

# STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Chairman and Members, Engineering Services Committee

**FROM:** Steve Elkington, Asset Engineer Roads

**REFERENCE:** B858

**DATE:** 12 June 2008

**SUBJECT:** **NELSON TO KAWATIRI RAIL TRAIL AND MAPUA COSTAL TRAIL**

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## 1 PURPOSE

To present a brief discussion paper on the funding of both the Nelson to Kawatiri Rail Trail and Richmond-Mapua Costal Trail.

## 2 BACKGROUND

Some months ago a meeting took place at Victory School in Nelson to discuss the proposal of a tourist cycle network being developed in the top of the South. The group was chaired by Bill Gilbertson and was attended by cycle interest groups including representatives of Tasman District Council. The group concluded there is a need to develop a pathway system similar to the Otago Rail-trail in Central Otago and the Little River Rail-trail on the south-eastern side of Christchurch.

At the last Engineering Services Committee meeting, Bill Gilbertson gave a short presentation outlining the group's intent.

Council's Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy specifically mentions the Nelson to Kawatiri Rail Trail and the fact that a study needs to be undertaken to establish the feasibility of this concept. I believe the intent here is to ensure that right of passage can be attained over what once was the railway reserve and most of which is now in private hands and amalgamated with adjacent property titles. One thing that came out of the meeting at Victory School is that if short sections are won at a time then eventually the overall concept can be realised. It may be if a suitable section length could be developed and held up as a model then this could be the catalyst for eventually the entire link being achieved. The future pathway is probably going to have to be a mix of some railway reserve, road reserve, esplanade reserve, rights-of-way over private property and probably some on-road sections. Therefore the indicative route cannot be clearly defined at this stage.

Transit NZ, is presently planning the extension of the shared path that skirts around the edge of Whakatu Drive to the Champion Road underpass. The proposed route ideally would continue along the eastern side of the Richmond Deviation to Queen Street. Logically, this pathway could extend along the railway reserve to Appleby Highway (SH60) and at least to Ranzau Road. The aim initially of this southern bound pathway would be to link with Brightwater and Wakefield, therefore this linkage would provide a path for both commuter and recreational cyclists and, to some lesser degree, tourist cyclists.

## 3 COMMENT

### **3.1 Funding**

This project along with others could be funded by Land Transport NZ provided the facility is identified in Council's Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy and the economic analysis of the project can achieve a benefit-cost ratio of at least 1. However, Land Transport NZ will not fund off road recreational facilities. Therefore as long as the facility can be shown that it takes cyclists off the road and has some functionality in terms of linkage to a place that people want to access then, it could be funded with subsidised funds. Council's subsidy rate for this type of work is currently 59%.

Council's Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy shows the link for the trail extending from Lower Queen Street to SH60 on its Richmond Map. From Appleby Highway (SH60) it shows the rail corridor out to Wakefield on both the Brightwater and Wakefield Maps and identifies this strip as the Railway Reserve. For funding purposes it has been assumed that as long as the link is identified on a map even though this may not be the final alignment and that it is referred to in the body of the strategy as there isn't a map showing the proposed trail all the way to Kawatiri which it is, then this is sufficient for being eligible for funding purposes.

### **3.2 How can Council help?**

Council can arrange for the survey, design and construction of the project as well as its funding. Council would probably need to clearly identify the project in the LTCCP or at least identify a lump sum (which is \$211,400 for 2008/09) used for developing shared paths across the district. Land Transport NZ is looking to fund RCA's on a three-yearly basis and as long as the project is identified in its Regional Cycling and Walking Strategy then the time when the work takes place is entirely up to Council.

### **3.3 Role of the Group (Nelson to Kawatiri Rail Trail)**

The group's role could be that of a steering committee and should include Council representation. The group's main role would be to establish the most suitable route and establish landowner contact and cooperation. Where landowner cooperation could not be achieved than an alternative route would need to be considered. The route however needs to be reasonably direct or commuter cyclists will tend to use the main road instead.

### **3.3 Mapua Coastal Trail**

This route is simply a trail and is being developed piecemeal as and when land becomes available. Its primary purpose is for recreational use with no connectivity as a transport linkage to say Richmond. Therefore it is highly unlikely that subsidised funding could be used.

## **4 RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Engineering Services Committee support the development of the Nelson to Kawatiri Rail Trail through Council working with Bill Gilbertson's group, and fund the investigations of the shared path (Rail Trail) through existing funding allocations.**

Steve Elkington  
**Asset Engineer Roads**