

Submission on draft GPS Land Transport 2021

Bike Waikato welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021 (draft GPS).

Bike Waikato is an active volunteer organisation based in Hamilton, promoting cycling to the public and advocating for safe cycling infrastructure in Hamilton and the surrounding communities, including Ngāruawāhia, Te Awamutu and Cambridge.

There is a demand for safe cycling infrastructure

In 2019, research carried out by Hamilton City Council found that over 50% of survey respondents would ride a bicycle more often if they felt safer to do so. Hamilton has the highest share of trips by car and the lowest share of walking and cycling trips when compared against other major centres across New Zealand indicating there is currently a lack of safe and attractive cycling infrastructure across the city.¹

A study commissioned by the Waipa District Council and Cambridge Community Board in 2018 found there was a significant level of interest from both parents and children in being able to walk or cycle to school safely, with cycling being the preferred option for children. Key findings included:²

- 87% of children (when asked by parents) said they wanted to be able to walk or bike to school; and
- 73% of parents would like children to either always or sometimes walk or bike to school.

More recently, since the country has entered into lockdown, there has been a notable increase in the number of people out walking, biking and scooting due to significant reductions in motor vehicle traffic. In Hamilton and Cambridge, we have seen that families are getting out on bicycles and young children are riding on the road because there is less risk. In Auckland, some areas are experiencing a 100% increase in cycling numbers.³

¹ NZ Transport Agency, Keeping Cities Moving, <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/keeping-cities-moving/Keeping-cities-moving.pdf>

² Safe Ways to School Cambridge Community Insight Report V2 (June 2018): https://www.ccas.com/site_files/18568/upload_files/SafeWaystoSchoolCambridgeProject.pdf?dl=1

³ https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12324256

These studies, along with the increased number of people walking and cycling during the lockdown period, demonstrate that there is significant latent demand for walking and cycling, which would likely be realised if adequate cycling infrastructure were provided.

It is also notable that there has been significant growth in the number of electric bikes and scooters sold in New Zealand. Figures from Statistics NZ show that more than 47,000 e-bikes and e-scooters were imported into New Zealand in 2018. This was up from 23,326 the year before and just 1332 in 2008.⁴

The use of personal hire devices is also becoming more prevalent. After a successful trial with Lime e-scooters, Hamilton City Council recently resolved to allow up to 1,000 personal hire devices (including e-scooters and e-bikes) to operate on Hamilton streets. The prevalence of these modes of transport means we need more suitable infrastructure sooner to ensure the transport system is safe for these users.

Investing in cycling infrastructure leads to more people cycling

In its 2017 briefing paper ‘Public Transport, Walking and Cycling’, the Ministry of Transport recognised that ongoing investment in alternative modes of transport leads to behaviour change: “Evidence shows that people will start to shift behaviours when alternatives are improved, especially if these make travel more convenient and affordable.”

The impact of investing in cycling infrastructure has been seen around New Zealand. Auckland is experiencing a large increase in cycling numbers, correlating with investment in building new cycling infrastructure, with some months experiencing double digit growth compared to 12 months prior.⁵

After it built a cycling network, New Plymouth saw a 35 per cent increase in cycling between 2006 and 2013, and increases in the numbers of people commuting by bike on shared pathways were reported in excess of 50 percent.⁶

Cycling tourism is also on the rise across the country with 300,000 people using the Te Awa River Ride trail, in its current form, each year. As Te Awa is completed, it is also anticipated that new tourism and commercial opportunities will develop as a result of the new facility including

4

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/auckland/114808558/number-of-ebikes-and-escooters-imported-rises-to-47000-amid-infrastructure-worries>

⁵ <https://at.govt.nz/cycling-walking/research-monitoring/monthly-cycle-monitoring/>

⁶ NZ Transport Agency, The Walking and Cycling Model Community Story with New Plymouth & Hastings, 2013, <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/Walking-Cycling-and-Public-Transport/docs/model-community-story-single.pdf>

bike hire, accommodation, cafes, tours and events⁷. Further development of a wider network of Waikato biking trails expected to bring 100,000 extra visitors and 160 new jobs over 10 years⁸.

Peoples' health and wellbeing need more recognition

- 1.1. The draft GPS states “A large proportion of land transport will continue to be focused on maintaining the transport system at acceptable levels of service, taking account of the strategic priorities in GPS 2021.” **(Para. 11)** We are concerned this level of service will promote decisions that aim to increase the capacity of roads for vehicle-centric living and conflict with other goals, such making streets safer for pedestrians.
- 1.2. We support the four strategic priorities in the draft GPS and the key outcomes in the Transport Outcomes Framework. However there needs to be greater recognition of benefits that Active Transport has on Better Travel Options and Climate Change. A Victoria University of Wellington study of the New Zealand Model Communities Programme shows health and carbon **benefits are 10 times the cost** of investment for walking and cycling infrastructure and educational campaigns.⁹ “Healthy and safe people” should be considered a *primary* benefit to Better Travel Options **(Section 2.3)** and supported with adequate funding to achieve these benefits..
- 1.3. We are concerned that the four strategic priorities don't sufficiently link back to support the key outcomes, particularly health and climate outcomes. The healthy and safe people framework outcome states “...making active travel an attractive option.” **(Page 5)** A step change in investment and leadership is needed in the draft GPS to provide attractive active transport options.
- 1.4. Proposed Indicator I **(Para. 80)** needs be amended to read “& of people with access to frequent public transport services and high quality, safe walking and cycling facilities.”
- 1.5. NZTA's Benefits of Investing in Cycling outline multiple health, environment and economic benefits that are provided when cycling infrastructure is implemented¹⁰.
- 1.6. Improving walking and cycling infrastructure will play a critical role in supporting the objectives of the new National Policy Statement on Urban Development. The Government has indicated key priority areas that will support housing affordability, quality of life and improved environmental outcomes. These include: increasing the quality of urban environments, reducing car dependency, reducing/eliminating requirements for car parks in larger cities, increasing levels of intensification in areas

⁷ <https://www.te-awa.org.nz>

⁸ <https://www.stuff.co.nz/waikato-times/news/108283991/cycling-network-promises-regional-benefits>

⁹ A Cost Benefit Analysis of an Active Travel Intervention with Health and Carbon Emission Reduction Benefits, <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/15/5/962>

¹⁰ NZ Transport Agency, Benefits of investing in cycling in New Zealand communities, <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/Walking-Cycling-and-Public-Transport/docs/benefits-of-investing-in-cycling/cyclife-benefits-booklet.pdf>

well connected to transport. Walking and cycling will play a key role in enabling these outcomes.

Investment needs to benefit the many, not just the few

- 1.7. We agree with the proposed investment principles. However, we believe that an additional principle ‘intergenerational equity’ should be added. This would require applicants to look forward and assess whether an investment will benefit young/future generations (who will ultimately be paying for the infrastructure), with particular consideration for intergenerational issues such as climate change.
- 1.8. We support making the most of our existing network. Reallocating road space to other efficient travel modes, such as cycle lanes or bus lanes, needs to be encouraged more within the draft GPS.
- 1.9. The draft GPS refers to user charges or discounts as demand management tools. We note that legislation needs to be changed/introduced to allow local authorities to implement congestion charging and ask that the Central Government address this as soon as possible.

We welcome the addition of new activity classes that support health and wellbeing

- 1.10. We welcome the inclusion of the two new activity classes for rail network and coastal shipping. Transferring more freight away from roads is an important move. The benefits realised will include making the transport system safer, reducing the cost of maintenance of the roading network, and reducing harmful emissions.
- 1.11. Because of their large mass, trucks tend to be over-represented in serious crashes.¹¹ In 2017 the Ministry of Transport reported that, “Deaths from crashes involving trucks make up around 20% of the total road toll, while just over 6% of the total distance travelled on New Zealand roads is by trucks.”¹²
- 1.12. Trucks pose a particular risk to cyclists. There was a sharp jump in bike/truck crashes between November 2016 and December 2017, with ten of the 17 cycling fatalities involving a motor vehicle featuring a truck.¹³
- 1.13. We support funding Road to Zero as its own activity class. However, it is unclear when funds from this activity class would apply to initiatives that improve walking and cycling safety. It appears that investment in safety infrastructure for walking and cycling would

¹¹ Ministry of Transport, Truck Crash Facts 2017,
<https://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Research/Documents/8764070595/Trucks-2017.pdf>

¹² Ibid

¹³ Patterns in NZ Bike/Truck Crashes, Koorey, Woodward and Mackie,
<https://viastrada.nz/sites/default/files/2018-03/IPENZ%202018%20KooreyEtAl-TGConf-ResearchPaper-web.pdf>

be limited to interventions where there is a high concentration of deaths and serious injuries (**Para. 118-119**). The draft GPS needs to state that any funds spent across all land based activity classes will include prevention of deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposed funding levels for activity classes do not support strategic direction

- 1.14. We are concerned that funding for the Walking and Cycling activity class needs to cover many areas from level of service improvements through to mode shift promotion costs. At the upper level walking and cycling is afforded only 2% of the transport budget, while almost 50% is allocated to maintaining and improving the level of service for roads and primarily single occupant vehicles. 2% of the total transport fund does not indicate that the Government wants to promote walking and cycling as a Better Travel Option or a viable means to address Climate Change. We support a balance of funding in the road improvement and maintenance activity classes to increase the funding available for walking and cycling.
- 1.15. The Ministry of Transport Accessible Streets Package proposes to legalise personal mobility devices in cycling facilities. The sharp uptake in usage of these devices shows that a larger investment in walking and cycling is necessary. Cycling is also the ideal mode of transport for trips up to 5km in length. Between 2015-2017 62% of all car trips in urban areas in New Zealand were within a reasonable cycling distance. The draft GPS needs to commit to ambitious targets for active transport use and a coordinated education and promotion programme realise the benefits that the health, wellbeing and economic values of all New Zealanders¹⁴.
- 1.16. The draft GPS states commitments such as Auckland Transport Alignment Plan (ATAP) and Let's Get Wellington Moving (LGWM) will be met by the Fund. If funding is already allocated to these programmes from the walking and cycling activity class, it is unclear how much funding will be available to invest in other parts of the country.
- 1.17. The Urban Cycleways Programme delivered many large scale cycleway projects over a four year period. The draft GPS does not appear to carry on the momentum created by this programme. Delay in a new round of projects will not show confidence to members of the public considering better travel options.
- 1.18. In response to the current crisis the HCC crown infrastructure proposal for its modeshift programme includes \$360m worth of cycling projects. Significant levels of funding are needed to effect this mode shift in Hamilton. With commitments to ATAP and LGWM already identified, the funding proposed in the GPS 2021 is insufficient to achieve any other transformational changes across the country.

¹⁴Turning the Tide - from Cars to Active Transport <https://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710135.pdf>

- 1.19. The United Nations recommend a target of at least 20% of transport funds are set aside for walking and cycling programmes. A mid range target of 5% allocation for the 2021/22 year, doubling for the next two years (10% for 2022/23 and 20% for 2023/2024), would see this goal being met. A bold goal like this would provide rapid investment in walking and cycling improvements and enable fast uptake by users, benefiting multiple strategic priorities.¹⁵

In light of the above, Bike Waikato strongly supports increasing funding for the walking and cycling fund. We also support decreasing the amount of funding allocated to improvements that encourage single occupant vehicle use, as we believe the high level of funding allocated to these activity classes does not align with the overall strategic direction of the GPS.

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¹⁵ Global Outlook on Walking and Cycling,
<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/share-road-global-outlook-walking-and-cycling-october-2016>