



Reducing Light Vehicle Kilometres Travelled

The Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP) has a target to reduce total kilometres travelled by the light vehicle fleet by 20 per cent by 2035 through improved urban form and providing better travel options, particularly in our largest cities. With a focus on major urban areas, this research piece investigates the feasibility of achieving a 20% reduction in light vehicle (LV) vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT).

Mode shift alone is unlikely to achieve the goals of the emissions reduction plan. 25% of LV-VKT in Tier 1 is from journeys travelled in main urban areas, under 15 kilometres, and for one of three purposes: commute to work, personal/shopping, or social/entertainment. While these journeys are potentially more feasible to shift to an alternative mode, targeting this subset will not achieve the reductions required to meet the ERP target.

The ERP target is ambitious. Longer journeys contribute too many kilometres. In Tier 1, about 20% of driven journeys contribute 60% of LV-VKT. These are over 15 km. Inversely, 54% of Tier 1 journeys taken are under 6 km, yet these contribute only 16% of Tier 1 LV-VKT. Minimising short driven journeys is important, but less rewarding in terms of the ERP target. If all current journeys under 6 km were suddenly not driven, it still wouldn't reduce Tier 1 LV-VKT by 20%. And Tier 1 will need a reduction larger than 20%. Main urban areas have more travel options; it will be even more difficult to cancel or shift driven trips in rural areas. Achieving the ERP target will require a suite of measures targeting driven journeys of all distances and purposes.

Urban planning and land use plays a critical role in our future. The 15-minute city framework, providing access rather than mobility, could help reduce the distance we need to travel.

The recently published report is available here: [Household travel in our major urban areas | Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency \(nzta.govt.nz\)](#)