

Hahei Ratepayers/ Walk Stakeholders Group

Walk and Traffic Congestion Management Strategy

Date 19 May 2015

At a meeting on Sunday, 17 May 2015, the combined Hahei Beach Ratepayers Association and the Walk Stakeholders Groups agreed that the community's position on the proposed Cathedral Coast Walk, would be as follows:

1. Background

Over the past few months there has been much Community discussion about the proposed Cathedral Coast Walk (the Walk). In the meantime, TCDC has issued press statements stating that they are focussed on raising finance and working with the Hahei Community to mitigate our concerns.

We appreciate TCDC's commitment to work with the Community to mitigate our concerns. To assist in this process, the following is a summary of the issues the Hahei Community has identified, some potential mitigation strategies, and our current preferred outcomes.

At the outset however, it is important to recognise, that Hahei's overriding position is:

- Fix Hahei's current traffic congestion, and then, if successful
- Build a walk or other tourist attractions.

2. Hahei Traffic Congestion

We strongly support the TCDC's decision to appoint a traffic management expert to develop solutions to manage traffic in the area from Hot Water Beach to Ferry Landing. We look forward to working with TCDC and the traffic expert as options are developed and reserve our final position on traffic management until the traffic expert's final report is delivered.

In the meantime, to assist TCDC and the traffic expert in the development of a long term strategy, we offer the following guidelines.

- **Long Term, Mercury Bay South, Holistic Solution** – We would like to see a long term, holistic, traffic management plan for the whole area. Specifically:
 - When visitors enter our area at Dalmeny Corner, it must be very easy for them to understand their parking options.
 - All Ratepayers' rights, both residents and non-residents, should be recognised. Owners have invested beach properties in the Coromandel to enjoy their holidays. Similarly many people choose to live in the Coromandel to enjoy its unique beauty and tranquillity. We all recognise it is increasingly busy during the holiday season, but we must ensure that all ratepayers' rights are preserved.
 - Ratepayers must not be burdened with unnecessary costs. Visitors should pay to enjoy our unique assets.

- All creative, innovative solutions should be considered. For instance, there may be support for making Hahei a pedestrian only area in January. How can GPS based traffic management systems be implemented?
- **Defer Construction of Pa Road Car Park** – Currently, TCDC is planning to build a car park at Pa Rd, alongside the sewage treatment plant before the end of 2015. We are not convinced that this is best solution for Hahei. As part of the District Planning process, options are being considered for the property adjacent to the proposed car park. One option, which we would probably support, is to allow the development of a car park/commercial area at the entrance to Hahei. The District Plan will not be finalised until December, so we would like to postpone any work on the proposed Pa Rd car park until the planning process is complete. We are prepared to continue with the Park and Ride operation while a long term solution is developed.
- **Grange Road Car Pay and Display** – We support the concept of making the Grange Road car park a Pay and Display only. This would apply during the busy holiday season, from December to May, and during holiday weekends, such as Labour weekend. There should be no overnight parking.

3. Cathedral Coast Walk Development

Some years ago, the Mayor promoted the concept of a Great Walk in the Coromandel, possibly going from Whitianga to Hot Water Beach or even Tairua. Like many in the Coromandel, our community supported this concept of a walk. A “Coastal Milford Track” sounded great.

At a meeting in Hahei on November 2014, it was explained that the Great Walk had morphed into a short walk to the Blowhole and a footpath from Cathedral Cove along Lees Road to the Purangi Estuary. The estimated cost was \$4.77m, however funding was uncertain.

Since the meeting, TCDC have submitted a funding application to the Lotteries Commission for \$1.84m and we understand a decision is expected in June.

The Department of Conservation has committed \$250k towards the project and has now ring-fenced an additional \$200k which will be approved subject to an accepted business case. This takes DoC's contribution to \$450k while our Council will contribute \$1.125M. This means that there could be approximately \$3.4m for the Walk.

If the Lotteries application is unsuccessful (less than \$900,000 secured), we understand the Governance Group will consider the following options

- Withdraw the project in its entirety
- Depending on what external funding is secured, construct from Hahei to the 'Blowhole', or, Lees Road to the Purangi, or, Carter's track to Cathedral Cove track and the Purangi, or, commence exploration from Whitianga north.
- A new Project Definition and Council approval would be required for any variation to the original proposal.
- Any section of work could commence immediately upon approval

To assist the Governance Group in determining their next steps and provide clarity to TCDC as they develop strategies to mitigate to Community's concerns, the following is a summary of the Hahei Community's position related to the Walk.

- ***Support Concept of Walk*** – We continue to support the Mayor’s original concept of the Walk – a world class “Coastal Milford Track” that would run from Whitianga south to Tairua. But we oppose small, underfunded segments with no firm long term plan to complete the Walk.
- ***Support the Development of a Walk North from Whitianga*** – Whitianga is the commercial centre of Mercury Bay with the infrastructure and businesses needed to support a new tourist initiative. It makes far more sense to develop this area of the Coromandel, rather than focus on an already congested, overcrowded area.
- ***Oppose Incomplete Walks South of Hahei*** – There is no support for the walk from Hahei Beach/end of Pa Road to the Blow Hole only. Walks south from Hahei should only be constructed if they are fully funded walk from Hahei to Hot Water Beach. Prior to the commencement of construction, there must be locally agreed mitigation strategies in place to manage, as a minimum, Pa Road parking congestion and walker safety, along with written support from all locally affected residents.
- ***Oppose Lees Road Foot path*** – There is no support for a walk alongside Lees Road from the Purangi Estuary to a walk down through Carter’s farm to Cathedral Cove. There are numerous issues that must be mitigated for this walk to receive our support. As a minimum, the following matters should be addressed.
 - In reality it will simply be a foot path and could never be consider as part of a Great Walk.
 - Without a complete upgrade, Lees Road is incapable of safely handling the increased traffic flows.
 - A walk along the northern boundary of Carter’s farm would create parking congestion on Lees Road.
 - Since there is no reliable way of crossing the Purangi Estuary, it is likely most cars will drive up and down Lees Road. A complete upgrade of Lees Road is therefore essential.
- ***Support a Purangi to Cathedral Cove Coastal Walk*** – We support the concept of a world class walk around the coast from the Purangi Estuary to Cathedral Cove. Initial discussions with key land owners have been positive and so we intend forming of a working group to explore this option in more detail.