

## **Proposals for consideration for Marlborough District Council's Annual Plan 2022 [John Kershaw 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022]**

The below points are in addition to my submission set out in the 2022 Annual Plan Consultation Document on-line Submission Form.

### **1. Proposed Wairau River Regional Park**

**1a.** This promising proposal needs consultation, support and funding. Restrictions on access into the river reserve should be implemented while at the same time and allocating areas for specific activities.

**1b.** The access roads [from SH62 and SH63] feeding into the existing reserve southern boundary should be retained. However, preventing vehicular traffic from using the stopbank would make a wonderful safe & picturesque Shared Path for walkers and cyclists. This would require gates and squeeze bars and opening up the two sections of stop bank currently closed off to the public. I commend council's on-going efforts to gain access to these sections are encourage you to keep at it!

**1c.** Imagine the joy of this safe Shared Path running from SH1 to the Waihopai confluence. This would immediately add 20 km to our Shared Path network.

**1d.** Some of the various access points would require parking/turning areas and a limited number should still go to the river's edge to enable small boats, canoes, paddleboards and the like to access the water.

**1e.** It would be a real asset to have a couple of formalised swimming areas on the riverbank. Parking, toilets, bar-b-ques, a safe method of entering and exiting the water and a 'harbour' or lagoon type arrangement with placid water for swimming out of the current.

**1f. Declaration:** I am a member of the Renwick Smart and Connected Cycle Group [otherwise known as BWR [Bike Walk Renwick]]. The points raised below are my own, while some are BWR's proposals or plans some may not be.

**1g.** Regarding BWR: I commend and thank council for its support of the community lead initiatives that BWR are involved in and for establishing the Working Group chaired by councillor Taylor.

**1h.** There is one facet of this Regional Park project that would be very valuable. If council could act on now and this is the section from the SH6 bridge along to Giffords Rd: Please close off the road on the top of the Wairau stopbank to motorised traffic on this section now. Gates [for Rivers Dept access] and squeeze bars would be required. The benefits of this would be; It could then be considered a true Shared Path [walking and cycling only] and thus added to the region's official network of Shared Paths. Secondly, it will start getting those currently using this area adjusting to roads being closed as the Regional Park takes shape.

### **2 The Shared Path network in the Wairau Plains and Southern Valleys**

**2a.** I support council's continued investment into Shared Paths [walking and cycling] in the Wairau Plains and Southern Valleys areas.

**2b.** The TRC report [commissioned by council] highlighted the unique characteristics of these areas that make cycling and walking for tourists so desirable: **Flat Terrain**, 'Brilliant Every Day' **weather**, beautiful **scenery** and a **destination**, in our case not only cellar doors but a diverse range of other activities.

**2c.** The status of these paths in order of desirability are:

**'Away from road'** is the most desirable [calling these 'off-road' sounds like a mountain bike track] an example of these is 'The Boulevard' between SH6 and New Renwick Rd, generously provided by Pernod Ricard.

**'Beside Road'**, with a good distance of separation of several metres of grass between path and road, as beside SH6 from Foxes Island Rd to The Wairau River.

**'On-road'**, [marked Cycle Lane] better than nothing!

**'Away from road'** routes are best but most challenging as these routes can trigger access issues. I ask that council be both brave and innovative in getting access to cross private or leased land.

**2d.** A network of interlinking paths is needed, to provide continuity, link as many destinations as possible and provide distance. Cyclists in particular want distance. Loops are best, rather than there-and-back paths.

**2e.** The benefit of Shared Paths is significant: Cycle-tourism is popular and we want this demographic of tourists visiting our region to spend money, go home and spread the word about all that sunny Marlborough has to offer.

**2f.** Recreational use for our own residents is important.

**2g.** Commuting by cycling will grow if safe routes are offered as both E-bikes enable faster and easier transport and more of us take to bikes as part of our individual climate change action.

**2h.** I commend council's support and funding for these Shared Paths and ask for this support to continue and grow.

**2i.** Since 2015, The shared paths RSC has been involved in facilitating are: Foxes Island Rd to Rapaura Rd [2015], Rapaura Rd to Wairau stopbank [2017], Vintage Lane to Alma St North/Foxes Island Rd [2018], 'The Boulevard' Linking New Renwick Rd to SH6 [2019], Jacksons Rd from Rapaura Rd to Allan Scott [2020].

**2j.** The current project is 6.5 km linking the above Jacksons Rd path to the Ōpaoa north stopbank to Old Renwick Rd, then on to SH6 and finally feeding into Havelock St in Renwick. This is a big project requiring multiple easements and significant civil engineering and has taken time to progress, especially within the Covid years. The funding for this project was approved by Council in 2021 and I hope these 2021 dollars will be enough for 2022/23 costs.

**2k.** Marlborough competes with other regions for cycle tourists. Many other regions are way ahead of us in both number of km of path and destinations within the path network. We need to grow our path km, just to keep up, and grow some more to become one of the major cycle trail regions.

**2l.** Just one example: After one year of operation the Dunstan Trail has had 83,000 visitors, and a reputed \$10m to \$12m injected into the local economy.

**2m.** We want and need some of that action!

### **3. Local Shared Paths and the Whale Trail**

**3a.** The Whale Trail is a fantastic project and well done those who seized the moment, made a great pitch and secured the central govt funding for this.

**3b.** To leverage the benefit of the Whale Trail we need 'Whale-trailers' to be 'stay another dayers, and not 'just ride aways'. We need both a North and a South link into the Whale Trail.

**3c.** The ideal North link is the Wairau stopbank from SH 1 all the way up to beyond Renwick.

**3d.** There already are sections of the South link: we just need the vision and the funding to join the 'Boulevard' on New Renwick Rd up to the existing path in the Ben Morven valley.

### **4. On-road cycling and Speed Limits**

**4a.** No matter how big the region's Shared Path network it will always be necessary to walk or cycle on-road.

**4b.** I commend the first wave of speed limit reductions on our local rural roads. I ask that all local rural roads be reduced from 100 to 80km/h.

**4c.** Let's think about SH6 which had a series of speed limit reductions introduced before the holiday period in 2020. We heard all the ridiculous claims about the reduction: It would cause more crashes, it would use more fuel, it would be an economic disaster. The fuss has died down and after one year the death and injury rate was slashed, so please follow Waka Kotahi's example.

**4d.** In particular I ask that Jacksons Rd be included as well as the roads that form the Renwick Cycle Route, that is all roads in the Omaka Valley, plus Dog Point Rd and Godfrey Rd.

**4e.** Brookby Rd in particular [ Declaration of interest: I live on that road] should be 80km/h as this is a transport route for two quarries, so can have up to 11,000 truck movements per year on this narrow rural road.

**4f.** The main quarry operator has a new consent with one of its conditions being a 70km/h speed limit for its trucks. This is helpful in reducing the impact on cycling and walking, but mixing a quarry haul route with an on-road cycle route is not ideal. With many trucks travelling at 70km/h it will be much safer if all other traffic is restricted to 80km/h.

## **5 Waste and Recycling**

**5a.** I commend council for the work done on the WMMP 2021-2027.

**5b.** I support more council resources going into recycling soft plastics. This website: <https://www.recycling.kiwi.nz/store-locator> shows soft plastic recycling is possible in many centres in the North Is, but only in Christchurch in the South Is.

**5c.** If our size or our location prohibits Marlborough from being included, I propose council should investigate subsidising this scheme.

**5d.** Section 4.4.4 [Page 21] of the WMMP mentions [last paragraph] Future Post currently only operating in the North Is. I ask that council consider offering a subsidy or incentive to this company to set up in our region.

## **6 EV & E-Bike charging**

**6a.** The EV charging network in our region is poor. Picton has none! Blenheim has only one in the CBD at the Warehouse, Renwick has none, Seddon has none. Please, lets look enlightened, Council should have these in the Alfred St carpark and other strategic places in the CBD and Redwoodtown. At the very least Council should be facilitating other parties to install these.

**6b.** Picton! Picton, the gateway to the South Is. There is no public EV charge station there. We should have a bank of them, right near the CBD.

**6c.** EVs are good for the CBD! Apart from the environmental benefit they take time to charge, so help keep customers in the CBD longer. Same for Seddon, an EV charge station will have EVs stopping for a charge-up, an ice cream, a coffee or maybe lunch.

## **7 3 Waters**

Despite the recent revision of 3 Waters by the government, I oppose the scheme. I acknowledge probably every local body needs or will need substantial upgrading of 3 Waters infrastructure, but council should resist involvement in the proposed 3 Waters entity.

A better model would be: Central Government produce a set of 3 Waters standards for all local authorities. Local authorities submit the scope for upgrading infrastructure along with the time-line to meet the standards. Central government provides grants to help fund these works.

The money has to come from somewhere and the Government's existing 3 Waters plan relies on cost savings from 'efficiencies of scale' from having just four 3 Waters entities. I remain doubtful any significant savings can be made under the proposed 'clunky' 3 Waters organisational structure.

In short, the Government should just pay the Councils directly without the extra layer of 3 Waters bureaucracy.

**My request to council is to adopt the above proposals or points in items 1 to 7 above.**

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