



Making Christchurch a city for people

Central Christchurch has a number of positive features but much can be done to make this part of the city more people friendly.

This is one of the key findings in the *Public Space Public Life Study* by Danish urban designer Jan Gehl, commissioned by the Christchurch City Council in 2009 to look at how people used the Central City's spaces and streets.

Gehl Architects analysed Central City streets and say 70% are designed for cars and 30% for people. They suggest there are a number of opportunities for the city to provide a better balance between pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and motor vehicles.

The study identifies a range of measures that could be implemented including longer pedestrian crossing times at traffic lights, wider footpaths, more seats, street trees and public art. Gehl also recommends slowing cars down to 30km/h in some parts of the Central City. The study proposes improving the quality of public spaces by having more activity and interest in buildings around the space and having more residents living in the city – which is consistent with the UDS.

For public transport, Central Christchurch's free bus service – the Shuttle – was praised as being a great asset for the Central City as it offered an easy, dependable and free way of getting about the city. The Study suggested Christchurch extend the Shuttle network to reach other parts of the Central City and possibly link with future park and ride facilities.

A transport interchange on the edge of the Central City core, dedicated bus lanes and the long-term replacement of buses with light rail are also recommended.

Gehl Architects supported the extension of the tram system and said if this were implemented along with reduced ticket prices, and letting the tram form part of the public transport network within the Central City this would be a good initiative to reduce traffic in the Central City.

Cycling is seen as a desirable mode of transport, but Christchurch was seen to have made “a half-hearted gesture” at establishing a cycle network. Gehl Architects promote establishing continuous cycle routes, giving cyclists a head start at traffic lights, making provision for safe and convenient cycle parking and introducing separate cycle ways to make Christchurch a cycle-friendly city.

For Christchurch to have a strong heart, the city needs to put the needs of people first, developing a Central City where there is a balance between pedestrians, cycles, public transport and motor vehicles.

Christchurch City Council have adopted *A City for People* action plan for the implementation of the Public Space Public Life study. It is a 12-year programme of actions setting out investigations, concept development, consultation and consideration in future LTCCP's before any of the new initiatives are implemented. A future edition of this newsletter will look at this work in more depth.

For more information the Public Space Public Life Study is online at www.ccc.govt.nz/jangehl

Metro puts bike racks on more buses

Environment Canterbury has increased the number of buses with bike racks following successful trials. The expanded service commenced in December 2009 and includes 12 Metro routes involving hills or significant distances around Christchurch. Two of the routes are in Waimakariri District and help strengthen transport connections to Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Waikuku.

Cr Carole Evans, Environment Canterbury public passenger transport committee chair, says the feedback from the community about bike racks was overwhelmingly positive and other long-distance routes are being considered for bike racks.

“The new racks offer bus-users the option of combining cycling with their bus trip and make it possible for people to bus to work and cycle home, or bike and bus in stages,” says Cr Evans. “People can enjoy improved access to cycle tracks like those at Bottle Lake Forest, the Port Hills or the off-road cycling opportunities at McLeans and Kaiapoi Islands in the Waimakariri River Regional Park.”

Bike racks make it possible for cyclists to cross the river bridges between Christchurch and Kaiapoi and Rangiora safely and make Lyttelton harbour destinations more accessible to cyclists by completing the link to and from the city through the tunnel. Cr Evans said bike racks have room for two bikes and are easy to use and can be used free-of-charge by bus users.

“Cyclists are responsible for loading and unloading their bikes themselves - it's safest for the driver to stay at the wheel,” says Cr Evans. “More bike racks on more routes is yet another reason to take advantage of Christchurch's world-class Metro service.”

All buses on the following routes are fitted with bike racks:

- 90 Rangiora
- 92 Rangiora via Woodend and Waikuku
- 77 Kennedy's Bush
- 11 Styx Mill-Westmorland
- 14 Harewood-Dyers Pass
- 15 Bishopdale-Beckenham
- 18 St Albans-Huntsbury
- 21 Ilam-Mt Pleasant
- 28 Lyttelton and Rapaki
- 3 Airport-Sumner via Avonhead
- 7 Halswell
- 35 Riccarton-Heathcote

On routes 3, 7 and 35, cyclists must board or disembark at a stop outside the Bus Exchange. At present, buses may not enter or leave the exchange building with bikes on board.





On the road to 2010

Welcome to the first edition of the UDS newsletter for 2010.

It's appropriate we're starting the New Year with a focus on transport. Each year it seems when we go on holiday, traffic congestion also takes a break, only to reappear at the start of the school year.

The key corridors that provide access into Christchurch City centre, to the airport and Lyttelton Port from Waimakariri District and Selwyn District are becoming noticeably congested, as urban and economic growth continues in these Districts.

Fortunately, the government has made a substantial commitment to funding improvements to transport infrastructure through their roads of national significance programme, administered by UDS partner the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA). Around \$660 million dollars is proposed for spending on highways in Greater Christchurch over the next ten years. The highways to be improved will deliver real benefits for all UDS partners, not just city residents.

The Northern Arterial and Western Belfast Bypass will divert traffic away from Belfast, reducing traffic, improving safety, and enabling urban development identified in the UDS to occur. People and businesses in Waimakariri District will also benefit from these highways giving them safer, more reliable access to the airport, Lyttelton Port and City centre.

It's a similar story for businesses based in Selwyn District, particularly at the Izone industrial park, and residents who'll benefit from the Southern Motorway projects providing faster and safer access to the City centre and Lyttelton Port.

None of the roads of national significance projects are new to the UDS partners. The NZTA, as a UDS partner, ensured all of them were identified in the UDS urban settlement pattern and planning for long-term growth. What's changed is the timeframe and funding to build these highways. The government's commitment to our region's transport infrastructure provides us with the certainty to implement our UDS plan with greater confidence.

While government funding is helping along highway construction, the UDS partnership is also pressing ahead with other transport improvements. Environment Canterbury (ECan) has introduced bike racks to a dozen bus routes, including services travelling to Waimakariri District and the Port Hills. The bus and bike combination has proved popular where ever it's been introduced.

The Christchurch City Council is also putting its best foot forward with the adoption of recommendations from the Jan Gehl report on walking and cycling initiatives for the city centre. The Danish urban designer has a reputation for reclaiming city centres from cars for people.

All of these initiatives are discussed in this newsletter. They demonstrate the partners are making tangible progress on implementing the UDS, bringing us closer to our vision of a sustainable transport system supporting thriving businesses and prosperous communities. Something positive to reflect on when you're next caught in traffic congestion. Let's make 2010 a year for travelling safely on our journey to a Greater Christchurch.

Bill Wasley

Independent Chair

UDS closer to reality as Councillors accept commissioners' report

Environment Canterbury Councillors accepted their commissioners' recommendations on the Regional Policy Statement Proposed Change 1 in December 2009. The change is essential for implementing the UDS.

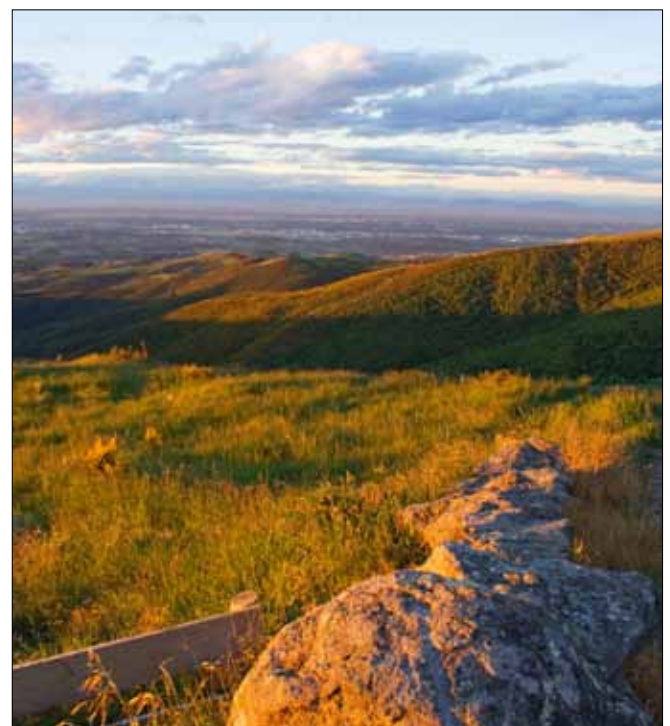
The Recommendations accept that Proposed Change 1 is an appropriate response to the urban development issues of Greater Christchurch. Subject to appeals to the Environment Court as part of the Resource Management Act process, Proposed Change 1 will become operative giving the UDS the statutory backing it needs for its continuing success.

Environment Canterbury chair Cr. Alec Neill said this milestone has been achieved through strong and effective collaboration between the UDS partners.

"The principle of integrating land-use with transport, the need for intensified land use, the importance of the Christchurch's drinking water aquifer recharge zone, the 50 decibel noise contour around the airport and the need for comprehensive development plans which incorporate storm water and catchment management are all endorsed by this decision," said Cr Neill.

Decisions on submissions on Proposed Change 1 were publicly notified on December 19, 2009 and represent the next step towards it becoming operative, subject to appeals to the Environment Court. The appeals period ends on March 5 2010. Mediation and Environment Court hearings are expected to begin in mid to late 2010.

Copies of the Regional Policy Statement Proposed Change 1 can be downloaded from Environment Canterbury's website at www.ecan.govt.nz/rps. A printable map of the urban limits and new development sites can be found at: <http://ecan.govt.nz/publications/Plans/A3Version.pdf>



Fine weather as first sod turned on Christchurch Southern Motorway

The sun shone as the Minister of Transport, Hon. Steven Joyce turned the first sod of the Christchurch Southern Motorway stage 1 (CSM1) on Monday 25 January.

The \$140 million project, that duplicates and extends the existing Southern Motorway from Barrington Street to Halswell Junction Road, is commencing several months ahead of schedule.

The ceremony was held, beside the alignment of the Southern Motorway, to turn the first sod and officially launch the Christchurch roads of national significance projects. Around 100 invited guests, including Mayors and Councillors of the Greater Christchurch councils, business and industry leaders, and project stakeholders attended the ceremony.

NZTA Canterbury Regional Director Mark Yaxley was MC, and introduced the speakers including the Minister, NZTA Deputy Chairman (and former Christchurch Mayor) Garry Moore and Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker. James Robinson, Apotero, performed a Maori blessing before the Minister powered up the excavator and turned the first sod on the Southern Motorway.

While CSM1 is the most expensive roading project in the South Island, it is just one of several roads of national significance projects proposed for the next ten years at a combined cost of around \$660 million. When completed, these will upgrade the highways leading to Christchurch Airport, Lyttelton Port and the Christchurch City centre reducing congestion, improving safety and supporting economic development.

Work will commence this year also on upgrading Russley Road to a 4-lane, median separated road from October 2010. Consultation commences shortly on these projects:

- Northern Arterial and QEII Drive 4-laning;
- Memorial Avenue/Russley Road intersection improvements;
- Western Belfast Bypass; and in mid-2010
- Christchurch Southern Motorway stage 2 (CSM2) and SH1 4-laning north of Rolleston.

For more information on all of these projects, information about the Christchurch roads of national significance and newsletters updating progress visit the website: www.nzta.govt.nz/network/projects/christchurch-motorways



NZTA Deputy Chairman Garry Moore with Minister of Transport Steven Joyce

A quick conversation with NZTA Project Manager Geoff Griffiths

NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) Project Manager Geoff Griffiths has the unenviable task of managing the construction of the Christchurch Southern Motorway stage one (CSM1).

The CSM1 is the South Island's most expensive roading project, projected to cost around \$140 million by the time it's finished in 2013. An experienced project manager, Geoff has no illusions about the responsibility that rests on his shoulders.

"An NZTA project manager is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the project on time, on budget, to agreed quality and safety standards and to the expectations of a large group of stakeholders, including the Minister of Transport and the final customer, the road users," says Geoff.

Achieving those goals requires a special set of professional skills and certain personality traits.



NZTA Project Manager Geoff Griffiths

According to Geoff, a project manager, aside from being technically proficient, requires credibility with the suppliers they are managing. These suppliers are a diverse group ranging from landscape architects, planners, environmental assessment specialists, Environment Court barristers, property advisors, geotechnical engineers and design engineers to the contractors actually constructing the project. In addition experience and knowledge of the processes involved is required when dealing with other NZTA staff, district and regional councils and stakeholders such as affected landowners, interest groups, media and the community.

Geoff says the most successful project managers share a common personal trait and that's perseverance. The project manager deals with dozens, if not hundreds, of people during the life cycle of the project commonly in stressful situations.

"While the project manager must listen to and consider various views, it's the project manager who must make the decisions required to move the project forward, that are best for the project and can be justified if challenged," says Geoff. "The discipline required to perform this role day in day out over all aspects, over many years, is one of the more challenging tasks of the role."

Though it may seem stressful (and can be), Geoff says the rewards are as great as the challenges.

"The project manager is usually the only one able to fully appreciate the range and diversity of resources that have been brought together, the efforts and sacrifices made by those involved, and the on-going benefits of a project for both the local communities and the country in general," says Geoff. "Successfully delivering a project is a hugely satisfying experience."



Bypass for Belfast?

The main artery of the Belfast community is congested.

Around 37,000 vehicles per day use Main North Road to enter and exit Christchurch - amongst the highest volume for any road in Canterbury. This volume of traffic, in particular the trucks and heavy vehicles using the road, discourage walking and cycling and restrict public transport. As traffic volumes grow, congestion will become worse, and safety and public health concerns will increase around the Main North Road/ Belfast Area.

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is currently investigating a bypass of Belfast, known as the Western Belfast Bypass. It will provide a new route from the Northern Motorway (SH1) for approximately five kilometres south to Johns Road (SH1) near The Groynes entrance.

NZTA Project Manager Ryan Cooney says the Western Belfast Bypass offers real benefits for residents and motorists.

“Traffic travelling through Belfast would experience reduced congestion and enjoy shorter travelling times,” says Ryan. “With through traffic diverted onto the bypass, an estimated 17,000 fewer vehicles per day on Main North Road will improve the quality of life for Belfast residents. Walking and cycling will be safer and there’ll be scope for more public transport. It will be easier to cross Main North Road, and noise and air pollution will be reduced.”

The bypass, as part of the Christchurch City Council (CCC) Belfast Area Plan, will enable Belfast to become a vibrant growing community served by a network of roads that enables development of new housing, social, commercial and recreational facilities, such as The Groynes.

“The NZTA are working with the CCC to ensure the bypass supports the Council’s development plans for The Groynes. Safe public access is a top priority for both organisations,” says Ryan. “A vehicle, cycle and pedestrian underpass, is likely to be provided close to the current entrance way. An additional pedestrian and cycle only entranceway to the north is being investigated – if people have ideas, we hope they’ll use the feedback form to let us know.”

Initial options for the alignment of the Western Belfast Bypass have been developed, so consultation is underway to get community feedback.

Consultation brochures and feedback forms are at the website www.nzta.govt.nz/westernbelfastbypass Consultation closes on Friday 16 April 2010.



Under or over? Memorial make-over for airport gateway

The gateway for air travellers visiting the region is set to get a multi-million dollar makeover as the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) commences consultation on improvements to the Russley Road (SH1)/Memorial Avenue intersection.

Memorial Avenue is the major entranceway to Christchurch City from the airport. At the intersection with Russley Road (SH1) traffic heading north and south along Russley Road meets with traffic on Memorial Avenue at a roundabout at times struggling to cope with the volume of traffic.

NZTA Project Manager Richard Shaw says the intersection is causing unacceptable delays and queuing during morning and evening peak periods. These delays are expected to increase as traffic volumes increase on Russley Road and Memorial Avenue.

“The increasing traffic through the intersection is leading to a reduction in safety, increased travel time to and from the airport, and loss of travel time reliability,” says Richard. “Pedestrians and cyclists are also poorly catered for through the current roundabout.”

Consultation is underway to identify a preferred design option for an upgraded intersection between Memorial Avenue and Russley Road. Richard says three options are being considered.

“The three options being presented for community feedback all involve running one road over the other,” says Richard. “The big question is which goes under and which goes over? Russley Road (SH1) could pass over Memorial Avenue, or Memorial Avenue could pass over Russley Road, or Russley Road could be sunk into a trench so Memorial Avenue would pass over it, but at ground level.”

Richard says key factors for determining the final design will include; minimising the land required, maintaining the 80kms per hour speed limit for State Highway traffic, providing for cyclists, pedestrians and passenger transport, and limiting the impacts on groundwater, while recognising the function the intersection provides as a gateway to Christchurch.

Each option has its advantages and disadvantages, listed in the consultation brochure available, along with the feedback form, at the NZTA website www.nzta.govt.nz/memorialintersection Consultation closes on Friday 26 March 2010.

New Transport Plan on the move

Late last year, the process of preparing a new 30-year transport plan for Canterbury commenced when the Regional Transport Committee asked people to help identify the key challenges facing our transport system between now and 2041.

While a wide range of responses was received, there were some common threads to the community feedback.

Most people felt public transport was a priority for the region and that work was needed to continue improving the options and services available. Many people also felt that the region’s rail network needed to be used more effectively, for the movement of both passengers and freight. Other findings included the need to enhance cycling opportunities and to encourage people to travel by walking, cycling and public transport, rather than using cars.

Following further consultation on a draft plan due out early next year, the new Regional Land Transport Strategy will be finalised in 2011. For further details of the consultation and research findings, or to be kept informed of the development of the new transport plan email transport@ecan.govt.nz

