



1 March 2011

RE: CCC ESTUARY EDGE MASTER PLAN

SUBMISSION FROM SPOKES CANTERBURY

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. Spokes Canterbury is a local cycling advocacy group with approximately 1,500 members that is affiliated with the national Cycling Advocates Network (CAN). All submissions are developed online and include member's input. Spokes is dedicated to including cycling as an everyday form of transport in the greater Christchurch area.

We would like the opportunity to appear at any hearing that is held to consider submissions on this Plan. Should there be an officer's report or similar document(s) we would appreciate a copy(s).

If you require further information or there are matters requiring clarification, please contact our Submissions Convenor Dirk De Lu in the first instance. His contact details are:

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Keith Turner
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INTRODUCTION

Spokes Canterbury thanks the Christchurch City Council for opening up this planning process for the Estuary edge to allow residents and interested groups to shape the forthcoming draft plan. Spokes looks forward to the full consultation process for the final Master Plan. We are hopeful that this early consultation will result in a process and outcome which well implements resident's input and current Council Strategies and policies.

Thank you also for the opportunity to undertake a site visit of the sewage ponds, and to hear the views of Council officers about potential cycling and walking issues and opportunities in the area. We found this visit most helpful in framing the relevant section of this submission.

It is heartening that the estuary is to be considered as a whole continuous entity. This broad view can produce objectives, policies and actions capable of meeting the many diverse needs identified while acknowledging the environmental, recreational, transportation and access issues involved.

Spokes considers the Master Plan should provide for two major cycling and walking linkages along or adjacent to the Estuary edge. These linkages are:

- The estuary section of the proposed Sumner to City route along the southern and eastern edge of the estuary,
- A proposed walking and cycling route along the western side of the estuary between the Avon and Heathcote rivers.

We discuss each of these in more detail in our recommendations below.

CONTRIBUTING REPORTS AND STRATEGIES

No draft master plan or issues and options report is available at this stage. In preparing this submission, Spokes has therefore relied on a number of reports and strategies which are either directly relevant to the estuary, or to the management of public open space generally, as well as the Ihutai Management Plan from the Avon-Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust. We comment on the implications of each of these documents in the discussion below.

The McCormack's Bay Steering Group Report, December 2009 was a fascinating look in on how residents and the Council can work together. A broadly inclusive resident's group working closely with and well supported by Council staff resulted in high quality investigation and recommendations.

This group was originally formed to address ecological concerns raised by the proposed widening of a culvert, but recognized that issues of residential development, transportation choices and infrastructure, recreation, access, likely increases in petrol prices and future sea level rise were closely related issues. The broad and foresightful approach adopted by this group can be further developed and applied to this process.

Issues raised included the need for bus lanes, cycle paths, pedestrian paths and limits on urban development. The specific recommendation calls for a culvert at the Ferrymead Bridge wide enough to accommodate current and future needs including provision of adequate width cycle and pedestrian lanes on both sides of the causeway. Development of cycle and pedestrian paths are specifically called for on the northern estuary edge.

Given the process now being undertaken for the master plan it seems important to repeat one of the final comments made by this report:

There is a greater lesson which Community and Council can learn from the success of this project, despite the difficulties and hurts that were endured in sustaining it. It is the lesson of trust, trust especially in people, people in the Community and people working in Council. When the going grew rough, it was only by a renewal of personal trust in people rather than by adherence to any particular protocol that the rough going was crossed over and the project was brought through to completion. It is in the same spirit of trust in the Community and trust in the Community Board and

Council that the Steering Group now commits the future of McCormack's Bay to their acceptance of this report and the implementation of its recommendations. (page 159)

Spokes looks forward to embarking on a process based on mutual trust and thorough communication.

Monck's Bay to Scarborough Beach Parks Issues and Opportunities July 2008 (MBSBPIO). This document requires updating to be consistent with current CCC policy and strategies. Fortunately the document anticipates this need when it cites one aim being to identify matters that might be considered and to establish priorities for investigation and implementation. Specific support for cycle access and transport network enhancement are found in the community outcomes goals which call for "well designed transport networks, designed to meet current and future needs", promotion of healthy lifestyles and safe environments.

MBSBPIO anticipates Council policy and strategies adopted since its publication. With reference to the proposed shared path from Monk's Bay to Scarborough it states: *A more formalised walkway would not only provide significantly improved recreational opportunities linked to our cities wider network of cycleways and paths but could also provide opportunities to better interpret this area's rich cultural history, develop or strengthen natural ecological corridors between the coast and Port Hills environments, and provide long term sustainable solutions for the protection and enhancement of this dynamic and fragile coastal edge.* (page 45) Spokes submitted on the MBSBPIO strongly supporting this proposed shared path.

The Christchurch City Council Infrastructure Design Standard Part 10 Reserves, Streetscapes and Open Spaces dated June 2010 specifically cites pedestrian and cycle paths as an integral part of reserve design. Spokes expects that this standard will be fully implemented in the master plan being developed.

The newly adopted CCC Open Space Strategy 2010-2040 calls for: *Safe and appropriate cycleway routes are developed and extended to facilitate increased active transportation.* (page 24) This strategy specifically seeks to integrate and enhance the current cycle network with Open Space development. For example: *There are a number of well-publicised cycle routes throughout Christchurch identified on the metropolitan map. These routes provide a good foundation for the development of a safe and integrated cycleway network, but significant work is required to connect and extend this network to support active transport and recreation...* (page 44) The Strategy specifically calls for cycle routes to provide access to waterways: *Walkways and cycle routes developed, including along unformed legal roads, and waterways linked to interesting destinations, coast and parks. Beach access provided...* (page 67)

Spokes Canterbury is heartened to see the recommendations of MBSBPIO supporting related Council strategies and policies. Cycle and pedestrian lanes and access are clearly called for in well consulted upon documents adopted and supported by the Council. With only the inclusion of either separate cycle paths or the provision of a shared path the MBSBPIO complies with current Council Strategy and policy. Spokes anticipates that the 2010 Open Space Strategy will be fully implemented. Spokes

would appreciate being advised if CCC policy will be delayed or not implemented in regards to developing and extending cycle ways and paths.

The South New Brighton Reserves Management Plan August 2010 calls for walking and biking tracks in all areas but those reserved for camping. The main path through the reserve is to be upgraded as a shared use walking and biking track. It is expected that this path will be at least the 2.5 metres as called for in the Christchurch City Council Infrastructure Design Standard Part 10. Given the high level of use Spokes urges that shared paths be increased to a minimum of 3 metres width to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, prams, mobility scooters, wheel chairs, etc.

Like MBSBPIO this management plan seeks to prohibit activities incompatible with the maintenance of natural character and ecological values. One approach is to fence and patrol, such as is currently done with the sewage ponds. As population density increases this may become more challenging and expensive. A complimentary approach is to encourage communities and citizens to “take responsibility” for resources they have learned to value. The suggested creation of a bicycle play area is a move in this direction. Greater pedestrian and cycle paths can allow more residents to access an area intimately, to feel connected and to be likely to take action, or at least report, when areas they feel strong affinity for are threatened. Education and access are key if residents are to become connected to their natural environments and serve as guardians for the wildlife and ecological values therein.

Scott Park Re Development Plan, Main Road and Ferrymead Terrace November 2007. This one page drawing is inconsistent with current Council Strategies and policy as referenced above. Cycle infrastructure is not provided, the single path at water’s edge is not designated as to use, and no width is indicated. Car parking is provided, cycle parking is not. This plan is inadequate for proper consultation and must be redrawn to conform to current standards. In particular, there needs to be provision for a shared walking and cycling path along the seaward margin of the reserve as this will be a key linkage in any future Sumner to City route. Given the high level of use to be expected a minimum path width of 3 metres is indicated.

SPOKE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

Spokes Canterbury recommends that Council’s Open Space Strategy goal of integrating open spaces with the on road cycle network be implemented. We consider that the Master Plan should provide for two key walking and cycling linkages across affected public lands. These are the proposed Avon-Heathcote link between NE and SE Christchurch, and the proposed Sumner to City route.

Avon –Heathcote link

The primary (only) cycle route between the north east and south east of Christchurch is via Dyers Pass Road travelling between the sewage treatment ponds. This is a state highway with much heavy vehicle traffic, and relatively high speeds. It is challenging and a deterrent to all but the more experienced and dedicated cyclists. Dyers Road is also very exposed in windy conditions, and is a relatively indirect route for those seeking to walk or cycle between NE Christchurch and areas between Ferrymead to

Sumner. Overall, the lack of alternatives to Dyers Road constitutes a barrier to cycling and walking between NE and SE Christchurch.

Spokes considers that an attractive alternative to this route could be developed through the sewage ponds and paddocks area from the south east corner of the Bridge Street roundabout to the Windsurf car park on Humphries Drive. This potential route is shown at Attachment One, and is made up of the following sections:

- 1) the Mt Pleasant Yacht Club access road,
- 2) the former construction access track to the NE corner of the ponds for the ocean outfall works,
- 3) Along the base of the eastern side of the sewage pond embankment adjacent to the estuary edge,
- 4) Utilising a short section of the embankment at the southern end of the ponds where there is insufficient space between the embankment and the shoreline,
- 5) Across the eastern end of the paddocks to meet up with the track to the Windsurf reserve car park.

New bridges would also be required across the toe drains on the north and south side of ponds.

From the Windsurf reserve car park area new paths could be formed as part of the proposed Sumner to City route: around Humphries Drive to connect up to Ferrymead Bridge, and along Linwood Avenue towards the central city, with a link to the Charlesworth Street reserve and on to the Heathcote River.

Spokes appreciates that both the sewage ponds and the adjoining estuary foreshore have high habitat values for wildlife, and we have had regard to the Goals and Targets of the Ihutai Management Plan in developing our proposals. We consider that the route as proposed above is likely to have the lowest habitat impacts of any potential walking and cycling route through the sewage ponds area.

Section 1 and 2 of the proposed route are away from the estuary and the ponds and avoid disturbance to wildlife. Section 3 is completely screened from the ponds by the embankment, and largely screened from the estuary by the existing plantings. Section 4 is visible from the ponds and the foreshore, but is relatively short and restricted to the eastern corner of the ponds. Screen planting and/ or fencing could be utilised to avoid disturbance to wildlife on the ponds through this section. Section 5 would cross an area of the paddocks with low ecological values away from the estuary edge and then link up with the old track around the foreshore in an area which is already subject to a high level of disturbance from windsurfers.

In addition, we suggested that the following steps be undertaken to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on habitat values from the proposed route:

- That no public access is permitted to the embankments and ponds area, except where it is necessary to access the embankment along section 4.
- That the embankment and ponds area be fenced out along section 3, and the ponds be fenced out and screen planted on the embankment along section 4.
- That further screen planting is carried out along the estuary edge if this is considered necessary to avoid habitat impacts, but that some open sections are retained to allow people to appreciate vistas of the estuary.

- That there is a complete ban on dogs and motorised vehicles along the entire route, except where these are required for management purposes.
- That suitable sign posts and barriers be erected at each end of the route to prevent the egress of motorcycles etc onto the path
- That consideration is given to a bylaw controlling dogs on the public foreshore along at least this section of estuary edge.
- That the area be regularly patrolled by Council staff to ensure that any environmental damage and/ or antisocial activity (as occurred with the Heathcote estuary saltmarshes over a lengthy period) is “nipped in the bud”.

Spokes urges that route development and vegetative screening to preserve the sanctity of the reserve be funded and undertaken early so as to allow the earliest opportunity to implement this alternative route.

This proposed route would allow cyclists both a pleasant, more sheltered, and direct alternative to Dyers Pass Road and a world class scenic route linking the Avon and Heathcote rivers and the city centre which would be attractive for both local residents and visiting cycle tourists. Improved access for bird enthusiasts and recreational walkers is also achieved.

Harkening back to earlier comments: residents and users would be able to renew their connection to place, to experience the value of natural environments, and to be informal guardians discouraging inappropriate users, as authorities would always be but a cell phone call away.

Sumner to City route

A number of individuals and organisations, including Spokes, have promoted the idea of a Sumner to City cycling route over the years. There is an opportunity to create a walking and cycling route largely utilising off road paths and quiet streets between the central city and Sumner, which could both increase the number of people cycling to work and provide a significant recreational and tourism asset.

About a third of the proposed Sumner to City route would fall within the area covered by the Master Plan, including almost all public lands on the estuary edge between Sumner beach and Charlesworth Reserve.

Spokes wishes to ensure that provision is made in the Master Plan for an off road walking and cycling path along this part of the estuary edge, and that adequate provisions is made for linkages to existing and proposed paths through affected public lands. In particular, the Master Plan should ensure that adequate provision is made for such a path in the following areas.

Ferrymead

A shared path should be provided through Scotts Park, and linkages provided between the park and Ferrymead Bridge, and between Ferrymead Bridge, the Heathcote towpath and around Humphries Drive. Further linkages should be provided between Humphries Drive and the existing paths on Charlesworth Reserve

Causeway

The existing gravel verge on the northern side of the causeway should be retained, and developed as a shared walking and cycling route between Scott Park and the eastern end of the causeway, and a connection provided to Beachville Road.

Redcliffs/ Monks Bay

Currently there is no linkage between the southern end of Beachville Road and the proposed Monks Bay to Sumner “boulevard”. This is a key “missing link” in the Sumner to City route, as cyclists and walkers have to rejoin Main Road at this point.

Long term options to provide all tide access along this section could include reclamation, or some form of boardwalk structure on public lands in front of the private properties. If practical and feasible, consideration could also be given to a pontoon structure such as that used in the Yarra river in Melbourne, to provide cycling and walking access past a section of motorway that occupies the river bank (see attached photo).

Monks Bay to Sumner

Spokes strongly supports the concept of a cycling and walking boulevard along this section of the coast to Cave Rock, as identified in the MBSBPIO. The adjoining Main Road is a busy arterial route and unsuitable for less confident or younger cyclists. There is a significant opportunity to create an outstanding cycling and walking experience along one of the more attractive sections of coastline within the built up area.

CONCLUSIONS

Spokes wishes to see the Master Plan provide for two major cycling and walking linkages along the Estuary. These linkages are:

- The estuary section of the proposed Sumner to City route along the southern and eastern edge of the estuary,
- A proposed Avon-Heathcote link walking and cycling route along the western side of the estuary through the sewage pond area.

Cyclists currently represent between 6-8% of peak hour road users (2006 census). This leads to a reduction in traffic congestion at key times that already benefits Christchurch’s economy and relieves road stress. Encouraging both utility and recreational cycling is simply good economic policy on top of its health and environmental benefits. Providing residents from Sumner through Ferrymead and on to New Brighton with alternative walking and cycling linkages via the estuary edge and to and from the city centre, would assist in meeting the social, economic and cultural needs of people, and provide for their health and safety. Connecting these routes to other parts of the city and to the Port Hills further meets resident’s needs for safe transportation choices and for recreation.

Addendum following the 22 February Earthquake

In light of the devastating earthquake CCC may find it difficult to progress this plan. Understandably there are more urgent priorities. As observed after the September quake, Spokes notes that bicycles again served Christchurch residents well when roads were damaged and petrol scarce. Fulton Hogan found road access impaired by the many people dependent upon their cars clogging roads required to undertake urgent repair work. Developing a contiguous, safe and inviting cycling network can allow more people to choose active transport while freeing up road space. Transport efficiency is enhanced in good times and bad. Overall, the contribution of active transport to disaster relief and rebuilding requires better recognition and development.

ATTACHMENT ONE:

PROPOSED AVON TO HEATHCOTE ESTUARY EDGE PATH

