

**Application for Resource Consent to
Gisborne District Council**

**Gisborne Beachfront Walk and Cycleway
Extension
Resource Consent Landscape Statement**

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Resource Consent Landscape Statement

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Landscape Statement

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1 Introduction

- (a) The Landscape Statement will form part of the Resource Consent application which is required in order to proceed with construction of a walkway/cycleway along the Gisborne Beachfront
- (b) Landscape Statement to accompany the Resource Consent application for the proposed walkway/cycleway along Gisborne Beachfront, from Waikanae Stream to Midway Beach. This statement will form part of the Assessment of Environmental Effects and is to detail any landscape or visual issues that may result from the construction of the walkway/cycleway.

2 Methodology

Site visit:

The site has been visited by me in August 2008 while I worked on the Turanganui Riverside Walkway project. At this time Opus consultants were working on the Gisborne Beachfront walkway/cycleway concept proposals for the Council. As the two walkways are to be connected I took time to look at the existing conditions of the beach and the proposed design.

As part of getting to know the site I stayed in an upstairs room overlooking the beach at the Whispering Sands Beachfront motel and dined at On the Beach Restaurant which both overlooked the Midway Beach Reserve and walked along segments of the beachfront during the morning and evening of my visit.

I have also visited Gisborne Beachfront on 2 occasions during the summer holidays.

Desk top assessment:

Assessment of the Gisborne District Council Planning Maps and relevant Reserve Management Plans, Quickmap and Google and photographs on the Opus project file to assess likely existing landscape character and features, as well as assessing view shafts.

The likely viewing audience and the visual vulnerability (the ability of the landscape to absorb the proposed development) were then assessed.

The landscape features of the proposed development were then assessed in terms of visibility and the visual vulnerability (ability to visually absorb) of the site followed by the recommendation of mitigation measures for any possible landscape and visual effects. Recommendations for any landscape enhancement was also then considered and suggested.

3 Statutory Context

The specific statutory context and issues relevant to this landscape statement will address will be from the assessment that the majority of the site is located within the *Coastal Environment Overlay*. In accordance with Rule 4.8.3.2 (3) land disturbance of more than 50m² of earth in a vertical plane view in any 3 month period, or disturbance of more than 50m³ of earth in any 3 month period is provided for as a Restricted Discretionary activity with Council restricting its discretion to the following matters:

- a) *Timing and duration of the activity*
- b) *Area, location and length of the activity with particular regard to conformity with existing landforms*
- c) *Placement and management of cuts and fills likely to be visually dominant in the landscape*
- d) *Potential effect on the values associated with natural character, biodiversity, significant habitat of indigenous fauna, amenity and landscape, including re-vegetation type, timing and density, especially of any cut and fill areas*
- e) *Effects on water quality of waterbodies in the Coastal Environment*
- f) *Heritage values in the heritage alert layer*
- g) *The protection of ecosystems unique to the Coastal Environment including those acting as natural defences to erosion and inundation such as estuaries, coastal wetlands and dunes.*

In accordance with The Regional Rules for the *Coastal Hazard Overlay* Rules 5.30.1.3, 5.31.1.3 and 5.32.1.3 any activity including earthworks which will alter natural dune landform, beaches, wetlands or sandspits is a Discretionary activity.

4 Landscape Character

4.1 Existing Landscape Character

Landscape character is derived from landform, landcover and the man made built patterns and features.

The beach is an open, reasonable flat beach with fine grey sand. It has some small incipient fore dune development on the more unmodified sections of the beach to the west.

The natural dune and back dune wetland system has been built over and developed to a highly modified coastal landscape. The fragile small foredune system and beach is now a very small remnant of the former coastal ecosystem.

The subject area of 1.5km long section of beach is managed by the Gisborne District Council Managed under the Waikanae Beach and Midway Beach Reserve Management Plans. The reserve is bordered from east to west by the following land use activities: Waikanae stream and Awapuni Road, the Waikanae Beach Holiday Park, cul-de-sacs of Grey Street and Roberts Road, residential houses and commercial accommodation with vehicle access off on Salisbury Road, and to the west, the Centennial Marine Drive with surf club, restaurant and across the road the Swimming pool and other recreational activities. The houses, the Holiday Park, other accommodation, surf clubs, restaurant, and parking area in Grey Street cul-de-sac are all in a position to look out over the mown grass reserve to the beach and sea beyond.

Presently the grassed area is used by people accessing the beach and walking along the reserve. The mown grass area where the path is to be aligned is between the beach and boundary of the building development. This is a narrow longitudinal (1.5km long) space that is at its most narrow at the Waikanae Beach Holiday Park where there is an existing paved path and retaining wall. South of the holiday park, except for the line of specimen trees (predominantly Norfolk pines) and fore dune, the mown grass reserve space has few features. While pedestrians presently walk along the grassed area where the walkway-cycleway is intended to go, there is no existing formal track or path along the length of the reserve from west of the holiday park.

The reserve space widens at the western Midway Beach end and the Waikanae Stream end around the Captain Cook statue and these areas have a more diverse vegetation patterns.

Over the years different structures have been built and demolished along the beach. In the Waikanae end of the beach significant concrete structure were built in the 1920's and demolished in the 1980's. In the 1990's structures were built in the Midway end of the reserve and these ended up covered in accreting sand and became a hazard (refer to GDC Midway Beach Reserve Management Plan)

With the 1290's removal of the dune system at the Waikanae end of the beach with the development of a 650 foot long sea wall (GDC Midway Beach Reserve Management Plan),

there is very little natural character apart from the sea and sand beach berm. The vegetation is predominantly the mown grass strip, exotic conifers and some native pohutukawa specimen tree planting as a line along the back of the beach foredune. To the west the incipient foredune system consists of some presence of native sand binding perennials such as spinifex and pingao. This incipient foredune creates a highly dynamic zone where dune erosion and re-building and stabilisation is a normal process and is a remnant that reflects the natural character and processes of a natural beach coastal environment.

5 Description of the Proposal

5.1 The Proposed Work

- (a) The proposal is for the construction of the walk and cycleway approximately 1.5km in length and 3 metres wide. The proposed alignment is to be at a minimum distance of 3 metre inland from the line of Norfolk pines (from the trunk), and 3 metres minimum back of the fore dune system at the western Midway end of the beach reserve. It is the intention of the Council to try and have the pathway away from the active dunes.
- (b) The walkway-cycleway will connect to the newly constructed Turanganui Riverside walkway/cycleway across the Waikanae Stream via Custom Road Bridge clip-on and the existing paving connections along the reserve. The proposed pathway end at the Midway Surf club off Centennial Marine Drive.
- (c) See Appendix 1 for the General Layout of the pathway.
- (d) At this stage it is envisaged that the walk and cycleway alignment would be constructed with either concrete or limestone chip interspersed with timber boardwalk. The removal of about 30cm deep top soil would be required to construct the alignment. There would be a certain amount of cut and fill required, although this would be kept to an absolute minimum.
- (e) Carparking at the Roberts Road cul-de-sac may also be extended as part of this work.
- (f) There will be some removal of existing mature Norfolk and Radiata pines around the Captain Cook and Young Nicks Statues. The purpose of their removal is to allow existing juvenile Pohutukawa and native shrub plantings to develop and protect the new pathway from tree roots.

6 Assessment of Visual & Landscape Effects

6.1 Visual Catchment

The reserve where the path is aligned is highly visible. It is seen from the well patronised beach, from residences and holiday/commercial accommodation, restaurant and surf club activities. The path structure itself will be close to horizontal reducing its visibility.

The visual prominence of the proposed path will depend on the locality along the length of the reserve. The wider parts of the reserve will be able to absorb the path. In the mown grass area west of Grey Street the visual absorption will be low as the reserve is narrow and path is 3m wide, occupying a relatively large surface area and will be visually prominent. The foredune and planting such as the line of the existing Norfolk pines will reduce the visibility of the path from the beach.

Timber slate path with grass will be less prominent, limestone slightly more prominent while concrete the most prominent material option.

To conclude:

- Visually the change will be less than minor to minor.

6.2 Assessment of Proposal on Site's Landscape Character

- (a) The proposed walkway-cycleway will provide a defined pathway to follow the extent of the beach from Waikanae Bridge to Midway, connecting the existing formed paved paths and access ways to the new. It will create a new modified element into the coastal environment. However, this existing coastal environment especially to the eastern Waikanae end is a highly modified coastal environment.
- (b) The pathway has the potential to provide defined connections for beach access and the containment of foot and cycle traffic there is a probability that the incipient dunes could become less trampled. With reduction of trampling, possible restoration of the natural dune system and processes is a possibility which would enhance the native biodiversity and natural character of this coastline.
- (c) To protect the natural processes and to regard to the conformity of the existing fore dune system the path alignment should be sited at a minimum of 3m distance from the back of dune system.
- (d) The concrete pathway will be a more structural and formal feature than the timber and limestone pathway construction options.
- (e) Visually the proposed pathway will be a long, linear flat directional line feature.
- (f) A totally straight alignment would be visually formal and unnatural while a slightly curved alignment is less formal and more fitting to this particular site.

- (g) A curved alignment however could look incoherent. The alignment needs to follow and relate to the landscape features landscape, for the existing connections such as cul-de-sacs and pedestrian access points from Salisbury Street, surf clubs and defined assess points to the beach to be thresholds and any features, such as trees, changes in slope within the space to be used to subtly shape the alignment. A curved alignment requires careful design so to reduce the potential of unattractive “desire lines”.
- (h) A pathway with a length of 1.5km will attract the need for seating. People in the community often request for memorial seats and shade trees in reserve situations such as this. . This activity would need to be addressed in the review of the Midway Beach Reserve management Plan.
- (i) The removal of the mature pine trees around the Captain Cook and Young Nick statues to allow the establishment of native planting will have an effect on the existing character and open the areas up. How the character of native plantings work in with this predominant exotic vegetated reserve environment needs to be addressed when the review process of the Midway Beach Reserve Management Plan.
- (j) Some existing native planting such as ngaio on the western midway end may require removal due to the path alignment. These species are fast growing; therefore any replanting would quickly mitigate any effect.
- (k) Carparking at the Roberts Road cul-de-sac will be a further modification of the beach environment with the increase in road surface and kerbing. Bollards may be required to ensure vehicles do not access the beach.

7 Summary of Recommendations for Mitigation:

- (a) Along side the Waikanae Beach Holiday park avoid any new structures by working in of existing pathway and pathway structures and where required carry out detailed enhancement works so to the marry and integrate the use of materials.
- (b) Improve connection with Grey Street pavements and alignment of the existing path alongside the Holiday Park and to integrate the different paving materials around the Grey Street cul-de-sac.
- (c) Regard to the conformity of the existing landform. From Grey Street west align the pathway away from the incipient fore dune system so to allow protection of the natural physical and ecological dune processes. Future dune ladder connections to the beach should be developed once the strong pattern of beach desire-lines is established by beach users.
- (d) If the line of existing Norfolk pine trees along the back of the foredune is to remain, the path should be aligned out from the drip line of the trees so to prevent damage from the tree roots to the pathway as well as damage of excavation to the tree roots and possible effect on tree stability.
- (e) Reflect the natural character of the coastal environment. Align the path to reflect the subtle curved line of the back of the fore dune system rather than the formal lines of the

straight line of the Norfolk pines and the built environment boundary. Such unnatural features could be issues to be addressed in the next review of the Midway Reserve Management Plan.

- (f) People in the community often request for memorial seats in reserve situations such as this. If seating was to be desired by the community it should be in an appropriate character and materials for this coastal site. Suitable sites would be the outside of the northern tip of the curve in the path alignment. Shade trees, located in consultation with adjoining landowners could be a consideration if any future seating is installed.
- (g) With any re-planting CPTED requirements are to be considered. For example, species foliage above 600mm to be 2m minimum back from the path and trees limbed up.
- (h) The Reserve Management plan when reviewed will need to address the character and materials of any future structures e.g. seating and other site furniture and defined beach access and railings. The vegetation strategy and landscape character also requires reviewing so to determine whether to retain existing predominant exotic character or staged replacement of native vegetation and restoration of a natural foredune ecosystem.

To conclude:

- The recommended path alignment should have a slightly curved alignment located on the mown grass area of the reserve so to reflect and protect the natural character of the beach and the conformity of the foredune system. The path is to be coherent layout to existing access points. Future dune ladder connections to the beach should be developed once the strong pattern of beach desire-lines is established by beach users.
- The vegetation management in the reserve requires review.

8 Conclusion and Discussion

- (a) This Statement addresses the relevant statutory context of the Coastal Environment and Coastal Hazard Overlays assessing the effects on the existing landform and natural character.
- (b) The construction of the 3m wide 1.5km walk and cyclepath will be a further modification of the beach environment in a highly visible reserve. However if well aligned in a coherent pattern and sensitive to the natural patterns environment, the pathway feature has the potential to be a positive landscape and visual element.
- (c) Future dune ladder connections to the beach should be developed once the strong pattern of beach desire-lines is established by beach users. By creating these defined access points to the beach and by containing walkers and cyclists to the path there is a potential to provide positive physical and ecological values by creating a less trampled fore dune system.

- (d) The path alignment is to reflect the natural subtle curved line of the foredune and at a distance from the back of the foredune to regard to the conformity of the existing fore dune system and the natural character of the coastline.
- (e) The pathway as a “built” feature has the potential to provide a key element to process of change by providing contained access and aligned so to be sensitive to the natural patterns and processes.
- (f) The review of the Waikanae Beach and Midway Reserve Management Plans will need to incorporate the management strategies to address any changes for which the path will create and to review the management of the reserve to the objectives and policies of Regional Land and District Plan.
- (g) From a desk top analysis the visual effects of the construction of the path will be less than minor to minor depending on the width of the reserve and the material of the path surface used.
- (h) Given that the majority of the Gisborne beachfront is a highly modified coastal environment, the proposed walk and cycleway developed with the recommended mitigation above, will have no more than minor effect on existing natural character and dune landform of this coastline.

9 References

Gisborne District Combined Regional Land and District Plan, August 2008

Waikanae Beach Management Plan, Gisborne District Council, 14 November 1996

Midway Beach Reserve Management and Development Plan, Gisborne District Council, 18 November 1999

10 Appendix 1

Gisborne District council

Beach Front Walkway / Cycleway General Layout Sheet 1 (R3) and Sheet 2 (R3)