



Integrated land use and transport planning

Land use and transport have always been linked. Well-integrated land use and transport planning improves people's access to the things they need and want to live a good life.

Traditional land use and transport planning typically assumed mobility through car travel as a priority. This has led to unintended negative environmental, social, health and equity consequences, and it hasn't necessarily led to better access. In fact, reliance on private vehicles has:

- increased the distances that people must travel to reach common services and activities
- reduced travel options (particularly for non-drivers)
- exacerbated traffic congestion.

Together these have reduced overall accessibility for many people and locations.

Exploring integrated land use and transport planning

The researchers in this study explored integrated land use and transport planning in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2022.

This is defined for this work as policy and practice that:

- considers the interconnected nature of land use and transport
- improves housing supply, choice and affordability
- relies less on private vehicles by reducing the need to travel and providing more public transport, walking and cycling options
- improves people's access and safeguards their wellbeing
- enables good quality higher density land use development in urban areas
- protects the environment.

The researchers:

- reviewed literature on the benefits of integrated planning and the tools used to achieve it, including approaches used overseas that could be used here
- did a stocktake of domestic policy to identify policies, legislation, levers and data that help or hinder integration in our current legislative and policy environment
- interviewed public sector planning professionals to understand the current state of integration in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Literature review

The literature review found two types of tools used to integrate land use planning and transport planning.

- **System settings** are institutional frameworks and processes that support integration and include governance and organisational structures. System settings facilitate or specify outcomes tools.
- **Outcomes tools** are specific development and design concepts, such as transit-oriented development, compact design, and mixed-use development. They achieve a particular outcome. They can be used in isolation, but effective system settings are needed to consistently meet strategic goals.

The literature review found that integrated land use and transport planning leads to:

- **environmental benefits**, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions through high public transport mode share, higher density development, mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, and reduced sprawl
- **social benefits**, including improved quality of life from better access to essential services, employment and education, and greater social vibrancy
- **health benefits**, including Covid-19 resilience and health benefits from active transport
- **equity benefits**, including improved access for low-income communities, and affordable housing supported by transport choice.

Policy stocktake

To clarify the policies, plans and procedures that form the existing planning context in New Zealand, the researchers reviewed a range of legislation and national-level policy, including the Urban Development Act 2020 and the Building Act 2004. However, they focused primarily on planning processes under:

- the Resource Management Act 1991
- the Local Government Act 2002
- the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

At the national level they found that:

- the government says that land use planning and transport planning need to be integrated and that the existing road and street network is not fit for purpose
- the land use and transport planning legislative framework system is highly complex
- local authorities have significant discretion over the quality and amount of integrated planning they do
- a strong shared understanding of integrated land use and transport planning is needed
- government agencies may be working in an uncoordinated way that undermines land use and transport planning
- political and consultation processes can hinder projects that would support integration
- the Local Government Act performance measures present an opportunity to improve outcomes and could be revised to encourage a move away from conventional street design standards
- the segregated activity classes defined by the Government Policy Statement on Land Transport and the associated Waka Kotahi funding processes contribute to a status quo bias through the 'maintenance' classes
- the direction under the three acts isn't always aligned
- good spatial planning and strategy is essential.

The policy stocktake of Hamilton and Auckland shows how national policy is incorporated at the local level. These cities were chosen for their different sizes and to give a comparison between the two government structures: a regional council with a territorial authority versus a unitary authority with a separate transport council-controlled organisation.

Overall, Hamilton displays better horizontal integration between land use planning and transport planning but shows poor vertical integration, while Auckland shows better vertical integration across regional and territorial authority level policy.

Interviews with planning professionals

The researchers interviewed six planning professionals to understand current integrated planning in practice. The interviewees were from Kāinga Ora, Waikato Regional Council, Waka Kotahi, Hamilton City Council and Auckland Council. The researchers found that:

- good relationships between agencies and individuals enable land use and transport integration at all levels of government
- interviewees were optimistic about the general direction of national government policy, and confident that with some changes, integrated outcomes are achievable
- silos between land use and transport departments affect integration at all levels of government
- barriers to integration include government structures, local authority capacity, politics, funding, and business-as-usual mindsets
- opportunities for future integration include Aotearoa New Zealand's general policy direction, resource management reform, and better use of funding
- supported by Waka Kotahi, Kāinga Ora has a unique role in supporting integrated land use and transport planning.

Conclusions and recommendations

The researchers found six barriers to integration:

- tension between policy and legislated requirements
- complexity of the existing planning framework
- inconsistent quality of local government strategic planning
- uncoordinated national government policies and legislation
- capacity challenges at the local government level
- status quo bias.

To address these barriers, they recommend:

- developing a shared understanding of integration by including a consistent definition in national-level policy and guidance for local governments
- improving practitioner and public understanding of integration through pan-disciplinary education, professional development and developing educational resources for the public
- a coordinated national approach by partnering government agencies to resolve inconsistencies in legislation, policies or approaches
- improving monitoring, evaluation and accountability through funding mechanisms, changes to the performance measures in the Local Government Act, and legislating minimum parameters for good land use and transport planning
- supporting integrated relationships between Waka Kotahi and other agencies through secondments, and between Waka Kotahi and local authorities through funding
- leveraging resource management and local government reforms to reduce planning system complexity
- doing further research to understand international policy, legislative and governance frameworks, funding mechanisms, and equity for Indigenous groups.



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