

Subject: Update on the Titirangi Harvest Project

Prepared by: Geoff Canham (Acting Group Manager Planning & Development)

Meeting Date: 12 March 2015

Report to FUTURE TAIRĀWHITI for noting

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

- summarise the progress to date of the Titirangi Project and pine plantation harvesting;
- outline key issues associated with the upcoming operational elements of the project.

Titirangi Reserve is a regionally significant site historically and culturally. It has special and significant cultural and spiritual importance to Ngati Oneone and is managed via an Operative Management Plan in partnership with Ngati Oneone.

The Titirangi project is significant to regional development. The harvesting component of the project is seldom seen in an urban area and requires careful planning and community engagement, particularly with those residents that are directly impacted on.

There are two phases to this project. The first phase is the pine plantation harvest and the second phase is planning and phasing of long term work involving restoration of the Reserve.

Council has previously approved, via the Titirangi Reserve Management Plan the removal of the pine plantation. The trees are mature and ready for harvest and some are becoming dangerous.

Work associated with Phase 1 of the project commenced on the 23rd of February under a non-notified resource consent issued for the removal of the overhead power supply that runs through the middle of the harvest site, and the undergrounding of power lines within the road reserve on the ridge of Titirangi.

The project team are currently awaiting the issue of a resource consent which provides for the balance of the pine harvesting project works and re-vegetation of the site post-harvest. This consent will be subject to a number of conditions including the preparation of an Operations Plan to be signed off by Gisborne District Council and Ngati Oneone prior to works commencing under the resource consent.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee

1. receives the report



Geoff Canham
Acting Group Manager Planning & Development

Keywords: titirangi reserve, kaiti hill, underground power, pine plantation, kaiti area, harvesting

1. BACKGROUND

1. Titirangi Reserve is a regionally significant site that has historical and archaeological significance. Titirangi was the site of an ancient Maori Pa, the largest in Turanganui with almost continuous occupation. The history of the Titirangi Reserve is varied and extensive, and today it is classified as a Historic Reserve with Waahi Tapu status.
2. The last 60 years have seen various development and improvements on the Reserve, including lookout and parking areas, planting, monuments, statues and construction of the James Cook Observatory from part of an existing concrete bunker. The Titirangi Domain Board historically administered the land until the Gisborne City Council took over the administration of the Reserve in 1959 and then later transferred to Council following amalgamation.
3. During the 1980's, the Reserve was developed with the addition of walking tracks, fitness trails, a playground, signage, seating and more tree plantings. Today, Titirangi is used by many for recreation and leisure needs. It has high urban visual amenity and can be seen from many parts of the city.
4. Titirangi Reserve has an Operative Management Plan that commenced in 2006 which covers a total area of 70ha. The Plan contains a protocol between Ngati Oneone and Council outlining the commitment from Council to protect waahi tapu and archaeological (cultural heritage) sites and an acknowledgement that the Reserve has special and significant cultural and spiritual importance to Ngati Oneone. The protocol also provides for the management of Titirangi to be carried out by Council in partnership with Ngati Oneone as the iwi kainga. Related to the protocol is the Titirangi Accord, signed by Ngati Oneone and Gisborne District Council in 2002.
5. Section 4.3 of the Plan outlines the background to the establishment of pine plantations within the reserve (largely to assist in slope stability around 20 – 25 years ago). The Plan further identifies that approximately 10 hectares of pines on the north eastern slope of Titirangi Reserve would be mature enough for harvest between 2015-2018 and that once removed the area will be planted in native plant species and nature trails developed in the area.
6. Notification was made to Council's Reserves staff in late 2013 that harvest would be scheduled for March 2014. However, it was later decided to delay to 2015. An opportunity then existed to take a whole of redevelopment approach, in collaboration with iwi, to Titirangi post harvesting.
7. A whole of Titirangi approach (consistent with the Management Plan) would take into account the Tairawhiti Navigations proposed improvements and other community preferences, for example one way road and improved walking tracks. Of related importance it would also be an opportune time to have replanting done before the 2019 Sestercentennial of Cook's landing to allow sufficient regrowth prior to the celebrations.
8. A paper provided to the Community Development and Services Committee in May 2014 by Councillor Seymour further reinforced the need to take a holistic view to redevelopment seeing the opportunities presented through the harvesting project. At the May meeting, Council officers presented the scope of the harvest project, including issues, timeframes and next steps which involved establishment of an internal project team to further refine the programme and phases of work.

9. This paper summarises for the wider Council's benefit, the progress to date of the Titirangi pine plantation harvesting project and outlines key phases of the total redevelopment project and issues associated with infrastructural costs.
10. Arrangements are underway to commence the pine harvesting in mid-March 2015.

2. DISCUSSION

11. A multi-disciplinary project team led by Geoff Canham (Canham Consultancy) for the harvesting project has been active since June 2014 to:
 - work with Council to scope the total Titirangi restoration project;
 - focus on the issues around implementing a PF Olsen Harvest Plan for the pine plantation, and subsequent re-vegetation of the site post-harvest on Titirangi; and
 - manage the preparation of a resource consent application, archaeological authority application, and preparation of a re-vegetation plan to enable harvesting of the pines to be completed by April 2015.
12. There are two key phases to the restoration project working collaboratively with Ngati Oneone. The total project itself is focussed on restoring, and where appropriate, redeveloping Titirangi Reserve (the Reserve) to reflect its cultural and historical significance to iwi and the wider community.
13. The first phase of the project is the pine harvest operation itself. This includes preparatory work pre-harvest (e.g. resource consents and route planning), the actual harvest (e.g. management of road closures, public communication) and post-harvest re-vegetation (e.g. enabling the community to assist).
14. The second phase is planning and phasing of long term works on Titirangi. This includes engaging with the wider community on issues such as the one way road concept, rationalising walking tracks and exercise equipment, treatment to certain sites of significance to connect to the Tairāwhiti Navigations project and potential connection to the 2019 Te Ha celebrations. This phase overlaps with planning for post-harvest re-vegetation.

Phase One: Pine Plantation Harvest

15. The pine plantation to be harvested under a resource consent application (currently being processed) comprises approximately 8.7ha of radiata pine planted in three compartments between 22 and 32 years ago. Council took ownership of this area in 1995 with a view to harvesting the trees between 2008 and 2018 (refer Appendix A).
16. A harvest of this nature is seldom seen in an urban area and requires considerable planning. The project timelines and key thresholds for this phase of the project are very tight to achieve a 2015 harvest. This is due to a number of interrelated statutory and project requirements with sequential dependencies. The native re-planting programme immediately follows the harvesting and would have to be delayed if the harvest wasn't achieved in Summer/Autumn 2015.
17. The February 2015 Project Status Report outlines the tasks that have been completed and tasks still to be completed. To summarise the main tasks to-date, the project team has:
 - a. Engaged in extensive consultation with various parties (including LDE, Heritage NZ, Historic Places Aotearoa – Tairāwhiti Branch, Eastland Port, Eastland Network Ltd, GDC, Spark) to gain feedback about the project to feed into consent applications.

- b. With Council staff, made critical decisions with Eastland Network resulting in the removal of the overhead power supply that runs through the middle of the harvest site and at the apex of Titirangi for health, safety and amenity reasons.
- c. Maintained an on-going dialogue with Ngati Oneone and Te Poho O Rawiri Marae on the project parameters, gaining a letter of support for the project to lodge with the required statutory applications, and currently working towards getting sign-off on an Operations Plan (required prior to harvesting works commencing).
- d. Engaged approved Archaeologist (Lynda Walter) to complete an archaeological assessment for the pine harvesting and site re-vegetation project (required for resource consent and archaeological authority applications).
- e. Worked with P F Olsen Ltd to refine the Harvesting Plan, identifying haulage routes and revised timeframes based on the archaeological assessment.
- f. Obtained an archaeological authority for the works from Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.
- g. Prepared, lodged and gained a non-notified resource consent for the removal of overhead power lines up the flank of Titirangi (through the pine plantation) and the undergrounding of power lines within the road reserve at the apex of Titirangi. Work under this consent commenced on 23rd February 2015.
- h. Completed vegetation and landscape assessments and prepared a comprehensive plan for re-vegetation at the harvest site and beyond, including map and species specification.
- i. Prepared and lodged an extensive resource consent application for the project which was notified in December 2014. Submissions closed on 4 February with one submission being received and later withdrawn (currently awaiting resource consent being issued by commissioner).
- j. Worked with Council officers to develop a Traffic Management Plan for the resource consent application and for submitting to Council with an application for road closure for the harvest period. Awaiting approval.
- k. Assisted with lodging 2 Corridor Action Request (CAR) applications with Council related to works within the road reserve;
- l. Communications with Council have been maintained to ensure that information about the project is available to staff and the community;
- m. Nearly completed work on the preparation of contracts for project operations e.g. harvesting, site security, fencing, signage, plant procurement.

Phase Two: Planning and Phasing of Long Term Work

- 18. Phase two of the re-development project involves working in partnership with Ngati Oneone and engaging the wider community to plan for the long term development, restoration and preservation of Titirangi.
- 19. Part of this work will commence in conjunction with re-vegetation plans post-harvest, however will continue beyond this timeframe to potentially align with preparations and projects around the 2019 Cook Commemorations.

20. A significant element of the project, critical to ensuring that harvesting can commence in March 2015 as planned, involves working with Ngati Oneone to complete an "Operations Plan" (currently in draft form) for sign-off by both Ngati Oneone and Gisborne District Council prior to harvesting works commencing. The requirement for an agreed Operations Plan is an outcome of both consultation and the letter of support provided by Ngati Oneone for the project, and has been carried through as a condition of resource consent.
21. There are 2 other stands of pine trees on the NW flank of Titirangi, comprising a total of approximately 150 trees, which are scheduled for removal. The Project Team is underway with the preparation of another suite of statutory applications for the harvest of these trees, optimally in April/May 2015.
22. Sufficient funding for this phase has been proposed through the 2015-2025 draft Long Term Plan process for Council to consider through the budget bid rounds. Once an action plan has been developed with community input and iwi endorsement, further budgets may be required through other activities such as Land Transport (for roading improvements).

3. SIGNIFICANCE

23. Significance was reported and resolved as a result of the paper provided to the Community Development and Services Committee in May 2014, and did not trigger a specific process for public consultation outside of the consenting requirements.

4. COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

24. The Titirangi Redevelopment Programme contributes to the following community outcomes:
 - a. Environmentally sustainable Tairawhiti – through appropriate selection of re-vegetation species.
 - b. Vibrant Tairawhiti – through revitalisation and redevelopment of Titirangi for the enjoyment of the wider community.
 - c. Healthy Tairawhiti – through providing more recreational opportunities for the wider community.
 - d. Empowered Tairawhiti – through shared decision making and management of the reserve with Ngati Oneone.

5. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

25. The Titirangi Redevelopment Programme addresses the following strategic challenges of:
 - a. Community Engagement - Engaging with the communities – especially Māori – within a demographically unique region.
 - b. Natural Resource Use: Manage natural resources so that the aspirations for lifestyle, the economy and kaitiakitanga/stewardship are recognised and the needs of future generations are not compromised.

6. POLICY

26. Policies that are applicable to the redevelopment project include the following:

- a. Policies from the Titirangi Reserves Management Plan prepared under the Reserves Act 1977.
- b. Policies under the Gisborne District Council Combined Regional Land and District Plan.
- c. Local Government Act requirements related to community consultation.

7. LEVELS OF SERVICE

Levels of service were covered in the paper provided to the Community Development and Services Committee in May 2014.

8. FINANCIAL

27. The financial situation around the harvesting was reported in the paper provided to the Community Development and Services Committee in May 2014.

28. Through the draft Long Term Plan officers are proposing (via the Parks and Open Spaces budget) a total investment in Titirangi of \$1.3m spread over ten years, which represents a 'whole of site' budget inclusive of preparations for the 2019 Commemorations. This will be subject to Council approval at a later date.

9. LEGAL

29. The proposed harvesting and redevelopment project has been assessed by officers as being consistent with the new purpose statement of local government as the effective management of reserves is considered a core activity of Council.

30. A total area of over 70ha is considered as Titirangi Reserve and is managed by the Council under the Titirangi Reserve Management Plan (2006) prepared in compliance with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977. The Reserve includes approximately 33ha of land classified as Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977, an additional 10ha currently managed as part of the Reserve but not classified under the Reserves Act 1977, and an additional 2 land parcels comprising 31ha held in fee simple by the Council.

31. The telecommunication and electrical utilities present at the site are protected by specific law and/or agreements where this would oblige agreement between Council and the telecommunications provider involved to alter exclusive arrangements and the location of assets.

32. The pine harvesting project requires resource consent and archaeological authority in order to proceed. The Reserve Management plan has already mandated the removal of the pine trees.

33. Council is obliged to ensure hazards are removed during harvest, e.g. power lines and poles to meet its requirements under the health and safety legislation. There would be contractual obligations between Council and timber harvesters, utility companies and contractors to effect aspects of the project.

10. CONSULTATION

To date extensive and targeted consultation has been undertaken in a variety of ways with a variety of parties. The process of consultation is ongoing, and has occurred before the statutory applications were lodged, during the notified process for the resource consent and are continuing as the project continues.

The parties who have been identified for consultation during the project are:

- Tangata Whenua (Ngati Oneone and Te Poho-O-Rawiri Marae);
- Port of Gisborne;
- Eastland Network Ltd;
- Spark;
- Gisborne Astronomical Society;
- Department of Conservation;
- GDC Rooding Control Authority;
- GDC Environmental Services;
- PF Olsen-timber harvesting;
- LDE-geotechnical considerations;
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga;
- Historic Places - Tairāwhiti;
- Truck transport representative;
- Kaiti Beach Community via Councillor Larry Foster
- Port neighbours reference group and nine properties identified as being on the log hauling route via the notified resource consent;
- Recreation users of the Maunga via the notified resource consent; and
- The community generally via the notified resource consent;

11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This project will also be part of Co-management discussions to be raised at a hui at Poho O Rawiri on Saturday 14 March 2015.

12. APPENDIX

- A - Aerial Map of Harvest Site