

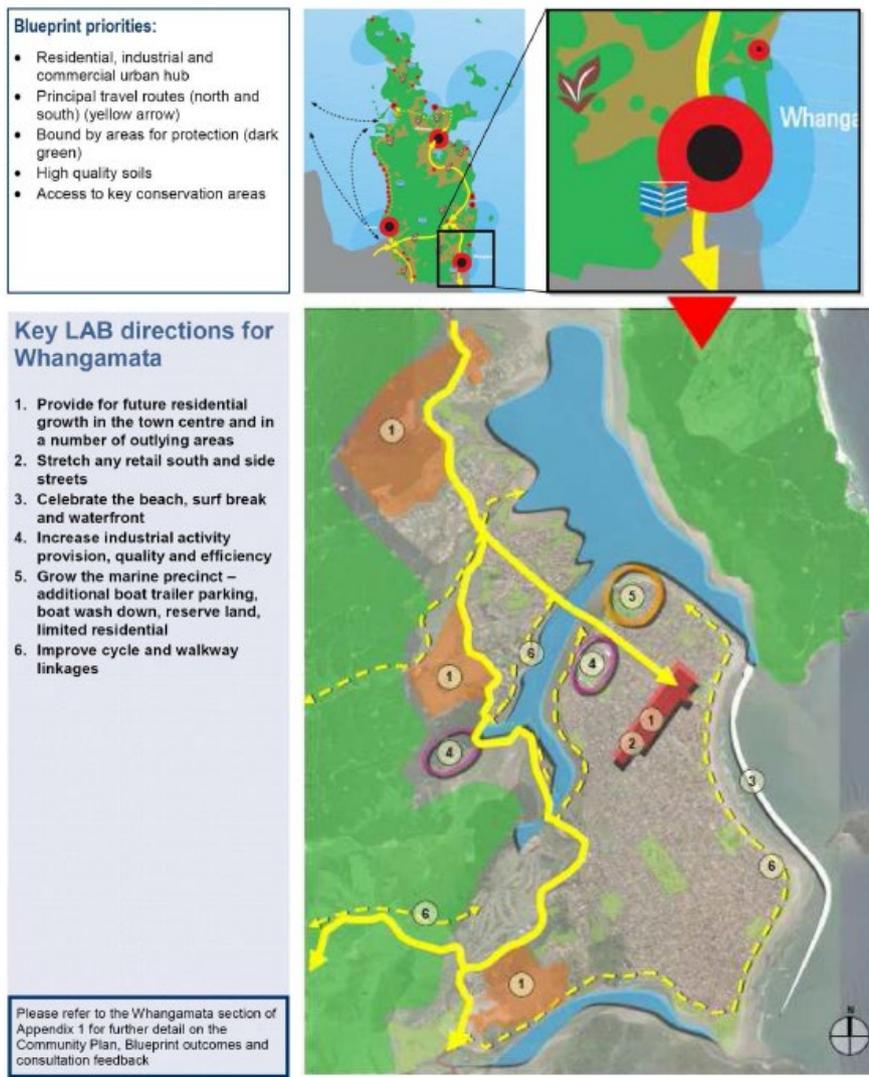
Whangamata Boardwalk Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What planning and consultation has taken place to come up with the proposed routes?

This project has been a priority for the Whangamata Community since 2011. At this time Council undertook a district wide consultation process on future development of the district through the Local Government Act 2002. The resulting outcome from this process was for communities to set a future vision for various towns and settlements across the district which culminated in a document called the Coromandel Blueprint. This blueprint was endorsed by local Communities (as they had driven the direction), and then adopted by Community Boards and Council. A summary of the 'key moves' identified by the Whangamata Community under this plan is below and emphasises under point 6 improved cycle and walkway linkages around the harbour, as an acknowledgement to improving liveability and connectivity for residents and visitors.

4.5.1 Whangamata settlement

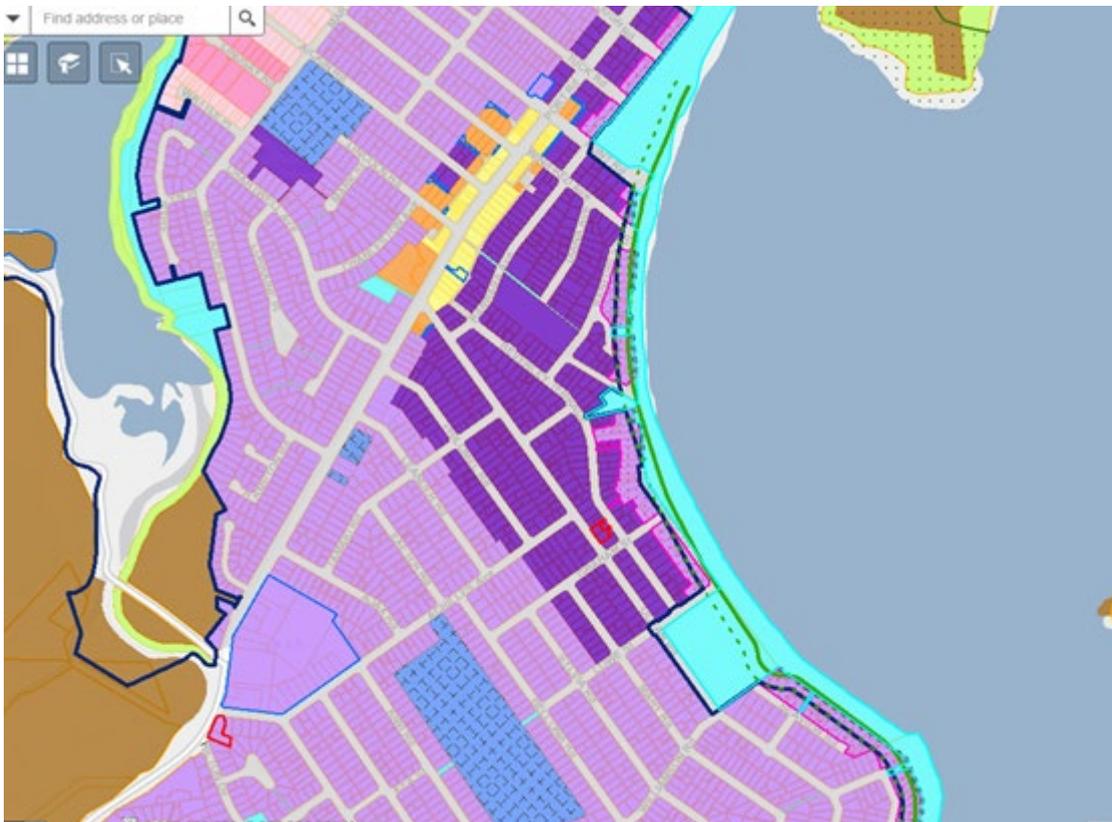


This Blueprint document went on to inform the review of our planning rules via the District Plan (Under the Resource Management Act). The amended District plan, following mandatory consultation was adopted on 6 April 2016. The plan deals with (amongst other things) coastal development, erosion and protection of our outstanding natural features, balanced against the need for individuals and communities to develop

into liveable communities. The adopted District Plan has zoned the majority of the ocean beach at Whangamata as a Recreation Passive Zone (see map below Blue area): The objectives and policies of this zone seek to limit development of buildings, retain open space, enhance amenity and protect and enhance indigenous vegetation. Section 53 of the district plan describes the zone purpose as:

“The Recreation Passive Zone provides a resource management umbrella under which individual reserves can be developed and used in accordance with their reserve management plans. It enables a range of informal use facilities and lower-scale development of recreation grounds, including picnic areas, playgrounds, community halls and public facilities, landscaping, walking tracks and amenities such as public toilets, carparks and signs. While some of the reserves in this Zone will have very high levels of local use, others will be limited due to their location or specific function under their reserve management plan.”

The Rules (Rule 2) of this zone – Goes on to clarify further the permitted baseline for this zone (i.e. what environmental affects/enhancements are anticipated). The proposed boardwalk project is defined as an ‘informal recreation’ development, with the associated seating, picnic tables, showers and rubbish bins defined as “public amenity’. Rule 2 under Section 53.4 of this zone permits boardwalks without the need for resource consent, provided specific standards are met which limits excavation for retaining walls.



Following community direction in 2011, The local Whangamata Community Board, endorsed by Council proposed a budget for the boardwalk project as part of the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan. All Councils have to undertake consultation every three years as part of the Long Term planning Process, this is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act. TCDC advertised this process in local papers and website and social media as well as directing people to view the 2018-2028 Long Term Plan consultation document. You can have a look at this document on our website on the right hand side “2018 Long Term Plan Consultation Document” (tcdc.govt.nz/ltp). This document highlighted “Major projects happening in the Whangamata area” on page 25 and 26, and included Whangamata Beach Boardwalk Extensions. A more targeted handout was made available to community groups and at Council Offices for the public which featured “Proposed Projects in the Whangamata Community Board Area”. There was also an advertisement in the Coastal News which directed people to find out more on Easter Sunday (1 April) at the

Whangamata Market or to visit www.tcdc.govt.nz/ltp. And there was a public meeting on Saturday, 17 March 2018 from 3pm to 5pm at the Whangamata Memorial Hall.

Following support and submissions on the project through the 2018-2028 LTP. We are now running a more targeted consultation on the proposed route alignment with advertising on Council's website, email newsletters, and social media. We're encouraging people to send us their feedback until the end of the month. Letters were sent on 20 December 2019 to all adjoining property owners from the surf club through to Hunt Road.

Has an Environmental Impact study or report for this proposal been done? Is a resource consent required?

As mentioned above, TCDC's District plan provides for the walkway as a permitted activity and therefore an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) is not a legislative requirement. This is generally due to the positive social (and in this case ecological) benefits and limited environmental effects that walkways are deemed to have. Additionally, no Regional Council consents are required for similar reasons, due to the anticipated benefits of improved connectivity, positivity social and environmental outcomes of walkways, provided that any walkway is compliant with section 5.1.5 conditions of a permitted activity under the Waikato Regional Plan. These conditions primarily control the effects of sediment into waterways due to earthworks. A construction management plan will be required when we get to the tender process for any contractors undertaking works to ensure these standards are met.

Notwithstanding the above, we are very keen to ensure that the boardwalk results in a positive environmental effect on the dune system. We have engaged Jim Dahm who is Waikato Regional Council and this districts leading Coastal Scientist. Jim has been involved from the project initiation, and has over 30 years of experience on coastal processes along the east coast of the Coromandel as well as being heavily involved in Dune restoration over the years.

Jim's comments regarding the concept plan are as follows:

- At present, the shoreline backing Whangamata Ocean Beach is in dynamic equilibrium, fluctuating backwards and forwards over time (periods of erosion and other periods of recovery) but with no long term trend for permanent seaward advance or landward erosion
- The accessway (as we mapped in field) has been located to avoid the shoreline zone which is presently subject to periodic wave erosion associated with these decadal shoreline fluctuations
- In the longer term (next 50-100 years and beyond), there is likely to be some permanent shoreline retreat in response to projected sea level rise. The path can be gradually moved landward over time as required to avoid this erosion; but is likely to be fine where proposed for the next 2-3 decades at least.
- With appropriate location and design the pathway will be an overall positive for dune restoration and management for various reasons

We have also engaged an archaeologist who will be undertaking an assessment, and I will send this through once completed. We are also talking with three identified Iwi that have mana whenua over the area. Iwi are supportive in principal, but I have yet to get formal feedback on the proposed concept design. We are also talking to the Department of Conservation.

Our Council has a dedicated Coastal Management Coordinator, Tanya Patrick, who has budget for initial dune planting along the Esplanade this year. There is on-going funding for dune planting and Tanya takes a very proactive approach working alongside coastal communities and organisations such as Whangamata Beach Care, DOC and Waikato Regional Council to ensure our dunes are managed and protected.

What is the budget?

The budget for this project in total is \$474,000. \$295,000 this year and \$179,000 next year.

Has a cost evaluation report or cost/benefit analysis been done?

A needs/cost/benefit analysis is undertaken as part of the project initiation documentation for the Long Term Planning process, and has to be adopted by Community Boards and Council. A summary of this process can be found for this project in the attachment. This captures the problem/issues being addressed, options and risks etc as well as a high-level cost estimate. As you are probably aware, provision of social services such as water, waste water, community parks, rubbish etc do not always have a positive NPV (Net Present Value) as direct monetary values of projects are sometimes difficult to define and can occur over generational time periods. Notwithstanding this, the requirement for provision of services efficiently and effectively is guided by the Local Government Act 2002. TCDC (and all other Council's) are required to adopt procurement policies that ensure works undertaken are subject to market competition through an open tender process or minimum of three written quotes. This policy is a formal policy and signed off by Council to ensure works are procured as defined by this policy.

This project will be subject to a tender process to ensure cost effectiveness in delivery by the market. As part of the discipline of this tender process, it is mandatory for an engineer to check off the reasonableness of any market cost estimates received to ensure we meet the objectives of our procurement policy and the sections of the LGA outlined above. We are not at the detailed design stage for this project yet, however once we have a detailed design, we will be undertaking a tender process as outlined.

As a matter of interest, there is evidence nationally and internationally, that public investment in public open space and/or proximity of "green infrastructure" introduced in urban/suburban environments can result in up to 16% more house prices. An Australian study of 2.5million house sales between 2000 and 2010 improved property sales by \$32-\$57,000 per property.

What is the expected increase in pedestrian and cycle traffic along the proposed walkway?

There is an expectation that the project will result in an increase in foot and cycle traffic over time, particularly over the two-week period during the summer holidays, however exact estimates have not been done.

Has the increased ongoing cost of rubbish clean-up been considered or budgeted for, including cleaning up broken bottles, etc as well as a general maintenance budget?

It is not anticipated that increased costs of rubbish collection would be generated by the walkway in its own right, however costs to keep Whangamata and our other communities clean and serviced with rubbish collection are subject to yearly contractual reviews and amended to meet peak and average visitor/residential numbers. A review of rubbish volumes, peak visitor number statistics and traffic counts help inform our District wide rubbish service annually. Some additional bins will be provided at the Esplanade, however we do not plan on adding significant number of bins along the path, as this can influence negative behaviour and may detract from the natural character of the environment.

What is the effect on the dotterels?

We are in discussions with the Department of Conservation, who at this point are supportive of the proposal. The intent is that for there to be no negative impacts on nesting dotterels and over time we hope that the project will have a very real and positive impact for the birds. The hope is that with additional planting and restricting pedestrians/bikes to one route (rather than unrestricted dune access as is the situation at present) this will create longer term sustainable nesting sites.

If the walkway is elevated, by how much?

The intent is for the walkway to sit on top of the dune as far as practicable. In some instances, we may have to sit the boardwalk with joists and bearers at ground level, in other areas there may be a need to

have the joists and bearers on piles that sit above the dune up to half a metre possibly. We still have to work through the details of this- however an example of Ship Creek on the west coast could give you an idea of how it may look:



The walkway will “provide opportunity for roping off large areas of the dune so that a programme of restoration can continue.” Can this not be done anyway?

Yes, this can be done anyway, however the walkway provides a single access across the dune tops, meaning that any areas to be roped off would not hinder the ability for the public to continue to access the dune along a defined walkway.

Use of the walkway after hours may increase, however if there are activities that are causing nuisances to adjoining residents how will this be managed?

We will be looking at the design further and removing seating/tables areas for people along the northern end in response to this. Following examples in New Zealand and Overseas, what tends to happen in these situations is that with increased use and passive surveillance, it changes the environment from a place undesirables go to hang out as there is no one watching, to a much more public space and reduced areas for areas to hide etc. Police would be first port of call for nuisance behaviour. Council’s noise by-law officers respond to stereo noise and are on call 24/7.

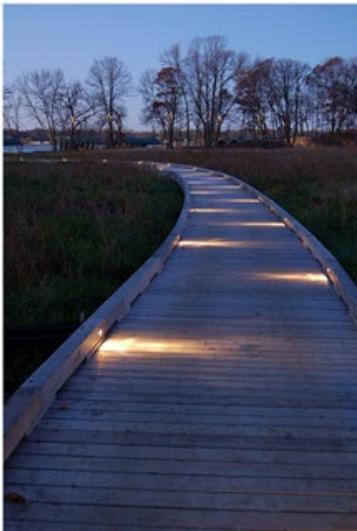
What will be done about sand blowing across, or scouring out under the proposed walkway?

The solution to this is to plant the dunes to reduce wind-blown sand. Further details of how much excavation will be needed at this location, we may look at this section of the walkway again to limit disruption of the existing planting. The intent is that we re-plant any exposed dune as soon as the excavations finish, to reduce this risk.

What are the effects of the boardwalk being “well lit”?

The intention is that at the more Urban end (the Esplanade) there is some ground level lighting provided. This area is already well lit by streetlighting. At the northern end and the dune area there is no

intention to provide lighting. Examples could include the following:



Dune re-shaping is not the natural erosion process and could spread grass seed. Will machinery be needed to construct?

We're seeking Jim's expertise in this regard. There are numerous examples of where dune systems, with appropriate management following some re-shaping and planting can greatly reduce grass seed (see attached presentation). The machinery that may be used has not been decided, as planning is still at the concept stage and we're asking for public feedback on the proposal until 31 January. However, similar boardwalks have been built with a combination of hand-held tools and small vehicles such as Bobcats or mini-diggers. It is likely that most of the work on the dunes would use hand-help tools. The works along the Esplanade, however, may require a Bobcat for dune reshaping.

What modelling has been done to show what happens during storm events?

As stated above and in the attached presentation – the alignment has been informed by coastal scientist Jim Dahm. The walkway will be located primarily away from the active dune erosion zone. Coastal erosion processes occurring in the early 1990's and early 2000's, resulted in some significant scouring at the Esplanade end. We intend to keep the boardwalk as close to the landward side of the dune system in this location. Any erosion that would threaten the walkway, would also pose a threat to other infrastructure including the road, Sand push-ups and bags are likely to be deployed in this case, however long term solution to this is to re-plant and stabilise the dune system, which is an important outcome of this project.