

2023/24 Chairperson's Report

Who is Bike Waikato?

Bike Waikato is a volunteer-run cycling advocacy community organisation with a goal to get “more people on bikes, safely”. We are well known within Kirikiriroa and the Waikato as an organisation that represents the cycling community.

We got an awesome group of people together to represent the Bike Waikato Executive Committee in October 2023. We have worked together to improve our ways of working and grow our capability as an organisation. We had a blast putting on a variety of events for our community during the warmer months—from group rides along the Te Awa River Trail to cargo bike picnics to coffee morning teas. This year also brought a further expansion to our Bike Valet Service to improve the accessibility and visibility of bicycle parking at events around the city.



From left to right, front to back: Melissa Smith, Kelli Pike, Simon Campbell, Stephen Hay, Jackson Fankhauser, Felix Hoornaert.

What did we achieve this year?

Advocacy and Outreach

With the change of Government at the 2023 General Election and the Long Term Plan cycle, this was a relatively big year for submissions. We made nine submissions:

- Government Policy Statement (GPS) on Land Transport
- Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034
- Matamata-Piako Long Term Plan 2024-2034
- Ngaaruawaahia, Hopuhopu & Taupiri Structure Plan and Town Centre Plan
- Second Emissions Reduction Plan
- Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024
- Waikato District Annual Plan 2024-2025
- Waikato Regional Council Long Term Plan 2024-2034
- Waikato Regional Land Transport Plan 2024-2054

We spoke to our submission for the Hamilton City Council Long Term Plan.

In addition to the above submissions, we contributed to two Hamilton City Council Infrastructure and Transport Committee public forums.

The outcome of many of these submissions are not what we would prefer, but we have kept Bike Waikato part of the local and national conversation. We have provided resources to our members and supporters to support initiatives and speak against poor policies and plans.



Submit to the GPS!

Submissions close April 2.

- We support increased funding for cycling infrastructure, not less.
- Cycling infrastructure will address key Government priorities: improved economic development, safety, travel time reliability, and value for money.
- Cycling infrastructure cannot be limited to places where people are already biking (because without cycling infrastructure, it is not safe!).

**Last Chance to
Submit to the GPS!**

Submissions close April 2.



Bike Waikato

16 April · 🌐



We've made it super easy to support cycling in the **Hamilton City Council's Long Term Plan** by creating a shortcut. 🎉

The magic link 👉 <https://tinyurl.com/LTP2024-34>

It'll take you as little as 30 seconds. All you need to do is add "I want to make a verbal submission" (in the May hearings).

And, feel free to add detail around the specific projects you want to show support for, and why.

If you want to submit using the formal consultation document, you'll find it here <https://hamilton.govt.nz/strategies.../future-hamilton/> Submissions close April 21st. See less

We have improved our visibility at community events such as Matariki, Light Night, and the upcoming Peacocke Bridge opening. We have collaborated with Hamilton City Council to give away goodies such as pamphlets, high-visibility vests, bike lights, and bells.





Our gazebo at Light Night Ngaaruaawahia (27 July 2024).

Community and Events

Our philosophy for organising events this year has been to create opportunities for our community to congregate, collaborate, and feel energised about cycling. This has been achieved through morning teas and brunches across town—at first, during Bike Month, but now throughout the year. By showing up by bike and providing business, we also demonstrate the value of accommodating and inviting people by bike.

Our biggest and most bike-tacular event of the year has to be the group ride from Hamilton Gardens to the Point, Ngaaruaawahia. This would not have been possible without the mahi, know-how, and commitment of Kelli Pike.



A small but recurring event throughout the year has been our Cargo Bike Picnics, the brainchild of Simon Campbell, our own cargo bike enthusiast. We have hosted families across parks in Kirikiriroa to chat about the cargo bike lifecycle and share tips and tricks. It has been really rewarding to connect with a different demographic of people riding bikes!



Samantha Campbell demonstrating their cargo bike prowess at our Cargo Bike Picnic in December 2023. No need to bring the car to transport the kids!

Bike Valet

A summary of our year would be incomplete without discussing the Bike Valet. Felix Hoornaert undertook most of the thinking and organising of this initiative this year, and he has done an excellent job at growing our Bike Valet capability.

While our Bike Valet service is mostly undertaken by our Executive Committee Members, the work we have achieved this year would be impossible without the dedication of our awesome volunteers. It cannot be said enough: thank you.

This year, we helped to park:

- Ninja Valley, March 2024 – approximately 50 bikes
- Bike to Sport (Jansen Park), June 2024 – approximately 50 bikes
- Bike to Sport (Discovery Park), June 2024 – approximately 10 bikes
- Matariki, June 2024 – approximately 50 bikes



Bike to Sport (Jansen Park) Bike Valet.



Matariki Bike Valet.



Ninja Valley Bike Valet.

Work is continuing to expand this service and boost its capability as a revenue source for Bike Waikato. We have started to proactively reach out to businesses and events where we believe a Bike Valet service would be appropriate.

Cycle Action Network Conference

Jackson Fankhauser and I represented Bike Waikato at the Cycle Action Network Conference in Wellington in March 2024. The trip was possible due to financial support from Cycle Action Network.

During the conference, we had the opportunity to network with cycling advocates from all around the country—from Auckland to Hawke's Bay to Nelson to Christchurch. We toured Wellington by bike to see the protected cycleways, cycling superhighways, and other cycling infrastructure that have been put in place over the last 12 - 18 months. On the second day of the conference, we heard presentations from advocates, discussing experiences at Environment Court challenging car centric infrastructure, the importance of accessible biking infrastructure, and how bikes can serve as mobility aids.

There are a lot of unique problems that cycling advocates face in different parts of Aotearoa, but likewise, there are many things that are the same. We do not always need to reinvent the wheel; we should reach out to our colleagues and see what we can achieve together.



Jackson (centre) and I (far right) touring Wellington by bike.



The substantive conference, with presentations and discussions from cycling organisations across the country.

What opportunities are there in the future?

There is always more that Bike Waikato can do to achieve our mission.

Our advocacy has been traditionally focused on submissions—both written and verbal—but there is opportunity to uplift and promote cycling generally. In the past, we commissioned “Life from the Bike Lane” to tell the story of people who use their bikes for everyday purposes in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. An enduring conversation this year has been to start a zine which we can distribute to public spaces, including libraries and bike shops. I am sure this will continue next year.

Our website is also an initiative that has room for improvement. As social media becomes more dominated by algorithms, we have relied more on our website and newsletter to keep our members up to date with news and events. There is more work to do to consolidate this space and make it fit-for-purpose for our members. This is a space where Stephen Hay has been practicable.

Final Thoughts

Bike Waikato is nothing without the people who work to make it what it is, so I want to express my sincere thanks to our committee members and volunteers.

To conclude generally, Bike Waikato has grown in its capability over the last year. We have improved the way that we work with each other and this has shown in our achievements since the previous Annual General Meeting. The next step is to bring that to the forefront and make our work visible through community events and outreach.

This is a great organisation to be a part of and I am excited to see what we will achieve in the future.

Melissa Smith

Chairperson 2023/24