

July 2016



3. The Walking Access Mapping System Frequently Asked Questions



What is the Walking Access Mapping System?

The Walking Access Mapping System is an online system that uses geographic information system (GIS) technology to display publicly accessible land.

The locations of this public land can be viewed against topographical maps, aerial photographs or a basic map showing only the outline of the land. The mapping system has a search facility, zooming tools, and other functions that allow people to plot points and lines and measure distances. Users can save maps and print them.

The mapping system also contains information sourced from other organisations such as the Department of Conservation and Fish & Game New Zealand, including the locations of many walking, cycling and horse riding tracks, fishing access points and other useful points of interest.

Where do I find the mapping system?

The maps can be accessed online at www.wams.org.nz. Users can also find the maps via the Walking Access Commission's website, at www.walkingaccess.govt.nz.

Does the system work on smartphones and tablets?

Yes, the mapping system can be viewed on smartphones and tablets, as well as desktop computers. The mobile version of the mapping system has been optimised for the smaller screens and built-in GPS functionality of mobile devices. It operates slightly differently from the desktop version.

How much does it cost to use the system?

Access to the Walking Access Mapping System is free.

Why do we need a Walking Access Mapping System?

One of the functions of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission, as specified in the Walking Access Act 2008, is to compile, hold and publish maps and information about land over which the public has access.

A need for maps and information that identify land open to public access was identified during debates over access between 2002 and 2008. For recreational users, maps that identify publicly accessible land and property boundaries are important if they are to know what recreational opportunities and limits exist and where landholder permission for access may be required.

Maps that provide clarity about the location of public and private land also provide valuable information for private landholders to manage their properties.

What makes the Walking Access Mapping System unique?

Other mapping databases exist, but none provide the type of freely-accessible, nationwide, authoritative information available through the Walking Access Mapping System.

The Walking Access Mapping System is currently the only product that focuses on and identifies land over which the public

has access, classified by type. The cadastral (property boundary) information on the Commission's system is updated monthly. It is also the only system that provides an access enquiry function.

Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) holds the authoritative source of New Zealand's property boundary information in its survey and property database (Landonline). Landonline is designed for use by surveyors, lawyers and real estate agents rather than the public. Access to Landonline is licensed and a data fee is charged.

The Google Maps service is free, but the maps provided do not show the public access status of land. The aerial imagery in the Walking Access Mapping System is also of a higher quality and resolution than that found in Google Maps.

TUMONZ and other similar commercially available maps contain topographic, photographic and cadastral data but are not currently available online and must be purchased.

While some local authorities also provide free online GIS mapping services, these tend to focus on rating and property information for administrative and utility management rather than public access.

Can my organisation display its own outdoor access information on the mapping system?

The Commission is open to approaches from other organisations that would like to display their outdoor-related information on the mapping system.

How long has the Walking Access Mapping System been in development?

The project arose out of three rounds of public consultation. Project design began in early 2009 and development started in January 2010. The project was completed in December 2010 and was opened to public

testing on 21 December 2010. The Walking Access Mapping System was formally launched in July 2011. Major enhancements were made in 2012, including an improved user interface and mobile functionality. Further more iterative improvements have been made since, including the introduction of an improved mobile version and other changes in June 2016.

How much did the system cost to develop?

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission received a capital allocation of \$1 million of government funding to develop the Walking Access Mapping System. The original version of the system was completed within time and budget.

Major post-launch enhancements include an improved interface and mobile functionality.

How accurate is the Walking Access Mapping System?

The Walking Access Mapping System draws on the most up-to-date cadastral, topographic and aerial imagery data available through LINZ and Terralink International Ltd. It is as accurate as it can be within the limits of the source information and the GIS technology that is used. Many users have commented that the Walking Access Mapping System is more up-to-date than other publically available maps.

The Topo50 maps provided by LINZ have an official spatial accuracy of +/- 22m. However, many areas have an improved spatial accuracy in the order of +/- 6m, due to technological improvements in the equipment used to obtain imagery.

If any apparent inaccuracies or errors are discovered, users are encouraged to submit their concerns to the Commission using the Walking Access Mapping System's built-in enquiry tool with the information required

to identify the land in question (for example, street address, property title reference or parcel appellation). The Commission will check the enquiry and if necessary make any corrections that are within its control. If the issue relates to the underlying cadastral information it will refer the matter to LINZ for resolution.

How often are the maps in the Walking Access Mapping System updated?

The entire New Zealand cadastre, administered by LINZ, is updated monthly.

Topographic maps are updated by LINZ and uploaded to the mapping system twice a year.

Colour coding of areas open to public access is reviewed as required and on a monthly basis when each New Zealand cadastre is supplied by LINZ.

How can I tell if the topographic data I'm looking at in the Walking Access Mapping System is current?

A page on the LINZ website details the update history for Topo50 map sheets: www.linz.govt.nz/topography/topo-maps/topo50/update-history.

LINZ welcomes feedback about areas that have changed. You can email information to LINZ at info@linz.govt.nz with subject line: "Topo50 map feedback", or phone 0800 665 463.

Are the roads and tracks shown on the topographic maps in the Walking Access Mapping System indicative of a public right of access?

No. Representation of a road or track on a topographic map does not necessarily indicate a public right of access. Some roads and tracks are privately owned.

How do I know if a road or track shown on the topographic maps in the mapping system is available for public access?

By switching on the Public Access Layer within the Walking Access Mapping System, users will be able to see if a road or track shown on a topographic map is on land that is publicly accessible. If the road or track coincides with the cadastral representation of a public access area, then it can be expected to be open to the public.

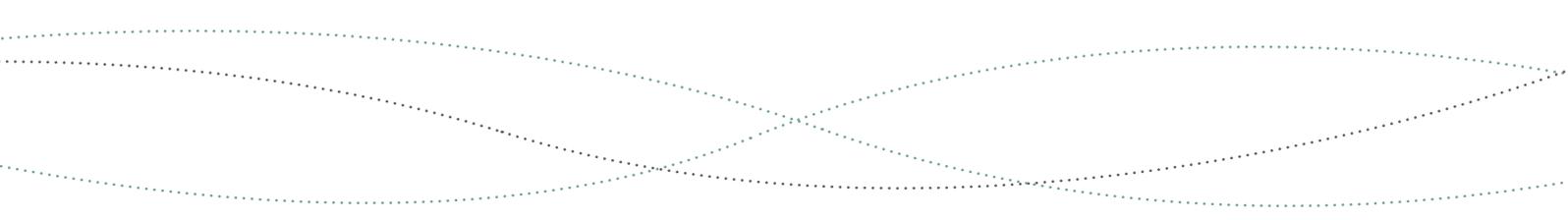
There may be marginal instances where the precise location of the road or track relative to the cadastral layer is outside the limits of accuracy of the system. In any cases of doubt the matter should be checked with the agency responsible for the public land (e.g. the Department of Conservation for conservation land or the local council for roads).

How can I tell if a road shown in the mapping system is formed or unformed?

You need to look at the map in topographic or aerial imagery view, and with the Public Access Layer turned on. The Public Access Layer will show you where the legal road access is, and by comparing that with the topographic or imagery layers which shows formed roads, you can see where the unformed road begins.

A landowner is preventing me from accessing an unformed legal road shown in the mapping system. What can the Walking Access Commission do?

The first port of call is the council responsible for the road. If the issue is not resolved in the first instance, users can submit an enquiry to the Commission through the mapping system, including as much information as possible. The Commission will investigate the issue.



Can I make an enquiry about public access?

Yes. The desktop version of the mapping system has an enquiry function that makes it easy to lodge enquiries about public access and other information shown in the mapping system.

Why does the topographic map disappear at scales larger than 1:10,000?

Topo50 maps are designed to be viewed at a maximum of 1:10,000 as the accuracy and value of the topographic map decreases beyond this point.

Why is there a difference between the data on a topographic map and what I can see on the corresponding aerial image?

There could be a number of reasons for this. The most likely is that the data on the map has been updated before or after the aerial image. To see the update history of any Topo50 map sheet, see www.linz.govt.nz/topography/topo-maps/topo50/update-history.

If the differences are small, it could also be the result of the techniques used when producing the 1:50,000 maps. At 1:50,000 scale, not all features can be shown – for example, if there is a group of five or six buildings in close proximity, only two or three may be shown. Where features are very close together – for example a road, railway line and coastline – they may be separated slightly on the map to enable each to be clearly visible. Similarly, small but significant features may be shown on the map slightly larger or longer than they truly are to ensure they are visible. For example, bridges less than 50m long are lengthened to 50m to ensure the bridge symbol is readable.