

AOTEAROA URBAN STREET GUIDE:

Supporting inclusive, safe and vibrant communities through great street design.

March 2021 | FAQ's

Overview

Do great streets make your heart lift and sing? Waka Kotahi is seeking to develop an Aotearoa Urban Street Guide to provide a national framework and high-level principles for excellence in multi-modal street planning and design in an urban context.

Urban streets play a big role in supporting vibrant, healthy and inclusive city life by creating great spaces for people that are easy to get around, as well as safe places with reduced harm.

The intent of the Aotearoa Urban Street Guide will be to support existing good practice internationally (e.g. NACTO Global Street Design Guide) and already underway in New Zealand rather than duplicate guides prepared by local authorities. It will look to provide an overarching direction generally for New Zealand and to support best practice on Waka Kotahi and council projects.

In supporting safe places and reducing harm the Aotearoa Urban Street Guide is part of the Road to Zero action plan.

FAQs

1. What is the Aotearoa Urban Street Guide?

- Waka Kotahi is one of many partners involved in 'city-making' and we work collaboratively to create great spaces for people to live. Importantly Waka Kotahi is working to help everyone get around in ways that are safe, healthy and sustainable.
- As the national transport agency, Waka Kotahi is in a unique position to provide sector leadership and direction in this space. We view urban street design as an important part of delivering on several government outcomes and are committed to leading change in this area and also aligning with our local partners.
- Waka Kotahi currently does not have design guidance for streets. The Aotearoa Urban Street Guide will be developed to help bring together mode specific guides, pedestrian planning guidelines, [cycling network guidance](#), and [public transport design guidelines](#) to create a suite of technical guidance in the urban mobility space.

- It will also be a practical tool to link high-level transport policy, safety and sustainability, alongside spatial and network planning to good practice street design and connect the concepts of movement function, place function and modal priority with these updated guidelines.
- Guidelines developed by Waka Kotahi have the potential to set the standards the principles and practices of the nation's engineers, planners, architects and designers working in cities today.
- The Aotearoa Urban Street Guide will seek to support existing good practice already underway in New Zealand, rather than duplicate guides already prepared by some of the local authorities. It will look to provide an overarching direction generally for New Zealand and to support best practice on Waka Kotahi projects and connection to the Government's policy direction

2. What work has been undertaken to date?

- Initial scoping for the development of an accord and the Aotearoa Urban Street Guide commenced in mid-2019, based on a review of international best practice and guidance within Waka Kotahi and Councils. What we learnt from this early work, including workshops with representatives from across government and the sector in November 2019, was that there was appetite and interest in high-level guidance, but less interest in an accord.
- We are now in the early stage of development for an Aotearoa Urban Street Guide and are engaging with the sector as the best means by which to progress its development.

3. Why should we get involved? Why now?

- Streets make up a significant amount of public space in our towns and cities. They are an important part of our built environment and contribute to our quality of life, access and sense of place. They influence the health of a population by determining how easy or not it is to integrate physical activity into our daily lives.
- Lots of our towns and cities are growing which means demands on street space is also increasing. People want safe, clean and green urban areas alongside improved transport choices.
- We need to make sure we are managing the limited street space in a way that maximises benefits to all. By using our street space more effectively we are able to move more people in the space we have, and create more space for people to enjoy.
- We are progressing this work now as there is a strong mandate for improvement and change, both in terms of delivering a transport system that reduces harm and one that reduces our dependency in urban areas on private cars to support public health, environmental and access outcomes.
- There is also a strong mandate for higher quality urban development, which relies on improved street design to shape towns and cities that support thriving community life.

- Existing national design standards and guidelines have been developed by Waka Kotahi primarily for the state highway development context and have tended towards more technical, engineering focused content, often with vehicle efficiency as a main outcome. The guide will have a very different focus.

4. What is the strategic context for the focus on streets?

- The Ministry of Transport Outcomes Framework together with the recently released Government Policy Statement (GPS) on land transport demonstrates a commitment to safety, mode neutrality/better travel options, improving freight connections for regional economic development, climate change, and delivering the best possible value for money.
- To deliver on the GPS Waka Kotahi recently updated its Statement of Intent, outlining its support of a transport system that keeps people safe, is well connected and can be accessed by everyone. The strategy puts people and place, rather than vehicles and networks, at the centre of decision-making for transport investment. The Government's commitment to Road to Zero, focused on improving the safety of roads and streets for the safety of people who use them, is at the heart of the land transport system.
- Recently, Waka Kotahi developed a mode shift plan – Keeping Cities Moving - to support changes to cities that make it more convenient and attractive for people to take trips by walking, cycling, public transport and other shared transport options, and feel safe and comfortable.
- There are three main ways Waka Kotahi will do this:
 - Shaping urban form
 - Making shared and active modes more attractive
 - Influencing travel demand and transport choices
- Waka Kotahi is also scoping the development of a Good Practice Guide for Urban Planning and Urban Design Guidance that will help connect activity in the Urban Development, Urban Mobility and Urban Design space.
- Waka Kotahi is looking to support our partners within central government, local government, and communities to develop good practice solutions for urban streets, and where we are leading transport infrastructure, to deliver on the GPS and deliver healthy streets and great spaces for people.
- The Aotearoa Urban Street Guide would contribute to how we give effect to 'Good Urban' design and well-functioning urban environments. This will help to deliver broader outcomes e.g. social, cultural, environmental and activity including economic outcomes.
- For more information on the GPS visit: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/multi-modal/keystrategiesandplans/gpsonlandtransportfunding/>
- For more information on the Transport Outcomes Framework visit: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/strategy-and-direction/transport-outcomes-framework/>

- For more information on Urban Growth Agenda visit: <https://www.hud.govt.nz/urban-development/urban-growth-agenda/>
- National Policy Statement - Urban Development <https://www.hud.govt.nz/urban-development/national-policy-statement-on-urban-development-nps-ud/>
- Transport Emissions Action Plan: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/environment-and-climate-change/climate-change/>

5. How does this work relate to the evolution of the One Network Road Classification to the One Network Framework?

- The REG partnership (Road Efficiency Group) is evolving the One Network Road Classification. REG is a genuine transport sector partnership working across local, regional and central government with backing from Waka Kotahi and LGNZ. Volunteers from council transport teams work alongside Waka Kotahi teams with a mandate from REG governors.
- The One Network Framework (ONF) is a key sector-wide change step to recognise movement, place and modal priority in strategic network planning, and the value of integrated land and transport planning to improving liveability and social and economic prosperity in our towns and cities.
- The new ONF will be based on a 'Movement and Place' classification, with new Street Families and revised levels of service and performance measures.
- The ONF refocuses on different mode priorities, providing clearer detail on the function of different parts of roads and streets. The resulting 'movement' and 'place' framework takes a 'roads and streets framework' model to a national level and will provide a toolbox to support the development of customer focused investment in future land transport programmes.
- This includes categories such as 'street families' or types which the development of an Aotearoa Urban Street Guide will seek to clearly align with and support.
- For more information on the ONF visit <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/road-efficiency-group/one-network-framework/>

6. How does this work relate to the proposed road safety strategy – Road to Zero?

- In late 2019, the Government launched Road to Zero: NZ's road safety strategy, signalling a new approach to road safety. The strategy aims to steer substantial improvements in road safety in the coming decade, and identifies road infrastructure and speed as one of the five focus areas for the coming decade.
- A key action within the above area of focus is a review of infrastructure standards and guidelines, updating them to reflect best practice and filling gaps where they exist. This includes good practice urban street design guidance that takes into account different travel modes and provides the mandate for development of an Aotearoa Urban Street Guide.
- We know that there are significant benefits to individuals and communities in encouraging more walking and other active modes. Improving safety and the feeling of safety will

become ever more important as more people adopt such modes of travel. Safer speeds and more walking and cycling friendly streets and neighbourhoods are a key to achieving this. They can also contribute to a positive cycle whereby increased use of active modes and public transport further improves safety directly by reducing the proportion of private vehicles on the roads.

- From a safe system perspective, design guidance needs to naturally lead transport planners, designers and engineers to safe street designs that reflect the local context, recognising that roads and streets can have a place function, as well as a movement function.
- For more information on Road to Zero visit: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/multi-modal/keystrategiesandplans/road-safety-strategy/>
- For more information on Vision Zero: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/safety/road-to-zero/>

7. How does it fit with other Transport Agency guidance and programmes, in particular how does this work interface with recently released Innovating Streets guidance from Waka Kotahi?

- We know wholesale, permanent street upgrades take significant time and money. We want to maximise the benefits from urban streets as quickly as possible, which is what the Innovating Streets programme is all about.
- While the Aotearoa Urban Street Guide will help support better street design from the outset, Innovating Streets is an example of a programme that will help us transition using low-cost and interim interventions to unlock the benefits earlier. The intention would be to include this ‘tactical approach’ in the design process and illustrate this in the street design guide.
- The Tactical Urbanism Handbook is an end-to-end guide on how to run a tactical urbanism pilot, which includes advice on project management, co-design, communications and monitoring/evaluation. <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/innovating-streets/resources/tactical-urbanism-handbook/>
- For more information on Innovating streets visit: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/roads-and-rail/innovating-streets/>

8. How can my organisation be involved or help?

If you are keen to be involved, have any thoughts you would like to share, or have any questions, please send a message to our Aotearoa Urban Street Guide team at: streets@nzta.govt.nz