

Living Streets Aotearoa



Living Streets Aotearoa policy proposals and asks for the 2023 General Election

Living Streets Aotearoa is the New Zealand organisation for people on foot, promoting walking-friendly communities. We are a nationwide organisation with local branches and affiliates throughout New Zealand.

Everyone walks whether on foot or with mobility aids. Walking is especially popular for trips of under 2km, and vital for trips to and from public transport. Walking is great for emissions reductions, individual health and public health. It contributes to the life of our communities, and can be very enjoyable whether it's done alone or with other people.

Yet walking is under-valued and faces many barriers, both physical and bureaucratic. A lack of institutional knowledge and expertise about walking contributes to this. We would like to see transport agencies employ pedestrian specialists, as they do for vehicle modes including cycling, to give people on foot and in wheelchairs the priority they deserve.

This election, it's time to realise walking's full potential in our towns, cities and communities. We're calling on all political parties to make the following commitments to walking in their 2023 election policies:

Design and placemaking

- 1. Keep footpaths for feet:** Footpaths are for pedestrians, which includes people on foot and disabled people using low-speed mobility devices. Footpaths need to be well-lit, well-maintained and uncluttered. It's time to stop obstructing them with parked cars and other vehicles, shop signs, scattered restaurant tables, wheelie bins etc.

What will your party do to achieve footpaths that are safe for pedestrians and free from obstructions?

- 2. Walkable cities and communities:** Walkable cities and communities have major benefits for people, the environment and the economy. To achieve that, walkability needs to be embedded in the laws replacing the RMA, and in the National Planning Framework and other planning instruments, and those planning instruments need to be translated into

properly funded action on the ground. Walkability requires complete footpath networks with safe, well-lit, well-maintained footpaths and crossing points. Access to public transport services need to increase nationally. We call for all political parties to plan for, fund and implement actions to greatly increase the walkability of our communities as measured using walkability assessment tools.

What will your party do to achieve highly walkable cities and communities?

- 3. Walking to school:** Walking can make a significant contribution to meeting people's physical activity goals at all ages but especially sets children up with lifelong active habits. Yet walking to school is declining. There are many effective programmes to increase the number of children walking to school, such as Auckland Transport's Walking School Bus programme. A target of doubling the percentage of children and adolescents walking to school by 2025 is required.

What will your party do to set and achieve a target for the percentage of students walking to school?

- 4. Placemaking:** Streets have important placemaking as well as movement functions that contribute to the well-being of our communities both socially and economically. Street design should include and support biodiversity and water management – like daylighting streams – and should be welcoming to all users. Streets should reflect local history and culture, including Māori identity, and Te Reo street names should be spelled correctly.

What will your party do to ensure that streets are healthy and welcoming places for the people who live on and walk along them, and reflect the history of our communities?

Safe, walkable environments

- 5. No e-scooters on footpaths:** In 2018, the Government decided to permit e-scooters on footpaths by Gazette notice with no public consultation or consideration of impacts on pedestrians. This decision expires in September 2023.

The 2018 decision hasn't worked out well. It has led to e-scooters being left scattered all over footpaths, some pedestrians being hit and many being intimidated by e-scooter users. This has discouraged many people, especially disabled and older people, from walking. E-scooters belong with other fast-moving wheeled devices on cycleways or on the road.

We call on all political parties to change the rules such that e-scooters are no longer allowed to be operated or parked on footpaths. Will your party support pedestrians and do so?

- 6. Safer speeds, safer streets and safer vehicles:** Cars, SUVs and trucks are getting bigger and heavier with many blind spots. That means they do even more damage when they crash into pedestrians – especially children. Slower speeds mean everyone, both inside and outside vehicles, will be at much less risk of death or serious injury when accidents occur. We want all political parties to commit to safer 30 km/h maximum speeds on the vast majority of urban streets and around rural schools, kura kaupapa and marae, except where lower speed limits already exist.

Will your party commit to requiring this of Road Controlling Authorities?

Walking and emissions reductions

- 7. Walking's role in emissions reductions:** New Zealand has committed both domestically and internationally to substantial greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Meeting our emission reduction goals will require replacing many journeys currently taken by car with journeys made on foot, by bike and by public transport.

Walking is the lowest-carbon form of transport. Encouraging people to walk rather than drive will play a vital role in reducing transport emissions. We call on all political parties to build on and strengthen the steps being taken under the first Emissions Reduction Plan, including the development of the National Walking Plan.

What will your party do to increase the share of trips taken on foot as part of our emissions reduction efforts?

Walking and equity

- 8. Equity:** Walking is the lowest-cost form of transport, available to the largest proportion of the population – so walking is inherently equitable. What’s more, walking forms the start and end of most journeys by public transport, another comparatively equitable mode. But the provision of good walking infrastructure varies widely. New developments often have poor or no walking access. Local developments need to support walkable communities with good pedestrian facilities and Councils should be required to adopt policies to prevent car-dependent urban sprawl.

What will your party do to ensure that good walking infrastructure is provided for all cities, suburbs and communities in Aotearoa?

Allocation of funds

- 9. Separate funding class for walking:** Currently, a major source of funding for new walking projects is the Walking and Cycling Improvements activity class in the National Land Transport Fund. But only about 10% of the funding in this class goes to walking. Walking and cycling are not the same, and they deserve to be funded equally and separately. We call for the creation of a separate Walking Improvements class in the National Land Transport Fund (NLTF).

The total funding for both modes needs to be increased as a percentage of the total National Land Transport Fund to help achieve the mode shift that is essential to achieve the nation’s emissions reduction targets, make cities better and improve public health.

Will your party create a separate Walking Improvements Class in the 2027 NLTF, and will your party increase the proportion of the total NLTF funding allocated to walking?