

Living Streets Aotearoa



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SUBMISSION ON TRANSIT'S PLANNING POLICY MANUAL SUPPLEMENT

1. Living Streets Aotearoa, established in 2002, works to advocate for and to develop pedestrian-friendly communities throughout New Zealand, and to promote the social, environmental and economic benefits of walking as a means of transport and recreation.
2. Living Streets exists because the needs and aspirations of pedestrians and walkers are not yet being met adequately. These needs and aspirations are too often overlooked, and are not consistently or fully integrated into decision-making in transport, urban design and community development. Too much emphasis is still placed on the needs of motor vehicles, while at the same time, walking has been on the decline. Living Streets aims to help shape current and future policy and infrastructure to support pedestrians and walkers, and to encourage more people to get out and about on foot more often.
3. We wish to comment on the Planning Policy Manual supplement, in particular with relation to access to State Highways.
4. We feel that the proposed guidelines should be improving the situation for pedestrians as part of an integrated transport mix. Our impression is that in these proposals, while Transit are making an effort to grapple with what the New Zealand Transport Strategy priorities and objectives mean for them, this is taking some time to work through to the practical, day-to-day level of control of access to State Highways.
5. A quote (below) from the Ministry of Transport web-site (before the transport sector was restructured) clearly states that Transit's objectives must be broader than merely catering for through traffic.

"To this end, the roles of Transfund (now Land Transport New Zealand) and Transit are being expanded so that they focus on land transport as a whole, not just roads. In line with the vision of the New Zealand Transport Strategy, both

agencies will have to contribute to achieving a land transport system that is integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable.

Transfund, when it is considering funding applications, and Transit, when it is preparing its land transport programme, will also need to take into account the objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy. These are to:

- assist economic development
- assist safety and personal security
- improve access and mobility
- protect and promote public health
- ensure environmental sustainability.

Transfund's and Transit's social and environmental responsibilities are being enhanced, including updating their consultation provisions to improve participation in their decision-making processes. There is a strong emphasis on considering options and alternatives when programmes are being put together."

6. We believe that some of the proposals in the Planning Policy Manual supplement are retrograde for pedestrian amenity where State Highways go through urban areas or small towns.
7. In many cities and towns, the route of a state highway is not merely a fast channel for through traffic but an integral part of the street network. In rural areas, state highways may be the only linkage between homes and schools, outlying farms and local centres.
8. In all these cases, local traffic, including pedestrians and cyclists, local businesses, cafes, facilities and town squares should not be sacrificed to the exigencies of freight and long-distance car travel. Long distance must not unduly inconvenience shorter distance travel, especially if the travel is undertaken in an active mode such as walking. Transit must encourage a wider view of the uses of state highways, given the five objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy.
9. Pedestrians often face increasing difficulties where major roads travel through their townships. When traffic increases, often pedestrian crossings are removed and replaced with uncontrolled crossings that do not assist people with mobility restrictions (disabilities, impairments, frailty, etc) to independently travel their chosen routes at the times they need to travel.
10. When Transit take over a road as a State Highway, they often apply an approach to it which is different to that of the local Council. Even though the local Council may have had the road at the 'top' of the roading hierarchy (i.e. through-traffic function), Transit are more mindful of through traffic efficiency. In one case in Wellington this resulted in chains being installed to corral pedestrians into only crossing on two parts of an intersection where previously they had free access to crossing before. The New Zealand Transport Strategy objectives (incumbent on Transit via the

LTMA) imply a less strict approach when considering, e.g. accessibility across the road on foot.

11. A very useful definition can be found in the book by Westerman, an important piece of best practice research that Transit ran seminars on at the time it was published. (Westerman, HL (1998). Cities for Tomorrow. Austroads, ISBN 0 85588 503 3 2 volumes)

Westerman pushes the line that urban road corridors should fall into one of two types:

Type 1 corridors:

Primary transport routes and their environments, where the through-transport function is dominant and adjoining areas are planned, designed and managed to reduce or eliminate friction and impact.

Type 2 corridors:

Secondary transport routes and their environments where both the transport function and frontage function are important.

This split is very much in line with the NZ Transport Strategy. Westerman goes much further than corridor types, and promotes a raft of good ideas in his book which is a very useful resource for those planning the interface between transport routes and their surrounding environments.



SH53 goes from Featherston to Martinborough. Its last couple of kilometers are part of a small but busy town.



The Urban Motorway in Thorndon Wellington bisects a cemetery. It was originally designed with wonderful pedestrian access along its road corridor, keeping pedestrians safe and separate. Over the years, Transit has not monitored the maintenance and the signage has become non-existent. The local council is now putting in some signage and Living Streets is preparing maps.