

Whitianga Accessibility Audit Report

TO Mercury Bay Community Board
FROM Christine Tye - Strategic Planner & Policy Analyst
DATE 18 September 2014
SUBJECT **Accessibility Audit Report**

1 Purpose of Report

For the Mercury Bay Community Board to receive the accessibility audit report for Whitianga.

The accessibility audits project sits under the Council's Disability Strategy.

2 Background

Thames Accessibility Audit - pilot project

In deliberations on the draft 2013/2014 Annual Plan, Council resolved to undertake accessibility audits of the district's main settlements to assess how accessible our public spaces are, particularly for disabled people and the elderly. Council approved an accessibility audit for Thames in August 2013 as a pilot project that would focus on the roading (streets) network, before looking at undertaking similar audits for other main centres.

Accessibility specialists were engaged to conduct the audit, being CCS Disability Action Waikato (a key stakeholder in the Council's Disability Strategy work, who submitted to the 2013/2014 Annual Plan regarding disability access issues) and sub-contractor Steve Taylor (accessibility consultant). On completion of the audit, findings were delivered in the form of a report which was received by Council and the Thames Community Board in late 2013. The audit report is being used to inform forward work programmes for Thames related to the Local Transportation Activity.

Funding for further audits

Early this year the Council was successful in an application for funding from the Ministry of Social Development (social change grant fund) to undertake further similar audits in the five other main centres of Coromandel Town, Whitianga, Tairua, Pauanui and Whangamata.

The audits would be similar as for Thames, engaging CCS Disability Action Waikato and sub-contractor Steve Taylor, and focus on the roading (streets) corridor of each main centre including footpaths, crossings, intersections and mobility parking spaces.

Community meetings were held in March to raise awareness of the audits and gain input from local stakeholders and members of the community regarding existing access issues. The consultants then undertook 'on the ground' assessments, and have now delivered their findings in an audit report for each settlement, including for Whitianga.

3 Issue

The accessibility audit report for Whitianga outlines identified access issues and recommendations on how these could be addressed, prioritised according to safety risk and with cost estimates.

The Community Board is asked to receive the audit report, with the purpose for it be used to inform forward work programmes related to the Local Transportation Activity. The Council's Roading Manager is aware of the audit projects and reports.

The Council is not obliged to action any of the recommendations. The audit report reflects findings of the accessibility consultants and their advice on how local accessibility issues could be addressed. It is not a matter of providing feedback to the reports for amendment.

The Whitianga Accessibility Audit Report is provided as **Attachment A**.

4 Discussion

In undertaking the accessibility audit the consultants worked with staff, stakeholders in the local disability sector, and other members of the local community. The World Health Organisation Age-Friendly Cities concept has been taken into consideration.

The audit report covers the following:

- Mobility parking spaces
- Kerb ramps
- Tactiles
- Footpaths
- Crossings
- Street furniture
- Temporary traffic management
- Walkways

The audit report identifies access issues regarding the above matters, and includes general and specific recommendations for improvements. To assist with prioritisation of recommendations, assessment of relative importance is set out (according to serious safety risks, significant concerns, minor concerns), and indicative cost for each recommended improvement.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Mercury Bay Community Board:

1. Receives the report.
2. Receives the accessibility audit report for Whitianga (Attachment A).

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *Whitianga Accessibility Audit Report (distributed separately)*