The Coromandel Great Walks project will eventually link the whole district through a variety of great walks around the coastline and across the spine of the Coromandel. It is envisaged that the project will take ten years to complete and will be conditional, as this first phase is, on external funding.

The first Walk was chosen as it links two internationally significant tourists destinations of Cathedral Cove and Hot Water Beach, to showcase the beauty of the Coromandel and enhances tourism and economic development opportunities to our region.

This first Walk once complete will move visitors between Whitianga, Cooks Beach, the Stella Evered Reserve, Cathedral Cove, Hahei, the Blowhole site at Te Pupuha Recreational Reserve and Hot Water Beach.

Stage 1A of the Walk from Ferry Landing to the Blowhole site south of Hahei, is funded through TCDC, DOC, Lotteries Significant Fund and Trust Waikato. Stage 1B from the Blowhole to Hot Water Beach remains unfunded. However we are working with local iwi Ngati Hei around a track over the backdunes at Hot Water Beach and looking at potential funding avenues. This is still very much an important next stage, but is a piece of work that is longer term.
WHAT’S HAPPENING NOW?

We’re currently focusing on Stage 1A of the Walk from Hahei Village through to the Stella Evered Reserve. In this work programme there’s four long standing community projects which tie into the Walk that we’re progressing. These 4 community projects on existing tracks or sites.

1. Boundary and coastal planting. Approximately 3000 native plants have been planted across 1.3ha south of Te Pare historic reserve and Te Pupuhua Reserve. This is on DOC and Council land that can and is being used for walking already.

2. Andlinger Track (Cathedral Cove extension). This section is part of the old Andlinger Estate and was put into DOC management as part of an Overseas Investment Office deal with the planned track approved for development in 2007. As a long-standing commitment this planned route can now be realised as a direct link to the Walk.

3. Stella Evered Reserve is a private reserve administered as a publicly accessible natural, cultural and historic reserve. We’re currently working with the park Trustees and administrators on fencing, tree removal and landscaping. The logging of ageing gum trees in preparation for some further planting around the stream along with farm fencing at the Stella Evered Reserve is complete. The Reserve, on Lees Rd, is managed by a private Trust but is open to the public.

4. Hereheretaura Pa site. Working closely with Ngati Hei improvements are being made to the existing track leading up to Te Pare Pa (the old pa site).

VIEWING PLATFORMS

There are a total of 6 viewing platforms that are integral to the first Walk. These not only provide vantage points across world class scenery, but they are essential for walking safety. The design of each once has been carefully considered so not to be visible from the water and with a minimal impact on the natural landscape. Five of the platforms will be along the route section from Hahei to the Blowhole, with one to the north at the Andlinger Track. Building consents have been approved for all platforms, confirming platforms meet engineering and building compliance. The Governance Group has put a hold on construction of all but one platform (at the Andlinger Track extension) until traffic issues are resolved around Hahei.

PURANGI CROSSING

Crossing the Purangi Estuary has been investigated and preliminary survey work undertaken. A walking route is definitely feasible to include boardwalks and the possibility of two bridges, which would provide a stunning addition to this part of the Walk through to Cooks Beach. Initial work is also underway for another commercial option for a water crossing over the Estuary from Cooks Beach to the Stella Evered Reserve at the existing stone jetty. A full review of the Great Walks budget will be undertaken once a more accurate cost estimate for walking around the Purangi is obtained.
CAR PARKING, VISITOR AND TRAFFIC ISSUES

TCDC recently commissioned an independent Traffic Assessment report to quantify existing traffic around Hahei and Cathedral Cove and to identify solutions to deal with this now. The report also looked at the expected traffic impacts of the Walk and what infrastructure is required to mitigate these, now and projected traffic growth into the future.

The report recommends short and long term solutions. In its long term plan TCDC has budgeted the following key traffic related infrastructure:

- Hahei Park and Ride Development (Pa Road)  
  $438,000. 2015/2016

- Lees Road Car Park and Seal Extension  
  $1,051,000. 2016/2017

- Pa Rd - For this summer (2015-2016), the Park and Ride carpark will be running at Pa Rd, Hahei, from 27 December 2015 to 1 February 2016. It will also operate over Waitangi Weekend 2016.

- Grange Rd - Traffic Ambassadors are also being employed to manage traffic flows at the Grange Rd carpark at Cathedral Cove and direct people to the Pa Rd Park and Ride.

- Lees Rd - In October Council met with Lees Rd residents to get feedback and input on the Great Walks Project. Since that meeting a “No Exit” sign has been installed and a dead pine tree identified by residents is being removed. We hear Lees Rd residents’ desire that the road is sealed and widened all the way to Stella Evered Reserve. Residents were not supportive of a suggested passing lane as a design option. There is the potential for dust sealing of the whole of Lees Rd to occur in 2016-2017 and following traffic counts over summer, a review of these numbers will inform whether additional road widening is required for the whole road. A report will be taken to Council with findings on this. Meanwhile a contract with a private landowner for a carpark at Lees Rd is being negotiated.

- Shuttle services. We have spoken with commercial bus/shuttle services who are also look at providing a service over summer 2015-2016, The Mercury Bay Community Board is to decide whether to discontinue subsidising the current service, which has run for the past 3 years. There are still some issues to resolve with Waikato Regional Council and NZ Transport Authority.
THE GREAT WALKS GOVERNANCE GROUP

This first route is a collaborative partnership with Thames-Coromandel District Council, Department of Conservation and mana whenua, Ngati Hei (Mercury Bay iwi) and maximises the economic, cultural, environmental and social potential of several existing coastal tracks along the Eastern Seaboard. It will link these tracks together, allow us to improve facilities for the increasing number of visitors, promote the history of the area and provide opportunities for businesses. The project will also manage and mitigate the increase of visitor numbers on existing communities and the environment. A report on the Governance Structure for the Coromandel Great Walks (as it applies across the district) and Terms of Reference are being worked on, which Council will need to endorse. This is anticipated to be presented at the Council meeting in December 2015.

FUNDING

The total cost for the construction of the first Walk (Whitianga to Hot Water Beach) is $4.77m. TCDC has allocated $2.5m, DOC has contributed $450,000 while $1m has been successfully obtained through the Lotteries Significant Project Fund and $330,000 from Trust Waikato.
INDICATIVE PROJECT TIMELINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer traffic survey and monitoring</th>
<th>Completed 2 January 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Updated MWH Traffic assessment report</td>
<td>Feb 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purangi Crossing Expressions of Interest</td>
<td>Feb 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andlinger Track (Cathedral Cove extension) and Platform</td>
<td>Estimated Feb/March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Consents lodged for Lees Rd Car Park, track and viewing platforms</td>
<td>Estimated to be lodged March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa Rd Car park construction</td>
<td>Estimated August/Sept 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lees Rd Car park construction</td>
<td>Estimated August/Sept 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lees Rd improvements</td>
<td>Estimated August/Sept 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereheretaura (south of Hahei Beach) track re-alignment</td>
<td>Working with local iwi Ngati Hei towards track construction in 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hahei to Blowhole (Stage 1A)</td>
<td>Post Pa Rd Car park construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT TIMELINE - HISTORIC:

2015
• The Lotteries Significant Projects Fund awards $1m and Trust Waikato awards $330,000 towards the Coromandel Great Walks project.

2014
• Experienced track builder John Gaukrodger is brought into the project.
• Council ringsfences $1.25m in the 2014/2015 Annual Plan with DOC contributing $450,000 towards Phase 1A and 1B of the Proposed Cathedral Coast Walkway, from Hahei to the Purangi Estuary. Phase 2 is a back dune track from Hot Water Beach.
• An additional $3.2m will need to be sourced externally.

2013
• A feasibility study on the Proposed Cathedral Coast Walkway is completed.
• A cultural impact report is commissioned for Ngati Hei to complete.
• Money allocated in the 2013/2014 draft Annual Plan to go towards feasibility studies for the Coromandel Great Walks Project.

2012
• A governance working group is established which includes our Council (elected members and staff), iwi and Department of Conservation (DOC) staff.
• Investigations into possible routes for the very first of our Coromandel Great Walks project begins.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PARKING AND TRAFFIC ISSUES

What monitoring and measurements are being taken around traffic and visitor numbers around Hahei and surrounds?

A. Parking occupancy surveys and pedestrian surveys will be undertaken on 2 January, which our past data tells us is the peak day for summer visitor numbers to Hahei. Once collected, the new data will be collated with existing data-gathering tools (DOC’s track counter system for Cathedral Cove, and our Council’s tube counters for cars going over roads) to help shape planning decisions to manage growing visitor numbers. Once this is completed the data will be processed and updated to the MWH Traffic report by mid-March 2016.

What does the MWH traffic assessment report say about how to address parking issues in Hahei now and into the future?

A. MWH is an independent company that provides technical engineering, construction services and consulting services. Our Council commissioned MWH to assess growing parking and traffic issues at Hahei and surrounds and provide recommendations to help solve these issues. The MWH report stated a need to provide additional parking at Pa Road, and also to provide a new car park at Lees Road, as well as supporting shuttle services. Key to the multi-faceted solution is to spread the load and traffic volumes away from Hahei Village, by providing parking at Lees Road and a new entrance to Cathedral Cove and an integrated shuttle service. The report goes on to state that: To support the growth in visitor numbers, the MWH report recommends that a new Lees Road car park is required alongside Park and Ride service operating out of the Pa Road car park. The Report has identified that the parking management strategy for Cathedral Cove should include:

1. 129 carpark at Pa Road, and 150 space car park at Lees Road as soon as possible (and expand Pa road to 200 spaces and Lees Road to 500 spaces by 2018/2019
2. Grange Road should be a drop off for tour busses and park and ride shuttles only (peak)
3. Disabled parking at Grange Road
4. Sealing of Lees Road to the car park and further improvements to the end of the road and traffic management to restrict any on-street parking of Lees Road
5. Expansion of park and ride service to Hahei shops
6. Temporary overflow car parks for Pa Road, commercial operators to use Pa Road car park rather than unsealed beach front, formalising on-street parking along a number of streets and promotion and expansion of existing Ferry Landing-Hot Water Beach shuttle service.

The full MWH draft report can be viewed at www.tcdc.govt.nz/ccwalk

What is the strategic thinking behind having a car park at Lees Rd? Will a car park at Lees Rd take business away from Hahei Village?

A. As stated above in the MWH report, it is essential that more parking is provided within Hahei, as well as outside the village to address the current peak traffic issues due to visitor numbers. Lees Road provides an ideal solution, providing and distributing vehicles away from Hahei village, but also providing an alternative access to Cathedral Cove. Lees Road car park will also help to service visitors who are what we are calling “box tickers”. They want to get into Cathedral Cove, take the photo, and leave again to get to Hot Water Beach in time for the low tide. Their time is limited – they have one day to do both sites, before they drive to places like Rotorua or Taupo. Lees Road will help to take this traffic away from Hahei village. There will still be Pa Road Car Park, and supporting shuttle services between car parks via Hahei Village to promote business in Hahei.

How will parking along Lees Road be managed (e.g. to avoid freedom camping)?

A. As part of the upgrade of Lees Road, the no parking bylaw will extend to the car park in the first instance. The bylaw and associated signage may be extended to the end of Lees Road if it is considered necessary for safety reasons.

How will the projected increase in traffic as a result of the Great Walks be managed at Lees Road, particularly traffic up the end of the road?

A. The MWH Report estimates that there will be a peak summer daily traffic increase of between 400-900 vehicles over the summer period due to the walks. This equates to about one extra car every three minutes over a month. A significant part of the Lees Road improvements will include signage, road marking as well as design solutions to steer vehicles to Lees Road car park as the main entrance to Cathedral Cove.

Our parking bylaws are also being reviewed over this summer, and will ensure that enforcement of on-street parking at Grange Road, Pa Road and Lees Road will be up and running the following year.

Who will fund the car parks and where will be revenue go?

A. Pa Road will be funded locally through the Mercury Bay rating base, whereas Lees Road car park and road improvements are being funded by the District. The revenue gathered from Pa Road will be used for local improvements related to tourism in Mercury Bay, further work with the local community board and Hahei community will ensure the right projects are prioritised. Revenue from the Lees Road car park will go towards on-going maintenance of the Coromandel Great Walks, as well as paying off the capital for the car park and road improvements. This will greatly reduce risks to the future ratepayer, and has the potential to fully fund on-going maintenance of the Walks as well as pay off the roading infrastructure within 5-6 years.
With the Pay and Display at Pa Road, how will TCDC manage issues with on-street parking in surrounding streets?

A. We acknowledge that on-street parking occurs in most communities around the Coromandel during the summer months. Monitoring of on-street parking will be ongoing over the summer and formalisation of on-street parking may be a solution along with others that the community suggests through its Community Plan. With the revenue generated from the Pay and Display at Pa road, self-funding of parking solutions within Hahei has the potential to be rate neutral.

Why are Council looking at paid parking at the car parks?

A. We recognise the importance of correct pricing for the car parks, to ensure revenue is generated and will also ensure there is promotion so people use the pay and display facilities. Through a working party with local community appropriate pricing will be established for Pa Road, Lees Road and also how concessions and multi-pass tickets might work through a commercial shuttle service.

Has there been any thought around commercial opportunities for a shuttle bus service from Ferry Landing through to Lees Rd, Hot Water Beach?

A. The MWH Report emphasises the importance of a shuttle service from Ferry Landing to Lees Road, Hahei and Hot Water Beach. This is a critical factor in the success of traffic management and distribution of people from Whitianga and further afield. This is a piece of work now being led out of our Mercury Bay Area Office.

What is being done to manage traffic and parking this summer (2015-2016)?

A. The Park and Ride carpark will be running at Pa Rd, Hahei, from 27 December 2015 to 1 February 2016. It will also operate over Waitangi Weekend 2016. Traffic Ambassadors are also being employed to manage traffic flows at the Grange Rd car park at Cathedral Cove and direct people to the Pa Rd Park and Ride. Our parking enforcement officers will be patrolling hotspot areas around Hahei at least twice a day over peak summer. We’re also looking to extend the Park and Ride service to include more days of the year and longer-term considering keeping it open all year round once the proposed Lees Rd car park is constructed.
COMMUNITY

Where are we at with updating the Hahei Community Plan?
A. The Hahei Community Plan was last updated in 2012. The Mercury Bay Community Board is co-funding an update to the plan with the Hahei Ratepayers/ Stakeholder Group. The Great Walks project will continue as planned and in no instance did Council suggest an update of the Community Plan will continue as planned and significant investment to manage traffic is already in place. However there are a number of other issues that can be dealt with through Hahei’s Community Plan. You can read the latest Hahei Community Plan by going to www.tcdc.govt.nz/haheicommunityplan

What is Council’s position on the possibility of Hahei becoming a “walking village?”
A. In principle our Council supports the idea of Hahei as a walking village, however how this progresses and traffic implications should be dealt with through the Mercury Bay Community Board and community planning process.

THE GREAT WALKS ROUTE

Has a coastal route north of Hahei been considered?
A. Testing and investigating the feasibility and probability of a coastal walk from Hahei to Stella Evered has been undertaken with members of the Hahei community, landowners, Coastal Walkways and TCDC staff. It was concluded that this route would not be part of the initial Great Walks route with the main reason being, that the topography cliff instability and higher levels of risks would mean significant more investigations and potential costs would be incurred. The Coastal Walkways Group is looking independently at an option of a coastal route from Cathedral Cove around the coast to the Stella Evered Reserve.

Is a coastal route south of the Blowhole to Hot Water Beach being investigated?
A. Over a year ago we began initial conversations with private landowners, but nothing has progressed any further. This route is still on the Governance Group’s work plan but is a longer term project. We’re working with Ngati Hei around a potential track over the back dunes at Hot Water Beach and potential funding avenues when this is ready to progress.

When will work on the route to the Blowhole start?
A. Until the carparking at Pa and Lees Rd has been completed no work will be undertaken to the Blowhole.

What about the crossing the Purangi Estuary?
A. There are a number of ways to cross the Purangi, both around the land and over the water. It is intended that expressions of interest will be sought with the commercial community in the New Year to gather and look at the potential range of innovative commercial options. Surveying and mapping of a walking route has been undertaken and we’re now investigating costs associated with a walking route, which will be available in the New Year.

Are toilet facilities and concessions for food and drink planned for on along the route track?
A. There is planning for some self-composting toilets along sections of the route.

Will emergency services have access to places along the route?
A. One of the key access points will be off the land from the proposed Lees Rd carpark through to the Cathedral Cove track. Land owned by the Carters is currently is used by emergency services but with this new route also off the proposed Lees Rd car park, access for emergency services will be made easier.

How will dogs and bikes be managed?
A. The starting point for now is no dogs or bikes.

How will rubbish be managed?
A. Council will manage solid waste through its existing contracts and additional signage/education campaign explaining visitors take rubbish with them will be utilised.

Will the Walk have disability access?
A. While the route won’t be fully mobility friendly, there will be a sections of the route that will provide better access for the disabled and families with prams etc.