

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Living Streets North Shore A Walking Action Group / Branch of Living Streets Aotearoa

### Submission on the Ngataranga Park, Devonport Draft Development Plan – May 2010

#### Background

Living Streets Aotearoa is a national organisation with a vision of

***More people choosing to walk more often.***

The objectives of Living Streets are:

- To promote walking as a healthy, accessible, cheap, sociable and environmentally-friendly means of transport and recreation.
- To promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities.
- To work for walking-friendly communities with improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners.
- To advocate for greater representation of walker and pedestrian concerns in land use and transport planning and urban design.
- To raise the profile of walking through education, debate, campaigns, publications, seminars and conferences.
- To foster consideration for people with special mobility needs.

Living Streets North Shore is the North Shore based walking action group / branch of Living Streets Aotearoa, which is working to make all areas of North Shore City more walking-friendly.

Living Streets North Shore represents a group of people from community, transport, health, recreation and other sectors of North Shore supported by Living Streets Aotearoa to advocate for better walking infrastructure and policies and for the needs of those using the pedestrian facilities of the city.

For more information, please see: [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## Key Points

Living Streets North Shore supports;

- Improved walking/cycling access at the park's three entry points; SW (Victoria Rd), NE (Lake Rd) and SE (Lake Rd) entrance points. The proposals related to this plan need to be strengthened to achieve this.
- The future development of a boardwalk linking the park to Jim Titchener Parade.
- Improvements to the coastal walkway provided its natural ambience is maintained.

Living Streets North Shore does not support:

- The relocation of the upper walking/cycling route.
- The relocation of the skateboard park (unless a new facility is built first and relocation is supported by young people who use the facility).
- A children's playground in the proposed location.

## Introduction

Living Streets North Shore (Living Streets) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this draft development plan.

Living Streets supports the vision for the park (2.1) however we do not agree with all the design responses proposed to active this.

## Water Edge / Ecology

Coastal viewing platforms and interpretive signage would offer enhanced enjoyment of the coastal walkway and educational opportunities along the coastal route. While we support enhancements which are sympathetic to the natural environment (which has notably been achieved in areas such as Abel Tasman park), we note that many people value this part of the walk for its natural unspoilt feel and sense of isolation from urban intrusion:

*"One of the things I like about the reserve is the sense (when using the bottom path) of being in the bush and out of the city, much like the bush walks done when camping as a youngster. Good in summer too as the trees provide shade for walkers using the path and a haven for birds including Tui."* Quote from one of our members.

We believe the current location of the main (upper) walking/cycling route suits its users well. These include people wishing to enjoy the open vistas afforded by its elevation, those who wish to take the most direct route across the park and those who feel safer using the open route rather than the lower, more secluded coastal route. We do not believe there is any need for this well established and well used route to be relocated.

It should be noted that this walking/cycling route across the park is part of the 6 km plus, mostly off-road network linking the Devonport, Bayswater, Hauraki and Takapuna communities, known as the Green Route. The Council, community groups and walking and cycling groups have invested considerable resources, time and energy into creating, maintaining, enhancing and promoting this route. The cost and disruption caused by

relocating this route would need to be carefully considered. We believe it cannot be justified at this time.

A boardwalk connection to Jim Titchener Parade would provide a valuable link for Stanley Bay residents wishing to access the park, and would offer that area an additional link into the Green Route.

### **Gateway Experience / Memorial Drive**

Living Streets recognises the significance of Memorial Drive. We believe any development to highlight this section of the park should meet with the expectations of the RSA and other relevant stakeholders. However the concept of a “gateway” may not be entirely appropriate.

Our primary interest would be to see a better designed entrance / access point into the park at the northern Lake Rd entrance for walkers and cyclists. The present narrow boardwalk entrance needs to be widened to better accommodate walkers and cyclists entering the park at this point. This is a key access point on the Green Route. The possibility of creating connections with Polly’s Park and the informal route through the former Wakakura Crescent also need to be considered when developing detailed plans for this area.

### **Park Amenities**

Living Streets recognises the need to provide for some car parking and a new access road on this site. However Living Streets believes communities should be encouraged to access neighbourhood parks such as this by foot or cycle. Provision of an extensive car park could send the wrong message at this site. Access in and out of the car park would be difficult considering the heavy traffic volumes on Lake Road, particularly at the weekend. Provision of some disabled parking so that less able visitors can access the park should be considered. There should also be provision for disabled parking at the end of Victoria Rd so that less able visitors can access the southern entrance to the park.

The pedestrian connection from the northern edge of the commercial area needs to be much improved, including paving any paths to enable access during the wetter months.

Living Streets believes that the skateboard park should remain in its current location. This location serves the young people of Devonport well. Its elevated location ensures it is overlooked by those using the walking/cycling route. If engineering works are required to stabilise the ground in its current location, this work should be carried out in preference to the much greater expense of relocating the skateboard park.

If it is determined that relocation is essential for engineering or ecological reasons, young people, especially those who currently use the facility must be consulted as to the best location and design of a new facility. If a decision to relocate the skateboard park is made, we believe a new skateboard park must be built before the old one is demolished. Otherwise there is a real risk that this valued amenity may not be reinstated.

A toilet block and seating, including picnic tables, appropriately located in the park would be desirable additional amenities. It has been noted that there are very few such amenities in

this park and indeed along the entire length of the Green Route. (The only public toilets on the route are in Bayswater Park). When installing such amenities, accessibility issues must be taken into consideration<sup>1</sup>.

A children's playground may be a desirable facility in the park, however it is not clear whether the proposed location would be the best one. It may be better to locate it adjacent to the walking/cycling route in a sunny location. We believe families in the area should be consulted on whether a playground is required and where it would be best located.

## **Open Space**

We do not agree that there is a need to relocate the skateboard park and walking/cycling route to create a more "open space". The park already offers a feeling of openness and people are free to wander from the designated paths if they choose. It should be noted that this grassed area becomes very wet in winter. Thus the walking/ cycling route provides a valuable route for activities such as dog walking or casual strolling in winter, while in drier weather, people are able to stroll wherever they choose.

## **Provision for pedestrians**

The extent of the proposed improvements for pedestrians along Memorial Drive are not clear from this plan. While wider footpaths on Memorial Drive would be desirable, the plan needs to indicate more clearly whether this is proposed as a pedestrian only or shared walking/cycle path. If it is to be a shared path, it should be at the recommended width for a promenade style path given the nature of this site<sup>2</sup> Whether there is sufficient space for this without disturbing the tree plantings is questioned.

There is little detailed consideration of how to improve the NE access to the park for pedestrians and cyclists. Nor is there sufficient consideration of improving the SW and SE access points from Victoria Rd and Lake Rd respectively. At the Victoria Rd entrance, improved alignment of the walking/cycling facilities leading to the park is needed. At the NE park entrance improved shared walking/cycling access is needed.

## **Conclusion**

Living Streets North Shore is concerned that the proposed development plan for Ngataringa Park includes the unnecessary relocation of the walking/cycling route and skateboard park.

We recognise the need to do some work to enhance vehicle access and parking on the site, however we believe Improved pedestrian/cycling access at all entrance points should be the priority.

This submission indicates that Living Streets North Shore would like to be considered a stakeholder in any future development consultation and processes in this area, particularly in relation to the provision of quality infrastructure for pedestrians.

We would be happy to speak to this submission should the opportunity arise. If you would like further clarification of any issues raised in this submission, please contact the Convenor of Living Streets North Shore.

## References

1. Erica Laws & Associates (2010). Assessing Accessibility of Walk Routes on Urban Parks and Streets. Study undertaken for North Shore City Council Transport and Parks departments.
2. Land Transport New Zealand (2008). Pedestrian planning and design guide. Wellington: Land Transport New Zealand. Online at: <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/pedestrian-planning-guide/>

## Contact

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