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GOMEZ PARK PROPOSAL - 2021

Background:

In 2011 a plan between some Hikurangi local businessmen and the Whangarei District Council was initiated with the intentions of building a “Motor Sport and Outdoor Recreation Park” on a 186ha Whangarei District Council owned piece land on Gomez Road, Hikurangi. At the time there was a substantial amount of money set aside for the project and noise and ecology feasibility studies were obtained. After a period of time, whispers of plans leaked into the community and the recreation park was mistakenly renamed by locals “The Noise Park”. There was a community stand up where some of the immediate locals to the site strongly voiced their concerns over the plans going ahead, and in return 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 for an Outdoor Recreational Park that benefits a variety of sports, various clubs, local community groups and businesses, and current and future sporting individuals.

Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park 2021: edited 2011 proposal

The 2021 proposal for the Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park is slightly different to the plan that was proposed and initiated in 2011. Whilst the original plan utilised 100% of the land available, the 2021 plan proposes to utilise only the north half of the land. The plan also proposes to drop some of the noisier activities originally proposed as to keep noise distress to neighbouring properties to the bare minimum.

An outline of the 2021 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 2021 proposal is to have 6 activities available, made up of the following: 5 of the original activities (archery, trail rides, 4wd course, mountain biking, and walking tracks), and adding the extra activity of horse treks. This means 4 of the original activities have been removed from the 2021 proposal, being stock cars, go karts, rifle range, and indoor pistol range. Expansion of the proposed activities is outlined below:

- Archery - The original proposal of having two archery options available remains. The idea would be to have an area dedicated as an outdoor archery course, and a flattened area somewhere in amongst the course as a designated archery range where target practice can be practiced. This activity would have the opportunity to either function as an active club where members could meet up to once a week, or it could be used solely as an event venue.

- Trail rides - The original proposal of having a trail ride track constructed remains. The course would be utilised for events only at a maximum of one event per month. The events would be created, run, and overseen by one of the many local community groups (rotating roster perhaps) where the money made from the event would be retained by that community group. The community group would need to apply in writing, adhere to health and safety measure, take responsibility for all running of the event before hand and on the day (including adequate supervisors and security), and provide details of income earned from the event.
- 4WD track - The proposal is for the track that is created for the trail rides to be created in a way where it is able to be utilized for other clubs to use as well. A 4wd club would be able to use the track to hold event days at a maximum of one per month during the appropriate off roading season. Special off roading tracks could be created between the trail ride loop for a more adventurous route.
- Mountain biking - this would again utilise the trail ride tracks created at the start of the project. Whether a club is formed in the area or whether open days are held in the same way as the trail rides would be hosted are both options for consideration and discussion. More specific purpose built tracks for alternative more adventurous routes could be created between the loop of the trail ride track.
- Horse trekking - we have a local Pony Club based in Hikurangi as well as a vast amount of independent horse owners within the Hikurangi District. The tracks created for the trail rides could easily be utilised for horse trekking where event days the same as the trail rides could be held for fundraising purposes for local community groups. The idea with the frequency of these events would be that EITHER a horse trek OR a trail ride would be held at a maximum of one event per month.
- Walking tracks - it is proposed to use the area between the archery course and along the edge of where the trail rides would go as a rural walking course where people could walk or run along smaller tracks within the natural environment. The idea would be that these tracks would be utilised whilst another event is being held on the grounds, ie: when a horse trek is on, when archery is operating, or when a trail ride is happening etc. It is a possibility for the walking/running track to be opened up privately for fundraising events such as a marathon or orienteering etc, but it is expected this would not be frequent and would likely only operate at a maximum of twice per year.

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 2021 proposal, the Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park proposes to utilise around 61ha (150 acres), excluding car parks, toilets, and clubrooms. The majority of the activities would utilise one specific area of land which would have a main loop track constructed to suit various activities, and some smaller tracks that weave in and out of the loop to suit more specific courses for the 4wd and mountain bike users.

The land currently consists predominantly over grown gorse and other non-desirable scrub. Some larger mature trees are on the property and it is likely that 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.

A map of proposed land use areas is attached as **APPENDIX 1**, which is designed in the following way:

- Pink lines = border of the property
- Orange lines = proposed area for archery course and target shooting
- Green lines = proposed car park and access points from road
- Blue lines = proposed area for tracks for horse treks, trail rides, mountain bike rides, and 4wd use
- Purple lines = proposed area for walking/running track

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. The intention would be for the property to be utilized mostly for events to be held, apart from the exception of the archery course. Taking all of the activities into account, excluding the options of foot-based activities such as orienteering, it is proposed that a maximum of ONE EVENT PER MONTH be allowed to be held on the property, which can be from any one of the four activities described above.

Archery would be permitted to use the property on a more frequent basis if a club was formed based from the property. In this case, they would be permitted to utilise the archery course once per week for regular practice, as well as up to a maximum of 2 events per year.

Foot-based activities such as orienteering would be permitted on an application basis, and would likely include local orienteering clubs or schools who attend in small groups of no more than 50 people at one time. These activities would be open to daytime use only, 7 days a week, between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

4. Parking

The proposal for parking predominantly consists of the same plan proposed in 2011. That being, to utilize two access points off Gomez Road which access single carpark that is long and slim in nature, bordering the outskirt of the property. With the proposal being that only one event be held at the property at any one time, it is presumed that the original car park plans remain suitable for this proposal. It needs to be taken into consideration that for a majority of the activities proposed for the site, that a car/trailer type set up will be in use often, there for adequate parking and turning space must be available. This will cater to vehicles towing trailers with bikes on, vehicles towing horse floats, horse trucks, and cars towing 4wd cars will be able to use the car park with ease.

An example of the car park can be found in **APPENDIX 1**.

5. Toilets

The original proposal included a toilet block located at the northern end of the car park. We propose to stick to the original plan for location.

The toilets would be made available for each event or club session, but would be locked outside of those hours.

An example of the toilet location can be found in **APPENDIX 2**.

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. We propose to stick to the original plan for location.

The clubrooms would be accessible for each event or club session, would ensure to have adequate electricity and water, have a decent amount of seating, and would also serve as a first aid facility.

An example of the clubroom location can be found in **APPENDIX 2**.

7. Access to Property

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

We propose that there would be a gated system in place at each access point, which would be locked outside of event or club usage hours. We also propose that there be substantial fencing installed around the access points that do not allow for vehicles or people on foot to enter the property outside of the gateways.

An example of the access locations can be found in **APPENDIX 1**.

8. Ongoing Security

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.

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.

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, 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 Community Library
- Hikurangi Business Association
- Hikurangi Rugby Club
- Hikurangi Netball Club
- Hikurangi Fire Station
- Hikurangi Auto Madness

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.

Noise, Ecology, and Traffic

In 2011/2012 feasibility reports were undertaken to assess impacts of the then proposed Gomez Park on the noise, ecology, and traffic on the local community and environment. At the time the assessments were conducted based on all the proposed activity planned for the site, which it now needs to be noted that the proposed activities have lessened in this proposal therefore the results of the previous feasibility studies needs to be reconsidered. This proposal recommends conducting the feasibility studies again with current proposed activities being considered. Below is a summary of the previous findings:

- a) Noise - This study was undertaken by Styles Group in March 2012. It focussed on the noise impact from the Karting and Speedway activities as proposed in the original plan, which are not activities included in this proposal. They used computer noise modelling software to predict noise activity during events with 22 receivers around Gomez Road and Marua Road. Results showed Karting alone passed within noise limit requirements, speedway racing alone failed noise limits on 2 receivers and reached maximum noise limits on a further 3 receivers, and combining the events together failed noise limits on 3 receivers and reached maximum noise capacity on 2 receivers. The noise generated from the park was not determined to effect any nearby stock and the traffic noise expected as also determined to be well within traffic noise limits for the area. It is our belief that with these results, that our loudest proposed sport (trail rides) would come within the noise limit requirements for residential neighbours, stock, and traffic. To view the noise feasibility investigation see **Appendix 3**.
- b) Ecology - This study was undertaken by Poynter & Associates Environmental Ltd in June 2011. The opportunity was taken to evaluate the natural land and advise of areas for concern in regards to animal life, lakes and streams (including aquatic life), and trees and plants. It was

noted that there was signs of recent ongoing pest control as well as recent hunting activity at the site which allowed the conclusion to be made that it was unlikely protected wildlife such as kiwi occupied the area. The lakes and streams were of a healthy nature and seemed to be home to eels and other aquatic species. The trees of particular interest were noted mainly along the edges of the streams/lakes, and the old forestry tracks that were proposed to be used were overgrown with tea tree and pest shrubs such as gorse and ginger. It was noted there was an existing weed problem at the property. When areas of concern were listed in order of most concern to least concern, the highest area for concern was streamlines and the lowest area for concern was existing/previously cleared tracks. Our proposal is to utilise the previously cleared forestry tracks and not disturb any of the growing native trees along the streamline. A copy of the ecology report can be viewed in **Appendix 4**.

- c) Traffic - The details on this study have not been passed on to the administrator collating the proposal. However, it is noted that the apparent review of traffic impacts along Gomez Road resulted in the consideration of tarsealing the road up to Access Point 2. This is an area that we propose gets discussed further and local residents opinions are taken into consideration.

Costs

To be addressed post council consultation

Work Required on Property

There are multiple 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 will now be engulfed with gorse and scrub. 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;
- More excessive earth moving will take place to clear particular places that require clear/flat areas where no trees, scrub, plants, weeds, or leftover tree roots can be present. These areas consist of the car park, the clubrooms area, the toilet area, and the area proposed to use for target practice at the archery range;
- The entrance gates will need to be checked and replaced if need be, and adequate fencing placed along the access areas of the road to ensure limitation of outside hours intrusion;
- The car park will need to be thorough cleared and levelled, and appropriate surface laid;
- The toilet block including water access, septic system, electrical requirements, and all other plumbing needs will need to be constructed;
- The clubrooms will need to be constructed including water and electricity requirements.

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. Clubs that may be struggling to remain functioning due to lack of property ownership or appropriate locations to train/hold events will have somewhere stable that is purpose built to fulfil their needs;
3. 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;
4. Local businesses will benefit by attendees of events spending their money within our community;
5. The property is currently being used as a rubbish dumping zone and a drug growing property which is of a hazardous nature;
6. Sports that are not easily accessible to people living in our district could now be available for our community to join, such as archery or orienteering;
7. Schools who seek outdoor recreation activities will benefit from the use of this property;
8. If this property is developed it will benefit the proposed idea of creating a walking/cycle track that links from Gomez Road over to Tikipunga, through the Glenbervie Forest.

Community Consultation

To take place in May 2021

Next Steps

- We request that council take the Gomez Outdoor Recreation Park into consideration for the 2021 Long Term Plan;
- The requirements moving forward would be to redo the ecology, noise, and traffic reports at the earliest convenience;
- Letter of support to be gathered from representatives of the proposed activities, members of the public, and community groups;
- Community consultation for immediate effected residents between 85-335 Marua Road and all residents of Gomez Road and Toia Way.

APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

