



Report 09.81
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Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee
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Proposed Te Araroa Walkway from Levin to Wellington

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's in principle support for the proposed Te Araroa walking access route from Levin to Wellington.

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 Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust has been established to secure a right of access for walkers from Levin to Wellington, as a sector of the 'Long Pathway' from Cape Reinga to Bluff. It is anticipated that the establishment of the pathway will engage local communities, promote outdoor activities and create an asset (the pathway) which will be a 'plus' for the people of the region.

The entire project is being put in place under the direction of the Te Araroa National Trust, based in Auckland. A pathway the length of New Zealand is the 'dream' of Geoff Chapple, writer and environmentalist of Auckland, who is actively driving things along with the aim of completion by the end of 2010.

The concept for Te Araroa rests on three principles:

- the path should link in with communities, rather than being confined to high and remote territory, and
- the path should serve local and community interests in providing access to the outdoors and promoting fitness, and
- the route should traverse a variety of New Zealand landscapes.

The Wellington Trust has separately received strong support from Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council. Consultations are continuing with the Department of Conservation on the route through Tararua National Park, also with Greater Wellington Regional Council and OnTrack.

4. Proposed Te Araroa route: Levin to Wellington

Attachment 1 outlines the full proposal from the Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust. **Attachment 2** shows the proposed route. The chosen route, which best meets the Te Araroa principles and local interests, is:

- **From Levin:** a three day 'bush walk' through the Tararua Ranges – avoiding the main range – to Otaki Forks;
- **From Otaki Forks:** a two day walk to Waikanae via the upper Waikanae River Valley;
- **From Waikanae:** a day walk down the Waikanae River and along the coast via Queen Elizabeth Park to Paekakariki;
- **From Paekakariki:** above the Coastal Highway to Pukerua Bay and from there to Plimmerton and Porirua, making use of existing Porirua City Council tracks;
- **From Porirua:** a one or two day walk – up and over Colonial Knob and down into the Ohariu Valley; up the Old Coach Road and along the Wellington City Council Northern Walkway to Ngaio; down into Trelissick Park and the Wellington City Council walk along the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream; up to Wadestown and down across Tinakori Hill to the Botanical Gardens, finishing at the top of the Cable Car.

Te Araroa is intended as a walking path and there is no plan to encourage mountain biking. It is anticipated that pedestrians will not have to cross State Highway 1. Because the proposed route will link the railway stations at Pukerua Bay and Paekakariki, the walk will be available to the community at large and encourage the use of public transport.

5. Linkages to Wellington Regional Strategy

There is considerable recognition in the Wellington Regional Strategy of the importance that open space plays in sustainable economic growth. Four of the WRS community outcomes link to a quality regional open space network. These include:

- Healthy Community
- Sense of Place
- Quality Lifestyle
- Healthy Environment

The WRS open space project is working on identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in our public space network. This action area will help to identify where greatest regional benefit could be gained through collective action. The Te Araroa walkway crosses a large part of the Wellington regional open space network. This concept is in keeping with the principles of the Wellington Regional Strategy as discussed above.

6. Support requested

The Trust is requesting the support of the WRS Committee in the form of formal confirmation that its proposed walkway is consistent with the WRS aims and objectives. The Trust has signalled it will also be seeking the support of iwi.

With the Committee's endorsement the Trust believes it will be in a strong position to seek funding from agencies, such as the Lotteries Commission, Community Trusts and others. It is not seeking any financial support from the Committee.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***
3. ***Confirms that the proposal by the Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust for a walking access route from Levin to Wellington, as part of the Te Araroa National Walkway, aligns well with the Wellington Regional Strategy aims and objectives.***
4. ***Authorises the Chair of the Committee to sign a letter of support to Te Araroa Wellington Regional Trust.***

Attachment 1: Submission to Greater Wellington Regional Strategy Committee on Behalf of Te Araroa Wellington

Attachment 2: Proposed Walkway Route