

Coromandel Walks - Cathedral Cove Walk - Purangi Crossing

High Level Options Report

Overview

The purpose of this report is to help provide an overview of the issues and options for crossing the Purangi Estuary, which is an integral part of the Coromandel Walks - Cathedral Cove Walkway linking Whitianga to Hahei and the blowhole south of the village.

The report outlines the key issues and a high level options table, which illustrates four initial crossing options and discusses the costs, pros and cons and the related risks for each option. It is intended that the table is used to help the Coromandel Walks Governance Group provide direction on which options to investigate further. It should be noted that the four options presented at this stage are not an exhaustive list and further research through a proposed EOI or RFP process is likely flesh out further viable options for consideration.

Any direction provided by the Governance Board will need to have due consideration of the programme vision (for the provision of a world class tourist destination) while being cognisant of revised project budget and realistic timeframes which includes appropriate staging to ultimately achieve a world class tourist attraction.

The Issues

The business case for the Coromandel Great Walks compiled by Miles Media and TRC Tourism Limited, identified a major tourist trend towards shorter, less demanding day walks. The concept of the Cathedral Cove Walkway capitalises on the Coromandel's existing natural beauty and expands on the existing tourist attraction of Cathedral Cove, by linking a number of destinations and townships through a 14km walk from Whitianga to the Blowhole south of Hahei Village and eventually onto Hot Water beach. The report also recommends supporting infrastructure to address existing tourist issues through the coordination of parking, shuttles and business opportunities.

Crossing the Purangi Estuary is undoubtedly a key part to the walkway, as it will connect the settlements of Whitianga, Cooks Beach, Stella Evered Reserve through to Cathedral Cove, Hahei Village and the blowhole to the south. The ability to cross the Purangi will provide for walking opportunities from the Settlements of Cooks beach and Whitianga, directly to Cathedral Cove, Hahei Village and further south. It also provides opportunities for a day walk from Cathedral Cove and Hahei north through to Whitianga.

Currently, for those who don't mind getting their feet wet, there is a natural path to cross the estuary at low tide. This low tide option combined with appropriate design and signage around parking as well as an effective tourist education campaign, could adequately address the perceived dead end traffic issues at the end on Lees Road in the short-term.

For those that would prefer not to do a low tide crossing, a number of walks linking destinations could still be achieved without an all tide Purangi crossing, and these walks would still benefit visitors and the local community immensely. However, without some form of all

tide crossing these smaller walks would most likely fall short of community expectations and the potential the Cathedral Coast Walkway could achieve.

Funding

The Cathedral Cove Walk project has been funded by TCDC through a district wide rate, as well as a contribution to direct costs from DOC, Grant funding from Lotteries New Zealand and Trust Waikato.

Overall budget available (inclusive of car parking and roading improvement projects) is \$3.66M. Best estimates at time of writing, including track construction, estimates for infrastructure, ancillary services such as toilets, design, surveying and consenting costs indicate a potential budget shortfall of just over 10%. This budget shortfall if well managed may not trigger to need to seek additional funding from Council in the short-term, but as the projects progress and the costs become clearer, additional funding may need to be sought in the October revision.

The current budget of \$3.66M does not include an allocation for designing, consenting and building an all tide crossing at the Purangi. However, initial investigations indicate that feasible crossing options exist and that funding options can be considered (within or outside) existing project budgets as costs become clearer.

This report provides an initial high level options appraisal, pros cons and risks, and should allow the Governance Board to make an informed decision on the direction to take from here.

Purangi Crossing Options

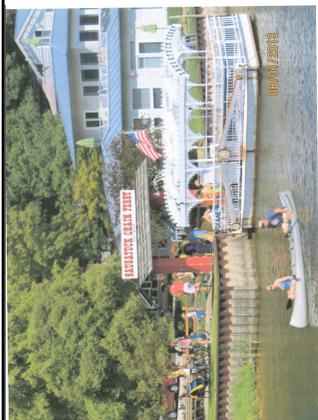


Option One - Tidal Walkway - Interim Solution

Cost	Pros	Cons
Capital \$10-15k	Provides an interesting and unique experience in its own right for those who are slightly adventurous and don't mind getting their feet wet. Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Similar walks with Tidal crossings include Abel Tasman and Te Araroa.	Tide Dependant - provides 2-3 hours around low tide before having to go into mangroves/mud
Operational minimal - within operational	Allowed for within existing budget	Limits potential users to those with some sense of adventure
	Can be implemented very soon with some minor enhancements to a short section of existing track and requires no property or consenting actions.	Requires tourist marketing, signage and access to tide times
	Does not rely on external track specialist contractors to implement - could be done by volunteers and managed by John Gaukrodger	Unlikely to meet community expectations, without a holistic approach to future stages
Risks: - Flooding and strong tidal currents increase risks to users particularly if they try and		

cross outside recommended timeframes and at crossings other than those identified. Needs thorough review by Health and Safety prior to promoting this walk, including warning signs.

Option Two - Chain or Cable Ferry



Cost Capital
\$100-\$300k
Operational
\$5k or less

Pros	Cons
<p>All Tide - does not rely on propeller driven mechanism that would limit motorised boat ferries to high tides.</p> <p>Excellent potential to provide an iconic tourist attraction e.g. "Cooks Crossing"</p>	<p>May require two structures either end to anchor the chain/cable - consenting may be required. Also may need small jetty and pontoon so that ferry does not get stranded at high tide. Amphibious boat or similar could reduce or eliminate the need for structures</p>
<p>Can cope with high sediment loads in Purangi river (propeller driven motors can't and require higher maintenance costs.</p>	<p>May require operator to steer and slow down the boating at the piers at either end depending on final design.</p>
<p>Could be designed to operate without the need for a ferry operator on board or concessions - Likely saving of \$60k a year</p>	<p>Requires a custodian/Council to padlock at nights</p>
<p>Low on-going maintenance costs compared to a motorised ferry - ferry operation approx. \$30k just for maintenance/fuel/oil (excludes staff related costs). Could be a free or gold coin donation service.</p>	<p>Flooding may cause damage. Pontoon and jetty heights need to accommodate appropriate flooding levels.</p>

Provides a continuous un-interrupted crossing - all year around during daylight hours	Maritime safety and health and safety requirements - floats on roof/ life jackets -
Limited visual impact on harbour and Purangi residents compared with boardwalk structures	No recently built examples - one operational in Clutha, and many more overseas.
Much lower consenting costs than large peers, boardwalks. No property requirements other than basic consultation of adjacent land owners	Unmanaged facility may be subject to vandalism or accidental damage.
Potentially safer than propeller ferry, less noise and better facilitates swimmers/users or Purangi and foreshore	Doesn't create any new jobs for the region
Possibly receive NZTA subsidy or funding from other sources e.g. Captain Cook 250 trust.	
Limited visual impact on harbour	
Risks: River mechanics and technology unknown until further investigation work undertaken. Iwi may have interest in laying a chain on the seabed.	

Option Three - Investigation into other options such as motorised boat or kayak operation



Cost
Capital
\$10K - \$200K
Operational
\$\$1k - \$20K+

Pros	Cons
Potential Local employment and economic Development opportunity	Seasonal around peak tourist months - may not provide all year round crossing.
Shorter timeframe to have service up and running. Can be run and managed by others.	Not all tide - Motorised boats with propellers are restricted by high tides.
Ability for Council to ensure meeting defined service through SLA's with company.	Limits users to the walkway as not everyone would use kayak to cross
Small commercial operator could provide a kayak service or similar at low cost and create a unique experience.	High Levels of sediment- major maintenance issues for prop driven boats
Limited visual impact on harbour	Difficult to operate a motorised crossing and predict bookings and pick up times - inconsistencies may make it unfeasible
	May still require structures for loading and unloading
	May have to provide subsidies for operator to extend service - increased costs long term.
Risks: Relies on a commercially practical crossing, and could result in increased subsidy requirements. Will need approval from Stella Evered trust for concessions if required.	

Option Four -Wooden Boardwalk structure and bridges around Purangi



Cost	Pros	Cons
Capital \$600-800 (including consenting costs)	An all tide permanent crossing available	High capital and maintenance costs - flooding could increase maintenance costs substantially.
Operational Costs	A unique attraction in its own right and an added value to the Cathedral Coast Walk	Route takes walkers close to existing houses and may impact on some residents privacy, careful attention to track alignment could mitigate this.
		Uncertain outcome through consenting process - could be long and drawn out in environment court
		Higher visual impact on harbour than other two options
		WRC consenting needed and longer to reach a decision for construction than other options
	Risks: Property and Consenting outcomes unknown - long time frames to gain approval, on-going maintenance costs could be high due to flooding.	

Recommendations and Timing

Crossing the Purangi in some way will complete the longer section of the walkway and connect Whitianga, Cooks beach to Cathedral Cove and Hahei, completing the first stage of a walkway through to Hot Water Beach.

A tide dependant option to cross the Purangi already exists within existing budget and could be completed very quickly with no consenting or property requirement necessary. This option would require a marketing and tourist strategy to ensure clear understanding, and would go hand in hand with a signage to Lees Road Carpark and Hahei entrance car park.

Further investigation is needed to confirm costs for a cable ferry, but this option could provide a viable crossing that is all tide, all seasons, as well as providing a unique experience or destination in its own right. It is possible that future funding for capital expenditure could be accommodated through project contingencies, or possibly through the Captain Cook 250 trust.

Running expressions of interest and/or an RFP process for crossing the Purangi needs to be run con-currently with continuing the cable ferry and other investigations. This process will help to provide a wider range of potential feasible options which have yet to be conceptualised. It is recommended that further investigations be conducted over the coming months to ensure we have a wide range of options for consideration before seeking final approval for the crossing option.

Future stages such as the Boardwalk option should become part of the longer term options to be funded and progressed once all opportunities have been considers.

The table below sets out possible options and timing:

Short Term (6-12 months) Stage One (Within Budget)	Medium Term (12-24 months) Stage Two (Budget possibly could be catered for within contingency)	longer term (24+months) Stage Three (Unbudgeted - subject to funding and further investigations)
Tidal crossing including small amount of track work and signage	Simple Cable ferry crossing - limited mooring structures - lightweight with ramped access to the beach to accommodate tides	\$550-700k boardwalk Purangi Crossing.
Signage/Tourism strategy, parking Bi-law lees Road and design of entrance to Lees Road car park.		Review sustainability of cable ferry or a range the full suite of workable crossing options

Investigate other commercial crossing options (i.e. small boat/kayak etc.		
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The intent would be to undertake the short term Stage one so that it is completed alongside the car park tracks by summer 2017. Should a decision be made on Short terms stage two, the aim would also be to complete this by summer 2017.