

7. BEXLEY ROAD PEDESTRIAN/CYCLE PATH

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
Officer responsible:	Transport and City Streets Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Board approval to proceed to tender and construction for the Bexley Road pathway - Wetlands Grove to Bridge Street.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Bexley Road is part of the Christchurch ring road and is a State Highway. It carries some 10,000 vehicles per day. The speed limit is 70 km/h and the existing carriageway width is just over 7 metres. Between Wetlands Grove and Bridge Street, no pathway exists. A dirt track has formed on the eastern side of the road. The shoulders are too rough for cycling.
3. There have been repeated community requests for a pathway to be established for children from the new subdivision around Wetlands Grove go to South New Brighton School. Their only option for reaching that school is via Bexley Road.
4. A plan for a pathway extending from Wetlands Grove to the existing pathways at the Bexley/Breezes/Bridge/Dyers roundabout has been developed. The pathway follows Bexley Road and is located on the east side. As shared usage with low to medium usage is envisaged, a sealed path of 2.5 metre width is required. Parts of the path are located within Transit NZ road reserve and other parts of the pathway are on adjacent Christchurch City Council (CCC) property.
5. Members of the local community, contacted through the Bexley Residents' Association and through pamphlet deliveries are fully supportive of the pathway, and no dissenting views on the path proposal have been received. Most consultation feedback has been complaining about the lack of haste in completing the path.
6. The intended path is shown in the attached plans.
7. The different land ownership under the path creates asset ownership and maintenance questions. About 330 metres of pathway are on land owned by CCC. Some 540 metres of pathway are on legal road (State Highway) corridor.
8. Transit NZ are supportive of the pathway, and will maintain its full extent once completed. Transit NZ have not planned for this path and it would not receive particularly high priority from them. As the path has a much higher priority for the CCC, the CCC has decided to construct the path. However, being on Transit NZ land, it will require the partial conversion of budget capital to operational funding for its construction.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The path is expected to cost \$170,000, and the cycleways budget has sufficient capital for the project. Approximately \$105,000 of this capital will be required to be converted to operational funding to allow construction of the path on non-CCC land.
10. There are no legal considerations relevant to the pathway.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the Bexley Road pathway, shown in plan RD 1707 (attached) for tender and construction.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the abovementioned recommendation be adopted.

BACKGROUND ON BEXLEY ROAD CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH

11. Bexley Road is part of the Christchurch ring road and is a State Highway. It carries some 10,000 vehicles per day, with a high proportion of heavy commercial traffic due to its connecting function with the port of Lyttelton. The speed limit is 70 km/h and the existing carriageway width is just over 7 metres. The shoulders are unsealed and too rough for cycling. Between Wetlands Grove and Bridge Street, no pathway exists, but a dirt track has formed on the eastern side of the road.
12. There have been repeated requests by members of the local community, and two petitions made to the Board for a pathway to be established, as many children from the new subdivision around Wetlands Grove go to South New Brighton School. Their only option for reaching that school is via Bexley Road. The Cycle Network Plan also recommends a cycle path along this section of road.
13. A project was established with the objectives of:
 - To improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians travelling from Wetlands Grove to Bridge Street.
 - Create a pathway that is sympathetic with the environmental, drainage and amenity values of the area.
14. The key issues involved in the project's development were:
 - The path was initiated to meet the needs of children cyclists and pedestrians in the area. It therefore needed to be wide enough for combined usage (but not high usage), and appropriately lit.
 - The path is to run adjacent to State Highway, and will partially be on Transit NZ land. Land ownership and maintenance issues will need resolution.
 - The land currently known as Bexley Reserve (295 Bexley Road) is considered of high ecological significance.
 - It is known to have been filled in the past but the state and stability of the land is unknown.
 - ECan's Natural Resources Regional Plan affects this area, and that the land is within 30 metres of a downstream river, indicating a resource consent is necessary for any work in this area.
 - The land is within stopbank height control areas and coastal set back and flood management areas, all of which require specific comment.
 - Greenspace matters are:
 - Freshwater springs in Bexley Reserve: their position needs to be confirmed and this project assessed for any impact.
 - Areas of low stopbank: some parts cycleway path are sitting at a lower level than desired in relation to flood risk in the area. Consideration of a stopbank in the immediate proximity may be sensible in relation to either this path, or subsequent subdivision work.
 - Drainage: drainage recommendations have been made by Greenspace. These need to be considered in the project evaluation.

OPTIONS

15. Only one option for this path was investigated. The project's initiating objective was very clear in the requirement for a path and the community requirement was equally clear that it needed to be on the east side of the road to satisfy the movement patterns of the subdivision residents.
16. With those parameters established a path alignment was proposed that generally placed the path on the driest parts of the available land, but was still close enough to the carriageway to be properly lit.
17. The local community raised the need for this path, and other than a clear expression that it be on the east side of Bexley Road, have largely not been too worried about design specific issues.
18. The do-nothing option does not achieve any of the project's objectives, does not meet the community's expectations for a path to be developed, and does not satisfy the Council's requirement as communicated through the 2004/05 Annual Plan. It was not considered further as a practical option for this project.

PREFERRED OPTION

19. The preferred option is a 2.5 metre wide pathway, on the east side of Bexley Road, running from Wetlands Grove to Bridge Street, as per the plan earlier in the report.
20. The chosen option meets the primary safety objective, as the new pathway is segregated from the roadway. No side streets will have to be crossed.
21. The proposed option satisfies the “sympathetic with the environmental, drainage and amenity values of the area” criteria through the following:
 - Where the pathway is not on legal road, it is as close as possible to the legal boundary as the cross falls allow, in order to not interfere with the wetland. There are also thought to be freshwater springs in the area south of the former Anthony Road, but no-one asked about them has ever been able to conclusively confirm their existence or location. The pathway is believed, though, to be clear of the likely locations of the springs, as the land adjacent chosen for the pathway is dry. There is a man-made drainage channel along the north side of the former Anthony Road and the last 2 metres of this channel is proposed to be filled with pitrun, allowing for the cycleway to be constructed clear of the batter of Bexley Road.
 - There is no specific landscaping to be carried out as part of the pathway construction. There is, however, extensive landscaping to be put into place in conjunction with the Bexley Wetland Restoration project.
 - The proposed path alignment commences at the intersection of Wetlands Grove and Bexley Road, and terminates at the intersection of Bexley/Breezes/Bridge/Dyers. The path commences on Transit NZ owned land, then crosses into CCC owned land, before terminating again on Transit NZ land. About 330 metres of pathway are on land owned by CCC. Some 540 metres of pathway are on legal road (State Highway) corridor. Transit NZ fully approve of the pathway and will maintain it, after the CCC has constructed it.
 - Bexley Wetland has been used as a private landfill since the 1940s until the 1990s. Large areas of the wetland contained contaminated soils. A restoration project is underway, with contaminated soils being stockpiled and capped immediately adjacent to the proposed pathway. CCC holds several resource consents for this major environmental enhancement work. The exact location of the contaminated mound was slightly adjusted, so that the proposed pathway could be accommodated. As part of the restoration project, two walkways are proposed on the mound. One of these walkways will now be linked to the proposed cycle/pedestrian pathway along Bexley Road.
 - A lighting assessment has been carried out. The existing lighting along Bexley Road will illuminate the proposed pathway to meet the required P3 classification. One light pole at 28 Seabreeze Close is to be relocated and a longer outreach arm to be fitted.
 - The existing consents for the Bexley Wetland Restoration Project have been studied in light of this project. It is concluded that no additional resource consent be required for this project.
 - The pathway has had a safety audit. Its safety status is satisfactory and no issues require any changes to be made.