

6. FROSTS ROAD: WALKING/CYCLING FACILITY

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of investigations into the possibility of providing off road walking/cycling facilities along Frosts Road.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 20 February 2002 the Community Board requested that, a report be provided from City Streets Unit and the Parks and Waterways Unit on a proposal for an informal unsealed path, along Frosts Road linking QEII and Travis Wetland.

COMMENTS FROM CITY STREETS UNIT

In early 2001 the City Streets Unit presented to the Board a design for an off road cycle way/pedestrian facility along the east side of Frosts Road. The estimated cost for this work was \$169,000 and as yet it has not gained a funding priority for this work to proceed.

As part of the Woolston/Burwood Expressway project the road seal was widened and a white sideline was painted along Frosts Road to provide an area for pedestrians and cyclists to travel along.

Frosts Road is designated as a minor arterial road with an average daily count of 8,000 vehicles. A survey has been carried out to ascertain the use of Frosts Road by cyclists and pedestrians, which indicated the following results:

	Cyclists	Pedestrians
Monday 16 September 2002 (between 4.15 and 5.45 pm)	11	10
Tuesday 17 September 2002 (between 7.30 and 9.00 am)	34	1

COMMENTS FROM PARKS AND WATERWAYS UNIT

The total length of the road in question is about 650 metres and the costing for a walk/cycleway proposal on the eastern side of road is about \$170,000. About one third of the length is on firm sand although much of the remainder is on firm, disturbed peat, partly affected by spoil from the road, willow root plates and some drainage. The balance is on soft peat. An alternative alignment is on the western (wetland) side of the road.

The comparative advantages of the eastern route will be the relatively firm ground on which a geo-textile and grit path could be satisfactorily established. The path will be somewhat segregated from the road traffic by a 5-7 metre wide berm and line of trees. There will be a natural shaded environment to move through, which will develop as the planned native trees and associated landscaping matures.

The western side proposition would involve filling a drain, cutting a lot of willow, and encroaching on a very wet edge of Travis Wetland. The track would be hemmed in between the Travis stream and the road, and exposure to traffic would be considerably more than on the eastern side. On the other hand there would be a more intimate view of the wetland - although this is rather muddy water and largely dominated by willows and other exotic species at this point. In a walk/ride around Travis Wetland from Angela Stream to Beach Road there would be no need to cross the road whereas two crossings at each end of the road will be required for the eastern track.

It seems very unlikely that a western track would cost less than the current proposal. It is considered there would be additional costs with the wetter terrain and less room to manoeuvre. Cutting the corner is not a suitable alternative as the ground is very wet all through there, more bridging would be required, and there would be more disturbance to an otherwise human-free area where native birds feed and breed. It would essentially cut off a corner of the wetland and create an isolated island of habitat less suitable for wildlife.

On balance, despite the slight inconvenience of the road crossings, the Unit's preference would be to see the eastern track developed. It is not favourable to reduce the area of the wetland, even by a third of a hectare (which is what might be involved here by developing the path along the western side of Frosts Road), as this would contribute to cumulative effects on land that is supposed to be reserved as far as possible for wildlife.

There have already been substantial losses of wetland in the vicinity to residential development over the past decade and more will be lost in the foreseeable future when Travis Road is widened and when land is developed south of this road.

ALTERNATIVE OPTION

A third option would be to construct a cycle/pedestrian path on the high ground along the golf course and self-driving range. The purchase of the lease and the repositioning of the safety fences along the golfing facilities would be very expensive, even if agreement could be reached from the lessees.

CONCLUSION

The formation of a cycle/pedestrian path through the trees on the eastern side of Frosts Road is the preferred option, if cyclists and pedestrians are to be provided with an off road facility. The cost of this is about \$170,000 and does not meet the funding priority for either the City Streets or the Parks and Waterways Unit at this time. The existing widening shoulder, which has been marked, is providing an adequate facility at present. The cycle/pedestrian use of Frosts Road appears to be increasing and therefore funds may be considered in the future.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: For discussion.