



URBAN DESIGN POLICY

Introduction and issues

New Zealand Urban Design Protocol

Transit, as a signatory to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol (the Protocol), is committed to planning and delivering quality urban design. State highways play a key role in contributing to the quality and character of urban and rural environments. Transit's primary contribution to achieving the objectives of the Protocol is a state highway network that achieves a high level of functionality while at the same time supports a high quality natural, built and social environment.

What is urban design?

Urban design involves the design and placement of buildings, roads and open spaces in towns and cities to create desirable places in which to live, work and play. On a large scale it is concerned with urban and rural structure, the pattern of buildings, open space and movement networks. On a small scale, it is concerned with urban and rural character and function and how roads, open spaces and buildings interact, appear and function.

What urban design is not

Urban design is not just about the aesthetic characteristics of roads and the introduction of public art and sculpture. These may contribute to good urban design, but the concept is more fundamentally concerned with the structure, character and function of urban and rural areas.

How urban design assists Transit

The application of urban design principles assists Transit in the identification and evaluation of key issues early in the project development process. This allows Transit to identify scope and funding needs more accurately in the planning phase of a new state highway project, which is an essential prerequisite for cost efficiency and effectiveness. On existing state highways there may be limited opportunity to fulfil the objectives of the NZ Urban Design Protocol and each initiative will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

One of the objectives of this focus on urban design is the achievement of an affordable state highway network that New Zealanders can be proud of in the future. However, there are many challenges involved in fulfilling this objective, including that many of the benefits of good urban design accrue in the long term.

State highway categorisation and urban design

State highway categorisation helps deliver urban design by allowing the planning and construction of state highways to reflect local context. It also requires this emphasis on local context to be balanced with the need to maintain the primary function of the state highway concerned.

For example, where the state highway forms the main street in a small town, it will be designed and managed in conjunction with the local community and may contain features to aid connectivity and town centre vibrancy such as traffic calming or controlled pedestrian crossings.

Partnership and cost sharing

Good urban design can only be achieved by working in partnership with local authorities, other agencies and communities. A number of urban design components are outside of Transit's mandate as an infrastructure provider, or may not be appropriate for Transit to seek funding for as part of a state highway project. In these situations Transit looks to its transport and planning partners to share or meet the costs involved.

Urban design is concerned with issues such as connectivity



Urban design policy

Transit will implement the Integrated Planning Policy by giving effect to this supporting policy, which relates to the contribution made by state highways to urban and rural form and amenity. Transit's policy on seeking to influence land use planning as part of an urban design approach is set out in Chapter 4.

As a signatory to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol Transit plans and design state highways in a way that supports good urban design and value for money. In particular, Transit aims to:

- ensure state highways contribute to vibrant, attractive and safe urban and rural areas; and
- achieve integration between state highways, local roads, public transport, cycling and walking networks and the land uses they serve.

UDIP

Transit will apply its Urban Design Implementation Principles (UDIP) to all state highway activities:

1. Appropriate urban design needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis for state highway improvement activities. Each activity is different and should not be assumed to be a precedent for the next.
2. Urban design elements need to be incorporated into the activity at the outset. This will help ensure the project design addresses urban design in an efficient and cost effective manner.
3. Urban design will not represent an extravagant use of public funds. Urban design initiatives should not attempt to 'disguise' a road, rather they should enhance its integration with the surrounding environment.
4. Early collaboration with local stakeholders will occur to promote alignment between urban design initiatives of Transit and the views of affected communities.
5. Co-funding of urban design initiatives with local stakeholders will always be considered. Where a local community desires a higher level of urban design than Transit provides, Transit will seek the cost of the higher level outcomes from local stakeholders.
6. Urban design will be consistent with the operational requirements of state highways, while recognising the needs of motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and surrounding communities. State highway categorisation has a key role to play.
7. All components of urban design will be considered when incorporating urban design into state highway activities. Urban design can contribute to:
 - assisting economic development;
 - improving safety and personal security for all state highway users;
 - improving access and mobility for motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and passenger transport;
 - protecting and promoting public health through the state highway being appropriately integrated with an interconnected road network; and
 - ensuring environmental sustainability through appropriate use of materials and influencing surrounding land use development.

Method

Urban design method

To achieve Transit's urban design policy outlined above, as it relates to the design of state highways, Transit will:

1. use the Transit Urban Design Professional Services Guide PSG/12 (contained within the State Highway Professional Services Contract Proforma Manual SM030) to implement urban design in the various stages of each Transit project.
 2. seek early collaboration with local stakeholders to promote alignment between Transit's urban design initiatives and the views of affected communities.
 3. seek cost sharing of urban design initiatives with relevant local authorities and other stakeholders to maximise opportunities to improve urban and rural environments, multi-modal transport opportunities and visual quality and character.
 4. consider all environmental treatments (such as stormwater facilities), features to facilitate economic development (such as access to urban centres), engineering factors (such as road design being safe and functional) and facilities to address social requirements (such as community cohesion, providing pedestrian and cycling linkages) in the design of a state highway project from the outset. Guidance on detailed design issues is provided in the Urban Design Professional Services Guide PSG/12.
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