



Polhill Reserve track proposals

Have your say

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

Love biking, running, or walking in Polhill Reserve?



Photo: Paul Ward

The Council and Brooklyn Trail Builders are proposing changes to tracks in Polhill Reserve. This includes three new tracks and closing two short track sections. We want to know what you think.

In 2016 we reviewed our Open Space Access Plan. The plan guides the use and management of the capital's more than 340-kilometres of walkways and tracks.

During the review, the Brooklyn Trail Builders (BTB) proposed new trails to improve people's experience in Polhill.

Since then, the Council has carried out a survey to find out who, when, why, and how people use the tracks in Polhill. We received 866 responses to the survey. The results showed 76 percent of people supported separation of walkers/runners and bikers, and 93 percent supported adding another track, or tracks. More than three quarters of people told us they were attracted to Polhill by the level of the tracks on offer (79 percent) and/or its natural environment (77 percent).

Have your say

**Please submit your feedback by 5pm
Monday 3 July 2017**

You can find more information on the proposals and reports, and submit online at: wellington.govt.nz/polhill-consultation

Or come to one of our drop-in sessions

6.30pm-8pm, Wednesday 14 June
RSA room, Brooklyn Community Centre,
18 Harrison Street, Brooklyn

1.15pm-2.45pm, Saturday 17 June
Aro Valley Community Centre,
48 Aro Street, Aro Valley

If you prefer, you can also complete a hard copy form, which you can get from Wellington Central Library, Brooklyn Library, or at Wellington City Council (101 Wakefield Street).

Next steps

- Written submissions close at 5pm on Monday 3 July.
- A final report on the five proposed track changes will be considered by the council's City Strategy Committee in late August, with the Council making a decision in September.

Polhill Reserve

Polhill comprises 70 hectares of the Wellington Town Belt and includes reserve areas known as Polhill Gully Recreation Reserve, Waimapihi Reserve, and George Denton Park.

Polhill has almost 66,000 users annually using the main track in the reserve, with a 50/50 split between bikers and walkers/runners.

Brooklyn Trail Builders (BTB) is a community volunteer group that has been building and maintaining trails, planting trees, and removing rubbish in Polhill for the past decade. BTB works in partnership with the Council and the Polhill Protectors - a group that established and maintains a pest control network in the reserve.

Polhill has important ecological features and values, and is one of two reserves where the endangered saddleback/tīeke bird species has established territories, and currently the only reserve where breeding has been confirmed. The area is close to Zealandia and provides a habitat for several native bird species. The reserve is zoned as a Conservation Site under the District Plan.

The proposals

There are three proposals from the BTB and two proposals from the Council.

Brooklyn Trail Builders' proposals

1 A new 2.5-kilometre mountain bike priority descending trail

This trail would remove descending mountain bikers from the upper two thirds of Transient trail, reducing congestion and improving the experience in both directions for walkers, runners, and uphill mountain bikers. Transient would become a shared track but with uphill riding only. The lower one kilometre of Transient would still be used for downhill by beginner and some intermediate mountain bikers, as Serendipity is for advanced-level riders only.

The Council proposes an alternate option for a small part of this trail at the top of the track below Ashton Fitchett Drive - 1a. It will mean less removal of vegetation and reduced earth works, but a steeper climb onto Ashton Fitchett Drive.

2 A new 350-metre walking-only connector trail from 104 Karepa Street to its connection with Transient

This trail would connect with the existing walking track to provide a seamless walking-only route through the middle of Polhill, connecting upper Brooklyn (and suburban walking tracks) with Aro Street. The track would require the addition of steps and the removal of vegetation. It is, however, 400 metres from another entrance on Ashton Fitchett Drive.

3 A new 350-metre shared-use connector trail from upper Clinical trail to Highbury Fling trail

Bikes climbing the top of the Clinical trail to George Denton Park face a steep climb just before the playground. If they then re-enter Polhill they have to cross a public road for another climb,

leading up to Highbury Fling. This proposed trail would keep bikes within the reserve on a track with an even gradient. However, it would cause some vegetation loss.

Wellington City Council proposals

4 Removing the steep track from Waimapihi Reserve to its connection with Transient

This route is rarely used, is very steep, and would need steps installed to make it useable for walkers. It also doesn't add to the overall network connectivity.

5 Removing the 60-metre Ashton Fitchett Drive steps onto Transient

There is another entrance into Polhill Reserve and Transient next to this track off Ashton Fitchett Drive.

Open Space Access Plan

We reviewed the BTB proposals against the criteria in the Open Space Access Plan. The review raised some issues. In particular:

- The trails would require vegetation removal and the forming of narrow tracks across steep slopes at risk of erosion. The routes would need reviewing by independent track designers before being built.
- The trails could pose a risk to the nesting success of tīeke. If the trails proceed a survey on the effects of the nesting and breeding of tīeke should take place.
- We will need careful design at trail intersections, including good sight lines to reduce speed and ensure people's safety.
- To minimise vegetation removal and overall disturbance to the reserve, the review recommended proposals 2 and 3 not proceed.