

Report No:	RESC11-04-06
File No:	R858-1
Date:	11 April 2011
<i>Information Only – no decision required</i>	

REPORT SUMMARY

Report to: Chairman and Members, Engineering Services Committee
Meeting Date: 28 April 2011
Subject: Tasman Cycle Trail Update
Report Author: Dugald Ley, Development Engineer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress with the Tasman Cycle Trial.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THAT the Engineering Services Committee receives the Tasman Cycle Trail Update Report, RESC11-04-06.

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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Engineering Services Committee of progress with Stage 1 construction of the Tasman Cycle Trail.

2. Background

2.1 Councillors will be aware that construction and consultation progress is being made in a number of areas. Two of these are specifically reported as requested at the last meeting.

2.2 The following is a summary of highlights to date:

- Completion of shared path along Ranzau Road.
- Completion by the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) of the Richmond deviation and a likely formal opening on 9 May 2011.
- Negotiations have commenced with the Alliance Group, Nelson Pine Industries, Gibbons and the Department of Conservation for land access around the coast from the Richmond Deviation to the end of Beach Road.
- A public meeting was held in Richmond to discuss the coastal route from the Waimea River to Rabbit Island with interested parties.
- The Trust is presently following up on sponsored works such as bridges etc.

2.3 The Trust requested proposals for professional services for design of the two bridges and foundations. Four proposals were received with Nick Barber & Associates appointed as the preferred supplier.

3. Waimea Estates – Former Railway Reserve

- 3.1 Councillors will be aware that the preferred alignment for the trail from Richmond to Brightwater is via the former railway reserve from SH60 to Ranzau Road.
- 3.2 NZTA has granted permission to use this land although the Trust will only occupy some 4.0 metres of the total 20 metre width.
- 3.3 NZTA has written to the two main leaseholders and has asked them to “vacate the property no later than 31 July 2011”. Council staff and the Trust believe that construction is likely to be later in 2011.
- 3.4 Two meetings have been held with Waimea Estates and another affected party to canvass the issues of allowing a shared path through a working vineyard. The affected parties are totally supportive of the shared path proposal and I would like, through this report, to formally thank them for their cooperation.
- 3.5 Discussions with Waimea Estates centre on continuing operation of a working vineyard and the perceived reverse sensitivity effects of horticultural activities on people who pass close by, ie those using the new shared path.
- 3.6 Waimea Estates undertakes best practice in their horticultural operations. Similar operations such as vineyards and orchards already exist close to public areas like the road carriageway and footpaths.
- 3.7 Waimea Estates use modern spray equipment that sprays both sides of the vine in one pass rather than older style rear-mounted air blowers. They use the minimum amount of spray and spray less times when conditions are ideal.
- 3.8 Agreement has been reached to allow both the vineyard operations and shared path to co-exist. Some users of the shared path may make comment on the vineyard operations and these “issues” will need to be addressed on a “case-by-case” basis.



3.9 Mitigation measures have been agreed as follows:

- Threshold treatments – these treatments will slow cyclists down before they enter a vineyard operation (at each end) and allow the cyclist to see the machinery that may come from the three internal road crossings within the vineyard. The photo below shows an example of a threshold treatment at the Railway Reserve/Saxton Road crossing and is typical of what will be used. Note the pavement markings, signage and bollards provide visual clues to the situation the users are approaching.



- Signage – As mentioned, Council staff have met with Waimea Estates on a number of occasions and it has been agreed that the following sign will be erected at each entrance to the vineyard on NZTA land. The sign sets out the possible adverse effects that may be evident when it comes to this working environment.



- A meeting has also been held with the Department of Labour who are satisfied that all practical measures have been taken and the need for the owner of the adjoining properties to meet their own Health & Safety requirements.

- Fencing – No fencing is proposed alongside the vineyard area. However one of the affected parties has requested relocation of their deer fence to the west on the boundary between NZTA land and the Hope Reserve. The issue of fencing the reserve is being managed by Community Services and the Hope Reserve users.
- Surfacing of trail/shared path – The path will have a permanent surface which will be either a two-coat chip seal or asphaltic concrete. Tenders will be called and a decision on the surface will be dependent on budgets.

3.10 All stakeholders are satisfied with the mitigation measures outlined above. Tenders will be arranged and construction will commence once the lessees have vacated their respective areas.

4. Waimea Inlet Forum and Tasman Cycle Trails Trust Working Party

4.1 The Waimea Inlet Forum was set up as an umbrella group representing stakeholders who have an interest in the Waimea estuary margins. Two meetings were held with the forum and issues discussed included:

- The western end of Rabbit Island;
- Pearl Creek at the end of Cotterell Road; and
- Nieman Creek near the north end of Lansdowne Road.

4.2 The forum has tasked a smaller working group to look into alternative routes that would bypass Pearl Creek.

- Western end of Rabbit Island – issues focus on restricting access for the public to the beach area which is a breeding habitat for variable and pied oyster catches and bar-tailed godwits. Suitable signage and restricted access to the beach will help to mitigate these issues. The plan below shows that a specific landing area will be created together with signage, plantings, interpretive signage and observation areas. A meeting with stakeholders and the ferry operator took place on 12 April at the western end of Rabbit Island.



- Pearl Creek and the use of the existing stopbanks for the shared path have been discussed previously as part of the Waimea River Management Plan and Waimea Inlet Management Strategy. Both documents were adopted by Council in August 2010. The Regional Cycling & Walking Strategy 2005 set out one of the strategies for the park as “....proposed shared use trail (pedestrian and cycle) between Lower Queen Street and Redwood Road (Rabbit Island) via the east bank of the Lower Waimea River, Appleby Bridge and the west bank of the Lower Waimea River.





- The Waimea River Park Management Plan also mentions that “....nature conservation has not been the primary objective of berm land management. However, management of the area for flood protection works has, by default, maintained or created some native conservation values”. “.....In recent years an area adjacent to the park at Pearl Creek has been protected and restored to protect native fish habitat”.



The above acknowledges that a number of uses would need to co-exist for the benefit of all. Comment has also been made that “community groups have completed restoration projects adjacent to the park at Pearl Creek.”

- 4.3 The Waimea Inlet Management Strategy brings together communities and interest groups to manage the inlet which is being surrounded by urban and peri-urban development. It acknowledges that people wish to retain a full range of options for the use and enjoyment of the inlet and also segregation of activities may be needed. It does (as we heard during the public forum of the last committee meeting) where Willie Cook mentioned “limiting access by people, vehicles, dogs or vessels in areas where significant vegetation and habitat types may be damaged or where disturbance to birds may be critical and directing these activities to places where damage or disturbance will be minimal”. Note the existing stopbanks are already being used by pedestrians, cyclists, people walking dogs and the occasional horse rider, even whitebaiters who tend to have their car radios going and scaring the bird life. I note also that three maimais are located within the Pearl Creek water berm.
- 4.4 The Strategy also mentions “making people aware of how their activities affect inlet values and how to turn around from causing adverse effects to creating benefits. Information boards, bird viewing hides, reducing effects of light spill on night sky visibility are options”.
- 4.5 The section on Cooperation or Separation is also relevant:

Cooperation or Separation

Encouraging approaches to new development proposals that:

- are cooperative, bringing interested people together with a common level of information about proposals;
- are informed by the known values of the Strategy;
- consciously seek win-win outcomes;
- create opportunities for ecosystem restoration;
- increase our knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of the inlet, and our long-term commitment to improving it.

Regeneration

- Reviewing opportunities and programmes for restoration of habitat types and planting on council and other public land, including species used and sourcing of plants, to meet the principles of this Strategy.
- Raising public awareness of inlet values through the provision of interpretation material and public events such as planting days.
- Supporting restoration planting by individuals or groups on coastal and riparian land and wetlands, by publicising existing planting guides and advising on sources of appropriate stock.
- Restoring stream mouths for fish habitat and fish passage.
- Investigating land purchase options for enhancement of vegetation sequences from marine to terrestrial habitats.
- Developing a strategic response to maintain natural functions of the inlet and representative habitats, under changing conditions of sea level.

- 4.6 It is possible that in the area of Pearl Creek, which already has a pathway through it, mutual use could be agreed by some of the provisions above.
- 4.7 At the workshop with the Waimea Inlet Forum it was decided to review the decisions made to date. A smaller group including Cr Brian Ensor, Stuart Hughes, Philip Wilson and Jim Frater were tasked to look at alternative access routes from the western stopbank of the Waimea River to Redwood Road. A meeting was held on 13 April 2011 with the sole landowner concerned and a verbal report of those discussions will be provided at the committee meeting.
- 4.8 Note – a suggestion to use SH60 from the Waimea River bridge to Redwood Road would not satisfy the Ministry of Economic Development as it would not meet the criteria of the “Great New Zealand Ride”. Jonathan Kennett of the New Zealand Cycleways Trust comments on this route saying:
- *Open roads with high traffic volumes cannot be used for grade 1 or 2 trails (please refer to figure 30 of the NZCT Design Guide). This is primarily for safety*

reasons. The cycle trail must be separate from roads with more than 1000 vehicles per day travelling at 100 kmh.

- *Cycling beside busy roads is an unpleasant experience that would deter grade 1 and 2 cyclists (your target market).*
- *The revised route avoids the very wildlife experience that would attract tourists to the cycle trail.”*

4.9 The advice to the Ministry of Economic Development goes on to say:

- *There are many ways of mitigating the effects of the cycle trail on Waimea Inlet, as well as enhancing the wildlife values of this area. Some of these have been suggested by David Melville. Having cycle tourists tread lightly to help protect threatened birds can become part of the experience. Signs and screening/planting are workable solutions. In some cases however, reroutes are being looked at that are completely unfeasible, either because they cost far too much, or they use dangerous roads, or they cross private land.*
- *It is extremely rare for cycle tourists to travel with a dog, therefore it is fine by us for restrictions to be placed on dogs in Waimea Inlet”.*

4.10 As previously outlined to Council the favoured option 1 over the existing stopbanks and causeway, was part of a peer review to ascertain other alignments of Best Island the Greenacres golf course (option 2) and via Bell Island to near the existing Rabbit Island boat ramp (option 3).

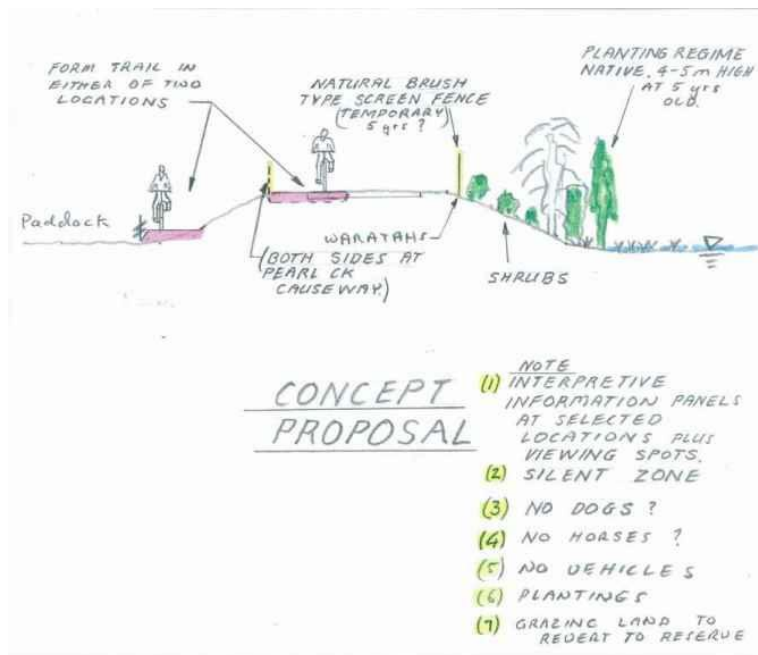
4.11 The peer review by Nick Barber (CPEng) confirmed that option 1 was returned as the favoured option.

4.12 Nieman Creek – This route takes the trail behind Ravensdown Fertiliser to private land and then over to Lansdowne Road via an elevated boardwalk. Issues of concern are bird habitat (more towards the Lower Queen Street location) and game bird hunting near the estuary. There is a number of maimais in the area, the closest being approximately 100 metres from the trail. In discussion with Neil Dean of Fish & Game, the most likely effects will be a surprise shotgun noise from one of the maimais. These usually face the open sea and hunting will only be from May to August. The trail is likely to be used less during these months and appropriate signage similar to that shown below will be adequate to warn cycle/pedestrians of their presence.



4.13 Failure to reach agreement (if that is the case) with landowners in Cotterell Road to cross their properties to Redwood Road, has resulted in the only option which is to allow the use of the existing stopbank as originally outlined to Council (we will know more following a meeting to be held with landowners prior to this committee meeting). This will need to be done with mitigation effects constructed and the attached concept plan is an option that could be considered by the stakeholders or interested parties in the area.

4.14 Possible locations of the trail around the existing stopbank are shown on the cross-section with the western option being on the paddock side of the stopbank for the majority of the length where endangered birds are located.



4.15 Where there is habitat on one or both sides then the following could be provided. These are only options for discussion:

- Screen/brush fencing, similar to the one that has been installed on the new Richmond deviation but higher;
- Silent zone – signage;
- Interpretive panels viewing area;
- Enhanced planting;
- Retire grazing land and establish new habitat;
- Signage/Bylaw regarding no dogs or dogs on lead; No horses.
- Closed to vehicles, ie lock gate but provide parking and turning area at end of Cotterell Road;
- Establish shared pathway away from visual habitat.

4.16 A meeting of the working group on 18 April will discuss the options above to gauge the result of access discussions and or mitigation measures. A verbal report on this meeting will be presented at the committee meeting.

4.17 At a public meeting on 12 April 2011, 36 interested parties discussed aspects of the coastal trail in this locality. The attendees were reasonably receptive but again all options for the final route need to be researched fully prior to the resource consent application.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That the report be received.

6. DRAFT RESOLUTION

6.1 THAT the Engineering Services Committee receives the Tasman District Council Cycle Trail Update report RESC11-04-06.