



February 2022

FOOTPATH STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Community Feedback Summary



WEST COAST COUNCIL FOOTPATH STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council sought community feedback and comments on the Footpath Management Plan document presented below. The Footpath Management Plan has been prepared to assist Council in improving the way it delivers services from Council owned infrastructure.

The strategy was released for public comment for a period of 7 weeks, closing on Friday 28 January 2022. The request for public comment was advertised via social media, Council's website and local radio.

There were four submissions received in response to the document and questions asked below:

This plan identifies that Council is underspending significantly on the expected maintenance for the number of footpaths we have, this is leading to footpaths being in very poor condition, particularly where constructed of gravel or spray seal. One of the ways this plan addresses this problem is by moving to only having footpaths on one side of the road outside of town centres and key service routes. This will mean that Council will cease maintaining footpaths on one side of the road in many areas.

Do you think this is an appropriate strategy or would you prefer Council increase rates to fund the required maintenance?

This plan identifies that approximately \$780,000 additional capital funding p.a. is required to bring core footpaths up to community expectations. This may require an up to 15% rate rise over the period to fund. What are your views on the cost benefit of doing this?

Do you think raising rates to improve footpath infrastructure is the best direction for Council or should the footpath network continue at the current standard?

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

Paul Frisby – QUEENSTOWN

I refer to Council's request for comment in this matter, and while I thought I had decided to limit my involvement in such matters, I believe there is a significant omission in material available for consideration of the plan and am moved to comment.

As I read it the plan totals up the annual cost of the necessary upgrades and projects raising cash to pay for those upgrades by the means of an increase in rates. This is fair enough as far as it goes.

It does not clearly say whether that increase would be over an estimated limited term with a reduction of rates when the improvements are completed and suggest such a decision should be clearly made by Council when deciding the matter. In other words, is this to be a 15% special levy for X number of years (or something that will drift on into an indeterminate future until someone complains loudly enough about it being forgotten)?

However, the potential for the application of a differential rating system depending on the increase in house value to individual property owners or owners/occupants of homes in areas benefiting from improvement, is also not discussed. While other LGAs have used this type of differential rating to achieve similar goals it can be controversial - but this does not mean it should not be canvassed as an option for public comment and Council deliberation.

Maintenance of the footpaths is discussed as an ongoing cost that should rightly be funded by rates. However, the investment in new footpaths involves an increase in asset value, and that value will be substantial and for a long term given the use of asphalt or concrete construction.

Surely it is therefore open to Council to consider borrowing the funds to carry out the capital works and this might be advantageous especially given the current level of interest rates. Funding the works in this manner might have the extra advantage of allowing the works to be carried out more expeditiously to the early benefit of

ratepayers, and at the same time bring forward any reduction in servicing/maintenance costs that would be generated by savings from footpath improvement.

I don't put up one of these ideas as the best solution, however I believe all the funding options should be available to Councillors as they decide on the merits of the plan.

Donna Martin – QUEENSTOWN

I do not see raising rates as a reasonable response to upgrading our towns footpaths because it only applies to a selected few footpaths that link to town centres or benefit tourists. For someone such as those that live in brown street Queenstown (that already have an old gravel footpath on one side of the street with an open drain running alongside it) we could be paying increased rates for another 30 years and never see any improvement except the 5 yearly dumping of gravel which is usually done when it is pouring down with rain and turns to bog making it impossible to enter my property from the front entrance. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to your proposed plans I hope this has been helpful.

Theresa Frerk – QUEENSTOWN

Just looked at the Queenstown map and where you have outlined a black line meaning we have a footpath across from my house, well I would like it if you could please show me this in person as there is no outlined or a resemblance of a footpath out the front of my house. I am at 23 Esplanade right next to the tennis court, which is now to be the new ambulance station, I would like to know where this footpath is so I can stand safely on it while a ambulance can take off in a hurry with a cars coming and going and pulling out of driveways.

Zeehan Thrives Inc – ZEEHAN

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the WCC footpath strategy.

Improvements to the Zeehan Main Street footpaths is vital to improving the overall appearance of Zeehan and to assist in allowing locals and visitors to explore on foot, the rich history and heritage of our town. Zeehan has a considerably long Main Street, with most of its tourist drawcard features a considerable distance from the entrance of the town. One of the issues Zeehan faces, is tourists only getting part way along the main street before turning and leaving, unaware that they have not yet reached the town centre. Unsightly Main Street footpaths, along with neglected buildings and absent landlords have not helped the situation.

Zeehan Thrives has a strong view that footpaths along our Main Street as well as footpaths along streets that are thoroughfares to community/ public facilities should be a priority. These are community facilities such as the school, swimming pool and gym, the Town Hall, Study Hub West Coast and Frank Long Memorial.

Zeehan Thrives also has an issue with the footpath and nature strip area on Main Street, running from the Zeehan/ Strahan intersection and adjacent to the Heemskirk Hotel. This area is currently difficult to maintain, with the path often covered in water and does not present well. This is an area that could be utilised and designed to make a better impression upon arrival to our town and is often a topic of discussion at our meetings.

Zeehan Thrives has concerns with the suggestion of a 15% rate rise to bring paths up to an expected standard. It would seem that Queenstown and Strahan would receive the most benefit from this proposal, effectively being supplemented by increased rates from rate payers of the other towns, especially as both of these towns have had significant footpath works already conducted over the last 10 years in comparison to other West Coast towns.

Zeehan Thrives feels the overall strategy as presented, seems fair and reasonable as a 10-year plan, especially if the focus is on those key heavy foot traffic areas. We do not support a heavily increased rates rise to assist with the perceived outcomes but do welcome a consistent practical approach to the maintenance of Councils, and the community's assets.