

24 April 2013

**BIKE TAUPŌ SUBMISSION ON THE TAUPO DISTRICT ANNUAL PLAN 2013/2014**

Please find attached a submission on behalf of Bike Taupo in respect to the above Plan.

Please note that representatives from Bike Taupo would like to speak to this submission in Taupo. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Waikato Conservation Management Strategy, and we look forward to presenting it in person.

Yours Sincerely



Rowan Sapsford

Bike Taupo Chairman

**Full Name of Submitter** : Bike Taupo Advocacy Group (inc)

**Contact Person** : Rowan Sapsford – Chairperson

**Contact email** : chair@biketaupo.org.nz

**Full Postal Address** : PO Box 1850, Taupo 3351

**Phone Number** : Rowan - 021 744 957

**Date** : 24 April 2013

**No. of Pages** : Five (including the covering letter)

#### **BIKE TAUPO SUBMISSION TO THE TAUPŌ DISTRICT DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2013-14**

##### **Introduction:**

Bike Taupō is a cycle advocacy group which provides the Taupō community with a voice for cycling. The organization was formalised in 2002 and currently has approximately 1500 members.

You will be well aware that as the population gains a better understanding of how humanity must move towards a more sustainable lifestyle, energy efficient forms of transport, particularly those like cycling that have a benefit to wellbeing, are of vital importance. That is why Bike Taupō works alongside the Taupō District Council (TDC) to promote the awareness and safety of cycling and in developing infrastructure with the goal of making Taupō the most cycle friendly town in New Zealand.

To date Bike Taupō has helped create a cycling culture within the district through constructing and maintaining nearly 200km off road tracks, partaking in continuous dialogue with regulatory authorities; acting as an “umbrella” organisation to help foster and promote the district’s individual clubs like the Freestyle BMX and trials and road cycling clubs.

Cycling is an important part of the Taupō economy. Bike Taupo alone has an asset base worth approximately three million dollars, making Bike Taupo a significant investor in the local community. A recent survey targeted at those who cycle in Taupō identified that on average each cycling visitor will spend \$1,250 in Taupō on each visit. Further analysis is required of the survey but the near 3000 responses have provided some good data about cycling in the Taupō District.

One of the resounding responses that were received in this survey when asked what could be included, was safety. Bike Taupō is also very concerned about the safety of cyclists in the Taupō District. This concern is not just limited to road cyclists using our rural roads, but also cyclists in

town. If Taupō gets a reputation as an unsafe place to ride it could result in significant economic impacts, not to mention the actual physical harm to residents and visitors.

Bike Taupō believes that the safety of all of our road users is an important matter and has been advocating to Taupō District Council for nearly ten years on this point. Bike Taupō is disappointed that TDC appears to take a back seat on this issue and let our organization and other groups and individuals take the lead on cycle safety in the District. We note that the TDC website states that *“The Transportation team has the lead role in the delivery of a road safety programme and the walking and cycling network action plan”*, we have seen little evidence of this leadership of late. We would like to see TDC take a more active role in looking after the safety of cyclists and other road users in the District.

Earlier this year, Bike Taupō was part of group that presented to the Council on the outcome of a cycling summit held last year. At this presentation, we asked whether or not the Council know how much it actually spent on cycling on an annual basis. This question was not answered and we would like to pose this question again, as it is not clear from the draft annual plan.

### **Economic Development – Destination Great lake Taupō Funding**

Bike Taupō supports the continued funding of Destination Great Lake Taupō (DGLT). DGLT provides a very valuable service and brings a lot of people to our District. DGLT has promoted Taupō as a cycling destination which mean more people ride our trails and support cycling based industries.

### **Economic Development – Events**

Bike Taupō notes the additional funding to the events industry. A number of these events are cycling based or have a cycling component which is dependent on the trails that BT has built and maintains, is dependent on Taupō being known as a cycling destination and is dependent on good cycling infrastructure. BT queries whether TDC should increase funding into events, or instead spend more on better cycling infrastructure and making Taupō a more ride friendly district for residents and visitors alike.

### **Transport - Cycling Strategy**

Bike Taupō notes that there is an increase in the annual expenditure on implementing the cycle strategy. Bike Taupō requests more information on what this expenditure is made up of, i.e. what parts of the strategy are being implemented through this spending? The request for this information is two fold, firstly Bike Taupō wants to ensure that this money is being spent effectively and with relevance, secondly Bike Taupō would like to work with TDC on how this spending is prioritised and allocated. Collectively Bike Taupō has a representation and access to information that means that we are able to work with TDC on such matter in a proactive and informed matter.

### **Transport - Cycling Culture**

BT would like to see priority spending on making the urban areas of the Taupō District safer for cyclists. This includes signage, cycle lanes, better road sweeping, growing easy cycling opportunities (such as the lions walk) information for road users on sharing the road and working with Bike Taupō and other groups to get more people on Bikes. BT would like to see more recreational and commuter cyclists in Taupō Town and strengthen the cycling culture in Taupō. It is this cycling culture which adds to Taupō as a destination for visitors and as a base for a lot of the events which are held in Taupō. A stronger cycling culture and better cycling infrastructure would also mean that the profile of cycling in Taupō would be greater which would have the potential to reduce accidents.

Bike Taupō's 'Kids Bike Taupō initiative is proving effective with many children in numerous schools taking part. This initiative is growing the cycling base in Taupo meaning that in the future there will potentially be an increase in the number of commuter and leisure cyclists on the streets. Bike Taupō urges TDC to look at what has been done in centers such as Hastings and New Plymouth to see the kind of cycling based improvements that have been made and how these could be made in Taupō. Bike Taupō sees this as a priority for TDC if it wants the District to continue to have cycling as one of its defining activities.

Bike Taupō also urges TDC to focus on facilitating easy (family) riding opportunities around Taupo. There is a high demand for this type of experience from Bike Taupō members and riders who we have talked to. Such rides will also facilitate the breadth of riding experience available to residents and visitors alike. Bike Taupō notes that the cycle path adjacent to the ETA remains unfinished, does not appear to be maintained and will soon be unusable. This is a very visible piece of infrastructure to users of the ETA and is not a very positive advertisement of Taupō as a cycling destination.

### **Transport - Poihipi Road**

Bike Taupō notes that TDC has committed to spend money widening parts of Poihipi Road. Bike Taupō supports this and would like to see at least \$100k per annum continue on an annual basis beyond 2014. This would enable the stretch of Poihipi Road between State Highway 1 and Whangamata Road to be widened so that there are good shoulders for the many cyclists to use this road, use it safely. Bike Taupō has been advocating TDC on this for nearly ten years and wants to reiterate its observations that the current use (numbers of traffic and type) of Poihipi Road is far greater than what it was designed and built for many years ago. Bike Taupo believes that there are opportunities to investigate the possibility of corporate sponsorship to increase resources for this project and work with other road users to solve this issue. To reiterate, TDC does not need to tackle such issues by them selves.

### **Owen Delany Park**

BT supports proposals to extend the mountain bike trails in Owen Delany Park. These trails join on to Bike Taupo's Rotary Ride track which is ridden by approx 40,000 people a year. Bike



PO Box 1850  
TAUPO 3351

[bike@biketaupo.org.nz](mailto:bike@biketaupo.org.nz)  
Rowan Sapsford (Chairman) +64 (21)744 957  
Cath Oldfield (Administrator) +64 (27) 280 4005

---

Taupō is happy to work with TDC in the development and maintenance of these trails to assist in keeping the Districts trails to a high standard.

### **Bike Taupō Funding**

Finally, Bike Taupō supports a continuation of the level of funding that Bike Taupō receives from Taupō District Council on an annual basis. This funding is put to good use in the continued development of our world renowned mountain bike trails, our maps and website which assist people to ride in Taupō. The new funding for Kids Bike Taupō has already enabled many children to learn how to ride bikes in local schools.