

Background

The Fiordland Trails Trust is a registered charitable trust formed in 2007 to: “promote, plan, fund, develop and establish a functional and high quality interconnected network of trails for walking, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, horse riding and any similar non-motorised recreational leisure activities covering the area of Te Anau, Fiordland (including Mavora Lakes) Southland, New Zealand...”¹

To date we have constructed 19km of Lake2Lake Trail from Te Anau towards Manapouri. We plan to add another 5km this year and complete the remaining 4km as soon as the Fiordland National Park Plan allows. We also plan to construct other trails in the coming years. Next on our project list is a trail from Te Anau to Te Anau Downs. Two separate reports have estimated over \$1 million economic benefit from the Lake2Lake trail alone.² Our trail has been built to grade 2 of the New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide.³

Submission

Our main concern about the proposed variations is equity. Of the 29 projects listed, only three are in Southland and none are in or around Te Anau. Of the 26 Otago projects, 16 are in or around Queenstown. The plan budgets \$13 132 800 NZTA funding for walking/cycling improvements in Wakatipu over 2018-26 in addition to \$42 066 000 for Queenstown Town Centre and two lots of funding for ferry services. I have enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the previous CEO of the Queenstown Trails Trust and am happy to see their network develop. I also understand the resource is finite so funding some projects means others cannot be funded. I remind the committees that Te Anau has also experienced growth with an even smaller population of ratepayers to fund improvement. **I simply ask that the committees consider the needs in other areas so funding is distributed more equitably.**

I also think it is worth bearing in mind historical funding in the Plans and from other sources. Queenstown and Otago benefited from three allocations of the \$50 million for cycle trails announced in 2009. The one trail that received funding and runs through some of Southland is marketed as starting and finishing in Queenstown.⁴ We understand NZTA contributed \$400 000 towards this project. When \$25 million funding was announced in Budget 2016 for enhancing great rides, \$13 million was already allocated to Queenstown-Otago. In contrast the Fiordland Trails Trust has received no funding from any government agency other than a single guard rail NZTA installed at the one point our trail comes alongside SH95 (after we declined their offer to install only reflectors.)

The Trust’s requests to NZTA are summarised in my 2014 letter to Peter Robinson (enclosed). I also enclose my two-page summary of the 144 page “Te Anau and Environs Cycling Opportunities Study”⁵ mentioned in my letter and adopted by our local community board. Our request remains the same: for residents and visitors to be able to access town and trails via a safe transport network. There are perhaps two key difference now. One is that we have firm plans to develop a trail to Te Anau Downs

¹ Trust Deed 2007

² Southern Land CKL; Business Feasibility Report. 2010. Also reference 4 below.

³ Available at: <https://www.nzcycletrail.com/news/2015/new-edition-of-cycle-trail-design-guide-available/>

⁴ <http://www.aroundthemountains.co.nz/>

⁵ Envisage New Zealand; Te Anau and Environs Cycling Opportunities Study. 2014. Available at: www.venturesouthland.co.nz/Portals/0/Documents/R_14_8_11294.PDF

so more urgently need to develop a means of creating a trail along portions of SH94 and crossing the Upukerora River. The second difference is that there has been an increase in residences and accommodation providers in and around Te Anau, including north of Te Anau (up the Milford Road and on Sinclair Road). Combined with the increase in tourism, this means there are more users (vehicle, cycle and pedestrian) of the sections of road we requested NZTA consider.

Additionally, the Trust has data on users of our existing section of Lake2Lake Trail towards Manapouri showing the trail use has exceeded expectations. With just under 11 months of monitoring 37 753 people have been on the most popular section of trail. This section leads from the Department of Conservation Visitor Centre to the Bird Sanctuary. It may be tempting to assume that fewer users can be expected on our trail to Te Anau Downs but:

1. The entire trail to the Downs has outstanding scenic value which we think will attract at least as many users as the Lake2Lake Trail
2. There is existing accommodation at Henry Creek and Te Anau Downs
3. There are plans for further developments at Te Anau Downs
4. Existing tourist options can easily link with a trail to Te Anau Downs
5. There is a lagoon, wetlands and 10 hectares of land at Patience Bay that is home to a range of bird species. Local residents have met with Department of Conservation representatives and begun a restoration project in this area which could become an attraction in its own right.
6. Even the very most remote section of our Lake2Lake Trail has counted 5064 users since opening less than eight months ago.
7. Two new bike hire businesses have opened *since* we opened our trail and existing businesses report marked increase in rentals and sales. Marketing is underway or being developed to attract more users.

Most importantly, we think the existing layout is unsafe. I live at Patience Bay and ride to work in Te Anau as often as able. The Upukerora Bridge is narrow, at the bottom of a hill (for vehicles heading south), around a corner with trees (for vehicles heading north), on open road and exposes users to wind gusts as they come out from behind trees onto the bridge. [Figure 1]



Figure 1: Upukerora Bridge

Just North of the bridge, the road is narrower and climbs over the crest of rise [figure 2]. I have had the gut-wrenching experience of watching vehicles cross well over the solid yellow line to overtake me on my bike when I cannot see over the crest of the rise despite being higher and further forward than them. The Great Views Holiday Park is at the top of the climb. Some people staying at the Park

walk along the Milford Road to get to town. Literally last night as I drove home I had to cross the centre line myself to avoid a couple walking hand in hand towards me.



Figure 2: Milford Road immediately north of the Upukerora Bridge

Further north still, the road has corners and little room for cyclist or pedestrians to share the road outside the white line. One resident from Sinclair Road has given up cycling after being knocked off his bike three times. The other state highways (94, Te Anau-Mossburn and 95, Te Anau-Manapouri) have similar hazards on road with high vehicle use and residents trying to commute or ride recreationally.

Specific requests we ask be included in the plan

1. A cycle and pedestrian bridge across the Upukerora River that meets the criteria of the “New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide”
2. Cycle and pedestrian lanes alongside the three main roads leading from Te Anau:
 - a. Te Anau-Manapouri Highway past Ivon Wilson Park to William-Stephen Road +/- on to Manapouri to cater for:
 - i. Manapouri commuters and recreational road riders
 - ii. Hillside Road loop road cyclists (a route suggested in the Cycling Opportunities study)
 - iii. Cyclists returning from Queen’s reach and Balloon Loop or the end of the Lake2Lake TrailNB: May be able to use planned sewerage pipeline material to form cycle lane as far as the Te Anau-Manapouri Airport
 - b. Milford Road from Te Anau to Sinclair Road
 - c. Te Anau-Mossburn Highway to Whitestone River +/- to Hillside Road (the Whitestone River offers another off road cycling route up and downstream of SH94)
3. Funding towards our trail from Te Anau to Te Anau Downs. This trail would include a side route to Sinclair Road. Both the main trail and the side route would help provide a means for commuting, tourism and recreational riders to head to Te Anau Downs well away from the Milford Highway (as would the three lanes above for their respective highways).

Including these projects in the Plan would surely help in “achieving a safer and more sustainable transport system that supports and enhances regional development” in this small community “with a low ratepayer base to maintain and enhance their local transport network”.

Thank you for your consideration in these matters



Peter Robinson
Senior Network Manager - Southland
NZTA
PO Box 5245,
Dunedin 9058

27 November 2014

Dear Peter

The Fiordland Trails Trust would like to work with NZTA to help achieve our vision of “a functional and high quality interconnected network of trails...covering the area of Te Anau, Fiordland (including Mavora Lakes) Southland, New Zealand.” Our specific requests are:

- 1) Erect a “Share the road” sign on Milford Road (no sign there despite other roads out of town all having a sign and Milford Road probably having the highest number of cyclists)
- 2) Review speed limits/buffer zones leading into town
- 3) Provision for cycle trails along Te Anau Mossburn Highway at Queens Reach
- 4) Cycle/walking lanes alongside roads leading from town (for commuting and recreation):
 - a) Te Anau-Manapouri highway past Ivon Wilson to William-Stephen Road +/- whole way to Manapouri to cater for:
 - i) Manapouri commuters and recreational road riders
 - ii) Hillside Road loop road cyclists
 - iii) cyclists returning from Queen’s reach and Balloon Loop
 - iv) return route for cyclists from Te Anau to Manapouri multi use track.NB: May be able to use sewerage pipeline material to form cycle lane or transport for riverside track
 - b) Milford Road from town to Sinclair Road
 - c) Te Anau-Mossburn highway to Whitestone River +/- on to Hillside Road
- 5) Consideration of cycle and pedestrian bridge over Upukerora river – even if required some outside funding



Our main project is to develop a trail from Te Anau to Manapouri but we have plans for other trails and would like trails to link into a road and town network that enables safe and pleasurable travel. A key informing document has been Simon Noble's "Te Anau and Environs Cycling Opportunities Study" (available on the Venture Southland website¹.) Page 44, for example, suggests extending the area for reduced speed. At Milford Road end of town there are 85km corners so extending the 80km zone may have little impact on vehicles but enable safer travel for cyclists and walkers.

The Te Anau Community Board is also using Simon's study to inform projects around town. They have previously adopted a cycling strategy drawn up by the local Cycling Club (encl.). Would you please consider our requests above and give an indication as to whether and when they can proceed? We understand not all can be done now but would like NZTA to have a plan in place where they achieve goals when practical: widening the smooth seal, for example, when they are resealing a road; or painting a cycle lane (along Milford Road in town) when they are repainting.

The main help we need with NZTA for our trail to Manapouri, is consent to build the trail close to the road at Queens Reach where the gully comes close to State Highway 95. I am happy to provide any information you may require.

Thank you for considering these matters. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Stephen Hoskin
Chair

¹ www.venturesouthland.co.nz/Portals/0/Documents/R_14_8_11294.PDF

Cycling Project List By Agency

Developed by Fiordland Trails Trust

August 2014

[] refers to page number in “Te Anau and Environs Cycling Opportunities Study” by Simon Noble

A: Southland District Council

- 1) Cycle lanes¹ marked in town, especially:
 - a) Milford Road out to Upukerora bridge – with/under NZTA
 - b) Corner of Luxmore drive - Milford Road ²
 - c) Luxmore drive – with/under NZTA
 - d) Quintin Drive at least to Water Park entrance
 - e) Main street
 - f) Milford Crescent³
- 2) Path through Water Park to Quintin Drive including exit/”pram pass” onto Quintin Drive [pg 38, 43]
- 3) Cycle/walking loop
 - a) Along Sandy Brown Road
 - b) Sandy Brown to Caswell St along Milford Highway – a well-worn grass track at present
 - c) Path through green belt from Caswell St to link with current brick track to West and North of Kepler Heights (provides cycle and walking option for school children and commuters)
- 4) Upgrade lakeside loop from Boat Harbour to mouth of Upukerora river
 - a) Especially lower Upukerora Road
 - b) Planting/shelter along lakefront
 - c) Consider widening path from DOC headquarters to boat harbour
- 5) Signage to remind drivers about cyclists
 - a) At each entrance to town
 - b) At each end of the main street
- 6) Cycle racks (suitable for mountain and road bikes)
 - a) Paper Plus
 - b) Lions park/public toilets
 - c) Lakeside information centres – one or both
 - d) Gym on Milford highway
- 7) Ivon Wilson Park [pg 39, 87f]
 - a) Loop track
 - b) Revegetation
 - c) Establish a dual use “connection through the park” and “loop back to the main car park” [pg 35, 37, map 38, 39], [done 2016]
- 8) Remove signage prohibiting cyclists in paths through residential areas
- 9) Development of cycle loops [pg 43]
 - a) Signage
 - b) Sealing
- 10) Change current maintenance regimen and “formalise appropriate standards” for roads [pg 57, 84-86]

¹ May not have the minimum 1.2-1.5m recommended but have some line both painted and smoothly sealed lane, designated for cycling. Rough space, as occurs along the Milford Road encourages cyclists to ride in the smooth seal where vehicles travel.

² This area is also being considered as a site to move the footpath further from the road to minimise the chances of pedestrians, especially school children, from falling into the path of a vehicle.

³ Probably Te Anau’s most utilised area for both bikes and cars yet has insufficient space for parked cars, pedestrians accessing vehicles, travelling vehicles and bikes to all share the road.

- 11) Other items in section 4.2.2 and 5.2 including:
 - a) "Pram passes" (ramps) from ~DOC centre to Quintin drive walkway
 - b) 30km/hr sign posting
 - c) Reduce main street planting islands so cycle lane is not narrowed
 - d) Remove build-out on Lakefront drive pedestrian crossing and other areas
 - e) Manapouri markings on streets, signs, chains [45, 46]
- 12) Consider regular funding to support Fiordland Trails Trust in maintaining its trails [pg 92][budgeted in annual plan 2016/17]

B: NZTA

- 13) Erect a "Share the road" sign on Milford Road (no sign there despite other roads out of town all having a sign and Milford Road probably having the highest number of cyclists)
- 14) Review speed limits/buffer zones leading into town [pg 44]
- 15) Provision for cycle trails along Te Anau-Mossburn Highway at Queens Reach
- 16) Cycle/walking lanes alongside roads leading from town (for commuting and recreation):
 - a) Te Anau-Manapouri Highway past Ivon Wilson to William-Stephen Road +/- whole way to Manapouri to cater for:
 - i) Manapouri commuters and recreational road riders
 - ii) Hillside Road loop road cyclists
 - iii) Cyclists returning from Queen's reach and Balloon Loop
 - iv) Return route for cyclists from Te Anau to Manapouri multi use track.
 NB: May be able to use sewerage pipeline material to form cycle lane or transport for Te Anau-Manapouri riverside track
 - b) Milford Road from town to Sinclair Road – note especially narrow road, poor visibility and solid yellow line on rise just north of Upukerora bridge
 - c) Te Anau-Mossburn highway to Whitestone River +/- on to Hillside Road
- 17) Consideration of cycle and pedestrian bridge over Upukerora river – even if required some outside funding

C: Department of Conservation

- 18) Upgrade South Mavora Lake track to rideable standard
- 19) Set budget for maintenance of Percy Saddle
 - a) Allow resources for some "simple upgrade" +/- with bike clubs/other volunteers [pg 59]
- 20) Clarify land status of existing track from Yacht Club to Wildlife park –is any in National Park?
 - a) ?able to do upgrade to 2.5m shared trail? [done]
- 21) Clarify and publicise currently available cycling opportunities
- 22) Clarify legality of mountain biking Percy Saddle

D: Trails Trust

- 23) Develop shared grade 2, 2.5m wide trail from Yacht Club to control gates [done]
- 24) Develop grade 3-4 trail from control gates to Queens Reach [done, grade 2]
- 25) Develop grade 3-4 trail from Queens reach to Rainbow reach [aiming start Jan 2017, grade 2]
- 26) Develop grade 2 trail from Rainbow reach to Manapouri

E: Bike clubs, volunteers, other organisations

- 27) Provide volunteers +/- funds to upgrade Percy Saddle – TACI, Southland Mountain Biking Club [upgrade of track marking completed 2016 by Southland Mountain Bike Club]
- 28) Control gates cycle loop - TACI