

Submission on the Waipa District Cycling Strategy

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This submission is made on behalf of the Waipa Mountain Bike Club (WMBC) by the club president, Brendan Haigh. The WMBC is a newly formed organization which was established to encourage participation in mountain biking and to promote, develop and maintain mountain biking trails in the Waipa District. The prime incentive for forming the club was frustration at the lack of mountain biking opportunities in our district. The club was formed in August and we currently have 40 people on our mailing list, a regular series of club rides, are preparing a proposal to develop mountain bike trails in the Pirongia area and have submitted a Waipa District Council community grant application to fund a workshop to train club members in sustainable trail maintenance and design.

We commend the Waipa District Council for developing this draft strategy for cycling in the Waipa District. Overall, we think the proposal is excellent, we support the strategy, but we are concerned that it neglects the role that mountain biking that can play in the council's mission to promote the well-being of the people of the Waipa District. As mountain biking is a popular¹, predominantly non-competitive form of cycling, which is accessible to a range of age groups and fitness levels, the promotion of off-road mountain biking opportunities in the district will encourage cycling among those members of the community who do not cycle to work or school or for whom competitive road cycling is daunting. In particular, the provision of mountain bike trails in our district would foster an environment which supports cycling (Strategy Objective 1), encourages more people to cycle more often (Strategy Objective 2) and provides for cycling opportunities away from our busy highways (Improved safety- Strategy Objective 3). The provision of mountain bike trails could be as simple as allowing shared use of existing trails, such as the Lake Ngaroto circuit, which would be ideally suited to family groups, through to assisting local groups like ourselves to develop purpose built trails on council land.

To support the role that mountain biking can play in achieving the objectives of the cycling strategy, we seek the amendments overleaf.

I would like to be heard in support of this submission.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Brendan Haigh

¹SPARC (2001), 12% of 25-35 year olds and 6% of all adults go mountain biking annually

Item	Submission	Amendment sought
1.4 Scope of this strategy	<p>The Scope states that the strategy <i>'focuses on cycling undertaken on public roads or reserves for transport and leisure'</i> but then indicates that <i>'cycling initiatives such as development of mountain bike tracks...are not covered specifically [by funding avenues], but such facilities are recognised as potential destinations for cyclists'</i>. The decision to exclude mountain bike trails from the cycling initiatives is an arbitrary decision which is in conflict with the specific goals of the council identified in Section 1.1 ie <i>'Specific goals which the council aims to achieve through the strategy are: to provide facilities and services which meet the needs of cyclists in the district... to foster awareness and enhancement of the District's recreational cycling opportunities...'</i></p> <p>The provision of mountain bike tracks should be specifically included in this strategy and in the funding avenues as (1) this is likely to be the predominant form of cycling undertaken on council reserves and (2) the promotion of mountain biking opportunities will greatly assist the council address the specific objectives of the cycling strategy, for the reasons outlined in the introduction to our submission.</p>	<p>Amend second sentence of second paragraph of Scope of this strategy to follow:</p> <p><i>'Funding avenues addressing the needs of students cycling to school, commuters cycling to work, people undertaking trips by bike to shops, services and to visit others, individuals and families cycling for recreation, fitness and leisure, sports cyclists training and racing on the road, and cyclists seeking off-road riding opportunities on council land have been identified within this document'</i></p>
3.2.10 Infra-structure action	<p>Current action point to <i>'investigate options to establish mountain bike tracks in the district'</i> is insufficient to make progress. More effort is required to actually make this happen. We also recognize this should not be the role of the council alone, so propose a new action, that being to support community groups to investigate, develop and promote these trails on council land.</p>	<p>Amend 3.2.10 to read as follows:</p> <p><i>'Assist community groups to investigate, develop and promote mountain bike tracks on council land in the district.'</i></p>
5 Projects	<p>If the strategy is to include the promotion and development of opportunities for off-road cycling in the Waipa District then it should be included in the Projects section of the strategy. A budget would be required to meet to meet this objective. The Waipa Mountain Bike Club could assist in developing costing for this section of the budget.</p>	<p>Amend sentence two of section 5.1 to read as follows:</p> <p><i>This strategy also aims to improve the safety of leisure and sports cyclists using identified rural roads and to promote the</i></p>

		<p><i>development of off-road cycling opportunities on council land.</i></p> <p>Insert a further long term objective in section 5.2, <i>‘To assist community groups investigate, develop and promote mountain bike tracks on council land in the district. A budget of about \$__ is suggested to support this objective’</i></p>
<p>Appendix C.6 Mountain Biking</p>	<p>The section on Mountain biking in the appendix should be updated.</p>	<p>Amend section C.6 to the following.</p> <p><i>‘As at September 2008, the only existing mountain bike tracks were on Mt Kakepuku and at Kaniwhaniwha Stream on Mount Pirongia. The Waipa Mountain Bike Club was established in August 2008. The objectives of the club are to encourage participation in mountain biking and to promote, develop and maintain mountain biking trails in the Waipa District. The club has 40 people on its mailing list (September 2008) and runs a regular series of club rides. It is currently investigating options for new mountain biking trails in the Waipa District.’</i></p>