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Dear Todd

## **TE ARA TIPUNA –CONSENT APPLICATION FOR WALKWAY**

- 1 We have been engaged by Te Ara Tipuna Charitable Trust (*Trust*) to assist the Trust with its application for resource consent to construct, operate and maintain a recreational pathway, 'Te Ara Tipuna', around Tairāwhiti from Gisborne to Ōpōtiki (*Project*) (*Application*). A copy of the Trust's Application is **enclosed**.
- 2 To assist the Council and submitters in reviewing and understanding the Application, we set out below a brief overview of the Project, and we refer interest in the fuller background to the Project website at <https://tearatipuna.nz/>

### **Description of the Project**

- 3 The Project is a 500km continuous pedestrian trail stretching from the southern boundary of Ngāti Porou at Te Toka-a-Taiau through the rohe of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngai Tai ki Torere, and ending at Tarakeha, in Te Whakatōhea.
- 4 Te Ara Tipuna means "the ways of our forebears". It is designed to reconnect us with the ways of our ancestors, allowing us to physically, figuratively, and culturally walk in their footsteps.
- 5 The trail will connect SH 35, public land, whenua Māori, private land and reserves to create a continuous journey around the coast through the respective iwi rohe. The track begins near Te Toka-a-Taiau, in Makorori, a beach community on the outskirts of Turanganui-a-Kiwa Gisborne, the major urban centre within Tairāwhiti. It ends at Tarakeha, near the coastal community of Ōpōtiki, in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. The pedestrian trail has two additional tracks – the Hikurangi Loop, which links to and around the culturally significant maunga Hikurangi, and the Port Awanui Loop where the first coastal settlement in Ngāti Porou was established.
- 6 The trail will capture a broad perspective of the East Coast of the North Island, covering diverse terrain including beach, farmland, dense bush, ridgelines and rivers.

### **What will the Project mean for the community and the region?**

- 7 The Project has significant cultural, social, and economic benefits for the Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty regions.
- 8 The primary purpose of Te Ara Tipuna is to restore connectivity between communities and provide resilience to the East Coast, particularly in light of recent weather events such as Cyclone Gabrielle and the effect on the condition and



accessibility of SH 35. The Project will provide alternative emergency access and egress to remote sections where SH 35 is prone to closure. The Project will also provide opportunities for local enterprise and economic development, and for iwi, hapu and whanau to access and connect to more of their whenua.

- 9 Te Ara Tipuna passes most marae and every community within its span. Most days of the journey will end in one of these communities where there will be opportunities to stay in a variety of accommodation, including over time, at those marae who wish to offer their unique manaakitanga experience.

#### **How will it work?**

- 10 The trail will be broken down into 26 walking days, plus five additional walking days if one chooses to complete the Hikurangi Loop and two days for the Port Awanui Loop. The trail could be used in a myriad of ways. One may complete the whole trail in one attempt or choose to attempt a couple of sections. Others may do the whole trail, but over a prolonged time period.
- 11 The Trust is committed to the ongoing protection and preservation of the whenua, awa, moana and wider ecosystems through which the trail will pass and the communities who call the area home. The pedestrian trail has been designed and will be operated with these objectives in mind.
- 12 The pedestrian trail treads very lightly on the land, with 90 percent of the trail being wayfaring across paddocks, hills and beaches in their natural state. The remaining 10 percent of the trail will have safety and protective measures built into the landscape.
- 13 The Trust has also proposed a kawa, ie, a code of care, to be developed and represented in a device akin to a passport to maintain the land, relationships and the experiences of land owners, iwi kainga, manuhiri and affected parties.

#### **Project consultation and Engagement**

- 14 The Project has been carefully developed over a long period. Since 2021, there has been ongoing and extensive engagement with as many affected landowners and governance entities as possible, with iwi and hapu representatives, local communities and various stakeholders throughout the three territorial authorities in the Project area.
- 15 The Trust has participated in discussions with elected representatives and senior officials and has taken part in relevant council strategy workshops.
- 16 The Trust has developed a bespoke database of landowners and un-succeeded beneficiaries, undertaken comprehensive research to identify legal title and status of land parcels from which an online interactive mapping tool has been co-designed with councils, has built a website to share all project reports and documents, general information and Project progress with the communities, has been running an active consultation programme for over two years and has held numerous landowner specific hui. To date, there have been close to 800 individual submissions in support of the Project.



- 17 Comprehensive information about the Project and directions on how to make a submission on the Application are available on the Trust's website:  
<https://tearatipuna.nz/>

**Next steps**

- 18 The Trust is pleased to reach the milestone of formal lodgement and notification of the Application.
- 19 The Trust looks forward to continuing engagement with communities throughout the submission and hearing process and is excited to bring this visionary and unique project to reality.

Yours sincerely

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Partner / Senior Associate

Copy to: Esta Kowhai, Team Leader District Consents, Gisborne District Council

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