# 1. Stairway to Heaven – Understanding Demand

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We live in increasingly unpredictable times, yet the call for good evidence to support the investment decisions we make for active modes does not seem to diminish.

This presentation will present evidence on how demand for active modes changed dramatically in response to a number of major disruptions in recent times (including the Canterbury Earthquake and Global Financial Crash). It also analyses the initial demand trends emerging from the Covid-19 outbreak and considers the methods and accuracy of predictions of future demand for active modes. The presentation considers whether the tools we have to predict general and route specific demand changes in response to major disruptors are reliable enough, and explores what we could do to improve our forecasting tools.

The presentation also examines whether the evidence from recent disruptions provides increasing support for adopting more flexible use of our transport infrastructure (such as ‘tactical urbanism’ interventions) and building in greater flexibility to new infrastructure we build. This draws on the findings of recent stakeholder feedback, demand data, and surveys of user experience on a variety of active mode projects in New Zealand which support the case to repurpose the existing infrastructure quickly to meet the changing demands at a time of increasing risk of greater public debt if we carry on investing in active modes in the way we traditionally have.