

2.0 BACKGROUND DATA

The reserve is made up of three distinct parts. The largest part is taken up by the Waikanae Beach Holiday Park camping ground. The foreshore area from Grey Street to the area known as the Cut has been developed for the most part as a formal promenade area including grassed banks, a path, trees, surf club house, a grassed play area, play equipment and a tennis court. The remainder is the Cut which is grassed area with a heavy cover of trees lying adjacent to the Turanganui River mouth.

The camping ground is operated by the Council on a commercial basis. As such its future management will be determined by the procedures contained under the Local Government Act for Annual Plans for Council services. The continued operation of the camp has been assumed for the purposes of preparing this management plan.

From the point of view of the reserve, the camping ground is an appropriate, well established use of a beachfront area consistent with the provisions of Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977. The activities associated with the camping ground have been assessed with a view to the impact upon the future use and development of the rest of the reserve.

While these activities are compatible with those of the beachfront, the continued successful operation of the camp is to a large degree dependant upon its location and continued ready access to the beach. The future management of the reserve will need to recognise this relationship.

This Reserve is primarily used, apart from the formal camping ground, as an area of informal active recreation in close association with the adjoining beach and river mouth.

Legal Access ▶ Entry to the Reserve is available from Grey Street and from Awapuni Road. Access is also available from the extensive length of foreshore and river margin bordering the reserve.

Status ▶ The legal description of the land is Section, Block VII Turanganui Survey District, DP 8507. The Reserve has an area of 4.6640 hectares. The Reserve was originally part of the Gisborne Domain and was classified and gazetted as a recreation reserve in terms of the Reserves Act 1977 in 1987. The Gisborne District Council advertised its intent to prepare a management plan and called for public submissions in January 1993. This management plan follows as a consequence of these actions.

Physical Access ▶ Pedestrian access is available from Grey Street by way of a concrete path which runs beside the foreshore or by informal entry along the adjoining grassed bank next to the beach. A formed and sealed vehicle accessway runs into the camping ground from Grey Street. This access is 6 metres wide.

It is the only formal entry to the camping ground although pedestrian access can be gained from the beach beside the Surf Club. The perimeter of the camping ground is otherwise fenced by a 3 metre high mesh fence.

Vehicle access to the reserve is also available from this accessway to the back of the Surf Club and a grassed carpark adjoining the clubhouse and Grey Street. No other vehicle access is currently available into the reserve from Grey Street.

Apart from the camping ground, pedestrian access to the reserve is readily available from the seashore, Grey Street [described above] and Awapuni Road. There is a low post and rail wooden fence along this boundary to control vehicle entry. The river boundary consists of a concrete retaining wall which could be scaled from a boat or, in parts, at low tide.

Beach Activity ▶ Waikanae is considered a relatively safe swimming beach. The adjoining facilities make it an ideal recreation attraction for both residents and visitors. On a normal warm sunny day there is a concentration of people on the beach in front of the Surf Club. Numbers would be upward of 150 people on the beach with a similar number on the foreshore. On either side of this area numbers dwindle away rapidly to a few.

Overall the area of the beach away from the front of the surf clubhouse attracts relatively little use. As a comparison, experience at other popular beachfronts around the country strongly suggest the beach will be well used where there is ready access for vehicles to part adjacent to the foreshore. Most of the water related activities are still within the eye of the Surf Patrol.

During the summer season cars normally will park in Grey Street down to the intersection with Salisbury Road. Few cars if any park beyond this point even though there are parking spaces available under the shade of trees.

In the area of the Cut cars park under trees on the grass and a similar number currently park on the riverbank. The pattern remains the same during the whole day.

The grassed areas east of the Surf Club attract relatively little use. The children's play equipment provides a diversion from beach activities in summer and attracts only limited use during the rest of the year, perhaps because of its out of the way location.

Out of season activities focus on passive recreation such as walking, jogging or just sitting admiring the view. This beach is one of the best vantage points to view Young Nick's Head. This association has been commemorated with the location of a statue of Young Nick on the eastern end of the beach. The importance of a visual link with the beach and shoreline is more pronounced in these months. Little parking occurs in areas away from the beachfront.

The reserve also provides an important link in a pedestrian walkway that stretches from the inner city riverbanks past the inner harbour along the coast to Midway Beach. However the necessary diversion onto Awapuni Road in order to bridge the Waikanae Stream disrupts the continuity of the walkway and considerably lessens its appeal. In effect the visual and physical links between the inner harbour and the reserve are broken.

The implications of the current development are that for a relatively safe swimming beach Waikanae is starved of people particularly in summer.

Vehicle Access ▶ A strong body of opinion would support the contention that the amount of use made of the beach is determined by the availability of vehicle access. Most people using the beach enjoy parking in view of the sea. In preference they will drive and park their vehicles where this view and ready access is available. **The current pattern of use of the Waikanae and Midway beachfronts would support this view. As carparks in immediate proximity to the beach fill, people drift west along the coastline looking for other unoccupied parking spots close to the beach.**

Waikanae Beach is recognised as a prime location for recreation. An increase in the amount of use being made of the reserve and beachfront would be seen as desirable. The ready availability of vehicle access may determine the level of future use of the reserve.

One of the primary considerations in improving vehicle access will be to maintain the continued safe and convenient movement of people through the reserve. Vehicle access will need careful design and control to preserve the recreational amenities of the reserve. Considerations for pedestrian safety will need to include the separation of pedestrians and vehicles where possible and the speed of the traffic. Speed humps, like those in Anzac Park, will keep speeds down to an acceptable level.

Experience elsewhere has also shown that vehicle access can attract an undesirable element and undesirable activities. These often result in damage to the facilities, and create a nuisance to other users. Such unwanted activities often diminish where the reserve is very visible and well used by the public and visitors to the reserve are kept under the public eye.

In other words if the reserve is attractive and well developed and maintained, the level of public use is high and undesirable activities are kept to a minimum.

Vehicle access to this reserve has until recently been restricted to a developed carpark off Awapuni Road by a wooden post and rail barrier. The barriers have been partially removed and vehicles can now gain access to most of the reserve from this entry. The exception is the camping ground. Some vehicles have been observed parked under the trees along the grass bank in front of the surf club.

While this activity is undesirable in this part of the reserve, it highlights a need to address the issue in the long term of improved vehicle access to the reserve.

The increased vehicle access to this reserve has seen a marked increase in the use of the reserve. Nearly all the cars park in sight of the sea and preferably in the shade. The increased public use of the Cut is a desirable outcome of the increased access. Some concerns have arisen with regard to rubbish, damage to the vegetation and the surface of ground, inappropriate mixing of cars and beach goers and the potential nuisance of noise to campers.

Heavy use has in places created deep ruts which in turn become mud holes in the wet. Most of this has occurred with through traffic and would be eliminated with a formed and sealed accessway along the lines of that found in Anzac Park. The design of the accessway should encourage traffic to move in a single direction around the reserve without the necessity of doubling back on itself.

Vehicles have been pushing through the undergrowth at random to form new parking spots in view of the sea. This movement will need restricting in order to stop damage to the vegetation.

Some control could be gained by the use of barriers along that side of the accessway. Planned parking spots and viewing spots should also be provided which can be sustained by natural features.

Damage to the trees is likely where vehicles can drive persistently across their surface roots. In places the roots have been exposed. These areas will need to be built up again by spreading topsoil over them to bring the soil back to its original level. The proposed accessway will need to be designed to avoid these areas as far as possible. The existing path that has been worn by vehicle movement entering and leaving the reserve will need appropriate formation and sealing to avoid this problem.

The vehicle entrance from Awapuni road turns in at a sharp angle and the sight lines along the road towards the port are narrow offering limited vision for vehicles leaving the reserve. An alternative exit is proposed for vehicles leaving the reserve.

The desirable extent of vehicle access is discussed further later in this proposed plan.