

# Bike Waikato Submission to Government Policy Statement on Land Transport

Kia ora

We are Bike Waikato, a local organisation based in the Waikato that aims to get more people biking, safely.

A majority of the cycling infrastructure delivered in the Waikato in the last few years, particularly Kirikiriroa Hamilton, has been co-funded by the Government and Waka Kotahi. For that reason, we take interest in the changes to the GPS that are proposed by the Government.

## **We support an activity class for cycling infrastructure maintenance.**

We are pleased to see particular focus given to cycling with a specific activity class for walking and cycling infrastructure and the introduction of an activity class for the maintenance of that infrastructure.

However, we have concerns about the general approach that the Government is taking for new infrastructure.

## **We do not support the limitations placed on cycling infrastructure investment.**

Section Three of the GPS outlines the Government's four key priorities:

- Economic Growth and Productivity
- Increased maintenance and resilience
- Safety
- Value for money

These priorities are well served by cycling infrastructure. For individuals, utilitarian cycling is a cheap mode of transportation. International as well as local evidence shows that people who cycle regularly have more disposable income to be spent in the economy<sup>1</sup> and if there is any effect on local businesses, it is positive<sup>2</sup>. Further to this, cycling infrastructure is relatively cheap to deliver and produces high return on investment in terms of environmental resilience,

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<sup>1</sup> Litman, T., & Laube, F. (2002). *Automobile Dependency and Economic Development*. Victoria Transport Policy Institute. <https://vtpi.org/ecodev.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Volker, J. M. B., & Handy, S. (2021). Economic impacts on local businesses of investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure: a review of the evidence. *Transport Reviews* 41 (4), 401-431. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2021.1912849>

ease of maintenance (a bicycle does 0.0006% less damage to a roadway than a standard car<sup>3</sup>), improved health outcomes, and economic benefits.

In fact, cycling infrastructure is some of the best “**value for money**” in the world of transportation.

Therefore, it is perplexing why the GPS significantly limits the amount of cycling infrastructure that can be built. The GPS outlines the two purposes of the activity class, of which the second concerns us:

- Maintaining the existing walking and cycling network
- Investment in walking and cycling where there is either clear benefit for increasing economic growth or clear benefit for improving safety where demonstrated volumes of pedestrians and cyclists already exist.

There is no other mode of transportation in Aotearoa New Zealand where investment in new infrastructure is limited to where demonstrated volumes of road users already exist. As is often stated in Kirikiriroa Hamilton: “**We do not wait until people are swimming across the awa before we build a bridge.**”

Already in Kirikiriroa Hamilton, 78% of people want to cycle for everyday purposes but do not feel safe doing so<sup>4</sup>. There is increased interest in utilitarian cycling across the country, demonstrating a clear suppressed demand. So, by limiting investment to where people are already biking, *which they are not doing because it is not sufficiently safe due to a lack of investment*, this policy effectively prevents territorial authorities from making the investments that are wanted by their constituents.

## **We do not support the limiting of multimodal improvements on state highways.**

Furthermore, the GPS outlines that funding for the “State Highway Improvements” activity class is not to be used to make multimodal improvements, such as cycleways. It also betrays a further contradiction, stating that funding should “prioritise reliable travel times” while at the same time prohibiting the construction of cycling infrastructure. International and local evidence again demonstrates that investing in roading projects increases congestion and reduces travel time reliability through *induced demand*. Again, this unnecessarily limits the delivery of infrastructure that is very much wanted and needed by the people of Kirikiriroa Hamilton and the Waikato and would achieve the stated goals of the Government and this GPS.

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<sup>3</sup> By the fourth power law, assuming a bicycle has a weight of 0.1T and a standard car has a weight of 2T.

<sup>4</sup> “Hamiltonians are the greatest supporters of biking out of the five largest New Zealand cities, with 78% most likely to consider improved facilities as a reason to bike.” (pg 27). Hamilton City Council (2022). *Access Hamilton Strategy*. <https://storage.googleapis.com/hccproduction-web-assets/public/Uploads/Documents/Strategies/24672-HCC-Access-Hamilton-Strategy-full.pdf>

## **We do not support the reduction in funding for walking and cycling infrastructure.**

The GPS currently sets out that funding for the walking and cycling activity class will be \$70-\$130M each year from 2025 to 2034 – almost half of the \$135-\$250M set out for 2024/25. In a period of increasing interest in utilitarian cycling, increased need for resilient and low carbon transportation, the Government should invest more in walking and cycling, not less.

## **We need to see alignment between evidence and investment.**

To conclude our submission, we will highlight the following points:

- Investment in cycling infrastructure aligns with the Government's stated goal of prioritising economic development.
- Investment in cycling infrastructure aligns with the Government's stated goal of reducing congestion and improving travel time reliability.
- Investing in cycling infrastructure is the best value for money in the transport space.

This Government has made its priorities clear in the outset of the GPS, but the areas that it has highlighted for investment do not align with international or local evidence. In delivering this GPS, we need to see the Government “put its money where its mouth is” and allow territorial authorities such as Hamilton City Council to continue delivering much-needed and much-lauded cycling infrastructure.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Kind regards

Bike Waikato Committee