



SUBMISSION

To **Tasman District Council**
189 Queen Street
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Submission on: **Draft Long-Term Plan 2024 - 2034**

Date: **24 April 2024**

Submission by: **Nelson Riding Club Incorporated**

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Nelson Riding Club welcomes this opportunity to submit on the Tasman District Council Draft Long-Term Plan 2024 – 2034.

We wish to be heard in support of our submission.

SUBMISSION TO TASMAN DISTRICT COUNCIL LONG-TERM PLAN 2024-2034

1. NELSON RIDING CLUB

- 1.1 Nelson Riding Club is a horse-riding club for adult riders over the age of 17 in the Nelson Tasman region. Our annual membership sits around 60, which makes us one of the largest equine clubs in the region. Our club is run by a dedicated committee, and is based at the Rough Island Equestrian Park. More information on our club and the activities we offer our members can be seen [here](#).
- 1.2 Our mission is: *‘creating safe, supportive, friendly experiences for adult riders of all abilities and those just starting out on their horse journey.’*
- 1.3 The purpose of the Nelson Riding Club is to benefit the community by:
 - a. Encouraging adult horse riding as a sport and recreation activity, to promote good fellowship amongst riders and improve and maintain the standard of riding and horsemanship,
 - b. Organising instructional meetings, lectures, competitions and other horse related activities,
 - c. Advocating for access to bridle tracks and rights of way with a view to opening those that have been closed, maintaining existing tracks and areas, and developing new tracks and areas for riding.

2. PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION

- 2.1 The purpose of this submission is to advocate for more access to recreational trail riding areas for horse riders in the region.
- 2.2 We hope that, over the next 10 years, the Council will work with the horse community to identify and develop new riding areas and will keep us ‘front of mind’ when it is considering options for existing reserves and forests, changes to roading, stop-bank and river management and new parks and reserves.
- 2.3 Our vision is a range of interesting and varied trails in the region that are actively supported and promoted by the Council, similar to those promoted by Kāpiti District Council and Christchurch City Council (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).
- 2.4 We would like to see the Council adopt a culture of support for dedicated horse trails and shared multi-use trails that include areas for horses, and for the Council to always consider the needs of horse riders when it is drafting community plans. We seek better visibility for the region’s horse riders, reflected in more active engagement with the equine community and

acknowledgement of the importance of providing for the horse-riding community in Council planning and management documents.

- 2.5 We would also like the Council to recognise that developing a network of multi-use trails provides opportunities for valuable recreation and potential tourism opportunities, as Kāpiti District Council has done (see Appendix 3).
- 2.6 **Recommendation: The Council works with the equine community to identify and develop new horse-riding areas in the district.**
- 2.7 **Recommendation: The Council adopts a culture of support for dedicated horse-riding trails and shared multi-use trails that include areas for horses.**
- 2.8 **Recommendation: The Council ensures that the needs of horse riders are considered and reflected in its activity planning and management decisions.**

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The horse-riding community in the region is very active. There are many different equine sports practised in Nelson and Tasman, including harness racing, gallop racing, dressage, working equitation, competitive trail riding, mounted games, show jumping, eventing, and western. Riders range in age from young children, many of whom start with Pony Club, through to riders in their 70s. We estimate there are at least 1000 horse owners and horse riders in Tasman, although we don't have exact numbers.
- 3.2 The wider equine community also includes people who have businesses associated with horses – i.e. farriers and barefoot trimmers, feed and fencing retailers, vets, dedicated equestrian retailers (2), body-workers, equine therapists, agistment businesses and riding instructors. Horses bring economic benefits to the community as well as sporting and recreational benefits. Horses are also used to support people with disabilities in our community through the RDA (Motueka and Richmond), and there is even a horse in the region that visits people in retirement villages.
- 3.3 Most equestrians who support the disciplines above also ride trails for recreation, as trail riding benefits horses physically and mentally, and is a pleasurable way for horse riders to socialise together.
- 3.4 Sought after areas for recreational trail riding are off road, offer a variety of slope and are either dedicated to horse riding, or are trails shared with other compatible users (such as dog-walking or family biking). Trails that connect grazing areas to facilities and reserves are very valuable. Riding trails need to have a safe area for parking floats and loading and unloading horses, and a suitable surface. Ideally, recreational trail riding areas have open access, i.e. riders can access them without a permit or key, and at any time (except in exceptional circumstances such as logging or high fire risk).

- 3.5 Some riders in the region are fortunate to live on farms large enough that they have their own riding areas. However, a great many riders do not have access to private recreational trail riding areas and rely on the few public areas available.
- 3.6 Over the years horse riders in the Tasman region have experienced a reduction in safe off-road areas to ride, and that trend is continuing. At the same time riding along roads is becoming more unsafe because of traffic density and a lack of driver awareness of how to pass a horse safely.

4. COUNCIL ACTIVITY PLANS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- 4.1 There is a lack of visibility of the needs of horse riders in the Council's activity management plans and other documents.
- 4.2 For example, horse riding is not mentioned in the 2024-2034 LTP consultation document at all, whereas cycle or cycling is mentioned 24 times. There is no mention of horses in the Draft Parks and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2024-2054 or the Draft Council Enterprise Activity Management Plan 2024-2034.
- 4.3 The only mention of horses in the Richmond Ward Reserves Plan is para. 6.8.3 – *Restrict the use of bicycles and horses on reserves if such uses are in conflict with other users.*
- 4.4 This paragraph is repeated in the Lakes Murchison Ward Reserves Plan at para. 5.8.3. Paragraph 5.23.4 of the Lakes Murchison Plan states - *allow the use of horse on reserves where individual reserve policies permit such use.*
- 4.5 The Council's Reserves General Policies has only one mention of horses, in section 4.11 'Dogs equestrian activities and other domestic animals'. Unfortunately, the text in that section is partially inaccurate and not supportive of the benefits of horse riding:
- Equestrian activities are appropriate on some reserves, but can result in turf and other surface damage. Horses can be unpredictable, especially in confined areas such as narrow tracks, and can leave large piles of manure (it is often difficult or dangerous for a rider to tether or control a horse while this is collected).*
- 4.6 Despite very limited or no reference to horse-riding in current council documents, the Council's stated 'Community Outcomes' provide an enabling approach under which planning and access for horse riding should be included. For example:
- 4.7 The Draft Council Enterprise Activity Management Plan 2024-2034 has the following Community Outcome (underline added):

- *Social Wellbeing - Our urban and rural environments are people-friendly, well planned, accessible and sustainably managed. The Council's commercial assets are accessible to the whole community.*

And:

- *Social Wellbeing – our communities have access to a range of social, cultural, educational and recreational facilities and activities. The Council's commercial activities provide spaces for social interaction and recreation. The Council's commercial forests are managed to provide the optimal level of benefit to the overall community, by balancing commercial and recreational use.*

4.8 The Draft Parks and Facilities Activity Management Plan 2024-2054 has as one of its levels of service:

- *An interconnected open space network and recreation facilities that provide a range of leisure opportunities and meet the needs of users and the community.*

4.9 Recommendation: The Council recognises and values the equine community when it considers how it will achieve its Community Outcomes.

4.10 Recommendation: The Council ensures that the needs of horse riders are considered and accurately reflected in its Activity Management Plans and other documents.

5. CURRENT RIDING AREAS

5.1 Many once popular riding areas have been lost completely to horse riders. Examples include Kingsland Forest, and areas now part of the Great Taste Cycle Trail. The loss in riding area has been exacerbated by forest management companies locking their gates to the public over the years and the growth of subdivisions in areas where there were previously paddocks and trails.

5.2 Current areas popular for recreational trail riding are shown in Table 1¹. The horse community is very grateful to be able to access these areas. However, an analysis of the table shows that there are very limited off-road public areas to ride, and that they are primarily flat (not so good for building horse muscle), short, closed at certain times of the day, or there is a loss of connectivity through to other areas that were once available to horse riders.

¹ Does not include Golden Bay and Murchison. We understand there to be limited public trail riding access in these areas.

Table 1: Public trail riding areas currently utilised by the horse community.

Location	Pros	Cons
Rough Island Equestrian Park	Fenced, easy access, good parking and facilities	All flat, very small distance for trail riding, closed at dusk
Rough Island perimeter trail (shared use)	Easy access, good parking, good surface, scenic, adjacent to the equestrian park.	All flat, very small distance for trail riding, closed at dusk, increasing pressure from more and more users
Rabbit Island Beach	Easy access, good parking, scenic, good surface	All flat, subject to tide times, access closed at dusk, increasing pressure from more and more users, unsafe public activities in the parking area (e.g. large-scale blow-up bouncy castles)
New Rabbit Island trail	Easy access, good parking, scenic	All flat, short trail, access closed at dusk, not yet open
Ruby Bay/ Kina/ Tasman View Road Loop	Mixture of flat and hill riding, scenic, good distance for horses to get a work-out	Limited parking, loss of connectivity: Tasman View Road no longer links to the Ruby Bay loop due to the changes to SH60 at the junction of Tasman View Road. The road was widened and riders can no longer safely pass to the track that leads along-side SH60 linking Tasman View Road to the Gardner Valley underpass. Loss of berm due to new cycle trail along parts of the road.
Tunnickliff Forest Loop	Mixture of flat and hill riding, scenic, good distance for horses to get a work-out	Closed until November 2024 due to logging, issues with access across land managed by a commercial forestry company (permit required), unsuitable surface for horses in recently logged area.
Waimea River stopbank	Easy access, good surface, scenic	All flat, loss of connectivity to other areas (e.g. Brightwater, Rough Island due to cycle trail)

6. FUTURE TRAIL RIDING AREAS

6.1 The following is a list of areas that could be quite easily opened up for horse trail riding, with little cost to the Council as there are already roads or tracks in place.

- Rabbit Island – a dedicated horse-riding trail around the perimeter of the eastern end of Rabbit Island that would utilise an already existing road/ track and create an excellent distance loop that connects with the beach front.
- Rabbit Island - Widen the trail around the western end of the island to create a multi-use trail that horse riders can use, or open up a new trail for horses at the western end of the island.
- Tunnickliff – reinstate access for horse riders after logging ceases and consider making new trails. Ensure logging road surfaces are suitable for horses (new metal chip on the logging roads is very sharp and unsuitable for riding on).
- Reinstate access along the Waimea River stopbank where access has been lost due to the cycle trail (e.g. Lower Queen Street to Rough Island)
- Tasman View Road – reinstate the berm for access to horse riders that has been lost due to creation of the cycle trail, or make the cycle trail a shared-use trail with a suitable surface (see Appendix 4).

6.2 The following is a list of areas where horse trail riding could occur in the future, with some planning and investment.

- Borlase Forest
- Howard River Forest
- Council stopbanks
- New reserves and parks
- Roadside berms where suitable
- New semi-rural subdivision developments, particularly on the Moutere hills. A series of interconnecting shared multi-use trails could be established as part of the subdivision consent.

6.3 There is also the potential for Council to negotiate Access Agreements for horse riding trails in private or corporate owned forests in the region, especially where those forests are adjacent to Council reserves or forestry (e.g. Tunnickliff). We think there is potential for the Council to negotiate access with DoC for trail riding, and there may also be potential to open up trails where easements and 'paper roads' already exist.

6.4 **Recommendation: that the Council consider plan and implement new trails and/or reinstate access to previous horse trails using existing roads, tracks, stopbanks and road berms.**

- 6.5 Recommendation: that the Council consider plan and implement new trails in Council-owned forests, and in current and future reserves and parks, and through access agreements with private forestry owners and others.**

7. SUMMARY

- 7.1 Horse riders and owners are part of the Council's community.
- 7.2 Horse riding brings economic benefit to the region and provides valuable wellbeing, sport and recreation opportunities.
- 7.3 Safe off-road horse-riding trails and areas are very limited in the Tasman region.
- 7.4 There is a lack of recognition of the needs of horse riders in Council planning and activity management documents.
- 7.5 Horse riders would like to work with the Council to identify, plan for and provide new trails and horse-riding areas.
- 7.6 As well as valuable recreation, such trails and areas could provide new tourism opportunities for the region.
- 7.7 The equine community hopes that the Council will adopt a culture of support for shared multi-use trails as other councils have done in New Zealand, and for dedicated horse trails.

END

Appendix 1 – Examples of Horse-Riding Trails Promoted by Kāpiti District Council

2. Te Ara Ramaroa / The Rocks (Whareroa Farm)



A hidden treasure on the Kāpiti Coast, choose this loop walk when you feel like getting off the beaten track, enjoying a hill walk, mature kohekohe and titoki trees and stunning views.

One of the best hill walks in the region, a little-known gem that weaves through wetlands, ancient kohekohe forest, stream hopping and a steepish climb up to stunning coastal views, returning through regenerating farm land.

A handy seat at 'The Rocks' awaits you with one of the best views around! On the way down, follow signs for the Ramaroa Wetland walk for a shady return to the farm race.





TRACK STATS
2.5 Hours, 8 Km
Easier tramping track
Start: Main entrance to Whareroa Farm



5. Coastal Track (Queen Elizabeth Park)



This much-loved seaside trail winds its way through the sand dunes and offers stunning coastal views and countless places to rest, play, picnic or swim.

The Coastal Track gently winds its way through sand dunes at the coast's edge between Paekākāriki and Raumati South. With spectacular views of sea, hills, coastline and Kapiti Island, on a clear day you'll also see the South Island, Mounts Ruapehu and Taranaki on the horizon.

Combine with Inland Track or Te Ara o Whareroa to make a loop.

See a good trail map at:
www.gw.govt.nz/parks/queen-elizabeth-park










Start: Southern end of Queen Elizabeth Park

TRACK STATS
1 Hour, 2.7km
Walking track

Walks of the Kāpiti Coast
3

11. Waikanae River Trail



Walk or ride the treelined banks of Waikanae River in a loop from Waikanae to the sea.

The Waikanae River Trail and Estuary is a nationally significant area and make up part of the Te Araroa Trail. It offers a place for many native birds to flourish, as they move between the Tararua Ranges and Kapiti Island. The tree-lined banks make it a fantastic outing for the whole family. It winds along the river beside established willows and young native plantings with plentiful bird life.

Four bridges across the river allow for many shorter loops. There are many parks and places to picnic and swim along the route.



TRACK STATS
2.5 Hours, 9.6km
Easy walking track

Start: Otaihanga Domain or Waikanae

18. Chrystalls Bend



This track is a gentle, picturesque stroll through native planting alongside the Ōtaki River, with breathtaking scenery of the Tararua mountains.

Popular for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, this easy trail continues on from the Ōtaki River Trail or you may choose to do it on its own. It's an easy walk along a grassy and gravel path, through native bush.

There are picnic seats at intervals to sit and enjoy the view of the river and the mountains, a great lunch spot, or go later in the day and watch the sky change colour and the Tararua mountains light up at dusk.



TRACK STATS
2 Hours, 4km return
Walking track

Start: Friends of Ōtaki River kiosk, Old SH1



Appendix 2: Example of a Horse-Riding Trail Promoted by Christchurch City Council – Bottle Lake Forest

Horse riding

Bottle Lake Forest has a dedicated track for horse riding.

Find out where else you can go [horse riding in Christchurch](#).



Appendix 3: Equestrian Use of Multi-Use Tracks in Kāpiti Coast District – Letter



27th July 2023

To whom it may concern

EQUESTRIAN USE OF MULTI-USE TRACKS IN KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT

The Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) manages approximately 40km of off-road tracks and trails in parks and reserves, plus another 40km of tracks and connections with transport links. Together, this network (known as CWB – cycleways, walkways and bridleways) provides connectivity between communities, facilitating recreation and safer active transport, especially for vulnerable road users.

KCDC works closely with Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council and Waka Kotahi, who also manage trails within the District. As the locally-based Council, we often receive service requests (in the first instance) relating to all CWB trails in the district.

To the best of KCDC's knowledge, during the past 18 months there have been no reports of accidents, incidents or near misses relating to horses or horse-riders on CWB network in the district.

Most of the off-road CWB network which KCDC manages is 'multi-use' and shared by pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.

Most of the off-road CWB network is constructed from compacted base-course and top-course (gravel). Where possible, grass mown-strips are provided next to the track, at least one metre wide, but this is not essential. This extra space is included where possible because it improves sight-lines for all users on the trail.

KCDC has not found that horses damage or particularly increase wear and tear to the CWB network (damage has been reported caused by dirt bikes and scooters).

When renewing tracks, the preferred construction method is to apply the top-course as a slurry and leave to set. In fine weather conditions, this takes several days. The aim is to keep horses off the section of renewed track until it is dry. Once cured, the tracks are not affected by horses using them. The local equestrian community has been obliging when requested to avoid a trail for this reason.

The primary purpose of the CWB network as defined in the Kāpiti Coast Open Space Strategy is to *support active transport, landscape and ecological connectivity*. It notes that trails *perform a wide range of functions including habitat creation, areas for picnics, walking, biking, horse riding and other recreation*. The trails also connect communities and keep vulnerable road users (of which horse riders are identified) safer.

The Coast35 (Paekākāriki to Ōtaki) off-road trail is a 35km long multi-use trail which forms an important 'spine' of the network of the Kāpiti Coast. This trail has supported and encouraged a rise in biking in the District in recent years (for recreation and transportation). The trail is regularly used by horse-riders as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

The Kāpiti Coast has a culture of shared multi-use trails, which are promoted using the slogan *pass wide and slow, and let people know*.

The network of multi-use off-road trails on the Kāpiti Coast provides valuable recreation and potential for further tourism opportunities. This potential is highlighted in the Kāpiti Coast Destination Management Plan 2021.

Please contact tracey.wave@kapiticoast.govt.nz for further information.

Yours sincerely

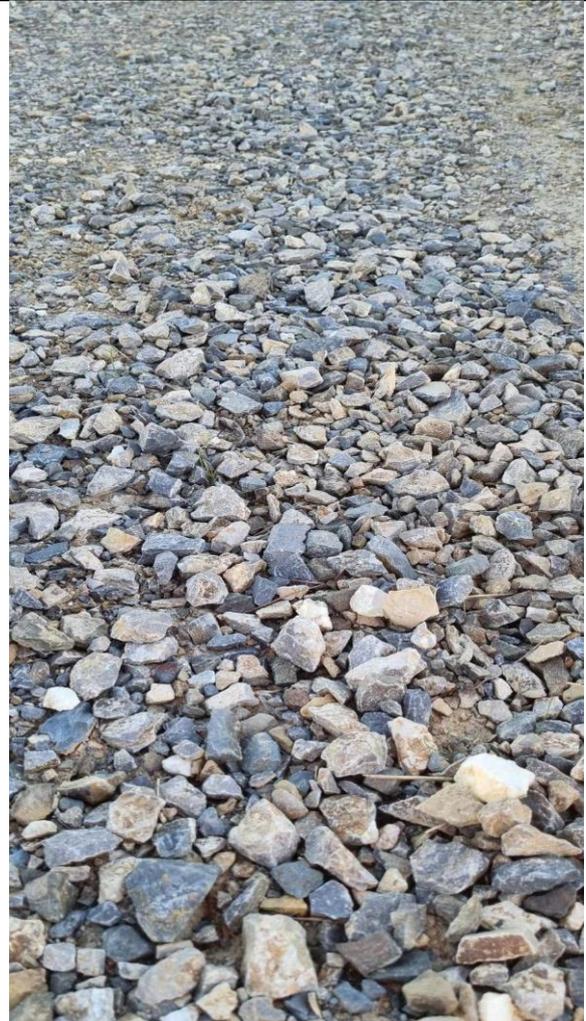


Mike Mendonça
Acting Group Manager Place and Space

Appendix 4 – Tasman View Road Photos



Tasman View Road showing new cycle trail in area previously used by horse riders



Tasman View Road - unsuitable surface for horses (many horses are barefoot)