

Guidance on transport options for communities

with limited or no public transport



NZ TRANSPORT AGENCY
WAKA KOTAHİ

New Zealand Government



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Introduction

Developing sustainable and affordable transport options in small and rural communities with low population densities is vital for the health of such communities. It enables them to attract and retain employers and residents, keep the local economy buoyant and provide a good standard of living. While the task of developing viable transport options in such settings may be challenging, small communities are sometimes more resourceful and flexible in their approach to problem solving than their urban counterparts. Novel partnerships have sprung up in a number of such communities to deliver innovative, low cost transport schemes or reduce the need to travel. This guide is designed to outline some of the options available to communities without public transport.



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Why has this guide been developed?

NZTA regional staff and our regional and local authority partners have for some time been pointing out that much of the community guidance that the NZTA produces targets urban transport issues and that there is little information available for non-urban communities. This guide therefore seeks to address this gap.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is aimed at a wide audience – people working within the transport sector, community groups, local employers, businesses and anyone who believes that a lack of transport choice is causing issues in their community. These issues may include a lack of access to employment, education, medical care, shopping and leisure activities.

For some, most of the information contained in this guide will be new. For others, with greater knowledge of transport issues, the guide may give new ideas or approaches to the problem.

What is the purpose of the guide?

To set out a process for identifying transport options in your community. The guide will explain how to combine information from a number of sources to enable you to:

- accurately describe the access problem/s in your area
- identify potential solutions
- implement the best solutions for your community.

It recognises that no two communities are identical and that for a solution to work, it must be tailored to meet the specific needs of the community it serves. This process can be complex and involves weighing up many different factors.

What does the guide cover?

The guide covers:

- gathering information to find out what is really happening in the community
- identifying stakeholders including government agencies and local employers who have an interest in transport and making their services more accessible
- describing the problem, including whom it affects and how it affects them, and when the problem occurs (all the time, or just at certain times of the day/week)
- identifying possible solutions, including doing nothing, reducing/avoiding the need to travel, providing information, making better use of existing resources, eg by carpooling or using vehicles which are already in the community, integrating and coordinating existing services, and setting up a new transport service
- potential sources of funding
- legal status
- rules relating to passenger services.

Information gathering

It is very important to build a comprehensive picture of what is happening in your community rather than being swayed by what is generally believed to be the cause of the problem. Building up this picture takes time, but it is worth the effort and will result in a solution which best meets the specific needs of your community.

The information gathering stage consists of three main phases:

- Compiling data from a variety of sources.
- Consulting widely.
- Identifying stakeholders who can provide information, but may also be part of the solution.

Each of these areas is dealt with in detail as follows.

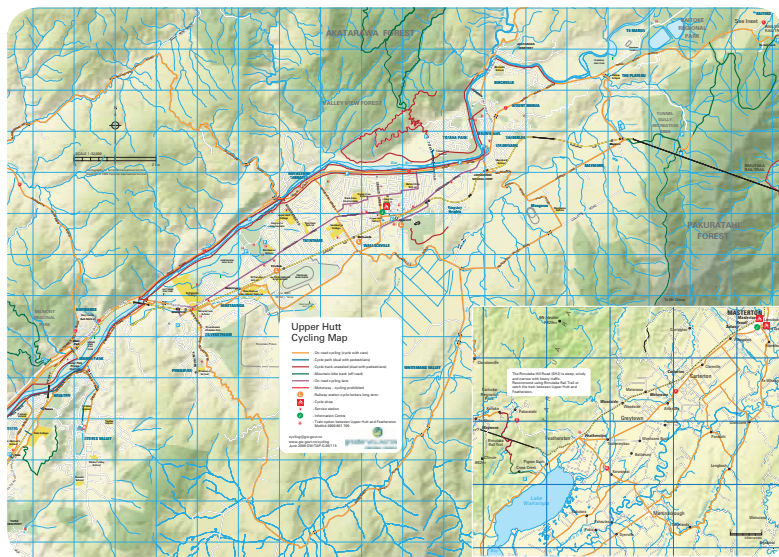
Compiling data

Compiling data involves putting together all of the objective information you can to give a clear picture of the characteristics of your community. The following list is not exhaustive, but contains some of the major sources of information you can access:

- **Census data**

this is a very rich source including information on age and gender, income, access to vehicles, employment etc. by region. See the Statistics NZ website at: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/statistics-by-area/default.htm>. It is also possible to request more detailed information from Statistics NZ for a fee.





- **GIS maps**
contact your regional or district council.
- **Regional Land Transport Strategy**
(check your regional council website) and the associated implementation plans, including pedestrian, cycling and freight plans.
- **Aerial maps**
showing topography, roads, walkways, cycleways and housing density. See the Terralink website at: http://www.terralink.co.nz/products_services/land_information.
- **Maps**
showing location of principal destinations including schools, medical centres, major employers, shopping centres, petrol stations etc.
- **Photographs**
- **Transport information**
schedules for transport services, such as trains, inter-regional coaches.
- **Broadband/mobile phone coverage**
there are a number of websites that compare services, such as: <http://www.shophere.co.nz/new-zealand-internet-service-providers.html> and <http://www.consumer.org.nz/>.
- **Delivery or other mobile services**
providing information/schedules.
- **Motor vehicle crash data**
in your region. See the MoT website: <http://www.transport.govt.nz/motor-vehicle-crashes-in-new-zealand-index/> and for other safety information relating to specific territorial authorities, see the NZTA website: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/performance/index.html>.

Consultation

Finding out what people in the community are experiencing and giving them the opportunity to be involved through a consultation process ensures they don't feel a solution is being imposed on them.

There are many different ways of getting opinions/ideas from local people. These include:

- paper or telephone surveys with a number of set questions about specific issues
- public meetings or hui with local community
- one to one interviews with local people, eg outside supermarkets or knocking on doors
- paper surveys through work or school.

For more ideas on consulting your community, see: <http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz/techniques/index.html>.

Identifying stakeholders

At first glance, this step may not appear to belong in the information gathering phase. However, talking with stakeholders is likely to save time and energy in the long run. It may be the case that stakeholder groups, both within and outside the community are aware of a problem (and have even begun work to overcome it) or they may be unintentionally contributing to it. They may have expertise or resources which can be part of an integrated solution.

Stakeholder groups consist of agencies and businesses which have an interest in ensuring their clients are able to access their services, as well as other groups within the community. The following list comprises some potential stakeholders you may like to contact. There are likely to be others of particular relevance to your area.



- Regional council and territorial authority.
- Government agencies, in particular the Department of Labour, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice – Courts, Ministry of Social Development, NZ Post.
- Kindergartens, kohanga reo, schools, tertiary and training institutions.
- District health boards, hospitals and medical centres.
- Local employers and retailers.
- Transport and tourism operators.
- Marae, RSA clubs, sports clubs, churches.
- Community, voluntary and advocacy groups such as unions, Federated Farmers, disability groups, Age Concern, PTAs, Lions, Rotary.
- Iwi and hapu organisations.

Contacting stakeholders early in the piece to get their views on transport issues affecting their clients ensures that the needs of all community members are taken into account. It also provides a useful network of contacts and a rich source of business skills, professional expertise and other resources.

Describing the problem

It may be that your initial idea about the nature of the transport problem in your community is backed up by the information you gather during the information-gathering phase or it may be quite wrong. By combining information from as many of the sources listed on page 5 as practicable, you will be in a good position to describe the problem or problems.

Use the information gathered to answer the following questions in order to help you to define the problem:



Who does it affect?

- Is the problem confined to those living in one specific area, eg. an isolated community?
- Is it a particular age group: the elderly or pre-schoolers?
- Is it low-income families or beneficiaries?
- Is it users of one mode, such as cyclists?

When does it occur?

- Does the problem occur only at certain times of the day, eg when school gets out?
- Does it occur only at certain times of the year, eg in winter?
- Is the problem short term only, eg caused by major building work?

Where does it occur?

- Does the problem occur around certain sites such as major employers or supermarkets?
- Is it widespread?

What effect does the problem have?

This may be a difficult question to answer. The following may help:

- Does the problem have an environmental impact?
- Does it cause hardship (financial, social or other) for members of the community?
- Does it affect people's ability to access basic services such as work, education, health care, shopping and leisure activities?
- Does it put people in physical danger or affect their health?

It may be helpful to complete the following table in order to identify the key issues and succinctly define the problem. A simple example has been provided:

Issue: Primary school located across busy road (Crofton Road) from main residential area	
Who?	School children and their families.
When?	Mainly at school start and end times, but also at lunch times.
Where?	On Crofton Road, near the two school entrances.
What is the impact?	Children on foot and on cycles are crossing Crofton Road dangerously, without using the pedestrian crossing. Visibility is poor at peak times due to congestion. Many parents drive their children short distances to school in order to get them across Crofton Road. This compounds the danger for children arriving on foot or by cycle.

Identifying solutions

This section presents a range of possible solutions that may partially or wholly solve the problem your community is facing. Many of these solutions are not strictly transport solutions and will require a flexible and collaborative approach from a number of different stakeholders.

Replace travel/reduce distances travelled

This generally involves home delivery or bringing goods and services into a central point in the community so that residents do not have to travel far to access them. This type of solution may require you to establish partnerships with organisations and individuals you have not yet had contact with.

- **Mobile services**

Expand the reach and/or focus of existing mobile services such as lending libraries, postal delivery, supermarket deliveries and surgical buses or set up new ones. Sometimes small items such as prescriptions, milk or bread can be carried easily by vehicles already operating in a given area. Where it is not feasible to deliver to individual homes, it may be possible to deposit items in a central location so that residents can walk or cycle to collect them.

- **Common multi-function spaces**

Set up a central multi-function space in a community hall or school so that services can be provided locally. These may include medical clinics, fitness classes, fruit and vegetable markets and craft sessions. An example of local service provision is the Heartlands project, a government funded interagency initiative, established in 2001, to provide people in provincial and rural New Zealand with access to government services. Local coordinators arrange appointments with visiting representatives from a range of agencies, including ACC, Housing New Zealand, Department of Labour, Tenancy Services and Internal Affairs, as well as free access to government websites, and toll-free access to government phone lines. For further information see <http://www.heartlandservices.govt.nz/>.

- **Satellite offices**

Set up satellite offices – equipped offices where employees can work locally, instead of travelling to their usual workplace each day.

- **Working from home**

Facilitate working from home – talk to broadband providers and computer companies about special deals. For resources see <http://www.telework.co.nz/index.htm>. Broadband services also give users access to home banking and shopping, travel booking and other services such as internet conferencing, which remove the need to travel.

Make better use of existing capacity

These solutions involve providing more rides without necessarily putting more vehicles on the road.

- **Carpooling**

This may be suitable when lots of single occupancy cars are travelling at the same time to a single destination, such as a large employment centre. This works best if those sharing a car don't live too far apart. However, in some areas, it may be possible to identify a central meeting point where cars and/or bicycles can be parked securely. Those sharing a ride can share costs for petrol and vehicle wear and tear. See: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/sustainable-transport/travel-behaviour-change/workplace-travel-plans/carpooling.html>

- **Vanpooling**

This operates in a similar way to carpooling, except that a larger number of people, up to 12 including the driver, can travel together. Vans can be leased or owned by one or more vanpool members.

- **Vehicle audit**

Carry out an audit of vans and cars in your community which may have spare capacity – talk to hotels, wineries, sports clubs, tourism operators etc. Find out whether it may be possible to use the vehicle at particular times/days to provide rides for other groups.

- **Existing transport providers**

Check whether existing transport providers such as District Health Board vans and postal delivery vehicles have additional capacity to carry goods or people.

School buses are another viable option. They carry students to and from 2600 schools throughout the country each day and their routes tend to be longer in rural areas.

Contractors servicing these routes may carry fare paying passengers provided eligible students are not disadvantaged (eg they must not stand while fare paying passengers sit and they must not be refused a ride due to overcrowding). If you wish to access school buses in your area, you will need to contact the school/s concerned and, of course, talk to the operator to find out if there is spare capacity. Remember also that school bus services don't operate during weekends and school holidays.

To identify school bus operators in your area, click on the link to the list of successful tenderers on the Ministry of Education web page at: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/Schools/SchoolOperations/SchoolTransport/SchoolTransportHomePage/SuccessfulTenderers2008NationalTenderSchoolBusTransport.aspx>.





To find the school bus routes, visit: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/educationSectors/Schools/SchoolOperations/SchoolTransport/SchoolTransportHomePage/SchoolBusRoutes.aspx>.

- **Community transport schemes**

Find out whether any community transport schemes are already operating in your area. This may not be easy because such schemes may not be well publicised. Check out community noticeboards and community newspapers. Community schemes provide transport for special needs groups and often rely on volunteer drivers. They may ask for a donation but do not charge their passengers. If any such schemes exist, see if there is potential to carry a wider range of passengers.

- **Taxis**

For specific events or regular trips, such as weekly shopping, it may be possible for a group to travel together in a taxi and split costs. In some areas taxis may act as buses providing a regular service along a fixed route.

- **Phone bookings**

Investigate the possibility of setting up a booking phone line to match passengers to rides.

- **Engineering solutions**

Check how suitable roads around key destinations are for walking, cycling and other active transport modes, as well as for those using a wheelchair or other type of mobility aid, or accompanied by a guide dog. Carry out an audit of roads within a 1-2km radius of schools, colleges, shopping centres and other destinations where there is residential housing to assess their suitability for cycling. See: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/road-user-safety/walking-and-cycling/cycle-network/>, and for walking see <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/road-user-safety/walking-and-cycling/pedestrian-planning-design-guide/index.html>. If you feel that roads could be improved to make active transport more attractive and safer, talk to your territorial authority.

Provide information

Sometimes lack of publicity means that target groups within the community are unaware of the services that have been set up for their benefit. This applies not only to transport services, but also mobile services, home deliveries and local services. Low patronage, due to lack of knowledge about the service, may well be interpreted as low level of demand and the service in question may be withdrawn.

You may need to research the best way of reaching clients for such services, but possibilities include:

- radio and local and community newspaper advertising
- school newsletters
- fridge magnets
- community and supermarket noticeboards
- displays at community events.

Integrate modes of transport/coordinate services

When considering travel needs in your community, make sure you plan the whole journey, and not just individual parts of it. For example, a shuttle service to an inter-city coach bus stop is not very practical if it arrives two hours before the daily coach stops. Walking and cycling paths that end abruptly at the edge of a busy highway can be dangerous. If the journey involves more than one mode, think about the interchange points between modes and how these can be made as seamless and safe as possible.



Some ideas for integrating modes include:

- passenger transport vehicles that may be able to carry freight
- freight carriers that may be able to provide a passenger service
- ensuring that at least some of the taxis, van and carpool vehicles in your community can carry bikes, wheelchairs, buggies, etc
- establishing feeder services for inter-city coach or rail services.

Set up a new passenger service

Under the Public Transport Management Act 2008 (PTMA), which came into force in January 2009, each regional council is required to include any public transport service they intend to subsidise in their Regional Public Transport Plan. See: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/information-for/local-transport-authorities/docs/regional-public-transport-plans.pdf>. In addition, the PTMA requires councils to address the needs of the transport disadvantaged. If you believe your community needs a new service, contact your regional council to discuss setting up one of the following:

- Bus service.
- Community transport scheme.
- Shuttle service starting or ending at a bus or ferry terminal, airport or railway station.

Taxi service set-up

If you are considering starting up a taxi service, contact the regional NZTA office for information on how to do this, as well as gaining exemption from operating a 24/7 service. Also visit: <http://www.business.govt.nz/> for advice on setting up a business.

See the final section, Rules relating to passenger services, for regulations concerning the different types of passenger service.



Sources of funding

There are a number of sources of funding available to assist with implementing some solutions:

- **Funding Information Service website**

The most comprehensive list of potential funding sources for community groups is available on the Funding Information Service website. In addition to around 650 sources of funding, the service also provides advice on applying for funding and lists over 140 NZ businesses that are keen to assist with community projects. See: <http://www.fis.org.nz/index.php?page=Resources> for links to information on preparing a funding application, writing a marketing plan and other useful advice. The website can be accessed free of charge from regional libraries and other public sites, or to subscribe, visit: <http://www.fis.org.nz/index.php?page=Subscribe&app=FundView>.

- **Regional Land Transport Programme**

Contact your council or NZTA programme and funding manager to discuss the eligibility of your proposed transport solution for funding within the Regional Land Transport Programme. See: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/funding/ppfm/index.html> for more information.

- **Think laterally**

Don't be afraid to approach local businesses and individuals. If they can't offer funding, they may be in a position to offer expertise (eg bookkeeping, computer skills, business planning or accounting) or resources such as PCs, vehicles or office space.

- **Sponsorship**

Consider sponsorship as a way of getting your project off the ground. See: <http://www.fis.org.nz/index.php?page=Sponsorship#definition> for advice on getting sponsorship.



Legal status

If you are undertaking a project as a community group, you may choose to formalise your legal status by forming a charitable trust, incorporated society or company. Having a formal legal status may have a number of advantages for your group including:

- reducing the risk of personal liability
- allowing it to hold assets or take out loans in its own name
- tax benefits
- ensuring the continuity of the group, even if members change

For information on the differences between charitable trusts, incorporated societies and companies, see the table entitled Comparison of more common legal structures at <http://www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/legalstructures/publicationsresources/choosing.htm>.

Charitable trusts must be registered with the Charities Commission. For more information see <http://www.charities.govt.nz/>.

For information on the tax issues relating to not-for-profit organisations, see <http://www.ird.govt.nz/notforprofits/>.

The Ministry of Economic Development is the government agency responsible for administering the Societies and Trusts Register and the Companies Register. It provides advice on setting up trusts and societies (see <http://www.societies.govt.nz/cms>) and companies (see <http://www.companies.govt.nz/cms>).

Keeping it legal is a publication produced by the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations which details comprehensive information about the legal responsibilities of voluntary organisations in New Zealand. You can download it at <http://www.keepingitlegal.net.nz/>.

The Department of Internal Affairs operates an information sharing website for NZ community and voluntary groups including clubs, charities, trusts, hapu & iwi at <http://www.community.net.nz/>.

The website for the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector, administered by the Ministry of Social Development, is a useful resource for partnerships between government agencies and the voluntary sector. See <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/about-us/index.html>.



Rules relating to passenger services

When establishing a new transport initiative, it is important to find out whether or not it is subject to the requirements of the Land Transport Rule: Operator Licensing 2007 which came into effect in October 2007. The rule covers situations where people are transported as part of a service offered by others, ie a passenger service.

The rule sets out what is required of a passenger service operator, in terms of the vehicle used and its driver. The Vehicle Standards Compliance Rule 2002 requires vehicles used in a passenger service to pass a more comprehensive vehicle safety check; the Passenger Service Vehicles Rule 1999 describes vehicle requirements; and finally, the Driver Licensing Rule 1999 requires drivers of such vehicles to hold a P (passenger) endorsement on their driver licence.

The Operator Licensing Rule also sets out the passenger services that are exempt from holding a passenger service licence. Exemptions include:

- carpooling, where costs (covering fuel and vehicle wear and tear) are shared between occupants and the vehicle is able to carry 12 people or fewer, including the driver
- a transport service provided by an organisation offering liquor or food on licensed premises, where the passengers don't pay a fare
- services operated by or under the control of a district health board, local authority, an incorporated charity, or an incorporated organisation registered under the Charities Act 2005 where:
 - the vehicles used can carry 12 or fewer people, and
 - the vehicle is provided by the organisation or the driver, and
 - the driver is a volunteer or a staff member of the organisation whose primary responsibility is not driving, and
 - the only payments made to the organisation or the driver are for the running costs of the vehicle (not the driver's time), and
 - the only payment made by the passenger is for the running costs of the vehicle.

For further information about the Operator Licensing Rule, see: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/factsheets/18.html>.

For information about the different categories of small passenger vehicle (ie those with 12 seats or fewer), see: <http://www.landtransport.govt.nz/commercial/docs/small-passenger-service-flowchart.pdf>.



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