



Draft Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport 2018

Submission from Brake, the road safety charity

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About Brake

Brake is a road safety charity with global interests, and branches in the UK and New Zealand. It approaches road safety and sustainable travel using the vision zero method. That is to say, the charity considers that all deaths and injuries on roads are unacceptable, and eliminating carbon emissions from transport, which is the largest contributing carbon sector, should be approached with equal zeal. Brake's vision is a world where people can move around in ways that are safe, sustainable, healthy and fair.

Brake promotes road safety awareness, safe and sustainable road use, and effective road safety policies. It does this through national campaigns, community activities, services for employers and fleet professionals, and coordination of national Road Safety Week.

Brake also cares for families bereaved and injured in road crashes. It does this by providing specialist support resources to families following a crash.

Strategic direction

Brake strongly supports the overall vision of the draft GPS. The increase in road deaths and serious injuries over the last few years needs addressing urgently, and is not simply the result of more vehicles on the road or kilometres travelled. Brake supports safety and access being made the top priorities within the GPS. Historically there has been a trade-off between safety and other priorities such as efficiency, but if we are to reduce our horrific road death rate, we must put safety first.

The greater emphasis given to creating a system free of deaths and serious injuries, and the inclusion of Vision Zero as an approach to road safety is something Brake strongly supports; we look forward to the development of the next Road Safety Strategy. However, whilst we are pleased to see these included in the GPS, we are concerned that there is a lack of more specific targets for road safety, and that with a new strategy and action plan still some time away, there is more urgent action we need to take in order to reduce our casualty rate.

Brake believes it is essential that there are specific, measurable targets for reducing deaths and serious injuries over time. For example, the Auckland Transport Alignment Project includes a commitment to a 60% reduction in road deaths and serious injuries over ten years. We would like to see similar work conducted to set national targets for reductions in deaths and serious injuries.

Whilst there is mention of targets as part of a new road safety strategy and action plan, we feel some more specific targets can be included here too. Internationally, those countries that set specific road safety targets tend to perform better than those without them; those that propose "stretch" targets tend to perform best.

These targets also need specific and measurable actions in order to achieve them. We must ensure that the road safety strategy and action plan include these, directed by the GPS.

Brake supports the commitment to increase transport choice and improve walking, cycling and public transport, to benefit health, the environment and help create liveable cities.

Safety

Brake strongly supports safety being a top priority in the GPS, and the inclusion in point 30 of a new strategy and action plan, the development of which considers Vision Zero as an approach for road safety in New Zealand.

We strongly support the inclusion of measurable targets in the next road safety strategy, and propose that these are ambitious but achievable. However, the human cost from road crashes is high, and whilst a new strategy and action plan is being developed, people will continue to lose their lives and suffer serious injuries on our roads. Brake would like to see the strategy and action plan prioritised, and other measures implemented in the interim, such as the Speed Management Guide, to start addressing our road crises immediately.

Point 25 discusses further investment in cycleways and footpaths. Brake supports the view of several other organisations that this requires some improvement to funding to also include footpath maintenance, which is not currently co-funded by central government. Well-maintained footpaths help to encourage people to walk, and also provide access for people with limited mobility.

Brake supports the implementation of the Speed Management Guide. Moving forward we would like to see an evidence-based strategy for identifying how much of the network needs targeting in order to reduce deaths and serious injuries to target levels. There were also some issues with the original guide which were unresolved, particularly with certain road user groups such as cyclists losing out when it came to rural roads. However, the quick implementation of the guide will help to start reducing road trauma until the next road safety strategy is in place.

Brake supports the use of regulatory changes to improve safety, as explained in point 43. We support the inclusion of safer and appropriate speeds, including around schools. As an organisation, Brake advocates for a 30km/h limit around schools and in many communities, following the best practice advice of the WHO and UN¹. Brake also advocates for lower speeds on many of our rural roads, which are not suitable for the current 100km/h limit. On many of our rural roads a 70km/h or 80km/h limit is far more appropriate for the condition of the roads.

Brake also supports policy measures to improve the safety of our vehicle fleet. New Zealand lags well behind other jurisdictions such as the EU for mandatory safety features on vehicles. There is a wealth of research into vehicle safety features and technology demonstrating how they can prevent crashes and reduce deaths and serious injuries in the event of a crash. Brake recommends that consideration is given to improving the mandatory safety features for new and second hand vehicles imported into New Zealand.

We support the other proposed policy developments listed here, but encourage added consideration of recommendations from the Cycle Safety Panel report (2014) much of which has yet to be implemented. We also recommend progressing give-way rules for pedestrians and cyclists crossing side streets.

Brake is concerned that commercial freight has not been fully included in this section. We have seen a recent increase in fatal and serious injury crashes involving heavy vehicles². Commercial freight is an important road user group to consider as part of the GPS and subsequent road safety strategy and action plan. We acknowledge the statement that “movement of freight should not result in the loss of life or cause serious injury” and also the inclusion of freight in relation to the environment and carbon emissions. However, specific measures relating to heavy vehicles may be required in order to reduce deaths and serious injuries involving freight and are not included here. This could include reviewing weight restrictions,

¹ [Global Status Report on Road Safety 2015](#), WHO, 2015

² P.3, “Road Safety Outcomes: Supplement to the NZ Transport Agency’s Quarterly results and insights, 1 October to 31 December 2017”, New Zealand Transport Agency.

logbook and driver hours regulations to tackle fatigue, reviewing penalties for companies and more mandatory safety features for imported trucks, for example.

Investment in land transport

Brake supports the increased funding given to public transport, walking, cycling and local road improvements as well as road safety, and the decreased funding for state highways. We believe this is necessary to address the crises we currently face in our transport system including road deaths and serious injuries, and the impacts on health from vehicle emissions and sedentary lifestyles.

Brake also supports the inclusion of rapid transit and transitional rail as additional activity classes. We hope that will help to ensure a wider range of options for travel for both passengers and freight.

Other points

Brake would like to see the GPS priorities embedded into the definitions and/or assessment criteria of each activity class or transport project, so that all actions are encouraged to deliver higher levels of safety and access.

Brake strongly supports a second-stage GPS, to include things that it was not possible to include in this GPS.

Support for victims of road trauma

As an organisation that supports bereaved families, we see the devastation that road crashes cause. Road deaths are sudden and traumatic for families.

Brake provides support to families in the form of support resources written specifically for those dealing with the consequences of crashes. Victim Support and other support organisations offer services such as emotional support, counselling and assistance with the judicial process.

However, from our work with families we feel there are still gaps in services for families affected by crashes.

Brake recommends that the future road safety strategy and GPS incorporate some recognition of the impact that crashes have on families, and look to further scope the requirements of affected families. We note this may be something which needs to be done in conjunction with other Government departments. Brake would be pleased to be involved in this process along with other support organisations, given our experience in this area both in New Zealand and overseas.

Conclusion

Overall Brake supports the direction and content of the draft GPS, and whilst we feel there are still opportunities for development, we appreciate that some additional points may be more appropriate for inclusion in the second-stage GPS, or the forthcoming road safety strategy.

The strategic approach of this GPS provides an improved framework to prioritise road safety and reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads.

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