

Request transfer of budget from Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project to John William Hall Arboretum track works

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| TO | Thames Community Board |
| FROM | Derek Thompson - Community Facilities Manager |
| DATE | 11 September 2018 |
| SUBJECT | Request transfer of budget from Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project to John William Hall Arboretum track works |

1 Purpose of Report

To request Community Board approval to a transfer of the \$20,564 budget from the Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project to John William Hall Arboretum track works.

2 Background

The Thames Promotion Project identified a series of pedestrian linkages and tracks within Thames that would make Thames a more desirable place to live and visit. As part of Council's Long Term Plan process, some projects had been selected to proceed to project and budget stage, the Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project being one of those.

Staff have now been assessing the project on the ground and there are some complexities with implementing this project, such as working around a disused reservoir and consulting with Heritage New Zealand.

Additionally it has been identified that a major slip has removed the possibility of the lower portion of the track being able to be constructed without major significantly more expenditure than is provided by the budget. To realign the track will direct track users to walk on Irishtown Road. The relevant section of Irishtown Road has no shoulder or footpath. It also has limited visibility and the road is only 2.6m wide at this point.

3 Issue

To request that the approved LTP funding for the Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project of \$20,564 be reallocated to track work in the John William Hall Arboretum.

4 Discussion

The proposed Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project has not been consulted on locally and will also require consultation with Heritage New Zealand as it traverses an old water race and reservoir. Additionally with the slip now affecting the proposed route, it is now a much less feasible option than originally anticipated.

An alternative is to reallocate the money to track work in the John William Hall Arboretum, which is New Zealand's first established arboretum. Council has worked in partnership with a number of groups at the site over a number of years, most notably with Forest & Bird Thames. This group has fundraised significantly in the past including \$16,000 for tree removal and \$7,000 for track construction.

In 2008, Council constructed a track from the carpark at Mount Sea Road to a point 260m further on. The track is well constructed to *Walking Track Standard*. From this point, the track degenerates to *Route Standard*. This could cause issues with visitor safety as it leads the visitor from a well-constructed and identified alignment, to an uneven, unmarked and sometimes slippery alignment. An additional problem is that the current alignment passes over the root plate of at least one kauri.

It is proposed, that if funding was reallocated to John William Hall Arboretum, that Council would be able to complete the track from the current end point, at least down to the old bulldozed road alignment. It is intended that the track standard should remain the same for the entirety of the track. An estimate for the works indicates that the track will be able to be accomplished for the \$20,564 budget. If additional budget is required to complete the works, officers will be able to utilise identified contingency within the Thames Parks capital budgets.

Reallocating the budget will identify that the Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track will not be able to be constructed in this LTP cycle, even if the other physical challenges were able to be overcome.

Reallocation of the budget will have minimal identified dis-benefits, whereas reallocating the budget would have the following benefits;

- Protect kauri
- Improve visitor safety
- Increase visitor numbers to John William Hall Arboretum
- Strengthen relationships with Forest & Bird Thames.
- There is no impact on rates for this proposal.

5 Suggested Resolution(s)

That the Thames Community Board:

1. Receives the 'Request transfer of budget from Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track project to John William Hall Arboretum track works' report, dated 11 September 2018.
2. Approves the reallocation of the \$20,564 budget from the Waiokaraka to Karaka Connector Track Project to the construction of tracks in the John William Hall Arboretum.

References-Tabled/Agenda Attachments

Attachment A *William Hall Arboretum new track option*

Attachment B *Waiokaraka to Karaka new track option*

Attachment A

Attachment A - William Hall Arboretum new track option

Attachment B - Waiokaraka to Karaka new track option