

MOTU TRAILS CYCLEWAY

Tirohanga Residents' Meeting Wednesday 28 July 2010 Games Room - Tirohanga Motor Camp

The meeting commenced at 5:30pm and was opened by Cr Doug Leeder, chairman of the Opotiki District Council's Tourism and Promotion Committee

Cr Leeder advised that he would be chairing the meeting and introduced:-

- Mike Houghton - Opotiki District Council/Motu Trails Project Manager
- Awhina White - Department of Conservation/Programme Manager Community Relations
- Chris Birt, Opotiki District Tourism and Marketing Advisor

The Chair outlined the programme for this meeting and stated that the invitation to attend the meeting had been sent to the Tirohanga community.

A question was raised from the floor as to why the notice advising of the meeting was so short. It was accepted that it was relatively short notice but two forms of notification had been sent, including a letterbox drop on Monday.

Resident Louise expressed the expectation that feedback would be provided from the meeting to residents of Tirohanga.

Alan Trotter asked for clarification on the signing of the agreement eg. 11 August 2010.

Motu Trails Project Manager Mike gave a background on the cycleway programme to date:-

- The cycleway project nationally came out of the job summit and was being run by the Ministry of Tourism
- The Opotiki and Gisborne District Councils and Department of Conservation looked at opportunities for the East Cape region
- A concept proposal was completed in May, then lodged with the MoT and accepted. This did not include a coastal ride.
- Consultants Tourism Resource Consultants were engaged to undertake the feasibility study and business case. This identified the need for a ride along the coast, eg. Waiaua to town, and advised that without this, the project would be unlikely to be supported by the Ministry.
- Waiaua to town links the inland section of the Motu Trails to the coastline
- Snells Beach to Wairakaia Road will be formed along existing legal roads or reserve land

Debra - Enquired as to what the first proposal (ie the concept plan) entailed. Project Manager Mike explained that this was essentially a route from Motu to Pakihi and on to Opotiki.

Alan Trotter raised a number of points:-

- Had an environmental impact report been undertaken. Answer: No
- Would the partners look at the feasibility of the coastal portion instead running 1.2km along State Highway 35 in front of the Tirohanga residents. Answer: The intended route is within the Tirohanga Conservation Area corridor which is approximately 60 metres in width. The route has yet to be defined but when it is, the draft will come back to residents for further discussion. Consideration will be given to any alternative options raised.
- Can the coastal section proceed without consent of landowners? Answer: Yes. The route occupies public land under the jurisdiction of Council or DoC for which public access is fundamental.

Callum - Enquired as to the width of the track in the Pakihi. Answer: 2.2 metres, as this will allow dual use walking and cycling trail and dual directional over this section.

Anna - Questioned as to whether or not horse riders will be able to use the track. Answer: No it is intended solely for cyclists and walkers only.

Coral - Is it correct that the coastal track will be 2.2m wide? Answer: Yes.

Debbie - The track is going out from the bollards. How far out? Answer: The bollards define the boundary between DOC Conservation Area and private land titles. The actual location of the cycleway is yet to be determined.

Coral - Raised concerns from herself and some elderly residents:-

- Not opposed to the track, but would like a win/win for all parties concerned.
- Local knowledge on erosion should be utilised
- Numbers of riders on what is a fragile area

Jean Caves:-

- Was the third person to buy on the Tirohanga development.
- When she moved out to Tirohanga there were three rows of sandhills - now there is only one.
- Will erosion carry on?
- Why does the trail have to go over the knob (bollards) and not around them.

Peter Shields:-

- Agrees that the cycleway is a good idea.
- Sand dunes change all the time. This is just part of nature.
- Opportunity to secure the dunes by having the cycle track. Residents will need to take 'ownership' of the track and have pride in the track within their area.

Mrs Ward

- Enquired as to what the track will be constructed of. Answer: Compacted gravel / aggregate
- Would it be wide enough for the trucks/4wd vehicles? Answer: Yes but only maintenance vehicles will be permitted.
- Residents have their own tracks to the beach from their homes. Will this be lost? Answer: No.

Project Manager Mike

Some vegetation removal will be required along the trail route. Earthworks will be required during the construction stage. More study will be required before a decision is made on the exact location of the track.

Resource consents will be required for:

- Vegetation clearance; and
- Earthworks within the Coastal Environment. The extent of the earthworks will be determined through more detailed design.

Barriers will be installed to prevent unauthorised vehicles access.

At selected locations accessways will be formed from the cycleway to the beach.

Awhina -The trail section at Tirohanga will be on public land managed by DOC.

Mrs Preston:-

- Has there been consultation with Maori re waahi tapu ? Answer: Yes.
- Will toilets be provided along the track? Answer: Not at Tirohanga, but yes at Pakihi. There are existing toilets at Hikuwai Beach.

Louise:-

- Not against the track
- Has read the DOC literature
- Construction of the track
- Upgrade three public access ways/infrastructure
- Environmental impact study needed
- Would like to be informed of reviews of DOC, ODC literature and recommendations

Chairperson Leeder asked for order and advised that speakers should not assume that everyone is against the Motu Trails proposal. He noted Louise has made some valid points.

Alan Trotter:- Stressed the need for more discussion with residents over the location of the trail past Tirohanga.

Apanui Mason:-

- Informed those present that he resides at Tirohanga and that he is kaumatua for three maraes in the area.
- Is in full support of the Motu Trails project
- Explained that there are two waahi tapu in the area

Coral:-

- Many of those present live directly on the beachfront and will be most affected by the 4000 people passing through. Answer: This number may be achieved, but they are spread throughout the year.
- Is the project team prepared to look at alternatives for the route of the track at Tirohanga? Answer: Repeat what was said earlier. The design work including route has not yet been undertaken and when it is, further discussions will be held with residents.

Peter Shields – Would the expected 4,000 cyclists would be all at once? Answer. Definitely not.

Un-identified speaker:- Asked the question as to what the distance of the track would be from in front of the houses. Answer: As stated, the design work has not been done but it will be on the seaward side of the boundary bollards.

Awhina explained:-

- At the concept stage there was no suggestion that a coastal section would be included. That came out of the feasibility study. Reiterated what the Project Manager had said – that the exact position/route of the track through Tirohanga has not decided on.
- It will be necessary to engage architects/engineers to work out the best route/options.
- When this has been decided on then residents will be notified and further discussions held.

Chairman Doug summarised the main issues raised to this point in the meeting. These were:-

- The sensitive environment of the dunes area along the coast
- The physical location of the track
- Privacy issues for the homes and concerns about security of properties

Alan Trotter:-

- Addressed the Project Manager and reiterated the alternatives he had raised in correspondence.

Project Manager informed Alan that he had taken these suggestions on board and reiterated again that the route for the cycle trail had not yet been determined.

Callum - Suggested that the track could follow the fence lines and also pointed out to those in attendance that Tirohanga was the first place for cyclists to spend money if they have come through from Toatoa.

Un-identified speaker – Suggested that the track could come 1.1km along SH 35 (past the houses) then back on to the sand dunes.

Kim Saunders:-

- Not opposed to the cycle trail
- Made the suggestion that the track come along the dunes, onto SH35, then back into the dunes. Also suggested that a better route could be made around Tirohanga bluff.

Project Manager advised that use of the State Highway would not qualify for Ministry of Tourism support because of the high traffic count and that a significant reason for support for the cycleway was the attraction of coastal component.

Robbie McKay:-

- Cycleway is a terrific idea.
- Some local people were trying to stop horse riders on the beach, then vehicles, now cycles.
- The cycleway would open the sand-dunes fauna to others to view, including many who could not do so now.
- DOC/ODC and residents have done a terrific job to preserve the fauna/dunes to date.
- Seems that the concern is that the cycleway will be that it could be too close to the property boundaries.

Louise:-

- The resource consent should be notified. Answer: The Department of Conservation and Opotiki District Council will be the resource consent applicants. Assessing the applications and, the decision to notify or not, is the responsibility of Environment Bay of Plenty.
- Would like to be informed if the regional council decides to notify the applications.

Bruce:-

Questioned as to the length of the track. Answer: Along the sand dunes, 10 kilometres, Opotiki town to Waiaua.

- His concern was that \$2 million is not enough for a well constructed track over 120 kilometres. Project Manager Mike advised that most of the trail will be on existing formed backcountry roads and thus the distance of new track to be constructed is far less than this.

Chairman Leeder:-

- Explained the original feasibility study and the dollar value. The entire project (excluding the Pakihi valley work) has been approved for \$1.7 million and there is no ability to secure any more. The project must be completed as per the proposal within the \$1.7 million budget. If there is a cost overrun this will fall back on the parties concerned, eg. DOC/ODC/ratepayers.

Alan Trotter thanked Cr Leeder for explaining this.

Chairman Leeder:-

- There will be maintenance and other on-going costs.
- Gisborne's part of the track (through Motu) is now funded by that Council.

Coral

- Why was the Tirohanga community not involved in the original consultation? It appears to have been just the cycleway fraternity involved. Answer: Consultation did not only involve the cycling fraternity. The consultation process targeted tourism industry and local businesses. The decision to include the coastal came late in the preparation of the feasibility study.

Peter Shields:-

- Has ridden his horse along the new fence line and could see nothing to attract tourists along that portion.

Unidentified speaker - Has been in construction industry all his working life and knows that \$1.7 million won't go far. Answer (Chairman Leeder). This was the point he was trying to make previously. Any cost overruns will need to be decided amongst the parties concerned as to which will pick up the costs.

Colin Waghorn - Raised the issue of coastal erosion. How many metres lost already (20-30 metres)? Answer. Yes we are aware that the coastal zone is a sensitive area. Coastcare is working to re-establish the fore dunes. Consent for the cycleway cannot be expected if it is determined that construction will contribute significantly to erosion.

Alan Trotter - Observed cycleway must come as near to private property as possible. Answer: As explained – investigations for the siting is yet to be established.

Coral:-

- Concerned for the elderly people in the area and security of properties.

Unidentified speaker:-

- Has DOC/ODC thought of fencing off the DOC/ODC land from private property? Answer: No
- Environment has not been discussed, only privacy/security issues.

Unidentified speaker - Raised the issue of refuse. Will this be addressed? Answer: Yes.

Unidentified speaker - There is already a refuse/litter problem and this can't be blamed on tourists.

Awhina - Once the track is formed, DOC will patrol the area once a week for litter.

Maurie Abraham

- Security is an issue, partly due to isolation
- More users makes the area less isolated and will help to stop vandalism
- Cycleway will be a big positive for the area

Debbie:-

- Consultation had been a bit slow
- More consultation and more information is being sought in future

Chairman Leeder.

- More specific answers can be given after the meeting on 11 August 2010 in relation to the cycleway project. This will be a public meeting, commencing at 5pm at the Opotiki District Council Chamber and anyone who has input will be welcome to attend the open forum on the cycleway project that evening.

Alan Trotter:-

Reiterated that he wasn't happy with just five days' notice of the Tirohanga meeting.

Chairman Leeder summarised the issues raised:-

- No-one had said it was a bad idea.
- Specific issues were raised, including security and privacy
- Everyone needs to get a balance between greater public good and the desires of the residents
- Proposed route along the coast, not yet decided.
- Bollard issue, not part of the cycleway trail project. Matter for DOC to address
- The project team should look at other cycleways (such as Otago Rail Trail) to get other ideas.
- Cycleway is not being developed to accommodate hooners.
- Reality is that people our age will be the bigger users as they enjoy the social and environment aspect.
- Accommodation must be of a pretty high standard.
- A bad experience will destroy everything. Word of mouth spreads faster than anything.

Chairperson thanked everyone for attending and for their participation.

The meeting closed at 6:50pm