

Council considers new helipad proposal

A proposal for a helipad at a multimillion-dollar property on Gordons Road is being processed by Auckland Council and offers an insight into the now controversial world of chopper restrictions on Waiheke.

The application for a new helipad at 345 Gordons Road proposes a maximum of 12 single-engine helicopter flights over a rolling three-day period or a maximum of eight movements in a single day.

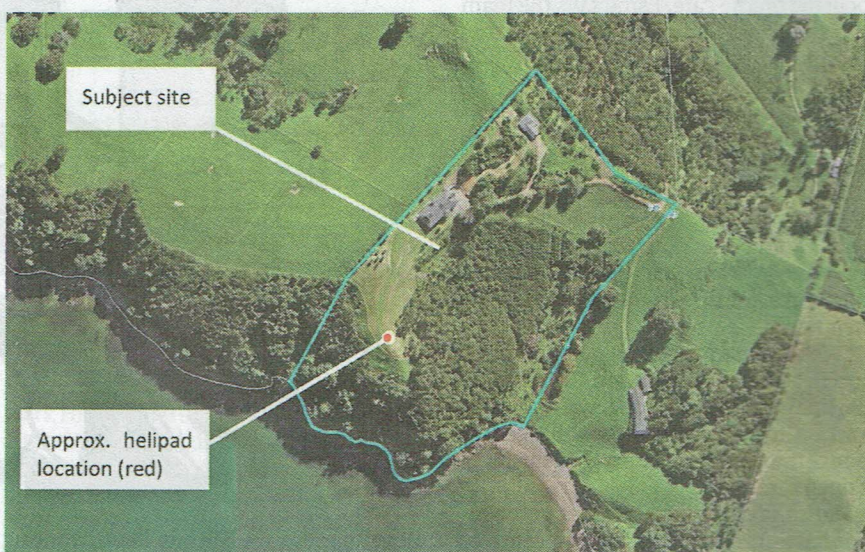
The number of permissible flights would be halved if twin-engine helicopters are used, according to the resource consent application.

The proposed helipad would sit near the coastal headland area of the six-hectare Gordons Road property and helicopters would predominantly access the site over the sea. However, some pilots may fly in and out via a northeast corridor due to the possibility of prevailing southwest and northeast wind directions, the proposal notes.

Whakanewha Regional Park is located around 600 metres northeast of the site, which is adjacent to other similarly large, rural properties.

Concern over helipads and flight paths over Waiheke have grown over recent months with *Gulf News* just last week reporting that air traffic over Waiheke, helipad usage, and the potential for a Special Use Airspace designation were being looked into by the Civil Aviation Authority.

The investigations are the result of the Waiheke Local Board and lobby group Quiet Sky Waiheke raising concerns around the helipad consent process and



Consent is sought for a helipad at 345 Gordons Road. If approved it will join three others already on the road, at numbers 341, 511 and 621.

a resulting "proliferation" of helicopter traffic over the island.

The identified flight paths from the proposed Gordons Road helipad would not pass over any neighbouring dwellings, which are located at least 230m from the proposed helipad, although the land use consent application's acoustic report, undertaken by Marshall Day, says helicopter noise will likely be audible at the properties during arrivals and departures.

The acoustic consultants used modelling to calculate the number of helicopter movements complying with a noise limit of 50 dB Ldn. Marshall Day explored any

cumulative noise effects and considered four helipads already in the area - three on Gordons Road and one at Poderi Crisci on Awaawaroa Road.

An interesting insight into how helipad applications on Waiheke are granted is also included in the report. A helipad at 341 Gordons Road is "permitted a high number of movements (12 per day with an EC135 helicopter) but is located at a significant distance (650m) from 345 Gordons Road and is well screened by topography," reads the acoustic report.

"Our calculations show that the cumulative noise will not be above 50 dB Ldn based on the proposed and existing

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Call for moratorium doesn't take off

New helipad applications fly in the face of lobby group Quiet Sky Waiheke's July request for a moratorium on all helipad consents until council and the Civil Aviation Authority have evaluated regulations.

"Council hasn't responded specifically to our moratorium," says founding member Michael Sweeney.

"Quiet Sky Waiheke continues to oppose any new helipads because we have 48 already creating cumulative noise pollution and safety concerns."

The group wants to see more comprehensive consent conditions and believes additional conditions should be imposed on existing helipads to reduce noise and increase

safety for residents. Until this happens, members don't want to see any new helipads consented for Waiheke.

Meanwhile, an application for a helipad at Onetangi winery Obsidian, which was hotly contested earlier this year, is still on hold after an Auckland Council request for additional information in July.

Ian Smallburn, General Manager of Resource Consents, says council has now received the required information, and an assigned planner and relevant specialists will soon undertake an assessment and analysis of the new information. "Once complete, the application will be taken off hold and start processing," Smallburn told *Gulf News* last week. •

helicopter landing pads. Cumulative effects are not likely given the separation distance between this site and the other helipads."

Conditions proposed to manage noise generated by a helicopter include restricting flights to between 8am and 10pm, complying with the permitted number of movements, following the identified arrival and departure vectors, accurate record-keeping, and not allowing aircraft to sit and idle unnecessarily.

Also according to the resource consent application, no earthworks, construction, building or other

physical works would be required to create the proposed helipad. The proposal states that any adverse effects on

the environment would be less than minor, and no person would be adversely affected by the proposal "to a minor or more than minor degree".

Positive effects resulting from the helipad would include an alternative means to access the applicant's property and visitor accommodation, reads the report, it would also allow the owners of the site "to better provide for their social and economic wellbeing". • *Sophie Boladeras*

"Our calculations show that the cumulative noise will not be above 50 dB Ldn based on the proposed and existing helicopter landing pads."

Defib fundraiser for Hekerua

Although lockdowns have put the kibosh on much group-orientated community work, that hasn't stopped one Waiheke volunteer organisation from helping their own corner of the island.

Friends of Te Aroha is best known for its tree-planting, weeding and pest control around Te Aroha Valley and Hekerua Bay, but while those jobs have been put on hold, they've branched out into fundraising for a life-saving cause: getting hold of a defibrillator.

Their Givealittle page has already raised \$1970 of the \$4252 goal and now they're looking to the rest of the community to help them complete the job.

"The unique thing about the valley and bay is that, while they are situated in a busy residential area, they are only accessible by walking in, which makes them rather special," the group says.

"The chances of saving someone's life from a heart attack are drastically increased by 50 percent to 70 percent if they are treated with a defibrillator located within three to five minutes of them. Currently, to get someone out of the valley or Hekerua Bay would take considerably longer than that, as it is a steep climb out on foot to a drive by car to the nearest defibrillator in Surfdale."

The Rotary club would install and maintain the device similar to the rest of the network around Waiheke. It's hoped the device would be installed near lighting so it can be easily seen by people if required.

If you want to donate to Friends of Te Aroha's cause, go to <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/defibrillator-wanted> •

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