



Report 08.221  
Date 16 April 2008  
File PK/14/01/03

Committee Parks, Forests and Utilities  
Author Ross Jackson, Advisor Community Projects

## Queen Elizabeth Park Cycling Tracks Concept Plan

### 1. Purpose

To request the Committee's approval in principle to a cycling tracks concept plan for Queen Elizabeth Park.

### 2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 2002*.

### 3. Background

The potential for cycling tracks and a cycling commuter route in Queen Elizabeth Park has been clearly identified in past and present management plans. Development of these opportunities has been raised and explored by the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park, who would like to see more recreational routes in the park. Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC) supports the cycling tracks concept and is keen to facilitate the funding of a commuter link. This also fits well with the objectives of the Kapiti Coast Rotary Pathways Trust, the aim of which is to promote and support funding of a cycleway/walkway right along the Kapiti Coast from Paekakariki to Otaki.

The Kennett Brothers, who are well recognised for their design and promotion of cycling tracks in many locations throughout New Zealand, were invited to prepare *Queen Elizabeth Park Cycling Tracks Concept Plan* (see attachment 1 for a copy of the plan)

There is currently access through the dunes that can be used by cyclists. However, they contain a number of steep sections of track and can be very exposed, making it difficult and off-putting for many riders. The recreational cycling route proposed through the park is on the inland side of the coastal dunes and is more sheltered, while the commuter link will be straighter and located closer to State Highway 1.

A number of links between the mountain bike track and the cycle commuter track are planned to provide a series of loop circuits suitable for beginners and family groups.

All the tracks will have very easy gradients. It is proposed that walkers and runners would also use the various tracks, with bridleways alongside in some instances.

All the current leaseholders in the park have been consulted and, in the main, are very supportive of the concept. While not thrilled with the proposal, the two farmers do accept that, with appropriate fencing, they can live with the activity.

#### **4. Discussion**

At Queen Elizabeth Park on Arbor Day in 2006 well known mountain biker Simon Kennett was the guest speaker. Simon spoke of the importance of conservation and explained that, with careful planning and management, it can be combined with recreation. Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park is seen as a very good example of a resource that is being developed with a strong conservation ethic in conjunction with mountain biking, walking and running. Simon spoke about the potential that Queen Elizabeth Park has to provide the best family friendly recreational bike tracks in the lower North Island.

Around our Region there are many challenging areas for the experienced and energetic younger riders but, apart from the Hutt River Trail, Rimutaka Rail Trail and service access road from Burdans gate to the Pencarrow Lighthouse, there is very little opportunity for easy riding.

In the Executive Summary of their report, the Kennett Brothers state:

*It can best be compared with Bottle Lake Forest Park in Christchurch, which receives 750,000 visits per year (walkers, cyclists and equestrians). All the tracks at Bottle Lake are built on flat sand-dune country and are physically and technically easy on the rider. Queen Elizabeth Park has the potential to emulate Bottle Lake and become a reknowned [sic] mountain bike destination*

#### **5. Commuter route**

Queen Elizabeth Park has been identified as the only possible location for a cycle commuter path between Paekakariki and Raumati/Paraparaumu. Commuting cyclists currently have to cycle on State Highway 1 and this deters most people from cycling the route.

A dedicated cycle route is supported by several policy documents, including the *Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy*, *KCDC's Cycleways, Walkways, Bridleways Strategy* and the *Queen Elizabeth Park Management Plan*.

## 6. Management plan

The *Queen Elizabeth Park Management Plan* and *Wellington Regional Land Transport Strategy*, as well as other Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and KCDC policy documents have identified the need for improved recreational opportunities at Queen Elizabeth Park and/or a cyclists' commuter route between Paekakariki and Paraparaumu. All the proposals in the cycling tracks concept are consistent with the current park management plan (see page 8 of attachment 1 for more specific details).

## 7. Project timeline

There is no specific timeline for the project. However, fundraising for some of the easy sections of the recreation route could commence over the next year once final details, including alignment and maintenance, are agreed to. The commuter route will be dependent on KCDC and Transit New Zealand, which have funding available for this purpose.

Projects of this type are often dependent on opportunities and the energy and enthusiasm of the proponents. A good example is the Hutt River Trail, which commenced in the early 1990s and has gradually improved through collective efforts of the various authorities and Rotary. It is now probably the most well used facility by the public on all GWRC managed land.

## 8. Costs

The project estimate prepared by the Kennett Brothers is \$744,000. This includes \$550,000 for the 6 km, 2.5 m wide cycle commuter route.

Funding has not been allowed for in the current LTCCP. However, a project like this does have the potential to attract funding from charitable trusts, events and private business. The Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park are about to become registered as a charitable trust and will be able to apply for funding from external sources.

Maintenance of the commuter track will be the responsibility of KCDC, while the recreation tracks will lie with GWRC.

## 9. Communication

The *Queen Elizabeth Park Cycling Tracks Concept Plan* can be distributed or made available to regional interest groups, park users, territorial authorities, the Department of Conservation, local iwi and Sport Wellington Region.

Once approved in principle, we will write to the Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park, make joint representation to KCDC and Rotary Pathways Trust, and put out a media release.

The cycling tracks concept plan will also be loaded on to the GWRC website and be available to access by interested parties.

## 10. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. **Receives and notes** the content the report.
2. *Approves in principle the Queen Elizabeth Park Cycling Tracks Concept Plan.*

Report prepared by:    Report approved by:    Report approved by:    Report approved by:

**Ross Jackson**  
Advisor Community  
Projects

**Murray Waititi**  
Manager, Parks

**Amanda Cox**  
Manager, Marketing  
and Design

**Murray Kennedy**  
Divisional Manager, Water  
Supply, Parks and Forests

### Attachment

- 1: *Queen Elizabeth Park Cycling Tracks Concept Plan*