# On being pregnant and walking

What is it like to be pregnant and move around a city? How does our urban environment respond to the needs of pregnant women? Whitney Adam of Aurecon explores this topic further using prompts from a diary maintained during her own pregnancy and her experience in social, environmental and equity impact assessment of transport infrastructure.

Pregnancy is a constantly changing physiological and emotional state. It is a unique, short and temporary time for a woman to experience changes to her body and mind and in turn, interact with the urban environment differently as the pregnancy progresses. Pregnant women are likely to experience a change in senses and heightened awareness, different moods, slower movement, and compromised balance, depending on the stage of the pregnancy.

About 1 in 16 women aged between 15 and 24 gave birth in 2017. Of these, over half lived in more deprived neighbourhoods, were young and there was a high birth rate for Māori, Asian and Pacific people. This, combined with the constantly changing state of pregnancy, presents a complex backdrop for how the urban environment responds to the different and changing needs of pregnant women.

Walking plays a critical and universal role for pregnant women no matter what the socio-economic situation is for the woman. It is important as a mode to get around, for exercise and to maintain mental wellbeing. Walking also forms part of public transport trips, such as transferring between transport modes at stations.

This presentation considers how the urban environment can respond to the needs of pregnant women*.* It considers three broad areas: the role of the street environment; infrastructure provision and maintenance; and land use and transport interaction.