



# Picton to Blenheim Cycle & Walkway

## **Picton Smart & Connected:**

**Submission in Support of Bike Walk Marlborough Trust's application to MDC 2016-17 Annual Plan, for funding of professional fees, for a Picton to Blenheim Cycle and Walkway.**

**Picton Smart & Connected supports the Bike Walk Marlborough Trust application for \$25,000 for professional fees for preparing a feasibility study and project plan for a 30km (approx.) cycling and walking route between Picton and Blenheim.**

## **Benefits of Picton to Blenheim Cycle and Walkway**

The proposed off State Highway 1 cycleway between Picton and Blenheim is to be cycle and walking friendly. It will have an appropriate gradient and sufficient points-of-interest to promote recreational and tourist cycling within the Picton and Blenheim communities.

The route will encourage Picton and/or Blenheim to be a base for cycling tourism. The proposed Picton to Blenheim cycle route will augment the ongoing development of mountain bike tracks within Picton, the Queen Charlotte Track Great Ride and the Link Pathway between Havelock and Picton. The new cycle route will provide tourists with a further reason to stay and play in Picton as the Sounds hub.

The proposed Picton to Blenheim cycle and walkway will:

- ✓ Connect to the Spring Creek to Blenheim Shared Path; thus maximising return on this considerable investment by Council and the Government Urban Cycleways Programme.
- ✓ Refresh the approach to Picton along Wairau Road with landscaping arising from the project.
- ✓ Safeguard pedestrians and cyclists by separating them from the high speed traffic along State Highway 1 - in particular the dangerous passing lanes through The Elevation.
- ✓ Encourage more people to cycle; many of whom lack the skills and confidence to cycle on busy State Highway 1. As a SH1 cycleway it will, importantly, allow opportunities to explore funding from outside of Marlborough for this regional development.
- ✓ Increase demand for cycle hire between Picton and Blenheim. Cycling on State Highway 1 is currently discouraged by business due to the significant hazards of the SH1 route. A safe and interesting pathway will allow for one-way hire between the two towns and the associated development of a cycle tourism business.
- ✓ Provide a safer and easier gradient route for the whole community to cycle and walk parts, or all, of the route between Picton and Blenheim.
- ✓ Create a safe cycling and walking route for Tuamarina and Koromiko communities, thus promoting an uptake of cycling, and potentially, providing services to cyclists on route.
- ✓ Address the increasing concerns of NZTA and Marlborough Roads for safety of cyclists on State Highway 1 by giving them a safe alternative. Increased ferry traffic and logging truck movements pose a threat to cycling and walking. Moreover the increasing provision of wire

cable roadside barriers are a deterrent to cycling because of the high impact hazard they present to them.

- ✓ Allow exploration of points of interest along the route between Picton and Blenheim - such as historic sites, sites of cultural importance to Maori, agricultural history and the Para wetlands restoration – all explained by signs and information boards.
- ✓ Create demand for one or two day cycling trips leveraged off ferry passengers and catering for a whole range of cycling experiences around Picton – from learner to advanced. At present this is an underdeveloped opportunity due to the effective cyclist-walker land-locking of Picton, caused by road traffic impediments through The Elevation.

Furthermore a cycle and walking route between Picton and Blenheim will allow Marlborough to start catching up on the nation-wide development of cycleways which have been rapidly advancing in other regions over the past five years.

#### Supporting MDC Mandates

The proposed Picton to Blenheim (P2B) cycle walkway clearly supports MDC's 'Growing Marlborough – A Strategy for the Future', by meeting all the initiatives identified for 'Future-proofed Transport Networks', i.e.:

- "Minimising the severance effects of State Highways and main arterials
- Raising awareness of the presence of townships on State Highways and main arterials
- Proposing more pedestrian and cycle friendly alternatives to the main routes
- Promoting a higher degree of connectivity and accessibility in the new growth areas
- Extending and enhancing the recreational movement network
- Making existing streets and routes more pedestrian and cycle friendly"<sup>1</sup>.

#### Progress to Date

In early 2016 Picton Smart & Connected's Bike Walk Picton Working Group commenced exploration of an 'Easy Grade' cycle and walking route between Picton and Blenheim. The Working Group's volunteers have significant skills and experience in cycling, cycle trail development, surveying, architectural design, and developing safe, activated amenities.

Early achievements have been to:

- ✓ Identify a route through The Elevation and to work with NZTA to achieve early development of the cycleway within the NZTA 2015-16 budget. Historically, the gradient and narrowness of The Elevation has been seen as an insurmountable problem for establishing a cycle trail and this break-through in terms of having found a way forward now opens up the real possibility of achieving the Picton to Blenheim cycling and walking connection at last!
- ✓ Identify a staged development path for the route.
- ✓ Engage with NZTA in support of the development, with plans to approach KiwiRail and significant private land owners soon.
- ✓ Identify some 30 (and rising) notable points of interest along the route (historic, cultural, ecological, agricultural) to enhance the overall experience and showcase Marlborough far beyond wine and The Sounds.
- ✓ Commence drafting a concept document for consultation about the proposed cycle and walking route.

#### Next Steps – Feasibility Study and Project Plan

---

<sup>1</sup> Growing Marlborough – District-Wide Overview, Marlborough District Council Page 3, March 2013

Preparation of a feasibility study and project plan to obtain funding for the route development is the next step. Because this is a cycle/walking initiative of regional significance, Picton Smart & Connected agree that Bike Walk Marlborough Trust should take the lead role in setting up a project group.

Bike Walk Picton will continue to provide volunteer support and participate on the Bike Walk Marlborough Trust project team.

The Council's financial contribution will allow the most rapid advancement of the cycleway whilst maximising return on the significant volunteer investment in time and effort.

Without funding, the Trust will be unable to engage the required engineering and project development resources for the cycle and walkway - and this opportunity would once again be lost to Marlborough.

Submission in Support

Picton Smart & Connected support Bike Walk Marlborough Trust in its application for \$25,000 for funding professional services needed to develop a feasibility study and project plan for the Picton to Blenheim Cycle and Walkway.