

ORDINARY MEETING 22 NOVEMBER 2017	9
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NORTHERN BEACHES LEISURE TRAIL UPDATE

L Kirchner | 79/4/1 | #5593519

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council notes this report and the proposed staged approach to continue the development of the Northern Beaches Leisure Trail.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Council has progressed the development of the Northern Beaches Leisure Trail (NBLT) for several years following endorsement of the preferred desired route which is generally along the beachfront where possible from Machans Beach to Palm Cove. The construction of the preferred route has been largely completed along the beachfronts with Kewarra Beach being the only remaining beach without a walking/cycling path.

Further analysis of the connections between suburbs along the preferred route has identified a number of “pinch points” which have required alternate options to be considered. These pinch points include risks associated with potential environmental impacts, construction access, need for extensive bridge structures in some locations, land tenure issues, and visual amenity impacts. These risks have been discussed at length at Council workshops and during site visits.

The purpose of this report is to document these risks and recommend a staged approach including alternate options for further implementation when funding and other opportunities allow.

BACKGROUND:

The concept of the Northern Beaches Leisure Trail (NBLT) has been articulated in Council documents and strategies since at least 1997. The key deliverables of the NBLT strategy include:

- Improved safety through the provision of a fully off road route, particularly between communities and for local school student movements.
- Increased leisure opportunities and attractors to foreshore facilities at the beach suburbs
- Development of inter and intra suburb pedestrian / cycling connections
- An iconic tourist route and promotion of other local tourism opportunities such as Cattana Wetlands, Earl Hill, Palm Cove, and eventually the Wangetti trail.

Conceptual work on the preferred alignment of the NBLT started in earnest in 2014 culminating in 2015 with a preferred desired alignment with a large percentage of the path along the foreshore from Machans Beach to Palm Cove.

A substantial part of the NBLT has either been fully constructed or will be completed shortly specifically along the beachfront at Palm Cove, Clifton Beach, Trinity Beach, Yorkeys Knob, Holloways Beach, and Machans Beach. The only remaining beach suburb without a walking or cycling path is Kewarra Beach.

Council has been successful in obtaining State Government funding of \$2.5 Million under the Cycle Network Local Government Grants scheme for development of the NBLT from Palm Cove to Kewarra Beach along the beachfront. State funding has also been secured for the design of a bridge structure between Holloways Beach and Machans Beach of \$135,000 which needs to be matched by Council.

Various risks have been flagged during the development of the concepts for the preferred route of the NBLT. These are generally at the connection between suburbs and include issues such as the need for various environmental and other approvals, land tenure, construction access, and potential visual amenity of bridge structures.

Detailed analysis of the preferred route has now resulted in some of the above mentioned risks being highlighted, resulting in alternate options being identified for consideration by Council. There have been a number of Council workshops and field visits along the preferred route where these issues have been discussed. During these discussions and site visits, the following 'pinch points' have been identified:

1. Palm Cove – the need for a long bridge structure at the southern end in front of an existing hotel and potential impacts on foreshore vegetation.
2. Kewarra Beach – the need for a long bridge structure and land and tenure issues at the north end. Potential land tenure, creek and access issues at the southern end.
3. Yorkeys Knob/Trinity Park – issues of getting over Half Moon Bay Creek whilst allowing large boats free passage, and potential environmental impacts through wetlands.
4. Yorkeys Knob to Holloways Beach – potential environmental impacts, construction access issues, land tenure issues for the various options.
5. Holloways Beach to Machans Beach – bridge structure required.
6. Barron River at Aeroglen – large structure required to traverse the Barron River.

COMMENT:

The pinch points identified above have resulted in the identification of alternate routes for the NBLT. The following staged approach is being recommended for consideration by Council for delivery as and when funding and other opportunities allow.

1. Palm Cove to Clifton Beach section – Do not proceed with the beachfront bridge at the Palm Cove end at this time but enhance existing path via Vievers St/Triton Road. Enhance path at Clifton Beach end to provide connectivity to existing path.
2. Clifton to Kewarra Beach section – Do not proceed with the bridge at northern end of Kewarra Beach at this time but explore inland options via Hope St and/or Cottesloe Drive and Albatross Street. Construct beachfront path along the length of Kewarra Beach as per other Beach Suburbs.
3. Kewarra Beach to Trinity Beach – Do not cross the creek or access via Taylors Point at this time. Enhance and extend existing connections such as Poolwood Reserve.

4. Trinity Beach to Trinity Park section – enhance existing path along Trinity Beach Road and explore on-road protected path on Reed Road to Smithfield Village Drive.
5. Trinity Park to Yorkeys Knob section – explore off-road path along Dunne Road to Varley Street.
6. Yorkeys Knob to Holloways Beach section – do not proceed with detailed design at this time due to potentially significant environmental and construction issues. Look for enhancements on existing on-road route. Continue discussions with TMR on options for path adjacent to the Cook Highway.
7. Holloways Beach to Machans Beach section – Proceed with design of bridge structure.
8. Machans Beach to Aeroglen – Undertake detailed design on the Esplanade from Barron River Bridge to Machans Beach. Continue discussion with TMR regarding crossing the Barron River and connecting to existing path at Aeroglen.

OPTIONS:

There have been numerous workshops, discussions and site visits to arrive at the proposed stage actions listed in the Comments section of the report that will assist in further development of the NBLT.

Council has the option of pursuing the current preferred route noting the risks identified in the report which may have significant cost, timing and reputational risks.

Council also has the option of not continuing with the development of the NBLT. This will result in allocated State funding being returned to the State.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

It should be noted that full implementation of this project is not without risk as summarised below:

- Detailed design and costing are yet to be undertaken for hard infrastructure elements.
- The adopted three year capital program allocation is \$5.098 million and there is no further allocation in the long term capital works program.
- The ongoing additional maintenance costs are yet to be factored into future operational budgets.
- Community reaction to the concepts once the total capital and operational costs are known.
- Council may need to renegotiate the funding agreement with TMR for the alternate options proposed.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

It is noted that further works will generate local employment. Council is in receipt of funding which needs to be fully acquitted within increasingly tight timeframes.

Council Officers have made contact with TMR and are awaiting their advice in relation to consideration of changing the current funding to that which supports the implementation of the revised staging.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

The development of the NBLT will result in improved active travel and leisure opportunities enabling greater access by a wider cross section of the community.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

All of the pillars of the corporate plan (economy, natural assets, liveability, community, and serving the community) are encompassed in the delivery of NBLT strategy.

Policy:

The usual procurement policies and procedures will be adhered to in the delivery of the NBLT.

CONSULTATION:

Appropriate consultation will continue to be undertaken as the various sections of the NBLT progress.



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