

Living Streets Aotearoa



Living Streets Aotearoa submission on draft Government Policy Statement on Transport 2021

- Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft GPS. It is a step forward from the GPS2018 in many ways but a lack of specific indicators, which may be added after consultation, leave us unsatisfied that agencies will have sufficient measurable performance indicators to effect change in a system dominated by cars and trucks.
- The existing five outcomes need breaking down into steps to achieve them. The relationship between these outcomes and the four priorities is not altogether clear. The language of “co-benefits” is welcome rather than a narrower focus on each priority separately.
- More ambitious and specific goals for walking are desirable so that NZTA follows the direction set out in the GPS rather than business-as-usual. We endorse *Turning the Tide*. This collaborative document on mode shift was launched by the Associate Transport Minister in Wellington but is not referred to by MoT nor NZTA. See <https://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710135.pdf>
- We look forward to a greater emphasis on walking for all transport reasons, including leisure and exercise, for all ages and abilities. The goal of 40% reduction in deaths and serious injuries overall, a good step towards Vision Zero, could usefully break down into modes – 40% reduction in pedestrian injury, 40% reduction in cycling injury etc.
- We look forward to walking be measured more effectively nationally and locally. There are now excellent counters that can measure walkers e.g. the CITIX-IR camera. We were pleased to see Palmerston North and NZTA installed a combined counter on He Ara Kotahi bridge. Helping fund counters that also display footfall would be an excellent use of some of the Walking and Cycling funding class. MoT should also work closely with other agencies to ensure walking to school, walking to work and walking “legs” of public transport trips are effectively captured. *Turning the Tide* produced by Otago University and other authors is an excellent set of recommendations. Paragraph 64 suggest that active modes and public transport will be measured. We strongly suggest that walking is measured separately and that walking to school is a specific measure with the goal of returning it to more than 50% by 2031. There is an International Data Standard for measuring walking which we have brought to MoT and NZTA’s attention a number of times but there is no reference to this collaborative piece of work. See <https://www.measuring-walking.org/>
- We look forward to seeing a clearer path to emissions reductions through investment in walking, cycling, public transport (and access to it), electric vehicles. The draft policy statement does acknowledge the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but it doesn’t state the specific requirements that face NZ: to cut emissions by 50% by 2030, and to zero by 2050, in order to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. A more radical change in investment is essential. This GPS is a distinct improvement on the 2018 one in its inclusion of rail. Freight by rail and coastal shipping will be part of the picture to reduce emissions. The direct effect on pedestrians will be to make our roads less busy and less noisy. There are too many rail crossings without warning lights that we believe could make walking safer. There is also a considerable rail footprint that, if not needed for double tracking or passing loops, could create useful walking routes, both urban and between towns. Some of these may be suitable for shared paths. KiwiRail has historically been reluctant to collaborate with active travel.
- The funding split between classes is somewhat artificial. Better lit, direct foot access to stations and bus interchanges helps both walking and public transport whereas shared paths are often detrimental to walking, especially when the infrastructure is merely the existing footpath re-purposed. Cobham Drive in Wellington is a far better example where eh walking

Living Streets Aotearoa



and cycling paths are separate. This means cyclists can go at the speed they wish, and pedestrians can relax. Some roading projects enhance safety for pedestrians too. Therefore we support the intent of programmes like the Auckland Transport Alignment Project and Let's Get Wellington Moving as being multimodal approaches, despite some concerns with the details and priorities within these programmes. We urge funding of behaviour change and public transport subsidies as well as pouring concrete for bus ways or highways. As many people could be employed in education or community support roles for walking school buses as would be employed building a once-off flyover. Consider Living Streets Aotearoa's 24 recommendations for increasing the rate of travel to school.

<https://www.livingstreets.org.nz/node/5047>

- We support the commentary in the GPS about agencies working together but are uncertain how this will be achieved or measured. For example, SportNZ refuses to consider the journey to school as relevant to its physical activity coordinators from recent budgets. The Ministry of Education says the journey to school is outside its remit despite clear international evidence of increased alertness and geographical comprehension from walking to school. We support the funding to improve safety around rural and urban schools and suggest that a significant amount be added to develop school travel plans that prioritise walking. Consideration should be given to closing school access streets for thirty minutes morning and afternoon. There are many good Belgian examples.
<https://www.paraatvoordeschoolstraat.be/>
- The GPS funding is focussed on outputs (projects you can see "on the ground" whereas effort in urban planning, road pricing and public transport investment in fare reduction are at least as effective as "shovel-ready projects" in creating desired outcomes. Living Streets Aotearoa supports the Transport Hierarchy analysis shared with us by Bevan Woodward and in his submission on the GPS. Strengthening the connection between NZTA, MoT and HUD to ensure streetscapes are attractive and urban growth is concentrated around transport nodes rather than creating more car dependent one household homes with urban sprawl over parks and productive farmland is essential. The monotonous suburban spread north of Auckland could turn into areas of deprivation. Covid-19 has also taught us that every apartment and terraced house needs its own outdoor space, whether a balcony or a garden. There will be other illnesses and pandemics. Walking is the easiest and cheapest form of exercise. Recent experience has confirmed the desirability of separate walking and cycling facilities and wider pavements.
- The Walking Access Commission, working with local Councils, iwi and residents, has facilitated an excellent project about connections in fast growing South Auckland to Waikato in advance of housing being built. This is exactly the sort of futureproofing that the GPS could fund. <https://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz/about-us/our-work/south-aucklandnorth-waikato-outdoor-access-project/>
- We would like to see some of the funding go to effectively fund Feet First and related Walk to School programmes, which has few staff although they certainly do their best. We recommend implementing the recommendations
- As a minor but symbolic matter, we look forward to a new logo for the Ministry of Transport which represents the transport hierarchy better, with the visibility of people on foot which is currently entirely lacking.
- Nga Haerenga has dedicated staff, though maybe not enough, and is funded through the Government. Te Araroa has no comparable funding as yet, although the Trust is working with the Walking Access Commission. Both projects were mentioned in GPS2018 but are

Living Streets Aotearoa



missing from GPS2021. Both walking and cycling contribute to sustainable tourism and there are many places where an unpleasant journey along a State Highway would be better replaced by a walking route on the road reserve or even an easement on private land if the development and maintenance of surfaces and fencing was guaranteed. There are also many bridges where walking is dangerous. We would welcome both projects being mentioned again and NZTA being directed to solve the road walking issue more urgently.

- Pedal-Ready is a Government funded programme which is helpful to cycling and run by external contractors. Relying on school volunteers for organising Walking School Buses is unfair to busy parents and teachers. The individual buses can of course be led by parents or caregivers or grandparents, but the programme, rewards and planning would benefit from funding. Auckland Transport is a good example of an effective approach here, but many Councils don't make Walking to School a priority.
- Innovating Streets is a very welcome programme with 90% funding assistance rates. We would welcome a permanent fund for "place-making" in towns and cities. This would sit well with the Urban Design Protocol and is not about wider footpaths or cycle lanes (which are also welcome) but transforming the hearts of our communities into people places. Most Councils also need some legislative change to enable nimbler trials that can be adapted as people use them.
- The GPS is not clear on how non-RCAs can be supported by the Walking and Cycling fund. The 2WalkAnd Cycle conference is currently very modestly supported and subsidised registrations to encourage both advocates and professionals to attend would help. Many engineers were trained when the car was king and need to update themselves with examples from New Zealand and around the world. Often there is no attendance from MoT or NZTA staff at the international conference Walk21 which is the only conference fully focussed on walking. Living Streets Aotearoa runs biennial walking awards, and this is another way of promoting good practice which would benefit from a little funding to promote more widely and potentially offer some prize money as well as recognition.
- We would like to be part of steering groups on Walk to School and Shared Spaces. Our participation in all the Road Safety working groups was a huge commitment for a voluntary organisation.
- Finally, we are pleased to be part of a quarterly meeting with NZTA, MoT and Walking Access Commission together with CAN but our advocacy and outreach would be improved if it were supported with a modest funding stream.