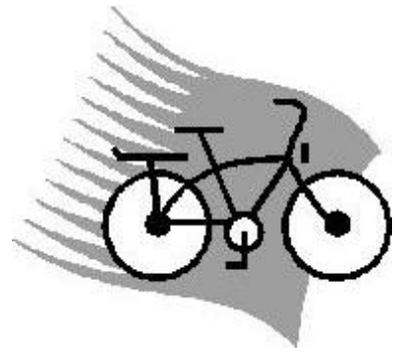


Bicycle Nelson Bays Submission on TDC's Draft Walking and Cycling Strategy September 2004



Introduction

Bicycle Nelson Bays (BNB) would like to commend TDC in taking steps toward providing for cyclists in the region through this strategy, acknowledging the core role cycling will play in future transport, health and recreation needs. We are pleased that the Strategy acknowledges that cycling is an essential part of meeting the requirements of the Land Transport Management Act, implementing community health goals, as well as being central to achieving the outcomes being sought in likes of the Active Transport section of the Regional Physical Activity Plan presently being developed by the Tasman Regional Sport Trust (RPAP) and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC).

In this submission BNB have raised points from a cycle user's perspective that may have not been obvious or considered when writing this strategy.

2.1 Vision for Cycling and Walking

Achieving the strategy's vision of making the Tasman District "a safe and enjoyable place to walk and cycle" is laudable, but will require concrete goals and targets being set to bring it about, as well as requiring a wider cross section of agencies being involved in its implementation. That the Strategy impacts across these dimensions is made very clear in the rationale for the Strategy as detailed in section 4.0, page 11. Only by the sectors of health, recreation, tourism, and economic development being included in the process will the strategy's vision be realised. It is unrealistic to expect the limited resources of TDC to achieve this vision in isolation.

2.2 Council Objectives

The objectives indicated in the strategy are excellent, although we would question why you would only want to increase cycling amongst workers and school children. There are many other groups for whom cycling would be an attractive option if the cycling environment were improved, for example; parents with young children, recreational riders, competitive cyclists, a growing pool of retirees etc.

2.3 Targets to Achieve

BNB would like to see TDC be a lot bolder in setting concrete targets in the strategy. TDC has nothing to lose by this, as the strategy is not binding on the council and it would give some clear goals to aim for. Also Transfund will only support initiatives that are

named in the strategy, and Transfund is constantly widening its scope for funding cycling related initiatives as shown in the August 2004 issue of "Transfund News" (attached).

Objective 1:

- There is no target percentage given for increasing cycle use. We would suggest an achievable target of **15%** given that Takaka is already at 9.1% (Table 3). Despite their inhospitable climates, some European countries have achieved over 30% cycle use, something that the Nelson region could achieve in the longer term.
- A 15% target for intermediate and high school seems extremely low (Motueka High is already at 13.2%) and does not reflect any real ambition to improve the cycling environment for children. The Council's own research on suppressed demand in Tasman schools (Figure 4) reveals that 1) cycling is easily the most preferred transport for children, 2) it is currently one of the least chosen modes, and 3) the children were clear about what needs to change – having adequate cycle lanes and storage. Where such facilities are provided, suppressed demand becomes usage; Broadgreen Intermediate has adequate cycle lanes and storage and a 65% rate of cycle usage. A percentage of 50% in urban areas would be therefore be a more reasonable and appropriate target
- Including a "static trend" as a target for cycling growth signals a pessimism in Council about the effectiveness of its own Strategy, and such an outcome would effectively represent a failure by Council to change the factors that are presently deterring cycle use. Given the efforts Council is making with the Strategy such a target is counter-productive.

Objective 2:

- Since a regional pilot project is being developed to fulfil this task, point one of Objective 2 needs to include "support" in addition to "implement" (an accident recording system).
- Surely we should have a zero target for pedestrian and cyclist injury accidents.

Objective 3:

There are two points we would like to see added to this objective:

- That the primary focus in building facilities is that they work for the end users, this being measured by auditing and questions in the NRB questionnaire. While this may seem obvious, it has been our experience that often facilities for cyclists are designed with other imperatives taking precedence, resulting in a facility that does not work for its target group. Consequently having facilities unnecessarily degraded in this way undermines both the Council's efforts at meeting its objectives and the resources it allocates to meeting the functional and safety needs of users.
- That a cycle officer/planner position be created in the region. Perhaps to work between TDC, NCC and Transit NZ. NCC has already flagged this position in their strategy: "Support from submissions and the RLTS is strong for a cycling

coordinator within Council. This role would include checking plans as part of plan circulation process and to coordinate cycling issues. It is recommended that this employee keep up to date with current overseas designs and technologies by attending cycle conferences and workshops" (NCC Cycle Strategy, 2001 p58). Such a role is essential if cycling knowledge and expertise is to be integral to planning and implementation in infrastructure projects, and for objectives in this document to be adequately addressed.

BNB are presently carrying out an increasing amount of work that a cycle officer would do, even though we only see the 'tip of the iceberg'. Many project designs are not run past us for input and so there is a lot of work being undertaken without cyclist input. As noted above, this undermines the Council's efforts at meeting its objectives, efficient use of resources, and the functional and safety needs of users.

Education Initiatives

Accident data shows that the greatest danger to cyclists comes from motor vehicles and driver awareness and education of their obligations and cyclists' rights should be a top priority.

It is obviously necessary to educate the general cycle population about cycle safety. Educating children in safe cycle use does not make them adults or give them the necessary concentration and skills of an adult. They will do unpredictable things and drivers must be made aware of this and drive accordingly. An unwillingness by vehicle drivers to 'share the road', opening of car doors without checking for cyclists first and not looking for or 'seeing' cyclists at intersections are all problems which need addressing. With the very high accident rate for cyclists in the Tasman region, we suggest that TDC engages with LTSA to embark on a driver education campaign related to cyclists.

3.1 Encouragement Initiatives

We are very pleased to see a plan to develop safe cycle storage as part of the Warring Car Park upgrade. This is an important issue for cyclists and we hope that the council will work with cyclists to ensure this facility is designed to meet their needs. We note that the Council's own research shows that lack of adequate cycle storage is a factor in suppressed demand that even extends to – and is identified by - school children.

The Strategy states that the council will, "promote the provision of cycle friendly facilities at workplaces and schools", but does not indicate how or what form this promotion will take. If people are to be encouraged to cycle to work, essential requirements for them are shower and locker facilities as well as secure bike storage. There is a need to have these facilities as requirements in any new commercial building if the council is serious about promoting cycling to work. New buildings have requirements imposed on them to provide car parking, which if anything will deter cycle use, so this would seem like the least that could be done if the council wants to encourage cycling.

Schools also need secure cycle storage to encourage cycle use. An example of such a facility is shown below.



Broadgreen Intermediate

The single most important factor in encouraging more cycle use is creating a safe cycling environment, that is, one that can be safely negotiated by the most vulnerable users.

Integrate Cycling and Walking into Land Use Planning (page 6)

This issue has a huge impact on future cycle use, as the further people live from their place of work/education/shopping, the less likely they are to bike. There is a need for the council to ensure ongoing housing development in the region does not become further distanced and dispersed from town centres. This has become an essential consideration for council because of demand management requirements in the Land Transport Management Act (LTMA).

There is a need for more than just asking for developers "to incorporate sections of identified cycleway or walkway into their development". Any new development should be required to provide cycle facilities that can contribute to a network. Even if the network does not exist at present, if all developments have this requirement, it will allow a network to evolve over time. A perfect example of where this could make a huge difference to cycle use is in the subdivision development presently taking place in the Hill Street/Champion Road area(we talk further about this in the safe routes to school section).

3.2 Engineering Initiatives

Paragraph (iii)

Again the "integration of cycling and walking into mainstream transportation planning", is an excellent intention and one that is crucial if the objectives of the strategy are to be met, but there is no indication of how this will be achieved. There is certainly no process in place at present to ensure this happens. It seems that TDC do not have a set process that projects must follow from concept phase to construction. There needs to be a process developed indicating each step of the process and stating at which stages

consultation with user groups will take place. It is only by developing formal procedures such as this that it is possible to avoid developments slipping through and possibly creating outcomes that go against this strategy's objectives.

BNB is being increasingly asked by NCC, TDC and Transit to evaluate projects from a cycling perspective. It is good to see the need for consultation being taken seriously, but all too often we are presented with plans (frequently at an advanced stage in the design process) that show a woeful lack of cycle planning and design skills in these projects. While we are happy to give input as end users we should not need to address fundamental planning and design flaws and omissions.

The majority of resealing, road construction and general infrastructure improvements do not get passed by us and we often find opportunities to improve cyclist ease and safety have been lost.

There need to be formal processes set in place to ensure *all* council projects go through evaluation for their impact on cyclists at crucial points of their development. We would suggest that cyclist input is sought at the concept phase and scheme Plan stage (we note that under a new Transfund rule, a pre-construction safety audit is required after the final construction drawings have been completed).

Paragraph (iv)

This is an important objective and it will be necessary if the desired outcomes are to be achieved. Unfortunately, what remains unspecified are the issues of How and by whom auditing of roading projects will be undertaken to "ensure that opportunities to improve conditions for cycling and walking are properly identified and considered"? Again the appointment of a Cycle Officer/Planner, seems the only viable way to meet this goal. A lot of engineers have *some* knowledge of *some* cycling requirements but their predominant training and experience is with roading for motor vehicles. For auditing to be useful to Council, it must bring to bear specific cycling knowledge and expertise regarding the functional and safety needs of users, and current best practice in cycling facility design.

An Urban Area that Satisfies the Needs of Pedestrians and Cyclists (page 7)

- An excellent example of the difference between engineering knowledge relevant to motor vehicles and engineering knowledge relevant to cycling requirements is use of the phrase a "cycle friendly built-out pedestrian crossing". The nature of kerb build-outs to aid pedestrian safety inevitably compromises cyclist safety by forcing the cyclist into the narrower roadspace created, forcing cyclists into a space-conflict with motorised traffic. This hazard is at its least when cars are stopped for pedestrians but at its greatest when vehicles are travelling through the build-out at speed. One possible solution to this would be to allow a cut-out in the kerb extension to allow bikes to pass through, without being forced out into the traffic lane.
- Where kerb extensions are used as a form of traffic calming to "favour pedestrian movements over vehicle movements". This design solution invariably compromises cyclist safety by creating a squeeze point on the road. It is important to ensure that these measures do not reduce safety for cyclists. Again, this is an instance where the input of adequate engineering knowledge relevant to

cycling requirements makes the difference between a project that unnecessarily compromises the safety of some user groups and one that adds safety for all.

Safe Routes to School (page 7)

One of the key community needs identified in this strategy is, "demand for pedestrian and cycling facilities to link schools with residential centres" (page 14). This, along with the suppressed demand shown in the "preferred mode of travel" graph (Figure 4) indicate that this sector of the community has probably the biggest untapped potential to take up cycling if safety and facilities are improved.

As already mentioned Broadgreen Intermediate has attained 65% cycle use. This is largely due to the school's bordering of the Railway Reserve giving the children a safe route between home and school that both parents and children are happy with.

In earlier briefings we had with TDC about this strategy, one idea that was put to us was creating an off-road path running behind Waimea College, Waimea Intermediate, Henley School and Kindergarten. This route between Gilbert Street and Kareti Drive would also provide a great link for Garin College pupils. There is a lot of new residential development occurring in this area and it would seem an ideal time to put in such a facility. This idea does not seem to have survived to this draft of the strategy despite the obvious advantages it would bring. This instance is a good example of the opportunities that have been - and will continue to be - lost to the Council and to its community because a clear awareness of cycling issues and potential (the cycling officer's role) is not integrated into development and infrastructure processes. The loss of such a opportunity, and the set-back this produces to the Council's objectives in this strategy, is particularly regrettable given the Council's own evidence for the desire of many children to cycle to school. Not only would such an initiative release suppressed demand, but the impact would extend to consequent health benefits for children in cycling to school and a corresponding reduction in road congestion, with fewer parents dropping their children off by car. School-commuting congestion in this high volume, high risk area presents a growing safety issue for children.

We would like to see a systematic audit of other schools in the region undertaken to see if similar routes are viable and can be developed - or at least protected for future construction.

Safety improvements (page7)

- We would expect a large percentage of the minor safety budget to be spent on cycling related issues given that it is cycling that is highlighted by LTSA as a major road safety issue in the Tasman District (Road Safety Issues, Tasman District, July 2004).
- The highest priority safety issues identified by BNB for cyclists in the Nelson Bays region of the Tasman District are:
 - 1) Crossing the Waimea River on the Appleby Bridge.
 - 2) Completing the missing link between Nelson and Richmond beside the Richmond Deviation.
 - 3) Providing off-road access to the schools in the Salisbury Road area.

Utilising Paper Roads, Esplanade Reserves and Local Purpose Reserves to develop Off-road Cycleways and Walking Trails (page8)

“Consideration has been given to using paper roads and esplanade reserves in this strategy and future trails will be identified when this strategy is reviewed”. It would seem like a prudent move to earmark all these facilities for future use as trails, to avoid links being lost inadvertently if any of this land is sold off. This situation has already occurred with the selling of much of the old rail reserve through to Kawatiri.

Services are Developed in Accordance with Engineering Standards (page 8)

“Appendix E of the strategy shows types of facilities adopted by Council for new roads and upgrades”. The “typical” roundabout intersection shown (page 62) could hardly be worse from a cycle safety perspective. It is widely acknowledged that roundabouts are the most dangerous form of intersections for cyclists and it is easy to see why, looking at this drawing. In this example all cycle provision ends both before entering and after leaving the intersection and cyclists are left to “mix-it” with motor vehicles. While roundabouts may work well for motor vehicles they are a nightmare to negotiate for cyclists and pedestrians and this is borne out by crash statistics.

Intersections are also listed as a major road safety issue for the Tasman District by LTSA (Road Safety Issues, Tasman District, July 2004), and standards for them need to address this issue as well as meeting the requirements of the LTMA and the goals of this strategy. Clearly that is not the case with the example shown.

3.3 Enforcement Initiatives

The primary focus of police law enforcement with regard to cyclists is helmet and light compliance. While these assist with cyclist safety, they are not the main safety issues and we would suggest the main reason they are the prime focus is because they are easily visible, hence easy to enforce and do not require special effort or resourcing by police.

The main danger to cyclists comes from motor vehicles and driver behaviour, yet there is very little enforcement focused on driver/cyclist interaction. Lack of resources is given as the main reason for this hole in enforcement. There are two things we can suggest that would bring a change to that situation:

- i. That Police resources be aligned to local issues, rather than to the national issues of speeding and alcohol as they are at present. LTSA has listed as the major road safety issues for our region as; cyclists, intersections and loss of control on bends. We ask TDC to lobby LTSA and Police policy-makers to enable police resourcing to reflect local priorities.
- ii. Having police using bikes as part of their work would make them familiar and alert to the issues cyclists face on the road and it would undoubtedly improve driver behaviour toward cyclists, if they knew the bikes they met on the road could have police as riders. We would like TDC in this strategy to encourage the Police to use bikes in their work.

Appendix B

The term "cycleway" is used to describe all cycle facilities shown in this appendix. In standard practice, the term "cycleway" designates a facility that is off-road, whereas an on-road facility is a "cyclelane" – from the users perspective these are very different facilities with very different levels of safety and likely usage. Conflating these terms, and extending the designation of "cycleway" to projects like seal widening - or, in the absence of even this provision, signage - is not only misleading, but it is an inaccuracy that detracts from the council's credibility.

Conclusion

BNB would like to congratulate TDC on this strategy, which with the additions and alterations suggested in this submission, the Strategy will fulfil its potential as a document that serves as the basis for future development for cyclists in the Tasman District, and for TDC to meet its obligations under the Land Transport Act, Road Safety 2010 Strategy, and other national transport, energy efficiency and health strategies.

A summary of the points BNB feel should be addressed in this strategy are:

- An overall need to be bolder in targets, goals and objectives sought for cyclists in this document.
- Setting up processes and communication paths with other sectors that want to encourage active transport to draw on the resources of all involved agencies.
- Setting specific concrete goals rather than making general statements.
- Set the achievable cycle use targets of 15% for the general community and 50% for school children.
- Broaden the objective for increasing cycle use from workers and students to the whole community.
- Set a zero target for injury crashes.
- Ensure facilities built for cyclists will meet the needs of the end users and set up ways to measure this.
- TDC work with NCC and Transit NZ to engage a cycle officer/planner who can work with them across the region. **This is the single most important thing TDC could do to improve the situation for cyclists in the region.**
- Have the majority of education initiatives aimed at where the greatest danger lies for cyclists ... motorists.
- Give some teeth to the notion of encouraging cycling by such initiatives as requiring new commercial buildings to have shower, locker and cycle storage facilities and schools to provide secure bike storage.
- Keep housing development as close as possible to work and shopping centres.
- Require developers to include cycle facilities into all new housing developments
- Create processes (not currently in place) to ensure cyclists are catered for in any resealing, road construction and general infrastructure improvements (cycle officer/planner).
- Ensure designs to enhance pedestrian safety do not compromise cyclist safety.
- Investigate possible off road routes to all schools in the region.
- The highest priority projects for the Richmond area are:
 - 1) Crossing the Waimea River on the Appleby Bridge.

- 2) Completing the missing link between Nelson and Richmond beside the Richmond Deviation.
- 3) Providing off-road access to the schools in the Salisbury Road area.
 - List all paper roads and esplanade reserves for possible use as cycleways.
 - Look for a better model of roundabout intersections than the one in the draft.
 - Work with LTSA and Police to ensure police funds and resources enable local issues to be tackled.
 - Encourage police to use bikes in their work.
 - Ensure the names given to different types of cycle facilities reflect what they actually are ie, 'cycleway' or 'cyclelane'. Seal widening is neither of these.

The suggestions we have made in this submission do not necessarily equate to a large amount of spending by the council, in fact they could save the council money by ensuring money is spent wisely at the outset avoiding expensive remedial work. What these suggestions do require is a different way of thinking and the setting up of formal processes that will allow the vision of this Strategy to be realised.

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