

Petition: Officers' Response

Title: New Mt Victoria Concrete Staircase

Primary Petitioner: Richard Tingey, Levin
Total Signatures: 11 (via ePetition)

Presented by:
Contact officer: Amber Bill
Director responsible: Greg Orchard

Officers' recommendation:

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the petition*
2. *Thank the submitter for his passion and interest in Wellington and the Town Belt*

Background:

The ePetition "New Mt Victoria Concrete Staircase" was initiated by Richard Tingey on 28/11/2013 and closed on 3/3/2014.

The purpose of the petition is to request that the Council provides a concrete staircase, with stainless steel handrails, between Palliser Road and Lookout Road, from the gravel track entry points. Rests seats, with International Peace Symbols, would be on the way. It would be similar to the one between Elphinstone Avenue and Tannadyce Street, in Strathmore Park. It would bypass very steep paths.

The petition was open to all members of the public with internet access to the Council's website. It received 11 signatures.

Further clarification of the location and purpose of the staircase was requested from the submitter who confirms that his idea is for the staircase to run close and parallel to the right hand side boundary line of Town Belt between Palliser Road and Lookout Road. The submitter suggests that this would shorten the route to the Lookout. The staircase would have a speed emphasis, compared to the scenic current walking route. The submitter suggests that users would be fit ocean cruise liner tourists, lunchtime runners, busy mothers and retired folk could enjoy a summit view, more often, to blend in with their busy routines. Lunch hour joggers could reach the summit from Oriental bay with time to spare, before resuming office work, after a shower, via the suggested staircase.

Officers' response:

There are a number of existing options to take walkers and runners to the Mt Victoria Lookout. The shortest route is a track created for the World Mountain Running Championships (held a number of years ago). The route people are encouraged to take (via on site signage) is a combination of the Southern Walkway and the Lookout Walkway. This is less steep and meets the NZ Standard of 'walking track' classification.

Concrete steps are not in keeping with a reserve setting, where the preference is to use natural surfaces which align with recreational user expectations, providing an experience in keeping with the natural reserve setting of this part of the Town Belt. Natural surfacing is also preferred from a maintenance perspective, in particular for managing tree roots.

A flight of stairs here would also be very long and steep which is not in keeping with contemporary standards of trail building methodology – particularly if an alternative alignment exists. Rough measurements show that these would be approximately 152 metres long and climb 75 m in altitude (Elphinstone Ave/Tannadyce Street is around 95 metres long and climbs 36 m in altitude). In addition these would be costly to build and maintain. A conservative estimate is that these would cost \$200,000 to build (excluding additional work around seating and art work). In addition, consideration would need to be given to lighting, drainage and maintenance (maintenance cost for concrete step is \$216 per step).

On the whole, Officer's do not recommend creating a new concrete staircase at this location for the following reasons: there are alternative and less steep tracks available to get people from Palliser Road

to the Mt Victoria Lookout; a concrete staircase is not appropriate across this part of the Town Belt where people expect a more natural and recreational experience, the proposal would be very costly to build and maintain, there is no budget available for this project and it would not be a priority for expenditure.