

4 September 2020

Submission on Taupō District Council Draft Transport Strategy

Introduction

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission Ara Hikoī Aotearoa is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues.

Our role is to provide New Zealanders with free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

We administer a national strategy on outdoor access, including tracks and trails. We map outdoor access, provide information to the public, oversee a code of responsible conduct in the outdoors, help to resolve access disputes and negotiate new access.

The Commission has a team in Wellington and a network of regional field advisors. An independent board governs our work. Our governing piece of legislation is the *Walking Access Act 2008*.

Much of our work focuses on active transport. We support the creation, maintenance, enhancement and promotion of walking and cycling both for recreation and for commuting to local destinations such as schools, places of work and shops.

Support for the draft strategy

We note the Taupō District Council's draft strategy will replace its current walking and cycling strategy when it is adopted.

We support the draft strategy's broad approach to consider not just modes of transport, but how people connect to the places they are traveling along and to – getting people to places they want to go, especially for recreation, and linking to wider networks, such as local and national trails.

We note that the district council has no policies for the management and retention of unformed legal roads, or for road stopping. We have expertise in each of these areas and would be happy to help the council develop policies in these areas.

We endorse the draft strategy. We lend our support to the following priorities within it:

- The third key priority to maintain and enhance transport networks so they are walking and cycling friendly. This will help to support people to make sustainable transport choices. We believe that off-road tracks and trails and outdoor public access are a key part of those transport choices.
- The focus on making towns and villages accessible and age friendly (2.2). As well as formed footpaths and streets it is important that people with reduced mobility can use at least some off-road tracks and walkways.
- Developing a network of shared paths, both paved and off-road (3.1 and 3.2). Shared pathways for cyclists, walkers and other active transport users help connect communities to shops, schools, recreational areas and other local resources. They also connect people to each other

and make for stronger communities. It is important that shared paths are well designed so that walkers, bikers, e-bikers, scooterers, mobility scooters and others can all share the space safely.

- The focus on recreational walking and cycling (3.8). Good recreational resources provide health and wellbeing value to people. But they also provide a link for people to transition from recreational cycling and walking, to being active transport cyclists and walkers.

Recommendations

It will be important to ensure that public walking and cycling access on reserves and other council land is not impeded or obstructed by encroachments from adjacent private properties (3.2, 3.8). This is especially relevant around the lakeshore. There are several examples where this has or is happening.

We have an interest in the District Council's commitment to creating access-friendly road stopping policy. We note that Christchurch City Council, Auckland Transport, Rangitikei District Council and Hurunui District Council have developed good policies that Taupō District Council could draw upon. The Commission could provide advice and support with this.

Taupō District Council has a substantial network of unformed legal roads. These unformed legal roads have significant current and potential future value. They will play a central role in the council's plans to develop a network of connecting trails and access points which allow people to get around the area by bike and foot. It is important that the council retain these unformed legal roads so that it can use them to develop its network of outdoor public access.

The Commission recommends that the Taupō District Council commit to creating an access-friendly unformed legal roads policy. Auckland Transport, Hurunui District Council and Rangitikei District Council have similar well-formed policies that Taupō could draw upon. We recommend using our Guidelines for the Management of Unformed Legal Roads as a best practice template.

The Commission would welcome to opportunity to speak to our submission.

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