

6. CYCLE STRATEGY - DRAFT UPDATED 2004 VERSION

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The purpose of this report is to introduce the draft updated Council Cycle Strategy to the Board and invite the Board to give feedback on it. This updated version of the Strategy was reported to the Council, which released it for the current consultation period ending on 7 May 2004. The existing Cycle Strategy is now four years old and was programmed to be updated at this time.

BACKGROUND

Members will recall they were informed at the end of last year of the proposed process to update the existing Council Cycle Strategy. Part of the process to create the updated draft Strategy (copy distributed with the agenda) included interviews with a sample of major stakeholders, and a number of Board members were included in these interviews.

In 1996 the Council adopted its first Cycling Strategy – one of the first councils in New Zealand to do so.

The 1996 Cycle Strategy was updated by the Council at the start of the year 2000. It has proved to be an effective document, with each annual report which monitors the strategy's outcomes being received positively by the Council.

In the last three to four years, in addition to the usual 'cycle scene' incremental changes expected, a number of exceptional changes have taken place. The new 2002 New Zealand Transport Strategy has now given explicit support for sustainable transport and, cascading from this, initiatives at national, regional and local level have been developing with extra impetus. This recent extra support towards sustainable transport generally has paralleled cycling gaining more funding, recognition through strategies, legal recognition through changes in the road user rules and development of national design and planning guidelines.

The need for a periodical update was recognised by the Council when it adopted the last updated strategy in 2000. It also then adopted a recommendation that such a future update be undertaken. It is particularly timely that the current Strategy is updated now to take account of the current changes in the cycling environment throughout New Zealand

A full revision of the Cycle Strategy, which will involve a comprehensive consultation process, is expected to be undertaken in 2008.

UPDATE PROCESS

The preparatory stage used to complete the draft updated Cycle Strategy has involved a sample of stakeholders being interviewed to gain their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing strategy and inviting suggestions for an updated version. This sampling included interviews with cycle advocates, a wide range of transport/interest organisation representatives, members from Community Boards and the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee. The information was presented to a working party of the Cycle Steering Committee to gain further direction and several more meetings were held to fine tune the draft strategy.

A project calendar has been developed for both the preparation of the Strategy document and its promotion. This has been prepared with the aim of having the final document adopted by the Council and available to the public well before the Local Government Elections in October 2004.

DRAFT UPDATED STRATEGY

The updated Strategy is consistent with the direction that the Council is currently progressing within the existing Cycling Strategy, but takes new impetus from such documents as the Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Statement Stage One and other national and regional transport-related strategies. The updated Strategy recognises the current key issues and trends affecting cycling and looks to deliver targeted resources to the areas of best effect. This will include focussing on both existing cyclists and potential cyclists, with an increased focus on initiatives directed to school-aged cyclists.

The draft updated Strategy looks to take the advancements of the last strategy, which effectively halted the earlier decline in cycle numbers, towards managing a stabilisation, and effecting an increase in the future.

Vision

The new proposed vision recognises the 1996 (current) vision, which was for Christchurch to be the most cycle-friendly city. With eight years of improvements in cycling the earlier decline in cycling in the city has largely been stabilised, but there is still a long way to go to reach the objectives set. To do this there is a need to ensure that everyone is on board - cyclists and non-cyclists alike, so we now look to a vision where “Everyone Likes Cycling in Christchurch”.

Objectives

The draft Strategy looks to retain the two objectives of the current strategy, but also recognises it is not just a case of raising numbers of cyclists and reducing cycle accident numbers. Cycling needs to be an enjoyable activity to gain popularity and help Christchurch to be considered a cycle-friendly city.

Targets

The targets have been adjusted and added to, to reflect more closely the experiences learnt in monitoring cycling progress over the last eight years in Christchurch.

General

The updated Strategy will have a layout and format aligned to other recent Council strategies – this will be incorporated in the draft for the consultation round. It will include images that support the promotional aspects of the Strategy. The content is also aligned in the direction that other recent Council strategy documents are using and includes policy, along with an implementation plan.

The general direction of the Strategy is not proposing major changes. In effect, it is a refinement to ensure Christchurch takes full advantage of the positive changes that are happening in the wider New Zealand and regional cycling contexts.

Current Strategy Vision: “To Be the Most Cycle-Friendly City”

Proposed New Vision: “Everyone Likes Cycling in Christchurch”

The new vision is interpreted as: *“Where the benefits of cycling as a safe, enjoyable and popular form of transport and recreation are valued by the community, and where recognition of these benefits leads to growth in cycling.”*

Current and Updated Strategy Objectives

- **To increase cycling in Christchurch**

Encouraging people to cycle for transport and/or recreation can increase cycling. This may include more people taking up cycling, existing cyclists cycling more often, or the total distance cycled increasing. People may cycle more if they perceive cycling to be enjoyable and safe.

- **To improve safety for cyclists in Christchurch**

Safety can be improved by reducing common causes of collisions and injury, such as by improving the way other road users interact with cyclists, improving cyclists' behaviour and increasing the quality of road and other facilities in the city.

Proposed Additional Objective

- **To increase the enjoyment of cycling in Christchurch**

Cycling can be an enjoyable activity for everyone when it is within a cycle-friendly environment. When people are enjoying cycling they are likely to cycle more and encourage others to do likewise.

CONCLUSION

The updated Cycle Strategy, whilst recognising the recent national and local advancements in the cycling environment and making improvements, essentially maintains the framework that the current Cycle Strategy has provided. Within this framework it will allow Christchurch to expand and better focus its resources and take advantage of the prevailing positive advancements in cycling in New Zealand towards achieving its vision for cycling for Christchurch.

The updated draft Cycling Strategy is currently released for consultation and all feedback will be considered by staff and the Cycle Steering Committee, with a new Cycle Strategy planned to be presented to both a seminar and the July 2004 meeting of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee, followed by reporting to the Council for adoption at the end of July 2004.

Staff

Recommendation: That the circulated draft updated Cycle Strategy be considered by the Board, with any responses being made prior to 7 May 2004.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion and Board response. Board members may wish to establish a working party to consider the updated draft strategy document.