



SPOKES
DUNEDIN

Spokes Dunedin Submission on Dunedin City Council Draft Annual Plan 2011/12

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Introduction

Spokes Dunedin is part of a network of local cycling advocacy groups that constitute the nationwide Cycling Advocates Network (CAN). See www.can.org.nz for more information about CAN.

Spokes aims to help make cycling in Dunedin safe and enjoyable, so that it becomes a preferred mode of travel for a much greater number of residents. Cycling has obvious benefits for participants, including improved physical and emotional health and financial savings. Studies are also showing evidence that traveling to school by active transportation (such as cycling or walking) improves alertness and learning among schoolchildren.

Noncyclists also benefit from an increase in cycling because of the decrease in road congestion, demand for car parking, and air pollution, among other factors. Making Dunedin a more attractive destination for cycle tourism (a rapidly growing sector of the tourism industry) also promises economic benefits for the city.

Spending on active-transport infrastructure is hampered everywhere by the chicken-and-egg conundrum: without large numbers of existing users, planners find it difficult to justify expenditure; but without adequate infrastructure, cyclist and walker numbers remain low. However, the pent-up demand for cycling and walking infrastructure has been amply demonstrated locally by the construction of the footpath and cycleway through Macandrew Bay. Where, a few years ago, only a few hardy residents picked their way over the rocky and narrow road shoulder to the dairy and the beach, the past couple of years have seen the transformation of the waterfront, with heavy use of the path and cycleway by

people of all ages and levels of fitness. More face-to-face contact between residents has strengthened the local sense of community.

We are fortunate this year to have a council whose members recognize the importance of preparing the city for the effects of climate change and rising fossil fuel costs. We are also pleased that many councillors have personally endorsed the International Walking Charter, which advocates the creation of safer streets for active transport users. Developing cycling infrastructure is a crucial part of these efforts. Cycleways and footpaths are not simply pleasant amenities for leisure and tourism: as fuel prices rise and more Dunedin families look for ways to reduce their dependence on private cars, cycle routes to school, work, shopping, and other daily destinations are becoming increasingly vital parts of our transport network.

This submission is generally restricted to specific projects and aspects of the 2011/12 Annual Plan. Other issues will be addressed in the context of the council's longer-range plans. The recommendations below are keyed to the relevant pages of the Annual Plan.

We wish to speak to our submission.

Preferred time: Friday, 6 May, 2011, afternoon session

Recommendations

More Sustainable Transport

- **Develop a sustainable transport network.** In its introduction to the section of the Plan titled "Transport Network," the Council should emphasize the importance of sustainable transport, to encourage Dunedin businesses and residents to prepare for the impacts of climate change and a low-carbon world. (Page 22)
- **Expand cycleways.** The annual plan sets a target of adding only 2 km to the length of existing city cycle lanes for 2011/12. At a time when fuel prices are at record levels and many residents are seeking alternatives to travelling by private car, this extremely limited objective is disappointing. Spokes would like to see plans for local cycleways expedited and expanded, in particular the Harbour cycleway (on both sides of the Harbour and around the stadium) and the proposed Caversham Tunnel route (see below), moving more rapidly towards the target of 100km of safe cycleways set out in the recent report to the Council, "Peak Oil Vulnerability: Assessment for Dunedin." (Page 25)
- **Finalize the Transport Strategy.** Spokes asks the Council to move fast on completing and implementing the Transport Strategy, with strong engagement and in consultation with key stakeholders, to enable key investments in the cycle network to take place and to ensure that investment is not delayed or lost.
- **Develop safe routes to school.** Spokes endorses the efforts of neighbourhood and advocacy groups to promote cycling and walking as preferred alternatives for Dunedin students to get to school. We

urge the council to support these efforts with better cycling infrastructure as well as regulatory changes, such as setting lower speed limits near schools and by-law changes that would allow primary-age children to ride on footpaths to travel safely between home and school.

- **Adopt a mandatory “Complete Streets” policy for transport infrastructure.** Spokes encourages the Council to adopt a Complete Streets policy (see www.completestreets.org), in which the needs of all road users (including walkers, cyclists, and the mobility-impaired as well as motorized traffic) are taken into account at all stages of transportation planning, and to apply these guidelines to the redevelopment of urban areas as well as to new development. Spokes would like to see mention of these principles within the Annual Plan.

Better Integrated Transport Networks

- **Spend a greater proportion of the Council’s minor improvements budget on the cycling network.** The allocation of just over 8% (\$0.6m) of the total \$7.4m over the next ten years is not enough to meet demand. On a related note, Spokes is aware that a number of cycling interventions by the Council need to be carried out under the rubric of minor improvements in order to maximize NZTA subsidy of Dunedin projects. Spokes urges the Council to find creative solutions to installing safe cycleways, especially on busy arterial roads where on-road cycle lanes offer minimal protection from other vehicles.
- **Move ahead judiciously with Rattray Street Crossing.** Spokes is pleased to see the council investigating additions to cycling infrastructure. We support this project provided that it is designed to serve as a useful transportation link (rather than a vanity project) and as long as other, previously identified cycle infrastructure projects continue to receive the support and funding they require. Because both ends of the proposed bridge appear to be placed at busy, complex traffic intersections, we also urge careful attention to providing safe approaches and access to the bridge and ensuring that its users do not find themselves stuck on a bridge to nowhere, unable to cross SH1 and Wharf Street to reach their destinations. Close consultation with all types of potential users will be necessary.
- **Expedite Harbour Cycleway construction.** Spokes is pleased that work is continuing on the extension of cycle and pedestrian routes on the Otago Peninsula along Portobello Road and along SH88 toward Port Chalmers. However, we are disappointed that the total budget has been reduced by \$1.7m to adjust to NZTA funding timeframes. We urge the Council to make completion of these projects a priority, shifting the budget line allocated to 2021 forward if at all possible. Noting that several users have expressed safety concerns about the existing routes, we also recommend more advance consultation with users, and stringent oversight of the construction, to ensure that the design and implementation result in safe, practical routes that meet (or exceed) NZTA standards. (Page 30)
- **Reopen the old Caversham to Kaikorai Valley rail tunnel and Chain Hills tunnel as a walking and cycling track.** Spokes is pleased to see that the Council has allocated money for investigating the feasibility of this in 2011/12, and we strongly urge the council to also allocate funds for initial

development of the tunnel route in this year's plan rather than wait another year before making funds available. Although a cycleway next to the Southern Motorway will serve the needs of some residents in the immediate vicinity, the hill climb and proximity to four lanes of heavy traffic will make it impractical for all but the strongest and most resilient cyclists. The tunnel route promises a much more practical, safe, and enjoyable transit connection as well as an additional attraction for Rail Trail tourists.

- **Include cyclists in plans for Jetty Street overbridge improvements.** Spokes supports the widening of the footpath on the overbridge: the approaches and crossing are currently dangerous and unpleasant without a motor vehicle, and there is no other viable crossing in the vicinity (and will not be for several years even if the Rattray Street bridge is undertaken). We strongly recommend, however, that the project take into account the safety of cyclists as well as pedestrians in the design of ramps, footpaths and kerb cuts, and traffic control.
- **Provide more cycle parking.** Spokes and Council staff have had productive discussions about the design and placement of additional cycle parking throughout the city. We look forward to seeing these plans implemented and urge that the 2011/12 budget include funds to continue these improvements (including providing bike parking at the new stadium). Spokes would like to see the inclusion of bike parking, and related expenditure, in the Transport Networks section of the Annual Plan. (Page 26)

Improved Health and Lifestyle

- **Keep John Wilson Ocean Drive car-free.** Spokes opposes the reopening of John Wilson Ocean Drive to vehicle use. In its current state, the drive offers a unique opportunity for residents (especially families with children and those with limited mobility) to enjoy a paved ocean promenade free from the noise, hazards, and pollution of motor vehicles. The current position of the bollards (contrary to many of the objections raised) leaves most of the road accessible to cars, provides access for the disabled, and also offers ample opportunities for parking on the drive. Further expenditure simply for a slight expansion of vehicle access and parking is not a sensible use of public funds. If, however, the Council goes ahead with Option 3 of the plan for the drive, vehicle access and parking must be designed to avoid disadvantage and danger to other users. Spokes urges consultation with active transportation groups on this issue. (Page 86)
- **Provide safer cycle routes.** Spokes is glad to see that the Council plans for a decrease in the number of casualties as a result of accidents between cyclists and vehicles but can find no discussion of how this objective will be achieved. Although on-road cycle lanes have recently been added to a number of streets in Dunedin, their implementation is inadequate for heavily travelled roads. Many residents (even very experienced cyclists) are reluctant to use the cycle lanes on SH1, for example, as they are too narrow to offer protection from large, heavy vehicles on one side and the opening doors of parked cars on the other. Spokes urges the Council to ensure that all such lanes conform to the NZTA minimum width of 1.5 meters, to construct wider lanes whenever feasible, to use more visible marking of lanes, and to explore alternatives for future projects, such as cycleways that are physically separated from footpaths, parked cars, and roadways. (Page 23)

- **Reprioritize recreation spending to focus not only on facilities for team sports, such as sports fields, but also on space for less structured, family-friendly outdoor activities, such as cycling and walking.** Spokes urges the Council to consider redistributing some of its “Sport, Recreation and Leisure” spending to extend the cycle and walking network for the city. (Page 81)
- **Acknowledge that public health encompasses not only water treatment systems but also healthy lifestyles and active modes of transport.** Studies of interventions by the public sector to improve health (particularly heart disease, onset of Type 2 diabetes, and obesity) through encouraging active transport modes show that it can significantly alter a population’s health profile. It has been good to see the Council working to develop safe and healthy ways for the children of Dunedin to get to and from school, and Spokes would like to see this attention extended to all Dunedin’s residents for their day-to-day journeys. (Page 41)

Thank you for your consideration of this submission.