

8. STANDARDS FOR DISABLED PERSONS

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The purpose of this report is to provide information on the implications of adopting the NZ Standard for Disabled Access by the Council, in response to a Committee request associated with a deputation on the Road Safety Strategy to the last Committee meeting.

BACKGROUND

The Council's design, monitoring and planning staff ensure that existing Council standards are incorporated in new developments in the city. Examples in regard to road design are:

1. Footpath longitudinal and crossfall gradients.
2. Footpath minimum widths.
3. Kerb cutdown profiles.
4. On-street mobility parking spaces.

Examples in regard to other (non-road) developments are:

1. Access specification within new buildings.
2. City Plan - provision of mobility car parks at malls etc.

The deputation noted above requested that adopted Council standards are identified in the Road Safety Strategy. This is not appropriate, and the preferred practice is to note via policy in the strategies that best practice will be pursued for a particular issue, and that the Council adopts appropriate standards and guidelines separately into its design manuals.

DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has recently published RTS14 - Guidelines for Facilities for Blind and Vision Impaired Pedestrians. This document specifies how to provide audio and tactile equipment at signalised pedestrian crossing facilities, as well as specifying tactile paving for other formal crossing facilities. This document has been the subject of discussions between staff from the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind (RNZFB), CCS, LTSA and CCC. Following agreement on application of this standard, recommendation to adopt this standard is likely in the near future.

The New Zealand Standard NZS 4121 - Design for Access and Mobility - Buildings and Associated Facilities, is currently being reviewed by Council staff in regard to developing an appropriate standard for the placement of barriers at pedestrian accessways. Most of the city accessways have barriers (staples) installed in 'offset' positions, such that wheelchair users and other similarly disadvantaged users have extreme difficulty negotiating these barriers. A recommended standard for installation of accessway barriers, so that all users can easily negotiate the barriers, will be recommended for adoption by the Council in the near future, which is intended to be part of the overall adoption of NZS 4121.

All new facilities constructed by the Council incorporate best practice standards for access by disabled persons. The retrofitting of existing infrastructure to best practice standards is an objective of the Transport and City Streets Unit, but will be a longer term (prioritised) project.

Should the Council adopt new standards, it would need to modify its design standards to draw them in line; and consideration would be required regarding potential modification to the City Plan via a Variation or Plan Change.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

New projects to be implemented will incorporate whatever best practice standards for disabled persons that the Council supports, and budgets will account for additional costs to incorporate facilities for these road users. These costs for some projects would be nominal, for other noticeable. Estimating the cost implications for this would be a major exercise, depending on a complex matrix of potential measures driven from assessments of options related to the adoption of various elements of standards and guidelines, and is well beyond the timeframes of this report.

Retrofitting for existing facilities has a cost implication. There are 200 traffic signals controlled by Christchurch City where an upgrade of audio/tactile equipment would benefit sight impaired persons. Based on pre-design estimates, the upgrade cost is expected to be approximately \$10,000 per intersection, involving virtually all signalised intersections. There are approximately 200 pedestrian accessways where barriers need to be modified. The pre-design estimate for this work is \$400 per accessway.

Prior to any formal assessment, it is estimated that 300 crossing point facilities, in addition to signalised crossings, would require retrofitting with tactile paving and kerb cutdown modifications. The pre-design estimate for this installation is \$3,000 per crossing point.

There are a significant number of kerb cutdowns, which exist for pedestrian access rather than for vehicle access. These cutdowns may not necessarily have a formal road crossing facility associated with it. Many of these cutdowns are difficult to negotiate by wheelchair users, with the most common issue being the cross sectional gradient from the footpath to roadway, or vice versa. An initial pre-design estimate for this work is \$1,000 per cutdown modification. Further investigation is required to identify the scope of this particular issue, and it is anticipated that a few hundred cutdown improvements would improve access for wheelchair users. These would most likely be located in the central/inner city and suburban areas of higher pedestrian activity eg suburban shopping malls.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of standards/guidelines to incorporate appropriate facilities for disabled persons is the next stage in the process, following refinement and agreement of aspects of each document, by staff and user group representatives.

Costs for meeting any new design standards for capital projects will be incorporated in the project costs.

The retrofitting of infrastructure (as opposed to renewals and new capital projects) to assist disabled persons' mobility on public roads requires a specific project with a corresponding budget provision to be adopted in the Annual Plan.

Staff

Recommendation: That on adoption of appropriate standards and guidelines for facilities for disabled persons, they be incorporated into the Council's design manuals and implemented through the Capital Works programme.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received and the actions included in the report be included into design manuals and Council standards.