Weld Road Reserve Coastal Shared Pathway and Swing Bridge

For NPDC

Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment V5

(amended visual effects assessment scale included shown as tracked changes)

January 2024

Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ngāmotu
New Plymouth District Council

CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

1 INTRODUCTION

New Plymouth District Council (NPDC) landscape architect (planning and design lead), Renée Davies has undertaken a Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment for the proposed coastal shared pathway and associated reinstated swing bridge at and around the headland of Weld Road Reserve, Oākura, New Plymouth. NPDC is the applicant for the resource consent, however Renée has been involved in numerous site visits and undertaken community consultation in relation to the site and proposed development and therefore is well placed to be able to document and assess the visual and landscape effects of the proposal.

The proposal includes:

- Construction of 140m of rock sea wall;
- Removal of approximately 240 m2 of mixed native/exotic treeland, grassland and dune land vegetation for the pathway construction;
- A 2m wide concrete pathway at crest of seawall and 12 total width of walkway and rock revetment; and
- 1,150m^3 of earthworks including fill volumes of approximately 230m^3.
- Replacement of the Ahu Ahu bridge extending over Whenuariki Stream and connecting Ahu Ahu Road to Weld Road Reserve.
- Removal/or trimming of approximately 28 m2 of mixed native/exotic treeland, and removal of 150 m2 grassland and shrubland and potentially some dune land vegetation for the bridge replacement construction (70m2 on the western bridge side and 80m2 on the eastern);

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a landscape and visual effects assessment of the proposed new coastal shared pathway and swing bridge reinstatement situated at the end of Ahu Ahu Road and Weld Road Lower, within the coastal environment and at the base of Weld Road Reserve. This report will focus on the visual and landscape impact of the proposed development in relation to the site's location within a coastal zone and adjacent to a waahi taonga site as identified under the New Plymouth Operative (ODP), Proposed District Plan (PDP) and the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki (CPT).

1.2 Proposal

The site is located at the end of both Ahu Ahu road and Lower Weld Road and adjacent to Weld Road Reserve.

Weld Road Reserve forms a small section of approximately 160m within a broader walking network that includes both formed and informal sections along this coastline.

It connects to a paper road access from Weld Road that crosses the Timaru Stream bridge and connects with Timaru Road lower. This walkway is used by both pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrians also access and utilise the 3km walk along Sandy beach (south of Weld Road Reserve) to Lower Greenwood Reserve (affected by tides).

There is public access around the headland of Weld Road Reserve via the beach. This is approximately a 1-2 minute walk. At very high tides wave action can extend right up to the base of the headland/cliff. This is dependent on the state of the beach and stream mouth variability.

As such for periods of time some high tides can temporarily prevent public access along the beach and driftwood beach debris can affect access along the beach.

Figure 1 Photograph looking north showing headland and driftwood debris on beach blocking easy access along beach

Figure 2 Photo of swing bridge (before storm damage) looking east from western stream side.2: Photograph looking north showing headland and driftwood debris on beach blocking easy access long beach and

A number of options have been explored for formalised shared pathway access between Ahu Ahu Road and Lower Weld Road. These include potential purchase of land, other routes within the reserve and coastal structures at the base of the headland.

There are no esplanade reserves along the Whenuariki stream directly to the north of Weld Road Reserve headland, which means any access from the western side of the Ahu Ahu swing bridge that is outside of the reserve would be required to go on private land.

Options have also been explored in relation to providing a formalised walkway that follows the route of the steep informal access track. Due to the steep topography and archaeology along this track, formalised walkway structures in this location are not feasible. This is reinforced by the earlier archaeological report (September 2008).

The proposed coastal shared pathway around the base of the headland has been assessed by Council as being the least disruptive way of providing safe shared pathway access around the headland to connect the existing public access connections.

In addition to the shared pathway, due to the existing Ahu Ahu road swing bridge being destroyed by a storm, reinstatement of the swing bridge has been included in the project works. It is proposed to increase the free board height of the bridge (to mitigate against future damage from storm surges) and at the request of hapū, to take the revetment for the bridge on the eastern side of the stream further away from the stream. Due to the increased height of the bridge revetments, the western side is proposed to have a boardwalk section that links from the end of the bridge to the proposed coastal shared pathway.

As such, the proposal includes creation of a 140 m long coastal revetment and pathway around the base of Weld Road Reserve headland and the reinstatement of the swing bridge in the same location but with higher abutments and extended span across stream as shown diagrammatically in Figure 1. Appendix A includes the proposed design drawings for the shared pathway and bridge.

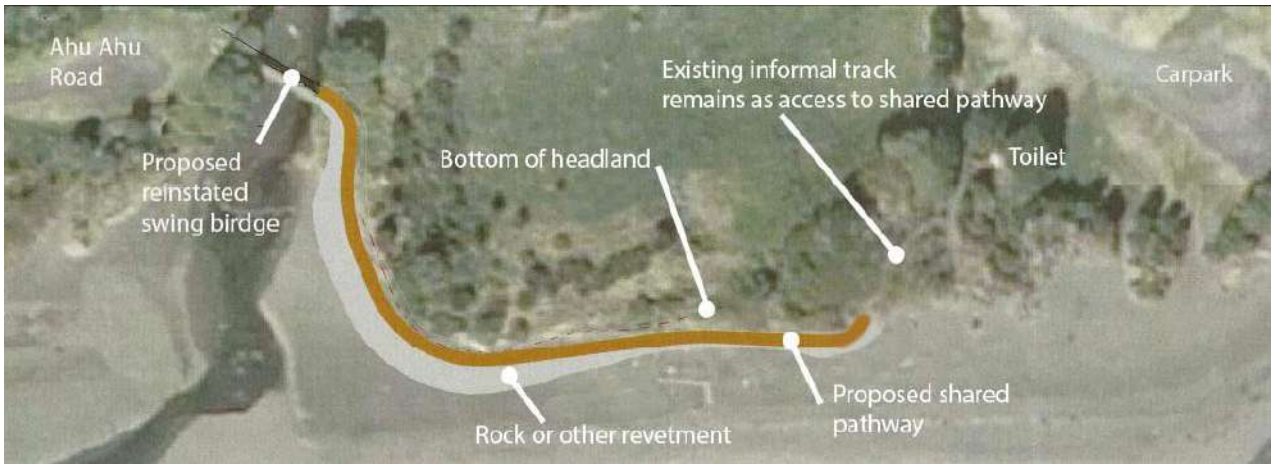

Figure 3 Diagram showing proposed location of shared pathway and location of the proposed reinstated swing bridge.

The proposed rock revetment will have an overall length of approximately 140 m, and a width of approximately 12 m, (although the lower part of the structure will be below the beach sand level and therefore not visible unless beach levels change). It is to be composed of large natural volcanic rock (locally sourced), with a gradient of approximately 30 degrees. The rock is to be supported by sandbags filled with excavated sand from the site and will not be visible as located behind the rock revetment.

An in-situ concrete pathway of 2 m in width will be supported at the crest of the structure, at a height of 2.9 m RL (Reduced Level[1]) and embedded approximately 0.4 m below the top of the rock armour.

The original Ahu Ahu bridge was designed as a single 19.5 m span bridge enabling access over the Whenuariki Stream to the Weld Road Reserve/adjacent coastal area. The bridge reinstatement works proposes to increase the bridges length to 21 m allowing the east abutment to be relocated 1.5 m east of the original bridge, improving the bridges resilience against scour. The abutment of the bridge is proposed to be raised approximately 0.7 m at the abutments. The new bridge deck will be flat while the original bridge had sagged of up to 0.8 m, therefore, the deck in the middle of the replacement bridge may be up to 1.5 m higher than the original.

For the proposed bridge deck level of 5.0 m RL, the freeboard from deck to the 1 in 25-year Serviceable Limit State (SLS) event is approximately 1.52 m.

Raising the abutments will require raised approaches to tie back into the car park (east end) and shared coastal pathway (west end). Based on a 1(V):9(H) gradient, this will require ramp lengths in the order of 10 m (east) and 19 m (west) to tie into existing levels. Boardwalk ramps (instead of earth ramps) are proposed to allow for improved protection of the surrounding archaeology and landscape.

The proposed structure is located within the coastal environment and as such triggers a range of natural character considerations.

As such, a landscape and visual effects assessment is required to be provided to support the resource consent application. This assessment needs to establish the landscape context taking into account the proposed activity and the affected landscape elements applicable to the development site and the immediate surrounding area.

1.3 Methodology

The assessment of landscape and visual effects are a separate, although linked, processes. The existing landscape and its visual context or visual envelope all contributes to the existing 'baseline' for the landscape and visual assessment studies. The assessment of the potential effects on the landscape is carried out as an effect on an environmental resource (i.e. landscape features or character). Visual effects are assessed as one of the interrelated effects on the

[1] The elevation of a point relative to the Mean Sea Level

surrounding viewing audience. The differences between these types of effects can be summarised as follows: *Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape. Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity*.

The following methodology was implemented in the preparation of this landscape and visual assessment:

- Desktop review of relevant statutory documents (District Plan text and mapping);
- Site visit and assessment of visibility and local character;
- Field survey of the local area;
- Identification of the visual catchment and viewing audience;
- Assessment of landscape and visual effects; and
- Identification of proposed design and mitigation measures if required.

The scope of this assessment includes:

- A description of the site and setting
- analysis of the existing landscape character and visual characteristics of the area;
- A description of the proposal;
- A detailed assessment of the potential effects of the proposal concerning landscape, visual amenity and natural character considerations; and
- Consideration of the proposal in relation to key relevant planning provisions applicable to this assessment.

The assessment considers the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposal in the context of the site and the wider landscape setting, as well as effects on key public views.

This assessment has been prepared with reference to the NZILA Best Practice Note Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1 in conjunction with Information requirements for the assessment of landscape and visual effects"[2]. The effects ratings and definitions used in Table 1 are provided in **Appendix B**. To determine the overall nature and significance of the landscape and visual effects, an understanding of the sensitivity of the landscape or viewing audience has been combined with an assessment of the magnitude of change resulting from the proposal in order to determine the overall significance of effects.

A site visit and field survey of the local area was undertaken by Renée Davies on a number of occasions during 2021, 2022 and 2023 at different times of the year.

2 SITE LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

2.1 Local Area Landscape Description

This section describes the landscape setting and the subject site ('the site') and considers the landscape values, character and quality of the landscape.

The site is located near the coastal township of Oākura. The area is 1.35 km west of Oākura and the broader landscape context consists of rural land. The landscape character of the area has been largely modified for farming activity but a dominant landscape feature is the Hauranga pā site (partially located within Weld road reserve headland, Whenuariki and Timaru streams that bound either side of the headland site and the sand and large rock beach environment.

[2] NZILA Best Practice Note Landscape Assessment and Sustainable Management 10.1 for the assessment of landscape and visual effects",

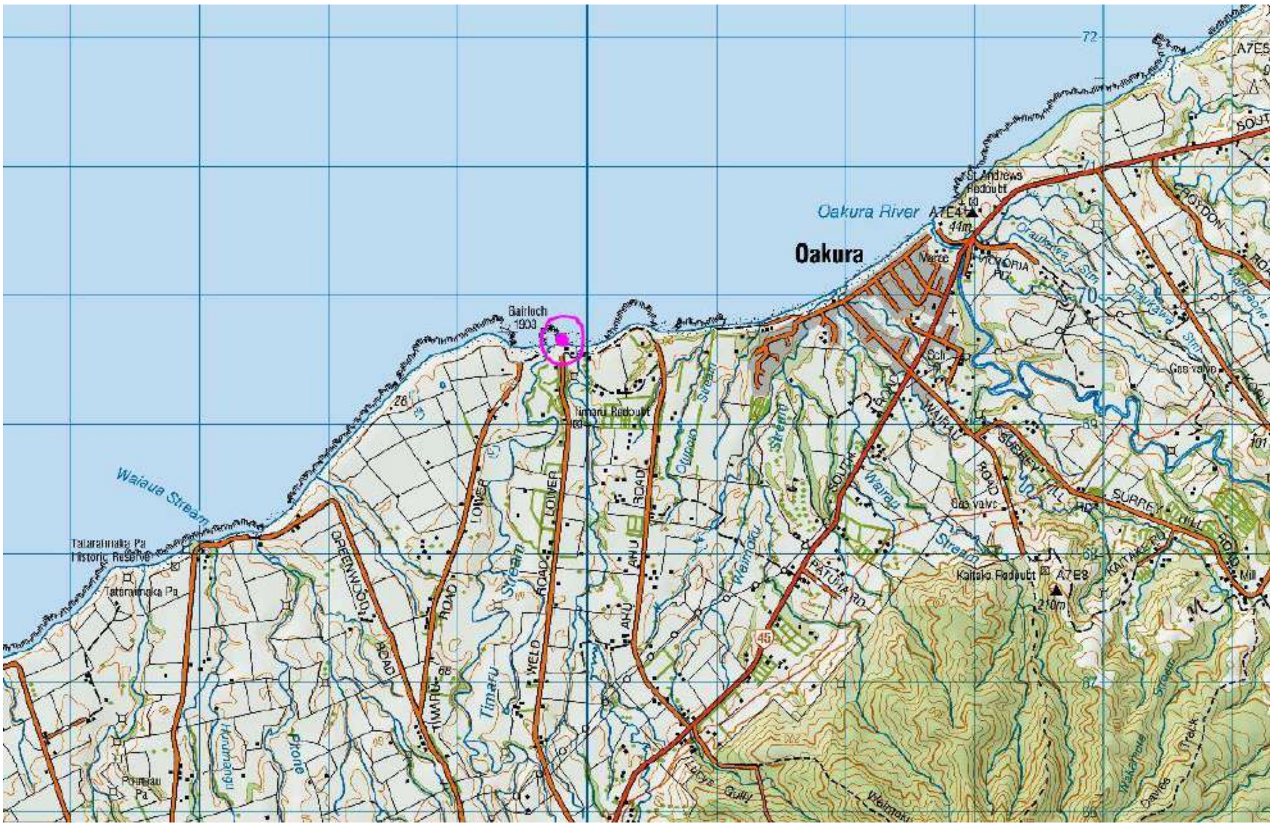

Figure 4 Location of the site. (source NPDC maps)

The area comprises a generally modified agricultural landscape with remnant dune systems located between mean high water springs and low cliffs. Although there has been modification of the landscape the beach and dune systems with associated vegetated cliff edges provides a strong sense of natural character.

The streams which flow down through the lowland ring plain terraces end with estuaries that weave through the beach environment. They are characterised by natural elements, processes and patterns such as highly dynamic sand, the ebb and flow of the tides, and the periodic appearance of wading birds. The containment of views within the creeks by the fringing vegetation increases perceptions of natural character.

Figure 5 Photograph looking north with Weld road reserve and headland to right of image (directly behind vehicles) and mouth of the Timaru stream in foreground.

Figure 6 Wider Context and Site Location.

In the preparation of the review of the Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki a Regional landscape study of the Taranaki coastal environment was undertaken. This study identified areas of high and outstanding natural character and outstanding natural features and landscapes.

The study identified 12 coastal units with particular landscape characterisations. The site is located in Coastal Unit 6 – being Oakura River to Hangatahua (Stony river). The study identified the character of this coastal unit to comprise of low relief cliffs up to 5m in height with a narrow and patchy frontal dune system directly adjacent to the cliff faces. Where present dunes were relatively stable and covered in indigenous vegetation. The study identified that there is a relatively flat contour except where streams dissect the laharic terrace. Indigenous vegetation is sparse and mostly confined to dunes, cliff faces and riparian margins of some of the watercourses.

The site is not identified as an area of high and outstanding natural character, and does not contain any outstanding natural features or landscapes.

An inventory of coastal areas of local or regional significance in the Taranaki Region (January 2004) identifies Ahu Ahu, Weld and Timaru road beaches as having wide sandy beaches backed by small dunes with offshore cobble and boulder reefs. The study identified high amenity, recreation and cultural/historical values with moderate ecological and scientific values. It also noted excellent public access in the area.

2.2 The Site and Immediate Surrounds

Hauranga Pā is located on the Weld Road Reserve. Hauranga Pā is an "archaeological site" as defined in section 6 of the HNZPT in that it is pre-1900s. This part of the reserve (Section 176 Oakura District) is listed in Appendix 26 of the ODP (as Site ID 54), which sets out Wāhi Taonga/Sites of Significance to Māori and Archaeological Sites. Site ID 54 has been identified as an archaeological site in the Council's PDP.

Hauranga Pā was a large, heavily populated Māori settlement in North Taranaki before the arrival of Europeans and the Pā played an important role in post-settlement history until after the New Zealand Wars. The remnants of the pā are evident on the site including a large number of archaeological features in good surface condition.

DoC owns the reserve and the Council administers the reserve under the Coastal Reserves Management Plan 2006 (Management Plan). Although the Management Plan is not specific to Hauranga Pā, the General Policies for Council Administered Reserves 2006 has a specific section that covers conservation and cultural heritage values.

Figure 7 Photograph looking west with the Ahu Ahu swing bridge (before destroyed by storm) to left of photo and Weld road reserve headland and adjacent archaeological site of Hauranga Pā.

The reserves at Weld Road and Ahu Ahu Road represent the western portion of an area of reserve gazetted as Corbett Park Domain. The overall reserve comprises a long band of foreshore extending from the mouth of the Timaru Stream to Ahu Ahu Road and includes the entire width of the waterfront, from the top of the escarpments to the beach.

This reserve area is accessed in three ways by vehicle:

- through a farmer's field at the end of Lower Timaru Rd;
- via Weld Rd; and
- via a gravel road at the end of Ahu Ahu Rd. There are swing bridges over Timaru Stream and Whenuariki Stream that allow visitors to walk the length of the reserve.

The Ahu Ahu side of the reserve is framed by high escarpments covered in native bush. Some landscaping and planting of cultivars has occurred on the Weld Rd side and along Ahu Ahu Road. The beach areas are buffered from the road and open space areas by dunes and native shrubs and trees. Dune areas are fenced off from human access as part of an ongoing dune restoration project and visitors are encouraged to stay to marked access trails.

The mix of easy access to the beach and natural beauty makes this one of the most popular reserves in the district. Despite its proximity to Oakura, its location behind headlands and beneath high banks gives a sense of being in a remote and undeveloped place.

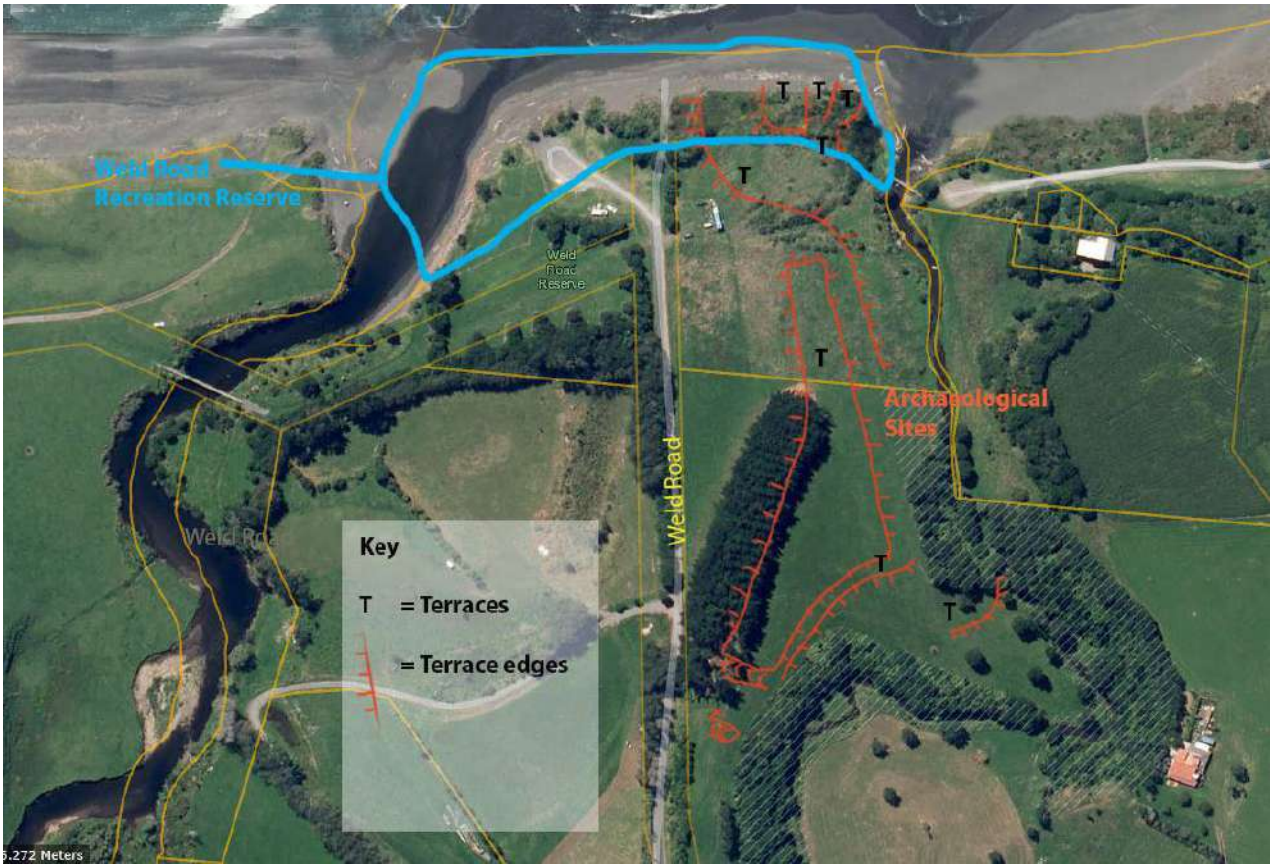

Figure 8 Site and adjacent archaeological site of Hauranga Pā.

3 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Resource consent is sought to create a rock revetment protected shared pathway and to reinstate a swing bridge across the Whenuariki stream in order to provide safe public access around the headland of Weld road reserve. This is required due to the reserve itself being a highly sensitive environment with archaeological and cultural sites that were being damaged by informal walkways across the headland. Those tracks are now closed off and as such a safe alternative route at beach level is required to ensure continued connection between existing trails. With the previous swing bridge being destroyed by a storm an opportunity was identified to be able to reinstate the bridge with an

improved design that removes the abutments on the eastern side of the stream away from the edge of the stream and to raise the level of the bridge.

The rock revetment will have an overall alignment length of approximately 140 m, and a width of approximately 12m. Importantly, in terms of visual effects, the lower part of the structure will be below the beach sand level. The height of the rock revetment has been minimised to the lowest possible while still ensuring safe access in normal sea conditions. The rock revetment will be composed of large local volcanic rock, with a surface gradient of approximately 30 degrees. Beneath the rock will be sandbags (excavated sand from within the site), and a geotextile cloth layer that will provide support but not be visible.

An in-situ concrete pathway of 2m in width will be supported at the crest of the structure, at a height of 2.9m RL (Reduced Level[3]) and sunk below the top of the highest rock by approximately 0.4m.

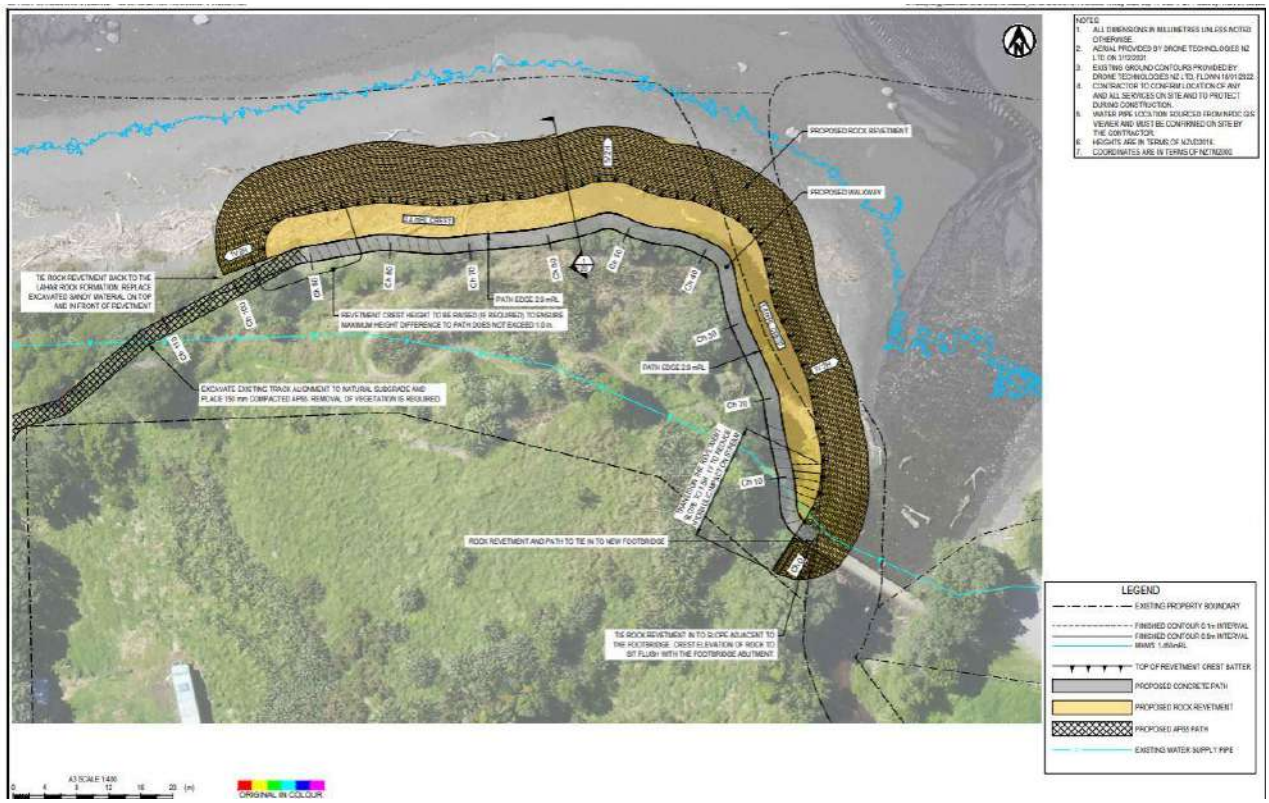

Figure 9 Diagram from engineers showing overall proposed shared pathway design.

[3] The elevation of a point relative to the Mean Sea Level

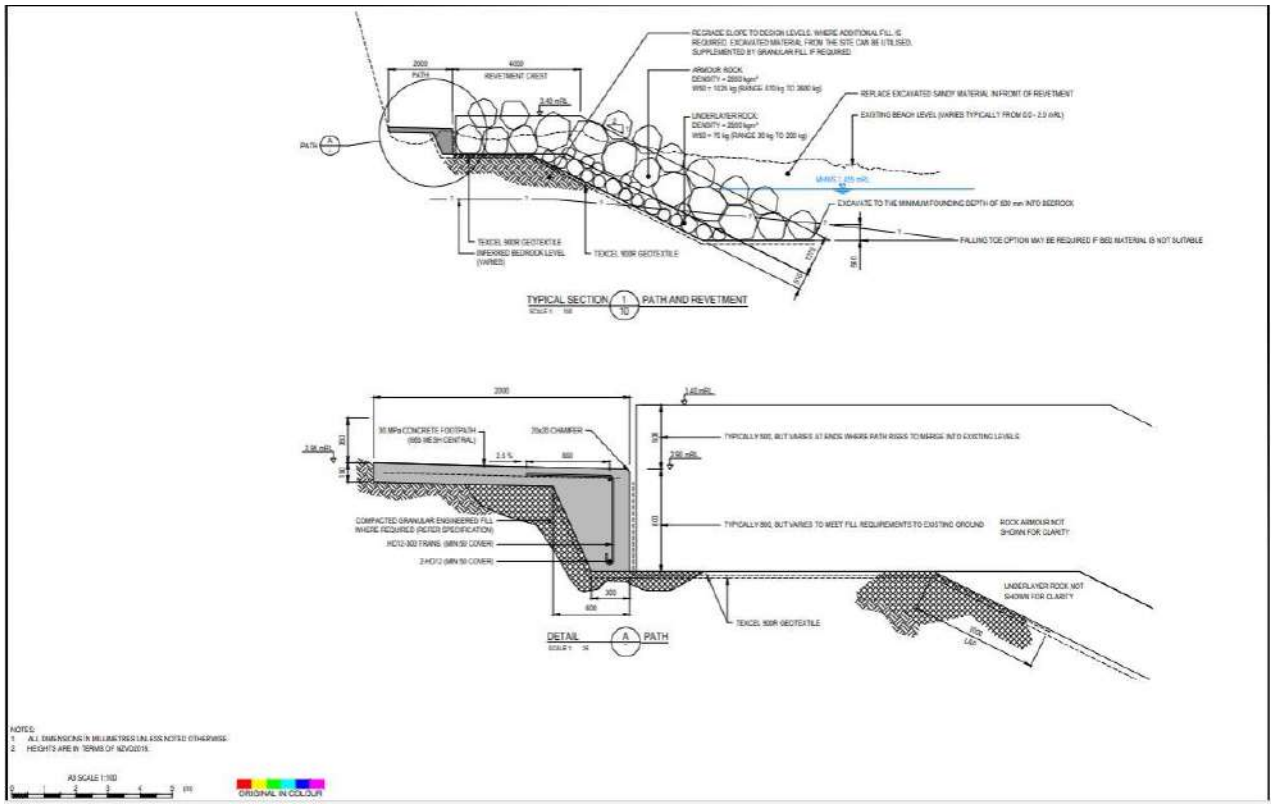

Figure 10 Diagram from engineers showing cross sections of proposed shared pathway design.

The proposed development is designed to break up the bulk and scale of the buildings by creating two built forms structures that are surrounded by vegetation.

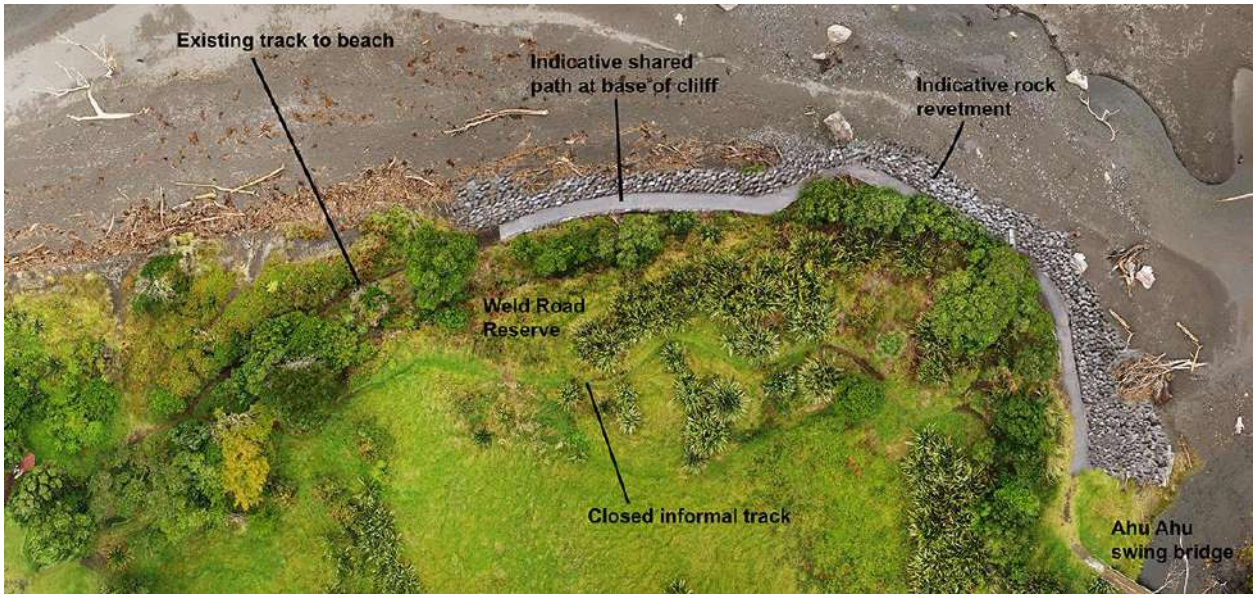

Figure 11 Drone photograph showing indicative location of proposed shared pathway in relation to Weld road reserve.

3.1 Vegetation Removal

As part of the proposed development of the shared path, there will be some minimal lower level vegetation that will need removal and/or trimming, totalling approximately 240 m^2 of mixed native / exotic treeland, grassland and duneland vegetation. For the proposed bridge, removal and/or trimming of approximately 28 m^2 of mixed native/exotic treeland, and removal of 150 m^2 of grassland and shrubland and potentially some dune land vegetation is required (70 m^2 on the western bridge side and 80 m^2 on the eastern). The degree of vegetation removal and/or trimming is difficult to assess at this concept/developed design stage and as such the mitigation for this is proposed to be determined on site in partnership with Ngati Tairi as works progress. A landscape restoration and planting methodology is included in Appendix 3 to provide guidance on how that will occur. The trimming and removal of the vegetation is not expected to have any effect on the overall vegetated character of the site as the removal and trimming will be restricted and the remaining vegetation and proposed landscape and planting restoration proposed as mitigation will maintain a sense of vegetated edge to the headland behind the shared path.

3.2 Earthworks

Construction of the revetment structure will require excavation of the existing beach material, to volumes of approximately 1,150 m^3, and uncompacted fill volumes of approximately 230 m^3 to an approximate total of 1,400 m^3 of material impacted. Additionally, approximately 1,400 m^3 of imported rock will be required for construction of the revetment structure itself. It is proposed for this construction to be undertaken at low tide only, and for construction machinery to return to the laydown area at the end of each day. Construction is likely to take 3-4 weeks to complete and the visual effects associated with this construction period have been assessed as part of the viewing audience visual effects assessment.

The area of earthworks directly associated with the construction of the footbridge (i.e., approach ramps on both sides and abutments) are expected to be approximately 150 m2. The volume of excavation is estimated to be 14 m3.

Approximately 190 truck and trailer loads are estimated over the construction period to bring rock and other materials to site, alongside light vehicle movements for staff and supervision.

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3.3 Reflectivity, Colour and Materials Palette

The visible aspect of the proposed shared pathway will be restricted to the rock that forms the rock revetment and the concrete pathway (from certain angles of view). The rock proposed to be used is sourced locally and consists of volcanic andesite boulders. The final look will be similar to other rock seawalls in the District and will age over time and although identifiable as man-made structures, due to the use of natural rock material and random placement is perceived as a more natural structure with relationship to the pebble, rock and cliff environments in which they are generally placed.

The low reflectivity and colouring of the rock is expected to blend well with the foreground rock, pebble and sand environment and be softened by driftwood that will collect at the base of the rock revetment. The backdrop of clay and grey coloured cliff lahar will have a similar colouring to the rock. From a distance this is expected to reduce the visual impact of the rock revetment as it will recede against the strong backdrop of vegetation and cliff and foreground of beach.

Concrete of the pathway will include a dark oxide to ensure that it is not highly reflective, this will ensure it has a more natural look and relate in terms of colour palette to the surrounding environment and black sand beach.

Figure 12 Photographs showing examples of colour, form and character of local rock revetment in context of beach and river environments.

Figure 13 Photograph showing rock revetment along New Plymouth coastal walkway with backdrop of vegetation.

The proposed swing bridge will be of similar style and material as the previous swing bridge. This is a mix of timber and steel and has a relatively light look and presence compared to solid bridge structures. The bridge location has a strongly vegetated backdrop.

4 STATUTORY PLANNING CONTEXT

The proposal is considered a Discretionary activity under the CPT, PDP and ODP. A full statutory assessment is provided in the planner's report that accompanies the resource consent application. The relevant planning provisions relating to landscape and visual matters are outlined and assessed in Table 2 .

Resource Management Act (RMA)

Section 6(a) - the preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (including the coastal marine area), wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins, and the protection of them from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development

Section 6(b) - the protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development

Section 7(c) - the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values

Section 7(f) - the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment

The Fourth Schedule lists a number of matters that should be considered when preparing an assessment of effects on the environment, including:

(7)(1)(b) Any physical effect on the locality including landscape and visual effects.

These RMA provisions are given effect by the relevant planning provisions of the

Taranaki Regional Plan the NPDC ODP and PDP.

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS)

The New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) was released in December 2010, at that time local authorities were tasked under Policy 13 to map or otherwise identify (at least) areas of high natural character in the coastal environment. The NZCPS also introduced the new term, 'outstanding natural character'. In defining natural character, the NZCPS clarifies that natural character is not the same as natural features and landscapes or amenity values and provides a list of eight matters which may apply in Policy 13 (2).

Guidance prepared by the Department of Conservation on how NZCPS Policy 13 is applied, identifies that the degree or level of natural character depends on:

1. The extent to which the natural elements, patterns and processes occur;
2. The nature and extent of modification to the ecosystems and landscape/seascape;
3. The degree of natural character is highest where there is least modification;
4. The effect of different types of modification upon natural character varies with context and may be perceived differently by different parts of the community

NZCPS Policy 13 lists a number of matters considered components of natural character. The list within the policy is a mix of factual (or natural science based) and perceptual, although there is a cross-over in many places.

There are three main categories arising: **Abiotic** (or non-living elements, processes or patterns); **Biotic** (or living elements, processes or patterns) and **Experiential** (derived from human senses).

Reserves Act 1977

The Reserves Act is administered by DOC for the general purpose of:

(a) providing, for the preservation and management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing—

(i) recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or

(ii) wildlife; or

(iii) indigenous flora or fauna; or

(iv) environmental and landscape amenity or interest; or

(v) natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, scientific, educational, community, or other special features or value

As well as the preservation of the natural environment it also places considerable emphasis on public access and appropriate use where as a key function of reserves. Weld Road Reserve is included in the Coastal Reserves Management Plan 2006. There is no specific policy or objective within that Plan that identifies specific intentions for the archaeological or cultural values. The Coastal Reserves Management Plan does however reference the September 2006 General Policies for Council Administered Reserves. This Policy document includes section (2.4) that identifies specific approaches in relation to conservation of cultural heritage values.

2.4(1) As far as practicable, identified areas of cultural heritage value on reserves will be protected, preserved or maintained as appropriate.

2.4(2) Mana whenua will be consulted prior to any decision regarding a significant development on a reserve.

2.4(4) If, on or adjacent to a proposed development site, an archaeological assessment reveals an archaeological site, the Historic Places Trust and tangata whenua will be notified and a decision made, through direct dialogue between the council, mana whenua, the Historic Places Trust and other affected parties as to how to proceed. Each incidence will be decided on a case by case basis according to criteria (still to be developed through discussion with tangata whenua) regarding the type of site, its cultural heritage significance and any other considerations brought forward by mana whenua.

2.4(7) The Council will work with individual iwi/hapū to develop a protocol regarding the management of vegetation on waahi tapu sites.

The proposed shared pathway is consistent with the policies and objectives of the Reserve Management Plan.

Regional Coastal Plan for Taranaki (CPT)

The CPT identifies the site as being within the coastal management area (CMA) of Open Coast. The site is adjacent to the regionally significant surf breaks of Weld Road Breaks (Hauranga) and Ahu Ahu multiple breaks (Oraukawa) under Schedule 8A of the CPT. The proposed shared pathway is relevant to consideration within the PRCP – interim from an amenity, access and natural character perspective and in regards to a site of significance to Māori.

The objectives and policies of the PRCP apply to all activities in the coastal environment which includes the inland boundary of the coastal environment, which is also defined in the NPDC PDP.

It is assumed that the PRCP has given effect to the NZCPS 2010. As such the NZCPS has not be specifically evaluated in terms of assessment within the LVEA.

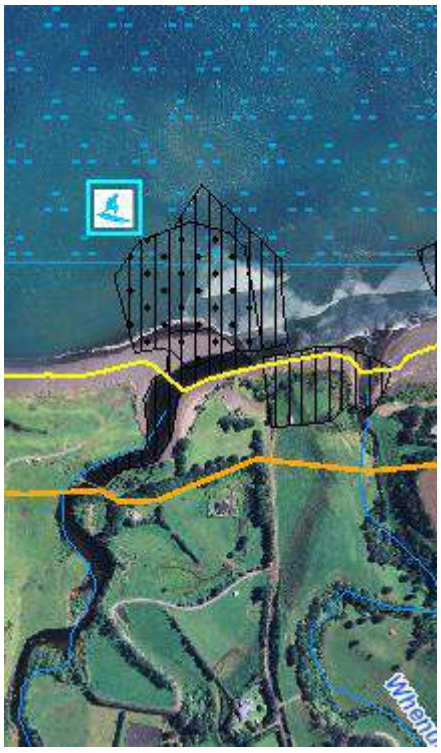

Figure 14 CPT map showing the identified surf breaks and sites of significance to Māori. Orange line being the coastal environment and yellow being the CMA.

New Plymouth District Council ODP and PDP

The land subject to the proposed shared pathway down to the line of MHWS, is subject to the rules in the NPDC ODP and PDP. Assessment considerations of relevance to the LVEA from these plans focus on coastal policy areas, coastal hazard areas, priority water bodies and waahi taonga site of significance to Māori.

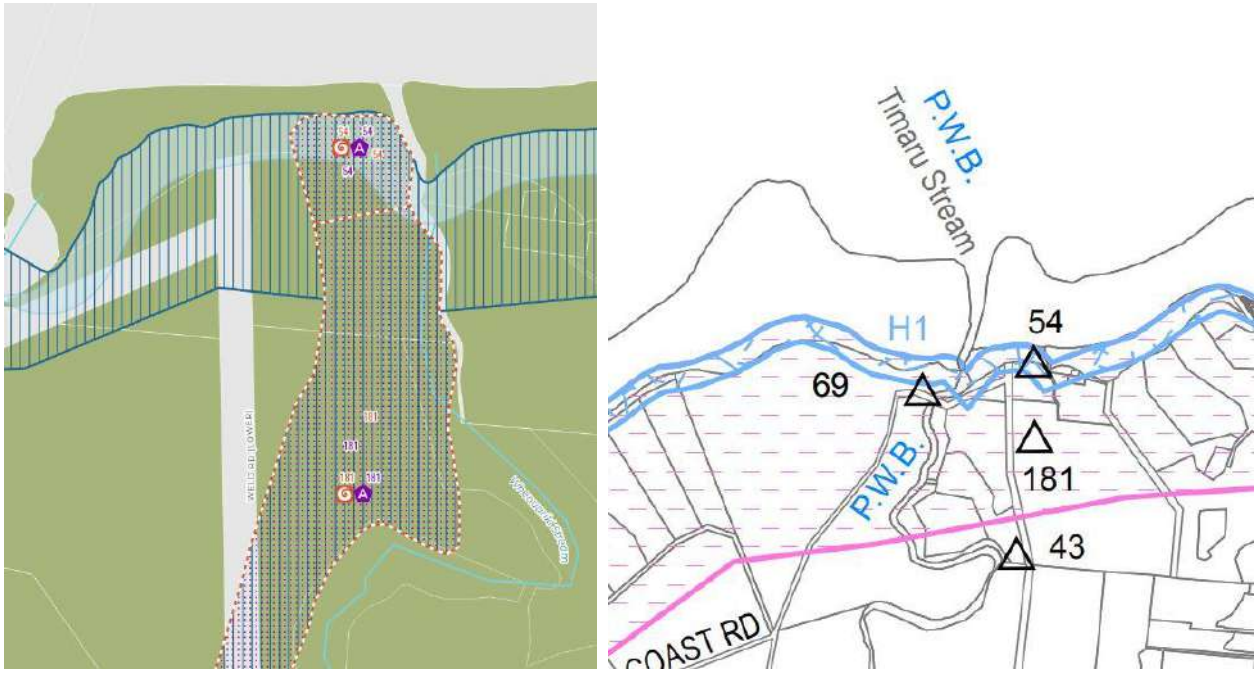

Figure 15 Map from the NPDC PDP and ODP showing waahi taonga sites, coastal hazard zones..

5 VISUAL EFFECTS

There is one main viewing audience for the proposed shared pathway and swing bridge, being users of the adjacent coastal reserves, beach and ocean. This viewing audience is grouped as one due to the viewpoint although varying in orientation depending on location within the coastal environment, will maintain the same degree of effect in relation to natural character and there is generally no significant change in terms of the amount of background in the view and the distance of the view from the viewing audience location.

The key consideration in this assessment is the scale and height of the proposed structures in relation to existing natural backdrop and form, colour and reflectivity in relation to the existing natural character of the coastal environment.

The site has a relatively small visual catchment within the broader area and in particular, the existing topography of Weld road reserve headland. The predominant visual effects of the proposed developments and the associated additional height of the bridge and abutments are restricted to views from users of the Ahu Ahu reserve, beach and ocean (swimmers, surfers and kite-boarders). The existing topography and vegetation contributes a high degree of backdrop for the proposed shared pathway.

It is anticipated that there will be some adverse effects visually during construction with the required machinery and materials stock-piling all impacting on the views of site for users of the reserve and beach. These effects will however, be temporary in nature and the autumn/winter construction period proposed will go a long way to mitigating those temporary and short term effects as this is a less used period of time for the beach.

Based on the visual catchment described the potential viewing audiences are comprised of the following main groups:

- **Viewing Audience A:** Recreational users of the trail network either side of the Weld road reserve;
- **Viewing Audience B:** Users of beach adjacent to the site; and
- **Viewing Audience C:** Ocean and surf break users.

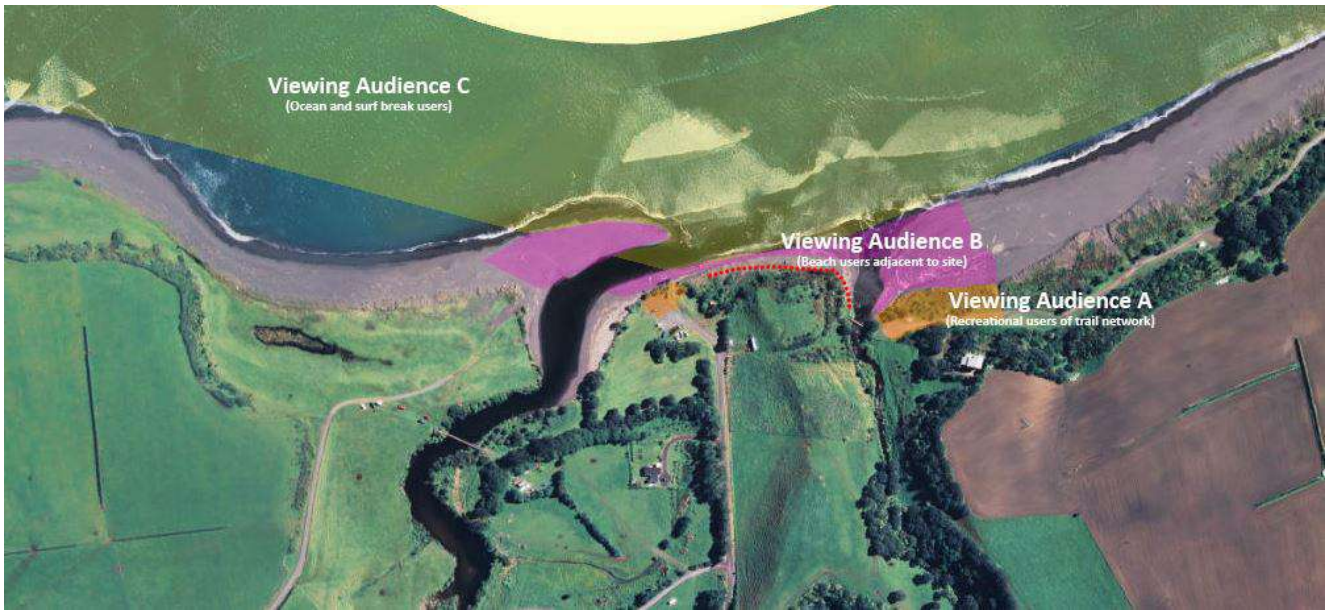

Figure 16 Aerial photograph showing viewing audiences.

Visual Simulation

The assessment of visual effects focuses mainly on these audiences and a photo-simulation has been prepared to demonstrate the likely visual effects from one of the main viewing points looking back to the proposed shared pathway from the beach at the mouth of the Waiongana stream. The visual effect of the bridge is assessed as being similar to the previously existing bridge and imagery of that provides the guidance for what the bridge will look like with the exception of some additional structural height at the abutments and associated timber ramps up to the bridge. The viewpoint selected for the photo-simulation is located where these audiences would be exposed to the most extensive potential visual effects of the proposal.

In order to inform the decision on height options, a preliminary assessment of the degree of visual effect on the natural character of the coastal environment was undertaken through a visual simulation of the proposed shared pathway, as shown below. This has utilised surveyed eye-level heights to provide a relatively accurate interpretation of the visual effects and change in character that the proposed shared path would have.

Figure 17 Visual simulation of proposed shared pathway.

Figure 18 Visual simulation of proposed shared pathway (an A3 size copy is provided in Appendix A)

Figure 19 Photograph showing the surveyed points where height has been determined. The propoed rl of the rock revetment that has been designed is located at the bottom of the top white line on the lower cone.

Figure 20 Photograph showing the previous swing bridge in place (with the white line being the water pipe running under the platform of the bridge).

The image above shows the highly vegetation visual backdrop to the location of the proposed swing bridge and an image of the previously existing bridge that provides a comparable visual effect as to what is proposed for the reinstatement.

The following imagery shows illustratively the proposed bridge replacement design. A timber and steel bridge similar to the previous, but with higher abutments and solid timber entry portal to secure the swing bridge steel ropes/mechanism.

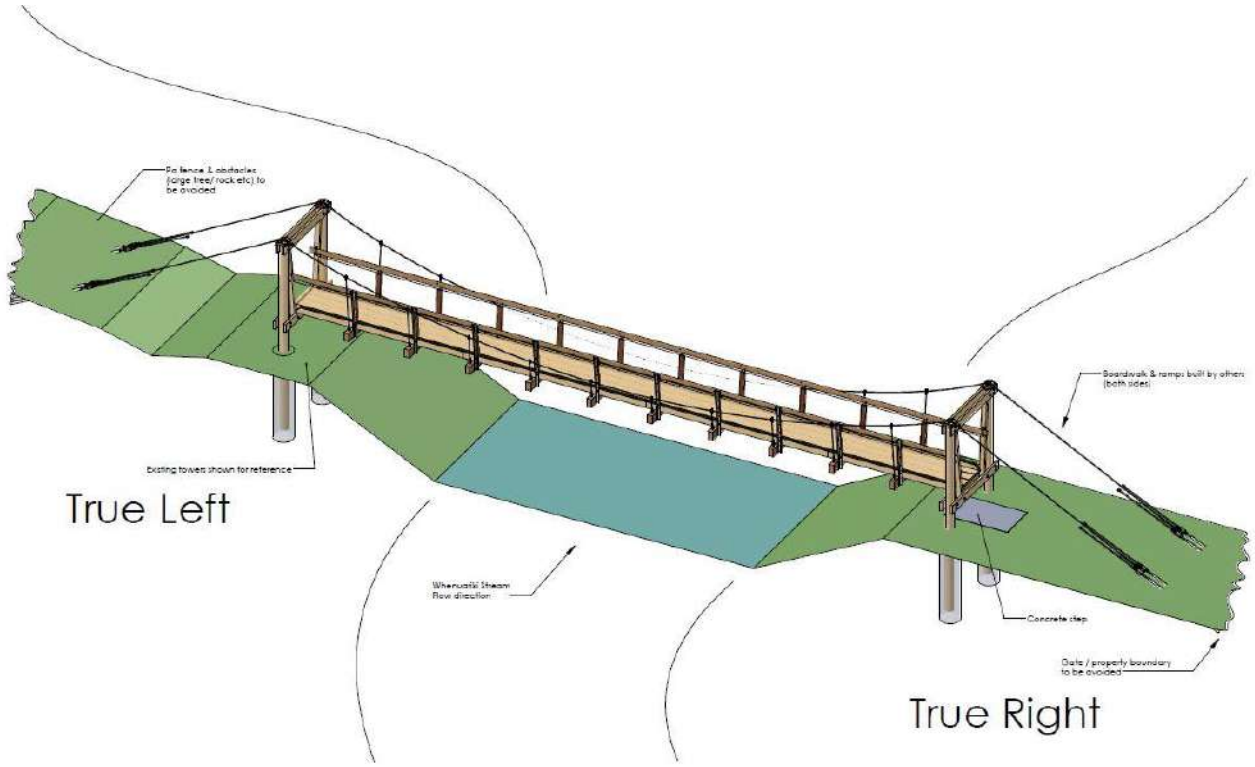

Figure 21 Illustrative diagram from WSP highlighting the style of replacement swing bridge.

Figure 22 Simple illustrative visualisation of the proposed replacement bridge design from Hauranga pā side of Whenuariki stream.

5.1 Viewing Audience A: Recreational users of the trail network either side of the Weld road reserve

This viewing audience includes those that are using the trails to the west and east of the Weld road reserve. Views of the proposed shared pathway and swing bridge are visible from the Ahu Ahu road reserve that leads to the proposed shared pathway site. As the bridge and shared pathway curves around the headland, the views are limited to the eastern and beginning of the shared pathway from Ahu Ahu road until the pathway disappears around the edge of the headland. The same situation exists from the western end of the reserve where views will be visible as users move from Lower Weld road reserve through the beach access trails and where the proposed shared pathway connects into the Weld road reserve trail. From this western access there is more of the proposed shared pathway visible for longer as the headland length is longer.

For both these viewing audience the proposed bridge and shared pathway will create visibly new (and in the case of the swing bridge reinstated) man-made structures within the environment. The bridge will be of a similar form and materiality as the previous bridge but with some additional rock revetment to protect the structure at it's base – this will connect with the proposed rock revetment of the adjacent shared pathway and thus the visual effect of this element is assessed as being low. The visual effect of the proposed shared pathway component for this viewing audience will be viewed as a low profile and natural rock material and retention of the majority of existing vegetation . This provides a degree of mitigation to the visual effect and ensure that the broader amenity of the coastal environment is maintained. The visual effect of the shared pathway component is considered to be moderate.

The short term construction effects for this viewing audience will be moderate - high, reducing to moderate in the medium to long term once construction is completed.

Figure 23 Photograph looking west with western access track and Weld road reserve headland to left.

Figure 24 Photograph looking east from western track that will access proposed shared pathway.

Figure 25 Photograph looking west from end of swing bridge to eastern entry to proposed shared pathway.

Figure 26 Photograph looking west from Ahu Ahu road across the previous swing bridge (now destroyed) towards site of proposed shared pathway.

5.2 Viewing Audience B: Users of beach adjacent to the site

This viewing audience consists of users who are walking along the beach to the east and west of the site and directly adjacent to the north of the site. This includes, walkers, picnickers, swimmers and waders in the streams, horse-riders and dog-walkers.

For this viewing audience, the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will be visible as you look towards the Weld road reserve headland. As with viewing audience A, the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will be visible man-made structures within the environment. The dominance of the both the structures will be minimised by the backdrop of vegetation and cliff that is located respectively behind and directly adjacent to the structures.

Although the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will be visible, the wider views out to the landscape and beachscape beyond will ensure that the visual effects associated with the rock revetment will be minimised and enable the overall amenity of the coastal environment to be retained with minimal effects on that scene. The visual effect of the bridge renewal are assessed as low with the visual effects of the shared pathway being moderate.

The short term construction effects for this viewing audience will be high, reducing to moderate in the medium to long term once construction is completed.

Figure 27 Photograph from beach looking back to Weld road reserve headland.

5.3 Viewing Audience C: Ocean and surf break users

Surf breaks are host to many user groups who participate in many different forms of recreation with positive qualities for physical and mental health for people of all ages and walks of life. The ocean directly off Weld road reserve is a well-known and used surf break.

Surf breaks contribute to visual and oral expressions of place – interconnected to wider landscape and seascape values

- Surf breaks contribute to the nature and memorability of experiences in the coastal environment
- Raw and undeveloped natural landscapes and seascapes contribute to the opportunities for wilderness experiences

For this viewing audience the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will consist of a visible length of rock revetment located at the base of the Weld road reserve headland and a less visible line of structure sitting across the stream. The overall broader natural character and amenity of the coastal environment will be retained and the

backdrop of the headland itself and the vegetated edges of the Whenuariki stream will remain as a dominant feature of the scene as viewed from the ocean environment. The views from the surf break are from some distance and this minimises the dominance of the shared pathway rock revetment in particular, with the shadows and backdrop of the headland meaning the overall visual impact will be less than from more closely located viewing audiences.

It is considered that the low profile of the revetment and natural materials will ensure that the contribution of the Weld road reserve and headland and beach area in front of the proposed shared pathway will continue to contribute to the enjoyment of the surfing and overall recreational experience.

The visual effects for this viewing audience is assessed as being low-moderate.

The short term construction effects for this viewing audience will be high, reducing to low-moderate in the medium to long term once construction is completed.

Figure 28 Photograph from Weld road surf break to site.

Figure 29 Photograph from Weld road surf break to site.

Figure 30 Photograph from Weld road surf break to site.

A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality. The proposal constitutes only a minor component of or change to the wider view. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.

Table 1 – Visual Effects Summary

Viewpoint	Ranking	
	Short Term (construction effects)	**Medium – Long Term**
Viewing Audience A – Bridge: Recreational users of the trail network either side of the Weld road reserve	Moderate-High	Low - Moderate
Viewing Audience A – Shared pathway: Recreational users of the trail network either side of the Weld road reserve	Moderate-High	Moderate
Viewing Audience B - **Bridge :** Users of beach adjacent to the site	Moderate-High	Low
Viewing Audience B – **Shared Pathway :** Users of beach adjacent to the site	Moderate-High	Moderate
Viewing Audience C - Bridge: Ocean and surf break users	Moderate	Very low
Viewing Audience C – Shared Pathway: Ocean and surf break users	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate

The visual effects for the proposal range in the medium to long term (after construction) from very low to moderate. For the different viewing audiences, there are two that sit at moderate effects with the remaining three being very low, low-moderate or low. As the viewing audiences and proposed component of the proposal (whether bridge or shared pathway) are quite different, there is no overall visual effect that summarises in totality.

6 NATURAL CHARACTER AND AMENITY EFFECTS

The landscape and amenity effects summary is provided as a table assessed against relevant assessment criteria from the relevant statutory documents.

Natural Character Effects

Although not defined in the RMA natural character values are recognised as a Matters of National Importance (Part 2, Section 6) in relation to managing the use, development and protection of natural and physical resources. Natural character relates to the degree of 'naturalness' of a landscape. Natural character is primarily determined by the nature and extent of modification to a landscape and comprises natural elements appearing in natural patterns, underpinned by natural processes.

The highest levels of natural character are where there is the least modification. Natural character effects relate to the degree to which a proposal alters the biophysical and / or perceived naturalness of a landscape.

The purpose of an assessment on effects on natural character is to determine whether an activity is appropriate. This is dependent on the extent to which a location can absorb development without adverse effects on the natural qualities of the setting. The following considerations are useful to assist in determining whether adverse effects on natural character are of this proposal are significant.

This section of the coastline is not acknowledged as having a high natural character within the Regional Coastal Plan, likely due to the changing nature of the river mouth, previous house and farm structures with associated erosion and modification. The area does not currently have a lot of built up form and displays a moderate level of natural character. From a broader perspective this will not be directly affected in any significant way by the proposal. Potential effects

are limited to the associated terrestrial areas (ie. Directly below the cliff at the highest point of the beach. It is acknowledged however, that the proposed works extend into the low high water mean springs area. Despite historic modification of these areas, they are undergoing the process of natural regeneration to indigenous vegetative cover. This process and the resultant landscape patterns therefore also represent a reasonable degree of natural character. Nonetheless, based on the consideration of the above criteria it is considered that the significance of the overall effects of the proposal on the natural character of these areas would be **moderate**.

The natural boundary of the Weld road reserve headland (coastal escarpments) provides a clearly defined and inland boundary to the coastal environment for this site as do the two streams that contain and bound the eastern and western ends of the site. On the eastern end of the site the presence of the previous presence of the swing bridge over the Whenuariki stream indicates a degree of modification and human influence within the landscape and this would be similar with the proposed reinstated swing bridge. In terms of natural character, the site is considered to be partially modified with a moderate level of natural character on the continuum from modified (very low) to pristine (very high). The site retains a level of natural character with the remnant dunes (being restored and containing indigenous dune vegetation) and the Weld road reserve headland with its associated geological formations visible from the beach and regenerating native vegetation (planted and naturally occurring).

Figure 31 Photograph showing natural character of the beach environment off Weld road reserve.

Figure 32 Photograph showing natural character of the beach environment with Weld road reserve headland.

Figure 33 Photograph showing natural character and geological form of the headland cliff.

Table 2 - Summary of Findings in Relation to Landscape

HEADING	MATTER	ASSESSED EFFECTS
Taranaki Regional Coastal Plan (Operative)		
Objective 1(b)	To recognise and provide for the preservation of the natural character of the coastal marine area, to protect that character from inappropriate use and development of the coastal marine area and to restore or rehabilitate the natural character of the coastal marine area where practicable.	The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will have a moderate effect on the natural character of the coastal environment with a man-made structure (albeit with natural rock, timber and steel) being located at the base of the headland and across the stream. The anticipated low level above existing beach and across the stream (in the same location as previous bridge was located) and materials used for the proposal, associated with the dominant topography of the headland behind the structure means that although it will be a visible change to the character, the overall broader scene will retain it's character.
Objective 3(a)	To maintain and enhance the natural character and amenity values of the coastal environment.	The proposed swing bridge is located across the Whenuariki stream and the proposed shared pathway is located at the very base of the headland of Weld road reserve. As such, the integrity of the headland including cliffs and vegetation will remain and form a significant backdrop to the proposed structure. The stream will have some rock revetment on the western side to protect the bridge abutment, and this will connect in visually with the rock revetment of the proposed shared pathway It is considered that the natural character of coastal environment is maintained, despite having a minor change in amenity. The proposed shared pathway provides for an alternative access around the headland that reinforces the prevention of public access over the sensitive archaeological and cultural site of Hauranga Pā located partially within the Weld road reserve. This provides for ongoing protection of the topography, geology and vegetation that forms part of the natural character of the area and allows for enhancement through appropriate

		weed removal and native restoration of the site through an management plan developed in conjunction with DOC, NPDC and hapū.
Policy 1.1(d)	Management of the coastal marine area will be carried out in a way that recognises that: (d) The open coastline: (i) is subject to a high energy westerly wave environment and the coastal land behind the foreshore is generally eroding; (ii) includes areas that are valued for recreation, particularly the beaches adjacent to urban areas or to which vehicle access exists; (iii) includes reef systems that provide habitat to marine life, and are valued by Maori for kaimoana gathering; (iv) includes a large proportion of the total foreshore area, which is mostly unmodified by human activity except in the vicinity of the New Plymouth urban area, and generally is under no significant pressure for use, development or protection; (v) includes some areas of outstanding coastal value; (vi) contains fisheries that are both recreationally and commercially valuable; (vii) is utilised for defence purposes in accordance with the Defence Act 1991.	The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway have been designed to ensure that it is located at as lower level as possible while still providing safe access around the headland for the public and ability to withstand storm surges (in the case of the bridge). This respective rl's, means that there is limited effect on the headland cliff or stream and if in future it needed to be removed, would be able to be done and the cliff and natural character of the stream remain unaffected. The proposed rock revetment will provide a degree of protection for the cliff and stream preventing any further erosion. The proposed shared pathway provides an opportunity for the public to see close up the cliff geology, which has a high amenity and interest. The site of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is not located in an area of outstanding coastal value. The area is a high use recreation area, for both walking, cycling and activities on the beach and within the ocean environment (particularly surfing). The area of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway are restricted to a small section of beach between two streams and as such has a limit to its extent. The remainder of the beach to the north and south of those respective streams remains unchanged, but the shared pathway provides a key link between existing trails for access to and along the coastal environment for recreation use.
Policy 1.2	In the management of the coastal marine area, recognition will be given to the restoration or rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal marine area where appropriate.	There is limited opportunity for mitigation measures, however restoration of dune areas at either end of the proposed shared pathway and appropriate restoration on Weld road reserve (whatever is considered appropriate as part of a co-management plan with DOC, hapū and NPDC) would provide an opportunity to enhance to a small degree, existing natural character values. In addition, ensuring a more natural colour

		palette with low reflectivity for concrete used in the construction will assist in integrating the build form into the natural palette of cliff, rock and sand found within the environment and will reduce any glare.
NPDC Proposed District Plan		
Policy NFL-P2	Protect natural features and landscapes in the coastal environment from inappropriate activities by: 1. in relation to outstanding natural features or landscapes: a. avoiding adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics 2. in relation to other natural features or landscapes: a. avoiding significant adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics; and b. avoiding, remedying or mitigating other adverse effects of activities on their values and characteristics.	There are no outstanding natural features or landscapes affected by the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway. Despite not being specifically identified as being outstanding, the site is considered to have natural character values. The proposed swing bridge and shared path are assessed as creating a partial change to the existing natural character of the coastal environment in which they sit. This results in a small reduction in amenity and is therefore considered at a moderate level of effect. The proposed shared pathway will add a new element within the scene. The proposed swing bridge is a replacement of an existing one that has been within the environment for a number of years. These structures will be noticeable, but when viewed from a distance and due to the natural materials used and the low profile, is not considered to detract from the overall quality of the scene/natural character of the area.
Objective CE-01	The natural character, landscape, historic, cultural and ecological values of the coastal environment are recognised and preserved, and where appropriate enhanced and restored.	The proposed shared pathway is being proposed in order that the cultural and geological feature of the Weld road esplanade reserve headland that includes part of Hauranga Pā, is able to be more effectively enhanced and restored. The proposed swing bridge replaces a bridge that has been in place for a number of years providing public access across the stream (thus removing the need for access within the stream bed by the public). The enhancement results from the removal of informal tracks that public used over the headland that were damaging sensitive archaeological sites, native vegetation and adding to erosion of the headland formation. As such, although the proposed shared pathway is not enhancing the natural character, it will ensure enhancement of the adjacent Weld road reserve,

		by re-directing damaging public access activity into a less sensitive environment (outside of the Waahi tapu site and headland). There is a subtle balance here between effects on natural character and amenity, but overall the benefits are considered to improve outcomes for the more sensitive natural landscape of the headland that would otherwise have demand for public access.
Policy CE-P2	Protect natural character in the Coastal Environment by ensuring: 1. any adverse effects on the natural characteristics, processes and values which contribute to Areas of Outstanding Natural Character are avoided; 2. any significant adverse effects on the natural characteristics, processes and values which contribute to other coastal natural character are avoided; and 3. any other adverse effects on the natural characteristics, processes and values which contribute to coastal natural character are avoided, remedied or mitigated.	As the landscape and visual effects are determined to be moderate, there are no significant effects on the natural character and values. There is acknowledged intrusion of man-made structures within the environment. Proposed mitigation for this relates to the height of the proposed shared pathway and associated rock revetment being kept as low as possible (while still being functional) and also use of natural local rock and a minimisation of the extent of pathway to the narrowest length possible to achieve public access around the headland. Other mitigation proposed relates to the resulting ability to protect and enhance the site of significance to Māori (Hauranga Pā) with a co-management plan for the site and where appropriate restoration planting on any disturbed areas adjacent to the proposed shared pathway. A landscape restoration and planting methodology will ensure that the vegetation removal and/or trimming required for the works can be mitigated with replacement planting.
Policy CE-P4 (5)	Manage the scale, location and design of activities within the Coastal Environment that have the potential to adversely affect coastal natural character, landscape, amenity, historic, cultural and ecological values and/or that have the potential to increase or be vulnerable to coastal hazards, including: 5. earthworks	The proposed shared pathway has been designed at the lowest height possible while still achieving safe public access. The proposed swing bridge is located in the same location as the previous bridge with the eastern side being removed further away from the edge of the stream. The reduced height of the walkway means that at times of extreme weather conditions the proposed shared pathway will be closed from use (similar to other portions of the New Plymouth coastal walkway). This has ensured that the rock revetment that will be visible above the existing beach level will be

		relatively low and with the backdrop of the existing cliff will have a much reduced visual impact for viewers and users. The location of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway are outside of the Hauranga Pā site and as such is considered unlikely to have any adverse effects on the natural character, amenity or cultural integrity of that site.
Policy CE-P6	Only allow hard protection structures in the Coastal Environment when: 1. the use of 'soft' protection options, such as beach re-nourishment and planting, will be ineffective; 2. any adverse effects on natural character, indigenous biodiversity and amenity values will be avoided, or when avoidance is not possible, appropriately mitigated or remedied; 3. they do not result in public access to and along the coast being limited or compromised; and 4. they are designed and located to: a. minimise the risk of increased coastal hazard exposure elsewhere along the coastline; and b. take into account the dynamic nature of coastal processes, including the effects of climate change and accelerated sea-level rise over a 100 year timeframe.	The proposed hard structure of the shared pathway had been identified through a thorough options analysis and public consultation process as being the most appropriate mechanism to provide for public access in this location. The current beach environment with significant driftwood and soft sand means that public access for such a highly used trail network along the beach reduces accessibility significantly. The provision of a rock revetment protected pathway ensures good access in the majority of conditions. Mitigation of effects on natural character with the placement of a man-made structure in this location is proposed to be mitigated by ensuring the lowest possible height is chosen and ensuring natural rock and dark, non-reflective colours. The proposed swing bridge is constructed of timber and steel and of similar design and style to the original bridge destroyed by a storm. The retention of a swing bridge style of structure means the structure will stay open and relatively light visibly as opposed to a solid span bridge structure. The new design has reduced the potential of storm damage and has taken into account storm surges and the changing nature of the Whenuariki stream. Public access to and along the coast will be enhanced with the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway. The proposed shared pathway has been designed to use the lowest height level to ensure reduced natural character effects compared with a height that sits at a level that accommodates 100 year timeframes. The approach taken assumes that

		Preferred options for the construction approach to the proposed shared pathway have been explored. These options were discussed with both hapū and engineering experts from the local community. The general principles by both stakeholders was that the shared pathway construction be as low as possible and be made of natural materials utilising, where possible, materials such as sand from the site. These principles ensure the lowest cost options and the least visual impact on the natural character of the site. Three height profiles of the preferred design option were assessed to inform recommended design option of the lowest height profile.
Policy CE-P7	Ensure activities are not located inappropriately within the Coastal Environment, having regard to: 1. the effects of the activity and its impact on the particular natural character, landscape, amenity, historic and ecological values and/or recreational values of the area; 2. the outcomes of any consultation with and/or cultural advice provided by tangata whenua, including the extent to which the activity may compromise tangata whenua's relationship with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu, and other taonga, and/or tangata whenua's responsibilities as kaitiaki and mana whenua in the coastal environment; 3. the extent to which the values of the area are sensitive or vulnerable to change and/or any whether any adverse effects can be avoided, or where avoidance is not possible, appropriately remedied or mitigated; 4. opportunities to enhance, restore or rehabilitate the particular values of the coastal environment of the area; 5. the presence of any natural hazards and whether the activity will exacerbate the hazard and/or be vulnerable to it;	The most important aspect when considering the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is to reduce the impact of both overtopping and storm surge impacts as this will affect the serviceability of the proposed shared pathway and swing bridge. Overtopping typically occurs when high coastal water levels and large waves coincide, resulting in waves breaking over the structure which can become a hazard to pedestrians. Long-term increases in this hazard are likely with sea level rises and beach levels lowering. A range of potential path levels were considered to inform an acceptable level of service in relation to overtopping. The preferred option provides for a shared pathway that minimises encroachment into the marine area. It is estimated that it will be overtopped by waves in a 1 in 1 year return storm. In instances like this in other parts of the Coastal Walkway, signage is used to indicate risk in storms and guide user caution. In 50 years, assuming current estimates for sea level rise, the shared pathway would be overtopped on a mean high water springs tide. The preferred option is a small scale structure that will enable public access in the short-medium term (up to 50 years) as modelled against Climate

	6. the adoption of a risk-based approach to hazard management, including consideration of climate change and sea level rise; and 7. whether the activity maintains and/or enhances public access to and along the coast and recreation within the coastal environment, including to the Waiwhakaiho surf break, and regionally significant surf breaks within the New Plymouth District as identified in the Proposed Coastal Plan for Taranaki (as notified).	Change projections. It is a localised solution as there are no current options for access to be provided outside of the coastal hazard zone or coastal marine area. Balanced against the protection of cultural values this is an acceptable level of effect to provide community benefit for the foreseeable future. The proposed shared pathway provides for improved public access to a regionally significant surf break and ensures ongoing safe public access between a highly used and popular trail network along the coast and between Ahu Ahu road and Lower Weld road. Opportunities to enhance and restore the values of Weld road reserve exist with the provision of the proposed shared pathway, as it will enable a full restoration approach to be designed with hapū for Weld road reserve without needing to accommodate public access and its associated impacts on the archaeological and cultural site. The reserve provides a significant backdrop and contribution to the natural character of the area and restoration and protection of this area will enable enhancement over time of the natural character values.
Policy CE-P8	Require activities within the Coastal Environment to minimise any adverse landscape, biodiversity, visual and amenity effects by: 1. ensuring the scale, location and design of any built form or land modification is appropriate in the location; 2. integrating natural processes, landform and topography into the design of the activity, including the use of naturally occurring building platforms; 3. limiting the prominence or visibility of built form from public places and the coast; 4. where possible, limiting expansion of existing urban coastal settlements; and 5. retaining existing indigenous vegetation, and/or restoring and rehabilitating indigenous vegetation, using coastal plant species sourced from the relevant ecological district.	The scale and location of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway have been determined based on the previously existing swing bridge and a location that has the least impact on the adjacent Hauranga pā. The prominence and visibility from the beach and ocean environment adjacent (predominant viewing audience) has been minimised by using the lightest and most open open bridge structure to span the stream and also by using natural rock materials to form the basis of the shared pathway that with the backdrop of cliff should recede relatively well into the landscape. Some limited vegetation removal will be required for the works, the intention being to minimise this and determine on site with hapū what can be retained and if removed, what can be replanted to mitigate this loss.

Policy CE-P13	Encourage restoration and rehabilitation of natural character, indigenous vegetation and habitats, cultural landscape features, dunes and other natural coastal features or processes.	Opportunities to enhance and restore the values of Weld road reserve exist with the provision of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway, as it will enable a full restoration approach to be designed with hapū for Weld road reserve without needing to accommodate public access and its associated impacts on the archaeological and cultural site. The reserve provides a significant backdrop and contribution to the natural character of the area and restoration and protection of this area will enable enhancement over time of the natural character values. There is opportunity for additional dune restoration with appropriate indigenous dune vegetation at each end of the proposed shared pathway where it meets in with existing dune environments.
Objective RPROZ-04	The predominant character and amenity of the Rural Production Zone is maintained, which includes: 1. extensive areas of vegetation of varying types (for example, pasture for grazing, crops, forestry and indigenous vegetation and habitat) and the presence of large numbers of farmed animals; 2. low density built form with open space between buildings that are predominantly used for agricultural, pastoral and horticultural activities (for example, barns and sheds), low density rural living (for example, farm houses and worker's cottages) and community activities (for example, rural halls, domains and schools); 3. a range of noises, smells, light overspill and traffic, often on a cyclic and seasonable basis, generated from the production, manufacture, processing and/or transportation of raw materials derived from primary production; 4. interspersed existing rural industry facilities associated with the use of the land for intensive indoor farming, quarrying, oil and gas activities and cleanfills; and 5. the presence of rural infrastructure, including rural roads, and the on-site disposal of waste, and a general lack of urban infrastructure, including street lighting, solid fences and footpaths.	There are no landscape or visual effects on the rural production zone.
NPDC Operative District Plan		

Policy 1.1	Activities should be located in areas where their effects are compatible with the character of the area.	The location of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway has a significant visual backdrop of the Weld road reserve headland and vegetated edges of the Whenuariki stream. These features, with their highly vegetated character and rock coloured cliff geology is a landscape that will help to absorb the visual effects of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway. The rock revetment of the shared pathway will be located in front of this feature and as such the most visually dominant feature is expected to remain the headland. The site location is therefore considered to be a compatible environment for this type of rock revetment, as compared with a natural dune environment, where the hard structure would have a more contrasting visual effect.
Policy 1.2	Activities within an area should not have adverse effects that diminish the amenity of neighbouring areas, having regard to the character of the receiving environment and cumulative effects.	The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is located in a contained site between two streams and across the Whenuariki stream. This containment and the high visual dominance of the streams and their associated natural character will ensure that the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway will have limited effect on the amenity to the east and west of the site. In addition the headland of Weld road reserve and vegetated character of the bounding streams ensures that visibility from neighbouring properties to the south are negligible.
Objective 4	To ensure the subdivision, use and development of land maintains the elements of RURAL CHARACTER.	The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is located within a coastal marine area that has natural character values of a duneland, vegetated coastal environment. The rural character areas sit behind the coastal area and as such the proposed shared pathway will not have any effect on rural character.
Policy 14.1	The natural character of the coastal environment should not be adversely affected by inappropriate subdivision, use or development and should, where practicable, be restored and rehabilitated.	The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is being proposed in order that the cultural and geological feature of the Weld road esplanade reserve headland that includes part of Hauranga Pā, is able to be more effectively enhanced and restored. The enhancement results from the removal of informal tracks that public used over the headland that were damaging

		sensitive archaeological sites, native vegetation and adding to erosion of the headland formation. As such, although the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway is not enhancing the natural character, it will ensure enhancement of the adjacent Weld road reserve, by re-directing damaging public access activity into a less sensitive environment (outside of the Waahi tapu site and headland). There is a subtle balance here between effects on natural character and amenity, but overall the benefits are considered to improve outcomes for the more sensitive natural landscape of the headland that would otherwise have demand for public access.
Policy 18.1	Public access should be provided to and along the coast and PRIORITY WATERBODIES except where such access should be restricted: • To preserve natural character. • To protect SIGNIFICANT COASTAL AREAS. • To protect SIGNIFICANT NATURAL AREAS. • To safeguard ecological, intrinsic or recreational attributes. • To avoid conflicts between competing uses. • To protect cultural and spiritual values of TANGATA WHENUA. • To protect human health and safety. • For reasons of security. • To prevent aggravation of a natural hazard. • To protect the integrity of RIVER and flood control works. • To provide for any other exceptional circumstances that are sufficient to justify the restriction, not withstanding the national importance of maintaining access.	The proposed shared pathway provides for enhanced public access between Ahu Ahu road and Lower Weld road.

7 MITIGATION MEASURES AND RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

It is considered that the proposed use of natural volcanic rock will age over time to blend well with the backdrop of the headland cliff and therefore provide a degree of mitigation for visual effects and in particular, to provide for integration of the proposed built form within the landscape. There is minimal vegetation disturbance proposed within the project, however where there may be some earthworks which result in exposed sand/ground areas, there is opportunity to consider use of appropriate coastal species to be planted.

The following conditions are recommended to ensure any visual and landscape effects of the proposed development are mitigated:

- That provision is made for assessment of opportunities post construction for appropriate indigenous coastal species to be re-instated adjacent to the cliff and on any disturbed land.
- That a co-management plan with hapū be developed for Weld road reserve taking into consideration weed removal, indigenous coastal planting (appropriate to preservation of archaeology).
- That the concrete pathway includes a black oxide to reduce the reflectivity of the concrete and ensure better integration with the rock colour and adjacent colour palette of the beach environment.
- That volcanic rock is sourced locally and where possible includes a range of sizes and smooth edges to allow public movement over the rocks to the beach.
- That some of the natural driftwood on site is replaced at the base of the rock revetment to create a more natural character to the newly established rock revetment.
- Increased potential for easy access to the beach from the proposed shared pathway with provision of informal strategically place rock revetment components to create natural rock steps part way along the shared pathway.
- That the landscape restoration and planting methodology is followed during construction.

Figure 35 – Photograph showing example of rocks placed in revetment to allow for informal public access down revetment.

8 CONCLUSION

The application proposes to create a rock revetment and concrete shared pathway around the base of Weld road headland and to reinstate a swing bridge across the Whenuariki stream, to provide for safe public access across the stream and around the headland.

The design of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway retains the large majority of vegetation within the coastal cliff environment of Weld road reserve/Hauranga Pā and will utilise natural shaped volcanic rock sourced from the District. The resulting structures have a backdrop of the cliffs of Weld road reserve and vegetated stream sides of the Whenuariki stream that reduces the visual effect of the proposed swing bridge and rock revetment that will be visible at the base and front of the cliff. This ensures the retention of the existing wider landscape character of the coastal environment of the site and ensures a mature vegetated backdrop to the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway from the reserve, beach and ocean viewpoints.

The addition of the rock revetment, although designed to be low profile and have a colour and material palette to blend as much as possible with the cliff-face behind, will have **moderate** effects on the local landscape. The proposed swing bridge and shared pathway materials and design are considered to be sympathetic to the location but will still generate a slight reduction in amenity in relation to the existing natural character. There will be benefits to the existing natural character by providing opportunities for enhancement of values on the adjacent Weld road reserve. This opportunity is related to the provision of the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway that will support removal of public access from that sensitive archaeological and cultural site. Development of a co-management plan with hapū for the site will explore opportunities for restoration of natural and cultural values for the site. In addition a landscape restoration and planting methodology will ensure mitigation of any affected vegetation during works.

The proposal will give rise to visual effects that are assessed to range between **very low** and **moderate**, depending on whether the bridge or shared pathway is being considered.

The proposal will give rise to landscape effects that are assessed to be of a **moderate** degree.

Taking into account the natural materials and minimal structural elements of the proposed swing bridge and shared path and the bulk and scale being minimised and reduced in impact by the backdrop of the Weld road headland cliff and associated vegetation, the character and style of the proposal is considered to be appropriate and sympathetic to the local area and will not detract from the overall quality of the natural environment.

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Appendix A:

Visual Simulation

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Proposed Weld Road Pathway - Indicative Visual Simulation

50mm DSLR camera lens and 3 merged photos
Heights determined by survey on site
Date: 23rd June 2021
Version 1.0
Prepared by: Renee Davies - Planning and Design

Te Kaunihera-ā-Rohe o Ngāmotu
New Plymouth District Council

Appendix B:

Effects Ranking

Table: 7-Scale Effects Assessment Reference

The Best Practise Guideline for Visual and Landscape Assessments from the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA) Te Tangi a te Manu indicate that a 7-scale effects ranking is usual for Visual and Landscape Assessments. The ranking table below and used in this Assessment report uses the 7-scale of effects outlined in Te Tangi a te Manu and then provides explanations for the rankings based on the review of a number of effects ranking tables with common and complementary explanations.

Report descriptor NZILA[4]	**Landscape Effects Explanation**
Very Low	The proposed development is barely discernible or there are no changes to the existing character, features or landscape quality.
Low	The proposed development is barely discernible with little change to the existing character, features or landscape quality. The proposal constitutes only an insignificant component of, or change to the wider view. Awareness of the proposal would have a very limited effect on the overall quality of the scene.
Low-Moderate	A slight loss to the existing character, features or landscape quality. The proposal constitutes only a minor component of or change to the wider view. Awareness of the proposal would not have a marked effect on the overall quality of the scene.
Moderate	Partial change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape and a small reduction in the perceived amenity. The proposal may form a visible and recognisable change or new element within the overall scene which may be noticed by the viewer, but does not detract from the overall quality of the scene.
Moderate - High	Noticeable change to the existing character or distinctive features of the landscape or reduction in the perceived amenity or the addition of new but uncharacteristic features and elements. The proposal may form a visible and recognisable change or new element within the overall scene and may be readily noticed by the viewer and which detracts from the overall quality of the scene
High	Major change to the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape or a significant reduction in the perceived amenity of the outlook. The proposal forms a significant and immediately apparent part of, or change to, the scene that affects and changes its overall character
Very High	Total loss of the existing character, distinctive features or quality of the landscape resulting in a complete change to the landscape or outlook. The proposal becomes the dominant feature of the scene to which other elements become subordinate and it significantly affects and changes its character

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Appendix C:

Landscape and Planting Methodology

Landscape Restoration and Planting Methodology

1.0 Introduction

The coastal vegetation around the site is highly modified, comprised of treeland / duneland species such as pōhutukawa ('Threatened' – Nationally vulnerable) / puka ('At Risk' – Nationally uncommon) / karo / puahou with exotic grass, rank pasture and herbaceous species interspersed with duneland complex. There also appears to be a sparse understory of native and exotic grasses, sedges and ferns including pingao ('At Risk' – Declining) and kokihi ('At Risk' – Naturally Uncommon). Harakeke is also throughout and/or adjacent to both project sites. Example photographs of the vegetation types across the two project sites for the proposed swing bridge and shared pathway are provided below.

<table>
<tr>
<td> 
Duneland vegetation adjacent to the laydown area within the pathway project site</td>
<td> 
Duneland vegetation, a small area of which is to be removed for the pathway laydown area. View towards Weld Road carpark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> 
Coastal vegetation around the headland of the pathway project site, view from the ocean.</td>
<td> 
Coastal vegetation around the headland, view from the ocean.</td>
</tr>
</table>

 Treeland/rank grass on the corner of the Weld Road reserve/near the bridge abutment on Whenuariki Stream (western side of the bridge project site).	 Treeland/rank grass on the western side of the bridge project site, adjacent to the Whenuariki Stream.

2.0 Vegetation Removal

As part of the proposed development of the shared path, there will be some minimal lower level vegetation that will need removal and/or trimming, totalling approximately 240 m^2 of mixed native / exotic treeland, grassland and duneland vegetation. For the proposed bridge, removal and/or trimming of approximately 28 m^2 of mixed native/exotic treeland, and removal of 150 m^2 of grassland and shrubland and potentially some dune land vegetation is required (70 m^2 on the western bridge side and 80 m^2 on the eastern). The degree of vegetation removal and/or trimming is difficult to assess at this concept/developed design stage and as such the mitigation for this is proposed to be determined on site in partnership with Ngati Tairi as works progress. A landscape restoration and planting methodology is included in Appendix 3 to provide guidance on how that will occur. The trimming and removal of the vegetation is not expected to have any effect on the overall vegetated character of the site as the removal and trimming will be restricted and the remaining vegetation and proposed landscape and planting restoration proposed as mitigation will maintain a sense of vegetated edge to the headland behind the shared path.

3.0 Landscape Restoration Methodology

As the exact plants that will require removal and/or trimming for the proposed works will be determined on site during the construction works, it is proposed to establish a restoration methodology that will inform the restoration and species that make up the mitigation restoration.

The proposed restoration methodology is as follows:

a. Meet on site with hapū and contractors during construction works to identify tree removals and at that time confirm with hapū the species for replacement planting. Plant selection will also take into account habitat for native birds and herpetofauna as identified in the ecological report.

b. Maintain a record of those removals and identified plant species and numbers in those locations to be planted in the next planting season following construction.

c. Order the plants as soon as full range of species required and numbers are confirmed. Eco-sourced to the Taranaki ecological district.

d. Planting to be undertaken in the first planting season following construction.

e. Plant in partnership with hapū.

f. Follow up through the Reserve Management Plan to be prepared in collaboration with hapū, an extended restoration plan for the broader site appropriate to both ecological conditions, archaeological considerations relating to Hauranga pā and cultural values.

4.0 Possible Plant Palette

The planting list below provides an overview of the range of species potentially suitable for the site based on the Restoration Planting in Taranaki: A guide to the Egmont Ecological District.

The final plant selection would be determined on site in partnership with hapū.

Table 1 : Range of potential coastal species for use within the landscape restoration.

Trees	
Maori /Common Name	**Latin Name**
Ti Kouka	*Cordyline australis*
Ngaio	*Myoporum laetum*
Mahoe	*Melicytus ramiflora*
Karaka	*Corynocarpus laevitagus*
Whau	*Enterlea arborescens*
Shrubs	
Coastal tree daisy	*Olearia solandri*
Hangehange	*Geniostoma ligustrifolium*
Karamu	*Coprosma robusta*
Karo	*Pittisporum crassifolium*
korikio	*Corokia cotoneaster 'Paritutu'*
Koromiko	*Hebe stricta*
Pinatoro	*Pimelea carnosa*
Rangiora	*Brachyglottis repanda*
Tauhinu	*Ozmanthus leptophyllus*
Taupata	*Coprosma repens*
Small leaved pohuehue	*Muehlenbeckia complexa*
Grasses	
Toetoe	*Austroderia toetoe*

Kowhangatara	*Spinifex sericeus*
Sedges	
Sand sedge	*Carex pumila*
Wiwi	*Ficinia nodosa*
Pingao	*Ficinia spiralis*
Herbs	
Harakeke	*Phormium tenax*
Native ice plant	*Disphyma australe*
Native spinach	*Tetragonia implexicoma*
New Zealand spinach	*Tetragonia tetragonioides*