

Report No:	RESC12-04-08
File No:	R878-1
Date:	13 April 2012
Decision Required	

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Engineering Services Committee
Meeting Date: 26 April 2012
Report Author: Dugald Ley
Subject: **Tasman's Great Taste Trail Update**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update and requests a decision regarding the future direction and funding of Tasman's Great Taste Trail.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report be received.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Engineering Services Committee receives the Tasman's Great Taste Trail Update report, RESC12-04-08; and

THAT subject to suitable funding being reallocated in the Long Term Plan that Council pursues option E and an application be made to the Ministry of Economic Development to form up a lower grade temporary loop trail as set out in the attached plan Appendix A and pursue the completed loop within the next 6 years, and noted in the report RESC12-04-08.

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1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides an update and requests a decision regarding the future direction and funding of Tasman's Great Taste Trail.

2. Update

2.1 Tenders for the Wairoa Suspension Bridge have recently closed and were awarded as follows:

Contract	No of tenders	Successful tenderer	Amount	Highest amount	Council estimate
Wairoa suspension bridge	3	Edifice Construction	\$265,324	\$380,859	\$280,000

2.2 The likely completion date for this bridge is mid June 2012 with many of the structural works presently being constructed off site. The physical works on site are likely to be completed quickly once the components arrive.

2.3 An official opening is likely to be held toward the end of June and will see the completion of the trail between Brightwater and Richmond.

2.4 Delays in obtaining resource consents will likely mean an extension of time to complete the Stage One trail until at the final construction phase of April 2013. An application to the Ministry to vary the agreed time frames will be sought.

3. Marketing and Maintenance of Trail

3.1 The marketing and maintenance deed has been submitted to the Nelson-Tasman Cycleways Trust for their consideration and two meetings have been held to clarify the document. We expect feedback by 27 April 2012.

4. Tasman's Great Taste Trail – Bylaw

4.1 The bylaw is discussed in a separate report.

5. Background to the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) Position

- 5.1 As noted in the report presented to the March Engineering Services Committee meeting, the Ministry of Economic Development have stated that they cannot market the trail as a “Great New Zealand Trail Ride” if the Tasman’s Great Taste Trail is terminated in Wakefield and Mapua. Their view is if there is no loop then there is no economic benefit and they would likely look at ways to exit the funding agreement and freeze any unspent funds.
- 5.2 A “temporary” option of a loop trail that could be ridden over a three to four day period via a temporary route through Pigeon Valley, Woodstock and back down the Motueka West Bank Road to Riwaka and back to Mapua would satisfy them in terms of meeting the commitments in the feasibility study application when the two Councils received the \$2.63 million funding (\$2.146 million for Tasman’s Great Taste Trail). They also see great advantages of the connection to Kaiteriteri from Riwaka even if it is only a short bridge over the Riwaka river at Goodall Road. (Note The Abel Tasman National Park has been nominated as the leading beach destination in Australasia in the World travel awards and already has been voted number one in the AA 101 “must dos” for kiwis).

6. Matters for Consideration

- 6.1 Concern by Councillors over logging trucks using the Pigeon Valley route is noted. Discussions with a local forestry operator (Hancock) noted:
- Tourism operators will advise their clients of the periods that forestry operations are likely, i.e. stop their clients using the trail at this point;
 - Appropriate signage advising of the period of closure or safety with the passing of logging trucks; and
 - Listen for approaching vehicles. There are adequate areas for cyclists to pull off and dismount if required to allow vehicles to pass.
- 6.2 As Councillors will be aware there are a number of submissions to the Long Term Plan encouraging Council to continue with the trail expansion so that the economic benefit to local communities can be realised.
- 6.3 Council should reassess the merits of an extension of Stage One trail and the implications of not continuing with the formation of a loop trail or carrying out future stages of the trail.

7. Options to be Considered

- 7.1 At the Engineering Services Committee meeting on 15 March 2012 it was resolved:

THAT the Deputy Chairman of the Engineering Services Committee, the Engineering Manager and the Development Engineer meet with the Ministry of Economic Development and the Nelson-Tasman Cycle Trails Trust to discuss options for the creation of a Great Taste Cycle Trail loop acknowledging funding from cost savings, not new money, and to report back to Council before any decisions are made. CARRIED

- 7.2 Jonathan Kennett from the Ministry of Economic Development visited on 26 March 2012 to discuss the design requirements of the proposed 'temporary' loop with representatives of the Cycleways Trust and Council staff. The design requirements are shown on the attached plan (Appendix A). A subsequent meeting was held on 4 April 2012 with Cr Dowler and the Trust to discuss the options.
- 7.3 As part of the funding agreement that Council signed with the Ministry of Economic Development on 20 August 2010, Council was tasked to construct a Grade One/Two trail being Stage One of the ultimate loop and there is no mandate or approval at this stage from the Ministry for Council to depart from that standard.
- 7.4 For reference, attached as Appendix B is the design criteria for the various cycle trail grades (Note grade one is for family and novice riders whereas grade six is for very adventurous and experienced riders).
- 7.5 For the present Stage One of the trail, the Nelson-Tasman Cycleways Trust has endeavoured to make savings on Council's behalf and has been using volunteers and "mates rates" wherever possible.
- 7.6 The coastal section of the trail for Stage One (Richmond to Mapua) originally had a carryover sum based on funding estimates that were shown for upgrading a section of Chaytor Track.
- 7.7 For the road section from Brightwater to Wakefield an application was submitted to Council's Transportation Manager to have a reduced posted speed limit on Higgins Road (from 100 kph to 60 kph). A 60 kph speed environment would allow a Grade One/Two trail to exist "on road." At the present open speed limit and to comply with a Grade One/Two trail criteria, an "off road" trail has to be constructed at an estimated cost of \$356,800. The alternative is to lower the trail to a Grade Three "on-road" along Higgins Road but note that the Transportation Manger has subsequently advised that Higgins Road cannot be reduced to 60 km/hr which compels the construction of a cycleway on the road berm including several bridges if the funded Grade One/Two trail standards are to be met. Note, we have no mandate to unilaterally amend the contract and lower this grade of the trail at this time unless we apply to the Ministry to do so. Further clarification is set out below and potential savings if this work is done to a revised Grade Three standard.

7.8 In light of Council's recent resolution, staff reassessed the options to extend the trail or to create a temporary loop as shown on the attached map which will require approval from the Ministry of Economic Development to reduce the grade of the trail, i.e. Grade Three/Four which is a departure from the funding agreement. (Note, a temporary loop is the Ministry's preferred option and extension to Kaiteriteri is also anticipated).

8. Financial Consideration

8.1 The table below summarises the costs for potential sections of the route with Higgins Road as funded or downgraded with Ministry approval to Grade Three:

Route	Item	Estimate	Grade
Richmond to Mapua and Wakefield	0.	No change	One/Two
Mapua to new SH60 underpass via Seaton Valley Road (not Chaytor Track)	1.	\$75,000 (<u>saving</u>), Old Chaytor Track	Proposed Grade Three trail
SH60 underpass to Tasman View Road	2.	\$263,500	Two
Tasman View Road to Motueka	3.	\$454,000	Three
Motueka to Riwaka	4.	\$45,000	Three
Riwaka to Kaiteriteri	5.	\$291,500	Three
Motueka Bridge to Westbank Road	6.	\$152,000	Three
Westbank Road to Woodstock	7.	\$9,000	Three
Woodstock to Wakefield	8.	\$34,000	Three
Higgins Road (downgrade to Grade Three/Four trail, i.e. on road)	9.	\$356,800 (<u>saving</u>)	Three/Four

9. Evaluation of Options

9.1 The following options are presented for consideration:

Option	New funding required	
A. Maintain status quo as per agreement with Ministry of Economic Development – stage 1 only – item 0	No new funding	No loop created
B. Continue to Motueka – items 1, 2, 3, 9	\$285,700	No loop created
C. Continue to Riwaka – items 1, 2, 3, 4, 9	\$330,700	No loop created
D. Continue to Kaiteriteri – items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9	\$622,200	No loop created
E. Form loop but NOT to Kaiteriteri – items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9	\$525,700	Temporary loop created
F. Form loop and continue link to Kaiteriteri – items 1 to 9	\$817,200	Temporary loop created

- 9.2 As previously stated, the Ministry of Economic Development has advised that finishing the trail at Wakefield and Mapua is not an option without a commitment to continue towards a complete finished loop over six years. They have advised that if a temporary loop is not provided by the end of the 2012-2013 financial year and a commitment to the completed loop within six years, then they will start proceedings to exit the funding agreement with Council which was signed on 20 August 2010 and that future funding for Stage One is at stake.
- 9.3 It is the Ministry’s view that the only options they would approve in the interim are E or F above.
- 9.4 Additional funding has been discussed with the Ministry of Economic Development. They have confirmed that if a “loop” trail can be achieved that would allow them to market a four to five day trail via the suggested temporary route (Option E) through Pigeon Valley and Woodstock, then an additional \$150,000 (see Appendix C) would be made available. This is subject to an application being made by the end of April 2012. Anything less than this would not be marketed or have the status of a “Great Ride” and Council would not be entitled to the \$150,000 funding being offered. This may also trigger the Ministry’s proceeding to freeze existing unallocated funds for Stage One which means Council would be left with trails or bridges that lead to nowhere. The Ministry also felt that the temporary loop (for six years) would be just that and that a long term goal would be to complete the loop as originally proposed in the feasibility study and also extend it to Kaiteriteri.
- 9.5 It is recommended that option E be pursued and the additional funding be made up as follows:

Contribution from	Contribution	2012-2013	
Ministry of Economic Development	\$150,000	\$150,000	
Tasman District Council – Reserves Fund (Community Services)	\$150,000	\$150,000 ⁽¹⁾	
Tasman District Council – Transportation	\$225,700	\$225,700 ⁽²⁾	
Total	\$525,700		

⁽¹⁾ Subject to funding from the Reserves Contribution account having available funds.

⁽²⁾ Subject to reallocation of funding priorities in Council’s Long Term Plan.

- 9.6 Note as above, any future funding cannot be committed at this stage and this will be discussed as part of the Long Term Plan workshops. Staff will “hold off” in these two areas where savings could be made should a temporary loop be envisaged by Council. However, this will compound delays to this project and the likely completion of Stage One will not be achieved this calendar year. It has been

noted that the Ministry's offer is only available for a short time and only if the loop can be created in the 2012/2013 financial year.

10. Significance

10.1 This decision is classed as minor in terms of Council's Significance Policy, viz "The extent of which any decision is likely to be controversial in the context of numbers of people affected, the area affected or the duration of the effect".

10.2 This may require a lesser amount of consultation than required under the policy and is likely to have an impact on local communities because of the economic benefits that could be realised.

11. RECOMMENDATION

11.1 It is recommended that an application be made to the Ministry to:

- a) lower the grade of the Higgins Road from a grade 1/2 trail to grade 3 "on road" or create threshold treatments to slow vehicles along this route to provide a 60km/hr environment;
- b) request that the Ministry of Economic Development provide funding of at least \$150,000 (application must be made before 30 April 2012);
- c) request construction of the temporary loop over the 2012/2013 period rather than by 31 December 2012 as stipulated by the Ministry of Economic Development; and
- d) that Council maintains a budget item in its 2012 Long Term Plan to complete construction over the next six years for the entire loop trail as set out in the feasibility study.

12. DRAFT RESOLUTION

12.1 THAT the Engineering Services Committee receives the Tasman's Great Taste Trail Update report, RESC12-04-08.

12.2 THAT subject to suitable funding being reallocated in the Long Term Plan that Council pursues option E and an application be made to the Ministry of Economic Development to form up a lower grade temporary loop trail as set out in the attached plan Appendix A and pursue the completed loop in the next 6 years, and noted in the report RESC12-04-08.

Appendices

Appendix A – Tasman's Great Taste Trail – Interim Route (Map)

Appendix B – New Zealand Cycle Trail – Design Criteria

Appendix C – Letter dated 8 March 2012 to Mayor Kempthorne from the Ministry of Economic Development "The Completion of the Great Taste Trail"