

City of Greater Geraldton

Whitehill Road Community Workshop Report

May 2016



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Background

On April 25 the City closed Whitehill Road to ensure community safety whilst a temporary adaptation measure for the area can be determined.

Although there are a number of temporary and longer term adaptation measures providing a more permanent solution that could retain connectivity between John Batten Hall and the north of Drummond Cove, the City sought advice from the Department of Planning regarding engaging with community (State Coastal Planning Policy No. 2.6 or SPP 2.6) to identify a solution.

The Department of Planning advised the City that undertaking permanent protection works along Whitehill Road at this time could pre-empt the outcomes of Geraldton wide coastal adaptation planning which takes a holistic approach by considering the entire urbanised coastline rather than isolated areas. Any engagement regarding the Whitehill Road should be regarding temporary adaptation options only.

Therefore, to assist Council's decision making regarding the future of Whitehill Road the City held a community workshop on Wednesday 18 May. The City received 66 pre-workshop registrations of which eight people did not attend however, an additional 15 members of the community came along and participated in the workshop on the evening.

The purpose of the workshop was to get an understanding of community sentiment regarding Whitehill Road and to determine the community's preferred temporary adaptation option to address the erosion till all of Geraldton Coastal Adaptation Planning is completed in 18-24 months' time.

The workshop objective was:

To inform Council decision making on the community's preferred temporary adaptation option for Whitehill Road.

The workshop was externally facilitated by Barbara Pedersen from the consultancy Evaluate Environmental Pty Ltd with presentations made by City of Greater Geraldton Acting Manager of Engineering Services Michael Dufour.

History of Whitehill Road

The workshop began with a short presentation on the history of Whitehill Road from its early days as a track into the settlement up to present day. Each participant was given handouts which contained aerial photos of the Drummond Cove area in the years 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2015 (see Sediment Change Booklet).

Determining the Value of Whitehill Road

In order for workshop participants, the City and Council to better understand the importance of Whitehill Road to the community a valuing exercise was undertaken. Participants were asked to take a moment to consider the question: *What does Whitehill Road mean to me?*

Each participant was given a ballot paper with four options and asked to choose the option that best represented how they feel about Whitehill Road.

The counting of the 66 submitted ballots was scrutinized by Gavin Hirschhausen, President of the Drummond Cove Progress Association. The following table shows the results of the secret ballot.

What does Whitehill Road mean to me?	
It means nothing to me	10
It means something to me	18
It means a lot to me	21
It means everything to me	17

* The decision to use a secret ballot was made as it reduces the effects of peer pressure and enables people to freely express their own opinion.

Temporary Coastal Adaptation Options for Whitehill Road

Five temporary adaptation options were presented at the workshop. Each participant received a booklet outlining each of the five options; the cost to implement each option; and an aerial map of what each of the options involved (see Whitehill Road Temporary Options Booklet).

The five options included:

Option 1	Do nothing
Option 2	Close the road
Option 3	Temporary realignment of the road adjacent to the existing road
Option 4	Temporary realignment of the road to the east side of the trees growing along Whitehill Road in the coastal reserve
Option 5	Temporary sand nourishment

The presentation of Options was followed by a group discussion where some of the following ideas and concerns were raised.

- The five temporary options;
- Possible long term solution such as rock walls or geotextile sand containers bags;
- Community safety regarding emergency access and escape routes for Drummond Cove Road residents;
- The community values being able to access and walk along the beach;
- Watercorp’s sewage pumping station and the future of this asset;
- The possibility of using the sand dune beside the skatepark for beach renourishment; and
- Concern that a temporary option could cost as much to implement as a permanent solution should Coastal Adaptation Planning take longer than 18-24 months.

Determining the Community’s Preferred Temporary Option

The question and answer period was followed by a second secret ballot. The ballot paper contained the five temporary options and an additional ‘Other Option’.

Participants were asked to vote for the temporary option they preferred most. If they didn’t want any of the five temporary options available to be implemented they could indicate so by ticking the ‘Other Option’ box.

Participants were also able to make comments on their ballot regarding an option. The counting of the 67 submitted ballots was scrutinized by Gavin Hirschhausen, President of the Drummond Cove Progress Association. The following table shows the results of the secret ballot.

Preferred Temporary Adaptation Option for Whitehill Road	
Option 1 - Do nothing	4
Option 2 - Close the road	5
Option 3 - Temporary road realignment 1	1
Option 4 - Temporary road realignment 1	5
Option 5 – Temporary sand Nourishment	40
None of the five options presented	2

Four ballots were excluded from count as they opted for a permanent solution to build a rock wall. Four ballots chose 'Other Option'.

Additional Results

16 ballots contained the following additional comments.

Additional information	No. of x's mentioned
Option 1 - Form a walking path	1
Options 1 & 2 should be implemented together	2
Options 2 & 5 Mixture of these two options	2
Option 3 & 5 Mixture of these two options	2
Option 4 Permanent road realignment through the park area	1
Option 5 Plus dune project in public open space	2
Option 5 and temporary road realignment	2
Other option Use sand bags i.e. Horrocks	3
Other option - Align road along Estuary and Wave Crest	1
Other option - Seal road between Whitehill and Estuary Way & Boat Cove detour	1
Other option - Build a rock wall	4

The Workshop came to a close with Ian Blayney MLA announcing that the State Government will be funding the construction of the \$22 million Beresford Foreshore Coastal Protection and Enhancement Project and as far as he was concerned, the next most important coastal issue in WA was Whitehill Road and Geraldton rate payers would not be paying for the repairs.