

CHAIN LINKS

The newsletter of CAN, the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

December 1997

The National Land Transport Strategy Draft

This document is now out for public comment, submissions close on the 19th December.

Cycle Aware Wellington and Jane Dawson have done a lot of work on this and they would encourage you to make submissions. The NLTS is the government's ideas on how the whole transport network should be developed, and there are certainly areas of concern for cyclists and supporters of other "green" modes.

Copies of the Strategy documents should be available from the MoT (see below). Cycle Aware Wellington have a summary sheet covering some of the issues, which is too long to include here. Contact them at PO Box 11-964 Wellington, Tel 04 385 2557, Email Liz@freemail.co.nz, and I'm sure they'll send you a copy.

If you've time for nothing else a short submission on the need for traffic *management* would be a good idea. To quote from CAW's sheet:

"The implication here is that users' demand for road space will be met by providing roads, not by encouraging them to travel less or use alternative means to travel. Efficient pricing mechanisms *may* be 'the most efficient means to assess supply and demand relationships', but are not relevant if you actually want to manage that demand. And *managing* demand is what is happening more and more in other countries."

You can send your submissions to: Draft National Land Transport Strategy, Ministry of Transport, PO Box 3175, Wellington. Fax 04 498 0648, Email nltssubs@transport.govt.nz. Those of you with email have no excuse!

Planning for and Promoting Cycling in Urban Areas – a personal viewpoint

This was a one day symposium held in Hamilton on October 15th. Cycle advocates, city planners, traffic consultants, and others from all over New Zealand came along and it was a most enjoyable day.

On a personal level meetings such as these are good for perspective and encouragement – its nice to know you're not the only place where narrowing cycling lanes is seen as a safety enhancement, or that people are succeeding in promoting positive transport policies even if your local town seems over concerned with increasing car congestion. Others of course are also encouraged when you relate the successes in your area.

However they go much further than that, they provide the opportunity to listen and learn. Some themes which recurred and stop out this year were:

- *Traffic Planners Should Bike*. Having problems with getting a cycle facility installed, or persuading the planners that an existing one doesn't work to well? Get them on their bikes. This theme was often repeated. If every local planner could be persuaded to walk, cycle, bus, train, and maybe even drive, around their locales I think we'd see some big changes!
- *Traffic Planners Are Not The Enemy*. Its all to easy to see planners with their car-centric planning as the enemy. But what you've got to do is talk to them, show them there are alternatives. Some years ago the private motor car was seen as the future of economic growth, and many planners were trained that way. Work with them, show them cycling is a positive activity. Again this theme was often repeated.

My only question, who is organising the next one?

Nigel Perry, Palmerston North

Palmerston North Adopts AustRoads 14

In October the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC) adopted "AustRoads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14: Bicycles" (AustRoads 14) in response to a preliminary recommendation from PNCC's BikePlan Working Group.

The BikePlan was set up earlier this year to develop a cycling plan for Palmerston North. It quickly became apparent, from both research and public input, that there was an immediate problem over cyclist safety in a number of locations around the City. These included a number of major signalised intersections used by school children, and the whole length of Fitzherbert Avenue.

Many New Zealanders will recall the latter street after it made national news in January with public street protests as the PNCC acted to remove trees to enable four-laning; one of the final acts in a battle that had lasted almost 10 years between the PNCC and various groups of environmentalists, cycle advocates, public transport proponents, traffic management supporters, pro-community lobbyists, etc. As part of this change the old cycle paths, which used to be a segregated facility, were replaced a lane marked mid-block between the new parking bays and inside motor vehicle lane. For some this was the cause for ongoing concern. Particular issue was made with problems for cyclists turning right into and off due to the four-lane layout. Their argument was that this would be a bad situation anywhere, but on a street with probably the highest cycle volumes of any in New Zealand (due to it being the sole route to Massey University and carrying large numbers of schoolchildren as well), clearly unacceptable.

Acknowledging this the BikePlan brought forward the preliminary recommendation to adopt AustRoads 14. These design guidelines cover all aspects of cycle facilities, including the provision of cycle lanes along roads and through intersections, the latter seen as very important in Palmerston North. After the PNCC

adopted the recommendation the Roothing Division moved quickly to re-paint the Avenue with new cycle lanes along its whole length.

Has it worked?

With the paint only just drying as this is written, and the new “box” turns for right turning cyclists not yet implemented, its too early to say. However the reaction has certainly been mixed. As some people were quick to point out AustRoads 14 are “guidelines”, and hence subject to interpretation and adaption. The design and implementation of the new markings has been carried out by the PNCC Roothing Division, some cyclists are pleased with the result, others find it lacking, and some find it more dangerous than before...

The “box” turns, which are yet even implemented, have caused a lot of reaction. Some people feel they relegate cyclists to second-class roads users and are a patch-up solution to a problem caused by the new road design. Others see them as a valuable addition, particularly for those cyclists who feel vulnerable crossing two lanes of through traffic to join the right turn lanes, and then sit in the middle of the junction till the lights change.

The BikePlan is due to make its final recommendations in mid-98, so we do not know what they will be, however they have indicated they will be monitoring the effect of the changes. We'll keep you informed on what they decide, and the success or otherwise of the Palmerston North experiment.

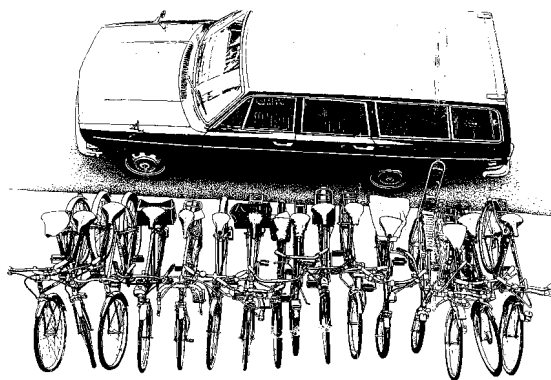
Group Profile: Dunedin Cycle Action Group

Dunedin Cycle Action Group (DUCAG) was formed in 1993 by a small group of enthusiasts mostly connected with the Dunedin Environment Centre. Its uphill battle – what other kind is there? – has consisted of Friday evening Critical Mass rides and representation on local road safety committees.

The group has lobbied the Dunedin City Council quite heavily with mixed results in raising their awareness from roughly below sea level to slightly above. One of our main concerns is the vicious circularity of people being put off cycling by conditions that may not be addressed due to the lack of people cycling.

Networking with other groups around the country would give us the benefit of others' experience and past victories or defeats.

We've no logo for DUCAG, but Gregor Campbell of DUCAG sent along the following picture, which needs no caption...



Editorial

I hesitate to call this an “editorial”, such a grand title does not seem to fit well with somebody who often jokingly claims to be “numerate but illiterate”... However in a moment of guilt over the damage my home town has done to cycling in New Zealand (now is not the time for yet another postmortem on that subject) I volunteered to edit *Chain Links*, so I should introduce myself.

In the day job I'm a computer scientist. I've been involved in local and national cycling issues in NZ over the last 5 years, before that I was a daily London (UK) rider but not directly involved in advocacy. There is no organised cycle advocacy group in Palmerston North, though cycling is high (it seems more cyclists enter Massey University each day than motor cars!). I'm currently on the local council's “BikePlan” as a community representative.

I see the newsletter's main role as distributing news of interest to cycle advocates. For this I need YOU! Please submit news items and articles of what is happening in your part of the country, without them there will be no newsletter (or it will be very boring). Items don't need to be news, those expressing opinion and experiences are of course welcome. It doesn't matter if the items have been published in a local newsletter, as others around the country will probably not have read them. Please also submit items of interest from around the world, we may live on a group of islands but we're not isolated.

I hope the newsletter will be monthly or bimonthly (depends on how much news you send in!). We also plan to make a version of the newsletter available on the World Wide Web – watch the CAN site at: <<http://www.kennett.co.nz/can>> for details.

You can post items to: Chain Links, c/o 17 Snowdon Avenue, Palmerston North; or email N.Perry@massey.ac.nz – electronic submission of items is encouraged.

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