

CHAIN LINKS

March 1998

The newsletter of CAN the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

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The Roothing Advisory Group Report

CAN sent in a submission on the Roothing Advisory Group Report on roading reform. The proposal was that the roading network should be handed over to 5 or 6 roading companies which would be jointly owned by the Crown and local authorities. Though the Report mentions cyclists in passing a couple of times the advisory group clearly did not seriously consider or understand cyclists' needs.

Here's a summary of the main points we made - if you are interested in seeing the full submission please contact Jane (c/o CAN) for a copy.

A major fault of the proposed structure is that it just considers the roading network rather than considering the transport system as a whole. This is an important issue for cyclists since bicycles combine very effectively with trains buses and ferries and cycling is also affected by land use planning decisions to a greater extent than motoring is.

Another major concern is the basis of a user-pays system. We have no objection to road users being asked to pay the full costs (health environmental safety community disruption) of their transport choices but the report does not make it clear that motor vehicle users should pay the full cost of all externalities such as water pollution air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions.

We said that the health costs created by pollution and the costs of increased damage to the ozone layer caused by carbon dioxide emissions must be charged in full as a means of reducing pollution. Cyclists are particularly vulnerable to air pollution since we are right there among the exhaust pipes often breathing deeply. Cyclists should in fact be given a credit for their contribution to easing congestion to reducing the use of fossil fuels and for reducing their use of health services.

We foresaw many problems for cyclists if the user-pays policy is implemented. If cyclists are *not* charged no facilities (or inadequate facilities) will be provided for them on the basis that they are not contributing. If they *are* charged facilities would probably be provided for them according to the amount collected. While this may seem fair on the surface it does not allow for the positive contribution cyclists make to society nor does it go that extra distance to provide well-designed cycle facilities that will attract people out of their cars.

A further concern is that companies which make their money out of motor vehicles using their roads may actively work to discourage cyclists from using 'their' roads in order to maximise space for motor vehicles. Even if they were obliged by law to provide for cyclists it would be very easy for the companies to make the roads unpleasant to use.

2 We pointed out that the provision of transport facilities is a valuable tool by which government can help to shape a sustainable community and that such activities are not compatible with profit-driven companies.

Cycle facilities often require the reallocation of space and therefore rely on sufficient priority being given to cyclists and we suggested that a road-user hierarchy should be adopted.

The advisory group considered that a market-driven approach to roading was the most appropriate but we pointed out that regulations are a useful way of protecting the more vulnerable road users such as cyclists and ensuring that their needs are considered. We asked for a cycle audit process to be applied to all roading schemes and that it should also address issues of encouraging cycle use by improving connections for cyclists. An audit process should also be linked to a set of national standards for cycle facilities.

CAN supported the recommendation that "the rights of all classes of road users should be defined in legislation" but we asked that it include defining the responsibilities as well. Many drivers do not seem to believe that cyclists have any right to use the carriageway and it would be useful to have that point clarified. We also feel it would be useful to define the responsibility of drivers for example to leave a safe distance between themselves and a cyclist when passing.

CAN supported the suggestion that the LTSA should purchase safety services directly from the police since it would help to remove duplications such as both the Police and LTSA developing safe cycling training schemes. But we asked for the

retention of the Safety (Administration) Programme or something similar for the funding of community-initiated safety projects.

Jane Dawson Wellington

[Though submissions on the RAG Report are now closed the intention of the Report is that a Bill should go before Parliament by the middle of this year. You can still write to your local MP if you wish and urge them to vote against the Bill in its present form. Your MP's address is:

MP's name

FreePost

Parliament Buildings

Wellington

No stamp is required. Editor.]

Don't Lose Your Mind - Cycle

When I was at university I did a project on why people travel - what motivates people to pack off to a different place for days or weeks. Package-deals and the Christchurch frost might have something to do with it. But another theory holds that people spend much of their time in a "mindless" state - mindless in that life is routine and expected and people are switched-off from the world around them. They don't get much pleasure from the everyday things. You could probably spot a couple of mindless people if you look around.

So people travel to a different environment to become "mindful" - mindful as in aware of surroundings and getting pleasure from experiencing them. Different scenery people and elevated prices are stimulating and senses are

3 heightened (at those prices they ought to be!). True some people will never snap out of their mindlessness no matter how long they travel but I think you get the point. I thought as I was cycling to work one frosty morning that driving a car to work probably contributes to that mindlessness. A warm steel and plastic cocoon is a really effective shield from the world. And if you are listening to the Regular Guys the Morning Crew or any other catchy bunch of radio characters you won't hear much of your environment either. Take the same route every day and the only daily changes will be the clothes you wear. If you're in uniform the day starts sort of monotonously doesn't it? You notice some interesting stuff from a bike. For a start there are some pretty neat houses tucked away on the sides of our roads - biking past gives a decent opportunity to spot some of these. But if you are not into real-estate you must be amazed by the array of life inside the steel shells. On one ride I saw a kid with the most spectacular green face (assume it was face paint) a parent with a startlingly red face (assume it was the kid) the loudest stereo on the planet in the crappiest car still moving (classical music too - don't get that very often) and somebody who actually gave way to me (amazing). The point is it's hard to be mindless on a bike (yes you may disagree but mindless in the context I am using it). The world is very full if you cycle. And I've found if there aren't that many curious cars to study then... I think. I think mainly about cyclists on the road (its my job after all) - is there room for a cycle lane here? Can this intersection be made cycle friendly? Could I get

away with removing that parking space? Why is that plonker cycling through a red light? Etc. I mainly think about my job but other thoughts occasionally trickle in - I would hate to be too single minded and boring.

The way I see it is that cycling does an awful lot to keep me mindful. Seeing so much feeling all types of weather and thinking as I go keeps me very much here in touch with where I live. My job is to make cycling safer and encourage more people to cycle. I would hate to be mindful and a failure at the job so please do me and yourselves a favour. Try cycling to work.

Tailpiece.

Then again I could be over-thinking the whole thing. My work mate says that cycling to work just wakes him up.

*Alix Newman Cycle Planning Officer Christchurch.
First published in The Press.*

Proposal For A Cycle/Pedestrian Bridge Across The Manawatu in Palmerston North

A proposal for a feasibility study followed by construction of a dedicated cycle/pedestrian bridge across the river has been included in Palmerston North's Draft Annual Plan.

Such a bridge has been requested many times over the years as a way of improving access to the Science Centres and Massey University thus encouraging both cycling and walking. With the recent 4-laning of the road corridor across the river which resulted in the narrowing of cycle facilities the idea has been raised again as people express concern over cycling the route. A

4 dedicated bridge would be a huge improvement for cyclists and hopefully help to reverse the decline in cycling indicated by the census figures. The proposal was placed in the DAP at the request of the BikePlan but didn't find universal favour in the corridors of power - indeed for a short while the item ended up postponed till 99 due to a "clerical error". Local cycle advocates have been out collecting submissions from the public at least 400 hundred were collected in a few short stints! If you're a Palmerston North resident make your views known to PNCC by 6th April.

Nigel Perry Palmerston North

CAN Membership Increasing

With the affiliation of Cycle Aware Wellington in January CAN membership went up by some 90 members! Individual memberships are now coming in steadily too - we now have financial members in Kerikeri Auckland Taupo Palmerston North and Wellington. We look forward to getting formal applications

from the various groups and individuals around NZ who have already been circulated with CAN material.

CAN is first and foremost a *network*- a channel for the sharing of ideas information experience resources...In order to link people together it needs people to link! So...get your application in now! Ask us for extra forms and pass them on to friends and work mates. Tell them about the web site and the benefits of belonging to CAN.

Send In Your Articles/News/Letters!

Please submit news items articles of what is happening in your part of the country "Letters to the Editor" etc.

Currently publication is intended to be bimonthly (depends on how much *you* send in we will go monthly if needed!) and the next issue deadline will be 17thApril.

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.



Cycling Advocates' Network (CAN)
PO Box 11-964 Wellington New Zealand
Tel/Fax: 04-385-2557 Email: can@actrix.gen.nz
WWW: <http://www.kennett.co.nz/can/>

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