

‘Out and About – On Tracks’

Nelson City Council’s Parks and Reserves Off Road Tracks Strategy

BACKGROUND

In October 2015 the Nelson City Council adopted its ‘Out and About’ – Active Travel and Pathway-based Recreation Policy covering physical activity on roads, footpaths and pathways either for travel or recreation purposes. During the Policy’s development it became evident there was a need to develop a complementary but separate strategy specifically for pathway based recreation.

‘Out and About – On Tracks’ is that strategy, and should be read in conjunction with ‘Out and About’– Active Travel and Pathway-based Recreation Policy. Please note that the term ‘Pathway’ used in the earlier ‘Out and About’ Policy has been replaced by the term ‘Track’.

INTRODUCTION

Nelson is known and admired for the fact it is surrounded by an abundance of accessible outdoor recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Participation in activities using front country off road tracks has increased rapidly over the past 10 years, to the point where many tracks are now under pressure in specific areas. This has resulted in increasing conflict between some users, and there is no sign of participation growth slowing down. The recent identification of Nelson as a leading international mountain bike destination¹ is likely to increase participation and use by visiting bikers, and the number of walkers (particularly older walkers) is expected to increase in correlation with the growing older adult population resulting in greater demand and behaviour management challenges going forward. The situation needs to be managed proactively now to ensure a positive future for Nelsons front country off road recreation for residents and visitors alike.

The purpose of this strategy is to provide clear direction for the Nelson City Council, key partners and the community with regards to the planning and provision of front country off road recreation within Nelson City over the next ten years for residents and visitors continued use and enjoyment. It is to be a living document, so while the strategy itself will remain unchanged, the strategy’s implementation plan will change to take advantage of currently unforeseen strategic opportunities that will no doubt arise during the strategy’s lifespan. As a result the strategy’s implementation plan will be reviewed and updated triennially from October 2017 to enable inclusion and alignment with Council’s 2018-28 Parks and Reserves Asset Management Plan, which informs Nelsons Long Term Plan 2018-28.

¹ The Nelson/Richmond/Tasman mountain bike track network was accredited as an International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Gold Ride Centre in August 2015, placing it among the best mountain bike destinations in the world.

The term 'front country' has been used to differentiate between the different domains of off road tracks, and refers to those that are easily accessible from urban areas and cater for a range of physical fitness and skill levels, as opposed to 'back country' tracks, which are generally further away from urban areas, in more rugged terrain requiring higher levels of physical fitness and skills to reach and utilise, and are therefore not under the same level of participation pressures. While this strategy doesn't focus on 'Back Country' Off Road Tracks it does support the relationships and management arrangements currently in place between key 'Back Country' land owners such as private land owners, NCC, DoC, Nelson Mountain Bike Club (NMTBC), Mountain Bike Trails Trust (MTBTT) and other key users (e.g., Over Fifties Walking Group, Athletics Nelson, Nelson Tramping/Orienteering Club) which are considered appropriate and effective at this point in time.

The primary users and therefore focus of this strategy are walkers (including people with disabilities, those walking dogs, and walking with baby buggies), off road runners, mountain bikers and to a lesser extent people on assisted motorised bikes up to 300 watts who use front country tracks for their recreational enjoyment as opposed to transportation. Motorised bikes over 300 watts are treated as motorbikes and therefore not permitted on Council owned front country off road tracks.

Front country off road tracks include everything from well-formed wide gentle gradient local tracks alongside rivers, to more challenging rough technical narrow tracks with steep climbs, steps and drop-offs. The provision of bridle tracks is not included in the scope of this Strategy.

These recreation activities already provide significant economic benefit for the local economy and also offer substantial growth potential, particularly when linked to other bike tourism initiatives in the region (e.g. the Great Taste Trail). The ongoing support, development and promotion of front country off road track recreational use from domestic and international tourism (in particular mountain biking) will continue to bring economic benefits to Nelson for the foreseeable future.

THE STRATEGY

VISION: Nelson is a city held in high regard nationally and internationally for its sustainably managed and easily accessible network of scenic front country off road tracks, that provide enjoyable and safe recreation opportunities for all users.

AIM: To maximise recreation opportunities and enjoyment for all front country off road track users and minimise any potential conflict through effective track design and mutual respect between users.

OUR DESIRED OUTCOMES

The following outcomes guide future development and management of front country off-road tracks in Nelson.

1. **Track-based recreation and sport participation contributing to improved social, mental and physical wellbeing of residents**
2. **Track-based recreation and sport attracting more visitors and events to the region and generating benefits for the local economy**
3. **Track-based recreation and sport events attracted to the region**
4. **An embedded culture of courtesy and respect between all users of tracks**
5. **Sensitive network planning and design reducing any negative user conflict and environmental impacts**

OUR KEY PRINCIPLES/STATEMENTS OF INTENT

The following principles are fundamental to the future development and management of front country off-road tracks in Nelson.

1. **All track users are equally important, and need to be catered for within the track network**
2. **Track user representatives will be consulted during the planning of physical track works**
3. **Tracks are to be designed and sustainably managed in accordance with industry best practice²**
4. **The Track Hierarchy and Grading System will be well-defined, clearly understood and appropriately managed**
5. **All track users adhere to Nelson's Front Country Off Road Track Users Code of Conduct**
There will be an agreed, understood and honoured code of conduct for all track users which aligns with the track hierarchy, and emphasises the importance of the three C's, Courtesy, Consideration and Care.

OUR PLANNING OBJECTIVES

The following objectives drive future development and management of front country off-road tracks in Nelson to achieve the desired outcomes.

² Currently recognised standards include the Department of Conservation and the NZCT standards for design, management and tracks classification recommendations.

Objective	Commentary
<p>Clarity in classification of track types and purpose and a clearly defined hierarchy with recognized levels of service.</p>	<p>Track types and purpose: are clearly defined for each track in the network, e.g. mountain bike downhill, tranquil walk</p> <p>Track standards: levels of service are clearly defined and identified for each track in the network, e.g. easy to advanced grade</p> <p>Hierarchy: ladder of tracks and ladder of track standards providing for all levels of ability and challenge within the track network</p>
<p>Consistency in use of standards in classification of each track within the network and consistency in communication to users of the standard of each track within the network</p>	<p>Consistency: The track is signposted and marked on maps as being of a specific standard with consistent level of safety, forward vision and gradient. It is preferable track grades remain for the entire track length, however if a change does occur it will be made clear via signage (and possibly mobile app software in future).</p> <p>Continuity: when choosing a route, users have accurate information about variations in level of service and difficult parts of the route.</p>
<p>Channelling encourages users to use tracks that are suited to their needs and expectations and enables exclusive use of a particular track or area or location when needed.</p> <p><i>Where this isn't practical (e.g. an experienced mountain biker using a slower shared track as a link to a more technical trail) they need to ride at the pace of the track – adopting the principle of 'the path determines the behaviour' which will need to be part of the education process.</i></p>	<p>Channelling: providing alternative routes and separate tracks or areas. I.e. fast confident cyclists use tracks with higher degrees of difficulty/challenge and less confident riders use easier standard.</p> <p>Separation: keeping different users apart for all or part of a route. Separation of types of users is accepted as a means to minimise conflict between users and to manage demand.</p> <p>Exclusive use: being the most important user relates to fairness of access and provision (and track hierarchy), e.g. where the route has high value for a specific user group because of unique or special attributes not generally or widely available within the network.</p>
<p>An expectation of courtesy enables all users to have an attractive, positive, enjoyable experience and vulnerable users are protected.</p>	<p>Courtesy: respect for other users, both of different modes and of different standards within same mode of use, means users feel safe.</p> <p>Protection of users: Be clear about which users are most vulnerable, e.g. the walker on a shared track.</p> <p>Grow awareness: about the need for courtesy around the very young, the elderly and users with disabilities through a combination of etiquette, education and social enforcement of acceptable behaviour.</p>

<p>Special or unique attributes of a track, area or location within the network are recognised, highly-valued and protected</p>	<p>Recognition: of special attributes including significant vegetation, proximity to stream or river edge environments, topography, cultural sensitivity, existing passive recreation use, and the level of existing community involvement and ownership to develop the asset. Protection of attributes: by clearly defining the type(s) of use permitted in keeping with the special or unique attribute (and experience derived from the attribute)</p>
<p>Track-based sport and recreation events are highly-valued and easily hosted within the network</p>	<p>Events: The network has defined tracks and areas with outstanding attributes for events and enable provision of facilities (either temporary or permanent) for participants, their supporters and spectators</p>
<p>Integrated planning and development with neighbouring land owners and controlling authorities providing a seamless experience for users</p>	<p>Regionally integrated: the Nelson track network meshes seamlessly with the network of tracks provided by neighbouring Councils, DoC, trusts and clubs. Routes are well connected, of a consistent standard with little or no difference in track experience (track design, construction and maintenance) along the route</p>
<p>Proactive planning and investment to meet changing and increasing demands from the projected growth in the resident population and visitor numbers, and new technologies, activities and events</p>	<p>Foresight and timely development: growth in demand is usually foreseeable and can be planned for through proactive development of the track network, new access points to the network from urban areas and ancillary facilities (e.g. parking and toilets). Agility in planning is also required to accommodate new technologies (e.g. bikes with electric motors), new activities and events</p>

PROCESS

Additional to the work completed when developing 'Out and About' The Active Travel and Pathway-based Recreation Policy, the Out and About – On Track strategy was developed by:

- An initial workshop with identified key users groups, to hear key issues and establish a process for the strategy's development
- Face to face interviews with each user group to further clarify key issues, explore potential solutions and ideas for improvement
- Review of relevant policies and strategies
- Review of relevant available participation data
- Development of a draft strategy, that was reviewed by Council, key partners and users
- Production of a final strategy

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This strategy has given due consideration to, and sought alignment with the following organisations and/or policy documents, where relevant summaries can be found in the appendixes.

International

- International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA)

National

- Sport NZ Group Strategic Plan 2015-20
- The New Zealand Walking Access Commission (NZWAC) National Strategy 2010-2035
- Cycling NZ Strategic Plan 2015
- The New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide 2015
- Mountain Biking NZ Constitution

Regional & Local

- Nelson City Council 2060
- Nelson City Council LTP 2015-2025
- Nelson City Council 'Out and About' - Active Travel and Pathway-based Recreation Policy – October 2015
- Sport Tasman – Strategic Plan 2014-2017'
- Nelson Tasman Cycle Trails Trust Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- Mountain Bike Trails Trust (MTBTT) – Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough 2015 Strategic Plan and various supplementary documents supplied by the MTBTT
- Nelson Mountain Bike Club (NMTBC) submissions

DEMAND ANALYSIS

Participation Rates & Trends

Securing accurate and quantifiable information on the current levels of participation for the front country recreation activities of walking, off road running and mountain biking in the Nelson/Tasman region has been a difficult process due to the mainly informal and casual nature on which no reliable information or data is accurately or regularly recorded, and is often not extrapolated from the sport as a whole (e.g. mountain biking grouped with cycling which includes road and velodrome, off road running which is grouped with road, track and jogging etc.).

As such a definitive picture of participation is not feasible. However, the following data provides an indication of current national and regional participation rates and trends.

2013/2014 Sport NZ Active New Zealand Survey

Nationally

- Walking is adult New Zealander's most popular sport and recreation activity with 60% participating (approximately 1,990,000 adults),
- Cycling is the 3rd with 24.8% (approximately 823,000 adults)
- Jogging/Running is 6th with 19.2% (approximately 635,000 adults).
- Cycling has grown the most of all the top 20 most popular sport and recreation activities, increasing 3% since 2007/08
- Sport and recreation participants interested in trying new activities rated cycling highly, with it being number one for men (5.5%) and number four for women (6.1%). Neither Walking or Jogging/Running were listed in the top five recreation activities adults would like to try.
- Walking (14.4%) was the most, and Jogging/Running (4.5%) the 5th most popular recreation activity that adults would like to do more of

2011 Sport NZ's Sport Tasman Young People's Survey Regional Profile

Regionally

- 15.4% of 11-18 year old boys and 14.1% of 11-18 year old girls regularly taking part in running, jogging or cross country.
- 9.3% of 11-18 year old boys and 4.8% of 11-18 year old girls regularly taking part in mountain biking.
- 7.4% of 11-18 year old boys and a significant 33.8% of 11-18 year old girls regularly taking part in walking. .

Event Participation

2013/2014 Sport NZ Active New Zealand Survey – Tasman Region

Regionally

- 13.6% (approximately 16,300 adults) took part in at least 1 recreation event in the past 12 months comparable to the national average of 17%.
- Of those events, 'Other running/walking' events were most popular (5.9%), 'Fun runs/walks' (5.2%) were 2nd, and 'Bike events' were 4th (3.1%).

Mountain Biking NZ Membership – Cycling NZ

The majority of mountain bikers in New Zealand are casual informal users not affiliated to Cycling NZ or Mountain Biking NZ. However, it is interesting to note that membership numbers show a much higher increase in the Tasman/Upper South Island Region in comparison to the rest of New Zealand.

- Tasman/Upper South Island Region membership has increased by 50% over the last four years from 93 members in 2013, to 140 in 2016, higher than the national average of just 6% increase over the same period.

Population Profile and Projections

The latest Statistics New Zealand population estimates for the year ended June 2016 tell us that:

- 50,600 people live in Nelson, a 6.5% increase since 2011
- There are slightly more females (26,000) than males (24,600)
- Nelson's median age (43.0 years) is higher than New Zealand as a whole (37.1 years)
- Nelson has a higher percentage of residents aged 65 years and older (18.9%), compared to the National average (14.9%)
- Nelson has a lower percentage of younger residents (18.0%) under 15 years, compared to the National average (19.6%)

NCC Population Projections (February 2015³)

Of particular relevance to this strategy are;

- Nelson's population is projected to increase by 3,500 to 57,800 by 2028, under the medium growth scenario, or by 7,200 to 57,800 under the high growth scenario
- The portion of the population aged 65 and over is expected to reach 27% in 2028 under the medium scenario, or 26% under the high scenario
- About half of the increase in Nelson's population and housing through to 2028 is projected to be in the Stoke area, about a quarter of growth is projected to be in the central Nelson suburbs, with the remainder in Tahunanui, Atawhai or Nelson North.

Summary of Demand

The casual and mainly informal nature of front country off road track and trail use and the variance of available data make it difficult to quantify total participation numbers in the Nelson region. However, what can be said is that both the available data around participation and anecdotal evidence from user groups and Council staff alike very clearly indicate increasing participation levels and popularity of off road track and trail use by the wider community. The very fact that participation levels have reached the point where the track infrastructure is under pressure and conflict is arising between users at some key locations in the network is a clear indication of demand in itself. The current situation is expected to continue increasing both from increasing popularity and participation rates, and from expected population growth and predicted demographic changes most significant being the growth in the older aged population. This has significant implications for the mix of track provision in the front country bordering the urban areas of Nelson.

³ Population projections by Statistics New Zealand for Nelson are due to be updated in December 2016. Population estimates since the February 2015 projections have shown Nelson's population growth at a rate halfway between the medium and high scenarios.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings to date summarised below generally relate to either 'Behavioural' or 'Design/infrastructure' aspects and interestingly appear to only relate to clashes between walkers and mountain bikers, no concerns were expressed by or about runners.

Behavioural

- There are concerns around people walking dogs that are poorly controlled on and off lead
- Some walkers feel undervalued and disrespected by other users and by Council
- Mountain bikers feel misunderstood due the inappropriate actions of a minority group of riders
- There is a theme in feedback that there is lack of respect and speed control by some mountain bikers when they come across other track users raising safety concerns
- There is a perception among some walkers that Council favours mountain bikers over walkers
- Some mountain bikers appear to be impatient, expecting walkers to move out of their way, while some walkers in large groups have blocked tracks making it difficult for other users (including mountain bikers) to easily pass.
- Walkers want peaceful places to walk, where they can relax and don't have to be on alert for other users, this is especially important for vulnerable users (such as elderly, disabled, families with young children)
- There appears to have been no real consultation with users in the past by Council before making track modifications, which has caused some frustration
- There seems to be little courtesy, consideration and care between some users
- There seems to be limited awareness by some users of how to effectively share tracks, there is a noticeable absence of any code of conduct or public promotional campaign beyond some signage, to this effect

Network and Track Design/Infrastructure

- Walkers need some quiet, peaceful walking only areas with appropriate amenities (shade, seating, shelter, toilets etc.)
- Mountain Bikers need some mountain biking only areas which can include for example highly technical jumps, as well as areas for inexperienced riders
- Vulnerable users need to be provided for through appropriate and sensitive design, these can be walkers, runners or mountain bikers.
- Many shared tracks are too narrow with blind spots and poor visibility around corners
- There are limited entry level track options for novice or inexperienced mountain bikers
- Poor planning and design is channelling incompatible users (fast mountain bikers/slow vulnerable walkers) onto inappropriate tracks, or at inappropriate entry points (limited visibility, narrow tracks)
- Growth in use is causing congestion at critical points in the network
- Some walkers like the varied routes, terrain and design that comes from shared use tracks
- Bushy vegetation that blocks lines of sight is a concern
- Track surface and gradient needs to be appropriate for the intended track user
- Though unintended some front country tracks also serve as commuter routes resulting congestion at key times

- The most popular tracks need to be the best designed and built to cater for numbers, they are currently congested at key times
- Where tracks cross or converge, there should be warning signs, track modifications to slow users and good sightlines to minimise safety concerns
- Track and trail modifications should be made for the benefit of all users, unless in an exclusive use area. The removal of steps to accommodate mountain bikers on some shared tracks has made them less suitable for walkers.
- Track entrance infrastructure such as adequate vehicle parking, gathering areas, toilets, BBQ and bike wash down areas, need to be provided and appropriately located.

Summary

- There are conflicting views among both walkers and mountain bikers as to whether the two activities are compatible. However, based on examples throughout the country, it is viable to share most tracks, if behavioural and design elements are appropriately addressed, and different users' needs are catered for.
- It is clear vulnerable users (such as elderly, disabled, children, and inexperienced riders) have specific needs that need to be considered
- Courtesy, consideration and care between and within user groups is paramount
- Speed is a common concern for and between all users, and a speed differential is the reality regardless of activity type (e.g. slower mountain bikers also get 'surprised' by faster mountain bikers)
- Overall the key track design elements to consider appear to be:
 - Need a clear hierarchy and grading system for tracks
 - Need to have a balance of tracks of grades to suit the varying user abilities
 - Channelling and separation of users is a valid option, where appropriate
 - Clear lines of sight
 - Controlled vegetation
 - Appropriate signage to identify track and trail types, desired users, forewarn of merging or crossing tracks and trails
 - Inclusion of passing bays on narrow sections of track
 - Appropriate widths, surfaces and gradients for intended users
 - Adequate parking with provision of gathering areas in appropriate locations
 - Provision of viewing and rest areas adjacent to tracks at strategic points (e.g. after a steep climb, near a stream/river)
 - Shade, seating and shelter where appropriate

TRACK HIERARCHY, GRADING & DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

Hierarchy

One of the apparent gaps with Nelson City's existing front country off road track network is the absence of any clear hierarchy among the tracks. The following hierarchy has been devised to minimise conflict and maximise experience for all track users, please see the network maps which show a draft application of the hierarchy.

- **Shared Use Tracks**

Tracks available to all users, which will be designed and managed accordingly to ensure that speed and required skill level of potential users is complementary and taken into consideration alongside the needs of vulnerable users (elderly, disabled, younger children, novice and/or older riders) who will take precedence at all times (e.g. mountain bikers and runners slow down or dismount for walkers, and runners or walkers make way for an inexperienced child rider that is clearly doing their best to stay in the middle of a track). For example they may be wide tracks, of a gentle gradient, with a good surface and good lines of sight that are unobstructed by vegetation. It is understood that there will be a need for differentiation between and within shared track users, as clearly inexperienced mountain bikers and older less mobile walkers are not compatible, as the inexperienced rider will not necessarily have the skill level to manoeuvre around the less mobile walker who may have no idea a rider is near due to a visual or hearing impairment.

- **Priority Use Tracks**

Tracks that are available to all users however are most suitable and designed more for a particular user group, who take priority when using the track. For example, a single track in hilly rooty and rutted terrain that is a mountain biking priority use track however some runners or walkers wanting to experience more challenging terrain may wish use it, so they do so in the knowledge they are likely to come across mountain bikers travelling at speed and must maintain vigilance and make way for the biker by moving to the side of the track.

- **Exclusive Use Tracks**

Tracks that are designed, signposted and managed specifically for one particular activity only, no other users are permitted onto those tracks. For example a walking only track that is easily accessible ensuring the protection of vulnerable users in a peaceful setting, ideally with wide tracks (they may include narrow tracks frequented by numbers of vulnerable users and unable to be widened due to their topography) and seating where people can stop to enjoy the tranquil setting at their leisure, and a mountain bike only track that offers riders a technical, fast downhill opportunity on narrow single track with tight berms.

Where the different types of tracks converge, cross or meet there will be 'slow zones' with warning signs, track modifications to slow users and ensure good lines of sight.

Grading & Balance of Tracks with the Network

It is also apparent that there is an imbalance between the grades of tracks available within the network, regardless of activity. It is important that the track network caters for all users from the most vulnerable to the very active, especially given Nelson's predicted ageing, yet active population. Findings to date indicate there is a need for more entry level tracks, catering mainly for vulnerable users, especially for inexperienced mountain bikers (Grades 2-3) – however there needs to be a clear delineation between entry level track users as they may not be compatible unless on wide tracks with plenty of space for manoeuvring and gentle gradients. Consistency in the application of grades (standard of track) along the entire track section is the key to an enjoyable user experience and general safety of users

It would be useful for all tracks to be graded utilising DoC walking track & NZCT grading benchmarks and standards to determine exactly what new track developments and remedial actions to existing tracks are required to provide a more balanced track network.

Procedure for New Track Developments

All new track development proposals will be considered for an environmental assessment, particular regard is to be given to proximity of tracks to outstanding landscapes or significant natural areas.

Once a proposal is considered environmentally appropriate, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be developed between Council and any Group (or Groups) wanting to construct a new track, prior to obtaining Council approval and any funding commitments. The MoU will be developed in the spirit of collaboration and co-operation and will specify conditions such as track location details, hierarchy, standard and grade, quality assurance of construction, responsibility for ongoing management, maintenance, environmental management, monitoring and any restoration where appropriate plus the funding of cost related to the track.

Actual works will be detailed in the Implementation Plan, and included in the Parks and Reserves Asset Management Plan, which informs the Nelson Long Term Plan which specifies any funding for new track developments and their on-going funding by Council.

Triennial Planning Cycle

Council planning is based on a triennial planning cycle, therefore groups likely to present proposals for new track developments are encouraged to align their respective planning processes to maximise opportunities in the review years (2017, 2020, 2023 and so on), ideally using the first quarter of these calendar years to formulate proposals.

Annual Planning Cycle

In exceptional circumstances new track proposals that fall outside the triennial review years can be presented and considered through Council's Annual Plan process, however alignment with the Long Term Plan and a strong case for consideration outside of the three yearly planning cycle will be required.

New Track Development Schedule

The schedule below shows the timing necessary for new track proposals to be considered in alignment with Council's planning and funding cycles.

Action	Timing
Group/s to Approach Council Staff with a New Track Development Proposal	September 2017, 2020, 2023
Environmental Impact Assessment	October - November 2017, 2020, 2023
'Out and About – On Tracks' Implementation Plan Review	Oct 2017, 2020, 2023
Parks and Reserves Asset Management Plan 2018-28	February 2018, 2021, 2024
Submissions to Council's Annual Plan & Process (if required in non-LTP year)	February
MoU Agreed prior to funding of any works	April - May
Nelson Long Term Plan	June 2018, 2021, 2024
Proposal Inclusion in Council Policy & Finalisation of MoU	June 2018, 2021, 2024
Works approved for construction following Annual Plan adoption	1 July

APPENDICES

The following documents will be included in a separate Information Report;

- **Track Hierarchy Maps**
- **Agreed Grading and Scheduling of Tracks**
- **Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan will give effect to the strategy, providing clear direction for all partners and users by outlining the key actions to be undertaken over the next ten years to achieve the strategy's vision, aim, outcomes and objectives. The plan will include prescriptive and directive actions that have been prioritised with low cost high impact actions taking precedent, to create a culture of success and ensure identified agreed priority actions are made as quickly as possible for the benefit of all track users.

All partners involved in the strategy's development will need to commit to support the strategy's implementation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the NCC Front Country Off Road Tracks Strategy.

The following Appendices helped to inform the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

- **Strategic Alignment**
- **Mountain Bikers Code**
- **Mountain Bike Track Types – Grading 1-6**
- **DoC – Walking Track Grading System**
- **New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide**
- **DoC Track Construction and Maintenance Guidelines**

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

NATIONAL

Sport NZ Group Strategic Plan 2015-20

The Strategic Plan covers all areas of the Sport NZ Groups work – young people, adults and elite athletes.

Vision: ‘New Zealand to be the world’s most successful sporting nation’

Four focus areas:

- **Young people** – ensuring all Kiwi kids gain a love of physical activity and sport at an early age, from which they are more likely to enjoy lifelong participation in sport and gain all the benefits that come with it.
- **Local delivery of sport, especially in low-participation communities** – ensuring clubs, councils, schools, families and all those involved in the local delivery of sport working more closely together.
- **Competitive sport** – ensuring the traditional structures of sport are strong to sustain and grow participation.
- **Continuing to drive high performance outcomes** and achieve more winning on the world stage, through High Performance Sport NZ.

Within the Strategic Plan sits a High Performance Strategy 2013-20 (led by High Performance Sport NZ) and a Community Sport Strategy 2015-20, which is most relevant.

Community Sport Strategy 2015-20

Strategic Outcomes:

- More kids in sport and recreation
- More New Zealander’s involved in sport and recreation

Focus Areas:

- School aged children
- Local Delivery
- Competitive Sport

Strategic Priorities

- **Insights;** Success is a well-informed, participant-focused sporting system at all levels
- **People;** Success is a network of skilled people delivering to and supporting participants
- **Spaces and Places;** success if more and better places for New Zealanders to play sport
- **Partners/Providers;** Success is a network of capable partners of sport, providing relevant sport experiences
- **Pathways;** Success is the system providing relevant opportunities and integrated experiences to participants that encourage their ongoing enjoyment

The New Zealand Walking Access Commission National Strategy 2010-2035

That strategy states 'Access to New Zealand's outdoors is part of New Zealand's culture and identity. The beauty and diversity of our landscapes enrich and inspire us. Having access to these places is part of New Zealand's culture and identity. We value actively participating in outdoor recreation as part of our heritage and our free, rugged and independent spirit'.

Vision: Walking Access is valued, enduring and understood

Objectives & Success Indicators:

- **Opportunities**

Enhanced opportunities for enduring walking access are available, clearly and consistently identified and located across the outdoors

- **Leadership**

Our approach and principals are values and adopted by central and local government, public and private land holders, businesses, communities and individuals

- **Attitudes**

Reciprocity and respect underpins provision of walking access, recognized as integral to our identity, with economic, recreation, health, and environmental benefits acknowledged.

Cycling NZ 2015 Strategic Overview

Cycling is more than a sport – to Cycling NZ it is a fundamental life skill, has something for everyone and has significant outcomes for society

Vision: A nation embracing cycling

Mission: Leading and enabling the growth and success in cycling for New Zealanders

Key Outcomes: Increased Medal success international
Growth in participation and membership

The New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide 2015 (4th Edition)

The New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide was first published in February 2010 to assist people involved in planning, designing or building cycle trails that would make up the New Zealand Cycle Trail (NZCT). During the construction of the "Great Rides" lessons have been learnt along the way and this fourth edition updates and clarifies key technical information, particularly relating to trail grades.

A worthwhile read however it is very specific to 'Cycle Trail Development', and for the purpose of this strategy is superseded by IMBA and DoC Information detailed further in the appendixes.

Mountain Biking NZ Constitution

Objects:

To promote and represent the interests of all mountain bikers in New Zealand;

- (b) To encourage mountain biking as a recreation and competitive sport;
- (c) To promote the following Off Road Code
 - Ride MTB and multi-use tracks only. Ask permission from landowners before heading out.
 - Respect other users; always give way to walkers
 - Leave no trace; never skid or drop rubbish
 - Keep your bicycle under control
 - Never spook animals; leave gates as you find them.
- (d) To promote the understanding, appreciation, maintenance (and) rejuvenation of the natural environment of New Zealand;
- (e) To organise, administer, and sanction events for competitive mountain bikers in NZ.
- (f) To uphold the rights and interests of cyclists and to communicate those interests to governmental and other authorities and to the public;
- (g) To provide fair representation directly or by affiliation, for all individuals and organisations who participate in the Sport;
- (h) To affiliate to and co-operate with kindred and other organisations, including the International Body.

REGIONAL & LOCAL

Nelson City Council 2060

A visionary document of what Nelson will be like in 2060 based on feedback from community workshops in 2011.

Vision:

'Nelson 2060 is an inclusive city, with a diverse range of residents who can connect easily to each other and to the beautiful place we call home. Our inclusive leadership style supports our unique approach to living, which is boldly creative, ecologically exemplary, socially balanced and economically prosperous'

There are Four Themes (the most relevant are highlighted) supported by ten goals;

- A sustainable city of beauty and connectivity
- **Outstanding lifestyles, immersed in nature and strong communities**
- A strong economy, built on knowledge and understanding
- Successful partnerships providing good leadership

The Ten Goals:

- We support and encourage leaders across our community
- We are all able to be involved in decisions
- **Our natural environment – air, land, rivers and sea – is protected and healthy**
- We produce more of our own food
- We are able to rapidly adapt to change
- We move from using fossil fuels to renewable energy sources
- **Our economy thrives and contributes to a vibrant and sustainable Nelson**
- Nelson is a centre of learning and practice in Kaitiakitanga and sustainable development
- Everyone in our community has their essential needs met
- We reduce consumption so that resources are shared more fairly

Nelson City Council LTP 2015-2025

This plan sets out Council's work programme over ten years, includes the Nelson 2060 Vision and themes.

There are Six Community Outcomes (the most relevant are highlighted):

- **Our unique natural environment is healthy and protected**
- **Our urban and rural environments are people friendly, well planned and sustainably managed**
- Our infrastructure is efficient, cost effective and meets current and future needs
- Our communities are healthy, safe, inclusive and resilient
- **Our communities have opportunities to celebrate and explore their heritage, identity and creativity**
- **Our communities have access to a range of social, educational and recreational facilities and activities**
- **Our Council provides leadership and fosters partnerships, a regional perspective, and community engagement**

Nelson City Council 'Out and About' Active Travel and Pathway-based Recreation Policy 2015

Vision: An attractive, accessible and safe network that puts Nelson at the forefront of active travel and path based recreation

Outcomes:

- More residents seeing active travel as a fun, attractive and normal option for their daily life journeys
- An embedded culture of courtesy and respect between all users of paths and roads
- A safer network of complete and convenient routes for active travel and recreational journeys alike
- Active travel reducing the negative environmental impacts and personal cost from daily journeys
- Active travel and pathway-based recreation contributing to improved social, mental and physical well-being of residents
- Recreational cyclists attracting more visitors to the region and generating benefits for the local economy
- Sensitive network planning and design ensuring tranquil and contemplate areas available throughout the city for all users

Sport Tasman Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Purpose: More people, more active, more often

Approach: Lead, Support, Deliver

Culture: Community driven, can do, supportive, innovative

Six Focus areas:

- Leadership & advocacy; Communications, Council Advocacy, Partner Alliances, Sport NZ Partnership
- Kids Sport
- Capability
- Community Sport; Coaches & Volunteers, Target Communities, Recreation, Kiwisport/Sport Start
- Facilities; Management, Community Driven planning, Community hubs
- Events

Nelson Tasman Cycle Trails Trust Strategic Plan 2015-2020

Vision: The Heart of Biking

The Nelson-Tasman region is a premier destination for domestic and international visitors drawn by a range of world class cycle trails and associated attractions and facilities, and has a high quality commuter and recreation cycle trail network for the local population.

Purpose

- To establish, promote and maintain designated cycle assets in the Nelson, Tasman, region
- To educate and to foster appreciation of the advantages of cycle assets

Principles

- To promote the use of cycle assets for recreation, tourism, health, scenic, economic and education purposes
- To work co-operatively with others involved in the provision and preservation of cycle assets
- To maintain the highest standards of professionalism and integrity

Mountain Bike Trails Trust – Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough – 2015 Strategic Plan

Purpose: The plan's purpose is to guide the Trust in its operational focus. As such, it is a living document and will be amended over time to take advantage of strategic opportunities and improvements.

Vision: 'Position the Top of the South as a national and international mountain biking destination, by developing a network of mountain bike trails for all abilities that will be a valued community asset'

Modus Operandi

How the MTB Trails Trust will achieve this vision:

- Develop and promote a networked trail plan for the Top of the South, identifying new linkages and existing trails that require realignment
- Adapt and integrate the Epic Trails Plan into the Trust's objectives
- Lobby and advocate for the development of MTB trails which will also be multi-use
- Project manage trail development and maintenance to a sustainable, long term plan for individual trails and trail clusters
- Fundraise for individual projects, and include this role as a key part of the wider project management function
- Mobilise and manage a volunteer labour force for individual projects, trail maintenance and weed control if appropriate
- Engage and manage professional trail build resources where appropriate
- Manage relationships with all interested parties (DOC, Councils, Forestry Managers, Nelmac, like minded sports organisations, private land owners, and community groups)
- Generate a Friends of the Trust, and Corporate Friends of the Trust support structure

Core Philosophies

Those values important to the Trust:

- Community focused, environmentally sustainable and low impact approach to all Trust endeavors
- Open engagement with land managers and MTB community
- Free access to all trails where possible and appropriate
- An International Mountain Bike Association based approach to all trail development projects i.e. a sustainable design and build process will be used for all projects the Trust is involved with, including principal trail build leaders and contractors undergoing appropriate training and up-skilling in sustainability
- A professional approach to project management. Removing the load on council and DOC staff to drive public land projects through this approach
- No reliance of any kind on gambling based funding organisations for funding

Mountain bikers code

Respect the track, respect others and respect the rules.

The following MTB code was developed by the New Zealand MTB Association (NZ MBA) in liaison with key stakeholders and DOC.

Respect others

- Stay in control. So you can safely avoid others and keep yourself intact.
- Give way to walkers.
- Use a bell or greeting when approaching others. Most negative feedback from walkers on shared-use tracks concerns being surprised by bikers approaching without warning.
- Ride shared-use tracks in small groups. A 'bike-train' with a dozen riders displaces other users. 6-8, or less, is a better number.

Respect the rules

- Only ride MTB and shared-use tracks; stay off closed tracks – including those that are seasonally closed to protect the surface or minimise conflict with other users. Land managers are generally pretty reasonable so talk with them about issues or ideas you may have.
- Be prepared - take food, water, tools, First Aid and warm clothes. Plan for the unexpected - a change in the weather, an accident or getting lost and late.
- Obtain permission from private landowners before you set out.
- Leave gates as you find them either open or closed to keep stock where they are intended to be.

Respect the track

- Don't skid, cut corners or make new lines. Skidding creates water channels and causes erosion. Use both brakes to slow down without skidding as you approach a corner. Cutting corners is cheating and damages fragile ecosystems.
- Avoid riding in the mud and rain. Both bikes and walkers damage soft, wet tracks.
- Clean your bike to prevent spreading weeds like gorse and didymo.
- Take rubbish home – like banana skins, old tubes and snack wrappers. Rubbish in the outdoors detracts from everyone's experience.

Respect public access easements

Some mountain bike rides travel along public access easements through private land. All easements and tracks are well marked. Please:

- Stay on the public easement track.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Do not disturb stock – cycle slowly through livestock areas.



Mountain Bike Track Types

Choose a track that match your skills, fitness and the experience you're after. Most tracks are more difficult when wet. Avoid riding in the mud and rain.



Grade 1. *Easiest*

Fairly flat, wide, smooth track or gravel road.



Grade 2. *Easy*

Mostly flat with some gentle climbs on smooth track with easily avoidable obstacles such as rocks and potholes.



Grade 3. *Intermediate*

Steep slopes and / or avoidable obstacles possibly on narrow track and / or with poor traction. There may be exposure at the track's outside edge.



Grade 4. *Advanced*

A mixture of long, steep climbs, narrow track, poor traction and difficult obstacles to avoid or jump over. Generally exposed at the track's outside edge. Most riders will find some sections easier to walk.



Grade 5. *Expert*

Technically challenging. Giant climbs, narrow track and numerous hazards including dangerous drop-offs, sharp corners and difficult obstacles. Expect walking and possibly bike carrying.



Grade 6. *Extreme*

Downhill / free ride specific tracks. Extremely steep sections with large drop-offs and other unavoidable obstacles. May include man-made structures and jumps.



Respect others

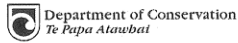
- Stay in control
- Give way to walkers
- Signal your approach and pass with care
- Ride shared-use tracks in small groups

Respect the rules

- Ride only where permitted
- Obtain permission from private land owners
- Leave gates as you find them
- Be prepared - take food, water, tools, First Aid and warm clothes

Respect the track

- Don't skid, cut corners or make new lines
- Avoid riding in the mud and rain
- Take rubbish home
- Clean your bike to prevent spreading weeds



Printed from: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/walking-and-tramping/track-categories/>

Walking track categories

Choose a track to match your skills, fitness and the experience you want. All tracks listed on this website are given one of these six walking track categories.

Easiest: Easy access short walk

Duration: Easy walking for up to an hour.

Suitable for: People of all abilities, wheelchairs, buggies and strollers.

Standard: Even surface, well formed with no steps or steep sections. Stream and rivers are bridged.

Footwear required: Walking shoes.

Typical tracks: [Cape Reinga Lighthouse Walk](#) | [Milford Foreshore Walk](#)



Easiest: Short walk

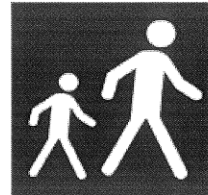
Duration: Easy walking for up to an hour.

Suitable for: People of most ages and fitness levels.

Standard: Track is well formed, with an even, well drained surface. There may be steps. Stream and rivers crossings are bridged.

Footwear required: Walking shoes.

Typical tracks: [Riwaka Resurgence](#) | [Waterworks Walk](#)



Easy: Walking track

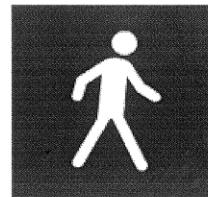
Duration: Gentle walking from a few minutes to a day.

Suitable for: People with low to moderate fitness and abilities. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is mostly well formed, some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Clearly signposted. Stream and river crossings are bridged.

Footwear required: Walking shoes or light tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: [Arthur's Pass Walking Track](#) | [Orongorongo Track](#)



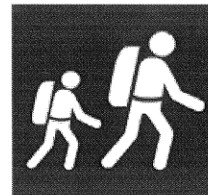
Intermediate: Great Walk/Easier tramping track

Duration: Comfortable multi-day tramping/hiking

Suitable for: People with limited backcountry (remote area) experience. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is generally well formed, some sections may be rough, muddy or steep. Track has signs, poles or markers. Major stream and river crossings are bridged.

Footwear required: Light tramping/hiking boots.



Typical tracks: [Tongariro Northern Circuit](#) | [Lake Daniell Track](#)

Advanced: Tramping track

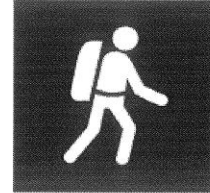
Duration: Challenging day or multi-day tramping/hiking

Suitable for: People with moderate to high level backcountry (remote areas) skills and experience, navigation and survival skills required. Some tracks suitable for mountain biking.

Standard: Track is mostly unformed, may be rough and steep. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.

Footwear required: Tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: [Kapakapanui Track](#) | [Inland Track](#)



Expert: Route

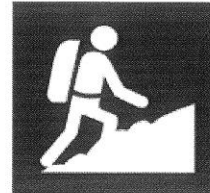
Duration: Challenging overnight tramping/hiking.

Suitable for: People with high level backcountry (remote areas) skills and experience, navigation and survival skills required. Complete self sufficiency required.

Standard: Track unformed and natural, may be rough, muddy or very steep. Track has markers, poles or rock cairns. Expect unbridged stream and river crossings.

Footwear required: Sturdy tramping/hiking boots.

Typical tracks: [Three Passes Route](#) | [Taranua Northern Crossing](#)





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About IMBA U.S.

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational association. Our mission is to create, enhance and preserve great mountain biking experiences.

Since 1988, IMBA has been bringing out the best in mountain biking by encouraging low-impact riding, volunteer trail work participation, cooperation among different trail user groups, grassroots advocacy and innovative trail management solutions. IMBA's staff, chapters, clubs and members work to benefit the entire mountain bike community.

- We create a **powerful voice** for trails, public lands and management policies that welcome bikes.
- We **advocate** for mountain bike access and acceptance nationwide.
- We **build** sustainable trails and bike facilities to make mountain biking more accessible.
- We **teach** environmentally responsible trail building and trail etiquette practices.
- We **inspire** more people to experience the outdoors on bicycles.
- We **educate** bike groups on how to organize and make mountain biking better at the local level.

Here's what we do, how you help and why we're so thankful!



IMBA's worldwide network includes 40,000+ individual members, 200+ [IMBA Chapters](#), 400+ [clubs and volunteer bike patrols](#), 200+ [corporate partners](#), 700+ [retail shops](#) and over 100,000+ subscribers to our messaging. IMBA's members live in all 50 U.S. states, most Canadian provinces and in 30 other countries. [Joining your local IMBA chapter](#) is the most effective way for you to build and maintain the amazing trails you love to ride. Your membership dues support your local chapter's work, and IMBA's efforts nationwide.

IMBA's U.S and international headquarters in the United States are located in Boulder, Colorado. Domestically, we currently have more than 50 full-time staff members, including [region directors](#) located in the Atlantic, California-Hawaii, Colorado-Wyoming, Great Lakes, Midwest, Pacific Northwest, South Central, Southeast (SORBA) and Southwest regions as well as trail building professionals located across the country.

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YES! I support mountain bikes. Please add my voice to thousands of others in support of finding bike-friendly solutions, and keep me informed about new places to ride. I would like to receive localized communications from IMBA. I am 18 years of age or older.

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Resources

IMBA's online resources offer free, easy-to-access information for the benefit of mountain bikers in the U.S. and around the globe.

Scan the menu on the right side of this page to help find materials covering a broad range of topics.

If you still haven't found what you're looking for, send a message to info@imba.com.

IMBA offers three textbooks featuring comprehensive treatments of many important topics. Consider picking up copies of [Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack](#), [Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA's Guide to Providing Sweet Riding](#), and [Bike Parks: IMBA's Guide to New-School Trails](#) at our online store.

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Trail Building and Design

There is much more to building a trail than moving rocks and dirt.

Trails are usually part of larger systems that are the result of careful and diligent planning and collaboration among user groups, land managers and funders. Trail systems often need to serve the needs of multiple user groups and must always take environmental and geographical factors into account.

While land managers and other administrators are ultimately responsible for the planning processes, committed trail users and community groups have important roles to play as well. Planning, after all, is ultimately about the big picture, and that picture includes not only the forest and the trees, but the entire trails community.

IMBA's online resources on trail building emphasize the importance of well-planned trail systems, and offer advice for how to create a trail system plan that can create good experiences for diverse visitors, minimize user conflict and environmental damage, and hold up in the future.

IMBA's books offer our most comprehensive treatments for trail building and many other important topics. Consider picking up copies of [Trail Solutions: IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack](#) and [Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA's Guide to Providing Sweet Riding](#) at IMBA's online store.



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