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# Waikato couple fighting road through their bird sanctuary hope '10,000 people tie themselves to trees'

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A Waikato couple holding out against a council plan to put a road through a bird sanctuary on their property for a subdivision are hoping thousands of people tie themselves to trees along the route to stall the roadworks.

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Hamilton City Council is offering Murray and Margaret Shaw \$335,000 for 1.9ha, but they don't want to sell. Source: Seven Sharp

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Seven Sharp reports Murray and Margaret Shaw have created a sanctuary for birds that's free for the public to enjoy. And they don't want to sell.

The couple reckon they've planted 3500 trees so far, which Mr Shaw said has cost "hundreds of thousands" of dollars.

But Hamilton City Council has decided the Shaws' property is perfect for a through-road for The Peacocks subdivision.

The proposed road will go across a nearby gully before continuing on through the bird park.

"That was the optimal route through to achieve the connections that need to be achieved," said Richard Briggs of the council.

Mr Shaw said the council valuation was \$335,000 for 1.9 hectares, involving 20 sections.

"And they just said, 'If you don't look at selling it to us, we'll take it under the Public Works Act'."

Mr Briggs said he'd "like to sit down with the Shaws and actually work out really what they're trying to achieve and see if we can come to some sort of agreement".

But Mr Shaw is busy planting 200 more trees, right in the proposed road's path.

"I'm hoping we're going to have 10,000 people tie themselves to trees. Try building a road with that many people there," he said.



"I'll be right in the front with all the birds."

Asked does the \$335,000 price seem fair, Mr Briggs said: "It is if you consider the broader uplift in value for the rest of the subdivision which we're not taking off them, which they'll have the opportunity to actually develop or sell to the market. That value's gone up significantly."

That's because the new road would enable the Shaws to create a subdivision.

"At our age we don't want to have anything to do with subdivisions. We want to keep it as a park," Mr Shaw said.

"Move the road 600 metres south where all the houses are going to go anyway."

But Mr Briggs said the designation for the road is "locked in as law in terms of that's where the road has the ability to go. A whole lot of people in the community have built plans, and developers in that area, around that road going through there".

Mr Shaw said the bird park will be cut in two and trees including 20-year-old rimu and kauri removed for the road.

"I don't know where the birds are going to go. They won't be staying here."

Mr Briggs said "a significant chunk of the Shaws' bird park will remain untouched" and the council will plant 15 hectares of gullies in The Peacocks subdivision where the birds will "have a ball".

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