

REPORT 2  
(1215/52IM)

APPROVAL FOR ELECTRICITY EASEMENTS THROUGH TOWN  
BELT – MACALISTER AND NAIRN STREET PARKS

**1. Purpose of report**

To seek the Committee's approval to grant an easement for an underground electricity cable under part of the Wellington Town Belt at Macalister Park and Nairn Park (between Palm Court and Central Park substations). Please refer to appendix A and B for the aerial plans.

**2. Executive summary**

Wellington Electricity Lines Limited is upgrading the existing power feed from Central Park substation to the Palm Grove substation with a new 33KV power cable. The existing cabling is approximately 40 years old and suffering overloading. The existing cables run through Adelaide Road, John Street, Wallace Street, Bidwill Street and Brooklyn Road. Their replacement in Adelaide Road, John and Wallace Streets would result in considerable traffic interruption and traffic management issues.

The proposed easements are shown in appendix B as a solid blue line across Macalister Park (from Palm Court to Finnimore Terrace) and a thick red line through a very small portion of Nairn Street Park between Brooklyn Road and Bidwill Street. As this easement is 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.

**3. Recommendations**

Officers recommend that the Strategy and policy Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Approve the granting of an electricity easement in perpetuity for a one off payment over parts of the Wellington Town Belt (**part of** part Lot 1 DP 10397 CT WN46D/915) and (**part of** part Lot 4 DP 10508 CT WN12D/1438), pursuant to the Town Belt Management Plan 2013 and Section 48 of the Reserves Act 1977.*
- 3. Agree to 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 easement.*

4. *Agree to Waive the requirement for public consultation under the 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).*
5. *Note that the easements are also subject to resource consent and providing Parks, Sport and Recreation with replanting mitigation plans and park management/work plans prior to commencing construction.*

#### **4. Background**

Wellington Electricity supplies electricity to approximately 160,000 distribution customers in Wellington, and to the Porirua and Hutt Valley regions. It 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 was which is approximately 40 years old which suffers from overloading at peak times and also to provide resilience spare ducting. The average lifespan for cabling is around 50 years.

The existing cables pass through the Adelaide Road, John Street, Wallace Street, Bidwill Street and Brooklyn Road predominantly main thoroughfares between Southern suburbs and the City. Installation along Adelaide Road, John Street and Wallace Street would result in considerable traffic interruptions that would have community wide disruptions, with significant traffic management planning issues. There are already traffic management issues to Southern suburbs due to works on the Buckle Street underpass, next to the National War Memorial, and the closure of Tasman Street at its intersection.

The Town Belt is managed in accordance with the Town Belt Deed 1873 and 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 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 easement for which approval is requested is necessary to complete the 33kV cabling upgrade between the substations at Central Park and Palm Court.

##### **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 Town Belt.

In consultation with Parks, the proposed routes (shown in Appendix A and B) has been agreed as the lowest impact alternative as it avoids all mature trees of interest. However, it may transpire that one or two pines situated near the top of

the slope (from the path leading up from Palm Court) that may need to be removed. Any removal will be done in agreement with Parks with an appropriate mitigation or compensation.

The alternative to going through the Town Belt Route is to go through the Adelaide Road, John Street and Wallace Street and this will cause significant traffic disruption. There have been significant road works along Adelaide Road in the past two years which caused disruption at the John Street and Adelaide Road intersection. 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 would be located below ground there will be no impacts on the open space values. Wellington Electricity has engaged the services of a landscape architect who will, in consultation with Parks, ensure the site is properly rehabilitated after the cables have been laid.

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 reserve land, 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 great (enhanced long term electricity supply) and long term impacts are immaterial.

Consultation will be carried out as part of the Resource Consent process with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, and the Friends of Wellington Town Belt have been advised of the easement application.

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.

## **5.3 Process**

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

- Wellington Electricity has applied for resource consent;
- Wellington Electricity to install the electrical cabling and rehabilitate the site to Council's satisfaction; and
- Survey and registration and valuation of the easement (at Wellington Electricity's cost).
- One off Betterment payment to be assessed by a registered valuer and negotiated with Wellington Electricity.

#### **5.4 Financial Considerations**

All costs associated with the preparation and registering and valuation of this easement will be borne by Wellington Electricity. Wellington Electricity 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 climate change impacts.

### **6. Conclusion**

The granting of these easements is essential to continuing and improved electrical supply to the Southern suburbs. This 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.

In addition these easements will avoid disruption to traffic and communities, now and in the future, on major arterial routes that have already experienced delays. It is also possible that another easement request will be made in the near future across Prince of Wales Park if Bidwill Street is impassable due to concentration of other utilities on this very narrow street.

Contact Officer: *John Vriens, Senior Property Advisor*

## 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 project is fully funded by Wellington Electricity.*

### 3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

*There are no Treaty of Waitangi considerations.*

### 4) Decision-making

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

### 5) Consultation

#### a) General consultation

*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. General consultation can be waived by the Committee under section 48 (3) of the Reserves Act 1977.*

#### 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.*

### 6) Legal implications

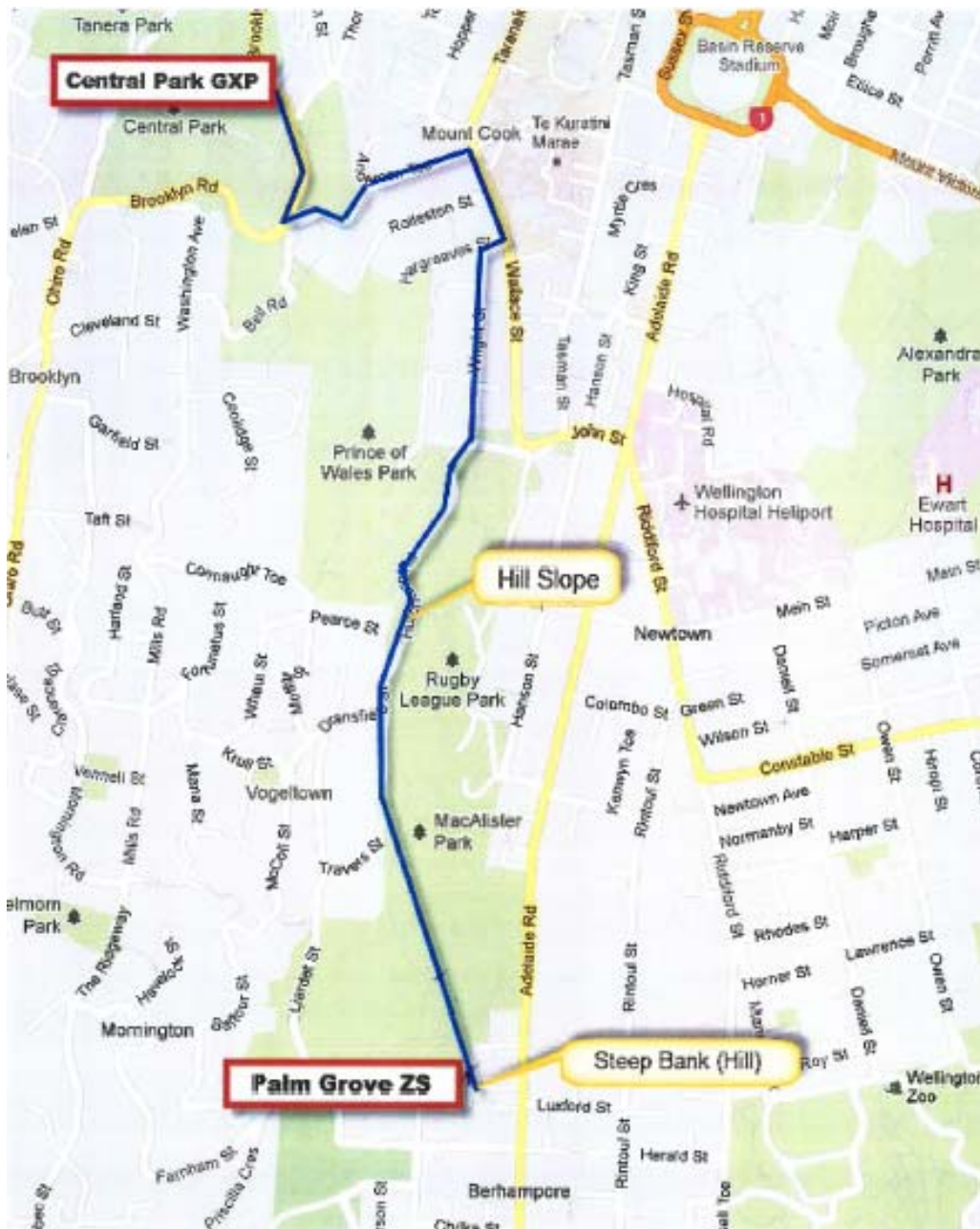
*Council's lawyers have been consulted during the development of this report.*

### 7) Consistency with existing policy

*The measures proposed by Wellington Electricity are consistent with the Town Belt Management Plan.*

# Appendix A

## Location Plan of 33kV Cable Replacement Project





# Appendix B

## Proposed Easements Primary Option Macalister Park





# Appendix B

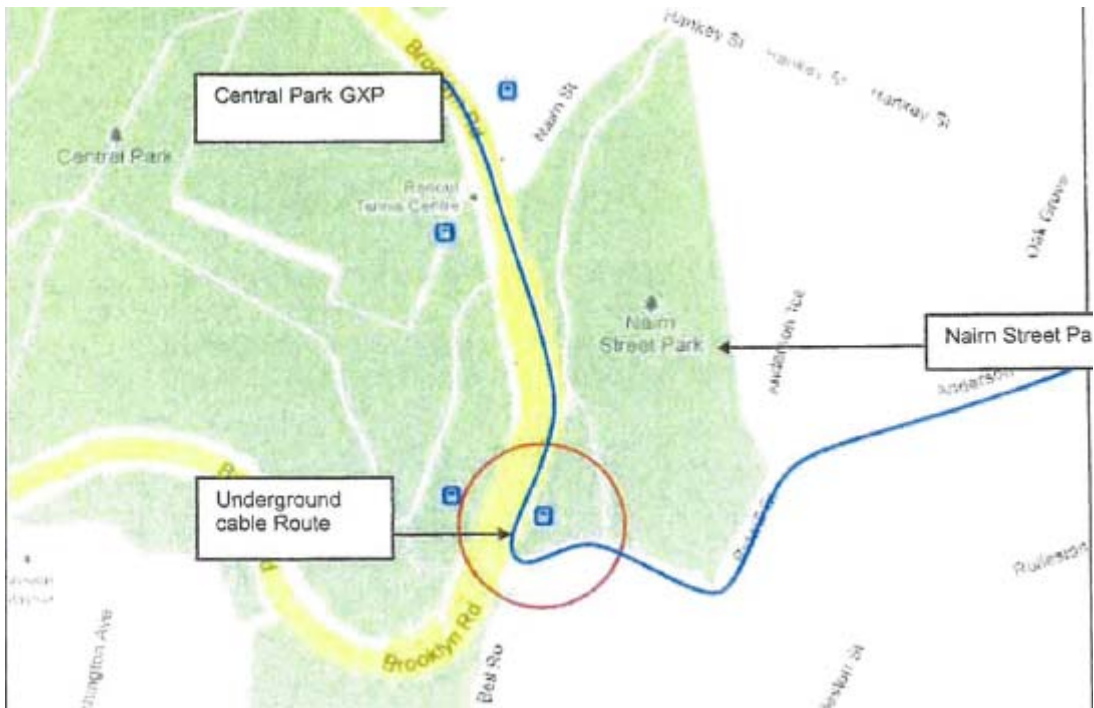
## Proposed Easements Secondary Option Macalister Park





# Appendix B

## Proposed Easements Nairn Street Park – Brooklyn Road to Bidwill Street



*This report is officer advice only. Refer to minutes of the meeting for decision.*

# Appendix B

## Proposed Easements Nairn Street Park – Brooklyn Road to Bidwill Street

