

9. CYCLE CONFERENCE 2000 REPORT BACK

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Corporate Plan Output: Page 9.5.6	

The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of some of the issues raised at the Cycle Symposium in Palmerston North, and identify some items with proposed or recommended future action.

INTRODUCTION

The second New Zealand Cycle Symposium was held in Palmerston North on 14/15 July 2000. The symposium was attended by a number of Council officers, staff from City Design, Council elected representatives and about a dozen Christchurch cycle advocates.

Councillor O'Rourke will be reporting to the Committee on a number of issues. This report will identify others not particularly addressed by him.

GENERAL SYMPOSIUM FEEDBACK

Council officers presented papers on promotion, network planning, infrastructure development, safety and education programmes. All were well received.

From both the formal paper feedback, and informal discussions, it is clear that Christchurch is exceptionally well regarded, nationally, for the efforts it is putting in to promote and encourage cycle numbers and cycle safety. All of the programmes and subjects raised by Christchurch people were responded to with considerable interest.

A number of people commented that cycling development initiatives in Christchurch are operating in an environment that is completely different (more positive and supportive) to that of any other local body in the country.

The Annabel promotion programme was considered to be a world leader by representatives of the Australian Bicycle Industries Traders' Association, and several packs marketing the programme were gladly accepted by other local bodies and organisations within the country.

NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES

The initial conference presentation was by Hon Steve Maharey, reporting on behalf of the Minister of Transport. His report discussed current actions and intentions in relation to a national transport strategy on which the Government hopes to make considerable progress within the next year.

A subsequent presentation and workshop discussed the development of a New Zealand cycle strategy, and its relationship to the National Transport Strategy.

Other key presentations revolved around the lack of New Zealand design standards, and how the huge social, economic and health benefits of cycling are overlooked in the very short term focus of LTSA and Transfund safety and economic analysis.

In light of these key issues raised, the symposium, at its closing session, drafted a set of recommendations. The symposium recommendations will be sent to the Minister of Transport, all Government departments with some transport responsibilities, and road controlling authorities.

The symposium's closing statement reads as follows:

Outcomes of the New Zealand Cycling Symposium 2000 "Making Cycling Viable"

Over 150 transport planners, engineers, policy makers, health professionals, cyclists, cycling advocates and representatives of the cycle industry attended the New Zealand Cycling Symposium 2000 held on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 July in Palmerston North.

In the wrap-up session on Saturday, the Symposium made the following recommendations to make cycling viable, based on the two days of information and discussion:

1. Government engages with the cycling community in developing its long term, sustainable transport strategy.
2. The Ministry of Transport develop a separate national cycle strategy linked with the national transport strategy.
3. All roads have, as a minimum design standard, safe provision for cyclists.
4. The Ministry of Transport identifies suitable funding processes for on-road and dedicated cycle facilities.
5. The cycle industry develops a levy used to promote cycling.
6. The government recognises the health, environment, economic, safety and social benefits of greater cycling.
7. Local government recognises the overall benefits to their communities of greater cycling.
8. Individuals and organisations wishing to show their support for cycling join the Cycle Advocates' Network.

9. Central and local government recognises and improves communication with New Zealand's existing pool of cycling expertise and research capability.
10. Where central and local government rely on voluntary sector cycle groups for cycling expertise, a fee for service is provided.

NEXT CYCLING SYMPOSIUM

Earlier this year, the City Services Committee agreed that Christchurch should hold a cycle symposium in October 2002. Given the current dynamism in the cycling world, and progress expected in national strategy areas in the next year, it would be most appropriate to hold the next cycling symposium next year (2001). It is therefore recommended that Christchurch host the next national cycling symposium in September 2001. At that symposium, the Government departments will be asked to report back on the above recommendations.

Issues related to hosting the symposium, including venue, date, length and financial commitment will be reported to the committee in due course. At this stage, there is likely to be a slight funding surplus from the most recent symposium that may be used to seed the next one.

CHRISTCHURCH SPECIFIC ISSUES

Despite being well regarded nationally, it is clear that Christchurch has some way to go before the goals of the cycle strategy are reached. Through the symposium, Christchurch attendees identified a number of areas where there is scope for improvement.

Most of the Christchurch symposium attendees met a week after the symposium, in conjunction with a Cycle Steering Group meeting. In discussing the issues raised at the symposium, the group identified a number of areas for future action in Christchurch:

- Our cycle infrastructure could be better focussed to meet the needs of school children and recreational cycling (particularly as this is a way in which new cyclists often start). As a result, the cycle capital programme will make recommendations to provide more cycle paths (off the road).
- While the Annabel promotion series is well regarded and considered successful, there are gaps in the promotion programme, particularly in countering some of the negative images associated with cycling. Future promotions budget recommendations will look at these areas in particular, and also look at moving into a more "up-market" image of cycling.

- Particular initiatives in relation to employers encouraging employees to cycle, cycle tourism efforts, and advances on developing infrastructure standards will be developed.
- The city could also benefit from a major, radical project around which all cycle advocates could rally. Ideas for such a project will be developed and reported to the committee.

Meanwhile, Christchurch will maintain its status in New Zealand by maintaining its impetus on existing cycle infrastructure and promotion projects.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Council host the next cycling symposium in September 2001.
 3. That interim funding be sought at the six monthly review.