



**Herenga  
ā Nuku**  
AOTEAROA

# **Walking and Cycling**

Engagement with Whangārei District Council and Far North District Council, May 2023

OUTDOOR ACCESS COMMISSION

# Engagement with Walking and Cycling Survey in Whangārei and Far North Districts, May 2023

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa is the Crown agency responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for 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 resolve access issues and negotiate new access.

You can learn more about [our organisation](#), [work](#), and [strategic goals](#) on our website: <https://www.herengaanuku.govt.nz/about-us/about>.

## Key points

We welcome the opportunity to help shape the district's network of cycle trails and walkways – taking into account the Northland Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Far North Trails Plan.

While we have not used the survey or online map tools to reference our input, we have provided a map by a third party and member of the Walking and Cycling Northland Group. The maps illustrate the connectivity we are advocating for within the context of community engagement in walking and cycling across the region.

In our response, we would like to emphasise five key issues:

1. Connectivity for rural people – particularly in small communities
2. Urban connectivity within some of the larger communities of Northland, such as Whangārei, Kaikohe, Kerikeri and Kaitaia
3. Tourism opportunities for a region where tourism is important, and where walking and cycling can enhance existing propositions
4. Acknowledging and supporting existing walking and cycling initiatives that are in progress, and also other strategic visions of existing parties, including community groups promoting active recreation and active mode transport.
5. Gathering data and engaging with communities to better understand their walking and cycling needs and aspirations. However, using a computer-based survey has limits in Te Tai Tokerau, where unequal access to devices and the internet can affect the survey's representativeness.

# Whangārei

## Urban

Urban connectivity within the largest community Whangārei. Waka Kotahi has \$1.7m initiatives in and around Tikipunga to the central city. We particularly support the following aspects:

1. Connecting these eastern suburbs to existing cycleways
2. Connecting to the CBD
3. Connecting to potential future (planned) cycleways
4. We see the potential for stage 6 of the central rail corridor extension to improve access to and from Te Kamo and beyond to Springsflat.
5. We see both on-road and off-road solutions combined as giving the best solution. In regard to the former, a critically important aspect is signage to improve education, understanding and attitudes to sharing the road. *Share the road* and *Give 1.5m* signs are cheap but essential components.

## Regional and Satellite Trails

Whangārei Central is disconnected from established regional trails or other Whangārei communities such as Bream Bay and Tutukaka Coast.

Of note, there is no connection to the mountain bike parks at Parahaki and Glenbervie.

Nor is there any connection to the communities along the Tutukaka Coast.

- This connection is partially established with the trail from Scows Landing to Ngunguru, but it is missing the vital link to Whangārei.
- We propose future developments to encourage the creation of an off-road cycleway to Scow Landing and to connect to the existing cycleway to the coast.

The communities of Bream Bay are also not connected to each other or Whangārei.

- Extending the Waipu Cycleway north would improve the connectivity and use existing land tenure to advantage, such as public conservation lands behind Bream Bay to Marsden Point.
- We see various options to extend to town. Our preferred option would be to use the proposed rail corridor between the port and the Whangārei township rather than beside the state highway when “4 laning” occurs. This is because of the greater amenity values and tourism potential. Again, having a single landowner is an advantage.

# Far North

## Urban

The Far North communities are not well connected by walking and cycling trails. Herenga ā Nuku encourages further development, allowing the connection of:

1. Waitangi to Kerikeri and to Paihia. This, along with developing a trail from Okiato to Russell, could be a huge asset as a tourism activity for the Far North and Northland.
2. Kaitaia to the tourist hot spot of Ahipara.

## Regional and Satellite Trails

The Twin Coast Cycleway is a bold and exciting first step that is beginning to show rewards to the communities along its length and the tourism industry generally. But at present, the Far North has no trail connection to either Kaipara or Whangārei.

The Kaihu Valley Trail (KVT), currently being established in Kaipara, opens the possibility of a multi-day trip along the KVT and connecting to the Twin Coast Cycleway. This connection could be established by connecting the KVT Trail to the Far North tourism hot spots of Ōmāpere and Hokianga. This could be achieved with support given to:

- The Waoku Coach Road. Connectivity south to the northern end of the Kaihu Valley and north to Ōmāpere and Hokianga is essential for the communities and the tourism potential. The historic and cobbled surface, stone bridges and outstanding scenery suggest this could be another jewel in the crown of the Far North. This route is on unformed legal roads (ULRs), which suggests it is an achievable goal.
- Existing efforts in Ōmāpere / Opononi along SH12 to connect communities such as Rawene and Horeke. This could make the Far North and Northland an attractive destination for multi-day trippers, both locals and tourists.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

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