



8 October 2004

Hagley Park / Botanic Gardens Consultation  
Communication Team  
Christchurch City Council  
PO Box 237  
Christchurch

To Whom It May Concern:

### **Hagley Park / Botanic Gardens Consultation**

Spokes Canterbury, the local cycling advocacy group, is pleased to offer this submission regarding the Council's Hagley Park / Botanic Gardens consultation. We would be happy to provide any further information if required.

We would very much like to present our submission in person if this opportunity is available to us.

### **General Comments**

**Spokes agrees that the Park and the Gardens are a stunning inner city space.** The foresight of past generations to set aside this area has to be commended, and we believe the current stewardship will be appreciated by future generations.

As an interest group representing cyclists, our comments will focus on access and circulation, recreational values of the park, land use, and transport planning issues.

We feel that the current Management Plan (and certainly the park operational management since its inception) fails to adequately plan for the use of the park as a key transport network for both cyclists and pedestrians. In this respect, the Greenspace Unit may wish to liaise further with the City Transport Unit regarding design and operational issues.

The future Management Plan, in our view, should reinforce that Hagley Park is to be absolutely protected from encroachment from new roads, parking and motor vehicle intrusion.

### **Circulation – General Issues**

#### **Pathway Design Standards**

Spokes welcomes Council's initiative in recent years of sealing more pathways within the Park (e.g. along Harper Ave) and building new pathways (e.g. along Riccarton Ave in South Hagley Park).

There is unfortunately a significant potential for conflicts between pedestrians (including joggers) and cyclists. It is not that cycling and walking (or jogging) are not compatible activities, but the overwhelming reason for the conflict potential is that most shared

pathways are significantly under-dimensioned. *AUSTROADS Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14: Cycling* is generally accepted as the appropriate design guide for New Zealand, and for compliance with those guidelines, most pathways would have to be between 1.0m and 2.0m wider than what they currently are. In these circumstances, conflict is inevitable.

In some cases, poor sight distance also contributes to a lack of warning of conflicts on paths. Features such as vegetation close to pathways can also pose other hazards, such as security risks and obstructions.

Spokes suggests that appropriate pathway design criteria be investigated, and a programme for upgrades established should this be the appropriate course of action. Some of our members have extensive traffic engineering qualifications and experience and would be most happy to discuss appropriate design criteria with Council.

We note that the 1991 Hagley Park Management Plan raises similar issues (page 73, policy 3) and that the issue would appear to be far from being resolved.

We appreciate that increasing the sealed area has some negative visual impact. We contend, however, that users experiencing conflict, stress, frustration, and sometimes even suffering injuries is also detrimental to the enjoyment of the area. The discussion should be had how the conflicting demands between minimising sealed area and minimising conflict and injury should be balanced. We note that narrow pathways are also incompatible with the parks service vehicles; particularly when the ground is wet, they can cause considerable damage to the adjacent berms.

## Pathway radii

Some existing curve radii are too small, and Figure 1 and Figure 2 show examples where these situations occur in conjunction with other problems. Possible consequences are potential for conflict with other users, potential loss of control, or preferring the parallel roadway network over the pathways (with subsequent potential for giving up cycling altogether).



Figure 1: Sharp curves combined with poor sight distance

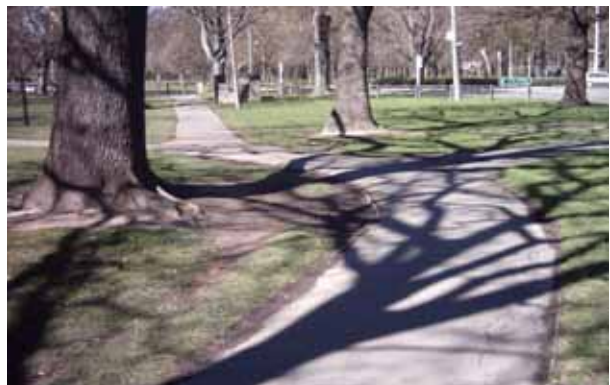


Figure 2: Sharp curves at busy pathway junction (tree to left also blocks visibility on approach)

## Segregation versus shared use

The 1991 Hagley Park Management Plan had as one of its policies to keep cycleways and pedestrian paths separate where practical (page 73, policy 5). There is a great variety of path users, all with their distinctive set of needs. Different travel speeds can be observed, from a fast cycle commuter to pedestrians who are out to meet others, and standing still while doing so. Common to most path users is that when travelling with companions, they are next to one another, so that a conversation can be had.

Since 1991, the variety of path users has increased, and inline skaters, scooters, and tricycle recumbents have since joined the mixture. With that, the clear distinction between pedestrians and cyclists has been further blurred. Spokes concludes that it is thus not practical to provide separate pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, but recommends the following:

- 1) The most important aspect are paths of sufficient width. When a path complies with design guidelines, shared usage should not result in problems.
- 2) Above a defined pathway width (say 3.0m), a centreline should be marked (as is practice in many Australian cities). Users should be encouraged to stick to one side of the centreline (thus giving other users travelling at a higher speed the opportunity to pass on the other half of the pathway).
- 3) Users who have stopped (e.g. for a conversation) should be encouraged to move off the pathway.
- 4) Dogs should be kept on a leash at all times. While this is currently required, many dog owners do not comply with this regulation, resulting in risk to cyclists and soiling of the park.
- 5) Cyclists should sound a warning where necessary when approaching other pathway users, e.g. sound a bell, "excuse me, coming through"

In most Australian states a common set of protocols are used to reinforce the above behaviours, with symbolic signs provided along pathways (see Figure 3 below). We commend a similar approach be taken in Hagley park (and along other Christchurch pathways), and a parallel publicity & education campaign be carried out.



**Figure 3: Standard path behaviour signs used in Australia**

Along some pathways adjacent to sports fields (e.g. through South Hagley Park), the paths are sometimes being used as "bag storage areas" or for practising on. These activities cause significant disruption to any passing path users. We suggest the construction of some small concrete pads adjacent to the pathways where sports teams can congregate instead.

### **Desire Lines**

Some obvious desire lines exist within the park, where these either represent a missing path link (see Figure 4) or a link avoiding an indirect path alignment (see Figure 5). These desire lines need to be attended to.



Figure 4: Desire line showing missing path link



Figure 5: Desire line avoiding curved path alignment

### Under-dimensioned pathways

Examples of seriously under-dimensioned pathways are along Hagley Ave, the path along the north side of the netball courts, the pathway along Riccarton Ave in North Hagley Park, the shared pathway along the Botanic Gardens on Rolleston Avenue, and the path starting near Matai St extending in an easterly direction.

### Right of Way

In a limited number of locations, pathways are crossing internal park roads. In all cases, cyclists have to give way to cars in these locations (see for example Figure 6), and it would appear that this is not based on the premise that the higher volume has the right of way.

This is unfortunate, as Christchurch is known nationally for its progressive traffic engineering. But in this case, Nelson appears to have an edge on Christchurch, with their railway pathway having right of way at a road crossing (see Figure 7). The use of raised crossings would also slow any crossing motor vehicles, thus minimising any potential conflicts.



Figure 6: Busy path giving way to minor access road – South Hagley Park



Figure 7: Nelson pathway having right of way over road

At some major junctions of pathways, there is also the potential for confusion or conflict from intersecting flows. We suggest that where necessary, simple priority control signs and markings be introduced, to encourage path user courtesy and minimise disputes.



**Figure 8: A five-leg path junction with no clear indication of right of way**



**Figure 9: Example of path controls in Nelson**

## Signposting

Figure 10 shows one of only two directional signs within Hagley Park. At the vast majority of pathway junctions, users will have to know where the paths will lead to (see for example Figure 11).



**Figure 10: Good directional signposting, but far too small to be read while moving at normal cycling speed**



**Figure 11: Where do these paths lead to?**

A directional signposting regime should be considered for Hagley Park. This would be beneficial for all park users, including tourists.

Another area where signposting could help is to the west of Lake Victoria, where the path alignment (see Figure 12) leads cyclists straight into the carpark, where access is completely blocked by a gate (see Figure 13).



**Figure 12: The main path is off to the left...**



**Figure 13: ... because this is where the right path leads to – a complete barrier**

Apart from signposting, the junction should be realigned, highlighting the main path, as well as the barrier modified to allow cycle access.

### Pathway maintenance

Some of the area adjacent to pathways are in poor condition. This is partly caused by the pathways being too narrow and consequently maintenance vehicles not fitting onto the paths. Figure 14 shows an unsightly example, with Figure 15 illustrating that the resulting drop off at the pathway edge could be hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists who are not paying attention where they travel or are forced to move over.

There is also a badly overgrown, narrow pathway parallel to the path connecting Armagh St with Fendalton Rd. It is not clear to Spokes what the purpose is of this parallel facility, but it is unbecoming to the quality of Hagley Park and should either be properly maintained or removed if deemed redundant.



Figure 14: Poorly maintained area next to path



Figure 15: Red pen showing dangerous drop

Some sections of pathway also have an unacceptable longitudinal roughness when cycling at normal speed. Notable sections include Riccarton Rd to Victoria Lake and Riccarton roundabout to Fendalton Rd. Such issues cannot generally be picked up by someone walking or driving along these paths, therefore regular cycling audits of pathways should be undertaken.

Systematic pathway maintenance should also be undertaken after any significant storms, when invariably mud and debris litter the pathways. These issues are quite important to cyclists and pedestrians who, unlike motor vehicles, are generally not able to simply ride over the mess and effectively “sweep” it out of the path.

Another important issue for cyclists and pedestrians is drainage and ponding. Many pathways simply have no adequate “shape” to them, resulting in water blocking the path after rain. All paths should be inspected either during or immediately after significant rain to identify major problems for remedying. Any new or upgraded paths should either have a raised central crown or a constant fall to one side.

### Hazard protection

Many cyclists travel at relatively high speeds (i.e. >20km/h); it is important therefore that any potential hazards are removed or mitigated. Bridges for example, pose a potential threat either through falling off them or running into the handrails. Therefore approach barriers on each side should be considered where necessary in the same way that road bridges often have such approach guardrails. Figure 16 shows an example where poor horizontal and vertical geometry throughout can cause problems, particularly when other path users are present or the surface is wet. Figure 17 shows a situation where

the side rails offer only minimal protection (*Austroroads Part 14* recommends handrails of at least 1.4m height) and the ends of them pose an unobtrusive hazard.



Figure 16: Bridge with winding geometry



Figure 17: Bridge with minimal rails and no approach barriers

## Circulation – Specific Issues

The accompanying map (see Figure 18) summarises the pathway network improvements suggested by Spokes. Clearly it is quite a comprehensive list; this merely reflects the lack of planning in this area that we feel has been evident in recent years.

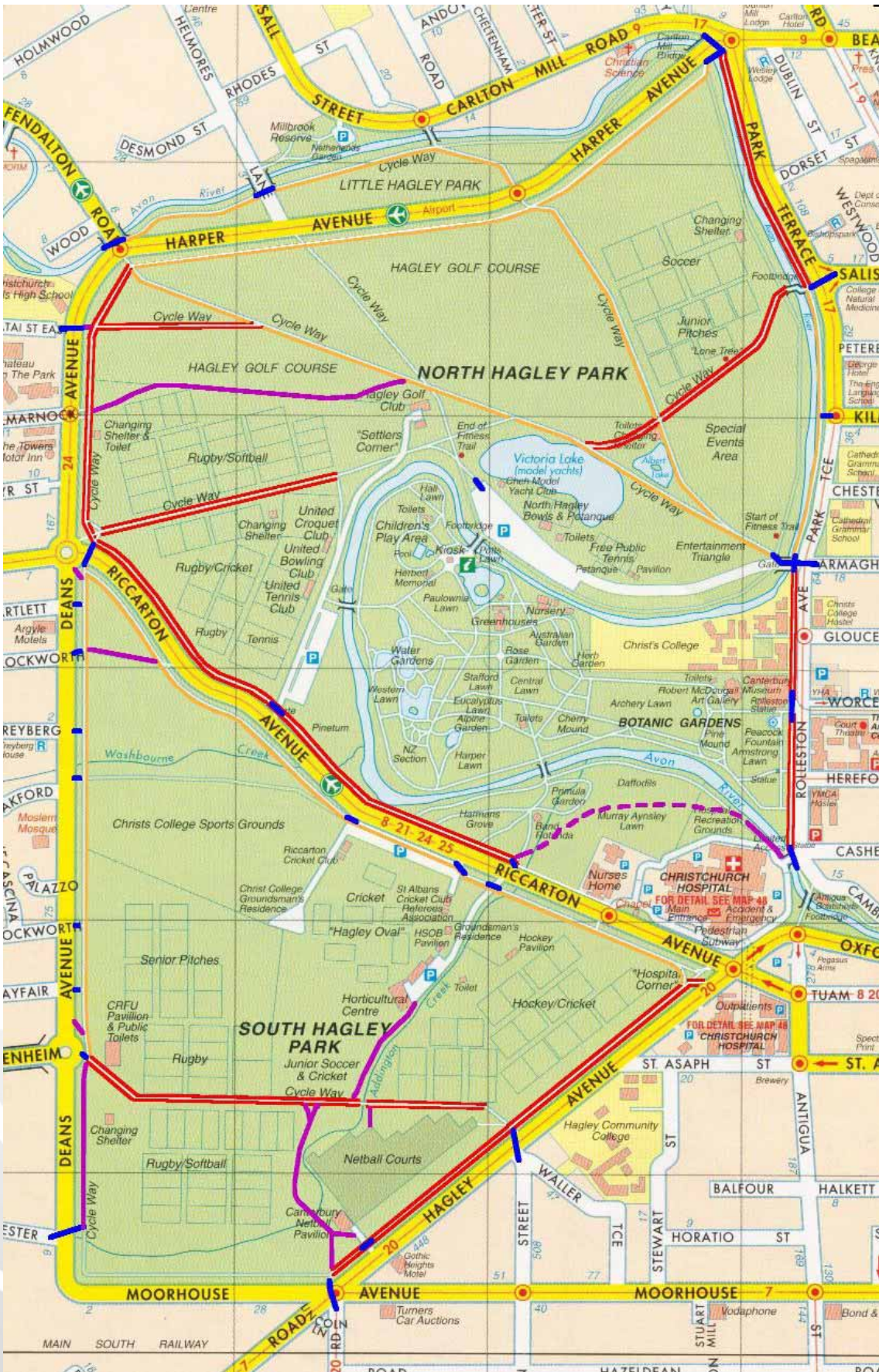
### Missing pathway behind Hospital

The most obvious location where a path suitable for walking and cycling is missing is between the hospital and the Avon River. Cyclists commuting from Riccarton to the central city, for whom the Riccarton Avenue corridor is the most direct route, are directed onto the road just prior to one of the more complex and demanding inner city intersections (i.e. Hospital Corner). A route around the back of the hospital and along the Avon River should be developed as a matter of priority, as it would offer a much more pleasant and safe journey into the inner city. It may well be that by doing so, many more people could be enticed to travel into the inner city by bicycle instead of by car, as this alternative route may enable people to eliminate their most frightening part of the journey by no longer having to use the Hospital Corner intersection. Spokes is aware that some of the land required for such a pathway is owned by the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB).

Negotiations should be entered with the CDHB regarding such a corridor. One of the strong arguments that could support the City Council in achieving such a corridor is the land transaction involving the Nurses Hostel (see section Nurses Hostel below). As a provider and promoter of health, CDHB should be fully encouraging of facilities that encourage healthy activities anyway.

If the land behind the Hospital is not available, then a route on the north side of the Avon through the Botanic Gardens should be considered. Spokes is aware that many interest groups have strong feelings on the issue of cycling in the Botanic Gardens. It is most important that a route connecting the central city with the Riccarton Avenue corridor be established, and all practical options should be considered. It may well be that a possible part of this route through the Botanic Gardens is most appropriate when separate from a pedestrian pathway.

A safe and attractive alternative to the Hospital Corner cycle route is a high priority for Spokes.



- Legend:**
- ▬▬▬ Significant Widening
  - ▬▬▬ Moderate Widening
  - ▬▬▬ New Pathways
  - ▬▬▬ Accesses/Crossings

Figure 18: Suggested pathway network improvements

## Other missing links

It could be considered to provide a new pathway extending from Kilmarnock St due east towards the city; the boundary between the sports fields and the golf course seems a logical route. South Hagley Park could be considered for a north-south pathway along the western side of the netball courts, connecting Moorhouse/Hagley Aves – netball courts – cricket ovals – Riccarton Ave.

## Pathway junction at toilet block

A toilet block is situated in North Hagley Park at the junction of two major pathways, totally obstructing visibility for cyclists approaching from the west or south. It has been attempted to remedy this situation by a sign saying “Cyclists Give Way to Right” (see Figure 19) and the installation of a mirror. Spokes is not convinced that these measures are sufficient, and indeed a look at a plot of injury cycle crashes shows three reported crashes (see Figure 20) – in the middle of Hagley Park! We find this situation unacceptable and suggest that the junction should be located away from the toilet block (both paths could easily be shifted north and east to achieve this).



Figure 19: Toilet block obstructing any visibility



Figure 20: Crash data – 3 injury crashes at the toilet block junction

## Access – General Comments

Access into Hagley Park, and across roads that cut through the park, needs to be improved in many places. Access at many points is good (see Figure 21), and has been improved at others (see Figure 22). But with increasing traffic volumes, the situation is slowly deteriorating at many points where roads need to be crossed for gaining access to the park.



Figure 21: Excellent park access



Figure 22: Access of reasonable standard

In some locations, major expenditure is necessary, as only grade separated access (bridges or underpasses) will provide a good level of service for cyclists and pedestrians, and a safe access solution.

In many locations, older narrow chicanes still exist (see Figure 23 and Figure 24). Whilst the Council has had a policy of removing these barriers for several years by now, it is disappointing that so many of them remain at this high-use facility. Not only are these a significant nuisance for cyclists, they also impact adversely on many other users, including wheelchairs and buggies/prams. We recommend that a programme be instituted to eliminate these throughout Hagley Park over the next two years.



Figure 23: Very tight chicane



Figure 24: Unacceptable access for people in wheel chairs as well as cyclists

## Access – Specific Comments

### Matai St

The 1991 Management Plan documents the decision that the previously proposed underpass at Matai St proved prohibitively expensive. Spokes offers the following observations:

- Despite a fence obstructing easy passage and no formal path, the photos below and the well-worn track are evidence that there is a strong demand for crossing Deans Avenue at Matai St.



Figure 25: Pupils cycling to school crossing Deans Avenue at Matai Street



Figure 26: Obvious desire line at Matai Street

- Matai St is part of the designated cycle network and shown on the cycle planning map, which has just been confirmed by Council as current policy.

- The visibility from the Park side in a northbound direction is restricted due to a bend in Deans Ave.
- Traffic speeds on Deans Ave are reasonably high.
- Many southbound drivers on Deans Ave are changing lanes in this location (many drivers coming from Fendalton Rd want to get onto Riccarton Avenue, and many drivers who have used the free turn lane at the intersection with Fendalton Rd are heading for Kilmarnock St or Riccarton Rd). Hence, they are occupied with checking over their shoulders whether they can change lane, rather than concentrating on the road ahead, hence traffic signals would not be suitable in this location.
- With the more recent project evaluation benefits for cyclists and pedestrians developed by Transfund NZ, there is a greater chance of obtaining some subsidy for engineering improvements.

For these reasons, Spokes recommends that a working group consisting of Council staff, walking and cycling advocates and other stakeholders (e.g. the Civic Trust) be established to resolve this long-standing issue.

### Deans Avenue

Hagley Park is very poorly accessible along Deans Avenue south of Blenheim Road. Many employees in the Deans Park office complex and people attending sports on Saturdays have great difficulty accessing the park from this area.

### Riccarton Avenue

Riccarton Avenue at the Deans Avenue end is another location where the road creates a major barrier. Spokes believes that an underpass should be considered for this location. Even if the intersection were to be converted for traffic signals, there would still be a strong need for an underpass (or a bridge), as a very high left turning demand exists from Deans Ave into Riccarton Ave, being in conflict with people crossing between North and South Hagley Park.

Consultation on Inner City Revitalisation has confirmed the community desire for a river promenade through the inner city. It is important that this promenade is available for cyclists over its whole length, and that it connects to Hagley Park (to the pathway behind the hospital?). Ultimately, family groups from the eastern part of the inner city should be able to cycle to Hagley Park with their young children along the Avon River segregated from motorised traffic over the whole journey. If travel along a traffic free corridor cannot be achieved, then the minimum age for children to whom the corridor is suitable increases significantly.

Riccarton Avenue divides Hagley Park into north and south, and presents a significant barrier. Spokes believes that with the pending construction of the Blenheim Road deviation, it should be considered to downgrade Riccarton Avenue. **Ideally, the road becomes so minor that the distinction between South and North Hagley Park is no longer necessary.** To achieve this, Riccarton Avenue could be closed to all traffic but public transport and emergency service vehicles, or at least downgraded to a two-lane "park access" facility.

### Park Tce

Park Tce is very difficult to cross during peak times. At Salisbury St, the crossing point is made up of two very tight chicanes, but at Peterborough St, park users have to cross three traffic lanes at once. The situation is not much better at Chester St.

Spokes recommends that the whole Park Tce corridor should be audited. Existing refuge islands need to be brought up to standard, islands or other crossing points installed at other locations in the first instance, and the number of traffic lanes should be reduced over much of the length of Park Tce. Given the strong demand from the park footbridge near Salisbury St, we suggest that a signalised crossing be investigated here.

It should be considered to create a “gateway” south of Kilmore St. Park Tce should have an arterial status connecting to the one-way system (Salisbury and Kilmore), but should be enhanced to represent a local road nature south of Kilmore. Park Tce / Rolleston Ave is classified as an arterial road in the City Plan from Hereford St to the north, so any downgrading may require a plan change.

## Rolleston Avenue

Rolleston Avenue does not really deserve the name Avenue. The road appears to be out of context and is an environment dominated by the car. The road goes through the cultural precinct and thus a high-use pedestrian area, yet it is heavily used by motorists avoiding the traffic lights on the parallel one-way system. The arterial road status in the City Plan north of Hereford St is illogical for the following reasons:

- It does not connect to other arterial roads (Gloucester St and Hereford St are classified as collector roads).
- It penetrates into a high-use pedestrian area.

Spokes suggests that Rolleston Avenue be transformed, achieving the following objectives:

- Creating a people-oriented environment, where necessary motorised traffic has a ‘guest’ status.
- Removing the barrier that the current road forms between Hagley Park and the Botanic Gardens on one side, and the Arts Precinct on the other.
- Greening of the corridor and achieving an avenue with trees on both sides of the road.
- Creating a ‘courtyard’ for the museum and the Botanic Gardens.

Much of this could be achieved by creating a “slow street” environment. The recently published proposal of creating a **30 km/h speed limit** in the inner city is fully supported and is very applicable for Rolleston Avenue. We recommend that Rolleston Avenue be considered for substantial traffic calming as part of the current work on central city traffic issues.

The existing shared pathway on Rolleston Avenue needs to be substantially widened in the longer term, and more signposting (or pavement markings) installed in the short term, outlining the shared nature of the path.

## Armagh St Park Entrance

Often, it is quite awkward to access the park from Armagh St because of high traffic volumes on Park Tce, and the proximity of a pedestrian crossing just south of Armagh St. Traffic stopping for pedestrians blocks access across the intersection. The kerbside position of the westbound cycle lane is also questionable, and a position between a through and a left turning lane would appear to be beneficial.

We note also that the current entrance gates and “false roundabout” just inside create a confusing layout for cyclists. It is not clear for example whether path users along Rolleston Ave or users of the park entrance (over the bridge) have right of way.

In line with our Rolleston Avenue suggestions, traffic volumes in a north-south direction should be reduced significantly, which would open up the opportunity of making Armagh St the priority route.

## Lighting

Lighting is generally adequate in Hagley Park. One exception, though, is the pathway connecting Fendalton Road and Armagh Street. At its western end, the tall lighting columns extend into the tree canopy, leaving parts of the path poorly illuminated. These dark areas may be especially uncomfortable for female park users after dark.

Lighting along the Deans Avenue path at its northern end also needs to be upgraded.

Also note that the lighting columns should be sufficiently far away ( $\geq 0.5\text{m}$ ) from the path edge, so as not to be a hazard.

## Bike Parking

Spokes is greatly appreciative of supervised bike parking during major events and commends Council for this initiative. In fact, fear of bike theft and vandalism is one of the greatest deterrents to cycling,

Examples of safe bike parks can otherwise be found in some inner city car parking buildings, the best facility being in Noahs car parking building, where the car park attendants supervise a bike parking cage, giving access to cyclists who want to leave their bike there.

It would be fantastic if such a safe facility could be established in Hagley Park, too. As it hinges on staff attendance, this may realistically only be achieved if this were incorporated into the Botanic Gardens visitor centre.

Apart from that, more bike parking opportunities need to be created in Hagley Park, near the various destinations. Of importance is that users can lock the frame of their bikes to the stands. Figure 27 shows the case where a bike park is installed hard against a timber rail, making it impractical to lock the bike frame to the stand. The bike stand needs to be relocated away from the timber rail. The left-hand stands are also obstructed by the parked car, and potentially another one could park next to it too.



**Figure 27: Wrongly installed bike stand**

## **Car Parking**

In Spokes opinion, car parking for Hagley Park needs to undergo a major review. Council has an existing bylaw, making it illegal to park on grass berms, yet this can readily be observed almost every evening and weekend on the park boundaries. In many areas, this illegal parking happens within the drip line of established trees, thus compacting their root system, which shortens the life expectancy of the trees. This is totally unacceptable and must change. Cars are even being parked in Little Hagley Park, since there is no barrier or a high kerb keeping vehicles out of there. Parking violations should be rigorously enforced.

Where a high parking demand exists, parking should not be available free of charge. The public transport system has immensely improved in quality over the last decade, and cycling and bus use should be promoted to park users as an alternative to car use. Indeed, as a condition of use by park leaseholders, they should have to prepare a sustainable travel plan for their organisation or event.

Spokes is opposed to Hagley Park being used for car parking for some major events, and we also oppose the establishment of any additional formal car parking spaces in the Park. Parking meters should be installed at all existing parking spaces within Hagley Park (e.g. the Gardens).

We wish to see policies in the Management Plan that vigorously prevent motor vehicle intrusion into the Park.

## **Public Transport**

Spokes had hoped that the recent Shuttle review would have resulted in an east-west Shuttle route. This has unfortunately not happened. The Shuttle connecting the inner city (and thus the car parking buildings) with Hagley Park would have been one of the benefits.

## **Nurses Hostel**

Spokes understands that the land for the Nurses Hostel was taken from Hagley Park under the premise that should the use as a hostel cease for more than one year, the land would revert to Hagley Park.

The hostel is no longer used for nursing accommodation, and according to the relevant Act of Parliament, we expect that the land be returned to Hagley Park. We do understand, however, that part of the land is converted for Hospital parking. We find that unacceptable and wonder how this can all happen in violation of Acts of Parliament?

## **Consultation**

Spokes recommends that a draft management plan be prepared and widely circulated before it is finalised. We kindly request the opportunity to present our submission on the Hagley Park Management Plan.

## **Conclusions**

Spokes congratulates the Council on the good stewardship of Hagley Park, one of the major environmental assets of the city. Our submission, however raises some fundamental areas where our group would like to see a change in management. Many of the desired changes extend beyond the control of the Greenspace Unit, and an inter-unit approach is necessary for addressing the issues as highlighted. We appreciate that

the numerous issues raised cannot possibly be addressed within a short period of time, but would encourage Council to put them onto the respective work programmes and make regular progress each year. In some cases (especially with maintenance), straightforward changes in existing practice may be sufficient to achieve useful benefit.

Yours sincerely,

**Glen Koorey**

Chairperson

SPOKES Canterbury

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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 and provides regular feedback on various council transportation and planning proposals.

