

Report 12.197
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Committee Economic Wellbeing
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Providing effective shelter at Tawa railway station

1. Purpose

To determine the future of the Tawa railway station building.

2. The decision-making process and significance

Officers recognise that the matters referenced in this report may have a high degree of importance to affected or interested parties.

The matters requiring decision in this report have been considered by officers against the requirements of Part 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 (the Act). Part 6 sets out the obligations of local authorities in relation to the making of decisions.

2.1 Significance of the decision

Part 6 requires Greater Wellington to consider the significance of the decision. The term 'significance' has a statutory definition set out in the Act.

Officers have considered the significance of the matter, taking the Council's significance policy and decision-making guidelines into account. Officers recommend that the matter be considered to have low significance.

The proposed method to provide effective shelter for rail passengers at Tawa railway station can be managed within existing rail asset management budgets and does not require separate funding applications or approval.

Officers do not consider that a formal record outlining consideration of the decision-making process is required in this instance.

3. Background

In July 2011, Greater Wellington took ownership of all Wellington Metro stations (excluding Wellington station) as part of a wider 'rail deal' with the Crown. In order to establish an up-to-date asset condition database, and prepare an appropriate asset management plan, Greater Wellington prepared a tender and went to the market for a full condition survey of stations, pedestrian footbridges and underpasses.

During surveys of station buildings the successful tenderer (Aurecon) identified Tawa Station as being in a particularly poor state of repair. As a result of initial condition survey a more detailed investigation was undertaken to determine the integrity of the building.

4. Building condition

The Tawa station building is approximately 80 years old and is situated on an island platform. It is a timber framed rectangular building with awnings cantilevering toward the rail tracks on both sides. The roof is timber framed and clad with corrugated iron. The exterior is clad in weatherboard and the interior is lined with timber boards. The floor is timber framed with timber boards and sits on timber bearers.

Numerous leaks in the roof were identified in the initial inspection and daylight was visible through the exposed corrugated awning cladding in several locations. Inside the building, there were four locations where water from the leaking roof had destroyed the ceiling lining and portions of the wall linings. Under two of the obvious leaks, the floor had a noticeable slant. The ceiling, wall and floor linings were removed at these interior locations to allow a proper assessment of the damage.

Removal of areas of the linings revealed badly rotting roof rafters, wall studs, top and bottom plates and bearers. Studs, wall boards and floor boards were also heavily infested with borer. Investigation of the foundation revealed that there wasn't one. The building sits on rotten 6"x10" bearers with minimal soil embedment and little to no soil compaction. The building also lacks a positive connection between the bearers and the floor joists.

Repair of the structure would require a new foundation, new floor finish, new wall framing, new wall linings (interior and exterior), partial replacement of the roof framing and new roof cladding. If it were refurbished, a generous estimate of the original building material that would remain would be 20%. It is entirely likely that in the course of demolition, more of the building materials would be deemed unsalvageable. This would make the building be less a restoration and more a replica.

5. Heritage values

The station building was built in 1937. The Tawa Historical Society, while acknowledging the lack of historical listing in the district plan or with the Historical Places Trust, have espoused the view that the building provides historical links to the early development of Tawa.

A station building of similar design exists at Plimmerton station. The Plimmerton station building was restored by the local community and now has a tenant. The work required on the Plimmerton building was not of a significantly structural nature and the foundations were relatively sound. Plimmerton station has arguably more prominence and physical presence, by virtue of its location in the local community, than Tawa station.

While community views may be varied there is no doubt that the Tawa building holds some important memories and reminders of Tawa's development.

6. Options considered

The following options have been considered:

6.1 Demolish and replace

The key aspects of this option include:

- The ability to use a new shelter design which incorporates significant improvements to security and resistance to tagging
- The works could start relatively soon, subject to:
 - removing or adequately protecting network signalling equipment which is currently housed in the building
 - confirmation of the condition of the pedestrian footbridge
- The estimated cost is \$600,000 over approximately three months
- The estimated cost and timeframes are based on similar, market tested, projects currently underway
- The modern structure will have lower ongoing maintenance costs
- This option represents the lowest overall risk against budget and passenger disruption.

6.2 Refurbish and restore

The key aspects of this option include:

- One of the more challenging issues is the need to re-pile when a suitable foundation is not present ie. the current ground conditions will not support piles
- The building will have to be lifted in stages to allow some sort of ground compaction and re-piling – the existing structure is unlikely to survive the lifting process
- The community driven Plimmerton approach is not viable as the nature of the work requires heavy equipment and substantial professional workforces to maximise the necessary 'windows of opportunity' for safe access (ie. power and trains turned off)
- The estimated cost is \$1-1.5 million over 18 months to two years
- To attempt this work will require a further investigation to ascertain viability – the investigation alone will cost approximately \$50,000
- Ongoing maintenance costs will be higher

- This option represents the highest overall risk against budget and ongoing passenger disruption.

6.3 Relocate and replace

Instead of demolishing the building, this option would see the building removed intact (or in large pieces) and relocated to another site where community restoration could take place away from the operating electrified rail environment.

- A major challenge would be access for the heavy lifting equipment and the physical removal of such a large item from an operating electrified railway
- The cost and timeframes of option 1. would expand considerably
- To attempt this work will require a further investigation to ascertain viability – the investigation alone will cost approximately \$50,000
- It is unclear where the building would go and what it would be used for
- There was little enthusiasm for this option from the community at the public meeting.

7. Community engagement

Greater Wellington has had a series of formal and informal engagements with the Tawa community on the future of the station. Officers have presented to the Tawa Community Board, and provided opportunities for board members to view inside the station building to see the damage firsthand. The issue has been well publicised in the Dompost and local newspapers, and the consultants report has been made widely available.

Greater Wellington also presented to a public meeting (with reported attendance of approximately 80 people) which included presentations from the Tawa Historical Society and a representative of the community group that restored the Plimmerton Station. An informal show of hands at the public meeting strongly supported the demolition and replacement option.

8. Recommendation

Greater Wellington officers recommend that, due to its current condition, the existing building be demolished and a new structure erected to provide effective shelter for passengers. The current building is no longer providing adequate shelter to waiting passengers, is not safe for ongoing occupation and the existing condition makes it a poor candidate for refurbishment. We would estimate that only around 20% of the original building fabric would remain making it more of a replica than a refurbishment.

Discussions should commence with KiwiRail regarding the options for removal or relocation of the existing signalling equipment housed in the building. It is also recommended that the condition of the footbridge be confirmed before commencing any work on the station building – the investigation requires a block of line and the results are expected in late June.

Discussions should also continue with the Tawa Community Board to determine an appropriate incorporation of information panels or photographs, depicting the stations role in the development of Tawa, into the new shelter design.

9. Communication

Greater Wellington will advise the Tawa Community Board of the decisions and work with them on the design and timing of the station replacement works.

10. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report*
- 2. Notes the content of the report*
- 3. Resolves that the Tawa railway station building be demolished and replaced with a modern shelter to provide effective shelter for rail passengers*
- 4. Resolves that officers work with the Tawa Community Board on the timing of works and design aspects of the new shelter.*

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