

## Swanson Foothills Walkway

File No.: CP2013/21362

### Purpose

1. To seek the approval of the Waitakere Ranges Local Board to proceed with the Swanson Foothills Walkway project, following consideration of public feedback.

### Executive Summary

2. The Waitakere Ranges Local Board has set aside budget in the 2013/2014 financial year for the construction of a section of the Waitakere Ranges Foothills Walkway at Swanson. A map of the proposed Swanson walkway route is attached (Attachment A). A programme to provide information and seek feedback on the proposed Swanson walkway was undertaken during July and August 2013, with a view, where possible, to address issues raised by the public prior to detailed design work.
3. This report provides information on the feedback received and seeks the approval of the Waitakere Ranges Local Board to proceed with the project.

### Recommendation/s

That the Waitakere Ranges Local Board:

- a) approves the construction of the Swanson Foothills Walkway
- b) requests that Auckland Transport expedite construction of a footpath along Candia Road from Burtons Drive to Coulter Road (north), as part of the Swanson Walkway project
- c) directs that detailed design of the walkway take into account the future possibility of a cycle and/or horse trail along the route
- d) directs that the walkway be designed in harmony with the rural character of the Swanson Foothills
- e) directs that a car park, able to be chained off during the hours of darkness, be constructed to accommodate approximately 6-8 vehicles at the north end of Perris Road.

### Discussion

4. The proposed Swanson Foothills Walkway is part of the Waitakere Ranges Foothills Walkway concept. A former Waitakere City Council project, this is a long term vision to construct a walkway stretching almost 50 kilometres over the rural eastern foothills of the Waitakere Ranges from the Swanson Railway Station in the north, to the Arataki Visitor Centre and Titirangi in the south. A feasibility study was prepared in 2010 outlining an indicative route and the associated priorities.
5. The Waitakere Ranges Foothills Walkway concept was endorsed by the Planning and Policy Committee of the former Waitakere City Council in 2010 (Resolution 395/2010) and by the Regional Development and Operations Committee (RDOC) of Auckland Council (Resolution RDO/2011/2).
6. The proposed Swanson Foothills section of the walkway traverses almost 5 kilometres of mainly rural farmland and is routed through public land including road reserve and public open space. It follows the northern end of Candia Road, Coulter Road, Perris Road (an unformed road), Seibel Reserve, Seibel Road, Vineyard Road and the southern end of Candia Road, as shown at Attachment A.

7. This route can be connected to a number of other walkways in the area. In the north, it will link with a proposed walkway/cycleway route to be constructed by Auckland Transport (AT) along the rail corridor from Swanson through to Henderson. There will also be a future link west of Candia Road through Burton Drive onto a walkway network to be provided as part of the Penihana subdivision to the Swanson railway station.
8. To the east the walkway will link with a proposed walking trail from the Hetherington Road area down to Candia Road near the Coulter Road junction, while in the south, a connection can be made via the existing footpath along Henderson Valley Road with the Project Twin Streams urban walkway along the Opanuku Stream into Henderson.
9. A programme to provide information and seek feedback on the proposed walkway was undertaken during July and August 2013 with a view to ascertaining issues and where possible, addressing them during the design phase of the project. This programme included:
  - An open day at the Swanson Station Market on 7 July
  - A letter to all landowners adjoining the route of the proposed walkway outlining the project, informing them of the open day and offering an individual site visit to discuss concerns.
  - Information on the Council's web site and Waitakere Ranges Local Board Facebook page.
  - Information in the Swanson and Henderson Valley School newsletters
  - Posters at local dairies and notice boards
  - Information over local email networks, including 'Window on Swanson' and 'Celebrating Swanson'
  - An advertisement in the Western Leader
  - An address to a meeting of the Henderson Valley Residents Association on 17 July

### **Submissions and Site Visits**

10. A total of 75 submissions were received by the closing date of 15 August 2013, 28 via the questionnaire on the council's web page, and 47 questionnaire forms from the Open Day or emails to the parks west email address. A copy of the submissions is available in the Waitakere Ranges Local Board Office.
11. Of those submissions, 49 are in support of the proposal, 7 are opposed and 14 submissions are either seeking information, or it is unclear whether the submitter supports or opposes the proposal. The other five submissions are supportive but with conditions such as an equestrian trail, or a footpath on Candia Road being provided.
12. Attachment B provides a summary of issues raised in submissions. The main issues are: equestrian and cycle use of the walkway route; road safety especially along Candia Road; the need to provide parking for the walkway; minimal disturbance to the bush and wildlife, and that the walkway design be in harmony with the rural character of the area.
13. Staff undertook 5 site visits requested by landowners who adjoin the proposed walkway route. In addition, a number of adjoining owners made submissions. The issues raised by adjoining landowners are outlined in Attachment C, with the main concerns over privacy and security, the cost and type of fencing along Perris Road, access from new proposed subdivision, dogs and increased litter.

### **Conclusion**

14. Most of these concerns can be addressed through the detailed design and ongoing management of the walkway. In particular, a carpark can be constructed at the north end of Perris Road, and sheep net fencing erected along Perris Road to contain most dogs within the walkway corridor. Care should be taken to ensure that walkway design does not compromise any future ability to construct a bridle trail and cycleways along the route.

## Consideration

### Local Board Views

14. The Swanson Foothills Walkway was discussed by the Waitakere Ranges Local Board at their workshop on 15 May 2013, and again through a report of the Portfolio Holder at the meeting of 26 June 2013.

### Maori Impact Statement

15. Te Kawerau a Maki, Ngati Whatua Nga Rima o Kaipara and Ngati Whatua Orakei were contacted with regard to the Swanson Foothills Walkway.
16. Issues of significance to manawhenua in respect of this walkway are their kaitiaki responsibilities: to ensure there will be no adverse effects on taonga; that the environment is protected and enhanced, and to provide for the needs of present and future generations. There is potential to bring heritage interpretation and Maori art into public spaces and support Maori artists but further discussions on these matters will be required.
17. Edward Ashby, the Environmental Officer of the Te Kawerau Iwi Tribal Authority advised that Te Kawerau would like to be involved with the Swanson Foothills Walkway and the wider Waitakere Ranges Foothills Walkway. He indicated that Henderson Valley is of significance to Te Kawerau but does not see any issue with the (Swanson) route at this stage. He noted for the record that a pa site (R11/8) is situated upslope about 0.5km from the south-western portion of the Swanson Foothills Walkway route, and the iwi would like to have this recognised through signage along the walkway, along with other sites of significance to Te Kawerau a Maki.
18. Malcolm Paterson, Senior Manager, Heritage and Resource Management Unit, Ngati Whatua Orakei, indicated that the walkway is considered to be in an area of shared interest with Te Kawerau a Maki, and that Ngati Whatua Orakei would be interested in making a joint contribution.
19. As detailed design for the walkway is progressed, ongoing discussions will be undertaken with Te Kawerau a Maki and Ngati Whatua Orakei to further explore how Iwi interests might be incorporated in the final walkway design and implementation.

### General

20. The walkway project is being led by a Project Team consisting of staff from Community Policy and Planning, Local and Sports Parks (west) and Biodiversity teams of Auckland Council, together with an Auckland Transport representative

### Implementation Issues

21. The Waitakere Ranges Local Board has set aside an amount of \$500,000 in the 2013/2014 financial year for this project. A concept plan undertaken by Thomas Civil and Environmental Consultants contained initial cost estimates for the project, which indicate that a gravel path of approximately 1.8 metres wide along the length of the walkway would likely exceed the budget by approximately 40%.
22. A next step is to undertake a more detailed estimate of costs and what can be achieved within the budget. To keep costs down, it is anticipated that roadside walking on the more winding stretches of road will be on the berms and will remain in mown grass rather than metal, while some lengths of the road-based trail with good sight lines would use the road as the walking track. The track along Perris Road and through Seibel Reserve will likely be metalled, and the track width may be reduced in some places. This would have the benefit of reducing the amount of vegetation that needs to be cleared.
23. Once the legal survey of boundaries along the route has been completed, detailed work on design will be undertaken and resource consents obtained, prior to construction.

## Attachments

No.	Title	Page
A	Proposed Swanson Foothills Walkway	
B	Swanson Walkway Issues raised in submissions	
C	Swanson Walkway issues raised by adjoining landowners	

## Signatories

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