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## **HIKURANGI COMMUNITY TRAIL RIDE PROPOSAL - 2022**

### **Background:**

In 2011 some local businessmen approach WDC about an under utilised piece of land on Gomez Road and sought an agreement where the land could be used by local community groups to host trail rides to fundraise money for locals in need, at the time this was for Hikurangi School. The land is 186ha block that has previously been used for water purposed from WDC. WDC edited and approved a plan to create the “Noisy Motorsport Park” on this land and local residents fought against the plan from proceeding. At the time there was a substantial amount of money set aside for the project and noise and ecology feasibility studies were obtained. Due to the disagreeance of the community about the plan, the project was abandoned. Since then some of the outdoor recreation groups who were originally included in the plans have lost the ability to access facilities for their sport that are adequate. The goal remains in the community to utilise the site on Gomez Road in ways that can benefit the community now and for future years to come.

### **Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park 2022:**

The 2022 proposal for the Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park is drastically different to the plan that was initiated in 2011. This plan goes back to the original inquiry by HBA about utilising the land for trail rides to fundraise for the community as the primary goal within the proposal, and considers investigating future uses alongside other groups who may have their own proposals to present. We have divided this proposal into two step, “step 1” being the original trail ride proposal, and “step 2” being the investigation into other recommended uses for this land, as seen below:

**STEP 1:** = in line with LTP funding and previous intentions for the land, follow through with creating community driven and managed trail rides to fundraise for various community groups and sports clubs at the earliest possible time;

**STEP 2:** = to look into long term usage for this area including a variety of previously proposed activities, as outlined throughout this document.

A more detailed outline of the proposal is below:

#### **1. Activities Covered in Park**

The original 2011 plan included a variety of 9 different activities available in the Outdoor Recreation Park. Our 2022 proposal is to have 1 activity only that can be started ASAP and remain running as long as there is a need for it, as well as continue to investigate a number of further opportunities in the future as potential to utilise the land.

### *STEP 1 PROPOSAL: short term achievement*

- Trail rides - The original proposal of having a trail ride track constructed remains. The course would utilise old forestry tracks on the western side of the land and operate under the motto “run by the community, for the community”. Local community groups and sports clubs would come together to run the event under the management of the Hikurangi Community Development Manager. All profits from the trail rides would get given back into the community, either divided up amongst groups or given in bulk depending on the purpose of the event.

### *STEP 2 PROPOSAL: long term achievement*

- Mountain biking - utilising the tracks created for the trail rides and potential partnering up with neighbouring land, an extensive mountain biking track could be created to meet the needs of a growing pass time in our district. It is possible this could be set up as a professional community business with mountain and ebikes for hire with any profits going back to the community.
- Archery - this very sought after sport requires two types of areas, a target range and an archery course. The latter could potentially be included within the tracks used for the trail rides, with animated targets located throughout the area.
- GRASS/FOGOFF - we note here that GRASS and FOGOFF have previously eluded to ideas their groups have for the Gomez land. We would like for their ideas and concepts to be considered for this land, in particular the eastern side of the land which is not currently being sought for use by HBA.

## **2. Land Area Details**

In the original 2011 proposal, almost all of the 186ha (460 acres) land area owned by council was to be utilised by the Motorsport Park. Under the new 2022 proposal, we are seeking to use much less hectares for the trail rides. See map attached at the end of the document as an example of the area HBA are proposing to use.

### *STEP 1:*

The land currently consists predominantly over grown gorse and other non-desirable scrub. Some larger mature trees are on the property and all measures will be taken to ensure mature trees will not be cut down or destroyed where possible. Courses will likely be created to go around established bush/tree areas where there is an option to do so. There are also a number of waterways and gully's on the property, which may or may not be utilised, but destruction or disturbance of these areas will also be avoided where possible. HBA is not proposing to use any of the dam sites or established rivers located on the land.

### *STEP 2:*

At this stage, the proposal is that the mountain biking and archery utilise the same area of land being proposed for use for the trail rides, until such time as FOGOFF has put their proposal in for the remainder of the land. In the future if there is no further plans for the remainder of the land and the mountain biking area is desired to be larger, and new proposal or agreement may come into effect to better suit the sports needs.

### **3. Frequency of Events**

It is noted that the intention for the Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park is not to be utilised in a daily come-and-go as you please manner.

#### *STEP 1:*

The intention would be that the property is used for events only. Our proposal is that up to 4 trail rides per year be allowed for the purposes of fundraising. This would be limited to between Spring and Autumn as the motorbikes will not use the land when it is muddy.

#### *STEP 2:*

It is likely the mountain biking would be open to the public on a daily bases, and the archery would utilise the space once per week or more if they were to also hold an event there.

### **4. Parking**

The 2011 proposal had one car park proposed off Gomez Road.

#### *STEP 1:*

For the trail rides the proposal is access to Gomez land would come off a neighbouring farm on the western side of the land. This means the access to the trail rides would come from Valley Road and would not require the use of Gomez Road for access or car parking. Car parking for the events would take place on the neighbouring farm.

#### *STEP 2:*

Mountain biking and archery would require car parking. Mountain biking could park on any road in Hikurangi if there was an adequate path to get to the mountain biking area. Archery would likely require a car park located off Gomez Road. This will need further investigating and planning.

### **5. Toilets**

The original proposal included a toilet block located at the northern end of the car park off Gomez Road.

#### *STEP 1:*

Toileting for these events would be paid for by the community and located on site of the neighbouring farm.

#### *STEP 2:*

It is unknown on toileting for these projects, depending on what they look like if/when they are proposed.

## **6. Clubrooms**

The original proposal included clubrooms located approximately half way down the car park, set a couple of metres away towards the internal area of the land.

### *STEP 1:*

There are no need for clubrooms for this event.

### *STEP 2:*

Clubrooms would not be required for either mountain biking or archery.

## **7. Access to Property**

On the original plan it was proposed to have two access points to the single car park.

### *STEP 1:*

Access would come from Valley Road until if/when either neighbouring farms sell, in which case the access would be revised.

### *STEP 2:*

Access would likely need to come from Gomez Road.

## **8. Ongoing Security**

### *STEP 1:*

The proposal is to have each group who is managing an event or club day, to be responsible for security to the property, including facilities, during the hours of the event. The managing group will be responsible for fixing/replacing any damage done to any part of the property during their event, they will be responsible for rubbish cleanup and removal, and also responsible for cleaning of all buildings and facilities.

### *STEP 2:*

Security would not be required on a permanent bases for either of the proposed sports.

If security of the property becomes an issue after hours, it is possible to look into options around installing security cameras, or seeking assistance from a security monitoring company. However the cost of this could be substantial so would be looked into at a later time if required.

## **9. Community Groups to Potentially Host Fundraising Events**

There are a variety of community groups within the Hikurangi District, and many of them are struggling to make financial ends meet each year. Some of the community groups largely rely on funding applications through places like Rano Trust, Lotteries, WDC or Oxford Trust. Often the amount applied for is not granted in full and the community groups are left with a large deficit that they need to find the money for themselves. Sometimes the deficit is not able to be filled, and things like building maintenance or equipment upgrades do not get to happen. Over the last few years, some of the local

community groups have had to close due to the difficulty of managing financially. This is particularly applicable post covid19.

The range of community groups who could benefit from fundraising by hosting events at Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park include (but are not limited to):

- Hikurangi Friendship House
- Hikurangi Mountain Lions
- Hikurangi Lighthouse Playgroup
- Hikurangi Tennis Incorporated
- Hikurangi Museum
- Hikurangi Community Library
- Hikurangi Business Association
- Hikurangi Rugby Club
- Hikurangi Netball Club
- Hikurangi Fire Station
- Hikurangi Auto Madness
- Hikurangi Hockey Club
- Hikurangi Fencing Club
- Hikurangi Bowling Club
- Hikurangi Maori Wardens

It is noted that a substantial amount of income can be earned from hosting events as described above. There are about two trail rides that get held annually in the north of Whangarei, and these events usually draw in \$8000-\$14,000 each time the event is held. For any of the above named groups, that is a huge income compared to other fundraising opportunities within the community.

## **10. Costs**

To be addressed post council consultation

## **11. Work Required on Property**

There are requirements to develop the property to fulfil the vision of the proposal. Some immediate considerations are:

- Earth works to create main loop track as the previously used logging tracks now have tea tree and scrub growing on them. However, where possible earth works will mostly be used to reclear the old logging tracks so ensure minimal damage to the natural untouched areas of the property;
- Boundary indications to be installed around the edge of the area to be used for trial rides to restrict riders entering incorrect areas of the land;
- Upgrade to fencing and entrance way to the property from neighbouring farms.

## 12. Benefits to the Community

There are a number of benefits for the community if this Recreation facility goes ahead:

1. Land that is currently under utilised will be able to be used in a relatively non-evasive way to nearby residents, in a way that is beneficial to multiple groups within the wider Whangarei community;
2. Community groups from within Hikurangi that may be struggling will benefit hugely from any income brought in by having the opportunity to host an event;
3. Local businesses will benefit by attendees of events spending their money within our community;
4. The property is currently being used as a rubbish dumping zone and a drug growing property which is of a hazardous nature;
5. If this property is developed it will benefit the proposed idea (in the Placemaking Plan) of creating a walking/cycle track that links from Gomez Road over to Tikipunga, through the Glenbervie Forest.

## 14. Community Consultation

- Meeting held on May 20th 2021 with Gomez Road residents and other neighbouring properties situated between 85 and 335 Marua Road as well as residents from Gomez Road, Toia Way, and Longs Road. 20 in attendance, feedback shared in **Appendix 2**.
- Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 with public community invites, 11 in attendance, with 8 of those being residents from the immediate Gomez zone. Feedback shared in **Appendix 2**.
- Meeting held on Jul 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 with interested sports groups and local community groups who would be directly affected if the new proposal was to go ahead. 6 different groups in attendance as well as one resident and one local business owner. Feedback is shared in **Appendix 2**.

## 15. Community Engagement and Feedback

In March 2022 on the neighbouring farms, HBA held a trial run pop-up trail ride. Neighbours were notified of the two day event and advertising was done on social media. With covid restriction in place and a bad weather report, the goal was to keep attendances under 100 bikes. With 76 in attendance over the 2 days, we have received no negative feedback from any neighbours or residents, nor from any of the riders who attended. Feedback from the community groups attending who supported with running the event (Mountain Lions, Tennis Club, HBA, Fire brigade, Maori Wardens, Museum) all had positive feedback and have volunteered their services again for the next ride. Feedback from the riders can be found in **Appendix 3**. Please note the repetitive requests for a longer trial ride (ours is 10km regular trail ride is 30-40km). This supports the need to access a portion of Gomez land to lengthen the trail ride track.



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## FEEDBACK FROM TRIAL TRAIL RIDE

*John Haverkort*

"Thank you for a great day, the event was perfect for our skill level. Maybe road signs would snare a few more riders".

*Cory Newby*

"It was perfect in the fact that with our group of 9 vehicles some of our kiddies were still learning to ride so small group was great in that aspect".

*John-Lee Diamond*

"I think the track was great. The kids enjoyed it and made it round the second time without falling off. If I was riding without the kids I would have liked to see what the advanced tracks were. But we had a great day, thanks".

*Graham Steedman*

"It was an awesome ride and if it is a regular event we will definitely be back. The weather was a bummer, but that can't be helped. Lots of support on the trail was awesome. My only feedback is a 10km loop is a short loop and that would put people off, 30km loops make for a longer and more fun day. Loved the food and the super friendly people. Was a super cool ride".

*Dylan Boyd*

"Loved the trail ride. Our kids had an amazing time on Sunday as did us adults. I think the only reason for such low attendance was the unpredictable weather. I would bring myself and my son and our group out every weekend if that was a thing. As it is sad that there are getting less and less places to ride and for kids to experience. I also would be happy to help set up or help in any way. We live in Onerahi and have nowhere for my son to ride and learn so the more often the better for us. Thanks heaps".

*Larry Purdie*

"Had great fund thanks".

*Luke HInse*

"The event was absolutely fantastic. Came only for the Saturday morning and enjoyed a great track with not too many riders. Please keep on doing it and I'm sure the numbers will go up. I liked the opportunity to choose between two days and it felt like and even from the community for the community. Big thumbs up! Was great and different view of Hikurangi. Thanks"

*Keron Fieckert*

"Awesome ride, I did the Saturday. Wish it was a bit muddier along the loop if possible. Well done, I'd do it again. Please keep in touch, I'll be back next time if you have it".

*Jon Townsend*

"Good day, good job".

*Brendon Honey*

"Awesome. It was awesome. Smiley people greeted my son and I from our drive up from Helensville, first of. Magic tracks with heaps for all abilities. Especially loved the super fast flowey stuff up on the paddocks, with a view to die for. Great to see volunteers out on the hills keeping an eye on the safety of the riders too. One more great thing was the fact that the farm offered the paddocks as part of the track which meant you could relax doing a circuit. I for one could ride heaps more in a day than I could anywhere else. Super magic day guys, you should all give yourselves a pat on the back. I'd be back in a shot".

*Arran Barnes*

"I myself thought it was a good day and good track, will do it again. However I think because it's a short track it would be a bit of chaos if there was the number riders that have been at bigger rides. So I think you would have to have people at the trouble points in order to spread riders out".

*Kevin Jessop*

"I just think it was not advertised enough or it was held straight after the Matarau school one and before the Mid Nothern one, which are probably two of the best ones held. Probably if it was held on a month when there is no other one on, you would get a lot better turn out. Or even if you could hold a two man endure cross race I reckon you would get a good turn out. But again, make sure you find out from the MX clubs when their club days are on so you're not clashing with them".

*Tony O'Connor*

"Had a good ride, thought it was awesome. Wouldn't change a thing. Just need more of them and thank you for putting it on".

*Alistair Simpson*

"I reckon it was pretty awesome. It's surprising you didn't have many riders. Maybe only being a 10km loop put people off? Just because a normal trail ride is 30-40km loop. But it was primo anyway, I'll definitely be back!"

*Stephen Pallant*

"I really appreciate the effort you all made with the friendly welcome, the trails, the parking area, catering, and facilities. I and my mate who came up from Auckland loved the terrain and the challenge of the trails. The 10km loop was great and a slightly longer one would be nice. Great day out, great people, great to be back in Northland".

*Malcolm Alysons*

"The advertising and notice was too short for a new unknown ride. Most people didn't know soon enough"



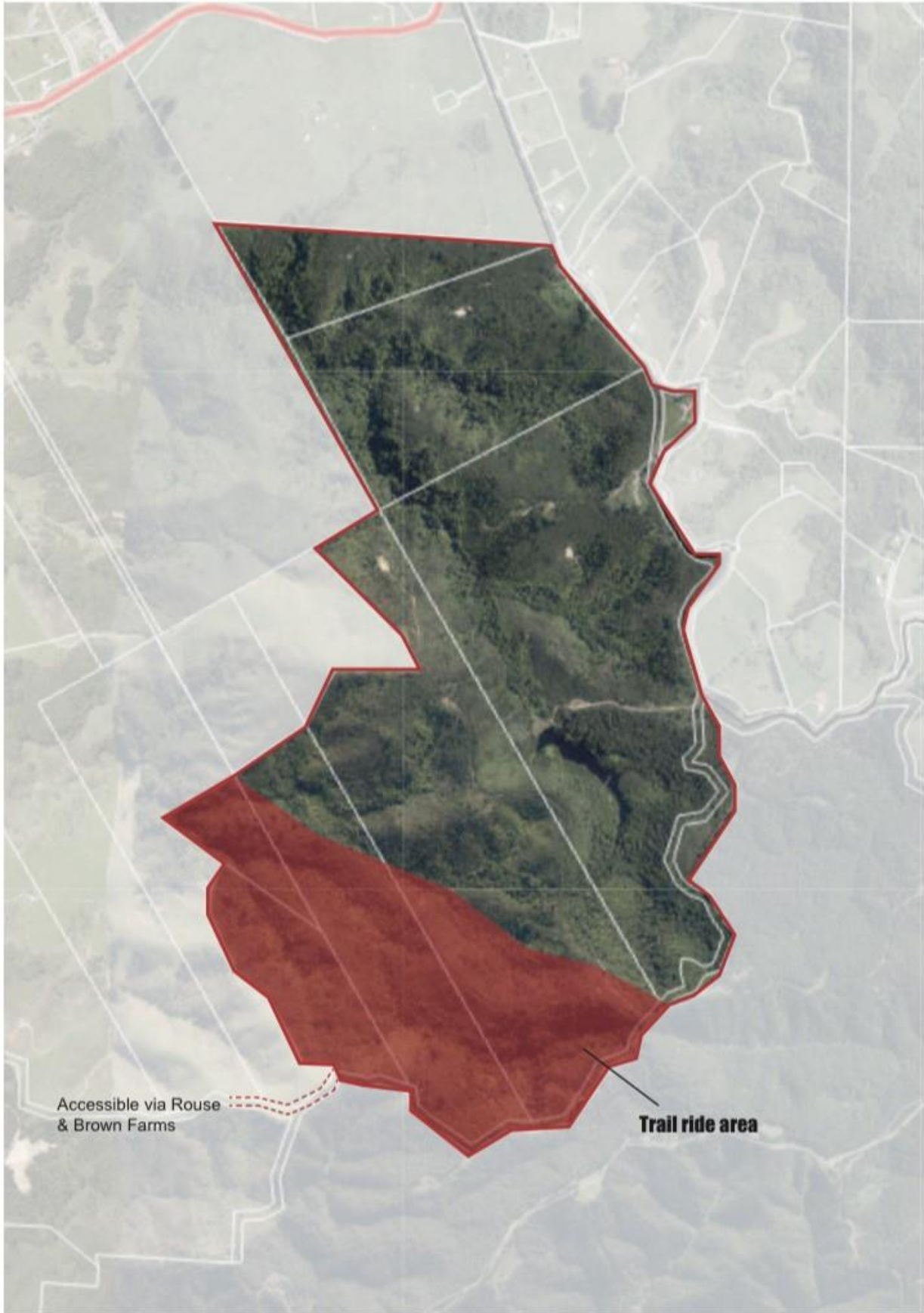
*Mike Gillmuig*

"I thought it was a hit, maybe a bit short on the course, but would still come back again. Would also suggest advertising the event on facebook, easy then to tag and share with mates. See you next time".

*Sam Pedersen*

"Great ride, will definitely be back again. The only reason you have low numbers is most trail rides are 30 odd km long. Would have put a lot of people off coming. Otherwise excellent and I'll be back again".

# PROPOSED MAP



Accessible via Rouse  
& Brown Farms

Trail ride area