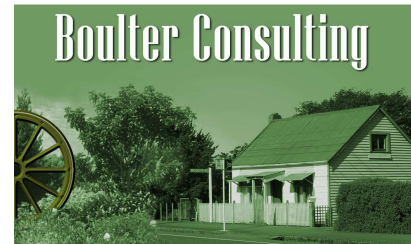


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urban and transport planning

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end-year 2015



Last September, I stayed at a bach to admire sunsets, go for walks, and blob out. I ended up with a 150-page book draft! My excuse: the only time I could do this. Day-to-day busy-ness does crowd out book-writing.

It's a history of cycle planning in New Zealand and overseas. I've observed and lived through a massive amount, and there's an urgent need to pass on the lessons learnt. This need has become more urgent over the last six months!

I've been involved in planning for cycling since 1982, including five years as full-time 'Cycling Officer' at Birmingham City Council (1990-95), and played a significant role in UK national cycling strategy work, through the UK Local Government Associations and some cycling sector groups. Later I led similar New Zealand developments during the early 2000s.

Few other professionals have this long experience, and none have been planners – a crucial difference. A major lesson from the 1980s and early 1990s was that cycling infrastructure – engineers' design expertise – will deliver perverse results if planning is not right. Planning brings in managing traffic volumes and speeds downwards; the elusive "*integrated transport planning*" concept; and educating cyclists in how to cope with traffic.

Pursuit of the 'level of service' concept for cyclists in isolation from general traffic planning is particularly flawed: because often what helps cyclists most lies outside 'cycling programmes'. This is 'integrated planning' in a nutshell.

The title of the "*Cycle Network Design Project*" illustrates the problems. It's flawed to think you can design cycle networks. You can only plan them. Much of that planning does not involve "*designing*" anything at all, and quite a small part involves "*designing*" infrastructure (not "*networks*").

Contrary to what you might have heard, most places already have a 'completed' cycle network: the road system. Start with this – don't assume a need to bolt (often expensive) "*cycleways*" onto it (although these do have a role, as two photos below show).

Apart from contributing to a local cycling safety audit, working for Lower Hutt's Barclay Traffic Planning (Bill Barclay) my cycle planning clients are the three Wairarapa Districts – Masterton, South Wairarapa and Carterton (the last two within the past six months, and Carterton District also asked me to advise them on transport issues for a local resource consent hearing).

Cycle planning at national level is overwhelmingly focused on larger centres (for example, an “Urban” Cycleways Fund), leaving ‘small-town New Zealand’ with little or no funding. This simply isn’t fair!

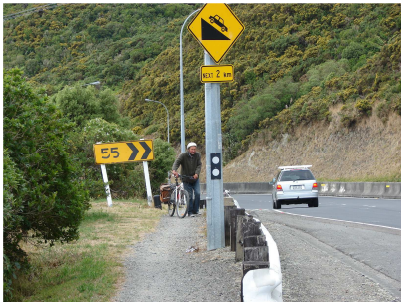
The problems aren’t technical – they’re about policy. Strategies are crucially important, to carefully choose the mix of infrastructure and non-infrastructure measures which will deliver positive outcomes.

Portland, Oregon, USA is a favourite ‘poster-child’ just now for targeting the large “interested but concerned” would-be cyclist population segment. We are told (wrongly!) that they will be attracted to cycling through ‘separated’ or ‘protected’ cycleways. This works in Portland, because this is ‘the icing’ on a bigger ‘cake’ including densification, very high quality public transport (“transit”) together with “transit-oriented” urban form development, and restraint of car parking and movement, all pursued over several decades! This again underlines the importance of strategies, and a broader, more ‘outside-the-square’ approach than blindly enthusing about “cycleway” projects.

The 1980s and early 1990s ‘segregation’ approach which I remember – rather like New Zealand’s current approach, in a similar car-based planning context – failed. Contrary to expectations, cycling did not increase, and cyclist crashes did not come down. So we changed tack in the mid-1990s, and I contributed to the seminal technical report which led this. Which explains why I sacrificed half my holiday to complete a book draft, which after some input from others and early 2016 research, should hit the booksellers during 2016.

Have a good Christmas! And may 2016 bring you good and satisfying work!

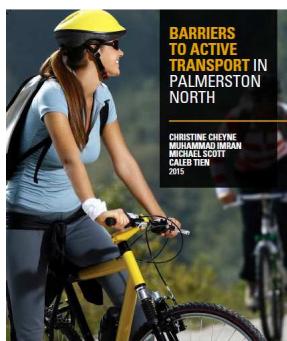
Roger



Wainuiomata Hill Road, Greater Wellington, site of a proposed cycle/ pedestrian shared path and bridge (which will help the guy in the photo) under the government’s Urban Cycleways Fund, on which Bill Barclay of Barclay Traffic Planning asked me to help in a safety audit earlier this year



Western Lake Road, South Wairarapa – subject of a business case for a roadside path, to bring cyclists and walkers from the Rimutaka ‘Great Ride’ into Featherston (and beyond to Carterton and Masterton)



Remember that Massey University student survey I was involved with, from my last newsletter? Well the results have now been published.



Don’t do this before driving this Christmas! Michael my computer technician (left) upgraded my equipment, and we had time for a ‘quick one’ down the Good George – in Hamilton, brews its own (vats behind the bar), and is in the former St George’s Church building