
**APPROVAL FOR ELECTRICITY AND FIBRE OPTIC EASEMENTS
THROUGH WELLINGTON TOWN BELT AND RESERVE LAND**

1. Purpose of report

To seek the Committee's approval to grant various underground easements for electricity cable and fibre optic cable under parts of the Wellington Town Belt and other reserve land. Please refer to appendix A and B for the aerial plans showing the easement routes.

2. Executive summary

Wellington Electricity (WE) is upgrading the existing power feed from Central Park substation to the Palm Grove substation with a new 33KV power cable. Due to a high concentration of existing services in narrow Bidwill Street there is insufficient room for WE cables through Bidwill Street so they need to go through Prince of Wales Park instead. Consultation has already occurred with Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and Capacity to ensure there won't be any conflict with the proposed reservoir and associated works on that park. The proposed easements are shown in appendix A as a solid red line.

Transpower is upgrading its telecommunications network (fibre optic cable) that is integral to the operation of the National Grid. They have already installed the Tanera/Central Park fibre optic cable in 2008 and rehabilitated the park land but still need to formalise an easement. The fibre optic cable in Horokiwi Reserve is yet to be installed. The Transpower easement routes are shown in Appendix B.

As the easements are all underground and any installation works will be properly rehabilitated, it will not materially alter the reserve land. In accordance with Section 48(3) of the Reserves Act 1977, a request is made to waive the requirement for public notification.

Consultation with Capacity and GWRC has already been carried out and will avoid any conflict with construction of the proposed Reservoir on Prince of Wales Park. Consultation is still to take place with The Bell Road Restoration Project. Mitigation planting plans will be submitted prior to the easement installation. Transpower will satisfy any conditions that Parks place on these easements.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*

2. *Approve the granting of an electricity easement in perpetuity to Wellington Electricity for a one off payment over part of the Wellington Town Belt (part of part Lot 2 DP 10337 CT WN46D/917) pursuant to the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan 2013 and Section 48 of the Reserves Act 1977 (Prince of Wales Park).*
3. *Approve the granting of an electricity easement of 60 years to Transpower for a one off payment over part of the Wellington Town Belt (part of part Lot 1 DP 10508 CT WN608/49); (part of part Lot 2 DP 10508 CT WN12D/1438) and Reserve at Epuni Street being Part Section 36 Town of Wellington CT 125/25 pursuant to the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan 2013 and Section 48 of the Reserves Act 1977 (Tanera and Central Park and Reserve at Epuni Street).*
4. *Approve the granting of an fibre optic easement of 60 years to Transpower for a one off payment over parts of Horokiwi Reserve being Lot 2 DP 53630 CT WN24C/403); Lot 30 DP 52382 CT WN22C/707); Lot 3 DP 53467 CT WN24C/404) pursuant to Section 48 of the Reserves Act 1977 (Horokiwi Reserve).*
5. *Waive the requirement for public notification under Section 48 (2) of the Reserves Act 1977 in accordance with Section 48(3) of the Reserves Act 1977, as the Town Belt is not likely to be materially altered or permanently damaged and the rights of the public are not likely to be permanently affected by the granting of the easements in 2 to 4 above.*
6. *Waive the requirement for public consultation under the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan as the Town Belt is not likely to be materially altered or permanently damaged and the rights of the public are not likely to be permanently affected by the granting of the easement (and the public is benefitted by way of continued and improved power supply).*
7. *Note that the easements are also subject to resource consent and Parks, Sport and Recreation agreement to all replanting mitigation plans and park management/work plans prior to construction commencing. Notes that Capacity and Greater Wellington Regional Council have approved the easement route beside the Bell Road steps in Prince of Wales Park and the local planting group will be consulted with.*

4. Background

Wellington Electricity (WE) is conducting a major underground cable replacement project, running from the Central Park substation to the Palm Grove substation. This is to replace cabling which is approximately 40 years old and suffers from overloading at peak times and also to provide resilience spare ducting. The average lifespan for cabling is around 50 years. Investigations into the services in narrow Bidwill Street have revealed there is insufficient room to install the 33kV electric cables due to the concentration of other utilities already existing under the road. Therefore it is necessary to request an easement through Prince of Wales (POW) Park beside the Bell Road steps (from Bell Road to Rolleston Street).

Transpower is nearing the end of a nationwide project to update its communications system with fibre optic cable for the operation of the National Grid and are currently working on the route between its Haywards and Glenside Substations. This route has gone through Belmont Regional Park and now needs to go through Horokiwi Reserve on its way to Glenside. In 2008 resource consent was granted and the cabling installed underground through Tanera Park and Central Park (from Epuni Street to Brooklyn Road) as part of the Central Park to Wilton Substation, communications upgrade.

The Wellington Town Belt is managed in accordance with the Town Belt Deed 1873 and Wellington Town Belt Management Plan 2013, and is a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. The Town Belt is zoned Open Space C under the District Plan.

In accordance with the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan and Section 48 of the Reserves Act 1977, the Strategy and Policy Committee has delegated authority to grant landowner approval for easements through the Town Belt.

5. Discussion

The WEL easement for which approval is requested is necessary to complete the 33kV cabling upgrade between the substations at Central Park and Palm Court.

The Transpower underground easements are for fibre optic cable required to improve the communications that operate the National Grid. The Horokiwi Reserve easement is for upgrade between the Haywards and Glenside Substation. The Tanera and Central Park easement was for an upgrade between the Central Park and Wilton Substations. It was installed in 2008 but due to staff changes at Transpower the need to formalise this by easement was only recently noticed.

5.1 Impacts on the Open Space Values of the Proposed Easement

The proposed cabling will be underground, and once laid, the land will be properly remediated by a Council-approved contractor under the supervision of Parks, Sport and Recreation (Parks). It will forevermore be usable by recreational users in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Wellington Town Belt and reserve land.

In consultation with Parks, (and Capacity and GWRC in respect of POW Park) the proposed easement routes (shown in Appendix A) have been agreed as the lowest impact alternative as they avoid mature trees. However, it may transpire that some vegetation may need to be removed. Any removal will be undertaken in agreement with Parks with appropriate mitigation or compensation.

The alternative to going through the Prince of Wales Park is to go through Bidwill Street. This is not possible due to the high concentration of other utilities under this narrow road. The existing electricity cabling under the roads will be left in place and utilised in the event of an emergency or as back up supply.

As the cables will be located below ground there will be no impact on the open space values. Wellington Electricity has engaged the services of a landscape architect who will, in consultation with Parks and the Bell Road Restoration Project, ensure the site is properly rehabilitated after the cables have been laid. Transpower will also ensure Horokiwi Reserve and the Wellington Town Belt are appropriately remediated.

Any maintenance works are to be strictly controlled by the wording of the easement.

5.2 Consultation and Engagement

Relevant policies from the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan around public consultation and the granting of easements for utilities *that are located underground is in terms of Section 48 of the Reserves Act.*

The intention of the Town Belt is to forever provide a public recreation ground for the inhabitants of the City of Wellington. As this easement will not materially alter the Town Belt, nor affect the recreational qualities of the land a request is made to waive the requirement for public notification. This is in accordance with Section 48(3) of the Reserves Act.

The Council has previously agreed to waive public notification under Section 48(3) in situations such as this on Town Belt land where the public benefits derived are greater (enhanced long term electricity supply) than the long term impacts.

Consultation would be carried out as part of the Resource Consent process with local iwi where there is a site of significance to Maori near the easement route,, in any event they will be advised as a matter of courtesy, as will the Friends of Wellington Town Belt. The Bell Road Restoration Project is heavily involved with POW Park planting and will be consulted with.

The Central Government 2010 National Infrastructure Plan raised concerns surrounding regulation and red tape preventing progress leading to its goal of permanently raising New Zealander's living standards. The report goes on to state the importance of electricity input for industrial, commercial and residential users and emphasises the importance in supporting improved economic activity and improved living standards.

The Palm Court to Central Park zone substations feeds the Southern Suburbs of Wellington Electricity network area.

The Transpower fibre optic cable installations will improve National Grid monitoring, switching, fault detection and assist communication with the electricity retail markets.

5.3 Process

If the Committee agrees with the Report's recommendation the following steps will be taken in the process:

- Wellington Electricity and Transpower will apply for resource consent;
- Wellington Electricity and Transpower install the electrical cabling/fibre optic cable and rehabilitate the site to Council's satisfaction; and
- Survey and registration and valuation of the easement (all at Wellington Electricity and Transpower cost).
- One off Betterment payments to be assessed by a registered valuer and negotiated with Wellington Electricity and Transpower.

5.4 Financial Considerations

All costs associated with the preparation and registering and valuation of these easements will be borne by Wellington Electricity and Transpower. Wellington Electricity and Transpower will be responsible for all costs associated with construction, landscaping, mitigation measures and supervision.

5.5 Climate change impacts and considerations

There are no climate change impacts.

5.6 Long-term plan considerations

There are no LTP considerations.

6. Conclusion

The granting of these easements is essential to continuing and improved electrical supply to the Southern suburbs and the better monitoring, fault detection and communication around the National Grid.

These electric and fibre optic cable upgrades between substations and serving the National Grid is consistent with the Council's commitment to maintaining and upgrading city infrastructure. It is also in keeping with Central Government's desire to improve the regulatory environment to facilitate the private sector's investment in infrastructure leading to enhanced economic outcomes.

Consultation has been carried out with Capacity and GWRC to ensure the easement route will not conflict with the new reservoir to be constructed on the Prince of Wales Park. Mitigation planting is to be to the satisfaction of Parks, Sports and Recreation and the Bell Road Restoration Project will be involved in this process.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1) Strategic fit / Strategic outcome

Agreement to the easement will contribute to Council meeting the city's economic objectives.

2) LTP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The projects are fully funded by Wellington Electricity and Transpower.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There is no Treaty of Waitangi considerations.

4) Decision-making

This is not a significant decision. The proposed easements are consistent with the Town Belt Management Plan and the Reserves Act 1977.

5) Consultation

a) General consultation

As the Town Belt and Reserve is not likely to be materially altered or permanently damaged and the rights of the public are not likely to be permanently affected by the granting of the easement. General consultation can be waived by the Committee under section 48 (3) of the Reserves Act 1977.

Capacity and GWRC have been consulted and agreed to the proposed POW Park easement route. The Bell Road Restoration Project will be consulted with prior to and during the installation process and to ensure appropriate mitigation takes place. Parks have been satisfied by Transpower.

b) Consultation with Maori

Local iwi will be consulted with through the resource consent process if there is a site of significance to Maori nearby and have been advised of the easement proposals as a matter of courtesy.

6) Legal implications

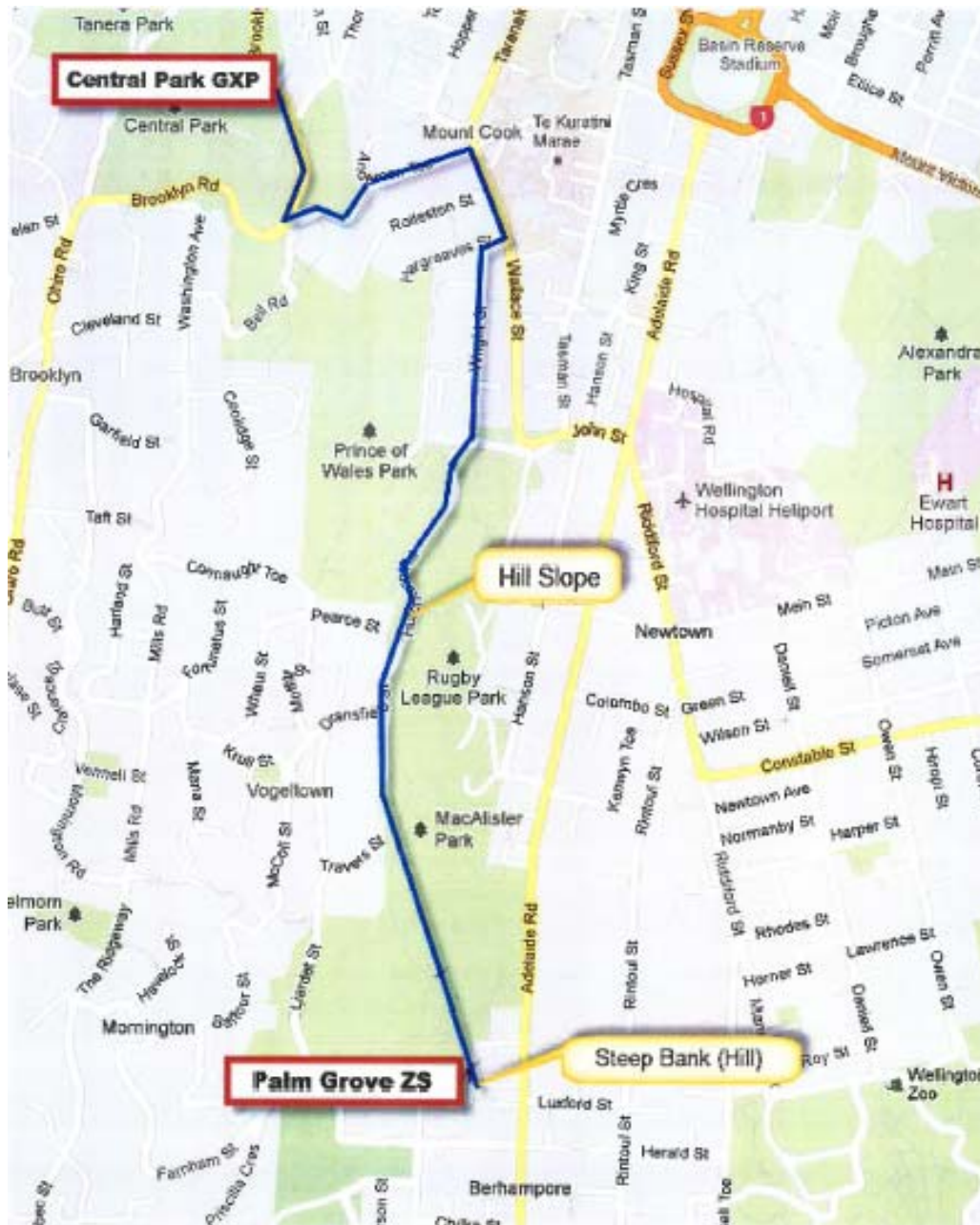
Council's lawyers have been consulted during the development of this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The measures proposed by Wellington Electricity and Transpower are consistent with the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan and Northern Reserves Management Plan.

APPENDIX A

Location Plan of 33kV Cable Replacement Project For the Southern suburbs – Wellington Electricity



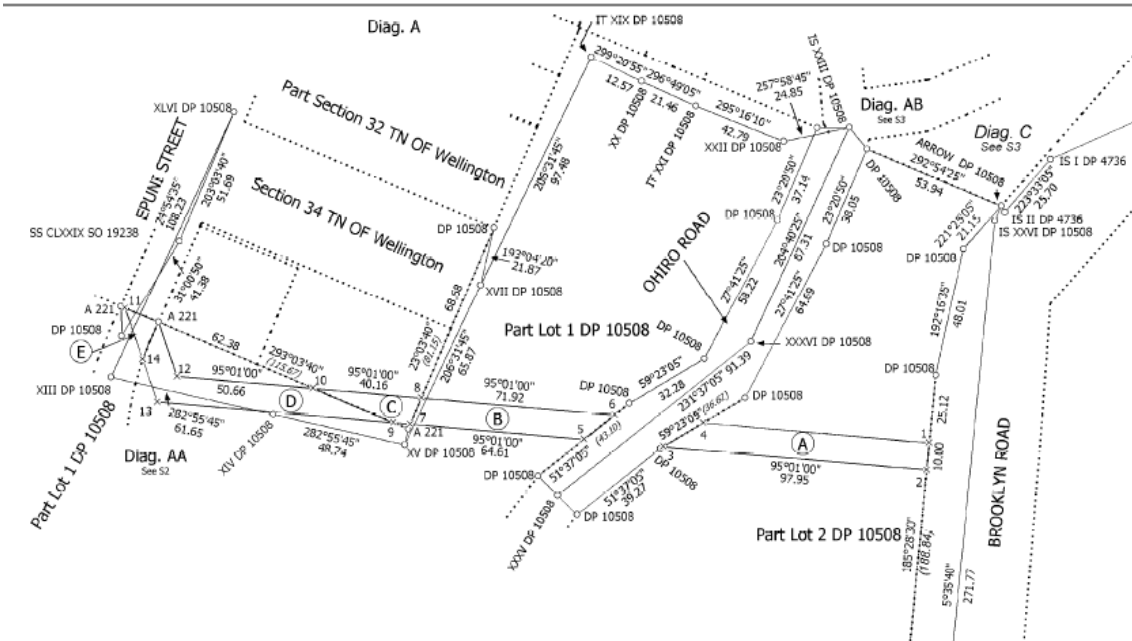
APPENDIX A

Proposed Easement route over Prince of Wales Park shown in red (from Bell Road to Rolleston Street) – Wellington Electricity



APPENDIX B

Proposed Easement route over Tanera/Ohiro Park; Reserve (Epuni St) and Central Park shown in pink dashes (from Epuni Street to Brooklyn Road) - Transpower



APPENDIX B

Proposed Easement route over Horokiwi Reserve shown in red (from Wollaston Way to Horokiwi Road)

