

2. CYCLE STRATEGY - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

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The purpose of this report is to present to the Council the Cycle Strategy Annual Report covering the 2001/02 financial year and 2002/03 year to May.

BACKGROUND

The Cycle Strategy for Christchurch requires the delivery of an annual report on cycling. The report presented at this meeting is the third such annual report.

The Annual Report is a bound document, separate from this report and has been tabled.

The following is the final discussion and recommendation section of the report. The Cycle Steering Committee Chairperson - Councillor Chrissie Williams has given feedback that has been incorporated into the body of the document and has written the foreword to the document.

REPORT CONCLUSIONS

Monitoring the number of commuter cyclists (by counts of the numbers of cyclists travelling through intersections at various points around the city) revealed that over a seven-year period numbers were relatively stable. This is a positive outcome when it is coupled with the 2001 census information which showed only a small 1% decline over the last five years (as opposed to a decline rate of almost twice that figure in the preceding five year period). The results are starting to reveal a slowing down or cessation of the earlier decline.

However, this trend isn't repeated within the school aged cycling numbers. Intersection and school based counts have revealed a slow decline over a seven-year period. This is particularly concerning as school age cyclists are considered to be the future growth indicators of cycling in general. This is based on the assumption that the propensity of people to cycle as they get older is greater if they have cycled in their younger years.

Recreational cyclists numbers continue to remain high over the last five years which is reflective in part to the popularity of both cycling as a life style choice and mountain biking.

The Cyclesafe programme expanded to successfully meet school demand in 2002. This was a pleasing achievement on behalf of the coordinator and the two teams and essentially ensured that the target was achieved. To increase the coverage from 75 per cent to 100 per cent of all schools, the programme would require an additional marketing component with additional resources to provide extra programmes neither of which are currently budgeted to encourage the non-participating schools to take part.

The indicators of the 'cycle-friendliness' of Christchurch and the consideration given from motorists towards cyclists both vary within the margins of error over a six year period. However, it does show results that are all within the desired target range which is considered positive.

The number of reported cycle accidents showed that the under 18 years of age figures met the target but the over 18 years of age did not, however, it shows a pleasing drop compared to the previous year's spike in numbers. No generalised determining factors could be deduced from the results to reveal why the last two year's crash figures have been relatively high.

The Council's involvement over 2002 in running cycle events and promotions continued at a similar level to 2001. The events were focussed and were mainly aimed at specific cycle-sector groups with participation rates continuing to grow. The promotions have been targeted and with modest budgets are focused on pinpointing the highest priorities. Several of the 2002 promotions were targeted to safety messages. With the recent addition of a Promotions and Education Adviser we have increased our capacity to 'add value' to events and promotions in 2003. This will allow us to better develop social marketing and work with organisations sharing similar objectives.

The quantity of cycle infrastructure throughout Christchurch continues to grow. The projects within the Cycleways capital budget are aligned to the priorities established through the 1999 Cycle Network Plan and the 2002 capital priority revision.

The level of research undertaken in 2002 to further refine cycle infrastructure design was limited. This was primarily due to the restructuring of the City Streets Unit and the interim effect this had on staff resources.

The recognition and development of cycling at a national and regional level in 2002 was ground breaking. Cycling is now becoming more seriously recognised as an important mode of transport through prudent strategies and their ensuing successful implementation. The effects of this are that the Council is becoming more supported in its efforts towards increasing the number of people cycling. Examples of such are evident, with subsidies for cycle projects from Transfund New Zealand and proposed law changes that will recognise and better protect cyclists rights on the road. Environment Canterbury is also very active in Christchurch and its surrounds, encouraging neighbouring local authorities to adopt cycle strategies and piloting sustainable transport projects in Christchurch. It is likely that the full effects of the national and regional advances towards cycling will be increasingly felt over the next few years and will give considerable support to the Council campaign objectives.

In summary, it is disappointing that a number of targets have not been reached. This is particularly so in the schools with a lowering level of cycling. The 2000 Christchurch City Council Cycle Strategy is due to be revised in 2003/04. The policies and targets will be reviewed in light of our experience and that of others, and in recognition of the many positive national and regional advances currently taking place. It is heartening for the Christchurch City Council with the vision, foresight and commitment over the past decade to guide Christchurch to a sustainable transport mix, to now be joined in its efforts at National and Regional levels. It is anticipated that these changes will give further impetus to the Council reaching its Strategic Cycle objectives.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council continue to work toward its vision of being 'the most cycle friendly city', and that the infrastructure development programme continue. The technical research work needs to continue towards assisting to develop best-practice standards that will also assist in national cycle design standards being adopted.

There is an ongoing need for promotion and education about cycling - to encourage the activity, advice on good cycling practice and to assist in making cycling a safe, healthy and practical choice. To achieve this, the Council's involvement should not only continue but be expanded to incorporate more partnerships with other organisations working towards similar objectives.

CONSIDERATIONS

The strategy is recognised as a living document - it must be regularly amended to keep track of changing situations. The implementation of the strategy towards achieving the cycle objectives will soon be reviewed along with the targets it set. The current (2000) strategy is due to be updated and the revised version will be available in early 2004. The revision process will allow for further public and political input into its development during this period. The Committee will have several opportunities for input into the early and later stages of the revised strategy as will the Cycle Steering Committee.

The existing Council Cycling Strategy recognises the benefits of encouraging and providing for cycling in Christchurch. The number of people cycling has not met the level of increase sought within the strategy, however, the current levels of cycling are very significant as evidenced from the Census results for 2001:

- The number of cycle trips made to and from work by adults in Christchurch totalled for twelve months over 4.3 million. In addition to this over one million trips were made by children to and from school. If the Council were to fail in supporting this mode of transport the loss of current benefits to Christchurch would be very significant.
- There were 61% more cycle trips made to and from work compared to bus trips. The level of investment made in public transport in Christchurch by central government and local ratepayer contributions is estimated to be more than 14 times that of the investment made in cycling.
- When compared with the following New Zealand centres, Christchurch featured in the top three for the highest percentage of people cycling to work - Auckland, Hamilton, Nelson, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Wanganui and Wellington.

The figures above provide a clear picture of the considerable levels of cycling in Christchurch. In short if cycling declines to very low levels the future consequences will include, increases in traffic volumes, slower journeys and longer travelling times, larger spending on building new roads just to contain present congestion levels, increased street pollution and increased traffic turning many of our currently quiet streets into noisy, polluted and congested roads. It will also contribute to lower levels of health for children and adults and lower the safety levels for all road users.

The revised strategy will look at the recent outcomes achieved under the current strategy and consider what options currently exist towards realistically achieving the strategy objectives and targets set.

Continuing with the provision of cycle facilities helps to guide cyclists through areas where they are vulnerable or feel unsafe. They also indicate to motorists that they can expect cyclists to be present and what their likely path will be. In collisions between cyclists and cars - particularly where most collisions happen (at intersections and driveways) usually the cyclist was not noticed by the driver of the car who failed to give way. Cycle facilities provide an obvious message to all road users that cyclists may be present and to look for them.

Cycle facilities not only improve the safety level for cyclists but also for all other road users. Cycle lanes are effective in reducing pedestrian crashes. Cycle lanes are also effective in reducing midblock and unsignalised intersection crashes for all road users ie pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. These factors provide prudent reasons to continue with progressively upgrading the marking programme for Christchurch's on-road cycle network.

FUTURE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The compilation and presentation of the Annual Report takes considerable effort from the cycle planning staff resources.

Recommendation: That the Council note the overall trends of the implementation of the cycle strategy to date and continue to implement it.