

Responses from political parties to questions from Living Streets Aotearoa, August 2014

We asked each Party represented in Parliament to answer 7 questions about what they'd do to make walking easier, more enjoyable and safer. We also asked them to state reasons for their answers and the year by which they would implement actions. The questions and their answers are below.

How do you rate them? Our ratings are at the bottom of the page.

Note that National's response was as follows: 'On behalf of Hon Michael Woodhouse, thank you for your email. National's transport policies have not yet been announced and will be launched during the campaign period.'

Question 1: Will your Party change the rules so that operation, maintenance, renewal and new capital works on footpaths and other pedestrian facilities will receive NZTA funding at the same financial assistance rate as local roads? Does your answer also apply to paths that serve as routes through green spaces rather than just to on-street facilities?

ACT: The same criteria will be applied as apply to roads - that is user demand, economic need, benefit vs cost, and efficiency of the overall transport network.

Greens: : The Green Party will completely rejig the priorities of NZTA so that its top priorities will be to provide for walking, cycling and public transport rather than building motorways. Maintenance, renewal and new capital works on footpaths and other pedestrian facilities will receive the same financial assistance rate as local roads.

Labour: An increase in walking is an essential part of transport policy to ease congestion, reduce noise pollution, improve health and save the health budget long-term through physical activity; reduce transport emissions; and also reduce the demand for road transport.

In order to realise these benefits, we must make walking a safe, convenient and viable transport option wherever possible. That means significantly increasing expenditure on off-road walking and cycling lanes. Equalising the financial assistance rate is something we will look at in Government.

Mana: Yes. A transport priority of MANA is to develop affordable and integrated, environmentally sustainable public transport systems in all major centres and towns, including walkways.

Maori: The Maori Party would support regular maintenance funding for footpaths and other pedestrian facilities, which would also apply to paths that serves as routes through green spaces. We would also support renewal works on footpaths, routes through green spaces and other pedestrian facilities that are unsafe or have the potential to be unsafe. As it is unlikely the Māori Party will be in a position to govern on our own, we will consider these priorities in the negotiations we will have with the governing party following the election.

National:

NZ First: Yes

United Future: We would like to see the NZTA funding to Council's broadened to other facilities like you describe.

Question 2: Will your Party make the Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide (<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/pedestrian-planning-guide/docs/pedestrian-planning-guide.pdf>) a document that has to be complied with by Road Controlling Authorities, i.e. make it a standard rather than a set of guidelines?

ACT: This is not an issue for politicians.

Greens: We will review road design guidelines and rules with the aim of making complete streets, with pedestrian access and amenity as the top priority, the standard for all urban streets. We cannot be certain of the exact mechanism, but we can positively consider making it mandatory that road controlling authorities abide by the Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide.

Labour: As mentioned above, in order to realise the benefits of walking we need to make the environment safe and convenient through more and better walking infrastructure. We are certainly happy to look at making the design guide a standard rather than just guidelines.

Mana: Yes.

Maori: We believe there should be a standard as opposed to a set of guidelines. Set standards mean that Road Controlling Authorities can be held accountable, as opposed to guidelines that can be interpreted in different ways which has the potential to create inconsistencies, delays in implementing the work and unaccountability.

National:

NZ First: Yes

United Future: We see that as somewhat excessive. We prefer communities and local authorities be allowed to make the best decisions for themselves. We would prefer the NZTA to offer an assessment of how well Council's meet the best practice outlined in the guide and how they could improve.

Question 3: Will your Party introduce mandatory lower speed limits outside all schools and allocate funding to implement any changes to the street environments necessary to help drivers comply with the lower speed limits?

ACT: We believe all changes should reflect user demand and satisfy a benefit cost analysis.

Greens: The Green Party transport policy will make it straightforward for local communities to request a road design change to address concerns about vehicle speeds and to facilitate safe road crossings, including on state highways. We will lower maximum permissible speeds in areas of significant pedestrian traffic, such as routes to schools, hospitals and shopping areas.

Labour: Please see below (ed. This seemed to refer to the answer to question 4)

Mana: Yes.

and speeding drivers by making it compulsory for a speed limit of 30km/h outside all schools. Drivers must be aware when they are entering a school area and for them to have enough time to slow down before entering the area. It is important that signs (indicating the speed limit as well as the type of area, in this case a school area) and speed bumps are visible and plentiful.

National:

NZ First: Yes

United Future: Over time, yes in cooperation with local communities.

Question 4: Will your Party introduce mandatory lower speeds limits in areas of high pedestrian use such as local and central retail areas, and in areas where pedestrians are likely to be particularly vulnerable such as near hospitals, resthomes, retirement villages and children's playgrounds and allocate funding to implement any changes to the street environments necessary to help drivers comply with the lower speed limits?

ACT: We believe all changes should reflect user demand and satisfy a benefit cost analysis.

Greens: As Above (ed. i.e. question 3)

Labour: Transport decisions should be taken as close as possible to the people, with local communities engaged in the delivery of local services. Labour supports the concept of slow speed zones in residential communities and will work with local government to make progress on this.

Local government will receive the support it needs to deliver on the transport needs of our cities, towns, and regions. In particular, Labour will work with local government to enhance affordable, sustainable, and energy-efficient public transport in all its forms in roads, rail, waterways, cycleways, and walkways in line with the aspirations of communities.

Mana: Yes.

Maori: Yes. Similar to the previous answer, we believe that in areas of high pedestrian areas and areas where pedestrians are likely to be particularly vulnerable there should be a mandatory speed limit of 30km/h and sufficient signs (indicating the speed limit as well as the type of area) and speed bumps to ensure all drivers are aware when entering these areas.

National:

NZ First: Yes

United Future: We would support such an approach again, in cooperation with local communities.

Question 5: Does your party support all modes of transport being given the same legal status and responsibility? If so, does it support vehicular traffic (motorised and self-propelled) which is turning having to give way to pedestrian traffic which is travelling straight at an intersection? (for a pictorial explanation of this, see <http://www.livingstreets.org.nz/node/4794>)

ACT: Support and funding for each mode of transport should be user/demand led and reflect the associated benefits and costs.

Greens: We support giving all modes of transport the same legal status and certainly support ensuring turning traffic at intersections having to give way to pedestrians.

Labour: As road users, we need to share the space and ensure safety of all road users. We don't have plans to change current practice, but are open to policy proposals that increase safety and efficiency for all road users.

Mana: Yes.

Maori: There are many different modes of transport, and some modes are more powerful and faster than others, which would make it difficult to give all modes of transport the same legal status, but we believe the responsibility should be the same. For example, a cyclist is arguably less dangerous than a person driving a car, motorcycle or truck, and a bicycle as a mode of transport is much less powerful and fast than motorised transport. Therefore one might question whether cyclists should have the same legal status as drivers of motorised transport. Having said that, the responsibility to operate a mode of transport safely must be the same for all modes.

National:

NZ First: Yes

United Future: We would support such a law change. And other changes that give pedestrians better protection in urban areas.

Question 6: Does your Party support mixing pedestrians and cyclists on the same paths or should pedestrians and cyclists be separated. If your Party favours mixing them, please explain under what circumstances and what measures your Party will take to support the safety of both pedestrians and cyclists on these paths?

ACT: We support a case by case assessment based on the associated benefits and costs.

Greens: Ideally, we would like to see cars, cyclists and pedestrians separated so that each has their own path/road as occurs in many European cities. In some areas with very low volumes of people walking, we could support mixed use for pedestrians and cyclists, noting that next to no deaths and very few serious injuries have occurred, whereas cycle and pedestrian deaths and injuries on roads are significant. We support tight safety measures to be in put place where mixed use paths are developed.

Labour: Safety has to be the over-riding concern. Wherever possible we should be putting in place separate spaces or lanes for cars, cyclists and pedestrians. It is not always possible to create those three spaces, so sometimes cycling lanes on roads will be the best option, and in other cases, cyclists and pedestrians sharing a path.

Mana: MANA supports the development of separate walkways and cycle lanes to keep both groups safe.

Maori: Separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians

National:

NZ First: No

United Future: Ultimately this is a decision for local authorities who design, build, and maintain such facilities. We support greater use and the construction of more cycleways and pathways and if possible the separation of the two modes. What to do in individual cases around NZ are decisions that lie best with local authorities.

Question 7: What other measures would your Party put into action to make the environment more conducive to, and safer for, walking?

ACT: We would rely on transport experts for cost effective design ideas.

Greens: The Green Party will invest \$400 million into new safe, separated walking and cycling infrastructure over the next four years, funded by reprioritised spending. Our children will be able to get school safely under their own steam again and urban cycleways will unlock the huge latent demand for those wanting to ride to work or the shops safely.

Labour: Our major cities are becoming more urbanised with compact living, and we need smart and active transport that keeps up with this changing lifestyle. We'll be announcing our full transport policy closer to the election.

Mana:

Maori: Environmental modes of transport such as walking and biking. We wish to encourage health and fitness with respect to encouraging fewer emissions in the environment. Pedestrian and cyclist safety are essential to the safety of our roads and communities. We seek to reduce transport disadvantage, by shifting the focus of private car use to one where public transport, walking and cycling are core. We want to rebuild neighbourhoods, focus on community safety and be connected to our environment.

We are also interested in improving urban design and broadband, so that people are less likely to have to travel, or can walk or cycle.

National:

NZ First: The development and regulation of national standards to ensure that footpaths and walkways are constructed and maintained to minimum standards. Provide local councils with information and promotional material to encourage the implementation of living streets principles for local roads.

United Future: We seek greater use of cycling and walking as additional transport modes. We will encourage councils to have more off street and less on street parking to free up space for cycling and walking. We also seek to encourage parking on CBD outskirts with well integrated cycling and walking links (with bike share schemes) so people can walk or cycle the last km or so into the CBD. Proposals such as this will offer more choice to communities