



24 March 2006

State Highway Forecast
Transit New Zealand
PO Box 5084
Wellington

Re: Draft 2006/07 – 2015/16 10-year State Highway Forecast - SUBMISSION

Spokes Canterbury, the local cycling advocacy group¹, is pleased to offer this submission to you regarding the 10-year State Highway (SH) Forecast. We would be happy to provide any further information or clarification if required. In making this submission, Spokes has based its feedback on the consultation information on Transit's website, comments from our members, and discussions with our local Transit cycling champion. Although our comments are largely focused on the impacts of the proposed Forecast on cyclists in the Canterbury region, some of the issues raised are applicable to other regions as well.

We also endorse the submissions made by the Cycling Advocates Network (CAN) and Bike NZ (which better address national cycling issues), and the submission by the Christchurch City Council (particularly regarding walking & cycling projects).

We wish to address a hearing panel in support of this submission.

General

While it is pleasing to see good cycle provision included in recent projects such as SH1/73 Yaldhurst intersection, SH73 Opawa Rd, and SH74 Styx Mill overbridge, the lack of consistent efforts to improve cycle provision (particularly on the existing SH network) causes us concern. When we look over previous submissions to Transit, in many respects we feel that we are repeating ourselves in this year's submission.

There are some signs that systematic changes are happening. For example, we have recently been contacted by a Transit consultant to obtain our feedback on a coming intersection improvement project, something we have been asking for over a number of years. The addition of a "pinch-point investigation" project in this year's Forecast also will hopefully address a lot of our concerns about the "little things" that tend to cause cyclists problems.

At the same time however we continue to see little progress on resolving cycle access via the Lyttelton Tunnel, or in getting the Christchurch City cycle lane projects underway with any great priority. On the rural front, cyclist issues relating to long narrow SH bridges do not appear to be "on the radar" at all, and our requests for trials such as dynamic warning signs and vibrational markings on curve shoulders have still not resulted in any action.

While the job of a cycle advocacy group is to help agencies like Transit to identify and prioritise issues for cyclists on their network, it should not be our job to identify every single issue, nor to ensure that the necessary remedial works are followed through with. Provision for cyclists on SHs should not be driven by the relative efforts of local (volunteer) cycling advocates. If Transit's staff, consultants and contractors do not have the necessary skills in this area, we recommend that they seek appropriate training.

¹ For more information about Spokes, see the end of this submission

Regional Priorities

Under Canterbury's key regional issues (Appendix A), cycling is not considered a key issue for Christchurch, yet Transit Waikato found it sufficiently compelling up in Hamilton (with only 2/3 of our commuter cyclist proportion) to warrant a mention. The broad issue "road safety" is also very vague and fails to indicate the key safety issues or what might be done to resolve them. In Canterbury for example, Land Transport NZ has identified Intersections, Speed, Alcohol, and Loss of control as important safety issues for the region, with Pedestrians and Cyclists also significant specifically for Christchurch.

For your information, we reiterate some of our priorities for cyclists on State Highways in Canterbury (largely repeated from last year):

- Cycle facilities along the major urban arterial routes, with a particular emphasis on intersections.
- Treatment/removal of a number of major pinch-points, including SH73A Sockburn roundabout/overbridge, SH74 Marshland Rd roundabout, SH74 Bexley/Dyers Rd, and SH74 Port Hills interchange.
- Cycle access to Lyttelton in some form via the SH74 tunnel.
- On-road access for cyclists along the various urban expressways in Christchurch (where currently prohibited).
- A strategic programme for improving cycle provision on/near narrow bridges along the SH network, particularly where there are no feasible alternative routes.
- Specialist auditing of and improvements to popular regional cycle routes (e.g. from Christchurch to Akaroa and Hanmer), where SHs form key components.
- Review of cyclist facilities/needs on SHs in regional Canterbury towns (whether travelling along or across the SH).

Many of these are not currently listed in Transit's SH programme and we request that they are added for future investigation and treatment.

Specific Comments

Spokes offers the following specific observations about the proposed Forecast:

- Under Appendix B, we fail to see how much of the material there demonstrates Transit's contribution to Land Transport Management Act objectives. Transit clearly expects to continue increasing funding of new road capacity works, in spite of the relative futility of this approach and without any indicated end in sight. This is despite claiming under "Ensuring Environmental Sustainability" that Transit is "*promoting multi-modal integrated planning to **reduce** the need for roads*"! Allocating only 0.1% of all SH funding to walking/cycling activities (with no signs of future improvement) also does little to ease the mind as well (although we acknowledge that other projects include cycle provision as well).
- We continue to be unimpressed with the top-heavy prioritisation of Auckland region projects (invariably congestion-related) in the national programme (20 of the top 23 projects). Although we can appreciate the strategic value of completing the Western Ring Route, many of the proposed projects are in fact capacity increases of existing parts of the route, which will simply serve to generate more traffic. We fail to see how these can be considered of greater importance than significant safety projects throughout the country.
- In the listings and descriptions of general SH projects planned, there is little indication about what walking/cycling provision (if any) is proposed to be included. We strongly endorse the suggestion in CAN's submission that the project tables should include a column summarising what walk/cycle provision is envisaged.

- We are very supportive of the “Christchurch Travel Demand Management (TDM) implementation” work item, particularly if it provides priority bus/cycle lanes along key corridors, and are pleased to see the high priority assigned to it, ahead of major road construction projects. However we are very concerned that in light of recent funding restrictions, the TDM projects appear to be on hold or deferred. This seems very short-sighted when they have the best potential to minimise future new road requirements. It is also not clear in Appendix D4 how “lower priority” projects can have their implementation time frames programmed ahead of this project.
- We are pleased to see that construction of the SH73 Southern Motorway extension and Northern arterial projects have been deferred. Given their price tags, we feel that sustainable alternatives are likely to be more cost-effective solutions to implement first. We wish that Transit would apply the same logic to its works programmes in other regions.
- In the list of Small/Medium Activities (Appendix D5) we strongly support prompt investigation and implementation of improvements at SH74 Marshland/QEII, SH73 Yaldhurst/Curletts, SH1 Main North/Darroch, SH74 Bexley Rd, and SH74 Travis/Burwood. All of these have the potential to also improve provision for cyclists at these locations. We are concerned however that the current rankings for many of these projects will see them languishing for many years to come.
- We are supportive of the Strategic Study plans (Appendix D8) for the Christchurch urban SH network and a West Coast cycle strategy. We would like to be involved in these projects, so that key cycling issues can be identified. Similarly, we would also like to see identification of and funding for treatment of cyclist issues on the SH networks in other urban areas throughout Canterbury (where the bulk of cycling is done).
- We struggle to understand how the indicated 3-year plan of walking & cycling activities (Appendix D9), totalling over \$21 million, relates at all to the allocated funding of \$1 million pa. It seems like “false advertising” if (on current funding) some of these projects will not even see the light of day within the next decade. Of course, our preference is for an increase in the funding allocated to this category, which seems perfectly justified in the context of the miniscule 0.1% of funding currently allocated. Given that Land Transport NZ has indicated walking/cycling funding for the next ten years of \$9-11 million pa (up from \$5-6 million in the past two years), it seems perfectly appropriate that Transit NZ should be requesting a greater amount of this.
- At the regional level, the indicated walking/cycling funding is also confusing. Transit’s Aug 2005 funding update for Canterbury indicated a uniform allocation of \$0.1 million each year for walking/cycling projects in this region (which suggests that very little thought actually went into what this funding would cover). Yet construction costs alone for the “Christchurch City Cycle Lanes” project are \$0.7 million and this was originally envisaged to be constructed over three years. Although the numbers might be smaller than those of major SH projects, we ask that Transit apply the same level of rigour to its expenditure forecasts for walking/cycling as for other activities.
- We strongly support the inclusion this year (and high priority) of funding for “cycle pinch point options investigation” within Canterbury and would urge that similar funding be allocated for all regions. We are happy to provide assistance with a “road user perspective” for these investigations if necessary.
- We strongly support the planned “Christchurch City cycle lanes” works, particularly given that they were originally recommended for 2004/05. We presume that this item incorporates both of the projects listed in 2005/06 Forecast (“cycle lanes” and “intersection cycle lanes”). As is done in most other regions (and within Chch CC’s Capital Works Plans), we would prefer that individual projects be listed here (e.g. “SH73 Brougham St, Gasson-Antigua”), so that it is clear what is being planned for and what is not.

- It was our understanding that Transit NZ was allocating some funding towards facilities linking SH75 to the proposed Christchurch-Little River Rail Trail; this does not appear to now be included in the SH Forecast.
- We have some concerns about Transit's continued use of double-lane roundabouts in many situations, e.g. SH73 / Pound Rd. In many cases it seems totally unnecessary any time in the foreseeable future for such capacity to be provided, and to the detriment of any cyclists using the route.
- Finally we reiterate our desire to be contacted for comment on all projects (not just cycling projects) being developed in the future. Often relatively minor things that we can pick up may have a significant impact on the "cycle-friendliness" of the finished product.

Please consider modifying the SH Forecast to incorporate the issues raised above.

Yours sincerely,

Glen Koorey

Chairperson

SPOKES Canterbury

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Note: we would prefer to be contacted via email

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.

Website: http://www.can.org.nz/spokes_chch

