



SUBMISSION

Transit New Zealand

Draft Land Transport Programme 2004/05 for State Highways

Introduction

The Cycling Advocates Network (CAN)¹ is pleased to present this submission on the above Draft SH Programme. The national committee of the group has prepared this submission, with feedback from CAN members. CAN has based its submission on examination of the relevant programme documents for all regions. Some of our local member groups may also be making separate submissions specific to their region. If you require any clarification of the points raised by us, please feel free to contact us as detailed at the end of our submission.

General Comments

CAN is very pleased to see such significant amounts of SH cycling (& walking) projects proposed for the coming few years. By our calculations, over \$12.0 million has been earmarked by Transit for walking & cycling projects through to 2006/07 (and we are aware of other potential future projects not listed).

Our enthusiasm however is tempered by our fears that the actual amount spent will be considerably less than this. This is for a number of reasons:

- Currently Transfund's 10-Year Forecast has allocated only \$3-4 million annually for all walking/cycling projects nationwide. We would hardly expect Transit to "scoop the pool" and use all of the funds for its projects only, when we are well aware of considerable walking/cycling programmes by other RCAs.
- Over \$1.1 million of walking/cycling projects targeted for 2003/04 still remain on the programme, presumably not to be implemented until at least the next financial year.
- Some listed projects are shown to have an indicative BCR of 1.0 or worse (when Transfund requires a BCR of greater than 1), which raises the question of why they are even being considered.
- The proposed work is a considerable step up from the previous investment in SH walking/cycling facilities. We have yet to see evidence of a concerted effort by

¹ More information about CAN is at the end of our submission.

Transit offices to ensure that the additional workload is catered for and given priority (but we are happy to be proven wrong).

We are keen to see Transfund's allocation for walking & cycling considerably increased from its current meagre amount, and we trust that Transit will actively lobby Transfund for more expenditure in this area, by pointing out the scale of their planned programme of works.

Given that at least 10% of all reported SH crash costs are imposed on cyclists and pedestrians², we request that a similar proportion of the general minor safety funding is also directed at projects that benefit these road users.

We expect that all of the more general SH projects will also adequately cater for cyclists as well. Our concern is that most of the major new construction projects have the potential to impose significant severance on cyclists, through facilities like four-laning and large multi-lane roundabouts. Certainly, we would not expect Transit to be upgrading roads without providing safe thoroughfare for cyclists; yet the recent examples of the Wellesley St overbridge in Auckland and Project PJK in Tauranga make us wary.

The descriptions given for each project in the draft programme are generally not very helpful to the lay-person in assessing where exactly the project is and what it involves (even for local cyclists). It would be far more useful to also provide a basic locality description (including Route Positions) and an expanded project precis. Providing the programme as spreadsheet files would also be useful for easy analysis.

Regional Large Project Lists (Attachment A)

It is our contention that many of the proposed "capacity improvement" projects undermine the NZTS Objectives, particularly "improving access and mobility", "protecting and promoting public health", and "ensuring environmental sustainability". Furthermore, we do not believe that many have been properly assessed against other land transport options and alternatives, as required. From our perspective the litmus test is that, at the very least, no project should make cycling conditions worse.

For the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars proposed to be spent, significant investment could be made in improving public transport, walking & cycling routes, and developing travel behaviour programmes, which would have a far more permanent effect on containing unnecessary traffic growth.

With that in mind, we ask that major projects, such as Manukau Extension 6-laning (Auckland), Hewletts Flyover (Tauranga), and Dowse-Petone Interchange (Wellington) be delayed until significant travel demand management programmes have been implemented first.

² LTSA injury crash database, 1998-2002

Regional Walking/Cycling Project List (Attachment F)

The following are specific comments about the walking/cycling projects listed in the draft Programme:

- As stated above, many of the descriptions for specific projects give us no clues whatsoever about the nature or location of the project.
- It is not clear how the various projects have been ranked on their subjective attributes. For example, the Christchurch - Little River Cycleway works are ranked High for Pollution (when the location is rural) but only Medium for Tourism (when its regional potential has already been widely acknowledged).
- We would like to see better evidence to justify the stated BCRs and costs given. Our concern is that, because Transit does not have to co-fund transport projects in the way that other RCAs do, there is little incentive to minimise costs (freeing up more funds for other projects nationwide), nor to adequately evaluate their project proposals and produce robust BCRs relative to the projects of other RCAs.
- We are disappointed at the relatively inconsistent application of funding throughout the country. For example, little or no walking/cycling investment is shown in Whangarei, Rotorua, Taranaki, Palmerston North, Marlborough, Timaru, or Southland. It is also difficult to believe that the top priorities for cycling in Dunedin are three small projects on the road to Port Chalmers, given that most cycling takes place in the city, which is intersected by SH1.
- It is disappointing to see so few of the country's long narrow bridges being dealt with, either under this category or in the general block allocations. CAN has provided information in the past about problem bridges for cyclists³, and we would have expected to see many of those appear on the programme for the coming years. Meanwhile, the programme includes relatively remote and minor bridges, such as the SH12 Waima River bridge (Northland) and SH7 Boyle River bridge (Canterbury), where we are not aware of any significant cycling problems there.

The inconsistencies listed above suggest a lack of strategic planning with regard to identifying and prioritising SH provision for cycling. Whereas other RCAs have to justify their walking/cycling projects as part of a developed strategy, we are not aware of any similar strategy from Transit (or a great desire to tie in with local TLA strategies). From our previous meetings with Transit, there has been the expectation of a SH Cycling Policy in development that would at least provide some general guidance on cycling issues and priorities, but even this is still not yet forthcoming.

We would like to see Transit commission specialist cycling audits of their network, to identify key impediments, pinch-points, and other concerns for cyclists. This is particularly important where there are no or few alternative routes to the SH for cyclists. Following on from this, some funding should be allocated to address any minor problems identified (or maintenance funding used); often it is a lot of little things that make the difference for cyclists. More significant issues can then be properly

³ See previous Transit submissions on our website at www.can.org.nz/activities/transit.htm

investigated and works subsequently programmed. In this way, provision for cyclists on SHs around the country will be more consistent and not driven only by the relative availability and enthusiasm of local cycle advocates and Transit cycling champions.

Glen Koorey

Policy & Technical Advisor

Phone: (03) 331-7504

for

Cycling Advocates Network (CAN)

PO Box 6491; Wellesley St; Auckland

E-mail: secretary@can.org.nz

Website: www.can.org.nz

The Cycling Advocates' Network of NZ (CAN) Inc is this country's national network of cycling advocate groups. It is a voice for all cyclists - recreational, commuter and touring. We work with central government and local authorities, on behalf of cyclists, for a better cycling environment. We have affiliated groups and individual members throughout the country, and links with overseas cycling organisations. In addition, several national/regional/local government authorities, transportation consultancies, and cycle industry businesses are supporting organisations.