



Tuesday, 3 June 2008

Brian Boddy
Christchurch City Council
PO Box 237
Christchurch 8011

Little River Rail Trail: Shands Road to Blakes Road - SUBMISSION

SPOKES appreciates the opportunity to make this submission, and we would like to speak to it when submissions are heard. SPOKES has been a long-time supporter of the Christchurch-Little River Rail Trail Trust's work of creating a pathway for cyclists and walkers. When the Trust's vision of a 55km, mostly off-road pathway from Christchurch to Little River is realised, the Trail will be a world-class facility for cycle commuting and for recreation (both for locals and tourists); a jewel in the crown of the greater Christchurch area.

We support the efforts to date (and those planned for the future) by both the Christchurch City and Selwyn District Councils, towards achieving the work of the CLRRT Trust. We support the proposed project as a step towards linking the Rail Trail with the cycling infrastructure of Christchurch.

The points we would like to raise in this submission are:

1) We would like to see the facility referred to as a "Pathway" rather than a "Cycleway", as it is a pathway intended for both walkers and cyclists. As it is a shared pathway, we encourage the Council to allow more than just the minimum requirement of pathway width, and to specify 3.5m rather than the proposed 2.5m as the normal width of the pathway.

Austrroads 14 (see Fig-6-19-paths), which New Zealand uses for best practice, notes scenarios of predominant path usage and recommends pathway widths accordingly. For concurrent commuting and recreation that is frequent and in both directions (with speeds up to 30km/hr), the recommended pathway width is 3.5m.

The pathway is for walkers and cyclists so its design needs to minimise potential conflicts and to make the path convenient and attractive for all users.

2) The proposed design shows pathway users giving way at three points along Shands Road: Edmonton Road, Sir James Wattie Drive and the Watties factory entrance. Spokes would like to see the pathway given priority, at least at the two latter intersections. A design similar to that used on Tennyson Street, whereby the pathway becomes part of the road again for 20m before the intersection, would achieve this result.

Changing the design in this way would add to the ease of use for people cycling along the pathway, without compromising safety.

3) Our final comments are related to the “vision thing” – the opportunities for investment in the Christchurch end of the Rail Trail in the near future, so that its potential as a commuting and recreational drawcard for locals and visitors is fulfilled.

Spokes welcomes the creation of a new pathway along Shands and Marshs Roads, and the small section of pathway along the rail corridor. However the Shands Road area is industrial, has a lot of heavy vehicle traffic and the surrounding roads are not at all cycle friendly, for example Main South Road.

If the Shands Road site indicated in Plan ‘J’ becomes the Christchurch terminus of the Little River Rail Trail, people will need access this world-class facility by cycling through some of the most poorly-served (for people cycling) streets in the city. We hope that Council will remedy this in a short time-frame, by making some long-overdue investments in cycling facilities for the Hornby area.

While the part of the Rail Trail from Lincoln to Little River is predominantly recreational in use, the section between Christchurch and Lincoln is going to be both recreational and commuter focussed. Along this new pathway, more consideration could be given to the points where commuters will join or leave the pathway from the Halswell and Wigram area, for example at Springs / Blakes and at Marshs Road.

We hope that the Council’s appreciation of the potential of this asset will soon see the Christchurch terminus of the Rail Trail in an attractive central location such as Hagley Park, within the next two years. As such, we welcome the proposed pathway as a step towards linking the Rail Trail with central Christchurch, and look forward to Council’s commitment to making this happen.

Paul de Spa
Chairperson

Spokes Canterbury (the former Canterbury Cyclists’ Association) is a local cycling advocacy group dedicated to including cycling as an everyday form of transport and in local and regional planning. The group is affiliated with the national Cycling Advocates’ Network (CAN) and includes a number of CAN’s executive members. Spokes has some 900 members.

Spokes provides significant cycling expertise through its many longstanding advocates, transportation professionals and regular cyclists. The group is represented on Christchurch City Council’s central city transport committee, Environment Canterbury’s Regional Land Transport Committee and provides regular feedback on various council and Transit New Zealand transportation and planning proposals.