

17. ANNUAL REPORT ON CYCLE PROGRAMME

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The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the overall cycle and cycle support programme run by the Christchurch City Council.

CYCLING ANNUAL REPORT

The cycle planning team have prepared a report which pulls together all the latest available information on cycle promotions, planning, facilities, and monitoring statistics. Ideally the report will be updated and published annually. A complete report will be distributed to Councillors prior to the City Services meeting. In order to provide a generally summary, the final section - Discussion and Conclusion - is reproduced in this report.

"DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The previous sections of this report have outlined an extensive, and as much as possible, an integrated effort from Christchurch City Council staff to both increase cyclist numbers and decrease the number of cycle collisions. The range of programmes covered involves promotion, celebration, education and information activities, as well as planning and design of infrastructure. The programmes also involve research and development to supplement the poor level of knowledge there is nationally concerning cycling and cycle design.

Anecdotal evidence, particularly from the national cycle conference held in Palmerston North in July 2000 indicates that Christchurch is still regarded as the lead city in New Zealand on cycling issues.

However, despite the level of infrastructure and operational investment in cycling, it would still appear that more work is needed.

7.1.1 Cyclist Numbers

The results of the various methods of information gathering about cycling indicate that cycling numbers have typically not changed much since 1998. There was a drop recorded in intersection counts in 1999 but commuter numbers and older school children numbers have risen since then, while younger children's numbers have dropped. This last point is not a particularly encouraging sign, as the propensity of people to cycle as they get older does depend, to some degree, on whether they cycle to school.

Those who have contacts with schools respond that the drop in school children numbers is no-doubt due in part to parents still believing the roads are too dangerous for their children to cycle. It is also due in part to the continuing growth in sedentary activities such as video games.

7.1.2 Cyclist Safety

Year 2000 recorded a sudden rise in adult injury collisions reported to the LTSA that exceeded the target levels. Up to that time, however, all other injury collision trends have been dropping. It would be too early to say whether this rise is the start of a growth trend, or a one-off occurrence.

Meanwhile the LTSA have indicated that the age group that has received Cycle-Safe training (by end of 2000, this would include year 6,7 and 8 pupils), have had a real reduction in the numbers of cycle collisions. As this reduction does not appear related to the slight drop in numbers, nor just luck, it would seem the Cycle-Safe programme is paying dividends.

7.1.3 Cycle Infrastructure

It can be seen from the table at the end of Section 6 that there has been a notable growth in the length of on-road cycle lanes since the start of FY99/00. Off-road path lengths have not grown so notably, but are progressing.

The general direction of cycle infrastructure projects has changed over the last one to two years. It is recognised that there is a strong call for pathways off the main carriageway, particularly for access to schools. It is also recognised that the central city - the area that attracts the greatest concentration of cyclists on a daily basis - is the area where most commuter cyclists feel most at risk.

Hence there has been, and will be a focus on cycle facilities in the central city, and a focus on identifying and treating difficult areas around schools. It has been seen from work in the Burnside "bubble" already that pathway treatments generally offer the best treatments for schools.

The infrastructure budget now includes over 50% of its expenditure on path development.

It is known, through overseas and local work, that developing infrastructure specifically for cycle use does attract new cycle use. Some of the decline in cycle numbers between 1998 and 2000 may be due in-part, to the dearth of cycle facilities created during this time. As indicated, many projects were significantly delayed due to consultation or design difficulties.

It is hoped that the completion of most of the projects in the capital plan between report publication and the end of the 2001 calendar year will help attract some additional cyclists back.

7.1.4 Cycle Promotion/Education

The indicators from cycling promotion and education monitoring are tending to indicate that the general programme is having the desired results. For the level of investment in promotional programmes, there is a very high recognition level amongst the public-recognition and awareness are the first steps toward behaviour change.

In addition, the monitoring tells us that cyclists generally feel that motorists are treating them with a little more care and attention. This is a positive indicator.

7.2 Construction

Overall, it would seem that efforts at promotion, information and education (cycle map, Annabel promotion, rides and events, Cycle-Safe) are having the desired effects. Children's safety statistics have improved, and awareness of cycle issues throughout the city appears to be on the increase.

On the other hand, activities that directly put bottoms on bike seats are not having the same notable effect. Cycle numbers overall appear to have stabilised at close to 1998 levels. While a lack of increase in numbers may seem disappointing, it should be pointed out that cycle numbers have been in steady decline since at least 1981, with the decline accelerating between 1991 and 1996. Having slowed or halted this decline must be considered a success story.

As more cycle-specific infrastructure is developed, it is hoped that the usage will increase. In the earlier days of the implementation of cycle infrastructure in Christchurch, most of the facilities were of short lengths and in disjointed locations throughout the city. With the completion of the cycle network plan, and full integration with the roading improvements and kerb and channel programme, cycle facilities should become progressively more continuous, providing greater incentive for use than in the past.

In conclusion, there is still some way to go before the Christchurch City Council achieves the goals it set itself in the Cycle Strategy for Christchurch City."

Recommendation: That the information be received

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the Council continue to support the progressive implementation of the cycle strategy within budget constraints.