

Planners Report 15A
a)Variation 1: Lifestyle Zones and Minden
Structure Plan Area

Lifestyle Section – Activity Performance
Standards
Walkway and Bridleway Widths

b)Development Code – Design and development
standards for Walkways and Bridleways

1.0 Background

- 1.1** This report replaces Report 15 that was submitted in March 2011.
- 1.2** This report deals only with submission points on the proposed widths for walkways (7m), bridleways (10m) and shared bridleways (15m) and no other aspect of this concept.
- 1.3** There is a direct relation between the widths for walkways and bridleways included in the Plan and the design and development standards for these walkways and bridleways that are included in the Development Code. The resolution on this issue will flow directly into Section 4 of the Development Code.
- 1.4** As these widths are also used in part to determine the area of land required to be vested in Council in return for bonus subdivision opportunities, the recommendations in this report will have a direct relationship to those in a subsequent report for Walkway and Equestrian Lot Entitlements.

2.0 Issues

- 2.1** Eleven submission points were received requesting amendments to the activity performance standards for walkway and bridleway widths. Two further submission points were received on this topic.
- 2.2** The main issues raised by submitters can be summarised as follows:
 - 2.2.1** Most of the submitters feel that the walkway and bridleway widths are too excessive. Suggestions for walkways range between 2m - 5m while suggestions for bridleways range between 4m - 10m. The width of shared bridleways can also be reduced by reducing the widths of the separation strip and verge.

- 2.2.2** Reasons such as cost, maintenance and disruption to existing activities have been specifically stated.
- 2.2.3** Submitters are of the opinion that the notified rules regarding the widths for walkways and bridleways are too rigid and advocates for more flexibility under certain circumstances. The following were included by submitters:
- a) DOC has requested that the widths should be able to be reduced to protect ecological features.
 - b) Where the topography is of such a nature that a reduced width can be considered.
 - c) The width should decrease if permeable fencing is used.
 - d) Where the users will feel safe with a reduced width.
 - e) Where amenity value of the proposed walkway or bridleway is not sacrificed.
 - f) Where the required width has a significant affect on productive land.
- 2.2.4** Cycleway widths are not provided for even though cycleways are mentioned in the explanatory statement.

3.0 Options

3.1 Option 1

- 3.1.1** Retain walkway and bridleway widths as notified.

3.2 Option 2

- 3.2.1** Reduce (fixed) walkway and bridleways widths;

- For walkways - as narrow as 2m;
- For bridleways - as narrow as 4m;
- For shared walkways/bridleways - as narrow as 10m.

3.3 Option 3

- 3.3.1** Allow for reduction of walkway and bridleway widths under the following circumstances;

- To protect ecological features;
- To follow natural topography;
- Where a lesser width can still provide a "visually safe feeling";
- Where permeable fencing is provided;
- Where productive land is affected significantly;

- The development of the tracks are consistent with the New Zealand Handbook for tracks and outdoor visitor structures – SNZ HB 8630:2004

3.4 Option 4

3.4.1 Add cycleway widths.

4.0 Advantages and Disadvantages

4.1 Option 1: Retain walkway and bridleway widths.	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate reserve width to construct path and avoid large trees and topographical constraints. • Limited conflict between different user groups. • High recreational value. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform widths do not respond to site constraints and opportunities that may allow for reductions. • Current widths take substantial areas of land from landowners without taking the above into account. • Having widths that are deemed excessive will discourage landowners from giving this land and taking advantage of the “bonus lot” provisions. • High costs and maintenance. • Disruption to existing land use activities.

4.2 Option 2: Reduce walkway and bridleways widths;	
<p>For walkways, as narrow as 2m; For bridleways, as narrow as 4m.; For shared walkways/bridleways as narrow as 10m.</p>	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases the width as included in the notified version of the Plan might be too excessive and not required. • Reducing widths encourages landowners to more readily provide these features under the “bonus lot” provisions. • Also requires less land to be vested by landowners, therefore less disruption of existing land use and other development opportunities. • Less maintenance costs. • Less disruption to existing land use activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recreational value of the tracks are compromised and as a result not used. • Reducing walkway widths below 7m is inconsistent with Development Code widths, which have taken into account the principles of CPTED. • Reducing bridleways below 7m may also be inconsistent with this. • The hilly topography may complicate construction works in a reduced width. • An increased width will increase conflict between user groups.

4.3 Option 3: Allow for reduction of walkway and bridleway widths under the following circumstances;

- **To protect ecological features;**
- **To follow natural topography;**
- **Where a lesser width can still provide a “visually safe feeling”;**
- **Where permeable fencing is provided;**
- **Where productive land is significantly affected;**
- **The development of the tracks are consistent with the New Zealand Handbook for tracks and outdoor visitor structures – SNZ HB 8630:2004**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of significant ecological features. • The fixed widths may not always be necessary and narrower widths may be appropriate in many cases. This provides more flexibility. • Avoids any unnecessary vesting of land where narrower widths may actually be a better solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves widths negotiable without setting a clear standard. • Can complicate the consenting process.

4.4 Option 4: Add cycleway widths.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is assumed that cyclists will use walkways (e.g. is not prohibited) therefore adding the word “cycleways” to walkways would be appropriate as it reflects the current understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None

5.0 Discussion

5.1 General

5.1.1 Three basic options have been presented with regard to the walkway and bridleway widths. Option 1 is to retain the fixed widths but this is largely opposed. Option 2 is to reduce these fixed widths, which is favoured by most submitters. Option 3, to allow these widths to be reduced under certain circumstances, has been suggested by a smaller number of submitters.

5.1.2 It is important to note that the width referred to in this report relates to the width of the walkway/cycleway and bridleway reserve and not just the formed path, which may only be 1.5m – 2.5m wide.

5.2 Option 1 – Retaining the proposed fixed widths

- 5.2.1** Option 1 would see widths retained at 7m for walkways, 10m for bridleways and 15m for shared walkways/bridleways.
- 5.2.2** The proposed minimum width of 7m for walkways was chosen to be consistent with the minimum width for shared pedestrian and cycle paths under Council's Development Code (W449). If Council wishes to remain consistent with the Development Code, the 7m width should be retained. The existing standards are consistent with CPTED principles (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design).
- 5.2.3** The proposed widths for bridleways on the other hand have been newly introduced. They intend to provide a safe environment for horse users and walkers/cyclists sharing the bridleways by separating those uses from each other and providing a further clear zone from other land uses. They also intend to provide for a high amenity and open space environment including space for the planting of trees and other plants. Both goals are assured by the larger widths.
- 5.2.4** The larger minimum widths however have raised other issues, most notably the lack of incentive for landowners to vest these features, the lack of flexibility afforded, and the prospect of vesting more land than may actually be required to bring the vision together.
- 5.2.5** However, Rule 16A.6.1 'Restricted Discretionary Activities – non compliance with Activity Performance Standards' stipulates that Council will limit its discretion to the effects of the non-compliance. This implies that widths can be reduced through the resource consent process (which is in principle the same as Option 3). Currently no matters of discretion have been included in 16A.6.1. for reduced widths, which will complicate the consenting process.
- 5.2.6** Some submitters have suggested criteria that can be included as matters of discretion under 16A.6.1. These will be discussed in Option 3.

5.3 Option 2 – Reducing the proposed fixed widths

- 5.3.1** As discussed above, the minimum width for walkways is recommended to stay at 7m for consistency with the Development Code. Bridleways and shared bridleways may be reduced to a width that accommodate concerns of some submitters to encourage development.
- 5.3.2** Advice given to Council by the designer is that shared bridleways (currently 15m) can be reduced to a minimum of 8m; allowing 2m for the bridleway and 1.5m for a walkway, a 1.5m - 2m

separation between uses, and 1 - 2m clear zone between the formed paths and boundaries. Purpose bridleways (currently 10m) can be reduced to a bare minimum of 5m, allowing 2m for the formed bridleway width and 1.5m either side for the formed path.

5.3.3 A trail designer is of the opinion that the proposed width reductions are a significant compromise and still have concerns that this will narrow sight-lines, affecting safety as walkers, cyclists and horses cannot see each other. It may also put horses on edge.

5.3.4 It has to be noted that although it might seem that a reduced width will be cheaper to develop and maintain, it could actually be the opposite. Because of the undulated topography of the Minden, a reduced width might require the construction of retaining walls as the width restrictions constrains the forming of a path.

5.3.5 Council staff are confident that by reducing the width of the verge and separation strip, a shared bridleway can be accommodated in a 7m wide reserve.

5.3.6 In general, horses, pedestrians and cyclists are not accommodated on the same formed path. Paths shared by horses and pedestrians/cyclists have to be maintained more frequently ensure that formed path is smooth for pedestrians and cyclists.

5.3.7 Currently there are no rules on the height and permeability of fences and hedge. With a reduced width, Council might want to consider activity performance standards on fences and hedges along proposed walkways and bridleways, as suggested by Submitter 20 and 73.

5.3.8 The proposed walk/cycleways and bridleways are for both recreation and connectivity and it is important that a reduced width should not compromise on quality or recreational value, which may result in low user numbers.

5.4 Option 3 – Allow widths to be reduced in certain characteristics

5.4.1 This option is mainly complementary to Option 1 and will be less advantageous if the widths are reduced to 7m as suggested above in Option 2, as the restrictions would have already been tightened. There may however be scenarios where a further reduction in width may be required.

5.4.2 As indicated in Option 1, the current rules already allow for a reduction in width as a Restricted Discretionary Activity, but no specific matters were included in 16A.6.1. Currently the matters

of discretion are limited to the relevant objectives and policies, which may not be sufficient.

5.4.3 Submitters proposed that the following criteria be included as matters of discretion under 16A.6.1 where walkways/cycleways or bridleways do not meet 16A.4.1(h) 'Standards for Walkways and Bridleways in the Minden Lifestyle Structure Plan area:'

- a) Connectivity throughout the structure plan area is not compromised for the various user groups.
- b) Where the topography allows for the construction of a more cost-efficient walkway or bridleway in a reduced width and quality, safety and amenity are not compromised.
- c) Ecological features or other prominent areas of indigenous vegetation, which contribute to the zones wider amenity, are protected.
- d) Where the risks of erosion and water pollution are not increased.
- e) Where visual permeable fences are provided. To make this more measurable, staff propose that 'visual permeability' be refined to read as follow: "Where a hedge or fence exists closer than 4m from the centre line of the walkways/cycleways or bridleways, the height be restricted to 1.2m above natural ground level, or where the portion of the fence that is higher than 1.2m has a visual permeability of at least 60%."
- f) Where safe sightlines can be achieved.
- g) Where productive land is significantly affected.
- h) The development of the tracks are consistent with the New Zealand Handbook for tracks and outdoor visitor structures – SNZ HB 8630:2004.

5.5 Option 4 – Include Cycleways

5.5.1 The walkways are effectively walkways/cycleways as they will be used for both purposes. This was not explicitly stated but should be corrected to do so.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 Rule 16A.4.1(h) of the District Plan and Section 4 of the Development Code (including relevant diagrams), be updated to reflect the following:

6.1.1 That the minimum width of all walkways/cycleways be retained at 7m with the minimum width of the formed path being 1.5m and a clear zone of 1.5m on both sides of the formed path.

6.1.2 That the minimum width of bridleways (unshared) be reduced from 10m to 7m with the minimum width of the formed path being 2m and a clear zone of at least 1.5m on both sides of the formed path.

6.1.3 That the minimum width of shared bridleways be reduced from 15m to 7m with the minimum width of the:

- a) formed walkway path being 1.5m;
- b) formed bridleway path being 2m;
- c) separation strip between the walkway and bridleway with a minimum width of 1.0m;
- d) clear zone with a minimum width of 1m between the paths and the boundary.

6.2 That the following be added to 16A.6.1 Restricted Discretionary Activities – Non Compliance with Activity Performance Standards

Where the minimum width, as stipulated in 16A.4.1(h) cannot be achieved, the minimum width may be reduced to 5m for walkway/cycleway and bridleway (unshared), where:

- a) Connectivity throughout the Structure Plan area is not compromised for the various user groups.
- b) The topography allows for the construction of a more cost-efficient walkway or bridleway in a reduced width and quality, safety and amenity are not compromised.
- c) Ecological features or other prominent areas of indigenous vegetation, which contribute to the zones wider amenity, are protected.
- d) The risks of erosion and water pollution are not increased.
- e) A hedge, fence or retaining wall exists closer than 4m from the centre line of the walkways/cycleways or bridleways and does not exceed a height of 1.2m above natural ground level.
- f) Where a fence exceeds 1.2m, the portion above 1.2m has a visual permeability of at least 60%.
- g) Safe sightlines can be achieved.
- h) Productive land is significantly affected.
- i) The development of the tracks are consistent with the New Zealand Handbook for tracks and outdoor visitor structures – SNZ HB 8630:2004.

6.3 That walkways are renamed as “walkways/cycleways”.

6.4 The following submissions on Variation 1 of the Plan are therefore:

6.5 Accepted

Submission	Point Number	Name
14	6	Department of Conservation (BOP)

6.6 Accepted in Part

Submission	Point Number	Name
39	4	Ainsworth Farm Trust
38	15	Gravit, Jo
FS 88	26	Hatton, GW and M Supports 46.7
73	1	Hume, Cushla

20	1	Hume, Nick
46	7	Purves, D & S
49	29	Surveying Services Ltd
27	3	Walpole, Erica

6.7 Rejected

Submission	Point Number	Name
29	11	Cobb, Ray & Michelle
FS 88	34	Hatton, GW and M Supports 46.7
56	2	Phipps, Nathan
61	1	Walpole, Bruce

6.8 The following submissions on the amendment to the Development Code are therefore:

6.9 Accepted

Submission	Point Number	Name
27	2	Ainsworth Farming Trust
8	1, 2	Department of Conservation (BOP)
23	2	Geejae Construction Limited
21	1, 2, 4	Gravit, Jo
28	2	Sobye, Deidre

6.10 Accepted in Part

Submission	Point Number	Name
27	3, 4	Ainsworth Farming Trust
3	1, 2, 3, 4	Carter, Grant
4	1, 2	Gardiner, Hugh
23	1, 3, 4	Geejae Construction Limited
21	3, 5	Gravit, Jo
28	4	Sobye, Deidre

6.11 Rejected

Submission	Point Number	Name
10	1	Cobb, Ray & Michelle
13	1, 2	Hart, G and A
7	1, 2	Hatton, GW and M
19	1	Purves, D & S
28	1, 3	Sobye, Deidre
15	1	Todd, Andrew & Susanne
12	1, 2	Walpole, Erica
5	1, 2	Ward, Christopher

7.0 Reasons

7.1 Option 1

- 7.1.1** Proposed widths are costly and impractical.
- 7.1.2** They also discourage landowners from vesting these features in Council for the overall benefit of Minden Lifestyle Zone.

7.2 Option 2

- 7.2.1** Making all walkways/cycleways and bridleways shared is considered a more practical approach, and does not preclude users from accessing certain trails.
- 7.2.2** However, the minimum width should not be too narrow and as a result effect the amenity value of the walkways/cycleways and bridleways.
- 7.2.3** Reducing these widths to 7m will reduce costs to landowners and encourage them to vest these features in Council.
- 7.2.4** Reduced widths are more practical.

7.3 Option 3

- 7.3.1** By including certain criteria, Council will be able to consider a reduction in width on a case by case basis, without compromising the amenity value and safety aspects of the walkways/cycleways and bridleways.

7.4 Option 4

- 7.4.1** It was intended for cyclists to use walkways.