

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

Policy on Use of Shared Paths

December 2017

Living Streets Aotearoa supports segregated or separated pedestrian-dedicated footpaths in urban areas as the best practice facility that will encourage people to walk further and more often. Walking has more significant health benefits per kilometre than any other mode.

We do not support shared paths replacing existing footpaths.

We only support shared paths in urban and rural areas where user numbers are low.

The extent of conflict between users of shared paths should be reduced by a variety of measures applied in concert, e.g. good design standards that ensure path widths and the speeds and separation of users are appropriate for the types and number of users, the use of signs and markings including dividing lines, the application of the Road Code, and promotion of courtesy.

Discussion

1. A shared path is a path intended to be used by pedestrians, mobility device users, wheeled recreational device users and cyclists¹. The main benefits of shared paths accrue to cyclists².
2. Shared path use may not be consistent throughout the year or even throughout the day and it may be for recreational or commuter purposes or both. Although many paths were originally designed for recreational walking, they are increasingly being used for commuter and high speed exercise cycling.
3. Conflict between users can arise for several reasons especially the different speeds of users, space constraints, and the unpredictable behaviour of some users.
4. Speed differences do make pedestrians feel insecure and deter them from using shared paths, particularly older people. Cycling speeds may average as high as 30km/h on shared paths compared with an average of 4-5km/h for walking. In one survey in Sydney, 8% of pedestrians reported having been knocked over by a

¹ NZTA Traffic control devices manual (2008) <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/trafficcontrol-devices-manual/definitions#s>

² NZ Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide 2007, s.6.4.4 Shared-use paths
<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/pedestrian-planning-guide/>

person riding a bike and 33% reported having been frightened by a person riding too fast³.

5. The increasing level of conflict between users of shared paths is discouraging pedestrians from using shared paths. This is especially so for those with young children, those with disabilities, and for the growing number of older pedestrians. In a survey of older people, 39% of people aged 60 or older identified people riding bicycles on shared paths as a moderate to major constraint to their walking⁴.

6. As our population increases, pedestrians walk more often, there are more cyclists and our population ages, the need for providing appropriate infrastructure for all is becoming urgent. The WHO Age-Friendly City Checklist specifically identifies vehicle-free footpaths reserved for pedestrians as necessary for an age-friendly city⁵.

7. Cycling and public transport are also beneficial to health and the environment, but supporting facilities should not be implemented to the detriment of the first mode; walking. We recommend that sufficient funding is made available to reallocate vehicle space in urban areas rather than take the second-rate cheaper option of appropriating pedestrian space.

7. All authorities agree that shared paths are suitable for low volumes of users at appropriate speeds but that at higher volumes segregated or separate facilities are needed^{2, 3, 6}. The definition of low volumes varies but is generally around 100 users per hour at peak use.

8. The design of shared paths can help decrease conflict between different users. In particular, adequate widths are critical. Living Streets supports the VicRoads guidance on width of shared-use paths⁷, and wants to see standards adopted in NZ that are developed from the perspectives of both pedestrian and cyclist.

9. Living Streets Aotearoa supports appropriately designed and constructed shared paths along recreational routes with low numbers of users and low speeds. Shared paths should be marked in accordance with the appropriate rules.

10. Some organisations and jurisdictions have codes of use for shared paths e.g. Sustrans⁸. Although Living Streets Aotearoa supports the development and promotion of such codes of use we believe that they are insufficient because user behaviour on shared paths is not monitored, codes are not enforced and some users

³ Victoria Walks (2015a) Shared paths – the issues p2
http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/Shared_paths_the_issues_v1.pdf

⁴ Victoria Walks (2015b) Shared Paths – finding solutions p2
<http://www.victoriawalks.org.au/Assets/Files/FINAL-Shared-Paths-position-paper.pdf>

⁵ WHO Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities 2007
http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Age_friendly_cities_checklist.pdf

⁶ Austroads (2011) Cycling Aspects of Austroads Guides p86
<https://www.onlinepublications.austroads.com.au/items/AP-G88-11>

⁷ VicRoads Cycle Notes 21 Width of Off-Road Shared Use Paths (2013)
http://viastrada.nz/sites/viastrada.nz/files/Cycle_Notes_21_0813_WEB.pdf

⁸ Cycling code of conduct on shared-use paths <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/change-your-travel/get-cycling/cycling-code-conduct-shared-use-paths>

are not considerate of others. We are strongly of the view that codes of use should be backed up by legislative tools.

11. In particular, Living Streets Aotearoa wants the Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 clause 11.1A Use of Shared Path (see Appendix 1 for the current version of this rule) to be modified to include:

- a) All shared paths should have their priority indicated by signs and/or markings, and,
- b) Where priority on a shared path is given to pedestrians, a user may pass, in either direction, a pedestrian at a speed no greater than 10km/h.

12. We support the principle that improvement in safety or amenity for one set of active users should not come at the expense of safety or amenity for another set of active users.

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Appendix 1 – (downloaded 19/9/17)

Shared path definition:

A shared path means an area of road, separated from a roadway, that may be used by some or all of the following persons at the same time: pedestrians, cyclists, riders of mobility devices and riders of wheeled recreational devices.

(Traffic Control Devices Rule Part 2 Definitions)

Shared path use: Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 (SR 2004/427) excerpt:

11.1A Use of shared path

(1) This clause applies to a path that—

- (a) may be a cycle path, a footpath, or some other kind of path; and
- (b) may be used by some or all of the following persons at the same time:
 - (i) pedestrians:
 - (ii) cyclists:
 - (iii) riders of mobility devices:
 - (iv) riders of wheeled recreational devices.

(2) A person using the path—

- (a) must use it in a careful and considerate manner; and
- (b) must not use it in a manner that constitutes a hazard to other persons using it.

(3) A rider of a cycle, mobility device, or wheeled recreational device on the path must not operate the cycle or device at a speed that constitutes a hazard to other persons using the path.

(4) If a sign or marking on the path gives priority to pedestrians or cyclists, the following rules apply on the path:

- (a) pedestrians, riders of mobility devices, and riders of wheeled recreational devices must give priority to cyclists if the sign or marking gives priority to cyclists:
- (b) cyclists must give priority to pedestrians, riders of mobility devices, and riders of wheeled recreational devices if the sign or marking gives priority to pedestrians:
- (c) no user may unduly impede the passage of any other user, whatever priority the sign or marking gives.

Clause 11.1A: inserted, on 1 November 2009, by clause 37 of the Land Transport (Road User) Amendment Rule 2009 (SR 2009/253).

Marking Shared paths

11.4 Facilities for cycles, wheeled recreational devices and mobility devices Paths shared by cycles and other users

11.4(1) For a shared path used by cycles, a road controlling authority:

- (a) must install an appropriate sign, or combination of signs, defining the class or classes of path user, that complies with Schedule 1:
 - (i) at the start of the shared path; and
 - (ii) after each roadway or any other pathway with which it intersects;and
 - (iii) at the end of the shared path; and
- (b) may install signs at other intervals along the shared path.

(Traffic Control Devices Rule)

