

Designing For Cyclists

PLANNING & DESIGN FOR CYCLING - RECENT NZ INITIATIVES

One of the big sticking points to date in getting high-quality cycling facilities in New Zealand has been the lack of technical guidance and training available locally for engineers and planners (certainly, I've tried to help a bit via these articles, but there's only so many issues of *ChainLinks* in a year...). Not since the rather brief (and now outdated) 1985 NRB/UTC *Guide to Cycle Facilities* has there been national guidance on the best approaches to providing for cyclists. Fortunately that is all now changing, and many of CAN's technically-minded members have been at the forefront of these initiatives:

NZ CYCLING DESIGN GUIDE

Many local practitioners use *Austroroads Part 14 (Bicycles)* for design details when developing cycle facilities (hopefully they're using the 1999 2nd edition!). However, not all of it is applicable to NZ (e.g. for legislative reasons), some of it is not world's best-practice, and technically speaking *Austroroads 14* is not approved in this country as a standard document to use.

The agreed solution has been to develop a NZ-specific "addendum" to *Austroroads 14*, known as the *NZ Cycling Design Guide (CDG)*. Sponsored by Transit NZ, on behalf of the Road Controlling Authorities Forum, the CDG has been developed by MWH NZ Ltd (led by Andrew Macbeth) and the draft version has just been out for public consultation (CAN has provided a submission, which is available on our website).

The CDG follows the same chapter and numbering system as *Austroroads 14*, to aid comparison between the two. The idea is that the CDG will be a designer's first "port of call" and in many cases may simply refer the reader on to the relevant section in *Austroroads 14*.

The CDG is likely to introduce quite a few significant changes to the way that many cycle facilities are currently designed in NZ. For example, the draft CDG proposes using an Aussie-style *solid* line to denote the sides of a cycle lane, rather than the fairly weak dashed line commonly used now. There are also new proposed regulatory and guide signs for cycle facilities, partly to eliminate the historic confusion over the "blue cycle disc".

Hopefully the "final" version of the CDG will be out by around October. A significant number of changes and additions will also need to be made to the *Manual of Traffic Signs and Markings (MOTSAM)* before the CDG is officially sanctioned. As an "addendum", the CDG is already pushing 50 pages and it may be that, over time, it is developed into a stand-alone design document separate to *Austroroads 14*.

The draft CDG can still be downloaded from Transit's website. For more information about this project, contact David McGonigal at Transit NZ (<David.McGonigal@transit.govt.nz>, Ph. 04-4966623).

CYCLE NETWORK PLANNING GUIDE

There's not much point designing a high-quality cycling facility if it's totally inappropriate for the situation, or poorly connected to other cycling routes. As part of their 2010 Pedestrian/Cycling Safety initiatives, the LTSA are looking to resolve this by producing a *Cycle Network Planning Guide (CNPG)* to complement the CDG.

Already an international literature review has been undertaken (led by Paul Ryan of Opus), and a contract for the CNPG development is just being finalised. The plan is to have a draft CNPG available for consultation ahead of the NZ Cycling Conference, with final publication by the end of the year, so it's a fairly tight timeframe.

The CNPG will provide best-practice advice for the planning of cycle networks, to ensure that the most appropriate provision for cycling is selected for development. The CNPG is also likely to cover issues such as cycling strategy development, cycle data collection, cycle network plans, and prioritising work programmes.

For more information about this project, contact Tim Hughes at LTSA (<th@ltsa.govt.nz>, Ph. 03-3635643).

FUNDAMENTALS OF PLANNING & DESIGN FOR CYCLING - TRAINING

Consistent national guidelines are one thing but, as many of you will appreciate, they can't turn a poor designer or planner into a good one just by looking up a book. The last link in the chain has been the development of a training course to explain the fundamentals of planning and design for cycling (hence its title). This is a one-day course, targeted primarily at professional/technical practitioners who will be involved in the planning and development of cycling facilities (that's not to say that a few politicians or cycling advocates might not get something out of it too!).

A consortium of cycling "gurus", led by Axel Wilke (City Solutions, Christchurch) has been developing the course material for Transfund NZ, primarily over the past six months. At the start of June, a pilot training course was held in Christchurch to enable the developers to test out the material by presenting it to an audience of interested practitioners. Feedback from this was then incorporated into the final notes provided to Transfund. To ensure industry acceptance, the material has been peer reviewed along the way by Transfund, LTSA and Transit NZ, who have all been very pleased with the outcome.

The one-day course covers essentially the same topics as the two national guidelines mentioned above. Given the relative progress of each project, coordinating details with these documents has been a little difficult, and still needs to be finalised later. However, a lot of the course concentrates on aspects of "good practice" rather than detailed specifics, making it fairly portable regardless of the design/planning standards being used. Course participants receive a set of course notes and presentation slide handouts.

The attention now turns to delivering this course around the country. Currently plans are underway to present seven initial training courses in the main centres during September and October (including a North Shore course the day before the NZ Cycling Conference). A team of five presenters (who, funnily enough, all happen to be CAN members...) will take turns pairing up to present these courses, in association with national training providers NZIHT. Watch for details in the next *ChainLinks* and future *e-CAN* issues.

It is envisaged that further training courses will be held in the future as demand requires, e.g. maybe one per year at a different venue each time. At Canterbury University this month, the course material will also comprise part of a Transportation Masters paper. Of course, there's only so much that can be taught in one day; so maybe in the future a longer "advanced" course might also be developed.

For information about the training course material, contact David Gunn at Transfund NZ (<David.Gunn@Transfund.govt.nz>, Ph. 04-4730220). For details about the forthcoming training courses, contact Lynette Walsh at NZIHT (<lynette@nziht.co.nz>, Ph. 06-7597065).

Some (Very) Relevant Reading

- Austroads 1999, *Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, Part 14: Bicycles*.
- Transit NZ 2003. *Draft Cycling Design Guide*, Jun 2003.
Web: <http://www.transit.govt.nz/technical_information/view_manual.jsp?_WHERE=ManualId%3D32&_UNIQUE_ID=ManualId&_TABLE=Manual>

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