

A potential vision for a national cycleway

The National Cycleway Advisory Group, March 2009

Who are we?

The National Cycleway Advisory Group is a coalition of national Business and Non-government representatives¹ who believe a national cycleway will benefit New Zealand significantly, who are already working to bring it about and who offer their expertise and influence to advise on its development.

What is this document for?

This document is a brief summary of the Group's shared view of a potential vision for a national cycleway. It was developed to provide a timely input to the post Job Summit process. This is a work in progress and is shared with the intention of making a constructive contribution. We welcome feedback. This document is not intended to be a technical briefing on all the benefits of a cycleway, to set out the proposed route or to provide a detailed costing. Rather, it is our view of what would be possible to deliver in order to optimise the returns on any investment the government wishes to make.

Is a National Cycleway a Good Idea?

We think it's a great idea to invest in national cycling infrastructure. We think it can boost jobs and provide a real asset for New Zealand. However, a smart approach will be needed to ensure that the investment results not in something that just delivers jobs in the construction phase, but something that can keep on contributing to the prosperity and wellbeing of New Zealanders in the future.

What kind of Cycleway would work?

A cycleway must set out to **deliver the best experience of New Zealand cycling** to both overseas visitors and New Zealanders. It is about the best experience from the point of view of the user (the cycling is just part of it). This will drive the growth in demand which will sustain its development. To do this we need the following elements:

- **One loved brand** – To provide the aspiration not only for existing cyclists but, importantly, to a whole new, **larger market of people starting out in cycling** – who have disposable income and want a great experience on fun, easy tracks
- In the short term we deliver a **“Spine”** the optimised zig zag route connecting north to south; comprising of
 - **“Highlights”** – the un-missable regional one-night-or-more cycling based tourism experiences; there should be a range of these so there is something for everybody
 - **“Connectors”** – the best routes and suggested transport links joining up the highlights and the length of the country
- In the future – we should grow an **integrated “network”** connecting all regions, urban and rural, with a significant amount of provision on cycle paths (away from roads). The “spine” is just the beginning.

One Loved Brand

- It is essential that a brand is built for the cycleway – and that the qualities of the brand are truly delivered by the “product” – there are many routes in New Zealand already but they are piecemeal, and of varied and unpredictable quality. (But each regional trail could also have its own branding).
- There is a lot we already know about what people say they value about their cycle tourism experience – these could help us develop a brand proposition:
 - The scenery – ride the view
 - The locals - meet the kiwis
 - A challenge to myself/sense of achievement – because it is there
 - Interaction – out there in it
 - Uniqueness - each ride a gem
 - Something different from the ordinary routine- taking the slow route
- We have not yet come up with the creative concept - this would be done with more detail about the users, segments and their preferences as well as the product we can deliver
- There has to be a predictable and dependable level of quality - but different regional sections could feel and look different or be for different levels of user

¹ Including the Cycling Advocates' Network (CAN), Cycle Touring Operators of New Zealand, BikeNZ, Living Streets Aotearoa, Quality Tourism Development, Mike Barnett Associates, ViaStrada, The Kennetts, The Hikurangi Foundation.

Highlights

- These are the “jewels” – the Otago Rail Trails or high value tourist/cycling areas. These are important because they encourage visitors to stay a day (or two) and therefore can deliver great local economic benefits (for example via the accommodation and other services used)
- These are very high quality and each is unique - it provides a reason to go, to do the next one or “collect the set”
- The highlights may be in the form of side branches or detours from the main zig zag spine
- They will be appropriate to the full range of cycling experience “fantastic experiences at your pace” (for example while most will be suitable for casual cyclists – one could be for mountain bikers). We would base this on more in-depth work of really knowing the segments of potential users and ensuring there is something for the key ones e.g. over 45 cash-rich leisure/social cyclists
- These can be wilderness/rural areas but there is also potential from local journeys/day rides and urban areas

The Connectors

- The routes that allow a continuity of coverage, they connect the cycling highlights and other high value tourist experiences (Queenstown, Rotorua or Milford for example)
- Connectors can be active (those that can be cycled) including
 - Cycle lanes
 - Cycle paths
 - Cycle facilities at key “crunch points” such as bridges
 - Marginal strips on rivers
 - Rural roads wilderness roads
 - Rail trails
 - Paper roads
 - Off-road routes
- All of this would need minimum quality standards and would be pitched at no harder than the intermediate level – they are the best quality route (from a cycling experience point of view) the length of the country- they are not highlights in their own right
- Connectors can also be in the forms of access (not riding your bike) e.g.
 - Trains with cycle storage
 - Coach with cycle racks/storage
 - Loops with hire facilities
 - Bike friendly shuttles

Growth over time

- Start with something that enables a north to south connection and joins up the early win highlights and high value tourist areas
- Over time grow into a network with a vision of providing joined up cycling over all the country – like the roads network
- Walking too – experience has shown that it is both feasible and beneficial for walkers to use trails too – Sustrans in Britain for example has high use by walkers particularly around urban areas
- Planning in organisation/format/model for delivery
 - Standards – nationally set and locally delivered
 - Community buy in
 - Maintenance
 - Marketing
 - Ongoing funding and matching funds
 - Contract management

Are the routes there?

Yes. There are many parts of this vision already in place and simply need adapting and unifying under common brand and quality. Other parts are possible routes which with well targeted investment could be developed. We have a comprehensive bank of know how about routes and are working to provide this insight in the most useful format. We have developed a suggested approach to route selection that includes factors such as: economic impact, safety, ridability, journey times, market segment coverage, readiness, and ability to lever in matching funding or in kind contributions.

How can the group be contacted?

You can contact individual member organisations, email the whole group at Idea21lives@googlegroups.com or Liana Stupples at the Hikurangi Foundation 021 154 6034 Liana.Stupples@hikurangi.org.nz