



7 May 2004

Draft Cycling Strategy

1. General Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft cycling strategy. We appreciate the effort that has gone into producing this third strategy, following the initial strategy in October 1996 and the second edition in January 2000.

We think the selection of photos used is very positive, using a good variety of subjects of different ages, ethnic groups and purposes. The photos on page 6 (mother and happy pre-schooler) and page 21 (gent in suit) are particularly good. Perhaps other photos of utilitarian cyclists (say people in their twenties or thirties cycling to work or sport, for example) would help reinforce the message. The more mainstream the photos are, the more non-cyclists might relate to them.

The photo on page 26, however, shows a group of high school students, but no cycles. Perhaps this could be replaced by a photo of some cool looking high school students on their way to or from school. Group photos are suggested, with an emphasis on kids having fun. The photos should be the sort of photos that would be used in a marketing campaign to promote cycling. In reality, this cycling strategy should be thought of as part of the marketing campaign.

One problem with photos is that unless carefully managed, the "pdf" files for the strategy are huge, which makes downloading the strategy very slow and unwieldy. Perhaps your IT staff are able to reduce the size of the photos for the web version so that the document is much more user friendly, by being significantly smaller than its current 12 Mb size. The strategy should be more easily accessible.

A major concern for Spokes is the cycling network plan provided on page 36 (Appendix B). It is far too small to provide meaningful detail. We comment more extensively on this in Section 3 – Detailed Comments).

Also of concern is the lack of specific projects and implementation. We realise that the strategy will be valid for four years (or until next updated), and projects will come and go over that time. Perhaps it would be practicable to identify the general strategic directions for implementation, such as:

- completion of the arterial road cycle route network,
- work around major clusters of schools,
- social marketing, etc.

2. Structure

In our view, the purpose of the strategy has changed from the earlier editions, which needed to convince decision-makers and members of the public that cycling was important for Christchurch and worthy of significant expenditure. That message is largely accepted now, although there is still debate.

For readers of the strategy, including members of the public and councillors, we suggest that it may now be time to change the focus so that the key points can be quickly found (and debated if necessary) by placing them at the beginning of the document.

In calling for comments, your “feedback reply form” has asked for comments on the following main parts of the strategy:

- Vision and Objectives
- Targets and Data Collection
- Policies and Methods; and
- Actions and Implementation

We agree that these generally are the key components of the strategy, with other parts (specifically the Introduction, Scene Setting (trends and issues) and Appendices) being useful background but less important strategically. This way, the key elements could be consolidated into the first 10 or so pages, giving crucial information about the Council’s vision for cycling and how this will be achieved. Specifically, we suggest consideration of the following structure:

- Introduction – 1 page
- Vision and Objectives – 1 page
- Policies – 3 pages
- Actions and Implementation – 2 pages
- Targets – 1 page
- Maps – 2 pages

These are the pieces on which the Council will be judged, and to which Council debate should be focused. The remaining pages (more than 25) can follow as appendices or background/explanation.

3. Specific Comments

Page Comment

- 7 Separate trends from targets, but cross-reference them. Target 1 – the “small decline of 1% over the last five years” is actually 13%, and is thus not really small.

Tucked away at the bottom of this page is the not-insignificant statement that cycle count numbers at a sample of intersections have remained stable over the past seven years. But this is overshadowed by the big diagram showing cycling to work still going down.

We would like to see (probably in place of Fig.1, or at least in a graph as at least as large as Figure 1) a plot showing cycle count totals over the past few years to illustrate this stabilisation of numbers. According to p.19, about 40 key sites are used to monitor trends in cycle traffic.

- 8 Figure 2 – can all data be drawn from Census rather than a mixture of Census and “transportation studies”? Otherwise there is a real danger of comparing apples with oranges.

P.10-11 - Good to see the point made here (and elsewhere) that we may not see significant growth in cycling until the cycle network is closer to completion (certainly particular routes). However, perhaps this could be translated into an implementation action that identifies where the significant "gaps" are (e.g. ones that can connect/complete a number of different routes) and prioritises their completion.

- 11 A graph showing Table 1 data would be helpful. In the targets section, provide targets for on-road and off-road facilities for 2008 (suggest 100 km of cycle lanes and 100 km of off-road paths)

- 12 The Safety and Risk section should acknowledge the "safety in numbers" concept. This responds to the perception in some quarters that encouraging more cyclists is dangerous. We also would like to see the safety issue set in context with the health benefits. Arguably it is more "dangerous" NOT to cycle, in terms of average longevity.

- 14 We strongly support the idea of more year-round promotion of cycling. Spokes would be very keen to start some dialogue with CCC staff to help develop cycling marketing and promotion concepts and programmes.
- 15 Mention draft NZ walking and cycling strategy in this section "1.2.5 National and regional support" (we note that it is mentioned later in the document).
- 16 Label the chart (eg Figure 4?). Table within chart shows zero change for annual average cycle maintenance between MCTS and current expenditure, when the change would appear to be \$0.1 m.
- 17 We love the vision!

Perhaps there should be one more objective, such as "To improve the acceptance of cycling in Christchurch". If this objective were realised, then arguably all the other three objectives would follow. This proposed objective is suggested by the vision's interpretation, but is not picked up in the three existing objectives.

- 18 Target 1 – great.
Target 2 – too cautious – suggest 20% in 2008 and 30% in 2012. Burnside High School used to have 90% cycling in 1983!
Target 3 – OK
Target 4 – Aim for 60% in 2008 and 70% in 2012.
Target 5 – show as percentages for 2008 and 2012.

Target 6 – show as percentages for 2008 and 2012. Safety in numbers notwithstanding, there is a potential danger that, if we see (say) a 50% increase in cycling and a 10% increase in crashes, the safety target will be deemed to have failed. Yet clearly the RATE of crashes per cyclist-km has decreased. The crash target should therefore be indexed to the key cycle counts. It also needs to be clarified what we mean about "injury cycle accidents". Are we talking about LTSA reported motor vehicle accidents (only 20-30% of all cycle injury crashes), or hospital numbers, or what? (p.19 suggests it is LTSA "accidents" – in addition, we prefer the word "crashes").

- 18 There should be an overall target for all cycling, based on the key cycle count sites. This would be far more accurate than a Census or interview survey figure once every 4-5 years, plus it allows annual monitoring. It will also reflect what people see out there; while it is useful to know specific trends in different types of cyclists, the success of the strategy will be judged on whether people perceive that there are more people IN GENERAL out there cycling.
- 19 Data collection should also mention the LTSA Continuous Travel Surveys; first info from these is expected in June 2004.
- 21 Use of the term "vulnerable road users" has negative connotations - "active modes" always seems more positive.
- 22 It seems a bit of a (dare we say) cop-out to say that the Police primarily manage the enforcement element, and almost imply that the Council won't consider it further (p.28 is pretty weak and nothing in the Implementation Plan). Police take some input from their local councils when planning enforcement activities, and should certainly be included in the parties who have to make this Strategy work. This is on both sides too - I'd certainly be quite happy if they pinged more cyclists for red light running, no lights, etc, provided we were also seeing some better action on motorist enforcement.
- 23 Although the IHT hierarchy is strongly acknowledged, this doesn't translate into a policy or action to implement more traffic management/calmed areas, to tackle volumes and speed. The strategy is still based on route solutions rather than area treatments.

- 25 There are no policies for cycling infrastructure other than the traditional cycle route and network facilities. Besides safe cycle routes, the availability of end-of-route facilities is a key issue in the promotion of cycling. This includes more than just bike racks. In particular, for commuter cycling, access to secure/sheltered parking, lockers, showers, etc is of vital importance.

At schools, there seems to be a trend to eliminate school bike parking and use the space for buildings (or worse, parking for cars). This short-sighted policy will mean it is hard for school students to return to cycling in anything like their former numbers, if there are no stands for them to store the bikes.

The "Bike Aid" programme, developed in Lancashire (England) and recently introduced by North Shore City Council, is a useful model which could be considered by CCC. Bike Aid is a simple concept where schools, business or any community institution can apply to the city council for funding to install cycle facilities on their sites.

A school requiring bike facilities would receive a grant of 80%, a local business, for example a cluster of shops, could expect 50% match funding. This approach would also be in line with the promotion of Travel Plans.

- 26 Education of adults isn't acknowledged; there is an untapped market of adults (e.g. returning cyclists, new migrants unfamiliar with cycling in NZ) who would like training in bike riding and maintenance skills. The "buddy" system may also have a role here.
- 28 Please tone down the helmet-wearing emphasis, e.g. it is in bold within the text (the only thing like this in the whole document), and is the only example given under Enforcement programmes. We would much rather the strategy focused on bike light use, poor motorist behaviour, etc.
- 30 Something obviously missing from Promotion is network signage - how do people know where cycle routes go to? Think of various criss-crossing paths in Hagley Park, or of cycle tourists approaching the city from the north, south or west.
- 31 It is not clear how the objectives lead to the policies, and the policies lead to the actions. There are 19 actions identified. Four of these are not related to a specific policy (should they be?) while policy number 1 has no specific actions. Perhaps the headings used (Strategy and Monitoring, etc.) should relate to the three (or four) objectives?

Is the City Streets Unit still called this or is it now the City Traffic Unit?

A number of actions listed here are introduced for the first time, with no previous discussion on their importance. E.g. cycle parking is considered in actions 8 & 9, but is not mentioned before this (e.g. how much cycle parking is there? what types? what is a future target?).

We would have liked to have seen a lot more agencies listed as being involved in some of the actions (if not always responsible), e.g. Police on enforcement, health & sporting agencies (e.g. Crown Public Health, Sport Canterbury) for promotional activities, cycle retailers for support of educational/promotional activities, etc. Not to mention Spokes who should play a part in some of the actions!

- 32 The importance of getting integration with public transport addressed is mentioned in implementation action 19, but not (as far as we are aware) in the rest of the document.
- 34 The strategy might confirm that it is aligned with the draft new RLTS, in particular the new cycling section and guiding principles.

- 36 We request that the City-wide network plan be updated as part of the strategy. This is a high priority for Spokes. We have worked with CCC staff on this map every year for some years now and urge Council to put greater priority on building and completing the cycle network.

Page 25 notes that the network map will be updated during 2004. This map is at a poor scale/ resolution; some indication of the existing network and future priorities should be provided. The map also shows a date of 1999. Surely the strategy should be able to show a 2004 map of existing routes, with perhaps planned routes too? There may be some merit in having a series of maps to show existing and proposed routes, and priorities within the strategy.

We commend CCC staff for a very comprehensive cycling strategy document and would be happy to work with you to further enhance it. Please don't hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

Richard Hayman (Chair)

SPOKES

Spokes Canterbury (the former Canterbury Cyclists' Association) is a local cycling advocacy group dedicated to including cycling as an everyday form of transport within 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 provides significant cycling expertise through its many longstanding advocates, transportation professionals and (most importantly) regular cyclists. The group is represented on Christchurch City Council's cycling steering committee and Environment Canterbury's Regional Land Transport Committee.