

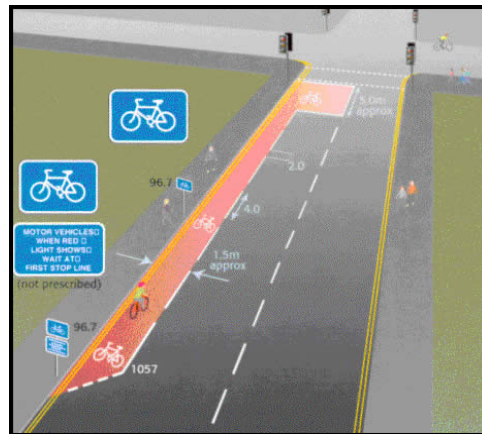
6. Safety

STRATEGIES:

- Apply best practice cycle design standards to cycle networks and to cycle facilities
- Maintain cycle infrastructure to a high standard
- Initiate and support education and training programmes that improve cycle safety

6.1 Design Standards

As a guideline, the North Shore City Council uses the cycle design standards for on-road cycle lanes as provided for in the Transit New Zealand Manual of Traffic Signs and Markings (MOTSAM) and the Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice, part 14.¹ However, it is recognised that there are shortcomings both with current design standards and their application. In response to this, Transit New Zealand has recently engaged consultants to undertake a major review of cycle design standards. New National Cycle Design Guidelines are expected by early 2004 and are to replace the current MOTSAM standards.



Guidelines and standards alone do not ensure safe on-road solutions for cyclists. Site-specific factors such as road geometry, available road space, parking and the requirements of other road users need to be considered. Particular issues are the need in some locations to share bus and cycle lanes, limited width of existing road reserves and difficult intersection treatments.

Sharing Lanes

The proposed citywide strategic cycle network will be predominantly made up of on-road cycle lanes. However, bus lanes are also planned for some of these routes, as are combined bus and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. In many of these instances, not all of the competing demands for road space can be easily accommodated separately because of space constraints or high costs. In these cases, one option is to share lanes with cyclists, buses or even HOV's.

Where feasible to implement, caution is required in sharing cycle lanes with buses and HOV's. Many cyclists are uncomfortable in sharing lanes and see it as a safety risk. Such risks are realised if there is not good road design. This strategy suggests the following guidance:

- Shared lanes will be considered only where separate facilities **cannot** sensibly exist
- Shared lanes should be '**overly wide**' to offer a greater degree of safety to cyclists. A minimum lane width of 4.2m is proposed
- Local bus companies must adopt a **safety awareness programme** for bus drivers highlighting cyclist safety
- Where HOV lanes are combined the lanes must be **low speed**. It is proposed that 50 km/ph is the maximum speed limit that should be adopted on such a scheme.

¹ Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice – Part 14 Bicycles, Austroads, second Edition 1999



ACTIONS:

- Once the National Cycling Design Standards are completed, revise cycle infrastructure standards and guidelines to be applied on the North Shore, and
- Review procedures to ensure that developers and the Council implement best practice standards when providing cycle infrastructure.

6.2 Asset Maintenance and Safety Audits

To ensure that elements of the cycling network continue to offer good service to cyclists, it is necessary to both audit the facilities and carry out regular maintenance checks. A route audit will ensure that the facilities remain appropriate to modern standards, continue to offer safety benefits and take account of the changing road and/or traffic environments. A regular maintenance programme will ensure a facility is offering the high level of service for which it was originally designed.

Safety audits of works involving on-road cycle infrastructure design and construction will need to ensure that cycle guidelines are applied appropriately. Safety for cyclists will be taken into account during all processes of road works from planning to implementation and during road works.

Even if cycle infrastructure is built to a high standard, over time deterioration of cycle infrastructure can impact on the safety of cyclists. Conditions that are of minor priority to car drivers can vitally affect the safety of cyclists. For example:

- Accumulation of debris, such as glass and stones, on cycle lanes
- Obliteration and deterioration of road markings
- Overhanging vegetation
- Lowered water grates after resurfacing
- Obstacles
- Edge gaps and sharp drops at edge after resealing
- Potholes or broken seal.



Comments in the "Bike-It!" Cycling Survey as well as feedback from cyclists indicates concerns over the standard of maintenance for on-road cycle lanes and suggests that there is room for improvement. Less is known about cyclist concerns about the condition of cycle paths, but observation of this infrastructure indicates potential for improvement. The poor condition of painted cycle markings on some shared footpaths is one example.



The application of appropriate cycle design standards needs to form the basis for auditing existing cycle infrastructure. An audit is best undertaken once new cycle design standards have been adopted as a result of the current Transit New Zealand sponsored review.



ACTIONS:

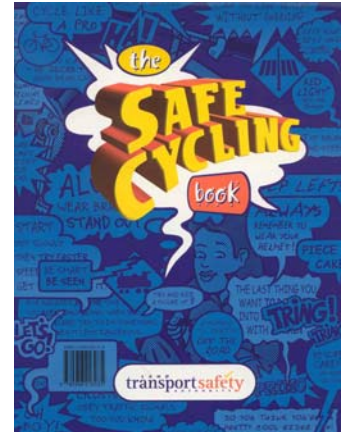
- Audit on-road cycle facilities and develop programme for upgrading and improvement
- Review maintenance procedures to ensure that cycle infrastructure continuously maintained to a high standard.

6.3 Traffic Management and Road Safety

Traffic Rules

Traffic rules are largely set by Government and administered by the New Zealand Police Department. Responsibility for enforcing parking rules is the main role of local authorities. Cyclists must obey the general road rules that apply to all road users. Specific rules that apply to cyclists include the requirements to wear a suitable helmet and operating using front and backlights at night. Restrictions for cyclists are: cycling on footpaths, carrying another person on the handlebars or bicycle bars and riding across pedestrian crossings.

Local authorities can also set a limited range of rules and can influence road safety through the way they manage traffic. Permissible rules are authorised under the Transport Act, but it is up to individual local authorities as to how these are applied to achieve specific outcomes. Rules can relate to parking. Traffic management devices that influence safety include road markings, signs and road layouts.



Draft Land Transport (Road User) Rule

The Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) is in the process of reviewing the Road User Rule. The proposed Road User Rule covers requirements that road users must adhere when using the road networks. Under this draft Rule a proposal has been drawn up to improve the rules for cycle lanes. Existing regulations are not clear about the duties of drivers where cycle lanes are marked and have lead to increasing concerns about cyclist safety. The proposal put forward in the Rule is:

- To include a cycle lane within the definition of a lane
- To prohibit driving along a cycle lane
- To permit drivers to cross a cycle lane when proceeding to turn or in the process of parking
- To prohibit parking or standing on a cycle lane.

North Shore City Council expects that the above will contribute to improve the safety for cyclists using cycle lanes.

Road Safety Plan

The Road Safety Plan for North Shore City Council is currently in development. The Road Safety Plan will set out actions to achieve road safety goals for the North Shore, including those for cyclists. One of the actions proposed by the plan will be the investigation of the accident causes and the subsequent development of targeted programmes for improvement.

Actions to improve cyclist safety will be incorporated in the Road Safety Plan and any new safety initiatives arising from the Road Safety Plan will be incorporated in succeeding Strategic Cycle Plans.



6.4 Safety and Education

Education and training for children and adults is an essential element of road safety and for promoting cycling. So too is the education of motorists to be mindful of cyclists.

Safety education programmes for cycling focus on:

- Providing information on road rules;
- Improving road skills;
- Developing confidence; and
- Creating awareness of safety risks.

Safety education and training is undertaken by a number of agencies, including: New Zealand Police, Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA), Accident Compensation Corporation and Auckland Regional Council. The LTSA funds two road safety coordinators employed by the North Shore City Council. These coordinators work on road safety programmes with schools and communities and liaise with other coordinators in the region through the regional RoadSafe group. In addition, the North Shore City Council's road safety coordinators participate in the Regional Road Safety Council, which is the principal forum for agreeing regional road safety strategies.



Cycle Education Programme at Schools

The Police Education Officers conduct a cycling skills programme for primary years 5 and 6, which caters for 10 year olds and those about to turn 10. The programme is aimed at developing skills and competency for cycling on the road, and includes control of the bicycle, hand signalling and understanding of the road rules. If deemed competent they are issued with a "cycle licence" which allows them to cycle to school, where this is in line with the school road safety policy. Children are also issued with a "warranty of fitness" sticker for their bicycle as long as both the bicycle and their helmet passes the police check. The Police Education Officers also work with children as young as 7 to develop their cycling skills but do not allow them to have a cycle licence.

Education programmes or courses to teach adult cyclists cycling competency skills need to be investigated, and if practical, developed. The programmes could be conducted at tertiary institutions, large organisations and community groups².

Safety promotions should also be aimed at motorists to demonstrate how to share the common road space, including indicating, and how to behave around cycle lanes and at intersections. Illustrations of cyclist speeds and likely manoeuvres should form part of the package.

² Model Cycling Strategy, Environment Canterbury, December 2002



Enforcement to improve the safety of cycling should be focused equally on aggressive behaviour by motorists and unsafe cyclist behaviour, such as cycling at night without cycle lights, and non-compliance with current cycle helmet law.

Driver Improvement Programme

An initiative of this strategy is to investigate, in partnership with the LTSA, a Driver Improvement Programme (DIP). Such a safety education programme targets unsafe drivers who are identified due to their having speeding, drinking or accident convictions. Targeting poor drivers and educating them in safer driving including cyclist safety has been a successful initiative in the UK where it contributes to overall improvements in road safety. Drivers are given a choice of a standard fine and penalty points or a fine and DIP. These programmes are run on a no cost basis to local councils there.

Citywide Cycling Safety Campaign

Cycling in the city is perceived by many people as a high-risk activity and safety issues have been recognized as a key factor for cycling (see also chapter 4). The Transport and Roading Department would like to initiate a Cycling Safety Campaign to address cycling safety issues including the perception of danger. The Campaign will focus on all road users to create more awareness about cycling and its specific characteristics in an urbanized environment.

ACTIONS:

- Support the police education officers to develop their cycling skill programme with Intermediate years 7 and 8
- Develop cycle training courses for inexperienced adult cyclists
- Investigate the opportunity of a Driver Improvement Programme in cooperation with the LTSA
- Initiate a citywide Cycle Safety Campaign
- Fund and employ additional staff posts to promote cycle training and safety.

