



# **Mangawhai**

## **Open Space Review**



Kaipara te Orangahui

**KAIPARA**  
**DISTRICT**

Two Oceans Two Harbours

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## Mangawhai Open Space Review

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### Executive summary

Three goals have been identified in ensuring Mangawhai's open spaces are well-equipped and planned to manage future population growth and demand. Recommendations are provided, detailing certain actions for achieving this. The three goals are:

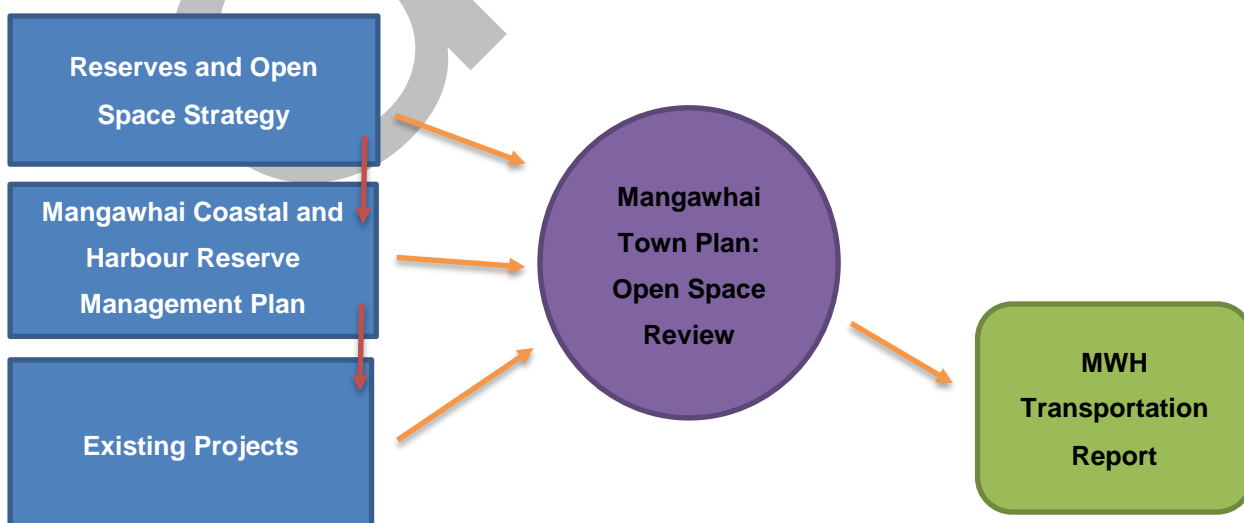
- i Increasing connectivity;
- ii Increasing leisure/recreational activities; and
- iii Enhancing and protecting landscape character.

### 1 Introduction

The Mangawhai Town Plan is a strategic project to plan for addressing current and future growth occurring in Mangawhai. As the area continues to grow, there is an increasing demand on services in the township, including access to reserves and public spaces.

This report seeks to review the current reserves and public recreational spaces and opportunities in Mangawhai, determining how they are connected and placed around the township. This report aligns with, and makes reference to, existing Kaipara District Council strategies, including: the Reserves and Open Space Strategy, the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan and subsequently any related projects currently being progressed by Council and community groups.

Existing assets and resources are reviewed and then discussed against future demand to provide a set of goals for future planning. Recommendations are provided for how Council and local community groups can ensure Mangawhai's reserves and recreational opportunities develop to ensure they meet demand, while at the same time retaining and enhancing the relaxed coastal aesthetic that the area is known for. How this review relates to other pieces of work:



## 1.1 Reserves and Open Space Strategy

Council's Reserves and Open Space Strategy (ROSS) provides an overall approach for addressing community outcomes for Kaipara's reserves and open space. It delivers an action plan for Council and communities to achieve the desired reserves and open spaces within the district, through a need to develop reserve management or development plans. It also guides Council policy for general management and integration of different types of reserves and open spaces. This strategy is reviewed every ten years, and is currently in a review year.

## 1.2 Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan

Council is required by the Reserves Act 1977 to prepare Reserve Management Plans (RMP) for most reserves under its control and to keep these plans under continuous review. The purpose of an RMP is to identify Council's objectives and policies for the management of coastal and harbour reserves at Mangawhai. An RMP provides more specific detail on the certain reserves, as an outcome of the ROSS.

Council's vision for the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan is to develop, manage and promote the Mangawhai harbour and coastal reserves as a regional resource and an integral part of the wider Mangawhai open space network. The emphasis within the reserves is on passive recreational activities, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment and character of the reserves which have seen sections of this area recognised as significant landscapes.

It is considered that the recommendations in this report are in direct alignment with the vision of the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan. The outcomes of this are considered direct, practical and specific.

## 1.3 Funding

Finally, relevant to understanding the resources in this report are the funding options for how actions or projects are currently progressed. Currently, reserves and open spaces in the Kaipara district are funded through the following sources and rationale:

- General rates, uniform annual general charges;
- Reserve contributions collected under the District Plan; whereby
- Reserve Contributions collected from the previous year available for the following year's capital works projects are subject to a 60:40 split. 40% is spent on reserves of district-wide significance: Mangawhai Community Park, Pou Tu Te Rangi Harding Park and Taharoa Domain. 60% is spent local to the area from where the contributions were collected.

Council's Community Assistance Policy also provides opportunity for community to apply for funding or support for projects. A range of these funding options applies to recreational facilities in the Mangawhai area. The funding mechanisms are:

- Licence to Occupy (an indirect funding mechanism via a peppercorn rental);
- Contract for Service;
- Discretionary Grant;

- Mayoral Fund; and
- Mangawhai Endowment Lands Account.

## **2 Existing assets**

Mangawhai has a total area of approximately 170 hectares<sup>1</sup> of reserve recreational land administered either by Council or other organisations. This total area is made up of some significant parks and recreation areas including Mangawhai Community Park, Mangawhai Golf Course, Mangawhai Heads Recreation Reserve (surf beach), Mangawhai Heads Holiday Park (campground) and Mangawhai Domain. In addition, there are numerous esplanade reserves around the coastal edge of Mangawhai, local purpose reserves, recreation reserves, playgrounds and a cemetery.

Besides reserve recreational land, Mangawhai currently has approximately 40 walkways and tracks located around the township, through bush, coastal and residential areas. There are also nine identified key recreational locations across the township, that each offer a range of activities for the public to enjoy.

### **2.1 High profile reserves**

#### **2.1.1 Mangawhai Community Park**

Mangawhai Community Park is a centrally located multiple-use park and public space, offering a number of different activities, encouraging the public to enjoy the outdoor environment. Council purchased the site for the purposes of a park and the land is held in fee-simple title and is neither held as a reserve under the Reserves Act nor zoned as a reserve in the District Plan. It is zoned rural with a harbour overlay. It is determined that the Park has more flexibility in terms of facilities offered not being listed as a reserve in the District Plan.

The Park currently has a range of recreational facilities including a playground, skate park, walking tracks and Museum. The St John Ambulance Station is also located within the Park and there are future plans for the Mangawhai Fire Brigade to be located alongside this.

Community organisations hold a Licence to Occupy Agreement with Council to lease the land, and the Friends of the Mangawhai Community Park (representative of the Park's users) make recommendations to Council to help determine suitable facilities. A Master Plan has been developed for the Park to ensure that growth and future projects are strategically planned for, with designated building sites for facilities.

Further implementation of this Master Plan includes carrying out the following:

- Development of an Historic Village;
- Implementation of a planting and landscape plan;
- Develop public car parking in both the Activity Zone and Museum areas;
- Develop pathways and roads to connect activities;
- Development of wetland features.

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<sup>1</sup> Total area of approximately 170 hectares of reserve land includes not only predominant or key reserves in the Mangawhai area, it also includes conservation land, esplanade reserves or strips, gifted land and other parcels of public land.

Funding for the park consists of:

- Financial (reserve) contribution funds to the amount of \$100,000 per annum for the next eight years to be spent on development; and
- Mangawhai Endowment Lands Account grant towards ongoing maintenance of the Park.

Recreational Services (Council's Contractor) currently maintains public toilets and the car park area including car park gardens, while Mangawhai Tracks Charitable Trust maintains the walkways and implements the planting plan. It is anticipated that the Park will continue to have a high level of voluntary input to maximise the output from the \$100,000 and maintenance grants. Ongoing maintenance is a combination of ratepayer/grant funding.

*Identified Issues:*

As Mangawhai Community Park is centrally located, it is considered a key connection point for recreational activity between the Mangawhai Village and Mangawhai Heads. Currently pedestrian access to and from the park could be improved, including from Mangawhai Community Park along the same side of the road to Mangawhai Museum.

The park has considerable capacity to provide for larger community facilities should these be identified and this has been provided for in the Master Plan.



*Mangawhai Activity Zone in Mangawhai Community Park*

### **2.1.2 Mangawhai Heads Recreation Reserve**

Mangawhai Heads Recreation Reserve is a high use reserve in the Mangawhai area, particularly over the summer period as it attracts large visitor numbers to the surf beach. Mangawhai Heads Volunteer Surf Lifesaving Club is located here and provides lifesaving services over the summer period. This service is vital as this area is the most popular destination for surfing and swimming. Concessions for surf lessons, and coffee and ice cream are also available, contributing to this area as a popular and high use summertime destination.

As per the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan, there is provision for concessions in this area over the peak holiday season, and Council will continue to allow mobile businesses to provide services such as the sale of food or hiring of coastal activities. This is managed through a concessions process.

The public facilities in this area are relatively new and a re-design of the car park area and landscaping, including rain gardens, was carried out in 2008/2009. High quality facilities include public toilets with a beach shower and furniture in the form of bench seats and tables. In 2016, a remaining area of gravelled car parking near the entrance was sealed.

There are currently no further programmed works for this area, aside from ongoing maintenance and potentially carrying out line marking to further define the recently sealed car parking area. Ongoing maintenance includes lawn mowing, garden maintenance and edge control and maintenance of the seven tracks (including beach accesses). Public toilets are also maintained three times daily in the peak season and twice daily for the remainder of the year.

*Identified Issues:*

Improved maintenance in the form of more infill planting has been identified as needed.

Car parking capacity in this reserve does not meet demand in the summer months, although this is not currently a concern at other times of the year. As part of the overall traffic assessments of the Mangawhai Township for the Mangawhai Town Plan project, this area was reviewed by MWH Engineers in terms of allowing for more car parking capacity. There are currently 107 car parks available and two options were developed to determine how parking capacity could be increased, one option adding 41 car parks and the other adding an additional 86 car parks.

However, at this stage, it is considered that funds should be spent on implementing the smaller scale of the two options, as well as increasing walking or cycling connections to the Heads Recreation Reserve. Improving walking and cycling connections to this area from Alamar Crescent along the coast to the Heads is a priority over increasing the number of car parks.



### 2.1.3 Alamar Crescent esplanade area



*Alamar Crescent esplanade area*

Alamar Crescent leads to an esplanade reserve area along the coastal edge between Mangawhai Heads Road and North Avenue. This space offers a range of activities along the waterfront, including two boat ramps, a camping ground, playground, Mangawhai Fishing and Boating Club, picnic tables, public toilets and walking connections both north and south along the coastal esplanade reserve. It is a popular area for locals and tourists to visit and access the harbour.

Mangawhai Heads Holiday Park holds a lease agreement with Council to run a campground on Council-owned land, while Mangawhai Boating and Fishing Club and Mangawhai Heads Volunteer Lifeguard Service also hold lease agreements with Council for clubrooms and a storage shed in this vicinity. Council maintenance includes mowing of the esplanade reserve area, some edge control and walkway maintenance and cleaning the public toilet facilities three times daily over the peak season and twice daily during the remainder of the year.

#### *Identified Issues:*

As this area becomes congested over busy periods, the Mangawhai Traffic Management and Public Space Strategy 2016 (**Attachment 1**) has been developed to manage existing and anticipated future demands on this area by visitors over the next 10-15 years. The issues it seeks to improve are pedestrian safety, lack of day visitor and boat trailer parking, traffic congestion and road safety particularly in the peak summer period. At the same time the plan recognises the public desire not to over-develop this area and to retain the simplicity and low key feel. Feedback on the Strategy reinforced this desire by the community not to over develop the area just to cater for the peak summer period.

Phase One of this strategy is in the early stages of being implemented. Anticipated works include; a reduction of the speed zone, improvements in trailer boat parking, vegetation clearance and more clearly defined pedestrian connections between the two boat ramps.



This strategy has indicated a phased approach be rolled out to address concerns appropriate to growth, providing a pragmatic response, whereby each initiative can build on each other. However, long term plans for this area have currently remained undecided, due to lack of public support and funding commitment. However, future improvements could be made to the location of the existing Sellars Land boat ramp (located at the bottom of North Avenue) and the relatively underdeveloped reserve area/unformed legal road near the campground office. Pedestrian safety could also be improved by development of a path along Alamar Crescent, however this would need to be balanced against reduced boat trailer parking along the road edge.

Similar to Mangawhai Heads Recreation Reserve, there is provision in this area for concessions over the peak holiday season, and Council will continue to allow mobile businesses to provide services such as the sale of food or hiring of coastal activities. This is managed through a concessions process. However, any further discussion of allowing permanent commercial activities in this space would need to be investigated and may not be possible through the Reserves Act. Therefore, seasonal concessions are considered most appropriate. Commercial activity could potentially be provided for on any adjacent private land subject to the private market and resource consent conditions.

#### **2.1.4 Mangawhai Domain**

The Mangawhai Domain is a community-owned facility managed by an elected committee. The Domain is home to numerous sport and recreational facilities including: tennis, soccer, dog clubs, organised fitness classes, community gardens, a playground and walks. It also has hall facilities for hire and holds an annual summer gala.

All funding for maintenance and upkeep is raised by the Committee and volunteers, mostly through an Annual Gala Day held in January every year which raises a large percentage of the costs needed for annual maintenance and minor capital improvements. The Committee also receives funding on an ad hoc basis for major capital works. The Committee consciously works to improve the playground, walking tracks and the landscape.

The Rose Madsen Cottage is a Council-owned building leased to Mangawhai Plunket and Mangawhai Toy Library and is considered a key asset within the Mangawhai community. This is not part of the Domain, however access is via the Domain and the Domain Committee and Council have co-operated to make it more accessible and usable by the community. The lawns around the Cottage are mowed by Council's contractors.

Recent upgrades to the Mangawhai Domain complex include expanding the number of tennis courts available and sealing a portion of the driveway entrance. There are currently plans for Mangawhai Football Club to establish a home ground and facilities at Mangawhai Domain, to enable the Club's growing membership to have increased opportunities which align with Northern Football Federation's competition. These anticipated facilities include; quality football and training pitches, changing rooms, club rooms and storage.

Mangawhai Football Club, Mangawhai Domain Committee and Mangawhai Community Trust are working together in regards to establishing the above desired facilities.

*Identified Issues:*

It has been identified that there is a lack of future planning for the Domain space by the Mangawhai Domain Committee as the development of additional facilities potentially compromises and reduces the amount of field space available. For example, Council received feedback during the 2016/2017 Annual Plan process from Northland Football Federation requesting additional land purchase for sports fields in the Mangawhai area as development at the Domain was potentially compromising the football sports fields. However, the Domain Committee now appears supportive and proactive in working with Mangawhai Football Club to achieve their vision.

Long term planning for the Domain and its uses is considered necessary to ensure any future development of the facilities best utilise the available space, particularly as the Domain is a key recreation area for Mangawhai Village. However, key to highlight is that land is owned and governed by a community group, although Council can contribute some financial contributions to this project, as it is a result of growth that these recreational facilities are warranted.



*Mangawhai Domain*

## 2.2 Other key parks and reserves

### 2.2.1 Fagan Place recreational area



*Fagan Place Recreational Area*

Fagan Place is located within the Wood Street shopping area in Mangawhai Heads. Located behind the main shopping area on Fagan Place, there is car parking, a community hall and a playground. It adjoins the Council-owned Mangawhai social housing complex. The community hall and playground are located on Council land held in fee-simple i.e. not held under the Reserves Act. The Council property also has an area formerly used for waste water dispersal but has been redundant since 2010 when the Mangawhai Community Wastewater Scheme became operational.

#### *Identified Issues:*

Feedback from the Wood Street community planning workshop is that the area can become relatively busy in terms of parking congestion and the current layout is not conducive to the playground being well-utilised. Furthermore the playground is old and tired. Renewal of the playground has been delayed until the future of this area is determined. Concept plans have been developed to review existing movements and how the area could be potentially improved. It is acknowledged that this green space is a strategic asset that could be enhanced as part of a re-design. Connecting this recreational area and public space through to the existing shops and any future commercial or mixed use development is key. Additionally, connecting this area to the coast at Robert Street could be significantly enhanced.

### 2.2.2 Robert Street esplanade area

The Robert Street reserve, although small in area, is key to linking the Wood Street shopping area to the harbour walkway. It includes a small parking area and furniture in the form of picnic table and bench seating. It connects to a large area of unformed road to the south that has future development potential.

South of the Robert Street esplanade area, Northland Regional Council is proposing to create additional mooring space which can be accessed from esplanade reserve from Findlay and Eveline Streets. Council

can work to provide on land facilities that may be required here, including ensuring pedestrian access and dinghy storage.

### **2.2.3 Lincoln Street esplanade area**

The Lincoln Street esplanade reserve includes a boat launching area, small car park and green space linking the residential area to the harbour. Walkway linkages are currently planned to be enhanced to residential areas and adjoining esplanade connections. This boat ramp facility has limited use at low tide.

#### *Identified Issues:*

This esplanade reserve area is currently relatively underdeveloped, and has the potential to provide for improved coastal access and recreation, which could potentially include improved boat access or a floating pontoon. Any future development of this area will require the production of a concept plan as per requirement of the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan.

### **2.2.4 Pearson Street and Kainui Street esplanade reserve area**

The Pearson Street and Kainui Street Esplanade Reserve areas are key coastal access points in the Mangawhai Village, connecting residential properties to the harbour and water views. Kainui Street has a small undeveloped boat ramp area and kayak access to the harbour, while Pearson Street Esplanade Reserve offers views to the wider harbour.

#### *Identified Issues:*

These reserves have the potential to connect coastal walking access in both directions, further south to the Mangawhai Tavern and further north linking the recently constructed Back Bay walkway. Both linkages are still dependent on missing esplanade reserve or links to still be vested in Council. However, the Mangawhai Tracks Charitable Trust is currently investigating connecting the Back Bay walkway to Kainui Street and Pearson Street Reserves via a boardwalk.

Similar to Lincoln Street Esplanade, the Pearson and Kainui Reserves are relatively underdeveloped and could provide increased and enhanced access to enjoy and access the Harbour, through enhanced boat or kayak access facilities. A development plan would be required as part of any enhancement of this area, particularly in relation to car parking, under the Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour Reserves Management Plan. Cars are currently able to access these reserves, which causes damage to the grassed area over the winter or wet periods. Future enhancements may include restricting car access to these esplanade reserves.

### **2.2.5 Mangawhai Cemetery**

Mangawhai's cemetery is located on Tara Road on Council-administered reserve land. The management of the cemetery is carried out by the community, which includes booking sites and digging graves. The lawns at the site are maintained by Council's maintenance contractors. It is considered that there is sufficient space here for growth as currently only approximately 20% of the land is utilised. However, some of the site is steep and is not suitable for burials.

#### *Identified Issues:*

Signage for the cemetery is currently lacking. Therefore entranceway signage and gardens could be installed, potentially in partnership between Council and the community group that manages the area. In addition, a boundary adjustment may be needed due to some graves encroaching on private property.

### 2.3 Recreational facilities

Nine significant recreational locations have been identified in the Mangawhai area, providing a range of facilities and activities. These are in a mix of Council and community ownership, with some facilities located within key reserve areas, some holding lease arrangements on Council land and others situated on land outside of Council ownership.

These recreational facilities have been identified and mapped in order to grasp the spread of available opportunities, but also any gaps. By identifying the locations, connection points between recreational locations are able to be assessed.

The nine key recreational facilities/locations within the Mangawhai Township have been identified as:

- 1 Mangawhai Domain;
- 2 Mangawhai Village;
- 3 Mangawhai Beach School;
- 4 Mangawhai Community Park;
- 5 Mangawhai Bowling Club;
- 6 Mangawhai Golf Club and Course;
- 7 Fagan Place;
- 8 Alamar Crescent; and
- 9 Mangawhai Heads Surf Beach.

Recreational facilities table (**Attachment 2**) details these locations, providing a full list of activities available in each place. These are also displayed visually on Map 1 (**Attachment 3**), showing Mangawhai's recreational locations.

#### *Identified issues:*

While Council's focus has remained on coastal and harbour fringe recreational areas, community-organised recreational facilities within the township have developed through community organisation and fundraising. Council has supported these community facilities where possible. However, there has been a hands off approach from Council towards developing Council-owned and run active recreational facilities, such as a sports complexes or swimming pools. This is discussed in more detail in relation to the evaluation of future demand, later in this report.

Additionally, there are some significant connectivity, or pedestrian and cycling linkages, lacking between these recreational facilities. Recommended connections linking these spaces are also included later in this report.

In terms of a recreational facility that could be investigated in terms of servicing a growing population in Mangawhai, is the potential need for a public library. Mangawhai's current library is community managed, and receives some support from Council in terms of management and book sharing. However, this service may need to be reviewed or upgraded if the population continues to grow and places pressure on this facility. A public library, owned and managed by Council could provide for a larger space or location, and



additional services such as computers and wireless internet connection. Mangawhai Community Park could be a potential location for such a facility, if it were required. Or alternatively, the existing Mangawhai or Kaiwaka library facilities could be expanded to meet a larger population demand.

Furthermore, a significant recreational facility that is currently being investigated by a community group is the re-establishment of a wharf at the harbour's edge on Moir Street in Mangawhai Village. Historically there was a wharf in this location, and there is strong community interest in re-establishing this. Feasibility plans are still to be developed. There may be some issues around car parking and suitable access that would need to be worked through with Council.

## 2.4 Connectivity

Mangawhai currently has approximately 40 walkways and tracks located around the township, through bush, coastal and residential areas. There is a strong walking community that utilises Mangawhai's walking tracks and are also proactive in terms of building and maintaining them. Mangawhai has an annual 'walking weekend' that draws visitors to the area to enjoy the range of tracks and rural and coastal views. Furthermore, there is a key number of community members encouraging cycling around the township: a 'Bike Bus' has been organised which ensures school children can cycle to school with the security of others, bike tracks have been established within Mangawhai Community Park and a recreational walkway and cycleway is being developed by the community on esplanade reserve. Increased opportunities for safe walking and cycling around Mangawhai are considered important, to encourage alternative methods of transport around the township.

Tracks on Council-owned land table (**Attachment 4**) shows a list of all Council tracks within the Mangawhai Township, determining their classification and level of service. Map 2 (**Attachment 5**) visually displays Mangawhai's walkway connections, showing both Council walkways, community established walkways, the Department of Conservation Cliff Top Walk and the National Te Araroa Trail which runs the length of the township.

At the current point in time, there are numerous walkway connections between residential areas in Mangawhai Heads and the coast. However, this tends to dwindle further south of Mangawhai Village. Connections to the harbour from both of the commercial areas also lack a connection with the coast. While there is often footpath access between recreational areas or shopping centres, the connections could be improved for both safety and ease of access, to enable more people to walk or cycle rather than drive.

In addition to established tracks and footpaths, esplanade reserves or links provide key connections around the coastal fringe of the Mangawhai Township. Esplanade access can be acquired by Council during a subdivision consent process, with land owners providing either a 20 metre wide reserve vested in Council or narrower access strip by easement on their land, which is publicly accessible. Esplanade access can allow for both walking access around, and direct access to, the harbour via public facilities such as boat/kayak launching.

These areas not only enable public access to the coast, but also can be seen to maintain or enhance the natural functioning of the sea, enhance aquatic habitats, protect associated natural values and mitigate natural hazards.

*Identified Issues:*



Connectivity between Mangawhai's parks and reserves and key recreational facilities is often lacking or could be significantly improved for ease of access and safety.

- High use areas such as the causeway track between Mangawhai Village and Mangawhai Heads is currently not wide enough to comfortably allow for both walking and cycling and also meets an unformed section of road corridor opposite Mangawhai Museum where there is little delineation between the road and the area that pedestrians or cyclists occupy.
- For people accessing different areas within Mangawhai Community Park, there is currently no clear pedestrian access from the Activity Zone to the Museum. Unless they utilise one of the tracks within the park itself, there is no formed footpath on Molesworth Drive to connect the two.
- The walkway/cycleway track established inside the harbour inlet by the causeway bridge has great potential but currently poses access issues. It does not safely connect to pedestrian or cyclist access across the road and there is no clear or safe crossing point across the road.
- Access to the harbour from both commercial centres on Wood Street and Moir Street is limited, with the lack of clear signage and established walking connections to enable people to access these areas.
- Access around the coastline is often inconsistent and reliant on low tide to walk from one key reserve to another.
- Public feedback on developing a formed walkway along the Alamar Crescent esplanade reserve was not positive. Getting the balance right between formed and unformed walking connections, especially along the coast, is critical.

At this point in time, cycling access through the township has no formal provision, where cyclists either occupy the narrow road corridor or the footpath. Therefore this infrastructure is not conducive to cycling. While the causeway track allows for cycling access, it is not wide enough to comfortably and formally accommodate both walking and cycling. This has already been acknowledged in the Transportation Report produced by MWH, indicating potential cycle access in the form of a shared path from Mangawhai Village to Mangawhai Heads and cycleways on Wood Street, and Moir Street. Additionally, more inclusive access is desired for non-motorised users, including provisions for push chairs, wheel chairs and mobility scooters.

While esplanade reserves or links provide key connections around the coastline, there are still a number of key connection points missing. There are approximately 10 missing esplanade linkages along the township's immediate coastline connecting Mangawhai Heads and Mangawhai Village. Gaining public access to these is critical to creating a comprehensive link around the immediate Mangawhai coastline for the public to access the coast and allowing both walking tracks and additional public facilities to be established here. In addition to this, a number of areas that have existing esplanade reserves or linkages have become subject to encroachment from private landowners. This seeks to threaten public access to the coast in some areas, as it appears privatised and unwelcoming.

Walkways and tracks throughout Mangawhai are generally lacking in maintenance as there is currently no agreed standard for how these are maintained and no detail given to specifications around edge control, metalling, step maintenance and vegetation clearance. As well as this, there is currently no clear definition or agreement between Council-owned and maintained and community-owned and maintained walking tracks. Existing walkway signage often differs between tracks and locations, and it is not always clearly

visible or numbered/named. Again, signage installed by Council and signage installed by community groups can be inconsistent.

## **2.5 Additional public spaces**

Finally, in addition to key parks and reserves or recreational facilities, there are a number of other public spaces within the Mangawhai Township that act as a gathering space or provide an opportunity to display and enhance Mangawhai's coastal aesthetic.

### **2.5.1 Town centres**

Mangawhai Village is the location of a number of popular public activities, such as commercial shops, the Mangawhai Library Hall, Saturday Market, Library and Art Gallery. There is some public space in this area, with seating directly outside of the main commercial area for people to sit and congregate. This area is well-utilised and busy over weekend periods, particularly when the market is on. This seating area is on private land, however Council's Parks and Community Team have recently taken over maintenance responsibility of this.

Also relevant to note here is the Mangawhai Village market, as it draws significant activity within the Village area, creating serious traffic and pedestrian issues. It is considered that a clear management of events is needed, whereby traffic management is in place, and parking and pedestrian access is accommodated for. Furthermore, as markets are a popular weekend activity in Mangawhai, it is determined that multiple market events are managed cohesively by Council and the community to ensure they are safe and enjoyable events for the community as a whole.

Similar to Mangawhai Village, predominant public space in the Wood Street shopping area is currently within private ownership, located around the eateries on Wood Street. In addition, there is a Council-owned playground and green public space off Fagan Place (behind Wood Street), which is seriously under-utilised and largely hidden from public view behind the main shops. It is acknowledged that this green space is a strategic asset that could be enhanced as part of a potential re-design. Connecting this recreational area and public space through to the existing shops and any future development is key.

### **2.5.2 Town entranceways**

Town entranceways from both northern, southern and western gateways currently lack any aligned approach, other than formal speed signage. This can be seen to provide a lacklustre entranceway into the township, with no hint at the area's identity. These areas are an opportunity to provide branded town signage and planting, while at the same time defining the boundaries of the township.

### **2.5.3 Gardens/vegetation**

Council has inherited and therefore maintains approximately 20 gardens differing in size around Mangawhai. A number of these gardens are located at the end of no exit residential streets or low profile areas, while others are located on traffic islands, high profile reserves and other visible public areas. Street trees within residential developments in the township also fall under Council's maintenance responsibility and create a significant impact in some residential areas. In addition, Council has also inherited a number of stormwater detention ponds in residential developments throughout the Mangawhai Township. Once installed by the developer, they have become the responsibility of Council to maintain. Gardens and

vegetation within the township provide an opportunity to not only reflect the area's coastal environment but also enhance biodiversity.

### Identified Issues

Currently public space within both shopping centres is relatively tired, unkempt and ad-hoc in terms of seating, planting and colour palette, with the exception of the newly refurbished area located at the back of the Wood Street shopping area. These public spaces are also restricted in size and location. However, as stated, both areas are predominantly on private land, somewhat restricting Council's input. Council could work with landowners and key users of this space to enhance and unify these areas. Following this, there are few other opportunities in Mangawhai Village for gaining or increasing public space aside from purchasing land. Again, as stated, additional public space in Fagan Place (Wood Street Shops) could be enhanced through a larger re-design of this vicinity.

The current process of Council taking responsibility of gardens within residential development could be considered not the best use of Council funds, as these gardens are in low profile residential areas. Instead, Council contractors could be focusing on developing and maintaining high profile key gardens within the township. Gardens in residential areas could be taken over by community groups if considered important to the area or removed. Additionally, stormwater detention ponds could be planted in a way to reduce ongoing maintenance, and allow for increased biodiversity.

Historical landscaping plans from subdivision development around Mangawhai are creating issues in terms of tree placement and size, affecting visibility and infrastructure. In particular in 'The Sands' development, too many trees were planted in close proximity to one another. Aside from street trees within some residential developments, streets trees on main roads within the township are generally lacking.

Identified issues for the additional public spaces discussed above are interrelated. Largely apparent is the lack of cohesive visual amenity for the Mangawhai Township, in terms of guidelines regarding colour palettes, planting, and public amenities such as seating. This enables an unkempt or ad-hoc style within public spaces, entrances to the township and gardens or vegetation.

## 3 Evaluation of future demand

Comparing what open space currently exists, against current and projected population growth, and existing community feedback, allows for Council to be proactive in determining where future demand may be identified and improvements can be made.

### 3.1 Population growth vs access to current reserves/facilities

Current and estimated permanent population growth<sup>2</sup>:

Year	2013	2016	2030	Projected Increase % 2016-2030
Mangawhai	2415	2682	4000	49%

Current provision of open space vs population:

<sup>2</sup> Figures are taken from Rob Bates' Mangawhai Town Plan growth data report.

Open Space Category	Area/Number	Area or number per 1000 residents (at 2016 population)	Area or number per 1000 residents (at projected population)
Reserves - Esplanade, recreational reserves, local purpose reserves	170 hectares	63 hectares/1000 residents	42.5 hectares/1000 residents
Playgrounds - Fagan Place - Mangawhai Activity Zone - Mangawhai Domain - Alamar Crescent	4 playgrounds and 1 skate park	1.9/1000 residents	1.25 hectares/1000 residents
Sports Grounds - Mangawhai Domain	7 hectares	2.6 hectares/1000 residents	1.75 hectares/1000 residents
Cemetery	4.8 hectares	1.8 hectares/1000 residents	1.2 hectares/1000 residents

There is approximately 170 hectares of reserve land in the Mangawhai area, representing 63 hectares per 1000 residents. The generally accepted national standard is 4 hectares per 1000 residents. Therefore in theory there is plentiful publically available reserve land in Mangawhai to meet current and future population demands. However, some areas such as Mangawhai Golf Club are included in this overall area and, although it is effectively private, it provides amenity for all as it contains wetlands, significant vegetation coverage and is protected from development.

### 3.2 Active recreational opportunities

For its current population size, Mangawhai has a wide range of recreational facilities available, particularly for less organised or passive recreational opportunities. However, it is acknowledged that as the population grows there may be a stronger demand for certain organised or active recreation facilities.

Demand for sports fields needs to be monitored. As identified above, there is limited sports fields for Mangawhai's growing population. The 2014 Northland Sports Facility Plan did not identify any shortage of sports fields in Mangawhai based on its current population size. However, should there be a demonstrated shortage, as indicated by Northland Football Federation and Mangawhai Football Club, the Plan suggests that prior to developing new fields or purchasing more land, explore:

- 1 Sports field partnerships with schools;
- 2 The cost/benefit of improving the quality of existing fields (i.e. improving drainage, sand carpeting etcetera);
- 3 Training (especially at junior level) on AstroTurf tennis courts (potentially located away from home grounds);
- 4 Operating on satellite sites (especially for junior competitions), making better use of existing field assets; and
- 5 Amalgamation of field sites (multi-sport models).

There also has been a demand for a public swimming pool in Mangawhai, with Council approached by a number of community groups. Mangawhai Beach School currently has a small pool available, however this is not considered large or deep enough for more advanced swimming lessons or recreational activity. It is identified that either Mangawhai Domain or Mangawhai Community Park could be ideal locations for a future public swimming pool: Mangawhai Domain as it is in close walking distance to the Beach School or Mangawhai Community Park as a pool would contribute to the Park as a hub for recreational activity.

### **3.3 Increased residential development**

As residential development in Mangawhai increases, this will place pressure on the existing open spaces and connections throughout the township.

It is proposed in the Land Development and Density Report for the Mangawhai Town Plan that intensified residential development is allowed for in the vicinity of Mangawhai Village and Wood Street Shopping Area. Therefore increased pedestrian and cycleway connections to the coast and surrounding area and enhanced public space need to be provided to manage higher demand or population within these nodes.

In addition, also relevant to note is the Estuary Estates Structure Plan area, comprised of approximately 130 hectares of land located on the upper Mangawhai Harbour. Estuary Estates seeks to provide for a commercial centre adjacent to Molesworth Drive to provide for future retail and service needs beyond those able to be provided for at the existing village centres. Beyond the retail/business centre, there are nodes of residential development at varying densities complemented by different forms of rural lifestyle development. The existing District Plan Chapter provides rules regarding the establishment of safe pedestrian linkages between areas of Estuary Estates, creation of a 'Village Green' and public spaces and planting and landscape treatments to retain the areas character and visual amenity. It is anticipated that as work on Estuary Estates Development progresses, Council Planners will ensure these actions align with the Mangawhai Town Plan's final recommendations, as this is such a significant portion of land. However, if planned, this would also allow for additional reserves or public spaces to meet the increased development.

Furthermore, substantial residential development is occurring on the Harbours edge of Estuary Drive, which is a location significant to local Maori. Maori settlement occurred here pre European settlement of the area, and the remains of a Pa Site are evident. As part of the planned residential development, this Pa Site is accessible by a network of paths and walking tracks, and interpretive signage will be installed to acknowledge and celebrate this historical site. In addition to this, walking tracks provide direct access to the Harbour, and will eventually connect with future residential development adjacent to this site, to allow for a cohesive walkway along the coast.

Due to Mangawhai's coastal environment, there are numerous archaeological sites located along the coast. Future mapping and recording of these sites are discussed and planned for in regards to the District Plan process, and are discussed as part of the Land Development and Density workstream report for the Mangawhai Town Plan.

### **3.4 Future Environmental Pressure**

When recognising future demand due to population growth, it is also noted that future environmental pressures need to be acknowledged if planning for further development of facilities along the coast.

As this report recommends that coastal recreational facilities and connections to them are enhanced in lieu of developing neighborhood reserves, coastal hazards such as erosion, flooding or sea level rise need to be considered. The following points should be considered to ensure new facilities in coastal areas are future proof;

- Consider the assets timeframe or life, and balance this against the cost outset
- Consider whether to spend significant amounts in a few areas or spread the costs/facilities
- Where possible, choose appropriate materials that are able to cope with coastal processes e.g. shell instead of concrete.

### **3.5 Community views**

Finally, key in identifying future demands and desires for public open space is the feedback already received via a community online survey and stakeholder interviews in early 2016. This survey feedback highlighted the importance of public coastal access in Mangawhai, as it is central to the area's identity. Key feedback included:

- Full pedestrian access from Mangawhai Village to the Heads surf beach was considered key.
- Ensure coastal access remains accessible to all and does not become privatised due to development along the coastline.
- There is a desire for alternative modes of transport to be encouraged, particularly as Mangawhai has an active community of walkers and cyclists.
- It is recognised that the township needs an improved approach to addressing weeds and roadside vegetation as well as street trees and gardens to enhance visual amenity.
- Finally, it was acknowledged there are great community facilities that serve as key public spaces and meeting points throughout Mangawhai, such as the Saturday Village Market.

## **4 Goals and recommendations**

In conclusion of this review, the following goals and associated recommendations are provided for to ensure that Mangawhai has safe, connected, well-maintained and defined public spaces that sustainably meet future growth.



## 4.1 Increasing connectivity

### 4.1.1 Key connections

The following areas are considered key connections that are currently lacking between significant coastal and recreational areas in Mangawhai. It is therefore recommended to implement these improved linkages. These connections could be both walking- and cycling-accessible, in order of priority:

- Causeway track between Mangawhai Village and Mangawhai Heads be upgraded to a wider path size and grade to accommodate for both walking and cycling;
- Extend footpath from opposite Mangawhai Community Park to the causeway bridge that is wide enough to allow for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Connecting Mangawhai Heads with Mangawhai Village via an all-tide coastal walkway;
- Install a footpath outside Mangawhai Activity Zone leading to Mangawhai Museum;
- Improved linkages between Fagan Place/Wood Street with coastal access at Robert Street;
- Connections to the coast in Mangawhai Village via loop tracks linking key recreational facilities to esplanade reserve areas;
- Improve connection from the walkway/cycleway located by Estuary Estates to the Back Bay walkway and the causeway tracks. Parking for this walkway/cycleway and therefore entrance to the track could potentially be accommodated for within the Estuary Estates development when consent conditions are negotiated;
- Development of a footpath along Alamar Crescent enabling safer pedestrian access to the boat ramp. However, this would need to be balanced against reduced boat trailer parking along the road edge.
- Pedestrian and/or cycleway connection over the Insley Street causeway bridge, connecting residential development and the Riverside Holiday Park on Black Swamp Road with Mangawhai.

It is also determined that there is further potential to continue working with the local community to develop missing links in Mangawhai's walkway network. Improving coastal walking connections would not only benefit visitors to the area, it would encourage locals to use alternative routes of travel around the township and enable people to further enjoy the coastal environment.

### 4.1.2 Missing esplanade links

As improving walkway connections along the coast is considered a priority, including connecting esplanade reserves or strips already in place to create full public access along the coastline, it is recommended that Council strategically acquires missing esplanade links through future subdivision consents. The identified missing links include esplanade areas on:

- Jordan Street;
- Estuary Drive;
- Molesworth Drive;
- Pearson Street;
- Moir Street; and

- Insley Street.

In addition, it is determined that Council be proactive in reclaiming and resolving esplanade encroachments by private landowners to ensure the coastal esplanade is accessible to all.

Both esplanade linkages and recommended future connections are displayed visually on Map 3 (**Attachment 6**).

#### **4.1.3 Walkway maintenance and signage**

It is strongly recommended that walkway maintenance be clearly detailed in future maintenance contracts to ensure specific standards for certain walkways around the Mangawhai township. First, it is recommended a hierarchy of Mangawhai's walkways be developed to determine which walkways are higher use or priority tracks. As part of this process, it would be beneficial to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between Council and Mangawhai Recreational Charitable Trust, Mangawhai Tracks Charitable Trust and any other community groups who are responsible for maintaining certain walkways around the township, determining who is responsible for the maintenance of them. Council's tracks, depending on their priority, would then be added to the maintenance contract. Priority tracks could then be further developed and/or maintained to meet New Zealand's short walk standard (SNZ HB 8630:2004)

It is also recommended that Council creates a signage plan to ensure signage for walkways throughout Mangawhai is consistent, naming is clear and is placed in visible locations. It is also recommended that Council works with Mangawhai Tracks Recreational Charitable Trust to align signage so there is a cohesive look for all. There could also be an opportunity to partner with local Iwi to provide bilingual signage in key locations with significance to Maori, and could also include interpretative signage sharing history or culture of the area.

Additionally, it is recommended that town entranceway signage also be included. This would provide an opportunity to install branded town signage and planting, sharing a sense of the town's identity while at the same time defining the boundaries of the township.

#### **4.2 Increasing leisure and recreation opportunities**

It has been identified that Mangawhai has a range of reserves and recreational facilities for the public to enjoy. As many of these reserves are located on Mangawhai's coastline, it is recommended that these areas be developed further in lieu of establishing neighbourhood reserves within the township. Further developing coastal reserves would align with the recommended all-tide access from Mangawhai Heads to Mangawhai Village. Therefore the following improvements are recommended:

- Smaller scale car parking improvements be carried out at Mangawhai Heads Recreation Reserve, by creating an additional 41 parking spaces by realigning the existing parking spaces. This is in alignment with MWH's Transportation review for the Mangawhai Town Plan
- Long term plans for the Alamar Crescent esplanade area considers developing the area of legal road near the Mangawhai Heads campground office to create additional open space, public toilet facilities, improved car parking and space for possible concessions and also considers relocating the Sellars Reserve boat ramp, as this would relieve existing pedestrian safety and roading concerns in this area and allow for the demand to be spread out across facilities. These measures fit within the three phased approach developed to recommend improvements for the wider Alamar Crescent area.

- In alignment with the Mangawhai Harbour Reserve Management Plan, development plans be established for Lincoln Street, Robert Street, Kainui and Pearson Street esplanade reserve areas to consider increased future use of these spaces, taking into account car parking, public toilet facilities, passive recreation and access to the harbour.

Furthermore, Council could continue to negotiate with developers in key esplanade connection areas in regards to developing public facilities in lieu of financial contributions. Examples include ensuring kayak or paddle board access to the harbour is provided for at certain locations, such as Pearson Street or Estuary Drive as these are facilities consistent with the Mangawhai Harbour Reserve Management Plan.

In addition to coastal reserve areas, it is recommended that Council continues to do the following:

- Monitor the demand for future sports fields;
- Council Officers work with Mangawhai Domain Committee in regards to future planning of this key space to ensure activities are in alignment; and
- Council Officers work with community groups to support and encourage where possible the establishment of further recreational opportunities.

#### **4.3 Enhancing and protecting landscape character**

Mangawhai has a relaxed coastal aesthetic that is central to the area's reputation and attraction. As growth continues, this has the potential to alter the shape of the town and therefore change this relaxed look and feel. It is therefore recommended that Council engages a suitable qualified person to develop guidelines, which:

- Identify the visual amenity and landscape values of the public spaces and settlement areas in question;
- Include detailed planting plans for the identified areas (including key gardens and town centres) with consideration to visual amenity, biodiversity enhancement and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles;
- Recommend street tree species (based on local character and amenity) for the Mangawhai area, enabling greater cohesiveness within the settlements and within new subdivisions as they occur;
- Prescribe design guidelines for landscape treatment within new development; and
- Carry out a maintenance review of the principal reserves and open spaces and existing areas included in the maintenance contract. This review would consider current maintenance regimes and determine if these could be rationalised i.e. if periodically wet and unmowable areas could be retired and planted with appropriate species thus reducing the cost of maintenance and benefiting ecological and visual values.

#### **Attachments:**

- 1 Mangawhai Traffic Management and Public Space Strategy (Opus, 12 April 2016)
- 2 Recreational facilities table
- 3 Map 1: Mangawhai – recreational locations

- 4 Tracks on Council-owned land table
- 5 Map 2: Mangawhai – walkway connections
- 6 Map 3: Mangawhai – esplanade connections and recommended future connections

draft