



New Zealand House of Representatives
Te Whare Māngai o Aotearoa

Petitions Committee

Komiti Whiriwhiri Take Petihana

54th Parliament
January 2026

Petition of Shane Riddle: That children are allowed to cycle slowly on footpaths

Presented to the House of Representatives
by Greg O'Connor, Chairperson

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Petition of Shane Riddle

Recommendation

The Petitions Committee has considered the petition of Shane Riddle—That children are allowed to cycle slowly on footpaths—and recommends to the Government that it consider the issues raised in Ms Riddle’s petition as part of its upcoming consultation.

Request for change to bicycle rules

This petition was signed by 286 people. It was presented to the House by Greg Fleming on 1 October 2024 and requests:

That the House of Representatives allow children aged 14 years and under and the adults accompanying them to cycle slowly on footpaths regardless of the wheel size of their bicycles.

Background

The Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 governs the use of bicycles on the footpath and road. The rule permits the use of “wheeled recreational devices” on footpaths, shared paths, and the road.¹ This includes bicycles with a wheel diameter less than 355 millimetres, as well as skateboards, push scooters, and electric scooters. These devices cannot be used on cycleways.

Bicycles with a wheel diameter greater than 355 millimetres may not be used on the footpath, but may be used on roads, some shared paths, and cycleways.²

Petition 2014/59 of Joanne Clendon

Ms Riddle is not the first person to submit a petition on this topic to Parliament. Joanne Clendon’s petition, which was presented to Parliament in 2016, requested:

That the House recommend a change to the New Zealand Road Rules to allow cycling on the footpath by children under 14 years of age (and accompanying adults), seniors over 65, and vulnerable users (such as those with mental or physical disabilities); make bells mandatory for any bicycle used on footpaths or shared use paths; and allow local authorities to exclude, on a reasonable basis, certain areas of footpath from being used for cycling.

The Transport and Industrial Relations Committee of the 51st Parliament received and considered submissions from 233 individuals and organisations on Ms Clendon’s petition. It

¹ Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004, clause 11.1.

² Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004, clause 11.11.

reported to the House in May 2017.³ In its report the committee recommended that the Government change the rules to:

- allow cycling on the footpath by children up to and including 12 years of age or year 8 (and accompanying adults), seniors over 65, and vulnerable users (such as those with mental or physical disabilities)
- make bells mandatory for any bicycle used on footpaths or shared use paths
- allow local authorities to exclude, on a reasonable basis, certain areas of footpath from being used for cycling.

The Government responded to the committee's recommendations in August 2017, stating that the recommendations would be considered in upcoming policy work.⁴

Consultation on transport rule changes

In 2020, the Government consulted on proposed changes to road rules, including changes to allow the use of bicycles on footpaths.⁵ That proposal would require that, when on a footpath, users of bicycles or other transport devices (such as e-scooters) give way to pedestrians, behave in a courteous and considerate manner, and not exceed 15km/h. Most submitters expressed support for this proposal. The Government did not implement these proposed changes.

In June 2025, the Government announced its plans to consult on proposals to change road rules.⁶ Among others, the proposals include allowing children to ride bicycles on the footpath.

Comments from the petitioner

Ms Riddle told us that her petition arose from discussion with her child. The petitioner and her child consider that the current regulatory settings are not appropriate, as they do not reflect real-world use of the road and do not create a suitable environment for children to learn to cycle safely.

Ms Riddle pointed us to 2016 research commissioned by NZTA, which says:

In addition to newspaper and postal deliverers, cycling on the footpath happens routinely in New Zealand by people of all ages, usually because many road environments are not specifically designed to accommodate cycling and there are perceived and actual risks in riding on the road. The current footpath cycling law is out of step with the existing norm of footpath cycling.⁷

³ The report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee on Petition 2014/59 of Joanne Clendon can be found on the [Parliament website](#).

⁴ The Government response to the report of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee can be found on the [Parliament website](#).

⁵ Hon Julie Anne Genter, [Bid for safer footpaths](#), March 2020.

⁶ Hon Chris Bishop, [Taking the handbrake off productivity through transport rule reform](#), June 2025.

⁷ New Zealand Transport Agency, [Footpath Cycling Rule Options Research](#), November 2016.

The petitioner acknowledged that allowing children to cycle on footpaths may increase risk for vulnerable pedestrians. However, she pointed out that the current settings classify electric scooters as wheeled recreational devices, allowing them to be used on the footpath. The petitioner suggested that a collision between a pedestrian and an adult on an electric scooter would be more severe than a collision between a pedestrian and a child on a bicycle.

Ms Riddle suggested that the current rules put parents in a difficult position, as keeping young children safe when cycling is at odds with teaching them to obey the law. She remarked that changing the law would allow cycle skills training in schools to teach children how to safely manage interactions with pedestrians, mitigating some of the increased danger to pedestrians.

Recommendations from the petitioner

Ms Riddle commented that the current use of wheel size to determine whether a bicycle can be used on the footpath is outdated. Her petition calls for an age limit instead. Under her proposal, children under the age of 14 and accompanying adults would be allowed to cycle on the footpath.

We asked the petitioner about alternative solutions. The petitioner told us that she also supports allowing people of all ages to cycle on the footpath, with a speed limit instead of a wheel size limit. Ms Riddle told us that she considers the footpath to be for people moving at approximately the speed of a pedestrian, regardless of whether they are on foot, on a bicycle, or on a scooter. Ms Riddle argued that anyone who feels unsafe riding on the road should be allowed to slowly and carefully cycle on the footpath.

Comments from the Ministry of Transport

The Ministry of Transport provided us with crash data to help us understand the level of risk associated with footpath cycling. This data covers the period from 1 January 2015 to 30 September 2024. In that period, 555 crashes were recorded involving cyclists on the footpath. Of those crashes, 29 involved a pedestrian. As a result, one cyclist died and 10 pedestrians were seriously injured.

The ministry told us that an age limit for cycling on the footpath was one of the options considered as part of the Accessible Streets proposal, alongside the proposal for a speed limit. It told us that the proposal to allow children to cycle on the footpath may be considered as part of the Government's Road Safety Objectives.⁸

Our response to the petition

We thank the petitioner for bringing this matter to our attention. We agree that the current rules are outdated.

We acknowledge that allowing cycling on the footpath may increase risk for vulnerable pedestrians, including the elderly. However, we note that e-scooters may already be used on the footpath, and that they pose similar dangers. A change to the rules to allow footpath

⁸ Ministry of Transport, [New Zealand's Road Safety Objectives](#).

cycling could come with restrictions to limit the danger posed by bicycles, e-scooters, and other transport devices on the footpath.

We note that many children already cycle on the footpath, despite it being unlawful. Many parts of New Zealand lack adequate cycle infrastructure, so footpath cycling is the only safe option for some children. We believe that the rules should reflect this reality.

We acknowledge the work of the Transport and Industrial Relations Committee of the 51st Parliament on this issue. We are disappointed that the Government did not implement changes following that committee's report, and we hope that the work announced by the Minister of Transport last year will lead to improvements to New Zealand's cycling rules.

There is considerable merit to this petition, and we believe that these issues warrant further consideration. We recommend that the Government consider the issues raised in Ms Riddle's petition as part of its upcoming consultation.

Appendix

Committee procedure

The petition was signed by 286 people on the Parliament website. It was presented to the House by Greg Fleming on 1 October 2024 and referred to us that day. We met between 21 November 2024 and 29 January 2026 to consider it. We received written submissions and heard oral evidence from the petitioner and the Ministry of Transport.

Committee members

Greg O'Connor (Chairperson)

Carl Bates (until 29 January 2025)

Kahurangi Carter (from 29 January 2025)

Greg Fleming

Paulo Garcia (from 29 January 2025)

Francisco Hernandez (until 29 January 2025)

Tom Rutherford and Celia Wade-Brown participated in some of our work on this petition.

Related resources

The documents we received as evidence in relation to this petition are available on the Parliament website.

A recording of our hearing can be accessed online on the Parliament website.