



Plan Change 14 Hearing Summary.

Good afternoon everyone,

My name is Alex Bartrum and I am here today to represent Cromwell Mountain Bike Club in support of Plan Change 14, Shannon Farm.

As Club President, I have been actively involved with representatives of Infinity Investments since Plan Change 14 became public knowledge.

We approached them at the public information day with our ideas of how we could utilise the proposed recreation zone to its full potential by including an MTB specific trail network in its design.

We as a club have been impressed and encouraged by how willing the developers of Shannon Farm have been to include a community asset into their development plans.

The proposed recreation zone at Shannon Farm is an exciting prospect for the community as it provides a multi-purpose activities area in close proximity to Cromwell town.

Here is a brief outline of who Cromwell Mountain Bike Club is and how we came to be.

For the last two years I have been contacting and meeting with local land owners in the hope of gaining fully approved access to local land for the development of MTB specific trails.

I formed Cromwell Mountain Bike Club last year as it became clear that a large portion of the community were as keen for MTB specific trails, in close proximity to Cromwell, as much as I was.

The formation of the club evolved from two public meetings. The first was to gauge interest for my ideas and the second meeting's purpose being to vote in the committee members and positions in accordance with the requirements of our club constitution.

A dynamic committee was formed and our first committee meeting took place in september 2019. Since that first meeting, we have been very busy.

We have continued our search for local land and have broadened our parameters to include applications for the use of local D.O.C regulated land.

The club became an Incorporated Society in November and we became a registered Charity in april this year. We couldn't celebrate this achievement properly due to being in lockdown, but it's still a win, and no small feat in such a short amount of time.

Our aim is to develop world class MTB specific trails in the hills surrounding Cromwell. These trails will be free access to anyone living in or visiting our region. The club will seek paying members but non-members will be just as welcome to use our trails.

Every day I see loads of vehicles leaving town with mountain bikes strapped to the back of them. These people are heading to Queenstown, Alexandra, Clyde and Wanaka to access any MTB trails they can get their hands on.

Mountain biking is a hugely popular recreation and its popularity is only growing worldwide.

I have scoped various locations in the Cromwell Basin with Tom Hey from Elevate Trails. Elevate Trails are responsible for some of the best MTB trails in not just our local area but other parts of NZ and other countries around the globe.

Tom and I spent half a day scoping and analysing the terrain inside the proposed recreation zone above the proposed lifestyle blocks on Shannon Farm.

This area is by far the most suitable for developing an MTB specific trail network that we have seen in this region.

Tom has created a detailed trail concept map and overview for your viewing today.

(View Overview/Concept map)

The benefits of this MTB trail zone to the community of Cromwell would be great. The main two being health and the local economy.

- Health

Mountain Biking is great for physical and mental health.

It is well known that cycling is a wonderful form of exercise. It not only puts the body through its paces but is also enjoyable due to how quickly your geographic position changes once your legs start spinning.

Having the varying grades of difficulty in the one zone means bike riders of varying ability can climb up together and then select the way down that best suits their ability.

Having trails from grade 3 to grade 5 provides the opportunity for riders to develop their skills if they so desire. The satisfaction that comes from completing a challenging trail is great for confidence and self-esteem, topped off with a lovely dose of endorphins.

Mountain biking gets you up into some amazing parts of our country and the elevation gained from climb trails usually provide amazing views.

The views from our proposed viewing area/hub and summit point at Shannon Farm are spectacular. It really highlights the beauty that surrounds Cromwell from a whole new angle.

The community in general would rarely see their town in this light without such a facility.

There is a natural cluster of rocks at the hub point where we envisage a rest area to take in the view, get your photos and fuel up for your next run.

As the climb trail is dual use for bikers and walkers, this hub would also be an ideal spot to walk to and unwind.

The climb trails are walkers only on the way down to ensure the safety and enjoyment of walkers using the zone.

Having a trail network this close to town would encourage individuals less likely to travel to MTB trails to get out of the house and get some fun exercise. It would also encourage those sitting on the fence in regards to MTB or lacking an active hobby to give MTB a go.

The trail concept map includes a car park and potential toilet facility in the design but being so close to town, a large percentage of local riders would be just as likely to ride out to the trail zone instead of driving.

It would be great to further develop a cycle trail from town all the way to the car park facility at Shannon Farm with appropriate safety and direction signage along the way.

This is great for health and reduces congestion at the carpark area.

The proposed trail network would get a lot of our youth off their devices and onto their bikes.

- Economic

It is well documented that the addition of good MTB trails close to town boosts the local economy.

Most of the people travelling to other towns to ride their trails are spending money in those towns.

Whether its fuel, food, drinks, bike parts or tourism-based attractions, that is money leaving Cromwell and being spent somewhere else.

Our proposed trail area would not only encourage locals to stay in town and ride our trails but would also encourage people from the wider community to visit Cromwell for the day or overnight.

It's quite likely that certain groups of riders doing the currently being constructed trail network, linking Queenstown and Wanaka through to Clyde via Cromwell, would stay an extra night in Cromwell to spend a day riding our proposed trails.

This would benefit our local economy hugely. More beds in hotels and BnB's being filled, more seats being filled in our local hospitality sector, our local bike store would certainly benefit, as would our other local attractions and business's.

The positive social media presence of Cromwell could significantly increase from people posting selfies and group shots of smiling riders from our hub, summit and scenic trail locations.

We plan to eventually hold events on our trails, such as Enduro or downhill racing. These events would certainly attract riders from near and afar and would result in overnight stays from out of towners.

The recent and continued devastation to the national and global economy due to Covid-19 is making our leaders appreciate the need for domestic travel in the tourism sector.

A world class MTB specific trail network in sight and riding distance from Cromwell town is precisely the kind of attraction needed to encourage more people to visit Cromwell in these dark times.

A free of charge bike park will encourage domestic tourism and those using the bike park will be more than happy to spend their hard-earned funds in our town as they will have had the time of their lives and not yet be out of pocket.

Once operational, we expect the trails to be very well used, especially in the summer months.

I have included an Economic Impact Review commissioned by the Queenstown MTB club in 2017. Whilst this is not for the Cromwell area, this report will give the panel an indication of the significant quantum of economic impact from these activities and what sectors they occur in.

We are aware that the proposed recreation zone falls under the category of Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL), we are taking this seriously and together with the developers are exploring all options to achieve our goals while respecting the relative regulations.

Since first meeting with representatives of NZ Cherry Corp, we as a club have been impressed with the level of effort and integrity shown during this whole plan change process. It is clear that both parties are equally excited by the prospect of this recreation zone providing world class MTB specific trails to the local and greater community free of charge.

In order to assure us that NZ Cherry Corp are 100% committed to allowing the club access to the recreation zone for trail development, Cromwell Mountain Bike Club and NZ Cherry Corp have accepted the terms of a formal agreement.

This agreement is wholly dependent on Plan Change 14 being approved.

At this stage, the club is a committee only as I haven't wanted to do a membership drive until we have secured a project.

We are estimating a healthy percentage of local riders will become members and are already aware of locals keen to help us out with volunteer dig days and events.

We have a sub-committee working on the membership launch as we speak, so that we can hit the ground running should we get a green light for this project.

We have also been researching fundraising options but again, no fundraising can occur without a researched and approved project.

Part of our formal agreement with NZ Cherry Corp is that should Plan Change 14 be approved; Cromwell Mountain Bike Club will receive contributions to help with trail development and maintenance costs for the first five years.

This will be a great means of support as all trails designed and built by Cromwell Mountain Bike Club will be properly maintained at all times. This will include paid work and volunteer efforts.

In closing, I truly hope you consider our proposal and give it the time required to process all the information within.

Our interest in this plan change is solely community vested and we feel a large portion of the community shares our dream.

Thank you for your time,

Alex Bartrum.

Club President.

Cromwell Mountain Bike Club.

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