Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
Transport access and mobility needs and impediments in New Zealand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Public Policy at Massey University, Albany Campus, New Zealand.

Anatole Michael Sergejew

February 2005
Abstract

New Zealand's Land Transport Management Act 2003 places a statutory requirement on transport agencies to improve access and mobility. However, the access and mobility needs of New Zealanders, and existing impediments to access and mobility, are not well understood.

This thesis focuses on groups of people that international research suggests are at risk of social exclusion. It investigates their transport needs and impediments related to access and mobility, by reviewing the international literature and by conducting face-to-face interviews with eight people selected from these potentially at-risk groups.

The understanding gained from this present research of mobility needs and impediments, and the effects of these impediments, are discussed. This thesis suggests that mobility impediments are resulting in social exclusion in New Zealand, and that while current consideration of the transport-disadvantaged in New Zealand is largely focussed on the elderly and the disabled, other groups identified internationally, such as young people and new settlers, are also at risk of social exclusion because of impediments to their mobility. This thesis has examined what people perceive as their mobility needs, and suggests that as needs are variable, it is not possible or appropriate to identify basic mobility needs that should apply to everyone. Also, mobility impediments, rather than being a matter of can or cannot, are a matter of degree.

The ways in which identified mobility impediments might be addressed are described. It is suggested that because of the difficulties in establishing and providing for access and mobility needs, it may be more appropriate to focus on providing access and mobility opportunities instead. The usefulness and limitations of this present research are discussed, together with the prospects of subsequently applying the research method on a wider scale in order to develop a fuller understanding of the range of access and mobility needs and impediments of New Zealanders.
Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of a number of people. In no particular order, I would like to acknowledge you.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Transport for granting me study leave to complete this thesis, and especially those Ministry staff who carried an extra workload for six months to make this possible.

I would like to thank the agency staff who recruited the interviewees for me, and I would like to thank the interviewees who agreed to participate in this research, and who were prepared to take time out and open up to me on their personal access and mobility needs and frustrations. I hope this thesis does justice to your difficulties.

I would like to thank the staff of the School of Social and Cultural Studies of Massey University Albany Campus, particularly my thesis supervisors Marilyn Waring and Grant Duncan, for their teaching, guidance, support and perseverance over the last seven years.

I would like to acknowledge the very timely suggestions I received in writing this thesis from my brother, Alex, who at two very critical stages was able to help me see a way forward.

Finally, but by no means least, I would like to thank my wife, Astrid, for encouraging me to start this degree in the first place, for supporting my study over the years, for the sacrifices this meant, and for making editing suggestions for the penultimate draft.

I hope that the effort and support I have received from you all will prove to be worthwhile, in as far as this research helps contribute to the future development of a more fully inclusive transport system.
# Table of contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................................. i  
Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................... ii  
Table of contents ........................................................................................................... iii  
List of tables .................................................................................................................... v  
Glossary ........................................................................................................................... vi  

## Chapter One: Introduction ......................................................................................... 1  
1.1 Land transport policy and legislation ................................................................. 1  
1.2 Objectives of this research .................................................................................... 3  
1.3 Chapter outline ....................................................................................................... 4  

## Chapter Two: Key concepts and questions ............................................................... 6  
2.1 Defining access and mobility in the transport field ............................................. 6  
2.2 Defining need in the transport field ....................................................................... 8  
2.3 Defining impediments in the transport field ......................................................... 15  
2.4 Why improve access and mobility? ....................................................................... 17  
2.5 Rights to access and mobility ............................................................................... 20  
2.6 What level of access and mobility should be available? ...................................... 24  
2.7 Who should access and mobility be improved for? ............................................. 28  
2.8 Other studies of mobility impediments .................................................................. 31  
2.8.1 Mobility for the elderly .................................................................................... 33  
2.8.2 Mobility for the disabled ................................................................................ 35  
2.8.3 Mobility for women ....................................................................................... 36  
2.8.4 Mobility and public transport ......................................................................... 37  
2.9 Summary and key questions .................................................................................. 38  

## Chapter Three: Research method ............................................................................. 40  
3.1 Choice of research method .................................................................................... 40  
3.2 Selection and recruitment of interviewees ............................................................. 41  
3.3 Ethical considerations ............................................................................................ 43  
3.4 Interview schedule ............................................................................................... 46  
3.5 Approach to interview analysis ............................................................................. 47
Chapter Four: Results ................................................................. 49
  4.1 Liu ..................................................................................... 49
  4.2 Mandy ............................................................................... 49
  4.3 Reena ............................................................................... 51
  4.4 Joy .................................................................................. 55
  4.5 May ................................................................................ 56
  4.6 Becky ............................................................................. 58
  4.7 Nick ................................................................................ 60
  4.8 Val .................................................................................. 61
  4.9 Sarah ............................................................................... 64
  4.10 David ............................................................................ 67
  4.11 Kath ............................................................................. 70
  4.12 Frequency of travel ............................................................... 72
  4.13 Ranking of importance of travel purposes ........................................ 74

Chapter Five: Discussion ............................................................. 76
  5.1 Frequency of travel ............................................................... 76
  5.2 Access without mobility? ........................................................ 77
  5.3 Ranking of importance of travel purposes ...................................... 78
  5.4 Types of mobility impediment .................................................. 82
  5.5 Modal mobility impediments and travel choices ................................ 83
  5.6 Effects of mobility impediments ............................................... 91
  5.7 Addressing mobility impediments ............................................. 92

Chapter Six: Conclusions ............................................................ 98
  6.1 Research questions and context ............................................... 98
  6.2 Understandings of access and mobility needs and impediments gained through this research ................................................................. 99
  6.3 Usefulness and limitations of research tools and suggestions for future research ................................................................. 102
  6.4 Conclusions ........................................................................ 105

Appendix ..................................................................................... 107
  MUHEC Application forms .......................................................... 107
  References .............................................................................. 108
List of tables

Table One: Comparison of needs ................................................................. 13

Table Two: comparison of mobility needs .................................................. 26

Table Three: Weekly travel frequency by purpose reported by interviewees .. 73

Table Four: Importance of travel purposes as ranked by interviewees ........ 75

Table Five: Comparison of importance of travel purposes .......................... 80

Table Six: Summary of mobility impediments .......................................... 85

Table Seven: Mobility impediments and effects by mode ............................ 89
Glossary

Access. The right or opportunity to reach activities using the transport system, and so participate in society.

Accessibility. The ease with which activities can be reached using the transport system.

DETR. Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions. The government department which was responsible for transport policy in the UK.

Impediment. A hindrance or obstruction, e.g. "mobility impediment".

Mobility. The ability and ease of individuals to move in the greater community using the transport system for the purpose of accessing activities to participate in society.

Need. A want or requirement.

Rideline. A telephone and Internet-based service that provides information on public transport services, e.g. information on services that could be taken for a particular journey, timetables, fares, location of stops, etc.

Social exclusion. The collective processes that work to deprive people of access to opportunities and means, material or otherwise, to achieve well-being and security in the terms that are important to them.

Total Mobility. A scheme co-funded by central government and by regional councils, that funds a fifty percent discount on taxi fares for people who are unable to use public transport because of a disability.

Virtual mobility. A shorthand term for the process of accessing activities that traditionally require physical mobility, but which can now be undertaken without
recourse to physical travel by the individual undertaking the activity, for example shopping or banking by telephone or over the Internet.