

NEW ZEALAND CYCLING CONFERENCE REPORT BACK

1. Purpose of Report

To report back to Councillors on the 2005 NZ Cycling Conference.

2. The Conference

The biennial NZ Cycling Conference was held in Hutt City in October 2005. Alick Shaw, Paul Barker and myself attended this conference. It is a biennial conference, alternating with the NZ Walking Conference. Mayor David Ogden enthusiastically opened the conference, stressing health benefits of an active lifestyle, and Hutt City was the main sponsor.

3. Key Messages

The 2005 NZ Cycling Conference was held at a time when cycling has begun to return the mainstream. It is now accepted as fundamental to achieving the sustainability goals of the NZ Transport Strategy and the Land Transport Management Act 2003. Cycling increasingly features in local strategies designed to improve the sustainability of urban and rural land use. The new national walking and cycling strategy "*Getting There - by foot, by cycle*" is underpinned by a plan to boost the promotion of cycling and teaching of bike skills, and identify the most effective means of encouraging people to cycle day-to-day.

Sessions included:

- reviews of cycle strategy best practice, using international and New Zealand examples – apparently Wellington City didn't reply to the research on which Councils had Walking or Cycling strategies. AT least Wellington Region's walking and cycling strategies were both considered good practice. Andrew Macbeth's work "NZ Walking & Cycling Strategies – best practice" is available at www.bikenz.org.nz. No doubt this will be drawn on in the work we are now undertaking in the TDM area.
- progress on New Zealand's national walking and cycling strategy – Harry Duynhoven MP spoke about the need to get more short trips made by cycling and walking and noted the importance of the Urban Design Protocol. He also noted that in Denmark, Holland and many parts of Europe, cycling is regarded as the norm, whereas in NZ it's an aberration.

- health, economics and cycling
- Active Friendly Environments and urban form
- rail trails, and mountain biking in national parks
- the design, implementation and efficacy of travel behaviour change programmes, including school travel planning and safer routes programmes
- is our risk averse society spelling the end of cycle events? And what role do events play in boosting daily cycling activity?
- predictive modelling to identify road design that minimises injury
- design criteria for intersections and roundabouts
- on- or off-road cycling – which is better?
- cyclists' legal rights and responsibilities
- Paul Barker presented on Safer Roads.

The keynote speaker, Danish engineer and senior transport planner Troels Andersen, focussed on his experience as project manager for the Odense cycling project. From 1999 to 2002, Odense was the official National Cycle City of Denmark. This city was interesting because it is comparable to Wellington in size, with 185,000 inhabitants. In 1976 there was a Master Plan and some dedicated budget, in 1979 Safe Routes to School began but it was a European Union initiative that really made the difference. There were three components;

Room (physical improvements),

Rights (rules for all road users that benefited cyclists)

Marketing (Campaigns to promote cycling) – we saw some very clever billboards showing cycling as an eminently desirable means of getting around.

The aim was as much improvements in cyclists' perceptions as objective improvements in speed or safety. At T-junctions a lane for cyclists meant they had a "green wave" where motorists had to stop.

In late August 2005 Odense Cycle City started a thorough check-up of 280 kilometres of cycle lanes. The little checking Smartcar searches the paths for holes, bumps etc. by using a laser. Bumps are registered and put into digital maps. In this way every stretch can be classified. The checking car and the results can be used to prioritise the financial means when a stretch needs new asphalt. This is a huge difference to our way of assessing road smoothness which focuses only on the car paths and leaves, for example, the edge of Jervois Quay and the Basin Reserve lumpy and covered with gravel respectively, just where a cyclist goes.

Route planners, 2000 new cycle parks, signage for commuter routes and painted advanced stop boxes were also relatively low cost ways of promoting cycling. Odense promoted the use of cycle trailers for parents, park and cycle using folding bikes and They succeeded in increasing cycling by 20% in three years so a quarter of all trips are cycled. Note they have permanent cycling monitoring so the statistics are not so affected by one day's variable weather. More than half of the new cyclists used to drive their car.

Cycle accidents decreased by 20% in the same period. They estimate that savings on health are double the size of investments made.

Please visit www.cykelby.dk - an English language version of their website detailing initiatives and successes.

4. Material for Circulation

The BikeNZ website has most papers available at <http://www.bikenz.org.nz/Article.aspx?ID=21020>

I attach a page with Cycle Advocates Network suggestions on how Councils can improve conditions in their districts.

5. Benefit to Council/Elected Members and Subsequent Action

It was important to have Wellington City Council represented but we came in for some criticism of the operational and planning state of affairs regarding cycling in Wellington. There was also incredulity that the Hutt/Wellington cycleway is still only one way and pretty bad at that – although the worst parts are not WCC responsibility, it reflects on us. A lack of attendance would have signalled we really didn't care.

I'm pleased to note that our Transport Strategy, especially Travel Demand Management and the policy work that underpins it, the draft performance measures and our recent support of Bikewise Breakfast and Cycle-mad City show an increase in our commitment to this important travel mode.

In 2007 I hope we for some presentation slots in the body of the conference to showcase innovation in the Capital.

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