

5 October 2021

Karen Yates
Policy and Governance Manager
South Wairarapa District Council
PO Box 6
Martinborough 5741

Attention: Karen Yates

RE: Assessment of the need to re name all or part of Underhill Road

Further to your request dated 17 April 2021 and discussions subsequently in respect to the assessment.

This assessment is a response to a request from Darren McGregor Service Delivery Co Ordinator NZ Post and Courier Post Masterton made on the 4 July 2019.

The request stated :

“We are having ongoing problems with mail delivery to Underhill Road due to it being split between RD1 Greytown and RD1 Featherston. Unfortunately the same numbering system has been used from both ends so there are duplicate addresses.

There is also a more serious issue around emergency services to Underhill Road due to the duplicate addresses and the barrier created by the Tauherenikau River. I have been informed that this has caused confusion in the past.”

On the 4 August 2021 an email was received from Darren which stated:

“One slight change to my email is that the Featherston side is done by RD3 Featherston.”

On the 17 August 2021 an email was received from Darren which stated:

“I have not had any more such complaints since the initial complaints a couple of years ago. Given this I feel that the emergency services aspect of the Underhill Road issue is far more important than the mail delivery aspect.”

The Council Policy on Naming of Public Roads provides, under section 4.4, Reasons for Changing Existing Road Names.

Reasons for changing road names may include:

“To assign different names to separate ends of a road with a permanent impassable section somewhere along the length”.

A key aspect of the NZ Post and Courier Post request is the reference to *“a serious issue around emergency services”*.

As a consequence the following organisations involved with emergency services have been consulted.

New Zealand Police

New Zealand Fire and Safety
 NZ Post and Courier Post
 Wellington Free Ambulance
 Power Co
 South Wairarapa District Council

The outcome of those consultations is as follows:

Name of Service Provider	Summary of significance	Recorded Incidents
NZ Police (NZP)	Don't wish to be involved. Consider road naming and changing road names is an issue for New Zealand Transport Authority and the District Council	Unwilling to comment.
NZ Fire and Emergency Service (NZFES)	Nick Pyatt Principal Rural Fire Officer commented: <i>"He was unaware of any issues arising with Underhill and does not regard it as an issue. Could be a risk and would support a separation of say north and south."</i>	No incidents recorded.
NZ Post and Courier Post (NZPCP)	Darren McGregor confirmed by email on 17 August 2021 <i>"that the original issue arose from complaints from residents receiving the wrong mail. It has not occurred since 2019. The issue is far more important for the emergency services rather than the mail deliver aspect."</i>	No incidents recorded since 2019
Wellington Free Ambulance.(WFA)	<p>Dispatcher/Relief Team Manager (Red Shift) Reported on the 24 September <i>" I have managed to have a look through our records and since 1 January 2021, we have had 2 calls for ambulance to Underhill Road Tauherenikau. One for 391 Underhill Road (Featherston side) and the other 284 Underhill Road (Greytown side). Both calls were for residents at those addresses and there is nothing in the incident notes to indicate there was confusion or concern regarding which side of the river we needed to attend to."</i></p> <p>A further response was received on the 25 September which clarified an earlier report by Communications Manager Robert Blayney. <i>"The incident that Rob referred to was confused because it was reported as a car crash but it was actually a cyclist on the side of the road."</i></p> <p>Further comment <i>"That WFA logging and navigation systems are effectively differentiating the correct sides of Underhill road ."</i></p>	<p>Three incidents reported. One on the Featherston side and one on the Greytown side of Underhill Road. A third incident involved a cyclist which was reported as a vehicle accident. No confusion has been reported due to the duplication of addresses on either side of Underhill Road.</p>

Power Co (PC)	Advise <i>“that they don’t rely on street names and are not aware of any issues with Underhill Road. They operate their own systems around GPS. They have their own staff and contractors locally based who know the area. Would support any change if Council consider it justified.”</i>	Not aware of any incidents.
South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC)	No comment at this stage	No comment.

Summary of emergency service responses.

NZP, NZFES and PC

All have a local presence in Greytown and Featherston and are familiar with road layouts and issues that apply to Underhill Road. Most also seem to have their own tracking systems based around GPS. None seem to be insistent about a need to change but acknowledge they would accept a name change if the Council considered it necessary.

WFA .

Consider that their logging and navigation systems are effectively differentiating the correct sides of Underhill road.

NZPCP

Have resolved issues internally. The recognition of separate rural delivery numbers for Featherston and Greytown may have assisted their solution.

SWDC 4.4 – ‘Policy for Changing Existing Road Names’.

Refer to item 4.4.2

This policy specifies that there *“needs to be a clear benefit to the Community if a name change is contemplated.”*

It is evident from the responses received from the organisations undertaking emergency services that they have adapted to the issues associated with access and common numbering at Underhill Road and have not expressed a compelling need to change the status quo.

It is concluded that the policy which requires a clear benefit to the Community if a name change is contemplated has not been justified through consultation with these organisations.

Refer to item 4.4.3

“Where a road name is requested to be changed, a significant majority of residents and owners along the road must support the proposed change.”

At this stage the residents and owners along Underhill Road have not been consulted to obtain their response to a possible name change.

This is a critical element in the assessment and needs to be undertaken as the implementation of a name change will initially create a significant burden for residents, as well as community services and emergency service organisations.

The responses from the residents on each side of the Tauherenikau River may also vary as each community have differing circumstances. This could influence different outcomes for each side of the River.

The observations which may influence the residents response are as follows:

The Featherston side of Underhill Road

Underhill Road starts in the Featherston residential area and extends north with additional no exit roads branching from it. NZPCP advise that there are 37 active customers on the Featherston side of Underhill Road. It is also understood that there is potential for new residential subdivisions extending from Underhill Road. The community awareness of the impasse created by the Tauherenikau River on the Featherston side is considered to be significant and this should minimise the risk of misadventure for the community and emergency services when responding to Underhill Road enquiries.

The Greytown side of Underhill Road

Underhill Road is semi isolated and located on the western outskirts of the intensively farmed region. It is a short road with no other branch roads and NZPCP advise it has 14 active customers. The community awareness of the impasse created by the Tauherenikau River on the Greytown side is likely to be less significant resulting in a higher risk of misadventure for the community and emergency services when responding to Underhill Road enquiries.

The assessment suggests that there may be additional benefit of a name change for the residents on the Greytown side of Underhill Road. The outcome of consultation with residents on each side would need to support this assessment.

The next very necessary step in the consideration of Policy 4.4.3 is to consult individually with each of the residents and owners on each side of the Tauherenikau River to establish if a significant majority of them would support a change in the road name.

The outcome of this consultation needs to be particularly decisive for a change as the responses from the organisations undertaking emergency services tends to favour the status quo.

Recommendation.

Featherston and Greytown Community Boards be advised of the outcome of investigations to date with the suggestion that local residents and owners of Underhill Road on the Greytown side and the Featherston side of the Tauherenikau River be consulted in accordance with Council's Policy 4.4.3.

R.E.W.Austin
Consultant