

## Key findings of recent NZ research on walkable environments

Tim Hughes

NZ Transport Agency Senior Engineer

New Zealand

### **Qualification of the presenter:**

Tim Hughes is the senior Engineer responsible for walking and cycling guidance in NZ. He has over thirty years experience in road safety and traffic engineering. He was responsible for NZ's respected Pedestrian Planning and Design Guide, and other NZ initiatives to develop resources and tools to help professionals to better plan and design for walking. Tim has a Master of Transportation Engineering. He was a plenary speaker at Walk 21 Barcelona

### **Proposal:**

In NZ a number of current research projects have improved our picture of pedestrian perceptions of the walking environment and how we can better provide for pedestrian needs. Most of these are being finalised for publication and will all be presented at the NZ walking conference in August 2010.

Topics are:

- Reducing pedestrian delay at traffic signals.
- In many places it is possible to significantly reduce pedestrian delay with little effect in traffic convenience
- Before and after studies of new and improved pedestrian facilities
- A variety of treatments were applied where pedestrian cross roads. Pedestrian behaviour was observed and users asked to rate how walking friendly they found the facilities with respect to safety, delay, directness, and attractiveness. There were substantial improvements in most scores - especially safety.
- Predicting Pedestrian Level of Service
- The user perception ratings from many community street reviews are analysed in relation to a comprehensive set of physical and operational characteristics encountered by each group of users.
- Self Explaining Roads
- Trial of road layouts that naturally result in desired behaviours especially lower speeds without the need for signs and enforcement. Includes analysis of video recordings of pedestrian and driver interactions.
- Spatial analysis of Accessibility
- Complete walking networks of two NZ towns have been prepared and the accessibility by walking to most common destinations calculated, mapped and compared with other modes of transport. This is like "Walkscore" but with more destinations, a real walking network, road crossing delays included and analysis by type of destination, and user groups.
- Benchmarking tool for walking.
- The framework we developed for cycling is being further developed and adapted for walking. Local Authorities will have a tool for assessing their performance for walking as well. We are aiming for a consistent international approach.
- Safer journeys – the NZ safety strategy to 2020.
- Key initiatives are proposed that will benefit pedestrian safety.

Note: The author is either the originator, peer reviewer or on the steering committee for the unpublished as yet projects so is already privy to their contents.