

3. CYCLE LANE SURFACE COLOURING

RR 11120

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Alix Newman: Cycle Planning Officer
Corporate Plan Output: Pages 9.5.37 & 38	

The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's opinion or decision on the colour of selected cycle lane and cycle path surfaces.

CURRENT SURFACE COLOUR STATUS

The Council will be aware that there are a number of cycle facilities in Christchurch that have a red-surface colouring. The cycle lanes on Kilmarnock Street and at Hospital Corner are examples.

At the recent Traffic Management Workshop in Palmerston North, cycle and public transport planners from throughout the country discussed which colour should be used for cycle and bus lanes. Hamilton and Auckland Councils are using GREEN for their surfaces. Christchurch is the only city using RED, however the three councils mentioned are the only ones colouring road or path surfaces.

In an informal vote, the majority supported the use of GREEN as a national, standard colour. This report summarises the pros and cons of the two different colours, and suggests some decision making options.

RED VERSUS GREEN

Colour examples have been tabled.

The main advantages of using RED surface colouring are:

- Currently have RED colouring in use, and it is recognised as a cycle surface in Christchurch.
- RED is recognised nationally and internationally as a “warning” colour.
- European psychological studies indicate that RED is reacted to more instinctively by drivers than any other colour.

The main disadvantages of using RED are:

- It is commonly used for pedestrian facilities and traffic calming measures - raised crossing points, humps and platforms. This common use may tend to reduce its awareness value.
- Christchurch may end up as the only city in New Zealand using RED surface colouring for cycle and/or bus lanes.

The main advantages of using GREEN are:

- Will fit in with other cities nationally.
- GREEN will be exclusively associated with bus and cycle spaces.
- GREEN is usually associated with “environmental” themes - appropriate to more sustainable modes of transport.

The main disadvantages of using GREEN are:

- Some cost (minor at this stage) of re-colouring our existing RED strips.

DISCUSSION

The City Streets Unit is currently investigating the general use of cycle space colouring as one of the possible methods of delineating cycle lanes and intersection spaces. This study is ongoing and no report is yet available. However, the study will not be affected by the choice of surface colouring.

Auckland and Hamilton are very unlikely to change to RED cycle/bus colouring, particularly because they are using RED more extensively for pedestrian facilities than we do in Christchurch. The LTSA is very reluctant to rule on a colour - ruling either way would set forth a storm of protest from one Council or another. As the use of colour is new and not very widespread, it makes sense for cycle/bus practitioners to agree on a colour between them. The alternative, of course, is to have different colours in different cities.

Both Christchurch (RED) and Auckland (GREEN) studies have shown that coloured surfaces work in identifying special road space and indicating that vehicles should keep clear. It is reasonable to infer that what colour is used is much less important than the fact that a colour is used at all.

The skid resistance and lifespan of the effective colour is not a significant issue. Modern materials mean colour clarity and skid resistance can be assured for extended periods (the Kilmarnock Street colour is guaranteed for five years and after 18 months is only fractionally less bright than new).

Technically, the decision comes down to individual city preference.

POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

The following are seen as practical courses of action:

- The Committee makes a policy decision on the colour for Christchurch - either no change (RED) or change (GREEN). If a change is made, all new surfaces will be GREEN. RED will be phased out as time and resources allow.
- Community consultation occurs - either extensively through newspaper surveys, or selectively through specific contacts - with a recommendation to a later Committee meeting (estimated consultation costs \$5,000).
- A GREEN trial strip is laid (possibly also on Kilmarnock Street) to assess public attitudes (estimated trial and survey cost \$7,000).

- The decision is left to City Streets Unit.

Recommendation: That RED be confirmed as the colour for cycleways in Christchurch, for the following reasons:

1. Green not as visible as red.
2. Green is the colour of the grass berms and red distinguishes cycleways from them.
3. Red is now well established for cycleways in Christchurch and there is insufficient reason to change.