

4.0 PROPOSED USE

4.1 Recreation

The Waikanae Beach Reserve was classified as a recreation reserve in 1987. Under the provisions of Section 17 of the Reserves Act 1977, the reserve is to be used to:

“provide areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public and for the protection of the natural environment and the beauty of the countryside, with an emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreation activities.....”

This reserve is part of an extensive length of beach and area of foreshore which incorporates Waikanae and Midway and extends from the mouth of the Turanganui in the east to the Waipaoa River in the west. Different people use the beach in different ways, not always compatibly. The whole beach cannot be used for one type of activity at the risk of isolating or at worst excluding other users. The obvious solution is to have a series of distinct parts with a specific character and user group in mind. Some of the unsatisfied demand could be taken up by other recreation facilities elsewhere on this shoreline or in the City e.g. Anzac Park.

The proposed use of this reserve is:

- ◆ To provide for the continued operation of the camping ground;
- ◆ **To provide a pedestrian link between a riverbank and coastal walkway;**
- ◆ To provide a developed foreshore area as a focus for facilities to encourage recreational activities associated with the river, the beach and the surf; *and*
- ◆ To provide an adjoining area of open space for informal outdoor recreation with the family in mind.

4.2 Pedestrian Linkages

The connections between the beachfront area and other destinations need to be strengthened in order to promote better use of the recreation resources of the district. The obvious solution is to use the pedestrian linkages being developed by Council along the banks of the rivers. A formal walkway gives definition to these linkages. Such a walkway has been proposed in the past and constructed in part mainly along the stretch of foreshore contained in this reserve in front of the Surf Club. To this end the continuation of a formal walkway or promenade is proposed for this reserve from Grey Street along the beachfront and river bank past Watties to town.

The physical barrier presented by the Waikanae Stream needs bridging. The current solution is to force people back onto the busy Awapuni Road. This deviation makes a physical and visual break in the pedestrian link and compromises the potential for encouraging greater use of the recreational assets of the City.

The existing path along the beachfront past the Surf Club needs extending to link with the existing path and the seawall which adjoins the Cut and the Turanganui River. An informal path has been worn on the grass bank along this route over time. This plan proposes to provide a formal walkway to join the existing formed pathways. The walkway should run between the two lines of existing trees along the foreshore and have the added advantage of creating a necessary barrier to cars parking on the beachfront.

4.3 Access to Beach

The position of the camp adjacent to the Surf Club wisely concentrates the beach activity of visitors on an area of the beach that is patrolled by the Club. Such convenience is not so readily available to the locals with parking being the problem.

Public submissions point out the difficulty of parking at the end of Grey Street or other places near the beach. Most people like to park where they can see the beach from the car and in many cases where they can see the car from the beach.

The Surf Club said in their submission that the pressure on the available parks means that people are going elsewhere on the beachfront where they can park. This means away from the Surf Clubs. The beach in front of the Club is then under-utilised and people's safety is put at risk. The Surf Club believes they should be the centre of beach activity. The Club House cannot move. So their answer is to bring the people back to the Club.

The beach has the capacity to cope with any increase in public recreation. The capacity of the beach is determined more by access and parking rather than the available area of beach. Current patterns of use support this contention that the level of use is determined by the availability of ready access. If parking becomes choked in Grey Street people move on to another area and the developed beach is under-utilised usually with accompanying demand for duplicate facilities elsewhere.

This raises the question of access to the beach and the availability of carparking. The congestion of traffic in Grey Street that occurs at periods of heavy demand has been well recognised in the past. The increasing problem has been one of providing for cars.

Previous reports have suggested the purchase and use of the section at Number 10 Salisbury Road, along with two other similar sections nearby, for access points to the beach off Salisbury Road. No. 10 was to form a loop road from Grey Street back around to Salisbury Road. This was to be used as a parking and drop off area. The proposal at No. 10 does raise the issue of protecting the interests of the adjoining landowners. Submissions have been received by Council from those opposed to any further parking on the available open grassed sections off Salisbury Road.

These proposals to reduce the parking problem fall outside of the provisions of this Plan. The use of the more distant sections would tend to focus public use of the beach away from the Waikanae Beach front.

If Waikanae is to continue as one of the main areas to focus beach activity a solution to the need for better access and improved parking will need to focus on this beachfront. Parking needs to be adjacent to this beach or as near as possible to it.

4.4 Options for Improving Access and Use

One option is to increase the use made of the area of the Cut and the other is to provide entry from Grey Street and make more use of the grassed areas to the east and west of the clubhouse for improved vehicle access and parking.

Moves were taken some time ago to effectively exclude cars from the area of the Cut mainly to encourage picnic type activities and to protect the existing trees from damage. Relatively little use was made of the area. In more recent times the barrier to access for vehicle has been partially removed.

The previous pattern of use has been re-established. Cars park amongst the trees with related activities being focused on the shoreline such as fishing, boating and other water related activities. Use of the area is increasing.

Accompanying this increased use, as described above, is wear and tear of the grassed surface and the inevitable damage to exposed tree roots. A number of attempts have been made to control vehicle movement in the past with variable success. There is an increasing level of demand to park in the shade and to gain ready access to the sea. The capacity of the Cut to accommodate this demand is considerable but not limitless. There are definite issues of protecting the vegetation and controlling the movement and use of the vehicles.

The first requirement is to provide a more formal structure to the vehicle pathways. This could be simply accomplished if a sealed driveway was developed similar to Anzac Park to channel the movement of the cars. This formed access should be sufficiently wide enough for two vehicles [4 metres]. In addition this formed access should be similarly developed to take in the grassed area west of the existing tennis courts to allow extended parking. It would also allow more concentrated use of the beach in support of the existing surf club facilities.

The bollards restricting entry to this grassed area have recently been removed after a recent storm in order to facilitate the removal of the debris from the beach. The subsequent periods of hot weather have seen more vehicles parking in this area and in the Cut than on Grey Street. People were looking to park in the shade close to the beachfront. This use has continued through the winter months with people parking their cars adjacent to the beach in sight of the sea.

4.5 The Need for Controls on Vehicle Movements

Now the barriers have been breached this area will become increasingly popular. However some problems will need resolving. Cars are being driven from the grassed area next to the tennis court along the grass bank to park under the trees in front of the surf club. Barriers will be needed along the line of the trees on the foreshore to stop this movement.

The existing entrance from Awapuni Road offers poor visibility for vehicles leaving the reserve. A large Norfolk Pine obscures oncoming traffic. An alternative exit is proposed adjacent to the existing entry. This will allow greater visibility of turning traffic.

The proposed vehicle accessway will be in the form of a loop which will reduce the possibility of any conflicting movement.

Another issue is to restrict cars from parking on top of the embankment bounding the Turanganui River. A considerable number of cars park under these trees. Fishing, water skiing and swimming are popular. The number of people using this area appears greater than when vehicle entry to the Cut was restricted.

The main impacts are the likely damage to the existing vegetation and the need to maintain the continued safe and convenient movement of pedestrians.

These two activities, parking and walking are not necessarily incompatible. The available space along the grass strip is rather confined. This strip of river margin is an integral part of the proposed pedestrian linkage of the beachfront with the river and harbour basin. Priority should be given to this linkage. Use of this strip for car access and parking will be in direct conflict with this priority use. Alternatively parking is proposed on the other side of the trees under controlled circumstances using vehicle barriers to keep the cars under or behind the trees.

4.6 Increasing Access from Grey Street

The other option is providing vehicle access from Grey Street to a newly formed parking area adjacent to the existing toilets and behind the surf club. Access would be by way of the existing entranceway to the camping ground.

This would allow further parking adjacent to the beachfront and would take some of the pressure off Grey Street. As the parking in Grey Street fills, rather than turn off to Salisbury Road, cars will be encouraged to turn down the entrance to the camp and park close to the beach.

There are a number of issues to be addressed so that this option can proceed, all involving the separation of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

The existing camp entrance provides access for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the camping ground, the surf club and the grassed area adjacent to the clubhouse and Grey Street often used for carparking. The speed of the vehicular traffic can be a concern. Speed bumps should be placed on this entrance to slow the movement of the vehicles and increase the safety of both pedestrians and turning traffic.

Entry to the proposed carparking areas will be from the camping ground entranceway through the existing entrance to the back of the surf club. This existing entrance is wide enough to ensure visibility is not restricted and vehicle movements can be completed in safety. An area of carparking would be formed on the grassed area adjacent to the toilets and behind the surf club.

A low wooden barrier will be needed to restrict vehicle movement to the parking areas. Bollards are already in place to stop cars from driving in front of the clubhouse.

4.7 Vegetation

The existing vegetation particularly in the Cut is generally in a state of deterioration due mainly to the erosion and compaction of soils caused by vehicles. The grassed area between the concrete wall along the river and the plantings is also suffering the same fate. In places exposed and damaged roots from the adjacent trees are evident.

The proposed formed vehicle access, parking areas and pedestrian accessways will need to be clearly defined around and through the existing vegetation. A system of low timber post and rail fences and bollards is proposed. All vehicles are to be excluded from the embankment.

The existing areas of vegetation will need to be cleaned up with the removal of all dead wood, broken branches and other rubbish. New trees and shrub planting should be carried out with similar species to those already existing and mulch applied to assist with re-establishment.

Additional planting should be carried out alongside the camping ground fence facing into the Cut and in the open grass area adjacent to the Waikanae Creek.

The grassed area along the embankment between the river concrete wall and the existing plantings will need restoring. Soil and reseeding work will be required to fill low areas, cover exposed tree roots and return banked areas to their original contour. The row of Norfolk Island Pines should have their lower sets of branches removed, the Pohutukawas pruned around their basis and other seedling and self-sown vegetation removed.

The area beneath the Morton Bay Fig trees could be mulched with bark to cover the exposed roots and generally improve the overall appearance. Grass is unlikely to grow under this heavy tree cover.

There are a number of self-sown seedling trees such as plum trees and other less desirable species that should be removed.

4.8 Facilities

Toilets and changing rooms are provided next to the surf club along with seating shelter and children's play equipment. Gas barbecues are proposed in the grass area adjacent to the play equipment, next to the tennis court and on the grass strip adjacent to the concrete wall in the Cut area. These will need to be accompanied with tables and rubbish receptacles.

There is an existing set of children's play equipment next to the tennis court which should be retained. The tennis court would provide for both camping ground visitors and the general public. The public entrance should be on the side facing the Cut.

4.9 Undesirable Behaviour

Concern has been expressed particularly by the camping ground of the need to avoid attracting undesirable behaviour such as vandalism to the reserve and surrounding area. Evidence of such activities can be readily seen in some parts of all communities today and such concerns are difficult to address in a management plan.

Provision has been made in this plan to help prevent creating conditions conducive to such behaviour. Careful consideration will be given to aspects of design and layout of proposed facilities, to avoid creating spaces concealed from public view and in their design and construction to avoid materials prone to vandalism.