

CYCLE CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES



I am delighted that cycle safety is the theme for Kidsafe Week 2003.

In 2002, the government released the *New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS)*. Its vision:

By 2010, New Zealand will have an affordable, integrated, safe, responsive and sustainable transport system.

Cycling is an important contributor to that vision.

The government is, however, aware that cycling is in decline – particularly among the young. This is of real concern, not only because of what it means for children's mobility, but also because children are the future of cycling. Without young cyclists, we are far less likely to have teenagers and adults who cycle. Nor are we likely to have adult drivers who understand the needs of cyclists on the road. We need both of these conditions for cycling to have a healthy future.

This makes the checklist very important. Safety is probably the biggest factor for parents when they decide whether to encourage or even allow their children to cycle. Councils have a key role to play in addressing parents' safety concerns.

Children need safe places to cycle. They need places they can learn to ride in safety when they are younger. They need neighbourhoods where they can have

cycling adventures with their mates when they are a little older. And they need roads they can use to cycle safely to school. This is a challenge as roads become busier and more difficult to negotiate.

Some councils are doing very good work to meet this challenge. In my own electorate the Upper Hutt City Council has a long record of consulting schools, cycle commuters and recreational cyclists about their needs, with a view to enhancing facilities and encouraging safe cycling behaviour. Others have only recently begun to think about what may be required. So this cycling checklist with its practical approach and examples of best practice for safer "on" and "off" road cycling is timely.

As Minister of Transport I recognise that central government must also do its part. In 2002 we introduced funding for cycling and walking through the National Land Transport Fund. We have also prioritised pedestrian and cycle safety in the *Road Safety Strategy to 2010*. And we have recently released for consultation a draft strategy to increase walking and cycling in New Zealand.

Working together, we can improve safety for young cyclists in our communities, and create a healthier future for cycling in New Zealand. I am pleased to lend my support to the *Cycling Checklist for Territorial Local Authorities*.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Swain'.

Paul Swain
Minister of Transport

INTRODUCTION

Central government has recognised the importance cycling can play in our future transport systems (*New Zealand Transport Strategy*). As a pollution free form of transport, cycling provides an environmentally friendly way of getting around – while easing traffic congestion and parking problems. Both nationally and locally cycling has also been identified as a mode of transport which is physically active – providing public health benefits for New Zealanders.

If, as a society, we are to encourage cycling as a form of transport in the future, it is important that the children of today learn how to cycle safely and are provided with opportunities to gain skills which will assist them as they move around our community. It's just as important that the environments provided for child cyclists, as well as adults, are safe, easily accessible and integrated into public transport systems.

There is little doubt that child cyclists *are* vulnerable to injury in our communities where the “car is king”. The statistics for bicycle related injuries to children are concerning. On average five to six of our child cyclists die every year and around 600 children are admitted to hospitals with injuries sustained while cycling.

The question we would like to address in this resource is how can we go about *reducing* bicycle related injuries to children *without* compromising their rights as cyclists? The role of councils working in partnership with the community to create and promote safe cycling environments can be critical in successfully achieving *both* a reduction in injuries *and* an increase in cycling.

THE BIG PICTURE

So What Can Councils Do?

Many councils have already established positive cycle-related practices and policies and we have included some of these strategies as case studies in this resource. One approach is to look at the many ways TLAs can be involved in the promotion of child cycle safety. These can be grouped under four broad headings:

- Research and planning processes;
- Land use planning;
- Urban design and engineering;
- Education, information and advocacy.

Using these headings we have developed a series of questions and a checklist that you can use both as a means of assessing where you are now and as a basis for further action.

Some of the suggestions lend themselves to short term action - others to the medium or longer term. Some ideas will be of benefit to cyclists of all ages including children, while others will relate more specifically to child cyclists.

Child Friendly Cities

Have we adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has our council made a commitment to developing Child and Youth Friendly Communities consistent with UNICEF's “Child Friendly Cities”.

<http://www.childfriendlycities.org/>
<http://www.hri.org/docs/CRC89.html>

RESEARCH

To ensure our council is informed about the issues and includes the needs of child cyclists as part of the policy making mix we have:

- Established the numbers of children using bikes in our area and where they ride;
- Estimated the *potential* numbers of child cyclists i.e. kids who would cycle if the roading environment was safer;
- Identified any “black spots” or hazardous areas where kids are injured;
- Designated responsibility for cycling to a particular position in council;

RESEARCH AND PLANNING PROCESSES

DUNEDIN CYCLING STRATEGY

The vision that "Dunedin is a safe and pleasant city for cycling, where people of all ages choose to cycle for transportation, access, health and recreation", was behind the city's Cycling Strategy, adopted by Council in January 2003.

The two major desired outcomes of the city's Cycling Strategy were;

- (1) Improved cycle safety,
- (2) Increased participation in cycling.

In order to achieve these, Council engaged a consultant expert in engineering for cyclists to write the draft strategy. It also established CIG (Cycling Interest Group) as part of the Strategy's development process.

Representatives from Spokes (Cycle Advocacy Group), Otago Primary Schools Principals' Association, tertiary institutions, AA, Heavy Truck representatives, LTSA, Transit, ACC, Injury Prevention, Sport Otago, Push Play, and Dunedin City Council departments were invited to be part of this group, which was intimately involved in development of the final Cycling Strategy.



The Council's Pedestrian Strategy was concurrently developed and followed the same format and process.

While the Cycling Strategy provided ideals and objectives for meeting the overall vision, Dunedin City Council and CIG have begun work on a cycling implementation plan, translating ideals into improved conditions for Dunedin cyclists. The implementation plan outlines projects, tasks, and the order they will be completed for maximum effect. One action within the plan is the provision of one course of cycling safety instruction for all Year 6 to Year 8 school students by the time they leave Year 8.

The Dunedin Cycling Strategy can be downloaded from the City of Dunedin Website:
<http://www.cityofdunedin.com/cycling>

For further information contact
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PLANNING PROCESSES

- Networked and consulted with groups and agencies promoting safe cycling;
- Enforced any existing laws that protect the safety of cyclists;
- Developed a local bike plan or cycle strategy with specific and achievable targets, and regularly reviewed/updated this cycle strategy
- Linked our cycle planning into the broader context in which cycle activities are planned (e.g. annual plans, education, health and leisure strategies)

LAND USE PLANNING

Land use practices, patterns and policies can create environments that are supportive to child cyclists both "on road" and "off road". TLAs can, for example, have a crucial role in creating environments where children can learn, practice and enjoy riding in safe off-road settings.

Which of the following do we have or are we planning for?

- Specific areas set aside for recreational cycling and safe off-road learning environments?
- Continuity and links between cycle ways/lanes?
- Cycle friendly links with public transport?
- Creation of long distance cycle routes (e.g. cycle maps across the city)?
- Activities planned and located so that dependence on the car is lessened?

URBAN DESIGN ENGINEERING

The layout and design of streets and other public spaces can provide a safer roading environment for cyclists.

Which of the following do we have or are we planning for?

- Traffic calming schemes that allow for cyclists needs e.g. chicanes at the kerbside, raised reflectors on the edge of the footpath rather than the edge of the road?
- Cycle lanes/cycle-ways that are well designed and well maintained on routes with heavy and fast moving traffic e.g. cycle signage and road markings?
- Regular maintenance and hazard checks of the roading environment?
- Provision of dropped kerbs and ramps when there are changes (such as drains) in the road?
- When space is limited shared pedestrian/cyclist spaces are considered?
- Cycle friendly intersections e.g. cyclist triggered light controls?
- Secure and safe bicycle parking facilities at high use areas in the community?
- Cycle supportive road schemes and subdivisions?

LAND USE PLANNING

TRAVELWISE TO SCHOOL - VAUXHALL SCHOOL AND NORTH SHORE CITY COUNCIL

Vauxhall School, situated in the suburb of Devonport on Auckland's North Shore, launched the Travelwise project in February 2002. The immediate aim of the project was to develop a school travel plan. Both children and parents were surveyed on how children travelled to school at the time and how they would like to travel if alternative systems of transport were available.

The results for child cyclists were very interesting. While only 7% of children cycled to school at the time the survey was undertaken, some 50% said they would like to. Two thirds of parents would not allow their children to cycle to school by themselves because they felt there were insufficient safe places to cycle and a dearth of cycle training in schools.

A group of representatives from the school, the Board of Trustees, parents, the Devonport Community Board, and North Shore City Council, examined the results of the survey and produced a School Travel Plan from this. Assistance was provided by the Council in the form of road improvements, provision of alternative facilities such as cycle lanes and support for funding applications.

The criteria for the continuing success of Travelwise to School includes; increased numbers of children walking or cycling to and from school in the next year and a reduction in car use.



For further information contact Gill Weyman, Road Safety Co-ordinator, North Shore City Council, Ph (09) 488-7128, gill.weyman@northshorecity.govt.nz

URBAN DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

NELSON'S RAILWAY RESERVE CYCLEWAY/WALKWAY

The Nelson Railway Reserve cycle-way/walkway is one of the best examples of an off-road cycle-way and walkway in the country with up to 700 users each day.

Nelson City Council staff created the cycle-way/walkway by utilising an abandoned 20 metre wide railway corridor, and transforming it into a landscaped park with over 25 connections to surrounding roads. The area is 3.7 km long with over bridges, level road crossings and underpasses. It comprises a 3m wide two-way combined asphalt path with level grass berms either side, allowing groups of pedestrians and cyclists to pass easily. Where the path crosses low volume local roads priority is given to cyclists (who make up 6% of commuters) and pedestrians, with cars on a give-way control.

Schools adjoining the area have been successful in encouraging children to cycle to school – with one third now biking. This has resulted in the unusual problem that they have insufficient secure cycle parking. While there was some initial concern from residents whose properties adjoined the cycle-way/walkway about property security, properties backing onto the reserve are now sort after and have experienced a capital gain.

The cycle-way/walkway was built over three years, between 1996 and 1999, at a cost of \$450,000 (excluding land). Nearly half of the project's funding came from Transfund NZ.

Nelson City Council Roding Engineer Peter Kortegast says the project's success is due to the vision of Nelson City Councillors, who supported it and saw it grow to become an integral community asset.

Also refer: Nelson Cycleway Strategy 2001

For further information contact Peter Kortegast, Roding Engineer, Nelson City Council, Ph (03) 546-0257, peter.kortegast@ncc.govt.nz

EDUCATION INFORMATION ADVOCACY

Initiatives need to create a balance between promoting the benefits of cycling for children and meeting their safety needs. It is also important to achieve a balance between promoting the needs of child cyclists and meeting those of other road users.

Which of the following do we have or are we planning for?

- Identification and promotion of safe access routes for cyclists to local facilities such as swimming pools, libraries, shopping and entertainment centres?
- Support for current campaigns or programmes that target child cycle safety and skills e.g. those coordinated by the NZ Police, Bike Wise and Cyclesafe?
- A campaign or programme that targets parents on cycle safety?

- Promotion of cycling as a healthy and environmentally friendly means of travel?
- Coordination of a 'share the road' campaign aimed at encouraging drivers and cyclists to respect each other's rights and accept their responsibilities as road users.
- Raising the profile of cycling with updates in the council newsletter or occasional articles in local newspapers?
- Campaigns that increase awareness amongst drivers of the safety needs of child cyclists?
- Advocacy at a national level for better funding/higher profile for cyclists as legitimate road users?
- A Safe Routes to School programme for identified schools?
- Involvement in Bike Wise Week?

EDUCATION INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY

To mark Bike Wise Week in February 2003, the Auckland City based group PITA (Preventing Injuries Through Action) organised a radio promotion on cycle safety for Pacific families. The promotion ended with a 'twilight' bike skills event at a central park where Pacific families put theory into practise. The Auckland City Council Events team worked with PITA to coordinate this.

Held at Western Springs Park, the event attracted more than 300 people – half of whom participated in organised cycling activities. Organisers provided a skills course for cyclists aged under five years, and one for school aged children. The latter provided children with the opportunity to develop their turning, stopping and road skills, and was supervised by cycling experts. The third cycling activity was a group ride along the newly opened North Western Cycle Lane, supervised by police. The ride promoted the cycle-way and cycling as a mode of transport.

Cycling retailers attended the event, checking cycles, cycle helmets, and making on-the-spot repairs to bikes. Music prizes and entertainment added to the evening, which attracted a large number of families, all keen to participate in cycling.

Spokesperson Elena Smith said the event provided a fun family focused event for teaching good cycle skills and promoting safety.



For further information please contact Elena Smith, Regional Public Health Promotion Adviser, Ph (09) 845-0955, email elenas@adhb.govt.nz



Caring for Young Families - Whanau Awhina

