

Report 03.449
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Committee Landcare
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State Highway 2 pedestrian underpass, Kaitoke

1. Purpose

To seek Council approval for increased costs for the construction of a pedestrian underpass on State Highway 2 (SH2) at Kaitoke and agree to funding from the Regional Parks Land Purchase Reserve.

2. Pedestrian underpass proposed at Kaitoke

In July 2001, as part of the negotiations with Transit NZ on the State Highway 2 upgrade, Council officers sought to have a pedestrian underpass built to facilitate safer recreational access between Kaitoke Regional Park and the Pakuratahi Forest (Tunnel Gully and Rimutaka Rail Trail).

The underpass was regarded as highly desirable to enable people to travel off-road from the Petone foreshore and Belmont Regional Park, along the Hutt River Trail to Kaitoke Regional Park, then into the Pakuratahi Forest and over to the Wairarapa (via the Rimutaka Rail Trail). It was noted that the underpass could be readily created at a reasonable cost while the road upgrading work was undertaken.

The Council considered a report on the construction of the pedestrian underpass (report 01.474) and:

- (1) *agree(d) that there were long-term recreational benefits by linking the Hutt River Trail/Kaitoke Regional Park with the Pakuratahi Forest.*
- (2) *agree(d) that there were safety benefits from the State Highway 2 Kaitoke Summit underpass proposal.*
- (3) *approve(d) the Council contributing a share towards construction of the underpass up to a total cost of \$80,000.*
- (4) *approve(d) Council funding for the project from a combination of the sale of the land and withdrawal from the Regional Parks Land Purchase Reserve.*
- (5) *authorise(d) the Divisional Manager, Landcare to approve a cost share agreement with Transit New Zealand for the project.*
- (6) *agree(d) that the Council Common Seal be affixed to the documents outlining the agreement with Transit NZ to achieve the underpass.*

At that time Transit estimated the cost of the underpass at \$70,000 to \$80,000. They had also stated that they expected the Regional Council to pay the full cost of the underpass.

3. 50:50 cost share agreement negotiated with Transit

Since August 2001, various options, locations and cost sharing arrangements for the proposed pedestrian underpass have been discussed between Opus (Engineering Consultants), Transit NZ and Greater Wellington Regional Council officers.

In September 2002, prior to Transit NZ letting the contract for the highway upgrading works, negotiations resulted in agreement in principle that:

- the design and location of the proposed underpass met Wellington Regional Council requirements
- the underpass was estimated to cost approximately \$135,000 + GST depending on final design
- the cost of constructing the underpass would be shared 50:50 between GW and Transit
- GW would be responsible for the cost of building tracks to the ends of the underpass.

This was reported to the Landcare Committee at the 8 October 2002 meeting.

A provisional sum for the underpass was included in the highway construction contract. Final design and construction drawings would be prepared after the site was cleared and further investigation and survey was carried out.

Public Pedestrian Underpass Construction and Use agreements were drafted by Transit NZ, subsequently amended by GW (following legal and property consultant's advice) and are ready to be signed by both parties.

4. Underpass construction costs rise

Early feasibility studies indicated that a pedestrian underpass could be combined with a stormwater culvert across a two-lane section of highway. However, closer investigations undertaken by Transit after initial design specifications were drafted, found that a longer underpass and separate stormwater culvert was required.

The location selected for the pedestrian underpass is immediately northeast of the summit of Kaitoke Hill, about 100 metres from the logging access road to the Tunnel Gully forest block. In this location, the new highway crosses a small gully with a short length of fill. The culvert needed in this gully is best kept separate rather than combining the stormwater discharge with the pedestrian underpass.

After the contractor cleared the site a detailed survey showed that the underpass would be on a skew to the road centreline and 33 metres long. The underpass was designed using 2.5 metre square precast concrete box units with concrete wingwalls at each end. A 600mm diameter stormwater culvert will be laid under the pedestrian underpass.

The contractor's price submitted for building the underpass is \$189,296 + GST. This is higher than both the original estimate of \$70,000 to \$80,000 and the revised estimate of \$135,000 assessed pre-tender in September 2002 due to the increased length and need for wingwalls. Under the 50:50 cost share agreement, the GW share would be \$94,648 + GST.

5. Discussion

The proposed pedestrian underpass will improve accessibility between our regional parks and forests. It has considerable long-term strategic value as it will provide a safe, off-road trail linking important recreational, natural and cultural heritage values that are popular with a wide range of people. The links with Tunnel Gully and Rimutaka Rail Trail will expand mountain biking opportunities in the Kaitoke area.

In recent years, Rotary clubs and city councils have assisted us to provide direction signs, planting, seats and new footbridges along the Hutt River Trail. Following these developments and enhancements we have observed increased use, and strong community interest and support.

Similar interest and support is evident for the proposed pedestrian underpass both with the local Upper Hutt community and also Wairarapa Rotary clubs.

Hence, despite the considerable increase in costs since the initial report, we remain of the view that the project is worthwhile.

6. Land Purchase Reserve

Council funding for the underpass project was approved from a combination of the sale of land at Kaitoke Regional Park and withdrawal from the Regional Parks Land Purchase Reserve. There is no reason to adjust the funding mechanism.

7. Communication

Transit NZ and the Regional Council's agreement in principle to sharing the cost of building the underpass has already been publicised through *Elements* and Transit's *SH2 Kaitoke to Te Marua* newsletters. No additional communication is required at this stage.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*
3. *note that a 50:50 cost share agreement has been agreed with Transit New Zealand for the Kaitoke State Highway 2 pedestrian underpass project.*

4. **approve** the Council contributing a share towards construction of the underpass up to a total cost of \$104,000 + GST (\$95,000 plus \$9,000 for contingency).
5. **confirm** the funding mechanism for the project from a combination of the sale of the land and withdrawal from the Regional Parks Land Purchase Reserve.
6. **agree** that the authorised signatory of Council be affixed to the documents outlining the agreements with Transit NZ to achieve the underpass.

Report prepared by:

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