# Rapid transit and walkability: a requisite team

Almost every public transport journey starts and finishes with a walking trip (even if only a short trip from a bicycle or carpark) . In the context of planned new rapid transit lines in Aotearoa’s main cities, ensuring high quality walking access around stations will be critical for maximising patronage and the broader benefits from these projects.

Despite the obvious connection between public transport and walkability, attention to the needs of people accessing stops and stations on foot is often neglected. For example, despite considerable recent investment in Auckland’s rail network, walk-up access to many suburban stations remains very poor with missing walking links, unsafe street crossing points and shortcomings in basic foopath infrastructure. In planning processes for future rapid transit, walkability around stations is often a second or third-tier consideration and tensions can emerge between operational imperatives for high-speed rapid transit infrastructure and designing for safe and direct movement of people on foot that enables station access.

This presentation will draw on recent practitioner experience in planning rapid transit in New Zealand cities, a review of international literature and selected case studies to clarify what good walkability around rapid transit stations means. It will identify key factors required to support effective pedestrian movement around stations and tools for systematically assessing, measuring and comparing walkability of station surrounds. These tools can inform future assessment of alternative options in rapid transit planning processes and enable identification of design interventions that can improve walking access to bus and rail stations.