

## [Auckland Design Manual Blog](#)

- [Design for Auckland](#)
- [Thriving Neighbourhoods](#)
- [World Class Streets](#)
- [Housing for Life](#)
- [Māori Design](#)
- [ADO](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Videos](#)
- [About](#)

May 12, 2017

### [Design for Auckland](#)

**In honor of Road Safety Week Aotearoa, we speak with Darren Davis, part of the Auckland Council's City Centre Design Team and self-confessed 'transit nerd', about the state of road safety in Auckland.**

*The theme of this year's Road Safety Week is 'speed' – do you think the design of Auckland's roads encourages speeding?*

While the overall speed environment in New Zealand is lower than that in countries such as Australia, Canada and the United States, we still tend to design streets for a speed that is higher than the posted speed limit. For example, a new street with a 50km/h speed limit might have been engineered to a 60km/h design speed. But most importantly is the safety of vulnerable road users – particularly people on foot and bike – who don't have the protections afforded by seat belts, air belts and crash-attenuating design features.

The graphic below is indeed graphic. At the default urban speed limit of 50km/h, there is an 85% likelihood of a person on foot or bike being killed in a collision with a motor vehicle. If that same person were hit at 30km/h, there would be a 90% chance of survival. This is important everywhere but no more so than in the communities where we live and our kids go to school and play.

In New Zealand, we tend to design our streets for the exceptional vehicle (for example a rubbish truck or a fire engine) rather than for the usual vehicle (generally no larger than a car on local streets), with the ability for the exceptional vehicle to enter even if it needs to cross the centre line. If we designed for the usual vehicle, street widths could be narrowed and kerb radii tightened which would reduce speeds, increase safety and decrease street construction cost as we would need to create less street.



Source: Cities Safer by Design (2015)

*How much of the problem is Kiwis' attitude to driving? Can this be changed?*

It is a combination of people seeing the speed limit as a target, not a maximum in ideal conditions, and the fact that New Zealand has a publicly communicated 'tolerance' for excess speed (7km/h over the limit or 4km/h during holiday periods and in school 40km/h zones). This means that unless there are other driving offences, speed cameras or police patrols will not enforce below the tolerance. This public communication means that in effect a 50km/h speed limit is actually 57km/h, at which point the chance of a pedestrian or cyclist surviving a crash drops below 15%.



Many of Auckland's roads have been designed to a speed 10 km/h above the posted speed limit.

*In your opinion, what are some recent successes we've had for road safety in Auckland?*

Auckland Transport has made a sustained effort over the past few years to improve the walkability of the City Centre by eliminating numerous left-turn slip lanes and installing pedestrian phases where they have been missing on legs of signalised intersections. The largely complete outer ring of the City Centre minimum grid of protected cycleways has expanded the possibilities for safer cycling suited to all ages and abilities and significant further expansion of the protected cycleway network will significantly reinforce this.

The extensive shared space programme in the City Centre is progressively creating a laneway network where pedestrians have priority and cars are the invited guest, not the dominant user of the space. The Waitemata Local Board is funding a series of raised pedestrian crossings at side street intersections with Ponsonby Road, which slows vehicles and raises the visibility of pedestrians crossing the street. However, red light running, excess speed and driver distraction through mobile devices are significant challenges across Auckland.



A raised pedestrian table at the corner of Mackelvie Street and Ponsonby Road.

*What are some other quick wins that could be implemented in Auckland to reduce speed and improve road safety?*

In the quick(er) wins department - something that would have a significant impact would be to implement 30km/h speed limits more extensively in areas with high numbers of pedestrians and/ or high numbers of children and lesser able and older adults. Auckland Transport's planned implementation of a 30km/h speed zone throughout the Wynyard Quarter is a positive step in this direction but Wellington City Council in particular makes extensive use of 30km/h speed zones in its town and local centres.





Auckland Transport's planned implementation of a 30km/h speed zone throughout the Wynyard Quarter

*Much of your work is focused on the City Centre – what improvements could be made to improve road safety in the city?*

For me personally, the most galling fact is that in New Zealand, pedestrians only have priority when on a zebra crossing, a signalised crosswalk, where vehicles cross footpaths (although this fact is not universally known nor complied with) and in shared spaces. In other countries, including the famously car-oriented United States, pedestrians have priority crossing at intersections whether or not a marked crosswalk exists. Walking is the only 100% transport mode as every trip involves some element of walking yet the same level of priority is not accorded to people on foot crossing a road as there is to motor vehicles.

I also dream of living in a city without left-hand slip lanes and pork chop islands as these either consciously or unconsciously push pedestrians to the bottom of the road user hierarchy. As the only 100% transport mode, pedestrians should be at the top of the hierarchy.

**The only place you should see a pork chop is on a plate, not as a pork chop traffic island.**



A 'pork chop island' at the corner of Symonds Street and Karangahape Road.

*Looking for more? The ADM's [Streets Hub](#) features case studies from around the world which made streets safer places for pedestrians, cyclists and cars. Auckland Transport are also in the process of developing street design guidance which will be made available later this year.*

[← Universal Design Tool: Putting People at the Centre of Design](#)

No comments yet.

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

Notify me of follow-up comments by email.

Notify me of new posts by email.



- [Popular](#)
- [Latest](#)
- [Comments](#)



- [Subdivision and Home Design Go Hand in Hand](#) March 11, 2015



- [Squaring our past with our futures...](#) September 22, 2015



- [Grow your own leafy green Auckland](#) April 26, 2016

- 
- [May 2017](#)
  - [April 2017](#)
  - [March 2017](#)
  - [February 2017](#)
  - [November 2016](#)
  - [September 2016](#)
  - [June 2016](#)
  - [May 2016](#)
  - [April 2016](#)
  - [February 2016](#)
  - [January 2016](#)
  - [December 2015](#)
  - [November 2015](#)
  - [October 2015](#)
  - [September 2015](#)
  - [August 2015](#)
  - [July 2015](#)
  - [June 2015](#)
  - [May 2015](#)
  - [April 2015](#)
  - [March 2015](#)
  - [February 2015](#)
  - [January 2015](#)
  - [December 2014](#)

---

**[Sign up to receive notifications of new posts.](#)**

## Tweets by @AkiDesignManual

---

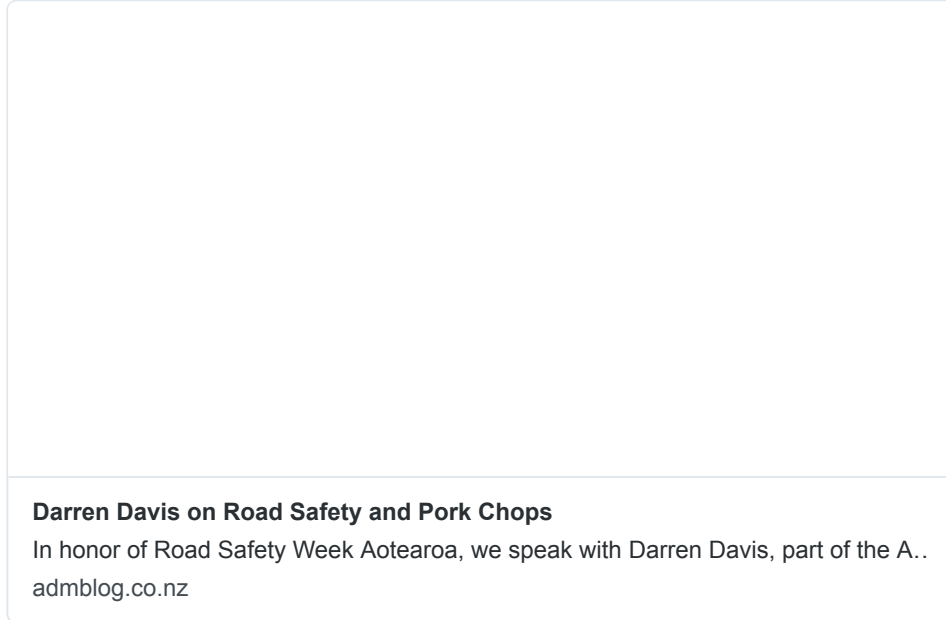


**AucklandDesignManual**

@AkiDesignManual

Transport guru @DarrenDavis10 shares his thoughts on Auckland's streets for #RoadSafetyWeek

[admblog.co.nz/darren-davis-o...](http://admblog.co.nz/darren-davis-o...)



### Darren Davis on Road Safety and Pork Chops

In honor of Road Safety Week Aotearoa, we speak with Darren Davis, part of the A..  
[admblog.co.nz](http://admblog.co.nz)

23h

---

[Embed](#)

[View on Twitter](#)

---



**[About the ADM](#)**

**[Contact us](#)**

**[Subscribe by email](#)**

Find us on:

 **[Twitter](#)**

 **[Pinterest](#)**

