safer Journeys* criteria but they also make substantial progress towards reducing death and serious injury and/or movement towards a safe system and are actions that can only be achieved by working together, often by working in new ways and with new partners.

These possible actions are:

Safe System	Action number	Short description
Safe Road Use		
	1	Move Towards International Best Practise
	2	Enhance the Whole of Government Approach
	3	Wider Use of Alcohol Interlocks
	4	New Interventions for Drug Driving
Safe Speed		
	5	Implement a Speed Plan
	6	Enhance Automatic Speed Enforcement
Safe Roads and Roadsides		
	7	Improve High-Risk Roads and Intersections
	8	Target Safety Improvements on Local Roads
Safe Vehicles		
	9	Improve the Quality of the Vehicles Entering the Fleet
	10	Encourage the Exit of Vehicles from the Fleet
	11	Change Consumer Purchasing Behaviour
Demonstrating the Safe System		
	12	Safe System Signature Projects
	13	Corporate Partnership Programme
	14	Align Policies and Strategies with the Safe System

The National Road Safety Committee agencies invite a conversation around the following questions for each of these possible actions:

- [What opportunities can you see in progressing this action?**
- [What do you still need to learn about this action?**
- [Who should be involved in this action?**
- [What challenges might need to be overcome and how that might be done?**
- [What is the next level of thinking that is needed?**

The National Road Safety Committee agencies are also interested to know what other actions you would suggest that could be strategic priorities.

We will comment only on a small number of actions that we believe would have benefit for vulnerable road users, who figure relatively highly in the death and serious injury statistics.

Although the number of pedestrians killed each year in road crashes has declined from about 75 per year in the mid-1990s to about 40 in 2011, no improvement has been achieved since about 2005 (MoT 2011 Crash Fact Sheet – Pedestrians). Death of child pedestrians is the leading cause (>30%) of traffic related deaths for children in NZ (SafeKids 2011 FactSheet – Traffic Related Child Pedestrian Injury). Pedestrians also make up a third of all traffic deaths in urban areas (NZTA 2007, Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide). Furthermore, serious injury (requiring hospitalisation) figures for pedestrians involved in road crashes have remained static over a long period (MoT Crash Fact Sheet – Pedestrians – 2011). Young and elderly pedestrians are most at risk of death and injury (because of factors relating to behaviour and ability to withstand crash impact). Many of the deaths and injuries of young pedestrians occur at times when they are probably on the way to or from school (Fig. 6, MoT, 2011 Risk on the Road - Pedestrians, Cyclists and Motorcyclists).

These deaths and injuries have a substantial cost associated with them although such cost is likely an underestimate because many crashes that result in minor injuries to pedestrians do not get reported to police or even result in hospitalisation.

We believe that many of the measures that could be taken to prevent pedestrian deaths and injuries would be highly cost effective. For example, the law concerning speeds through areas of high pedestrian activity or where the risk to vulnerable users is high could be changed at low cost. This could change the standard speed limit through a sign-posted local business zone or CBD, past a school, retirement village, aged care facility, or hospital to 30km/h. The aim would be for this to become ingrained in road users' minds just as the current 50km/h urban speed limit is - everyone knows that limit applies everywhere in urban areas unless otherwise indicated. It would greatly decrease the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians in these areas, not to mention

the boost it is likely to give walking because of the greater sense of safety pedestrians would feel as a result. That would have numerous co-benefits.

Safe Road Use No. 1: Move Towards International Best Practise (A)

[**What opportunities can you see in progressing this action?**

Following the 2012 change in the vehicle to vehicle Give Way rule, Living Streets Aotearoa (LSA) believes it is important to adopt international best practice with respect to vehicle to non-vehicular road user interaction at intersections. In particular, we believe there would be a reduction in pedestrian injuries if turning vehicular traffic was required to give way to pedestrian road users travelling straight. This would mean that vehicles turning left or right from one road into another road would give way to pedestrians travelling straight across the intersection as currently occurs at signalised intersections. It would mean that all road users would be covered by the same rule.

[**What do you still need to learn about this action**

Two things: The number of of pedestrians injured or killed at intersections because of being hit by a turning vehicle and the inhibition of walking because of fear of being hit by a vehicle.

[**Who should be involved in this action?**

MoT and NZTA as it requires a law change. Road controlling authorities because it may involve a need for signs or changes to existing ones. It could also involve build-outs at some intersections to decrease the crossing distance for pedestrians travelling straight through as well as set-back markings on the road surface indicating the appropriate place for vehicles to stop to allow pedestrians to cross. Police because like all road rules, it will need to be enforced. Driving instructors and media to adequately educate the public on the change.

[**What challenges might need to be overcome and how that might be done?**

Resistance from vehicle users not accustomed to treating pedestrians as road users with equal rights and responsibilities. Adequate publicity focused on the idea of fairness and respect to all road users might help overcome this, especially if it involved positive advertisements with people reacting in a friendly way to one another when abiding by the proposed new rule. Also, including pedestrian wait times in BCR calculations for new and renewal projects might assist.

[**What is the next level of thinking that is needed?**

A shift in mindset to consider all road users and to afford them equal rights and responsibilities. Consideration also needs to be given to whether, once bedded in, this would have any effect on vehicle to vehicle crash rates at intersections. Perhaps it should be coupled with a requirement for a lower speed limit through intersections.

Safe Road Use No. 1: Move Towards International Best Practise (B)

[**What opportunities can you see in progressing this action?**

Currently, many footpaths are made hazardous for use because of vehicles being driven across them without adequate regard for pedestrians. This is in part due to two factors which fail to represent best practice.

The first is the inadequate or inappropriate visual cues given to drivers that they are crossing a foot path and should give way to pedestrians. In many instances the material, colour, texture and sometimes slope of the vehicle crossing is continuous from the kerb to the property boundary. This is not in accord with the NZTA Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide (LTSA Dec 2007, p14-17 and 14-18)

which shows a pedestrian through route being, at the very least, of continuous texture and colour. In many instances, Councils are continuing to build new, and replace old, vehicle crossings in a way that sends the message to drivers that they have right of way over pedestrians, contrary to the law.

The second aspect is that many properties have high fences and/or dense vegetation which blocks the view of the footpath from the driveway on the private property. The Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide (p14-18) shows that visibility splays would be created for high volume driveways. We suggest that similar, though not necessarily as large, visibility splays should be required on all driveways. This would give both parties greater chance of seeing one another so helping to avoid vehicle-pedestrian crashes.

[**What do you still need to learn about this action**

With regard to the vehicle crossings, whether footpaths could be suitably reinforced so as to be as resistant to deformation as the apron of the vehicle crossing is. If so, this counters the argument sometimes made that the same material (often concrete) is used for both the vehicle crossing and the footpath because to make the footpath of asphaltic concrete (tarseal) leads to a shorter footpath lifespan because of deformation by the vehicles repeatedly crossing it. Also, need to know whether, even if the vehicle crossing is made of the same material as the footpath whether some colourant could be added to the top layer to match the colour of the footpath or to alert the driver that he/she should give way to pedestrians.

[**Who should be involved in this action?**

With regard to vehicle crossings, NZTA because it should require the Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide to be adopted by Councils and footpaths and vehicle

crossings constructed in accordance with it. Councils because they are the ones mainly responsible for maintaining footpaths and vehicle crossings to private properties and because they can set requirements for new developments in their areas of jurisdiction.

With regard to visibility splays, property owners would also need to be involved to implement the work required to enable vehicle drivers and pedestrians to see each other easily.

[What challenges might need to be overcome and how that might be done?

Nothing for the vehicle crossing aspect other than the tradition of councils and the habits of contractors. Council traditions should be easily overcome by conditioning NZTA funding, such as minor safety improvements, on Council implementing the Guide's best practice. Contractor habits should be able to be changed through Councils amending their contracts for doing the work.

For the visibility splays some property owners may be concerned about aesthetics or security or privacy if they can't have a continuous, solid fence or wall along their property boundary. Aesthetics and security concerns could be accommodated through the use of open fences rather than solid ones but we don't see a practical way of overcoming any privacy concern. A safe systems approach would surely put pedestrian safety ahead of land occupier privacy.

[What is the next level of thinking that is needed?

This is also about protecting vulnerable road users and taking measures to increase their safety. The vehicle crossing aspect seems like it would be incredibly easy to implement for all renewal and new works. Similarly for the visibility splay. How suitable provisions would be encoded would need further thought – through district plans, subdivision specifications or some other means.

Safe Speed No. 5: Implement a Speed Plan

[What opportunities can you see in progressing this action?

We fully endorse the basic idea of developing and implementing a national speed plan although we have concerns about to what extent safety would be traded off against economic productivity in any balancing act. We believe a safe systems approach would put much heavier weight on safety than on economic productivity. This needs to provide national direction to road controlling authorities in much the same way as National Environmental Standards do under the RMA. Consistency of approach is especially important on roads where so much human behaviour becomes subconscious.

We strongly support the goal of speed limits reflecting the use and function of the network but this must consider all uses and users not just motor vehicular ones. It should be particularly cognisant of the use of roads (including footpaths) by vulnerable road users.

To these ends, we favour a standard speed limit in the vicinity of high activity areas where vulnerable road users are likely to be. This would include schools, local and central business district retail areas, retirement villages, aged-care facilities, hospitals, parks etc. In many cases, many drivers are already cautious in these places but not all and not at all appropriate times. For example, some rural schools are located on high speed (100km/h) roads and few drivers slow at all in such places. Also, although congestion near schools can be effective at slowing traffic, it is not generally effective during 'shoulder' periods, more than say 20-30 minutes before or after the peak arrival and departure times when some pupils arrive at or leave school. Furthermore, congestion adds another risk factor for children who may not be able to see all the traffic (because of their height) and may become confused from so many vehicle movements happening at once.

Children are easily distracted and excited, especially when their friends are around, sometimes resulting in them not paying attention to traffic.

The reason we favour a standard speed limit is because of the general confusion that will result if there are multiple ones. If people know that whenever one passes a school, or another high activity area, the speed limit is X km/h then it can become an ingrained and automated response, which we believe is to be preferred. Very few drivers seem innately aware of a 'safe speed', something that a standard speed limit would make obvious.

This measure, applied to schools, would also help to teach future drivers that there are places where speeds should simply be lower and that one needs to drive at speeds appropriate to the circumstances and make special allowance for vulnerable road users. That attitudinal shift might even be the most important longer term outcome of implementing lower speed limits near schools.

We believe that the speed limit near schools and other places where there are vulnerable road users, especially the frail and the elderly, should be no more than 30km/h. This is because the often-cited relationship between vehicle speed and injury severity is based on healthy adults not on children and frail adults whose bodies are much less tolerant of crash forces than are those of healthy adults. Also, at 30km/h, vehicles travel much shorter distances during the time it takes drivers to react and the total stopping distance is decreased, compared with at higher speeds, so decreasing the likelihood of a crash.

The above-proposed change would be a transformational one, putting the safety of vulnerable users ahead of the speed of motorists.

[**What do you still need to learn about this action?**

We believe there is already sufficient evidence of the public support for lower speed limits, especially near schools, and ample overseas evidence of the benefits of such limits. There is also ample NZ experience with them. They should be rapidly phased in as part of the National Speeds Plan, which might also cover other matters such as open road speeds at night or under certain weather conditions.

[**Who should be involved in this action?**

MoT and NZTA because they set the rules. Councils because in most cases they are the agents who directly set speed limits. The Police because they enforce the limits. For lower limits near schools, the Ministry of Education, Boards of Trustees and Principals because they operate schools (where one could envisage there being variable speed limits whereas for most other activity centres the limits would be constant ones and so not need the involvement of the facility operator such as the DHBs or rest-home operator).

[**What challenges might need to be overcome and how that might be done?**

There will be some level of public resistance to lowering speed limits but we believe introducing lower speed limits near schools should be the first step to be taken because there is already a high level of public support for this measure and it will meet the least resistance. Once people are fully used to that it could be extended to some of the other activity centres mentioned above.

Publicity emphasising the rights of children to safe journeys and the importance of them choosing their mode of transport (rather than being given no choice by their parents because of the latter's perceptions of the dangers on the roads) in

developing healthy lifestyles and independence would help to overcome negative attitudes towards lower school zone speed limits.

If the limits are variable (i.e. by time of day and year) then the expense might also be a factor given there are some 2550 schools in NZ and average implementation costs may be \$20-30K per school if implemented in the way currently being done. However with many safety features like flashing lights already installed outside schools, the cost of implementation is likely to be well below the above figure.

Also, the attitude that there aren't many vulnerable road users in a particular activity centre, which seems to be used to not implement lower limits, is likely to be a challenge. But this ignores the fact that in many cases low numbers of these users is a direct result of speeds which are considered too high. Furthermore, if that thinking were valid it would justify having higher speed limits in urban areas during periods when few vulnerable road users are about, such as between 4 and 6 in the morning, yet that is not done.

[What is the next level of thinking that is needed?

A commitment to safety of vulnerable road users, starting with school children but being extended to others in other high activity areas. A consistent speed limit is more likely to be adhered to and will make drivers more aware of a safe speed.

A reassessment of the use of travel time in making decisions about speed limits, recognising that small delays have no economic effect, that lower speeds can result in smoother traffic flow, and that active travel modes have such valuable co-benefits besides just getting a person from origin to destination.