

Minutes of the Taranaki Regional Cycleways Group meeting held in the Taranaki Regional Council Chambers, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford on Friday 16 October 2009 commencing at 2.30pm.

Present	John Sutton	New Plymouth District Council
	Antony Rhodes	Venture Taranaki
	Jo Bielski	Taranaki Regional Council
	Rob Phillips	Taranaki Regional Council
	Tanya Anaha	Ministry of Social Development
	John Jones	Stratford District Council
	Phil Mohi	Department of Conservation
	Dave Rogers	Department of Conservation
	Jan Martin	South Taranaki District Council
	John Sargeant	South Taranaki District Council
	Sol Hessell	New Zealand Transport Agency
	Graeme Lindup	North Taranaki Cycle Advocates Group
	Nathaniel Benefield	New Plymouth District Council
	Rex Hendry	Taranaki Regional Transport Committee
	Carl Whittleston	New Plymouth District Council
	Anna Collins	New Plymouth District Council

Apologies The apologies from Paul Stancliff-White (Venture Taranaki), Vincent Lim (South Taranaki District Council), Barry Jagersma (Stratford District Council), Mike Tapp (Department of Conservation), Damian Coutts (Department of Conservation), Gloria Cambell (Ministry of Social Development), Densie Elers (New Zealand Transport Agency), Maurice Mildenhall (New Zealand Transport Agency), Ross Fulton (Sport Taranaki) and Oliver Vincent (Sport Taranaki) were received and sustained.

1. Welcome

John Sutton (Chair) welcomed those present.

John noted that he had received a request from the media to attend the meeting. However he noted that the group is not currently formally recognised and is only a forum for discussion. Others agreed that it was not appropriate for the media to attend current or future meetings at this point in time.

Action: John to update the media representative after the meeting.

The minutes from the last meeting were received and sustained however there were two mistakes noted that needed fixing.

Action: Jo to fix minutes from last meeting.

2. Opunake Lions Club interest in project

Jan Martin and John Sargeant (STDC) noted that the Opunake Lions Club are interested in any construction activity associated with future cycleway projects in and around the Opunake area. The group acknowledged this interest.

3. Further work undertaken on routes

Antony Rhodes (VTT) provided the group with an update on the work undertaken following the last meeting. He noted that 10 routes were identified at this last meeting, including the:

- Round the Mountain – Upper Route
- Round the Mountain – Middle Route
- Round the Mountain – Lower Route
- Kirihau Tram Track
- Inland Route from Bridge to Nowhere to Stratford
- Junction Road/Tarata Loop
- Coastal Path with linkages
- Waiwhakaiho Route – mountain to sea
- Kapuni to Opunake Route – old rail line
- South Taranaki (Hawera) to Wanganui Route

As they were not present at the last meeting Phil Mohi and Dave Rogers (DoC) noted that they didn't have any additional routes to add to this list.

Antony outlined the assessment undertaken on these 10 routes and suggested that several options could consequently be removed from further consideration i.e.:

- Round the Mountain (Upper Route): too difficult given the terrain and associated costs with establishing a suitable cycle track within the Egmont National Park.
- Kirihau Tram Track: better as a linkage to a more main cycle route.
- Junction Road/Tarata Loop: road based, but outside criteria
- Waiwhakaiho Route - mountain to sea: Phil Mohi noted the importance of the North Egmont Visitor Centre as a well utilised 'tourism hub'. However this route could link into the Round the Mountain (Lower) route.
- Round the Mountain (Middle Route): big issues around land ownership, topography and location of rivers etc. Therefore too difficult due to cost. Practicably unfeasible.
- Kapuni to Opunake Route – old rail line: add as a possible 'linkage' with the Round the Mountain (Lower) route.
- South Taranaki (Hawera) to Wanganui Route: this is more a long-term link with other national routes. Not suitable as a route to be progressed in the next 3 years.

4. Preferred option(s)

That leaves 3 routes for further consideration:

- Round the Mountain (Lower Route)
- Inland Route from the 'Bridge to Nowhere' to Stratford
- Coastal Path with linkages - which includes most of Taranaki's coastline (north of New Plymouth to south of Hawera)

Jan Martin noted that the Round the Mountain (Lower) option is the best of the three due to its iconic nature and match with the Ministry of Tourism's specified criteria. Most of the infrastructure is also already there and it links all three districts. Others agreed. Its weakness is the section located on the state highway network i.e. Stratford to Inglewood (not really a tourist path). It is therefore necessary to investigate alternative options for this section.

A suitable route could be along the following: Pukeiti (start), Okato or Inner Road, Wiremu Road, Opunake, Cardiff, Pembroke Road, York Road, Denby Road, Bedford Road extension, Lepper Road etc. It could also connect in with the Waiwhakaiho link at Egmont Village (Alfred Road, Kent Road, Mangorei etc). 80% of it could be sealed.

Action: Jo to identify possible route on a map and send out to everyone.

Once map is completed Jo to obtain traffic counts for those roads where information is available.

A query was made about connecting the route in with towns i.e. Opunake, Kaponga, Stratford, Egmont Village and New Plymouth. Therefore need to look into this as an issue.

With regard to the Coastal Path – Jan noted that STDC likes this idea but it could be problematic due to land ownership issues. It could also take some time to progress because of the large number of properties along the coastal route. It is therefore too big an option given the timeframes set by the Ministry. This option was therefore discounted from further investigation at this stage.

Rex Hendry noted that the Inland Route could also be another good option to investigate further. A general discussion was held on where this route could go – Ramanu (Wanganui District), Matemateonga Track, Wangamomona, SH43 to Stratford. This could then link in with the Round the Mountain Route.

By linking in with each other it might be more advantageous to prepare the two routes as one.

Action: Antony to investigate how to combine the two routes into one in any future bid made.

5. Overview of criteria released by Tourism NZ

Antony provided a brief overview of the criteria that had been published by the Ministry only the day before the meeting. A copy of the Ministry's media statement was presented to the group for their information.

6. Work programme/timeframes

As noted in the media statement prepared by the Ministry, any concept proposals must be submitted by the 18th December. It was therefore suggested that a smaller working group be established to progress the concept proposal in more detail. This working group was to include one representative from each of the following organisations:

- One from each of the district councils
- Venture Taranaki Trust
- Taranaki Regional Council
- Department of Conservation

Action: Jo to request from each of these organisations a representative to be nominated for this working group.

7. Next steps

As the timeline for the concept proposal is 18th December it was agreed that another Regional Cycleways Group meeting (i.e. the wider group) should be held late November. The smaller working group was to meet as soon as possible to identify how to progress the concept proposal in greater detail.

A question arose as to whether or not Venture Taranaki can submit the bid.

Action: Antony to check this with the Ministry of Tourism.

8. General Business

Funding options

Concerns were raised by John Jones about who would pay for the maintenance of these routes once they were developed. SDC is not able to contribute towards the ongoing maintenance costs.

Commercial sponsorship is something which the working party should consider.

Action: Antony to investigate issues around corporate sponsorship in greater detail and ongoing maintenance cost issues.

Political involvement in project

Jo outlined the role of the Regional Transport Committee and the Mayoral Forum. A general discussion was then held as to which group would most appropriately drive this project. It was agreed that the Mayoral Forum was the best group to do this.

The next Mayoral Forum meeting is to be held 12th November. A presentation therefore needs to be made at this meeting outlining progress to-date, purpose of the group and where to from here.

Actions: Each district and regional council representative to discuss this issue with their Mayoral Forum representative.
Jo to email a brief update to each district council representative on the purpose and progress of the group. This information can be used to update political representatives.
Jo to confirm Mayoral Forum meeting dates with STDC.
John Sutton to prepare a presentation for this Mayoral Forum meeting

Other comments

- Tanya Anaha noted that the project definitely has the Ministry of Social Development's support.
- It was questioned how other regions had prepared their bids.

Action: Antony to investigate options of obtaining copies of other bids to identify how these were prepared/compiled.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Cycleways Group will be held sometime in late November – date yet to be decided.

Action: Jo to co-ordinate next meeting for the end of November.

Meeting closed: 4pm