

Report 03.372
Date 27 June 2003
File PK/14/01/03

Committee Landcare
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Queen Elizabeth Park – State Highway 1 overbridge/ MacKays Crossing entrance

1. Purpose

To present to the Committee the current status of Transit New Zealand's proposal for changes to State Highway 1 (SH1) at MacKays Crossing and its implications for the MacKays Crossing entranceway to Queen Elizabeth Park.

2. Background

MacKays Crossing is the ideal place for the main entrance to Queen Elizabeth Park. The entrance provides a focal point on which access to the wider Park can be facilitated and on which any future developments can be driven (see reports 94.145 and 01.04).

Transit NZ is upgrading the road at MacKays Crossing and the upgrade presents an opportunity to redesign the entrance area in a manner most beneficial to the Park in the long term.

3. Current status of project

Transit NZ has indicated that they have received the necessary approval and funding to start the project, and believe construction of the upgrade will start around May 2004. At present they are in the final stages of completing detailed designs and land purchases for works involved in constructing the railway overbridge and altering the alignment of SH1 at MacKays Crossing. Transit has approached the Council about what entranceway roading configuration would be desirable for us.

We have investigated different entranceway options and have agreed with Transit that the proposal attached (see **Attachment 2**), including the upgrades noted in section 4 of this report, satisfied the future needs of the Park.

4. Implications for the MacKays Crossing entranceway to the Park from the realignment of SH1

The project removes a portion of the Department of Conservation (DoC) wetland between SH1 and the Park directly south of MacKays Crossing. As compensation for the loss of some of the DoC wetlands outside the Park, Transit has agreed to fund \$85,000 for the restoration of a 3.5ha wetland in the Park. In addition, Transit will fund a replacement tree-planting programme at the MacKays entrance because existing trees at the road frontage will be removed for road construction. Transit will also relocate the existing barn as it is sited on the new road alignment.

Approximately 4 hectares of Park land at the road edge is required by Transit for the road works. In compensation for the loss to the Park, land owned by Transit of equivalent value at the Raumati end of the Park will be exchanged (see **Attachment 1**).

For the entranceway into Queen Elizabeth Park

The highway overbridge with an underpass into the Park will improve access into the Park (see **Attachment 2**). Officers and Transit NZ have been investigating options for the best long-term access into the Park. The present entrance through the memorial brick gates will continue to be used. However, the entrance will need upgrading at some point as it is narrow and the road needs raising. Difficulties arise when large volumes of traffic, or vehicles such as horse floats or buses, enter/exit the Park. Ultimately a new or better aligned entrance may be necessary, but this will not be considered until the next LTCCP.

Redesign of the MacKays Crossing area required

With the major modifications taking place, the placement of surplus fill material, vegetation patterns, and the placement of future facilities are being closely looked at by Council and Transit staff. In addition to the relocation of the existing barn, new toilets are to be constructed and future sites for the Rangers office and possible facilities will be identified. Also, with the wetlands at the entrance being restored, this will create very good education opportunities.

Funding for the project

No additional funding is required at this stage. The cost of the design is mostly being met by Transit. Any additional design work that we would like done will be funded out of existing budgets.

5. Communication

There are excellent promotional opportunities for the local press once the realignment project commences. We will investigate promotional opportunities and implement a media campaign when the timing is right.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*

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Attachment 1: Queen Elizabeth Park map

Attachment 2: MacKays Crossing entrance