

EASTERN BAY OF PLENTY

CYCLE TRAIL STRATEGY

JULY 2015





PART 1 PURPOSE

The Kawerau (KDC), Ōpōtiki (ODC) and Whakatāne District Councils (WDC) have produced this Eastern Bay of Plenty Cycle Trail Strategy to provide the strategic framework for an Eastern Bay of Plenty cycle trail network linking the region's major communities. The trail would traverse areas of high amenity value, including coastal reserves, rivers and lakes.

The Purpose of the strategy is to:

- Establish the strategic direction for a cycle trail network
- Provide for the development of an integrated Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP) Cycle Trail network
- Support future funding proposals for network development and expansion
- Seek support and endorsement from New Zealand Cycle Trail (NZCT) for inclusion as a potential expansion to the 'Great Rides' network.

This Strategy will:

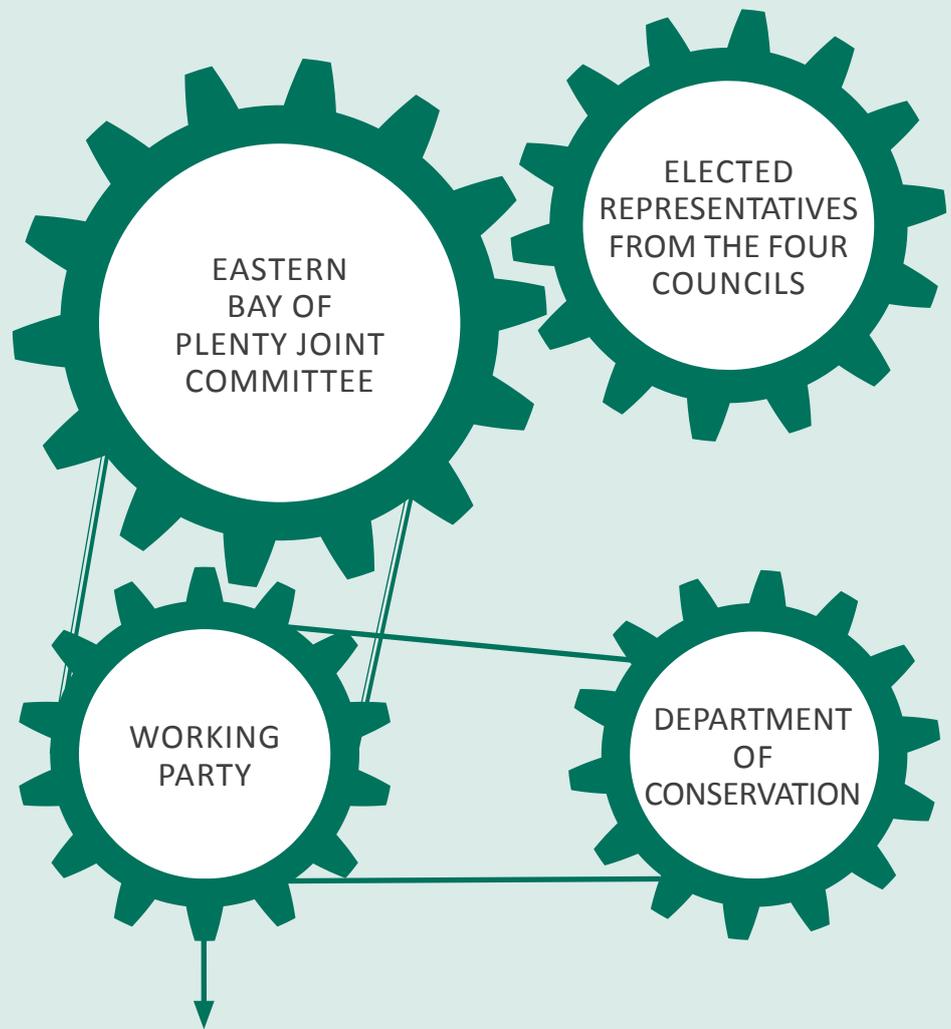
- Inform each Council's policy and strategy documents – including Long Term Plans, the Regional Land Transport Plan and the Eastern Bay Spatial Plan
- Be used as a Master Plan to develop long-term partnerships with government organisations and funding agencies such as Trusts, community organisations and other interested parties.

GOVERNANCE

The governance structure for this strategy is detailed in the following diagram.

The Eastern Bay of Plenty Joint Committee (EBOPJC) is a collaboration between the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, KDC, ODC and WDC, which responds to and manages a range of Eastern Bay of Plenty issues.

The purpose of the committee is to form, explore and make recommendations for strategic collaborative initiatives between the partner councils.



REVIEW AND COMMUNICATIONS

Review of the strategy is required to ensure that the mission and objectives are incorporated in the implementation of the strategy. The following table details the review and communications process.

MONITOR AND REVIEW STRATEGY PROGRESS

Monitoring and evaluation is critical as it allows us to see if progress is being achieved.

- Review and revise the Strategy every 2 years
- As part of any review, ensure revisions reflect policy and strategy updates and amendments

COMMUNICATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Ongoing collaborative advocacy at governance and operational level is essential

- Consult and engage as required - recognise that many actions naturally require collaboration with many other players
- Communicate strategy development and report on progress to stakeholders and the wider community

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS

Key Stakeholders for implementing the Strategy include:

- Local Territorial Authorities of Whakatāne, Kawerau and Ōpōtiki
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- Department of Conservation
- Iwi and hapu
- Affected private landowners
- NZ Transport Agency

Support is also anticipated from local community groups, clubs and Trusts. NZCT support will also be sought for a potential heartland ride.

This Strategy acknowledges the Mōtū Trails Charitable Trust and the stakeholders will work with the Trust, as appropriate, to develop the wider coastal trail.

Key Users include:

- Local communities
- Recreational users including cyclists, walkers and joggers
- Cycle Tourists
- Business operators

MISSION

To develop new or improved cycle trail experiences in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, that build on existing recreational cycling infrastructure to promote, encourage, enhance and support:

- Economic development and growth for Whakatāne, Ōpōtiki and Kawerau District Communities and the wider Bay of Plenty Region.
- Recreational opportunities
- Connected communities
- Environmental and cultural values
- Improved safety for cyclists.



NETWORK

- Develop a sub-regional network
- Link Eastern Bay of Plenty communities
- Link the Eastern Bay of Plenty with neighbouring Districts
- Provide community connections
- Link and enhance existing and future trail networks
- Investigate opportunities to enhance the cycle trail network and link to 'Great Rides'
- Meet NZCT standards
- All-weather trail.

RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL

- Provide recreational opportunities for local residents and visitors
- Celebrate and enhance the natural environment
- Celebrate cultural heritage
- Promote an active lifestyle and the health and well-being of our communities
- Encourage public access to coast, rivers and lakes.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Deliver economic benefits by providing a range of opportunities, including a multi-day cycle experience
- Identify, support and promote local business opportunities
- Work collaboratively to achieve collective branding and marketing of a Cycle Trail network
- Attract national and international visitors
- Introduce value to local communities.

SAFETY

- Provide a safe cycling experience
- Provide off-road connections between communities
- Improve the current cycling environment/infrastructure.

Primary objectives of the cycle trail network



PART 2 BACKGROUND

Nga Haerenga – The New Zealand Cycle Trail (NZCT) was launched as an economic development initiative by the NZ Government in 2009, co-funded with local Councils and charitable trusts. The intention was that predominantly off-road trails would showcase the environment, landscape, heritage and culture of New Zealand, while generating economic, social and environmental benefits for communities.

Based around the Ōpōtiki hinterland, Mōtū Trails won funding support from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and is now established as a 'Great Ride', forming part of the NZCT network.

Mōtū Trails has resulted in increased economic activity in the Ōpōtiki District. Reports by Angus & Co and Toi EDA have identified that 'growing Mōtū Trails' into a multi-day/night experience could result in significant benefits to the sub-regional tourism sector.

The partner agencies undertake to investigate and develop an integrated network of cycle trails in the Eastern Bay of Plenty for the benefits of economic development, recreational cycling, environmental enhancements and improved network safety.

Independent advice to-date has recommended extending Mōtū Trails with a Grade 2 (NZCT Grading) coastal cycle trail; providing a safe, moderate-to-easy ride within a very scenic environment; complementing existing services to the visitor industry.

Subsequently, further developments have opened an opportunity to extend the trail to Kawerau and potentially to Rotorua via Tarawera and Okataina. NZCT has approved the Rere Trail as a network expansion linking the Mōtū Trails with the Gisborne Region.

These options and others are to be explored by the Working Party.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Local Authorities

The three local authorities have strategic documents and plans, including each Council’s Long Term Plan (LTP), which provide for cycle and walkways as part of the recreation and transport networks.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

The EBOP Cycling Strategy is supported by the objectives of the Regional Land Transport Plan, which identifies Cycling (and walking) as being able to contribute to positive economic and public health outcomes within the Bay of Plenty. The Strategy is also supported by a number of policies in the BOPRC Regional Policy Statement and the National Coastal Policy Statement, in its ability to enhance the public open space and recreation qualities and values of the coastal marine area.

Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation (DOC) recognises the social, economic and conservation gains which can accrue from well-developed cycling facilities and associated services.

DOC owns and manages a limited number of formed cycle tracks within the Eastern Bay of Plenty – the most significant being the grade 3 Pakihi Track on the Mōtū Trails National Cycleway and the grade 2 Eastern section of the Tirohanga “Dunes Trail” which is also a part of Mōtū Trails.

The Department does not anticipate owning further assets to support cycling but is supportive of, and looks forward to working constructively with, cycleway developments by third parties, including those on Public Conservation Land.

Land Transportation - Government Policy Statement

The national Government Policy Statement on Land Transport (GPS) outlines the government strategy that will guide investment in land transport over the next ten years. The GPS sets out a series of priorities, objectives and long-term results, which it hopes to achieve through investment in the land transport network.

It is anticipated that investment which assists in delivering the EBOP cycle strategy will fit within the guidance provided by GPS, by delivering on the following priorities, objectives and desired long term results.

PRIORITY	OBJECTIVE	RESULTS	HOW
Economic growth and productivity	A land transport system that provides appropriate transport choices	Provide appropriate travel choices, particularly for people with limited access to a private vehicle	Providing a facility that enables cycle tourists to travel where they choose.
		Increased safe cycling through improvement of cycle networks	Encourage cycling by providing an improved cycle network
Road Safety	A safer land transport system that is increasingly free of death and serious injury accidents involving cyclists	Reduction in deaths and serious injuries.	Removing conflicts between cycle tourists and trucks by providing alternative low or no traffic routes for cyclists
	A land transport system that mitigates the effects of land transport on the environment	Mitigation of adverse environmental effects	Reduction in motor vehicle kilometres travelled, encouraging long term mode shift to cycling reducing impact of transport infrastructure



PART 3 KEY BACKBONE TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

This strategy supports the development of cycle opportunities that will form an integrated network through the Eastern Bay, with the option of further links to neighbouring districts. These identified projects will provide the backbone of that network. Many other cycle opportunities exist within Districts that will build a varied and more localised internal network of cycle options.

ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT - EAST TO WEST

1. Mōtū Trails (existing NZCT Great Ride)

Matawai to Mōtū Village - Mōtū Village to start of Pakihi Track (Gisborne District); then either; Pakihi Track to Otara Road to Ōpōtiki or; Mōtū Road Trail to Waiaua then; Dunes Trail to Ōpōtiki.

2. Ōpōtiki Stopbank Trail

6km riverside trail following Otara and Waioeka Rivers around Ōpōtiki Township.

3. Huntress Creek to Ōpōtiki

Linking Ōpōtiki town to Waiōtahi Beach via Huntress Creek wetlands and dunes

4. Waiōtahi Beach Trail

An easy, rolling trail alongside coastal dunes, Pohutukawa tunnels to Te Ahiaua/Waiōtahi Estuary.

5. Ōhiwa Harbour Trail

Follow the harbour fringe to Ōhiwa Loop Road boatramp – water taxi to Ōhope.



WHAKATĀNE DISTRICT EAST TO WEST

1. *Ōhiwa Harbour to Ōhope*

- A) ŌHIWA HARBOUR WATER TAXI/FERRY SHUTTLE:
An opportunity exists for the establishment of a water taxi/ferry shuttle service from the Ohiwa Landing on the Ōpōtiki side to Port Ōhope Wharf on the Whakatāne side of the Ōhiwa Harbour.

AND/OR

- B) Ōhiwa Harbour Trail: A mostly off-road trail linking from Ōhiwa Harbour Holiday Park to Pohutukawa Ave, Ōhope

2. *Ōhope Spit Ocean/Harbour Road*

(development opportunity in conjunction with Whakatāne Rotary Club)

Along the harbour-side of the Ōhope Spit from Ōhope Wharf to Harbour Road and Pohutukawa Avenue.

3. *Ōhope Community*

(existing on-road cycleway) Pohutukawa Avenue

- A) WHAKATĀNE – ŌHOPE CYCLEWAY
The Gorge Road Shared Use Path will complete the link between Ōhope and Whakatāne. This path already has high commuter and recreational use.
- B) BURMA ROAD WEST (existing, but requires further development)
Off-road cycle trail on a formed paper road through native bush, from Pohutukawa Avenue in Ōhope to Ōhope Road.
- C) WHAKATĀNE RIVERSIDE CYCLEWAY AND URBAN LOOPS (existing)
Paved Warren Cole walkway/cycleway beside the Whakatāne River between the Whakatāne Heads, CBD and Landing Road Bridge.
- D) WHAKATĀNE – MATATĀ COASTAL DUNE CYCLEWAY (part of the proposed Coastal Dunes extension)
A flat-to-rolling and meandering cycleway through the coastal dunes between Whakatāne and Matatā.
Midpoint link with the Thornton Beach Holiday Park.

WHAKATĀNE CYCLE OPPORTUNITIES NORTH TO SOUTH

1. *Matatā to Kawerau*

Riverside trail/wetland track from the Tarawera River mouth through to Kawerau township (could be via Edgecumbe or Te Teko)

OR

2. *Thornton to Edgecumbe/Te Teko*

Trail from Thornton (Rangitāiki River mouth) along the Rangitāiki River to Edgecumbe township and then on to Te Teko

3. *Te Teko to Kawerau*

Tahuna Road, Te Teko Golf Course, Forest tracks/roads to Kawerau

KAWERAU CYCLE OPPORTUNITIES NORTH TO SOUTH/WEST

1. *Kawerau River/Forest Trail*

Potential trail running along the riverside and through forest tracks from Kawerau to the Lake Tarawera Outlet. The owners of the land between Kawerau Township and the Tarawera Outlet are considering the development of a cycle trail between the two destinations over the next 5 years.

2. *Tarawera/Rotorua Connection*

Link Tarawera Outlet with Rotorua Lakes walk/cycle network, either around Lake Tarawera or across to Lake Okataina, or via existing water taxi service.



PART 4 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Ōpōtiki District Council Walking and Cycling Strategy
- Whakatāne District Council Walking and Cycling Strategy 2007
- Whakatāne District Council Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan 2013
- Regional Land Transport Plan
- Feasibility Study for Mōtū Trails
- New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide, Trail Grades
- Ministry of Business Innovation and Enterprise Report Mōtū Trails
- Department of Conservation Experience Audit
- Richard Balme Report for TOI EDA
- Ministry of Business and Innovation – 4 Trails Report
- Ōpōtiki Visitor Strategy
- Ōpōtiki Economic Development Strategy
- TOI EDA Tourism Economy Report (s)
- KDC District Council – Walking and Cycling Strategy 2007

