

# Summary of Student Travel Survey: Wānaka Primary School March 2020

## Background

Wānaka Primary School is one of eight primary schools in the district implementing travel plan activities with the support of Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). The aim of school travel planning is to increase safe travel choices for children with the help of the school community and to address road safety issues where possible. Wānaka Primary School is co-located with other educational facilities in the area such as Holy Family School, Mt Aspiring College and the Montessori Early Education Centre.

In 2020, students were asked how they got to and from school over a five-day period (2nd - 6th March). In this report, student survey data is summarised in the following way:

1. How students currently travel to school – a breakdown of travel choice for 2020.
2. Travel choice comparisons – comparing travel modes over time, comparing active with motorised transport, and comparing actual with desired travel modes.
3. Travel choice by year group.
4. Changes in travel choice.
5. Opportunities.

## Methodology

For this survey, teachers collected data by asking students each morning how they travelled to and from school. We try to encourage teachers to oversee data collection, but some classes with older students elect a student to record this. We asked that rainy days and school trips be noted on the survey sheet. There was one wet day recorded during this week on Tuesday the 3rd March.

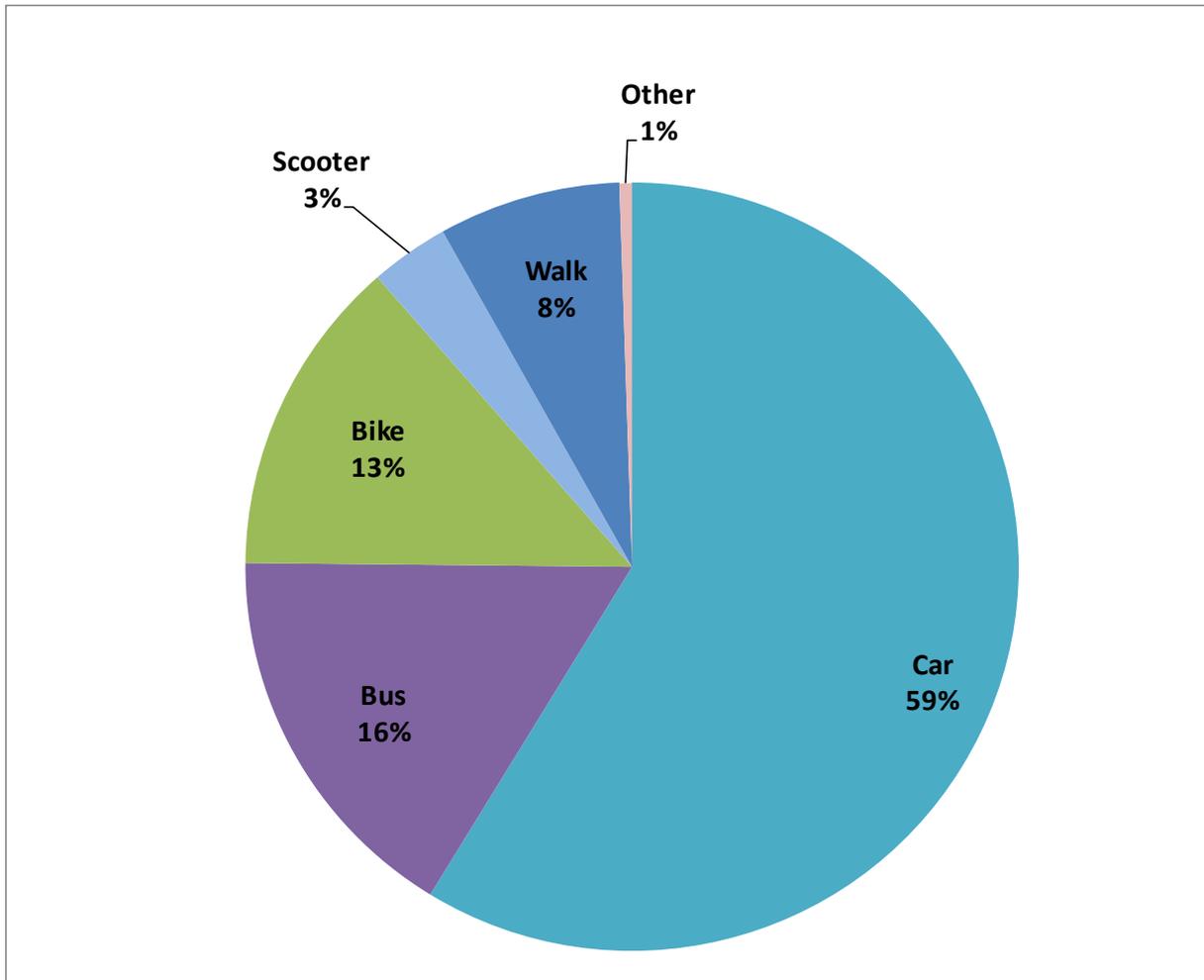
Generally, participation rates are high for student surveys, with nearly all children present in the classroom having their answers recorded and most classes taking part. Data for 2020 showed that on the day with the highest response, there was a participation rate of 87% (with a school roll of 567<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Based on figures provided to QLDC from WPS for the week beginning 3rd March 2020

# 1. How Students get to and from Wānaka Primary School

March 2020

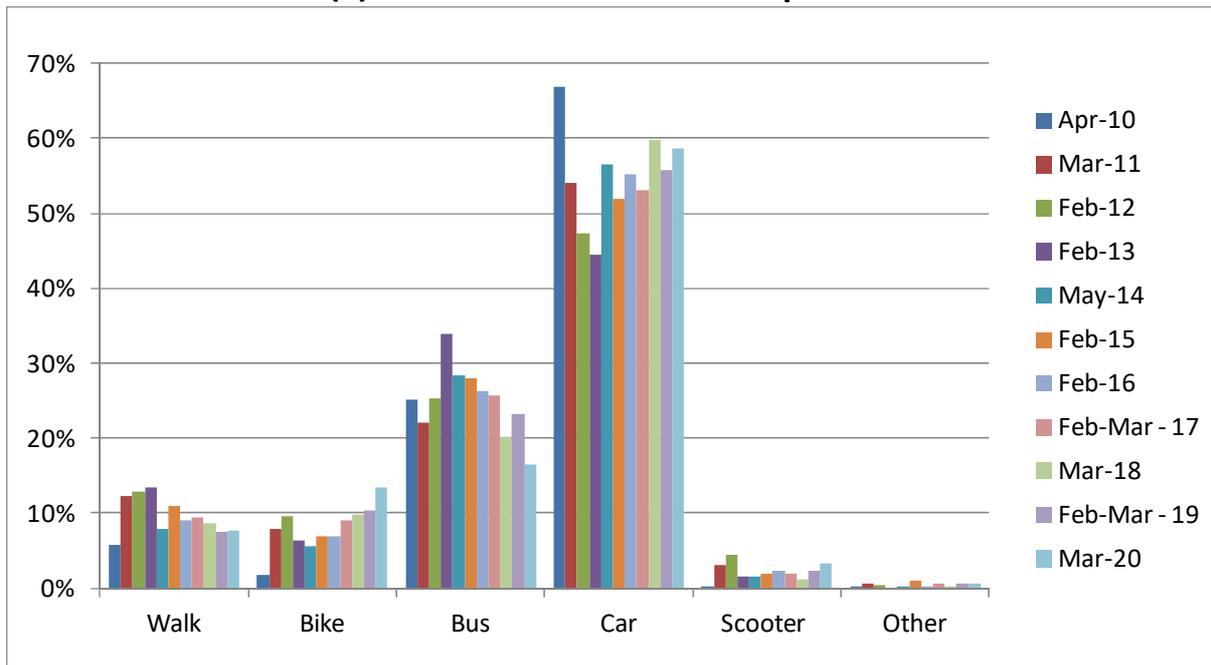


**Figure 1: How students are travelling to and from school (data taken over five days)**

Figure 1 gives a breakdown of travel modes for students over the five-day period in March 2020. The vast majority of transport to and from school was via car at 59% of the total, while 16% of trips were via bus. The remaining 25% of trips to and from school were split between biking (13%), walking (8%), scootering (3%) and “Other” kinds of transport (1%) which include motorbike and skateboard.

## 2. Travel Choice Comparisons

### (a) Annual Travel Mode Comparison



**Figure 2: Annual travel mode comparisons from 2010 to 2020**

Figure 2 shows how travel modes have changed between 2010 and 2020.

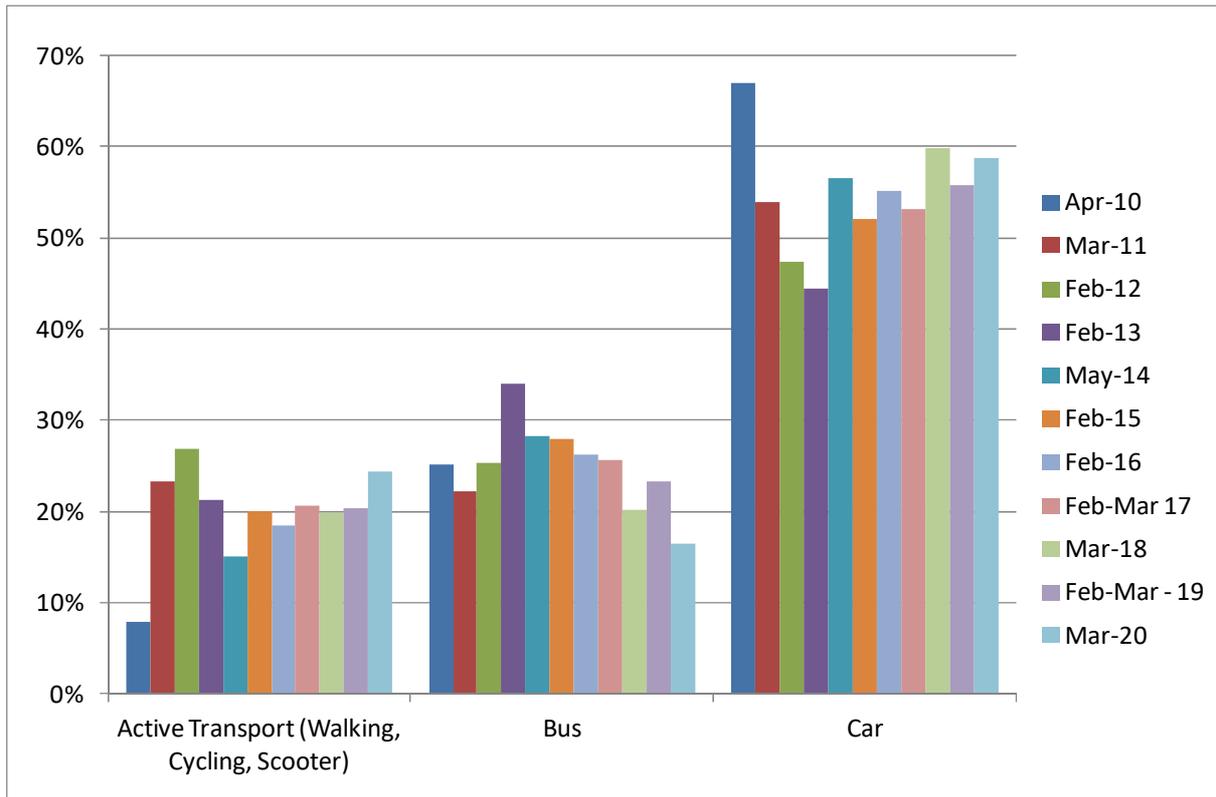
Since records began in 2010, walking rates have averaged  $10 \pm 2\%$ . In 2020, walking rates were slightly below average, but held steady for a second year in a row at 8%. Biking rates over the past 11 years have averaged  $8 \pm 3\%$ . Biking rates have been gradually increasing over the past six years with 2020 having record bike numbers at 13% of the transport share. Scootering has ranged between 0-5% over the last 11 years and accounted for 3% of trips in 2020.

Travelling to and from school via bus has been used on average by  $25 \pm 5\%$  of students over the past 11 years. Since 2012, there has been a declining trend of bus usage. Despite a small increase in bus use in 2019, the data from 2020 follows the declining trend to a record low in bus usage of 16%.

The three surveys carried out after Wānaka Primary moved to its Scurr Heights location (in Term 4, 2010) showed a steady decline in the number of driving trips to school to a low of 44% in 2013. However, since this time the number of car trips has shown an upward trend with  $55 \pm 3\%$  of students being driven to school between 2014 and 2019. From the 2020 survey we can see 59% of students were driven to school, which is the second highest rate for driving since the school moved to its current location.

Other factors influencing changes in travel choice are discussed in more detail on page 8.

## Annual Travel Modes (Comparison of Active and Motorised Travel)



**Figure 3: Annual travel mode comparisons between active and motorised travel 2010- 2020**

Figure 3 groups together all active transport modes (walking, cycling and scootering) comparing these with motorised transport such as the bus and car.

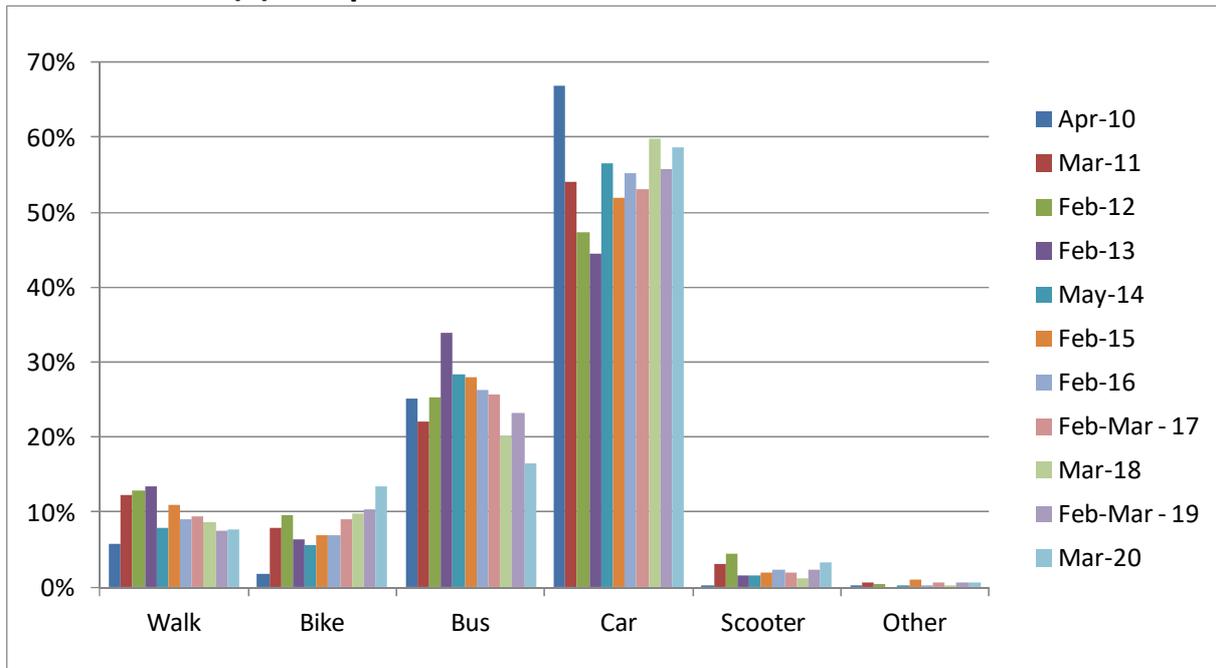
Active transport figures were higher after 2010 when the school moved from its Tenby Street location. Since this time, the average active transport rate has been 21±3%. In 2020, active transport rates were recorded as 24%, which is the second highest recorded and the highest active transport rate seen over the last 7 years.

The numbers of bussing trips to/from school show a gradual 3% decline each year since its peak in 2013 (34%). Despite a small increase in bus use in 2019, the data from 2020 follows the declining trend to a record low in bus usage of 16%.

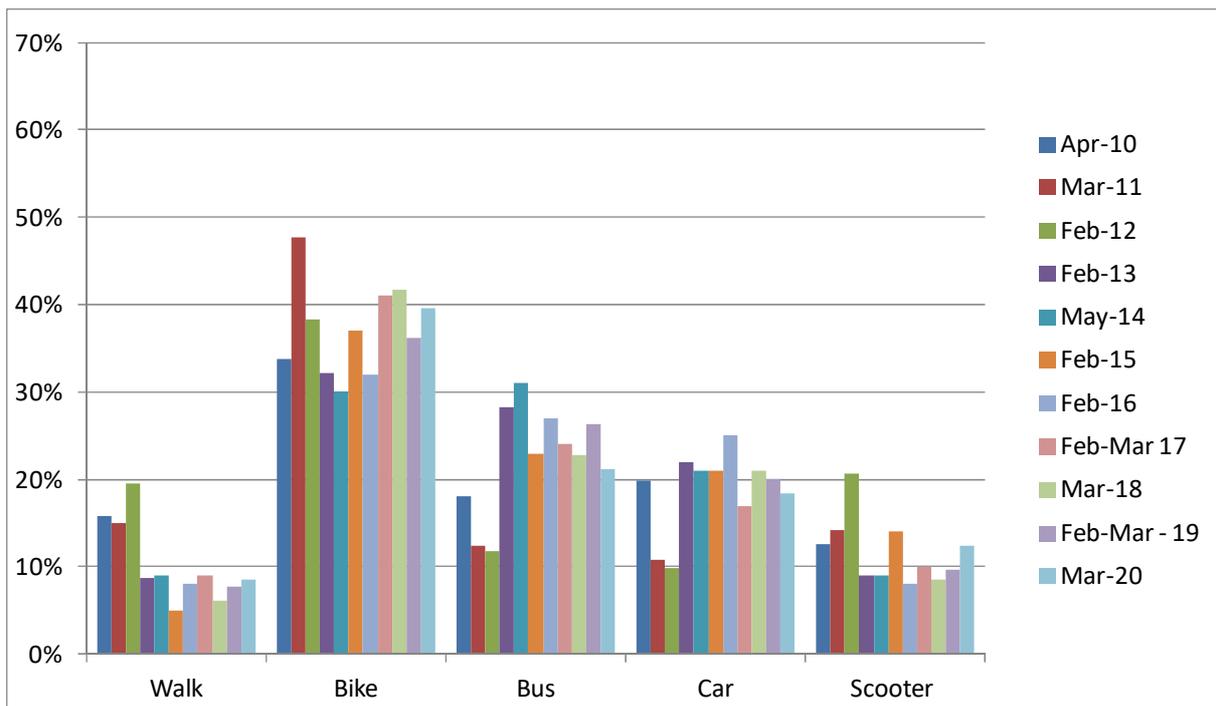
While the number of car trips have fluctuated over the 11 years of survey data, since 2013 there has been an upward trend with 55±3% of students on average being driven to school between 2014 and 2019. From the 2020 survey, we can see 59% of students were driven to school, which is the second highest rate for driving since the school moved to its current location in 2010.

The 2010 survey was conducted when the school was at the old location and timed in late April with some recorded wet days. In contrast, all subsequent surveys have been run in midsummer and with much lower driving rates. It is likely the 2010 driving rate of 67% is an aberration and noteworthy that the 2012 and 2013 surveys show the lowest driving rates overall. Factors influencing travel mode change are discussed on page 8.

### (a) Comparisons of Actual and Desired Travel Modes



**Figure 4: Actual travel modes comparisons from 2010 to 2020**



**Figure 5: Preferred travel mode comparisons from 2010 to 2020**

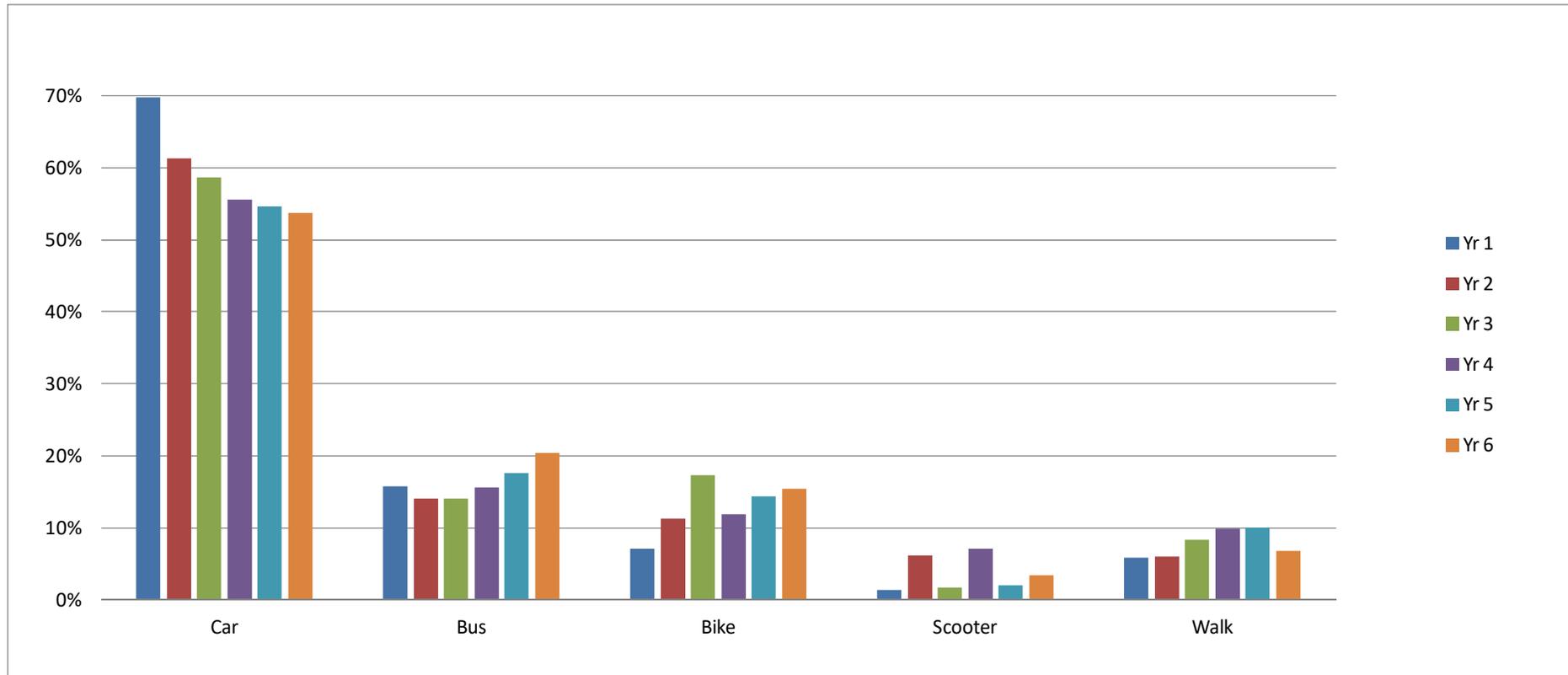
Figure 4 shows how students *actually* travelled to school over the period 2010-2020 while Figure 5 shows the *preferred* (how students would like to travel to and from school given the choice) travel modes over the same period. This information can be used to identify potential opportunities for future sustainable school travel.

Over the last eleven surveys, the average number of walking trips of 10±3% is aligned with the average number of students who would *like to walk* (10±3%). When it comes to biking

however, the average number of students *actually* biking ( $8\pm 3\%$ ) is significantly lower than the numbers who would *like* to bike ( $37\pm 5\%$ ). Similarly, those wanting to scooter are much greater than those actually using this mode, with around 2% on average scootering over the last eleven surveys and  $12\pm 4\%$  preferring to scooter if they had the choice.

Being driven to school is the highest of all travel modes with  $55\pm 3\%$  of students getting to and from school in a car. In contrast to this only  $19\pm 5\%$  of students would *like* to be driven to school if they were given the choice.

### 3. Travel Choice by Year Group



**Figure 6 - Travel Modes by Year Group 2020:** The increasing number of active transport trips where students are biking and walking to/from school tends to correspond to a decrease in the numbers being driven to school as the student's year group rises. I.e. as the students get older, they are more likely to use active transport to get to and from school independently. The higher numbers of children being driven to school amongst younger year groups is a feature consistent with many other schools in the district.

## 4. Changes in Travel Modes

### Active Transport (walking, biking, scootering)

In the past, cycling rates have always been slightly less than walking rates, 2018 was the first time the number of cycling trips had exceeded the number of walking trips. This trend has continued in 2020 for a third consecutive year of biking trips accounting for more compared to walking. Scooter rates have remained relatively constant over the last eleven years fluctuating around the 2% mark on average.

If the average is taken across all eleven surveys, the number of students using active transport is 21±3% of the total mode share. However, if given the choice up to 59% of students would *prefer* to bike, walk or scooter to school if they could, a figure that is equal to the number of students currently being driven to school.

### Driving and Bussing to School – Changes between 2010-2020

The survey taken in 2010 shows the highest driving rate, together with moderate bus use and the lowest walking and cycling rates over the eleven year survey cycle. Factors influencing these results will include the timing of the survey (late April instead of February), recorded wet days and the fact that it was taken at its Tenby Street location with less walking and cycling infrastructure.

Surveys in 2012 and 2013 saw lower driving rates than later years and the highest active transport rates over the survey period. There is also a correlation between driving and bus use, with bus use at its highest when driving rates are at their lowest. After this time the school roll continued to rise and we can see car use climbing up again to around 50-55%. Bus usage has been declining gradually each year since its peak in 2013 (34%). Despite a small increase in bus use in 2019, the declining trend continues with a record low in bus usage of 16% recorded in 2020.

Wānaka Primary School has experienced large growth of student numbers in the order of 87% since 2010. Over the last six years, 56% of trips to and from school have been via car. It is possible that an increase in the school traffic volume discourages some from walking or biking, especially if parents notice there is more congestion and therefore feel less safe. Another important factor is the increase in the numbers of new entrants enrolled each year. This increase of around 30%<sup>1</sup> may have an impact on the overall travel profile for the school because as Figure 6 shows, the younger the student, the more car trips and less biking, walking and bussing trips overall. Busy lifestyles also have a role to play with children enjoying multiple after-school activities combined with changes in parents' expectations around how students get to these (less walking or biking). Pressures of time are also a big factor for parents. The convenience of the car – even for short trips – is hard to ignore when it so easily overcomes time constraints.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication, Wendy Bamford, May 2017.

## 5. Opportunities

- The future of transport to and from Wānaka Primary is set to see a change due to the enrolment zones of the newly opened school Te Kura O Take Kārara. Many students who currently attend Wānaka Primary (and who may opt to continue attending Wānaka Primary rather than changing schools) will no longer have access to the school bus service which will likely see an increase in the number of car trips to and from Wānaka Primary. Alternatively, with the housing developments close to Wānaka Primary and long term zoning changes it could cause an increase in active transport, as a large percentage of students will live closer to school. It will be interesting to see how these changes shape the school transport in the future and considerations that will have to be made.
- The number of students biking to and from school in the 2020 survey is the highest since records began eleven years ago. Wānaka Primary students seem to *prefer* this mode to all others with 40% of students saying they would *prefer* to bike if given the option. Not all schools favour cycling in this way and with ongoing infrastructure development around Wānaka to support biking hopefully we keep seeing this increase.
- Safety programmes which reinforce safe walking and cycling are a good match for the transport profile of this school and QLDC will continue to work closely with the school community to implement these where possible. The Safe Walking programme is planned to be carried out in Term 1 2021 for all year 0-2 students and the BikeReady cycling programme is planned to be carried out in Term 4 2021 for the year 6 students.
- A walking school bus from Anderson Road continues to operate in 2020 and a kea crossing was introduced at the Kings/Ironside Drive roundabout in Term 1 2017 before and after school. This has partially eased congestion on Ironside Drive at pick up times enabling parents to meet children further away from the main entrance, with students crossing at the kea patrol first. The kea crossing also encourages students living nearby to walk and bike to school, providing a safe way to negotiate this busy intersection.
- QLDC will continue to programme infrastructure works where possible to address road safety issues or support safe routes to school.

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