

Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport
PO Box 3175
Wellington 6140
gps@transport.govt.nz

26 March 2024

Submission on the Draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024-34

Tēnā koutou

Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa, the Outdoor Access Commission, is the Crown agent responsible for providing leadership on outdoor access issues. Our role is to advise on and advocate for free, certain, enduring, and practical access to the outdoors.

Herenga ā Nuku plays a key role in negotiating, establishing and improving outdoor access for New Zealanders. This includes making people and organisations aware of public access locations and ensuring that access endures over time. Our mandate includes all forms of public access, including by foot, bike, horse and vehicle.

Our submission to the draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2024 (GPS 2024) is that the statement should consider the role that off-road access can play in New Zealand's transport network.

Unformed public access, such as unformed legal roads, marginal strips, esplanade reserves, and easements, can play an important role as a transport asset for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as a recreational asset. In some cases, such as the bike trail network in Queenstown, off-road public access initially envisioned as a recreational asset has become an important commuting route and transport asset, reducing the pressure on formed roads. However, off-road access and connectivity appear to fall into a grey zone—not funded through transport budgets and not funded through recreation budgets.

An example is the Pūhoi to Mangawhai Trail project, which we are supporting the Matakana Coast Trails Trust Ngāti Manuhiri, Auckland Transport, and Auckland Council to develop. This will create a significant network of trails linking Northland to Auckland.

The business case for the Pūhoi to Mangawhai Trail project estimates 390,000 uses per year – many of them transport journeys rather than recreation journeys. It estimates \$78m of health benefits (improvement in health

Level 12, Majestic Centre
100 Willis Street
Wellington, 6011

herengaānuku.govt.nz

outcomes for domestic users). It will create 330 jobs during the construction phase, and many more jobs will be ongoing from servicing the trails – such as hospitality, tourism, and bike maintenance jobs.

Projects such as this, which support off-road transport, advance the government’s overarching goal for effective, efficient, safe, secure, accessible, and resilient transport that supports the growth of our country’s economy.

Off-road transport options offer an important resilient connection between communities following extreme weather events and natural disasters because they can be restored much more quickly than formed roads and can be used by people on foot and bicycle.

It is important that greenfield developments consider both formed road and unformed off-road transport access. Unformed off-road transport routes are a more economical, healthier, and more sustainable transport option for some people and help relieve pressure on the formed road network.

A successful transport strategy will need to develop off-road and on-road pathways. Off-road transport options for walkers, cyclists and horse riders offer value for money because they make better use of existing capacity. We need to develop off-road tracks and trails to create a network that crosses public land, private land, council land, and land over which local hapū and Māori organisations hold mana whenua.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ric Cullinane', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ric Cullinane
Chief Executive