


Utilities in Highways: Minimising the Effects on Road Users

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**“Utilities in Highways:
Minimising the Effects on
Road Users”**

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Topics covered

- ◆ Highlighting the Key Utility Issues for Transit
- ◆ Road vs Utility Corridor
- ◆ Legislation Inconsistency
- ◆ Relocation Costs
- ◆ Traffic Disruption
- ◆ Installation Agreements
- ◆ Undergrounding/Safety/Amenity
- ◆ Occupancy Costs
- ◆ Records Management
- ◆ Agreements and Communications




**Some key statistics on
Transit New Zealand**

- ◆ 10,776 km of highways
- ◆ Asset value approx \$10 billion
- ◆ Strategic links with 81,400 km local roads
- ◆ \$310m per ann for capital projects
- ◆ \$275m per ann for maintenance
- ◆ 250 employees
- ◆ 6 Authority members



Mode of operation

- ◆ Contracting out all physical works and professional services
- ◆ New projects evaluated on a national basis
- ◆ Active programme of maintenance
- ◆ Stringent performance criteria applied to all activities
- ◆ Developed innovative procurement procedures



The players

Transit
(Client)

Consultants

Contractors

Local Authorities

Landowners

Wider Community

Utilities

Road Users, incl Cyclists and Pedestrians




Ruling legislation for Transit

- ◆ Transit Act 1989
- ◆ Local Government Act 1974
- ◆ Public Works Act 1981
- ◆ Resource Management Act 1991
- ◆ Telecommunications Act 1987
- ◆ Gas Act 1992
- ◆ Electricity Act 1992



Last 15 years of change

- ◆ From all utilities being public agencies in the early 1980s to most now in private ownership.
- ◆ Greater accountability for actions across all agencies.
- ◆ Much higher emphasis on road safety and efficiency as well as amenity, than ever before.



Issues for RCA's

- ◆ Management of Road Corridor
- ◆ Minimising disruption to road users
- ◆ Preserving the Short and Long Term Quality of the Road Asset
- ◆ Minimising the transaction costs between utilities and RCA
- ◆ Ensuring transparency of costs among occupiers of highway reserves
- ◆ Treating utilities consistently



Road or utility corridor?

Must be responsibility of RCA because:

- ◆ Road is largest occupier of the space
- ◆ RCAs represent interests of road users in terms of safety and cost burdens


Must be balance between road user and community interests

- ◆ Highways – movement focus
- ◆ Local roads – access and community focus



Local roads/highways


- ◆ Council often first point of contact
- ◆ Residents look at LA on amenity, litter, safety, events etc.
- ◆ LA's are utility owners as well
- ◆ All roads are a finite resource – many activities within them



Inconsistency in legislation

Not well coordinated or integrated in terms of:


- ◆ Cost of relocation
- ◆ Betterment
- ◆ Occupancy costs
- ◆ Notice of works
- ◆ Reinstatement



Relocation costs

on RCA doing work in road


Service	Legislation	Basis
Gas/Power	Gas Act 1992 Electricity Act 1992	Full cost, excl fittings
Telco	Telecomm. Act 1987 & Amdts	50% excl. betterment
Other LA (Water/Storm/Sever)	Transit Act 1989	50% excl betterment
Private	Transit Act 1989	Nil



Traffic disruption

Important issue for road managers, rely on common theory:

Hierarchy	Operational Performance	Amenity/ Access
Motorways	High Priority	Low Priority
Secondary	Med Priority	Med Priority
Cul-de-sacs	Low Priority	High Priority




Traffic disruption – (cont.)

Hierarchy	Utility Access
Motorways	At discretion of RCA and only in Exceptions
Expressways and High Volume State Highways	Statutory Right but Under Strict Conditions
Low Volume State Highways	Less Stringent Conditions




Traffic disruption - (Cont.)

- ◆ Managing our own contractors
- ◆ Utility contractors an additional problem
- ◆ Too often inadequate forward planning
- ◆ Need for greater coordination
- ◆ Have had utility openings without RCA approvals at all




Installation agreements

- ◆ Recognising a large number of utilities today, many operating nationally
- ◆ Need for consistency, fairness
- ◆ Provide certainty for utilities and RCAs
- ◆ Minimising transaction costs



Undergrounding


- ◆ Aesthetics issue, recognise cost implications of under grounding
- ◆ Must balance out with safety issue
- ◆ Vehicle wander space requirements
- ◆ Most important on high speed roads



Occupancy costs

Costs of having utilities in roads lacks clarity. Is there a case for an occupancy charge?

- ◆ For Extra Roads
Right to occupy based on public ownership of utilities. Should it be revisited today when many are in private ownership? Is it evenhanded?
- ◆ For New Roads
Inequitable as RCA purchases land and utilities have free access.




Cost transparency
for all Occupiers of Road

Costs from utilities absorbed by road users in the past (and the converse may be true) eg:

- ◆ Trenching disrupting traffic
- ◆ Trenching reducing life of road structure
- ◆ Long term damage to road asset
- ◆ Administration/supervision costs burden

Recognise these costs may cut both ways but accountability is an issue for any asset manager in today's world.



Cost transparency -
(Cont.)

In terms of key issues via cost sharing, application of rentals and admin charges, different rules apply according to:

- ◆ Road status (motorway, formed or unformed road)
- ◆ Type of utility
- ◆ Currency of legislation



Records management


- ◆ Continuing commercialisation causing difficulties to get information
- ◆ Causes costs on all parties
- ◆ Opportunities need to be taken with GIS technology now with us to be better organised
- ◆ Will assist with issues of space, coordination and communications between agencies



Communications and agreements

Need for consistency in:

- ◆ forward planning
- ◆ cost sharing (incl. admin.)
- ◆ engineering (installation /reinstatement/traffic control/site safety)
- ◆ installation agreements (technical)
- ◆ future liabilities
- ◆ risks
- ◆ third party responsibilities



Thank you
