



Alexa Place, Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace walkways

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The Whanganui District Council is considering permanently closing Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace walkways and doing repair work on Alexa Place walkway, which is currently closed, in order to keep it open. These three walkways connect St Johns Hill with the city.

It is timely to consider the future viability of these walkways, particularly when there are a number of alternative routes to get to and from St Johns Hill from the base of the hill. The alternative routes include the NZTA shared pathway, the Victoria Park walkway, Hillside Terrace (Christies Hill walkway), 'Ghost Track A' and 'Ghost Track B' (semi-paved tracks maintained by the Council).

Analysis of options

Option 1: Continue to maintain all walkways: Alexa Place, Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace

This option would mean that the Council continues to maintain Alexa Place, Smart Terrace, and Burnett Terrace.

The walkways are within St Johns Hill greenbelt area and allow various options and circuits for people who use them for recreational purposes. It is expected that there will be further slips on all of these walkways in the future. From a walking perspective they can become quite treacherous and are difficult to maintain. Access for equipment to do repair work, bring in materials or take away slippage is difficult and costly.

Benefits:

- More walkways opened can be considered as promoting connectivity and providing additional travel options for commuters

Disadvantages:

- Council funds can be more efficiently used elsewhere
- Ongoing slips are likely to add to maintenance costs
- Continuing to maintain Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace walkways may put commuters at risk, especially during winter

Option 2: Close Smart Terrace, Burnett Terrace and Alexa Place walkways

This option would mean that the Council will close Alexa Place, Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace.

There are a number of alternatives for people to get to St Johns Hill from the Peat Street area, including 'Ghost Track A' and 'Ghost Track B', Christies Hill and the NZTA shared pathway. Funding could be focused to ensure the remaining walkways are kept to a better standard.

Benefits:

- This is the most cost effective option
- It prevents health and safety risks to commuters
- Funding can be concentrated on remaining and nearby walkways
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that some people enjoy the challenge presented by these walkways for cycle training, so it is also an option that until the walkways deteriorate to such an extent that the risk is too great, they could be identified as cycle tracks only and signposted as such

Disadvantages:

- Closing all three walkways will reduce connectivity between St Johns Hill and the city

Option 3: Close the Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace walkways and repair only Alexa Place walkway

This option would mean that the Council will close Smart Terrace and Burnett Terrace walkways and will repair only Alexa Place walkway.

There has already been significant investment in maintenance of the Alexa Place walkway since repair work was approved by the Council in May 2013. Alexa Place is not as steep as Smart Terrace and therefore is more user-friendly from a walker's perspective. It is also closer to Christies Hill to provide a loop option for walkers exercising in the area.

Benefits:

- Maintains a connection to Christies Hill and provides a loop for walkers
- Alexa Place has a lower gradient than Smart Terrace
- Closing Burnett Terrace and Smart Terrace prevents health and safety risks to commuters
- Funding can be focused on remaining walkways

Disadvantages

- Some connection to the city will be lost, but not as much as in option 2