



21 March 2005

SH Plan
Transit New Zealand
PO Box 5084
Wellington

Re: Draft 2005/06 – 2014/15 10-year State Highway Plan - SUBMISSION

Spokes Canterbury, the local cycling advocacy group¹, is pleased to offer this submission to you regarding the 10-year SH Plan. 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 Plan on cyclists in the Canterbury region, some of the issues raised are applicable to other regions as well.

We also endorse the submission made by the Cycling Advocates Network (CAN), which better addresses national issues, and parts of the submission by the Christchurch City Council that discuss walking & cycling projects.

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

General

Spokes is pleased to see growing evidence of consideration for cyclists on the State Highway network in Canterbury (especially Christchurch), particularly where new works have been implemented. Facilities such as those at SH75 Halswell Junction Rd, SH74 Linwood Ave, and SH1 Buchanans Rd are much appreciated by cyclists. We look forward to many of the coming planned works where we understand that cyclist provision will also be included.

This appreciation however is tempered by the somewhat inconsistent way that such provision has been incorporated. Recent examples such as the SH73 Lunns/Parkhouse intersection and SH74 Anzac Drive illustrate that attempted provision for cyclists can result in poor solutions lacking in coherence and/or safety. More worrying are the ongoing cycling pinch-points right throughout the SH network that continue to be untouched (and often not identified in the first place). These deficiencies appear to come about because of:

- A negligible process of consultation with cyclists on proposed SH works and their potential impact on them. This seems particularly evident for "general" projects, where the main focus is often on dealing with safety or efficiency issues for motorists. Examples are the passing lanes on SH1 north and south of Christchurch, which created new pinch-points for cyclists as sealed shoulders were omitted. Opportunities to improve cycling conditions when undertaking routine maintenance works (e.g. reseals) are also missed.
- A lack of regular, systematic audits of the SH network from a cycling perspective. This requires both a process to be in place and adequate expertise to undertake it.

For example, the following projects are identified for construction within the next year (or already underway), yet we have not seen any information about the proposed works, nor their implications for cyclists:

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

- SH1 Empire Road off-ramp
- SH1/73A Hornby intersection
- SH1/73 Yaldhurst intersection
- SH75 Halswell Rd

Meanwhile we have seen a number of minor re-sealing and kerb & channel works around Canterbury where simple improvements for cyclists could have easily been made at the same time at almost no extra cost to Transit.

Resolving these two issues alone would go a long way towards ensuring that Transit's SH network adequately provided for cyclists.

Ultimately, providing for cyclists does not have to require considerable additional expenditure by Transit NZ; simply improving the use of the current expenditure would resolve many issues for cyclists.

Regional Priorities

Some of our priorities for cyclists on State Highways in Canterbury include:

- 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 Port Hills interchange, and SH74 Marshland Rd roundabout.
- Cycle access to Lyttelton via the SH74 tunnel.
- On-road access for cyclists along the various urban expressways in Christchurch.
- Improved cycle provision on/near narrow bridges along the SH network, particularly where there are no feasible alternative routes.
- Review of cyclist facilities/needs on SHs in regional Canterbury towns (whether travelling along or across the SH).
- Improved Lower Waimakariri River crossing for cyclists. Although this might be seen as a local council issue, potentially Transit have a role to play in providing a reasonable solution to the existing old Waimakariri Bridge, e.g. a clip-on of the SH1 motorway bridge.
- Development of the regional cycling network (as initiated by Environment Canterbury), where SHs form components.

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

We are pleased to see at the bottom of Appendix D a list of planned cycling projects, including:

- SH1s Rakaia River Bridge Cycle Facility
- SH1s Ashley River Bridge Cycle Facility
- SH8 Tekapo River Bridge Cycle Facility
- SH1s Waimakariri River Bridge Cycle Facility
- SH74 Lyttelton Tunnel Cycling Facility
- SH73 Bruce Stream Cycle Facility
- SH75 Hotel to Little River Cycle Facility

This gives us hope that a number of our key concerns are beginning to be considered, and we look forward to some subsequent investigation and prompt implementation on these.

In some rural locations (e.g. SH75 Akaroa Hilltop, various narrow bridges) it would clearly be difficult to provide adequate shoulder width for cyclists. Therefore we encourage the use of interim dynamic warning signs, as used overseas, to alert motorists to the presence of cyclists ahead. Vibraline edge-line markings on inside curves are another tool with the potential to discourage motorists from cutting the corner and encountering cyclists.

We would like to see Transit commission specialist cycling audits of its network, to identify key impediments, pinch-points, and other concerns for cyclists. Following on from this, funding should be allocated to address any minor problems identified (or maintenance funding used); often it is a number of minor things that make the difference for cyclists, or that discourage non-cyclists from becoming cyclists, for at least some of their journeys. More significant issues can then be properly investigated and works subsequently programmed. Although cyclists are invariably invited to provide feedback to Transit on specific pinch-points, it is not our job to be SH auditors. Provision for cyclists on SHs should not be driven by the relative efforts of local (volunteer) cycling advocates.

We would also encourage an ongoing programme of cycle counts on the SH network, both within Christchurch and throughout Canterbury. Currently it is difficult to prioritise works when so little data is available. This is particularly so for rural cycle touring/commuting routes. Automatic cycle counters now make such data collection feasible.

Specific Comments

Spokes offers the following specific observations about the proposed programme:

- It is not clear whether the indicative walking/cycling plan (Appendix K) applies only to expenditure in the coming year only (2005/06, as indicated in the Appendix heading), the coming three years (as indicated in the Introduction), or something else. About \$8.8 million of projects throughout New Zealand are listed, which would appear to require about eight years for implementation on current expenditure levels.
- We strongly support the planned Christchurch City cycle lanes & intersections works. However we note that there are a number of other high/medium-priority sites that we would also like to see programmed and dealt with as urgently as possible (as listed in the previous section). In this respect, we feel that average annual expenditure will have to be increased to complete the work sufficiently promptly. Indeed, the current level of expenditure by Transit NZ on walking/cycling and TDM projects is insufficient in relation to the overall planned SH funding.
- We are unclear why the SH7 Boyle River Bridge has been identified as a “cyclist facility” project; it is our understanding that this is a pedestrian safety project.
- It was also 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 Plan.
- We are unimpressed with the top-heavy prioritisation of Auckland region projects (invariably congestion-related) in the national programme (all of the top 10 and 15 of the top 18 projects). We fail to see how these can be considered of greater importance than significant rural safety projects such as the SH2 Mangatawhiri Deviation and SH1s Tumai - Waikouaiti Realignment, or similar Canterbury projects.
- In the list of Small/Medium Activities (Appendix G) we strongly support prompt investigation and implementation of intersection improvements at SH1s Walnut Avenue, SH74 Marshland/QEII, SH73 Yaldhurst/Curletts, and SH1s/SH8 Washdyke. All of these have the potential to also improve provision for cyclists at these locations.
- We are very supportive of the “Christchurch 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.

- We have some concern that Transit NZ does not seem to fully appreciate the exact concept of travel demand management, which seems in their Plan to focus largely on motorway ramp metering and ITS displays. These treatments do not tend to suppress the actual demand for trips; they merely attempt to optimise the flow of those already travelling on the network. The perverse result is that such improvements to traffic flow are likely to encourage **greater** demand for the road network, in the same way that a widened road might. Spokes would rather see Transit NZ play a lead role in developing and promoting travel behaviour programmes to encourage people to reduce the number of trips they take, e.g. by using alternatives such as cycling and public transport or by ride-sharing. We would commend as an example the “Road to Rail” campaign promoted by the Highways Agency in the UK. This would be a very useful approach to consider say for tackling commuter congestion on the Christchurch northern motorway.
- Transit has asked for comments regarding their indicative maintenance allocation. Our concern is not so much with the amounts as with **how** it is spent. It would be relatively easy to use the existing maintenance expenditure more wisely to improve conditions for cyclists, such as through regular sweeping (or seal extensions) of gravel problem areas and isolated site treatments of pinch-points such as narrow seal edges and steep edge-breaks. Care also needs to be taken under routine maintenance operations to ensure that there is a smooth transition between the edge of seal and the shoulder so that if cyclists run off the seal (or are forced off by the proximity of motor vehicles), they can easily recover.
- We are supportive of the development of Corridor Management Plans in the coming year for the Christchurch, Ashburton, and Timaru urban SH networks. We would like to be involved in the early scoping phase for these projects, so that strategic cycling issues can be addressed.
- Accordingly, we would also like to see identification of and funding for treatment of cyclist issues on the SH networks in other urban areas including Amberley, Culverden, Temuka, Woodend, Kaikoura and Geraldine.
- We request that construction of the SH73 Southern Motorway extension and Northern arterial be deferred, pending further work on promoting travel alternatives and travel behaviour change. Given their \$73m and \$20m price tags, we feel that the alternatives are likely to be more cost-effective solutions.

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

Yours sincerely,

Glen Koorey

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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