

ITEM NO: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO:** TURANGI-TONGARIRO COMMUNITY BOARD

**FROM:** District Offices Manager

**SUBJECT:** Waipapa Street Accessway & Beach Access - Kuratau

**SIGNIFICANT DECISION:** NO

**DATE:** 13 August 2013

**OBJECTIVE DOCUMENT ID:** A1138741

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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This item is for the Board to consider the possible closure of the accessway or replacement of the stairway from Waipapa Street to the Lakefront and beach area west of the Kuratau Boat ramp. There was a slip recently on the escarpment that has undermined a section of the stairway creating a hazard to users. The accessway is currently taped off and sign posted.

#### **SUGGESTED RESOLUTION**

- 1. That the accessway located between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street, Kuratau be closed by means of physical barrier.**
- 2. That the wooden stairway structure and handrails are removed to deter public access onto the escarpment.**

## REASON FOR REPORT

To consider the possible closure of the accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street in Kuratau.

## BACKGROUND

The accessway was vested in the Taumarunui County under the Counties Amendment Act and dates back to the original development of Kuratau. The wooden stairway is of unknown origin, and does not appear to have been professionally constructed. The stairway is recorded in Taupō District Council's Reserves Asset register.

Earlier this year a slip occurred on the escarpment that undermined the upper section of the accessway creating a significant hazard for users.

## DISCUSSION

The accessway leads to a wooden stairway and track that traverses the escarpment to arrive at the lakeshore immediately west of the Kuratau water supply intake pump station. The slope of the escarpment is typically 50 degrees and the grade of the track varies but is as steep as 24 degrees in places.

The escarpment was planted in Australian Blackwoods (*Acacia Melanoxylon*) up until late 2010/early 2011 when the trees were removed at the request of residents in Waipapa Street. The slope was subsequently planted with small native shrubs (*Hebe* spp). Currently there is a mixture of native species (planted and naturally regenerating) as well as various weed species. (see photo 1)

Earlier this year a slip occurred on the escarpment at the rear of 25 Waipapa Street. The slip is approximately 15 metres long by 25 metres at its widest point (approx 225 square metres in area) and has undermined the stairway at the top of the track. (see photo 2)

One option is to close the accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street (either through legal process or through physical barriers) and remove the existing wooden structure from the escarpment thereby removing any access. This solution is both cost effective and safer from a land stability point of view.

There is another beach accessway 195metres to the west (from Pihanga Road, Hinerangi Place and Te Ara Hori Road) as well as access from Pihanga Road Boat Ramp (260metres east) and Omori Road Boat Ramp (750metres) west.

Chris Smith (Central Plateau Builders) has supplied an estimate to replace the stairway with a new compliant structure (See attached report) but was unable to suggest a way to safely anchor the top section of accessway in the area of the slip without having a geotechnical report to advise appropriate pile size, depths etc. The site is not readily accessible for machinery to be able to drive the piles.

## DESIRED OUTCOME

To close the accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street by means of physical barrier and remove the existing wooden stairway and handrail from the escarpment track.

## CONSIDERATIONS

- **Financial Considerations**

The full cost to replace the accessway has not been determined because of the need to obtain a geotechnical assessment of the site before designing a pile or similar anchoring system for the upper section of stairway. The estimated cost to replace the existing wooden stairway is \$25,990.00 inc gst. There is no renewals budget allocated for the project.

- **Legal Considerations**

If the section of accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street is to be closed there is a legal process (Outlined in appended LGA 1974 No. 66 Public Act Schedule 10) to be followed.

- **Policy Implications**  
None foreseen
- **Risks**
  - 1/ If the accessway remains open there is a significant Health & Safety risk to members of the public.
  - 2/ Any site works on the escarpment could aggravate the land stability issues further causing more erosion, possibly impacting on the Waipapa Street properties as well as the public reserve.

**OPTIONS**

Analysis of Options

**Option 1.**

**Reconstruct wooden stairway to current building standards**

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retains current access for residents and maintains current Level of Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased risk of erosion resulting from site works and continued foot traffic in the area.</li> <li>• Cost of replacement not in the renewals program.</li> </ul>

**Option 2.**

**Close the accessway to public access (but retain ownership of the accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street). Remove wooden structure.**

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most cost effective option</li> <li>• Accessway can be reopened in future should circumstances change, bank stabilise etc.</li> <li>• Hazard is removed</li> <li>• Site is not subject to any activities that promote erosion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going maintenance of accessway depending on type of physical barrier used.</li> <li>• Public lose an access point to the lakeshore – reduction in service</li> </ul>

**Option 3.**

**Close the accessway to public access and formally close the accessway between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street**

<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Disadvantages</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No further maintenance required</li> <li>• Hazard is removed</li> <li>• Site is not subject to any activities that promote erosion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public lose an access point to the lakeshore – reduction in service</li> <li>• Lengthy process involved to legally close the accessway</li> <li>• Once the accessway is closed there is no option to re-establish access</li> </ul>

**CONSULTATION**

The Omori/Kuratau Residents and Ratepayers Committee have been advised of the hazard associated with the stairway and the temporary closure. The committee have no objections to the closure of the accessway.

**COMMUNICATION/MEDIA**

Communication via media as well as Residents and Ratepayers newsletter to advise the community of the issues around replacement or closure. Public notification is required by law if the accessway is to be closed permanently (see appended LGA 1974 No. 66 Public Act Schedule 10).

## CONCLUSION

The stairway from the Waipapa Street accessway to the lakefront is in a dangerous condition due to erosion of the escarpment. The most cost effective and safest solution is to physically close the accessway and remove the wooden stairway. There will no doubt be a level of disappointment amongst residents and holiday makers at losing a direct access from Waipapa Street to the beach. However, the land stability issues are significant and the viability of maintaining a structure on the escarpment makes it difficult to recommend replacement of the wooden stairway.

## SUGGESTED RESOLUTION

1. That the accessway located between 25 and 27 Waipapa Street, Kuratau be closed by means of physical barrier.
2. That the wooden stairway structure and handrails are removed to deter public access onto the escarpment.

Report Prepared by:

Report Reviewed by:

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*Greg Hadley*  
*District Offices Manager*

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*John Ridd*  
*District Manager – Parks & Public Spaces*

## ATTACHMENTS

- 1/ LGA 1974 No. 66 Public Act Schedule 10
- 2/ Aerial photo of accessways
- 3/ Builders Report – Central Plateau Builders
- 4/ Photos showing slip