



12 April 2004

Chris Neason

Waimakariri District Council
Private Bag 1005
Rangiora

Dear Ms Neason

Re: Waimakariri District Walking/Cycling Strategy

Spokes Canterbury, the local cycling advocacy group, is pleased to offer this submission regarding the development of a walking/cycling strategy in the district. For more information about Spokes, see the end of our submission.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Spokes welcomes the development of a walking/cycling strategy for the Waimakariri District. Given the district's proximity to Christchurch and popularity for cycle touring, it is a logical step to identify cycling needs in the area. And, given the burgeoning growth and development taking place in the district, it is sensible to establish a strategy now so that walking and cycling can be properly incorporated with developments and not be retrofitted later with greater difficulty.

We have many suggestions listed below, based on our personal knowledge and experiences of the district, as well as from perusal of the Council's previous Transportation Studies and current draft Annual Plan. While our comments are largely related to cycling issues, we also support the push for further encouragement and provision for walking, and some of our points will be relevant to this as well. We also note that there are many "general" council issues and policies that have an effect on the take-up of walking and cycling, and so these also need to be addressed.

One potential concern we have is that any strategy produced does not get given appropriate funding to properly implement it. Given that over 6% of commuters in the District walk or cycle to work (2001 census), and that proportion will be higher for local urban trips of all types, we would expect that at least 6% of the total District roading budget should be allocated to providing for walking & cycling. The current Annual Plan appears not to recognise any notable future allocation.

Spokes would like to be kept informed of progress on this strategy as it develops. It is difficult to comment on something that doesn't exist yet, so we hope that there will be another opportunity for feedback once a draft strategy is produced.

SPECIFIC SITE SUGGESTIONS

- Cycle provision on the Old Waimakariri bridge is an urgent necessity. Not only does it provide the only link for local cyclists between the District and Christchurch, it is also the only link for cycle tourists heading north or south without having to detour right up to Waimakariri Gorge. We are disappointed that the WDC's draft works programme currently has no construction envisaged before 2011; this is unacceptable. WDC must work with CCC and Transfund to accelerate work on this bridge.

- Cycle provision on the Ashley River (Cones Rd) bridge is also an important need for both local and touring cyclists. We would like to see some cycle facilities here much sooner than the suggested date of 2015.
- In Rangiora, develop on-road cycle facilities along King, Blackett, Kingsbury, Southbrook, Percival, Johns, South Belt, Wales and Queen. These will provide arterial links to the local street network.
- Similarly, in Kaiapoi, develop on-road cycle facilities along Smith, Beach, Main North, Williams and Ohoka. Also provide some on-road cycle facilities in Woodend (SH1, Woodend Rd) and Oxford (Main St, High St).
- In Rangiora, improve the Dudley Park pathway connection between Rata and Queen Sts.
- Improve/develop pathway connections across major green spaces (e.g. Ashcroft Park, Matawai Park, Kaiapoi Domain) and also alleyway links (e.g. remove unnecessary barriers)
- A number of popular cycle touring routes traverse the District; the well-known Lonely Planet guide¹ details many of them (e.g. Amberley-Sefton-Rangiora-Kaiapoi-Chch, Ashley-Loburn-Oxford-Waimak.Gorge, Kaiapoi-Tram Rd-Oxford). To ensure that cycle tourists continue to provide economic benefits to the District, audits of the key touring routes should be made to identify any remedial works, e.g. remove pinch-points, widening where sight distance is poor. Appropriate route signage also needs to be developed to help cyclists identify designated touring routes.
- Like Christchurch, undertake "school bubble" cycle safety projects to identify pinch-points affecting cyclists and to develop safe routes to Rangiora High (& Rangiora Training Inst), and Kaiapoi High.
- The various rivers within the District provide good opportunities for recreational walking & cycling trails. We suggest enhancing access to, along, and across the Kaiapoi, Cam, Ashley and lower Waimakariri river corridors.
- Investigate a foot/cycle bridge across the lower Kaiapoi river (e.g. near Corcoran Reserve), to avoid having to use Williams St and to link with river pathways.
- WDC need to liaise with Transit NZ (esp. Tony Spowart, Transit's local cycling champion) regarding priorities for State Highway cycle works, e.g. SH1 Ashley Bridge, SH1 through Woodend, and the Main North Rd intersection at Pineacres.
- Further investigate using the rail corridor for walk/cycle routes. As well as the Rangiora & Kaiapoi urban areas, a route could be developed on the west side of the line parallel to SH71 to link these two towns.

OTHER STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

- We suggest that WDC uses Environment Canterbury's model cycling strategy and Christchurch City's updated Cycling Strategy as useful templates for developing their own strategy.
- The implementation programme must also ensure that adequate, well-designed cycle parking is available around Rangiora and Kaiapoi at key destinations.

¹ *Cycling New Zealand*, N.Wells, N.Irvine & I.Duckworth, Lonely Planet Publications, Melbourne, 2000.

- An ongoing programme of cycle counts at key urban intersections/routes and some rural touring locations needs to be implemented, using a combination of both manual observation surveys and automated counters.
- In-house skills in cycle planning/engineering need to be developed by all Council transportation (and parks) staff, e.g. by attending one of the national Cycle Design & Planning training courses. Staff should also ensure that the latest national best practices are used, e.g. the existing cycle lanes on Southbrook Rd that stop at every side road are very poor.
- WDC must ensure that ALL roading projects consider the needs of cyclists (and pedestrians). In particular, all future arterial road projects should adequately provide for these road users at the time of construction.
- Ensure that any other WDC strategies currently being developed or planned (e.g. looking at road widths, bridges, road hierarchies) specifically address cyclist's' needs as well.
- WDC need to undertake extensive traffic calming/management of local (non-arterial) streets, including consideration of lower speed limits, to encourage more walking and cycling there. Certainly, new local subdivisions should not be encouraging more motor vehicle use and speeding, so some examination of existing standards may be required. New networks should also ensure that cyclists and pedestrians have greater connections between links, even while restricting motorists (e.g. culs de sac with pathways between them).
- Continue to support your excellent promotions, such as "Don't Burst Their Bubble" and rural school truck/cycle safety. Behaviour/attitude is just as important as facilities.
- We encourage WDC to follow CCC's lead in removing parking on arterial roads where necessary to provide space for cycle lanes.

We trust that you will find the above comments useful in your strategy development process. We would be happy to provide any further information if required, and look forward to its progress.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Hayman

Chairperson

SPOKES Canterbury

Email: spokes_chch@hotmail.com

Phone: 021 772445

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.