

Frequently Asked Questions - Te Aroha - Matamata Cycleway Extension

Why extend the cycleway from Te Aroha to Matamata?

The Hauraki Rail trail was a project promoted and supported by the Government to provide economic development and employment opportunities around New Zealand.

The Te Aroha to Matamata extension adds an extra day's riding, plus the chance for visitors to participate in other activities in our district.

Why has Council chosen the Manawaru/Tower Road route?

A number of submitters to Council supported the cycleway, but suggested a more scenic/varied route along Old Te Aroha Road (rather than the proposed route along Manawaru Road).

We investigated both routes and have chosen the route along Manawaru Road, as this will mean the trail can be 'grade 1'. Grade 1 trails are suitable for all levels of cyclists, and could be branded as an extension to the existing Hauraki Rail Trail.

What standard will the cycle way be built to?

- Grade 1 standard, which is <math><2^\circ</math> gradient for 98% of track, and between - The track will be 2.5m wide with a compacted gravel surface.
- The track will be fenced, typically on both sides with a 3-5 wire fence.
- Bridges will be 1.5m wide
- Toilets will be provided approximately every 7.5 - 10 kms
- Screen planting will be provided where required
- Litter and weed control will be undertaken by cycleway operator

Why use the road corridor?

The road corridor is land that is designated specifically for roading, and is usually much wider than the road itself. Constructing the cycleway along the road corridor allows for a flat, wide and smooth trail. There is enough room between the road and the road boundary to construct a separate cycleway (i.e. so cyclists are not riding on the road).

The road corridor has a gentle gradient, making it accessible to riders of all ages and abilities.

We also investigated a route along the river bank, however this route had high periodic flooding and limited land access.

If the access needs to be fenced, who will pay for this?

It is normal for the organisation building trail to pay for any fencing that is required.

Options include: 2 wire electric fence, 3 wire fence, 5 wire fence.

What will happen to our access across the road corridor/cycleway?

Current farm access points will be retained. Stock crossing farm race points will be hard-fill/gravel reinforced

Farm activities will have precedence (cyclists will give way). Cattle stops/kissing gates will be placed along the trail to ensure this.

Access along the cycleway for farming activities will not be permitted. Cycleway access points will be gated at road crossings.

What will happen with the remainder of the road corridor?

Farmers can continue to graze this land.

Will my privacy be affected?

In most cases the trail will be located and designed in such a way to preserve your privacy. Some landowners have expressed concerns about increasing rates of crime in rural areas, however there is no evidence of a link between recreational access to land and increasing crime in rural areas.



Will the cycle trail be used by people other than cyclists?

The purpose of the trail is for cyclists. Past experience has shown that a well designed cycle trail is likely to be popular with other users such as walkers. However, ultimately it is up to the owner of the trail to make decisions about who can use the trail.

Horses and motorbikes (except for maintenance purposes) will be prohibited.

What information will there be for cyclists?

- “Stop” road crossing signage at every road intersection
- “Give Way” Farm crossing signage at cattle race intersections
- Information signage – at appropriate locations (e.g. local history, local attractions, farming practices)
- Distance signage – at appropriate locations

Is there a code of responsible conduct?

Only a small proportion of users are likely to abuse their right of access. A code of responsible conduct could address problems that result from a lack of public knowledge about acceptable conduct in rural areas. It could also clarify the rights and responsibilities of all parties. There is already a Mountain Bike Code. A code of responsible conduct could be published and promoted.

What are my health and safety liabilities?

The Department of Labour has produced “Guidelines for Provision of Safety, Health and Accommodation in Agriculture”. Section 1.22 of these guidelines is relevant to cycle trails. This is provided as follows:

Section 1.22 Recreational visitors to farms, private or public land

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 primarily applies to people at work. However, section 16 of the Act places responsibility on people in control of the place of work to take all practical steps to ensure the health and safety of all people in the place of work. See section 1.6, Children and young persons.

Duties

Note: At the time of publication of these guidelines, amendments were before Parliament. The proposed changes are intended to make it clear that only those persons visiting the farm for a purpose connected with the workplace will be covered by the Act.

The Act imposes no duties on members of the public who visit or are allowed access on to — or the use of — farm property, private, or public land. Such visitors are responsible for their own health and safety while undertaking their recreational activity.

However, the farmer or landowner is required to take all practicable steps to ensure that no work activity or plant on the farm or land will cause or be a source of harm to the visitor while they are accessing, leaving, or on the farm or land.

The farmer is not expected to make her/his farm hazard free specifically for access by visitors, but to ensure that hazards in or arising from work on the farm

do not cause or become a source of harm to visitors.

While the Act does not place duties on people other than those covered by its provisions, visitors should be aware that many natural hazards and work-related hazards exist on farms, private, or public land, and they should take appropriate precautions, by not:

- Interfering with any plant or equipment, including electrical installations, fences or equipment;
- Entering unauthorised areas or farm buildings;
- Disturbing or unnecessarily approaching farm animals or work activities;
- Allowing children to wander unsupervised;
- Ignoring instructions or warnings; or
- Leaving gates open or damaging fences.

Farmers and property owners are not responsible for ensuring that natural hazards or any risks associated with the recreational activity carried on by a visitor do not cause harm to the visitor or any spectators involved.

Warnings and information for visitors

In taking “all practicable steps” as set out above, the farmer or landowner may need to provide information, instructions or warning signs to alert people to known hazards. Visitors should ensure that they take notice of any such information, instruction, or warning signs, and that they should not proceed if in doubt, until they contact the farmer or landowner for advice. Visitors should not venture into unauthorised areas.

The “Guidelines for Provision of Safety, Health and Accommodation in Agriculture” can be accessed at www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/agricug.pdf or www.dol.govt.nz

What other opportunities are there for me?

There is potential for adjoining property owners to offer services to cycleway users (e.g. refreshments, accommodation, farm experience visits).

Where can I get more information?

Visit mpdc.govt.nz/projects/cycleway-extension, sign up for email updates on this project at mpdc.govt.nz/sign-up or call Council on 07 884 0060.