Can cameras tell us which streets need help?

The Idea: Using pedestrian counts to decide where crossings and footpaths are improved



Illustrative Image

01 WHAT THE TECHNOLOGY PROMISES

CAMERAS → **SOFTWARE** → **PLANNERS** → **PROJECTS**

- **CAMERAS**: Observe people using a street
- **SOFTWARE**: Estimate numbers at different times
- **PLANNERS**: Compare streets and spending options
- **PROJECTS**: Choose where to invest

Potential Benefits: More observations than a short manual count; but only if the system is accurate and useful.

02 WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

RISK A : PEOPLE MAY BE FILMED

Actual camera images may show identifiable people, even when staff only receive totals.

RISK B: LOW USE CAN HIDE HIGH NEED



FEWER PEOPLE ≠ LOWER PRIORITY

People may avoid the very street that needs fixing.

03 WHAT DO THE RULES PROTECT?

NEW ZEALAND PRIVACY LAW

Controls personal data and its use.

WHAT LAW ALONE CANNOT DECIDE

Which street most deserves funding.

The Biometrics Code depends on what the camera software actually does. EU law offers an impact-assessment example; it is not NZ law.

04 HOW COULD THE COUNCIL USE IT RESPONSIBLY?

1. **CHECK NEED** — Could a simpler counter do the job?
2. **PROTECT PEOPLE** — Collect and keep as little footage as possible.
3. **TEST ACCURACY** — Compare camera counts with real observations.
4. **CHECK FAIRNESS** — Add safety, access and local experience.
5. **REVIEW & STOP** — Explain spending choices; stop if harms outweigh value.

References: Kitchin (2014); Nissenbaum (2004); boyd & Crawford (2012); Privacy Act 2020; Biometric Processing Privacy Code 2025; GDPR art. 35. Full references available in accompanying report.