

Te Ara Tipuna.

Assessment Of Landscape and Visual Effects.

Final – July 2023



Papatea Bay – Opotiki District

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Isthmus Group has completed a high-level Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects (LVA) for the concept stage design of Te Ara Tipuna (the Project, Proposal, path). Te Ara Tipuna is a proposed path of approximately 500kms in length for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders between Gisborne and Opotiki. The LVA considers the effects on landscape, including outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONFL - as identified on planning maps), visual amenity and natural character.
- 1.2 As set out in the 2021 Proposal Document for Te Ara Tipuna¹ the aim of the Project is:
- “to restore connectivity and momentum in the daily life of those who live and work in-rohe, the iwi kaenga, the ahi ka, safe and independent of SH35. To be able to create local level enterprises and economic development, to save and share the stories of their wahi, to revitalise the pa kaenga as centres of activity and society, to be everyday kaitiaki of the ara and the people who traverse them, locals, and manuhiri alike.”*
- 1.3 Te Ara Tipuna is proposed for development mostly within the coastal environment. It will pass through dramatic, varied, and high-value landscapes and will provide connections into local communities along the route. There is an intention to include overnight stays at marae as part of the experience, as is being discussed with iwi and hapu.
- 1.4 This high-level LVA has been conducted alongside development of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP), appended to this report. The LMP supports the effects assessment through the methods it sets out as assumed measures to avoid, remedy and mitigate for adverse effects within the concept design. Further recommendations are also outlined in the LMP for future stages, to further reduce adverse effects and build in landscape benefits. The LVA includes an assumption that the LMP will form part of the consent package.
- 1.5 Te Ara Tipuna comprises five possible development Stages – as set out in the 2021 Te Ara Tipuna Proposal Document. The LVA is structured around these stages – with consideration of existing values and effects in each Stage in relation to the existing Concept Design – including the proposed route and new bridge and toilet/shelter (google earth kml file lodged) and Te Ara Tipuna Conceptual Document, with typical path type cross sections and plans.

¹ Te Ara Tipuna, Proposal Document 2021, pg. 2. Refer to the AEE for the Proposal Document 2021.

- 1.6 The LVA considers the high-level positive and adverse landscape and visual amenity effects for each Stage of Te Ara Tipuna assuming these will relate to a corridor (50m)² and the detail of the built works and agreed mitigation measures at consent ‘design freeze’ as developed through the Project shaping stages with the wider team of discipline specialists.

The Existing Environment - Summary

- 1.7 The existing environment of Te Ara Tipuna is analysed through the baseline evaluation appended to this report (**Appendix C**). This has been informed by desk top analysis and local knowledge from trips around the East Coast on SH35 and to many of the coastal communities intended as destinations. The evaluation considers the landscape catchments and sequence of destinations within each development stage, and the existing features and patterns that contribute to landscape values including:
- a. identified ONFL within the Gisborne and Opotiki Districts with reference to scheduled values.
 - b. natural and built/community landscape characteristics including features that contribute to natural character (as natural character includes biophysical and perceptual matters.
 - c. the visual amenity of the landscapes of Te Ara Tipuna relating to existing views and the likely viewing audiences of the path.
 - d. planning overlays that are relevant in each district and as they address the biophysical, perceptual, and shared and recognised components of landscape (refer to definitions within the Appendices to this report).

Findings on Effects – Summary

- 1.8 The effects of the Project are considered in two parts with a focus on measures to avoid adverse effects and the Stage specific requirements for mitigation (complementing the general principles set out in the LMP).
- 1.9 The first part of the assessment addresses the components of the concept design (the Conceptual Document) with findings addressing the use of path segregation, roading type elements, path types appropriate in ONFL and bridge structures.

² The final footprint of the alignment and property owner easement is likely to be no more than 20m in width. However, the effects assessment takes a wider, 50m, ‘corridor’ approach, to ensure greater certainty. Given the concept stage of the design, it is understood that the final centreline of the path may need to vary slightly from that shown in the consent stage, as there will be adjustments made in response to site work and landowner feedback.

- 1.10 The second part of the assessment considers each Stage in turn including where further investigation is required to confirm the alignment and path types, and provides a summative, high-level assessment of effects for ONFL, the natural and built landscape, visual amenity, and natural character.
- 1.11 Overall, the findings of this assessment are that the effects of Te Ara Tipuna on ONFL, landscape, visual amenity, and natural character will be appropriate. The Project shaping stages, including iterative review and feedback on landscape matters, have confirmed a concept alignment and options for path types and new structures that bring a focus on avoiding adverse effects and practicable mitigation measures, as included in the LMP. Landscape matters to resolve in the next stages of the design relate to both detailed alignment and response to site, to further reduce adverse effects and provide for greater benefits.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an assessment of Te Ara Tipuna (the Project/Proposal/path) effects on landscape, visual amenity, and natural character. It considers potential adverse and positive effects, including on the values of areas identified as outstanding natural features and landscapes (ONFL).
- 2.2 The effects will arise from both construction (temporary) and operational (permanent) use.

Proposal Overview

- 2.3 The Proposal is to provide for a continuous walking, cycling and horse-riding path to (and from) Makorori headland³ in the south to Opotiki⁴ over approximately 500km in the Gisborne and Opotiki districts. Most sections of the route will be shared by all users, and generally walkers and horse riders will follow the same path.
- 2.4 The overarching purpose of Te Ara Tipuna, as set out in the Proposal Document 2021⁵ is to:
- Create the conditions in which Ngati Porou and Te Whanau-a-Apanui can regenerate the cultural wealth of a lively, healthy society of connected communities, culturally fluent and capable, enterprising, and economically active, environmental protectors, and sustainers, in revitalised whanau, hapu, and iwi relationships.*
- 2.5 The operating principles⁶ which have guided the design and are relevant to landscape matters⁷ are:

To facilitate everyday rangatiratanga, every day – individuals and collectives are independent and self-determining, making positive decisions for themselves about themselves, with responsibility for the consequences.

To support practical expressions of wellness, wellbeing, and kindness.

³ The horse and cycle path will start at the northern base of the headland - from the existing freedom camping- carpark site.

⁴ As per the 2021 Proposal document, this report only uses tout (macrons) for names of organisations, otherwise they are not used in accordance with Ngati Porou practice.

⁵ Te Ara Tipuna Proposal Document 2021, pg 11

⁶ Te Ara Tipuna Proposal Document 2021, pg 11

⁷ Best practice guidance considers three interrelated components of landscape and values derived from – the biophysical (natural science), sensory (perceptual, including through all the senses) and the shared and recognised (due to associations, ongoing connections). Refer to landscape definitions in Appendix A to this report.

To reinforce connection and contribution through whakapapa, and activity between and amongst communities.

To honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi in practical, local, and relationship-based ways.

- 2.6 Te Ara Tipuna follows a varied route, generally close to the coast and within the coastal environment (as identified on Gisborne Regional Council, Opotiki District Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council planning maps). In many locations it is aligned with existing recreation tracks, beach areas above high tide, farm tracks and unformed legal (paper) roads. In other areas it will be located alongside SH35 and formed local roads. In places the route crosses through private land, as negotiated/to be negotiated with landowners.
- 2.7 The process of confirming the concept alignment has followed an iterative process with the wider Project team of effects specialists. This included consideration of the potential resilience benefits of the path as an alternative ATV (all-terrain vehicle) connection to and from Tokomaru Bay and Ruatoria, following successive cyclones and flooding events which have closed SH35 and local roads, for weeks on end.
- 2.8 The consent design is provided at a high level, to allow for refinements in the next stages in response to specific site/context issues, and to provide for further input to the design as it progresses from iwi, hapu, landowners, and the wider Te Ara Tipuna community.
- 2.9 While the detailed spatial arrangement of the path types proposed (as included in the Conceptual Document – cross sections) will be confirmed through further investigation the standard path will be approximately 4.5m wide and formed over natural ground, to minimise earthworks and ongoing maintenance requirements. The Construction Management Plan (CMP)⁸ will set out a site-responsive approach to confirm appropriate path types and the application of those in future design stages (i.e., it will confirm/provide a spatial strategy), and this (site responsiveness) is supported by the principles and methods set out in the LMP.
- 2.10 As included in the concept design, and assessed in the LVA, there are new bridges and ‘clip-ons’ to existing bridges and new toilet/shelter facilities.

⁸ The CMP is under development at the time of writing this report. Through team discussions, it has been confirmed that the CMP will require consideration of *functional need* as a first principle (during more detailed design stages), for inclusion of boardwalks, gravel and stripped/compacted path types and vertical path segregators. This responsive approach is to minimise adverse landscape, visual amenity, and natural character effects, particularly in sensitive areas such as ONFL.

- 2.11 Features to be confirmed (which are not included in the concept design and are not assessed in this report) may include vertical timber or concrete clad retaining walls as needed, additional car parking facilities, fencing and bollards, lighting and seating and other structures to be confirmed in a future overall narrative and identity strategy and to progress mahi toi and wayfinding and interpretation elements.⁹ The LMP provides high level guidance recommendations relating to these elements.
- 2.12 A detailed description of the Project is included in the AEE report. This report focuses on those Project components most likely to generate landscape, visual amenity and/or natural character effects, as summarised in the Assessment of Effects sections of this report.

Proposed staging

- 2.13 The Proposal includes five Stages¹⁰, as set out in the AEE. The Stages are (from south to north):
- a. Tairawhiti, Makorori Headland to Tolaga Bay, Uawa
 - b. Tolaga Bay to Waipiro Bay
 - c. Waipiro Bay to East Cape
 - d. East Cape to Te Kaha
 - e. Te Kaha to Opotiki
- 2.14 The five Stages have been used as a framework for this LVA – refer to Assessment Approach, below.

3. ASSESMENT APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Scope

Baseline Evaluation - Assumptions

- 3.1 Given the scale and stage of the Project, this assessment has not included a comprehensive gap analysis of planning document landscape values. However, additional values, considered relevant to the LVA and best practice assessment, have been drawn from site observations

⁹ Further resource consents will likely be needed for such components.

¹⁰ These relate to possible staging for construction. The Stages set out may alter depending on funding.

and desk-top study, including the observations made by other specialists on the Project, and as informed by the project planning team.¹¹

- 3.2 This assessment does not include a review of the ONFL identified in regional and district plans and, or their documented values. This is important to note as ONFL identified in the Gisborne and Opotiki region were completed some time ago (with updates being considered in current Resource Management Plan reviews and noting the TRMP does not identify ONFL outside the coastal environment), using a best practice methodology that has since been further developed. Notably, the values addressed in existing schedules would now be considered insufficient, as they focus on what can be seen, views of a landscape and generic or limited concepts of what contributes to aesthetic value or amenity. Rather than being inaccurate, the existing schedules miss the full consideration of the natural science, sensory and shared and recognised factors that contribute to landscape values. That being said, this assessment considers the ONFL identified by GDC and ODC are valid for the purpose of this assessment; and would be identified, generally, in the same locations through a comprehensive review.
- 3.3 Similarly, a review and gap analysis of existing natural character values (refer to the definitions in Appendix A) has not been included in the assessment, due to the scale of the Project. In the Opotiki District the existing natural character evaluation, as included in the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (BOPRC) planning maps, has been considered along with first principles, a best practice approach to understanding factors that contribute to, and can adversely effect, natural character, as described further in the Assessment of Effects section of the report below. The Tairāwhiti Regional Management Plan (TRMP) does not rate the natural character of the coastal environment or identify areas of outstanding or high natural character. For the purpose of this assessment and based on site work, it is assumed that the natural character of ONFL areas is at least moderate-high, the majority areas along the route have at least moderate natural character with minor areas, adjacent to settlements having low-moderate natural character (on a seven-point scale).
- 3.4 For both regions the best practice principles of Te Tangi a Te Manu¹² and the direction of NZCPS policies will apply alongside planning matters. That is, the assessment considers the

¹¹ This has included “hot spot” workshops and reporting by other specialists to identify likely areas of significance and concern (in February and May 2023) As outlined in Appendix A, landscape definitions and the New Zealand Institute of Architects Assessment Guidance, Te Tangi a Te Manu, landscape is an integrating concept and as such needs to be informed by a range of specialist areas addressing biophysical, perceptual and shared and recognised matters (ecology, geology, hazards, archaeology, cultural, social, and recreation).

¹² Section 9.37 of Te Tangi a Te Manu addresses the assessment of effects on natural character.

potential of the Project to impact both biophysical and sensory matters that contribute to the specific natural character in each area along Te Ara Tipuna and whether, or not, the works will have, on balance, and inclusive of agreed mitigation, adverse or positive effects that are appropriate in that context.

Project footprint

- 3.5 With reference to the Conceptual Document, the direct effects of the works associated with Te Ara Tipuna are likely to be limited to less than a 20m width including all earthworks and vegetation removal. In some areas, where there is limited need for disturbance, the corridor footprint (width) of the Project could be generally 4.5m - the width of the standard path. For the purposes of this assessment, however, it is assumed that final route is to be confirmed within a 50m-wide corridor. That is: 25m either side of the centre line. As is appropriate to this stage of the Project, this 50m reflects the need to provide a measure of effects certainty and flexibility, including where landowner easement agreements are yet to be confirmed and their knowledge will help confirm the final alignment. It is understood that the final footprint of the Path (including all earthworks and vegetation removal) will be less than 20m.

Project components

- 3.6 In line with the brief provided and the Project stage, the assessment of effects focuses on the proposed alignment and built works. (Refer also to Approach/High-level assessment, below.)
- 3.7 The LVA does not include consideration of effects arising from increased use of the area. Potential effects associated with cyclists, walkers, and horse riders, and how their numbers might vary over time, or on different sections of the path, are addressed in the Recreation Assessment Report and, as they relate to the varied communities, in the Social Impact Report. These matters (including consideration of privacy -not assessed in this report) will be a focus in future stages, through ongoing engagement and formal agreements.
- 3.8 Effects on visual amenity for individual properties have not been assessed in the LVA given the stage and extent of the Project. However, effects for individual dwellings have been considered at a high level within Project shaping – and further commentary is provided on this within the body of the assessment.)

Construction (temporary) effects

- 3.9 These will be a particular consideration as Te Ara Tipuna is proposed to be located within the coastal environment¹³ over much of the proposed route (as identified on planning maps), and/or in proximity to wetlands, rivers and streams and their margins.
- 3.10 The LVA considers construction effects at a high-level, as appropriate to the stage of the Project (and with the CMP under development at the time of writing). Construction (temporary) effects have been considered at a broadscale as part of the project shaping – and commentary is provided on this within the body of the effects assessment.¹⁴

Approach

Definitions

- 3.11 This LVA uses definitions of landscape, visual amenity and natural character as provided by Te Tangi a te Manu.¹⁵ The definitions are set out in **Appendix A** to this report along with further explanations.

High level assessment

- 3.12 The overall approach for assessment has been driven by the scale and stage of the Project. Baseline evaluation and assessment of effects is provided at a high level, as appropriate to the Project's 500km length, and the Proposal's focus at this stage on providing an appropriate alignment, appropriate "typical" design guidance for key built elements (using "typical" cross-sections); and management of potential adverse effects through a suite of management plans (assumed to be conditioned to any consent granted).
- 3.13 The LVA does not provide ratings of effects against the NZILA 7-point rating scale. Such an assessment would require sufficiently detailed plans showing the spatial arrangement of path types and the general nature and extent of earthworks and vegetation removal in each Stage.
- 3.14 Similarly, it follows that a detailed assessment against statutory planning provisions is not included in this high-level LVA. Relevant planning provisions have been considered as part of the Project's context for development of the consent design. A summary of key landscape-related provisions is included below in the section headed Existing Environment. These have

¹³ Where the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, NZCPS (2010) policies will apply.

¹⁴ Refer to Approach, below, for a description of what this assessment considers a "temporary" (construction) effect.

¹⁵ The NZILA landscape assessment guidelines.

been summarised from a more detailed description of landscape-related provisions provided by the planning team and have informed the Project shaping (refer below).

- 3.15 In summary, the approach and assessment methodology used in this LVA has been developed as appropriate to specifics of this Project stage and its context. This is in line with Te Tangi a te Manu, the NZILA guideline for landscape assessment, which recognises the need for such appropriate adaptation, rather than the application of a standard methodology.

Project shaping and future design guidance

- 3.16 A key part of the approach for the LVA has been to contribute to the concept design through Project shaping and development (in parallel) of the LMP. This has occurred with input from other specialists on the Project team, such as cultural specialists and ecologists – who have provided input folding into/relevant to landscape matters.
- 3.17 The Project shaping, using integrated design and assessment as the LVA has progressed, has sought to avoid inappropriate adverse landscape effects as a first principle. In the first instance this has meant a focus on iterations to confirm the location/alignment of the Te Ara Tipuna, with adjustments made to the proposed route following the workshops and other inputs (such as mapping of “hotspots” i.e., locations and areas to avoid).
- 3.18 Project shaping has also included input to the Project description and typical path component details (the Project cross-sections), and to the CMP.¹⁶
- 3.19 The LMP has been developed alongside the workshops and other shaping inputs to set out design methods for future more detailed design stages, to guide design and provide certainty (through its conditioning), that appropriate landscape outcomes will be achieved. The LMP will support the site-responsive approach agreed for the CMP, for spatial strategy in the detailed design stages.¹⁷
- 3.20 The LMP also includes recommendations for further investigations post consent to further avoid adverse effects and build in positive effects.

¹⁶ Refer below to The Proposal for further details on the development of the CMP.

¹⁷ The CMP has not been reviewed; however, a site-responsive approach has been discussed and agreed with the Project team and as such is assumed for this report. Refer below to The Proposal for further details on the approach agreed for the CMP.

Landscape catchments

- 3.21 The LVA has used the Project Stages (refer to Introduction above) as a framework for the baseline evaluation and effects assessment. While the Stages relate to a possible construction sequence, these also have a landscape logic. For example, the first Stage assessed considers Makorori Headland to the Cooks Landing existing track end at Tolaga.
- 3.22 The Proposal defines potential walking days along the length of Te Ara Tipuna - generally aligned with possible accommodation options and with times varying between days. Reference to defined Days has not been included in the LVA because start/end points may be subject to further refinement as the Project progresses, including through ongoing input from the community and through recommendations from other disciplines and assessment reports.

Temporary (construction) effects

- 3.23 This assessment considers that an effect will be temporary where it does not extend beyond the construction period or is appropriately mitigated at the end of construction.

Methodology/Tasks

- 3.24 The methodology used to consider potential adverse and positive effects on landscape, visual amenity and construction effects of the proposal has followed best practice guidance Te Tangi A Te Manu provided by Tuia Pito Ora, the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).¹⁸ This has included the following tasks:
- a. review of the proposal plans and documents, including relevant planning provisions (as provided by the Proposal's planning team).
 - b. high-level evaluation of the existing environment. This has provided a description of landscape character and factors contributing to existing landscape values (refer to **Appendix C**) as a baseline evaluation from which to assess the potential adverse and positive effects of the Project and whether they are appropriate in that context. The baseline evaluation has comprised desk-top analysis of existing information (statutory planning documents and maps), supplemented by local knowledge and site visits, and assisted by context photos provided to the Project team, including drone shots taken in January 2023. Refer also to Scope, above, in relation to the baseline evaluation

¹⁸ Te Tangi a te Manu, Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines; Tuia Pito Ora New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA); April 2021. The NZILA recommended methodology recognises the need for adaptation of methodology in each project, to suit the site, context, and proposal (including stage of the proposal) being considered.

completed.

- c. outline of the proposal and identification of relevant matters/components likely to generate, landscape and visual amenity and natural character effects.
- d. desk-top evaluation of the proposal's visual catchment, considering existing visual "access" – views to/from the proposed path.
- e. project shaping through workshops, meetings, and adjustments to design from "hotspots" analysis.
- f. development of an LMP in parallel with the project shaping and assessment work – including assumed mitigation measures and further recommendations for future stages (Refer to Appendix D).
- g. assessment of residual effects – that is, effects remaining after adjustments to the proposal through Project shaping to confirm the concept design and the assumed mitigation measures, as set out in the LMP (assumed as conditioned).
- h. conclusions.

4. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Values – Site and Context

- 4.1 A baseline evaluation has been completed and this is provided at **Appendix C** to this report. The evaluation has referenced relevant statutory planning documents, supplemented by local knowledge and site observations and desk-top study, including photos along the proposed route provided by the Project team.
- 4.2 The purpose of the baseline evaluation is to understand the existing characteristics of the area that contribute landscape values, as the 'base' from which the impacts of the proposal can be assessed. The analysis is set out by Stage in tabulated form under the headings ONFL, natural landscape, built/community landscape, visual amenity, and planning overlays. (Refer above to Approach. The five Proposal Stages are used as a framework for this LVA.)

Planning Framework

- 4.3 The planning framework for the Proposal includes relevant Section 6 matters of the Resource Management Act (RMA) and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS 2010) as included in **Appendix B**.
- 4.4 Further, the Gisborne District/Regional Plans, the Opotiki District Plan, and the Bay of Plenty Regional Plan, form part of the planning context (or existing environment) for the Proposal.

- 4.5 The baseline evaluation identifies landscape and environmental *overlays* in the relevant planning documents as included **Appendix C**.
- 4.6 A summary of more detailed planning provisions applying (at a regional and district planning scale) is set out at the end of **Appendix B**. This comprises a summary of more detailed information provided by the Proposal planning team and relates to standards and activity status for vegetation removal, land disturbance and the inclusion of structures inside the various landscape planning overlays and/or zones in each region/district (such as ONFL, coastal environment, coastal zoning, riparian areas, and in formed/unformed roads).

5. THE PROPOSAL ¹⁹

- 5.1 The assessment of effects is focused on the proposed alignment and built works of the Proposal, as contained in the Project description, and the plans and cross-sections attached to the AEE. The key matters considered in the assessment relate to the:

Design components

- 5.2 At the concept stage of the Project, as included in the Conceptual Document, the components that can be assessed, and where mitigation is proposed within the LMP, include the:
- a. proposed range of path types.
 - b. road crossings, as illustrated in the typical cross sections.
- 5.3 Other design components will have a bearing on landscape effects and are included in the LMP guidance as future stage recommendations.

Location - alignment of Te Ara Tipuna.

- 5.4 The alignment of the design concept has been determined through the iterative Project-shaping process (through workshops and meetings including the wider project team) to avoid areas where earthworks and/or indigenous vegetation removal would be difficult to remedy or mitigate, and, or would be a dominant feature in public views. Using the Project path centre line overlayed on planning maps and aerial photographs, the path has been located (as possible) to:
- a. avoid sensitive environments such as coastal escarpments, areas with indigenous vegetation and dune and wetland environments (including those scheduled in planning

¹⁹ Refer also to the detailed Description of the Proposal provided in the AEE.

documents and identified on high-resolution desktop study).

- b. avoid road reserves where the carriageway is confined and there are narrow shoulders or limited open and relatively level areas within the road reserve.
- c. avoid the use of unformed legal roads where existing tracks exist and where they are near existing formed roads, and their use would result in indigenous vegetation removal and, or additional cut batters near those already apparent on the legal road²⁰.
- d. use existing tracks as a preference outside of the road reserve (such as farm tracks - identified on high-resolution photographs and to be confirmed with landowners) as they often follow the natural contours and may not require any other works, other than sightline wayfinding markers.
- e. provide for logical egress in and out of existing communities using existing cadastral patterns – to avoid oblique connections, on and off a road reserve alignment particularly near spurs (tight corners for vehicles).

Landscape Management Plan (LMP)

- 5.5 As described above the LMP includes both matters assumed as mitigation and assessed in this LVA, and recommendations for future stages (not assessed). Refer to **Appendix C**.

Construction Management Plan (CMP)

- 5.6 The CMP is being developed at the time of writing this report. Through discussions with the Proposal team, it has been confirmed/agreed that the CMP will include requirements for a site-responsive approach in the ongoing, more detailed design stages of the Project, (post consent) to avoid additional/inappropriate adverse effects. This will be provided for further refinement of the design typologies and appropriate “matching” of path types to site and context along the length of the route, using a “first principles” approach - such as to consider functional need and the development of a path type strategy to support an overall narrative and identity for Te Ara Tipuna:
 - a. vertical path segregators will be used where there is a clear and definite need to ensure clear cues for movement and safety, rather than as a standard.
 - b. the “standard” path type will generally be used where there is no functional need for a boardwalk or gravel surface. For example, the functional need for a boardwalk may relate to maintenance and protection of wetland hydrology patterns or the need to uplift and recognise the mana of a site or community. A gravel surface may be required due to

²⁰ For the most part this relates to the Opotiki District, where SH35 is confined along a more vegetated coast.

site specific ground conditions and/or resilience objectives; for example, as proposed from Tokomaru Bay to Ruatoria²¹

- c. compacting will be used only as 'as needed', in response to ground conditions and to ensure clear cues for movement and safety, rather than as a standard.
- 5.7 The site-responsive approach in the CMP (as outlined above) can be thought of as a 'spatial strategy' for the use of path types in the more detailed design stages and should be supported by the development a set of overarching 'principles' (based on principles such as functional need and relevance to overall narrative and identity).
- 5.8 Matters to be addressed through the CMP (as above) are further detailed and explained through the body of this assessment of effects.

6. LANDSCAPE & VISUAL AMENITY EFFECTS - SCOPE

- 6.1 Te Ara Tipuna will establish a near continuous walking, cycling and horse-riding path from Makorori headland²² to Opotiki, through 2 regions. The path, which is sometimes shared and sometimes single use, is generally within the coastal environment and often near the water's edge and passes through or is near coastal and rural communities. While the Project shaping stage (see above) has focused on the opportunities to avoid and ensure there are measures embedded into the concept that will mitigate, there will be some residual adverse effects on natural and built/community components of landscape and their combined visual amenity, including landscapes identified as **ONFL**. Such effects relate to both construction challenges and the Project's interface with remote areas and existing communities in coastal and rural environments, including:
- a. the constraints posed on horizontal and vertical alignment, to achieve a continuous route with connections to remote communities through highly variable terrain and areas with both Geotech and natural hazards.
 - b. because of a., the Project's varying footprint including areas requiring earthworks (cut and fill batters and the potential for retaining walls) to establish a standard 4.5m width path for all users and, with that, the potential for indigenous vegetation removal.
 - c. the proximity of the earthworks and vegetation removal (independent of the scale) to highly sensitive environments including wetland, streams and rivers, dune habitats, including the potential for alternative or ad hoc routes at, for example high tide.

²¹ Principles for use of path-types would be set as part of the spatial strategy to be developed.

²² Cyclists and horse riders will start the journey from the northern side of the Makorori headland, from the existing freedom camping carpark

- d. the potential for severance caused by the path's interaction with existing patterns of movement and settlement and sites that are sensitive – related to archaeological, historical, and contemporary community connections and associations.
 - e. the adverse visual effects associated with the path earthworks, which will take time to rehabilitate.
 - f. any structures including any required retaining walls, bridges, and those needed to establish carparking, toilet facilities and safety signage and barriers.
- 6.2 Potential positive effects for landscape and visual amenity, that can be evaluated with a degree of certainty²³ at this stage of the Project relate to:
- a. existing earth worked areas to be rehabilitated because of the Project.
 - b. stream, and river margins that are to be planted that are currently in pasture, exotic weeds.
 - c. existing areas of indigenous vegetation that could be enhanced, including through buffer planting to their edges.
 - d. improvements made to existing paths and structures or the removal and, or replacement of structures in poor condition.
 - e. improved access and connectivity to the coastal environment and other valued destinations, for both local communities and visitors.
 - f. enhanced visual amenity in particular locations due to the standard/typical details and planting proposed as rehabilitation, compared to the existing condition and visual quality of the environment.
 - g. improved visual access to features that are appreciated in views such as the coastal environment, well known and valued natural and built/landscape features including sites of archaeological, heritage and contemporary significance and association.
- 6.3 There are a range of other opportunities to integrate further positive landscape and visual amenity benefits in the Project at the detailed design stage. These have been addressed at a high level within the LMP and have not been assessed in this report.

7. NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS - SCOPE

- 7.1 The Project shaping stage has similarly had a focus to avoid and integrate measures necessary to remedy and mitigate for effects on the biophysical and perceptual factors that contribute

²³ Assuming the mitigation measures set out in the LMP, and the site responsive approach agreed for a spatial strategy in the CMP.

to natural character. However, given the nature and extent of the Project, mainly through the coastal environment, including areas of high and outstanding natural character, and proximity and requirement to cross waterways, there will be residual adverse natural character effects. Policy matters direct a particular consideration to areas that have been identified to have outstanding and high natural character, however, natural character has not been assessed/rated in the Gisborne Region²⁴ (and the Opotiki District uses the categories very high and high natural character). Given this gap in background assessment information, and the likely, at least, moderate natural character values along the route, a precautionary approach relevant to this Project shaping stage has been assumed, with avoidance prioritised. Adverse effects will relate to:

- a. the modification of natural landforms, vegetation (particularly indigenous vegetation), waterways, hydrological patterns, and habitats. Including the height and extent of cut and fill batters.
- b. the location and design of the path in all areas of the coastal environment and where they interact with waterbodies and it's fit with the existing context, to include low-key, non-roading type components.
- c. the nature and extent of any new planting, including for rehabilitation of the footprint or any other required mitigation, and how these fit with naturalised patterns in the environment, including known historical habitat types.
- d. the requirement for new bridges and new natural (non-bridged) stream and river crossings including over waterways and their fit with the existing built landscape.
- e. the nature and extent of other new structures, and their relative dominance and qualities or fit within the existing context.
- f. where there is a loss or reduction to visual or physical access to the coastal environment and waterways for example due to the path structures or proposed rehabilitation planting.

7.2 Positive effects will relate to the counter factual of these matters, where, on balance there is shift in both the biophysical and perceptual factors that contribute to natural character. In this context, positive effects would result from:

- a. enhancement and restoration of natural patterns of landform, hydrology, and indigenous vegetation i.e., improvements beyond the Project footprint, to increase the dominance

²⁴ TRMP C3.2.2 Objective 2 notes *"It is not possible to assess the natural character of the Coastal Environment as a discrete value. It is a composite of various 'traits' that when viewed together combine to provide the distinctive character of the Gisborne Coast. The individual 'traits' are identifiable"*. This approach differs from some other regions/districts, where areas of High and Very High natural character are assessed and mapped inside a defined coastal extent.

of natural landscape patterns.

- b. removal of existing structures or replacement with those that are less dominant visually and or have qualities that have a better fit in that context.
- c. improved visual and physical access to the coastal environment and waterways, providing this is via sensitive construction methods following topography, avoiding indigenous vegetation removal and uses existing tracks as a base, where possible.

8. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

8.1 The first section of the assessment (below) considers the components of the concept design and additional measures to avoid adverse effects on landscape (ONFL, natural and built landscape, visual amenity, and natural character) that are, otherwise, not able to be easily mitigated.

8.2 The second section of the **assessment** address the five Stages the Project. This effects assessment is necessarily at a high-level, given the design is at a concept stage and a comprehensive spatial strategy for all path types and palette for the other built components is yet to be developed (although agreed as an approach for the LMP and CMP). RMA provisions (see **Appendix B**) and regional and district planning matters, including permitted activities (refer to **Appendix B**) are considered in general terms along with the baseline evaluation (see **Appendix C**) and assumed mitigation measures, as are included in the LMP (see **Appendix D**). Other resources referenced in this Stage-by-Stage assessment include the:

- a. digital kml file of the alignment, path types and new toilet and bridge features.
- b. Te Ara Tipuna Conceptual Document, including typical cross sections and example sketches.
- c. Te Ara Tipuna Proposal Document 2021 including the operating principles and objectives.
- d. as further matters, the draft Te Ara Tipuna Passport (user guide) and Kaitiaki principles which will be developed post consent, through community and key stakeholder engagement.

9. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN – EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

9.1 With reference to the Te Ara Tipuna Conceptual Document cross sections and sketches and the responsive approach included in the CMP, the assessment findings are to further refine the Path Type designs, as these set the framework or backbone of potential adverse and positive landscape effects. Adverse effects will be avoided where:

- a. path segregation markers are avoided, as a ‘typical’ treatment. Regular and standardised

use of segregation posts would contribute to adverse landscape effects due to visual clutter and adverse effects on the visual amenity of the rural landscapes and perceptions of natural character. Regular posts and/or reflector markers (for example, every 100m) would add a strong linear element to areas that are otherwise dominated by natural and rural and coastal community landscape patterns. A more responsive design approach, as confirmed for the CMP,²⁵ will manage these potential adverse effects. For example, vertical or horizontal²⁶ segregators might be required in specific locations, due to likely user conflict. In other areas expected behaviour can be supported by the expectations and guidance included in the Te Ara Tipuna user passport and through anticipated Kaitiaki roles. Segregators might be necessary in areas that are likely to be more popular, or at the start and end of 'Days' to set expectations (including at more frequent intervals or as a consistent ground level treatment on the boardwalks). However, a whole route approach to segregators would have adverse effects that are not able to be easily mitigated. It is understood that wayfinding markers will be required, for example, at the beginning and end of sightlines along the path, including design for lower light conditions. However, these are unlikely to be needed every 100m, for example, and could potentially instead be provided as/with distance markers (for example at 1km intervals) including the use of bespoke design elements that contribute to an overall narrative and identity

- b. use of roading type elements is limited to where they are required, in formed road reserves. While individually of low impact, as a regular pattern of new built forms, roading type signs, markers and other structures would contribute to adverse effects on the existing values of the coastal and rural landscapes and ONFL. For example, where path segregators are needed, and understanding there is a need for these to be cost effective, they should not appear as roading type markers, such as off the shelf flexible hit sticks. Road crossing points will also be important in this regard, and while councils and Waka Kotahi will necessarily set requirements for crossing signage etc within the reserve, this built vernacular should not be continued outside of the crossing point. For example, the bollards/wayfinding elements shown in the Makorori Beach crossing in the Conceptual Document should not use roading type signs. In general terms, roading type elements will create the perception of an area for use by vehicles, rather than by walkers, cyclists, and horse riders, and should be avoided outside of formed road reserves.

²⁵ As confirmed in team discussions and assumed for this report.

²⁶ Horizontal segregators could be used on the boardwalk type path, for example, where rumble type strips or another form of 'roughening' will discourage cyclist use of the area intended for walkers.

- c. stripping the grass layer and compacting the ground is avoided as a standard path treatment. During construction this would require further earthwork activity and equipment to be in areas that otherwise see very occasional farming type 'traffic'. Stripping also has implications for operational effects, as the process is likely to result in weed growth and, or require ongoing maintenance, presumably spraying to keep the area clear. As with segregators, similarly, this measure may be required in some locations, to increase track utility, for example, where grass growth is unlikely, there is a particular need or landowner request to define the path, the terrain is steep, and grass removal and/or compaction is necessary to provide track resilience. However, use as a typical treatment would have adverse effects that would be difficult to mitigate, due to the creation of a continuous, delineated path in an environment where existing farm tracks are intermittent and not always cleared. As a continuous feature this new linear 'structure' would have adverse natural character effects and detract from an immersive landscape and coastal environment experience.
- d. the standard grassed track, with simple sightline wayfinding markers, is used in ONFL areas. Board walk type paths (raised and ground level) should be avoided in 'open pasture' ONFL. This path type would require additional construction activities and be an obvious new structure in an otherwise open landscape of pasture and rural fencing. In landscape terms and in this context, boardwalks will be appropriate in relatively small areas and in response to the existing values; where they can maintain or enhance contributing natural science, sensory or associative factors. For example, boardwalks may provide some advantages or help reduce earthworks and vegetation removal in some locations, be necessary where ground stability issues can be addressed through piling or to help protect wetland hydrology. As another 'structure' they could also fit well alongside other built forms, to help communicate an overall narrative and as a tool to enhance and uplift the mana of an area. For example, boardwalks are often used in more populated areas, to uplift and recognise the values of that community, or to signal the approach and appreciation of landmarks including awa, on approach to bridge structures. As included in the LMP, and once the core path type palette has been refined to avoid effects, as a first principle, there is value in developing an 'all path types' spatial strategy to support this and the overall narrative and identity for the Project.²⁷
- e. bridge design concepts and cross sections are yet to be developed. Any non-permitted structures could have an impact on landscape values and have particular relevance to adverse effects on the natural character given their setting over rivers, streams, and their

²⁷ As agreed in team discussions – the CMP is to include a responsive approach for detailed design stages.

margins. While the LMP provides for high level guidance as to the design and spatial arrangement of these structures, and the CMP will set out the need for site specific construction methodology, additional adverse effects could arise where greater numbers of bridges are required - as can only be determined during detailed design. For example, should additional bridges be required along the Wharekahika River (currently there are four structures proposed - a new clip-on structure on the existing road bridge at Wharekahika Bay and a new footbridge, small river crossing bridge and standard bridge crossing between the bay and SH 35 near Potaka) there may be a need to consider further measures to manage natural character effects, including options for alternative routes. Similarly, the design proposes a single bridge over Whareponga Stream (to and from Whareponga Rd), and, to the north of this, a natural crossing of the Wharekaha stream. Considering these locations, and the LMP mitigation proposed, natural character will be able to be maintained. However, should site work identify the need for additional bridges, including in response to a greater understanding of cyclone damage, this may 'tip' the natural character balance. Overall, the findings in this LVA are to carry out further investigation to confirm the number and type of bridges required for the project in each catchment and to consider the need to avoid additional adverse natural character effects.

10. MAKORORI HEADLAND TO TOLAGA BAY UAWA, STAGE E -- EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 For each Project Stage in turn, the assessment describes:
- a. the existing environment, as a summary of the baseline evaluation, (see **Appendix C**).
 - b. the relevant aspects of the Project which will determine landscape effects in this Stage.
 - c. further investigation required at the detailed design stage, to avoid adverse effects through alignment and path type design refinement.
 - d. a high-level summary assessment of the residual effects (including LMP mitigation) on ONFL (where relevant), natural and built landscape, visual amenity, and natural character with a view to both construction and operational effects.
- 10.2 For completeness the Stages are assessed in sequence south to north, while acknowledging there will be varied journeys in terms of starting point, direction, and duration. Note: the Stage codes (Stage E, C etc) are not sequential, as they denote likely construction stages as stated in the 2021 Proposal Document. (Stages may be refined at a later date, depending on funding).

Existing Environment- Project Context

- 10.3 This stage of the Project traverses the coastal headlands, escarpments, and beaches with much of the journey accessing existing recreation and farmland tracks with limited sections of the journey, mainly for cyclists, aligned to SH35 and/or local formed roads. Unformed (paper) roads have been used as a basis for the path alignment in other areas. For example, inland of the new bridge along the Pakarae River.
- 10.4 Parts of Te Ara Tipuna are located within, or are near ONFL, waterways and areas of indigenous vegetation as identified on district planning maps (refer to **Appendix C**) and are relevant to the assessment of landscape effects. While areas of indigenous vegetation are more limited in this Stage, and the ONFL are generally open pasture, there are sensitive environments with important natural science values to consider including dunes, wetlands, and estuaries, for example at the Waiomoko River mouth and at Tolaga, Uawa and a marine reserve at Pouawa.
- 10.5 The existing visual and recreational experience of this area is relatively confined from the road and noting that SH35 follows an inland route from Pouawa. There are significant sections of the coast north of Pouawa that are relatively inaccessible from land and existing recreation tracks are limited to the beach off public roads and the tracks over Makorori headland (and other headlands informally, such as at Tatapouri) and the well-known connection to Cooks Cove walkway (which can be accessed as a side trip from Te Ara Tipuna). Historically, there have been horse trekking operations that accessed Makorori Beach, to and from Lysnar Road Wainui, and informal, or club type treks over the coastal farmland to the north of this (anecdotal knowledge). Recreational and commercial fishing is also common in the area, given its proximity to Gisborne City and Tolaga. The coastal edge and marine environment are well used and appreciated from the sea, for a variety of recreation and fishing, kai moana activities including by local communities such as at Whangara. There are many valued coastal and river mahinga kai located in these landscapes.
- 10.6 In terms of wider community and cultural connections contributing to landscape values there are many sites of archaeological and cultural significance featuring along the route, as documented in other discipline assessment reports. The shared path generally follows the historic east coast coach road and will bring users in contact with popular freedom camping areas at Turihaua and Pouawa and to the 'front' door of the marae at Whangara, with cyclists continuing along the so-called 'Private Road' on to the Pakarae River crossing.

Stage Specific Components

- 10.7 Topography and context constraints will mean a range of non-standard track types need to apply in this Stage. For example, in transitioning off Makorori Beach the 'new pathway through Existing Vegetation' (cross section 13) is proposed, and, on the approach Waihou Bay, the 'Low Volume Road, Utilising Existing Road Carriageway' (cross section 11) is likely to be the only practicable option. In general terms, it is not proposed to widen the existing shoulder where cyclists access SH35 or local roads.
- 10.8 Additional features proposed to provide essential services and connectivity include a new clip-on Bridge across the Pouawa River, a new over the Waiomoko and Pakarae River and a new toilet/shelter between Whangara and Waihou Bay.
- 10.9 With a view to the above summary of the Existing Environment - Project Context and Stage Specific Components, the mitigation measures described in the LMP, and the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, the effects assessment findings for this Stage address:

Alignment and Path Types – Further Investigation Required

- 10.10 It is recommended that further investigation be carried out to avoid adverse landscape effects in the following locations:
- a. At Makorori Beach to respond to and integrate with the GDC masterplan²⁸ proposal (currently out for public consultation) to avoid additional adverse effects and ensure legibility, clear cues for movement.
 - a. At Makorori Beach and the proposed connection to the lookout above, for horses. It is recommended that horses follow cyclists up onto Makorori Station and use the escarpment route to Turihaua. If for 'walkers only', the proposed connection, alongside the playground and unnamed stream, could be achieved with reduced earthworks and vegetation removal (and it is difficult to see how the required clearance for horses could be safely accommodated under the existing power pole stay). Horse riders would still be able to access the beach from the freedom camping carpark and then cross SH35 safely to Makorori Station (as horse trek operators have done in the past).
 - b. At Pariokonohi Point (ONFL Unit 13), and as a general principle relating to open pasture ONFL, it is recommended that a standard path type is used, rather than a raised boardwalk (noting that the detailed spatial arrangement of the path types is to be confirmed in the next stages of the project). Use of an additional raised structure (such

²⁸ [Makorori Beach Master Plan | Participate \(gdc.govt.nz\)](#)

as a boardwalk) would have adverse effects on the landscape values of this area, during construction and operation, that are not easily mitigated, and a standard type of path will provide for a more immersive experience.

- c. At the Waiomoko River mouth (ONFL Unit 13) and the Pakarae River mouth, further investigation will be required to confirm the need for an alternative path type including consideration of a raised or ground level boardwalk to ensure wetland areas can be maintained and have the greatest future potential to be enhanced.

ONFL - High Level Effects Assessment

10.11 All the headlands are identified as ONFL in this Stage (bar the Makorori headland) along with the estuary, wetland, and river environments at Waiomoko and Uawa River. In general terms the landscape effects are assessed as appropriate for ONFL, considering the permitted activity rules, likely standard path type use, alignments that follow existing informal tracks, the LMP mitigation requirements and responsive approach confirmed for the CMP. The following comments are made as further guidance and explanation for detailed design development:

- a. In general terms – segregation markers should be avoided through the ONFL. Where used as a standard or typical treatment, these markers will add a further built element into the landscape and have an adverse effect on values associated with the natural patterns (dominance of the natural landscape is required for an area to be identified as an ONFL).
- b. Pariokonohi Point (ONFL Unit 13). As above, a raised boardwalk would be considered inappropriate in this location. It is not needed to help protect the values of this ONF. It would add a further linear, dominant built structure and there is no functional need for a boardwalk; it is not required for good access.
- c. Waiomoko Stream mouth (ONFL Unit 13). In contrast, to Pariokonohi Point, wetland areas make a significant contribution to the landscape values here. An alternative path type, including consideration of either a raised or ground level boardwalk, is likely to ensure these values can be maintained, and potentially enhanced, in the future.

Natural and Built Landscape - High Level Effects Assessment

10.12 Overall, the concept for Te Ara Tipuna has an appropriate fit with both the natural and built landscape patterns of the existing environment and, providing the measures described in the LMP are implemented, and the CMP includes a responsive approach (as set out above in The Proposal), adverse effects will be able to be mitigated.

10.13 The remaining matters to be addressed are described above under Concept Design and Stage specific Alignment and Path Type - Further Investigation. Further, there will be a need to pay particular attention to the **transitions** between path types and landscape contexts in this Stage to ensure adverse effects are avoided and benefits can be realised. In this Stage Te Ara Tipuna traverses' headlands, dune, beach, escarpment, formed and unformed road reserves, wetland areas, makes numerous stream and river crossings and links to and through the Whangara community. These matters of finer grain detailed design are addressed as recommendations of the LMP and development of the User Passport.

Visual Amenity - High Level Effects

10.14 Measures to avoid and mitigate potential adverse visual amenity effects have been focus of the Project scoping phase, and in the development of the LMP.

10.15 However, the matters for further investigation addressed above, relating to the Concept Design elements and Alignment and Path Type, will be important to consider as they contribute to visual amenity. In particular, the use of roading type elements and path segregators (if included inappropriately²⁹) will have adverse visual amenity effects.

10.16 Further, and while privacy is not specifically addressed in this assessment, adverse visual amenity effects for Whangara residents will be a matter to consider in detailed design. High level guidance relating to possible screening options is included in the LMP.

10.17 Overall, this Stage will provide significant visual amenity benefits to local communities and visitors due to the way in which it provides access to areas that are previously inaccessible and through a varied experience of landscape types.

10.18 Future stage recommendations included in the LMP also bring a focus to the opportunities to further enhance visual amenity. For example, through the consideration of the path type spatial strategy which will lend coherency and attention to the details of planting for both mitigation and possible restoration/enhancement, including developing a Stage specific palette and tohu/marker species.

²⁹ Refer to CMP under the heading The Proposal, above.

Natural Character - High Level Effects Assessment

10.19 Natural character effects relate to most of this Stage, as it located in the coastal environment and includes numerous stream crossings. Measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character are retained relate to three key matters.

- a. alignment to avoid earthworks and vegetation removal and the rehabilitation of these sites.
- b. the extent with which the proposed path type enhances or detracts from the experience of the natural environment including visual and physical access to the coast and elevated lookouts.
- c. the nature (design vernacular) and extent of other built elements and their fit with the existing context and relative dominance in the landscape.

10.20 Notwithstanding the matters identified above that require further investigation (related to Concept Design and Alignment and Path Type - above), the findings of this assessment are that natural character will be able to be maintained in this Stage with the mitigation as assumed in the LMP and tiaki, care measures that will be supported by the Te Ara Tipuna user passport, and with the responsive approach confirmed for the CMP.

10.21 Overall, there are significant benefits provided by the Project in terms of perceptions of natural character, due to the way in which it will enable local communities and visitors to have enhanced access to the coastline.

10.22 While not consequential to the above assessment, as would be consistent with Part 2 of the RMA and the NZCPS policies, there are many opportunities to further enhance natural character values in this Stage of the Te Ara Tipuna. For example, through restoration of the Waiomoko Stream mouth wetland. High level guidance for future stage planting measures off the footprint, to enhance existing habitats, are included in the LMP. Note- these areas would be in addition to any requirements for mitigation and offset required due to adverse ecological effects.

11. TOLAGA BAY, COOKS COVE TO WAIPIRO BAY, STAGE C — EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Existing Environment- Project Context

11.1 From Cooks Cove and the Tolaga Bay wharf the Project follows existing informal tracks through the estuarine ONFL, to cross the river pass through the township of Uawa and on to the Earnest Reeve, escarpment walkway. In contrast to the previous Stage, broader inland

'loops' link Te Ara Tipuna to the coast north of Tolaga, as amended through the Project shaping, to avoid steep unstable escarpments and bush remnants. For the most part, cyclists follow the same route as walkers and horse riders, and while use of local road reserves, continue to feature in this Stage, there is very little contact with SH35, excluding the connections to and from the townships of Tolaga and Tokomaru Bay. Unformed legal (paper) roads have been considered in confirming the alignment, to link smaller settlements, for example, between Kaiaua and Anaura Bay. However, due to the limits of past surveying efforts (where the unformed legal road traverses steep eroding escarpments) these routes have been adjusted through the Project shaping phase. In preference existing tracks are used through inland areas, and to avoid protected and regenerating areas of indigenous vegetation. While there are regular access points to and from the coastal edge in this Stage, the beaches are less commonly used as part of Te Ara Tipuna, due to known coastal hazards and, or lack of navigable areas at high tide.

11.2 Due to the inland route, ONFL are less commonly traversed by Te Ara Tipuna, except at the Uawa Estuary and Earnest Reeves walkway area (ONFL Unit 10), where existing tracks will be used with minor upgrades. However, ONFL and Outstanding Natural Features (ONF) will form the wider context in views from the path, where there is elevation and an open aspect. For example, the elevated path above Nuhiti (along the existing private road) will offer views of Motuhina Island (Unit 7, an ONF). As in the previous Stage, there are numerous waterways in this landscape including scheduled rivers at Anaura and Tokomaru Bay (which will be crossed by existing bridges). In contrast these landscapes feature a greater pattern of regenerating and protected indigenous vegetation such as the Tawhiti Block. Other sensitive environments with important natural science values to consider include dunes, wetlands, and estuaries, for example, at the Waikawa Stream mouth. While consideration of coastal hazards has influenced the final route alignment in several areas, for example, to avoid the Waipiro Bay beach, in others there are limited viable alternatives. For example, at Tokomaru Bay, Te Ara Tipuna follows the narrow and eroding coastal edge through to Waima, as the possible inland route would follow the Mangahuini River and SH35, which is constantly damaged by flooding events.

11.3 Visual and direct physical access to the coast is not a feature of the existing journey along SH35 through this Stage, as the highway follows a route between Tolaga and Tokomaru Bay and then north to Ruatoria. This transport corridor has suffered considerable damage through successive cyclones in recent years. As is relevant to this Stage, there has been a need for new bridges and temporary roads to be constructed, for example along the Hikuwai River (at 'three' bridges') and the SH35 connection along the Mangahuini River, from Tokomaru Bay to

Te Puia, was impassable for several months, following Cyclone Gabrielle, February 2023³⁰. From this inland route, local roads provide a 'point to point' connection into the small communities at Kaiaua, Anaura, Nuhiti (via a private road) and Waipiro Bays often along tributaries that have been impacted by flooding. As it relates to landscape effects, these routes are linked to both coastal communities and highly valued intergenerational campsites at managed and private sites often with good access, safe access to the marine environment for fishing and boating.

- 11.4 As is relevant to existing landscape values, recreational and commercial fishing is common in the area, although has a greater local presence compared to the Makorori- Tolaga Stage. This includes informal access over farms for hunting, fishing, and surfing (in Stage 1 these can be accessed via public roads). Travel by sea follows historic patterns extending to arrival of waka, and the area being well known as a coastal trading route, as marked by the wharf at Tolaga, now restored, and relics of wool store buildings and the wharf at Tokomaru, both common visitor and recreation destinations.
- 11.5 The narrative of archaeological and cultural significance continues through this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna, as signified by the historic and continuing pattern of kainga and marae and, in many ways, also, by the pattern of 'alternative' transport routes. For example, remnants of the old coach road bench cuts are often visible at the end of beaches (and in Stage 1); where the track had to cut up and over headlands.

Stage Specific Components

- 11.6 The standard path types will generally apply in this Stage; however, topography and other context constraints will require nonstandard track types in specific locations. For example, given the pattern of protected and regenerating indigenous vegetation the 'new pathway through Existing Vegetation' (cross section 13) will need to apply in many areas and given the steepness of the terrain, for example, in dropping down off the Earnest Reeves walkway to the inland route north, it is likely that in some location's steps will be required for walkers. Boardwalk type paths could also be used as part of the response to identified wetland areas, or as part of the overall spatial strategy to enhance legibility of the path and mana of its communities.

³⁰ While noting that the view of Tokomaru Bay from SH35 when travelling north, is spectacular- as it is travelling north into Tolaga Bay.

- 11.7 To provide for additional resilience through future flooding events, a quad bike/ATV accessible path is proposed from Tokomaru through to Ruatoria (Cross Section 15 in the Conceptual Document). The final alignment and requirements for this path type are yet to be confirmed.
- 11.8 There are no new bridges or clip on structures proposed in this Stage, other than small foot bridges over existing drainage channels along the Tokomaru Bay foreshore. The remoteness of the area will require further investigation to confirm this (see below assessment of natural character effects). New toilets/shelter are proposed at Kaiaua and north of Nuhiti near the Karorotau Stream mouth.
- 11.9 With a view to the above summary of the Existing Environment - Project Context and Stage Specific Components, the mitigation measures described in the LMP, and the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, the effects assessment findings for this Stage address:

Alignment and Path Types – Further Investigation Required

- 11.10 It is recommended that further investigation be carried out to avoid adverse landscape effects in the following locations:
- a. Through all protected management areas to ensure the least impact and removal of indigenous vegetation.
 - b. At all proposed natural stream crossings. Given the remoteness of this area there may be additional bridge structures required or an alternative crossing point to be determined through site investigations
 - c. At the northern end of Kaiaua Beach, near the wool shed (assumed) where Te Ara Tipuna diverts off the formed carriageway towards Kaiaua Stream (crossing a tributary). Given the low traffic environment, a continued alignment along the road reserve would be preferred.
 - d. At Tolaga and Kaiaua Bay to consider the best path type to interface appropriately with the existing recreational uses of the campgrounds and the annual beach horse races at Kaiaua. As above, it is recommended that the sequence of path types is confirmed through a detailed design strategy and appropriate multi-criteria analysis.
 - e. At the northern end of Nuhiti Beach, aerials show an existing track transition off the beach which could be utilised.
 - f. Similarly, an existing track could be used to provide the natural crossing of Karorotau Stream north of Nuhiti.
 - g. At Tokomaru Bay, there may be alternatives to accessing the township via SH35 from the south. From a landscape perspective, given the narrow shoulders along this stretch of

the highway, which are confined against the Mangapuketea Stream and existing fences, this is likely to provide an unpleasant experience for walkers and horse riders arriving in the bay. It appears there are existing tracks over the farmland above the bay that could be used, exiting at the fire station near the bridge, and that a standard, low impact path type could be used to make this connection.

- h. At Tokomaru, the requirements and final alignment to provide for ATV use along Te Ara Tipuna through to Ruatoria (in the event of a SH35 road closure), and use of Cross Section 15, if chosen (refer to the Conceptual Document) would require further investigation and assessment to understand and avoid adverse landscape effects. This path type is proposed over steep terrain and through protected management areas including a possible alternative inland river crossing at Waikawa Stream (the south end of Waipiro Bay) which will require an additional bridge structure.
- i. On approach to Waipiro Te Ara Tipuna follows the local road and then transitions onto private land, to avoid areas of the road that have a very narrow shoulder. However, this also means that a new path will need to be constructed for all users (4.5m wide) through a protected management area of indigenous vegetation including its connection back onto Waipiro Road near existing residences. The path will follow natural contour and is part of the potential ATV route, however adverse landscape effects will result that will be difficult to mitigate given the likely requirement for vegetation removal and earthworks. While there are some pinch points, where there is a steep drop off, for the most part it appears that Te Ara Tipuna could be set off the carriageway alongside Waipiro Road and this option, or an alternative to reduce indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks is recommended for further investigation at detailed design. For example, should walkers be provided with the 'off road' path, this would be reduced in width and have less adverse effects.

ONFL - High Level Effects Assessment

11.11 In general terms the landscape effects are assessed as appropriate for ONFL; considering the proposed alignment, permitted activity rules, use of existing tracks, the LMP mitigation requirements, and the confirmed responsive approach for the CMP. As described in more detail above under Conceptual Design – Further Investigation, the use of path segregators as a standard path design, should be avoided in ONFL.

Natural and Built Landscape - High Level Effects Assessment

11.12 Overall, the concept for Te Ara Tipuna has an appropriate fit with both the natural and built landscape patterns of the existing environment in this Stage and, providing the measures

described in the LMP are implemented, and the CMP includes the path type responsive approach (set out above in The Proposal), adverse effects will be able to be mitigated.

11.13 The remaining matters to be addressed are described above under Concept Design and Stage specific Alignment and Path Type - Further Investigation. Further, there will be a need to pay particular attention to measures that reduce indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks including how the path is constructed in areas with steep terrain.

11.14 Detailed design 'fit' within existing communities is a further matter to be resolved, with high level guidance included in the recommendations of the LMP. This includes the way in which the path types will interface with local roads and residential properties where space is limited, particularly along the Tokomaru Bay foreshore, and alongside formal and freedom campsites at Kaiaua, Anaaura, Nuhiti and Tokomaru Bay.

Visual Amenity - High Level Effects Assessment

11.15 The matters addressed for Stage E (refer above) to manage visual amenity, are also relevant to this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna.

11.16 Further, and while privacy is not specifically addressed in this assessment, there will be potential adverse visual amenity effects to manage in the detailed design of Te Ara Tipuna. High level guidance relating to possible screening options is included in the LMP, however there may also be some areas where further alignment changes are considered; as recommended above, on the southern approach to Waipiro Bay.

11.17 Overall, this Stage will provide significant visual amenity benefits to local communities and visitors. Te Ara Tipuna provides access to areas that are previously inaccessible including to many elevated vantage points overlooking ONFL and access to and through protected management areas with indigenous vegetation.

Natural Character - High Level Effects Assessment

11.18 Natural character effects are relevant to this Stage, where Te Ara Tipuna is in the coastal environment and follows or crosses waterways such as at the Waikawa Stream mouth. Measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character are retained relate to three key matters as stated above under the previous Stage.

- a. alignment to avoid earthworks and vegetation removal within these areas and their rehabilitation.
- b. the nature (design vernacular) and extent of the built elements and their fit with the

existing context and relative dominance in the landscape.

- c. the extent with which the path types and their location enhances or detracts from the experience of the natural environment including visual and physical access to the coast and elevated lookouts.
- d. in addition, the management of vehicle access will need to be carefully considered in this Stage, where it is proposed that Te Ara Tipuna will form an alternative access route from Tokomaru Bay to Ruatoria should SH35 be closed.

11.19 Notwithstanding the matters identified for further investigation above (related to Concept Design and Alignment and Path Type) the findings of this assessment are that natural character will be able to be maintained in this Stage. This assessment is also dependant on the mitigation, as assumed in the LMP and tiaki, care measures, that will be supported by the Te Ara Tipuna user passport, and with the responsive approach confirmed for the CMP.

11.20 There are significant benefits provided in this Stage, in terms of perceptions of natural character. This is due to the way in which Te Ara Tipuna will enable local communities and visitors to have enhanced visual and, in some areas, physical access to the coastal edge and areas of indigenous vegetation within the coastal environment. These perceptual benefits are dependent on the sensitive design and spatial arrangement of the track to avoid unnecessary earthworks, particularly in elevated areas, vegetation removal and bridge structures.

11.21 While not consequential to the above assessment, as would be consistent with Part 2 of the RMA and the NZCPS policies, there are many opportunities to further enhance natural character values in this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna. For example, through the enhancement of existing protected management areas. High level guidance for future stage planting measures away from the path earthworks footprint, to enhance existing habitats, are included in the LMP. Note: these areas would be in addition to any requirements for mitigation and offset required due to adverse ecological effects.

12. WAIPIRO BAY TO EAST CAPE, STAGE B — EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Existing Environment - Project Context

12.1 From Waipiro Bay Te Ara Tipuna will continue along Kopuaroa Rd to connect with Taharoa and Kiekie marae and the Parapara Rd end. From here, Te Ara Tipuna follows an unformed legal road, above the coastal escarpment, connecting with Whareponga and Tuparoa via

stream gully's, using Reporua Road³¹ to connect back to through Ruatoria and the bridge over the Waiapu River³². Access to the East Cape combines use of the SH35 and local road reserves, to the Rangitukia Road connection with Te Parera Steam from which point existing tracks, generally aligned with the unformed legal road alongside the waterway, is used to connect to the East Coast Road, via the saddle to the west of the maunga, Kokomukataranga. The East Cape light house area is currently closed to the public.

- 12.2 In contrast to the previous Stage, Te Ara Tipuna follows a closer coastal edge escarpment and river route, as refined through Project shaping, including the removal of an additional bridge structure at Awanui North Road to connect Tikapa Road to the Tikitiki township. This has meant that the communities of Reporua, Port Awanui and Tikapa will now be accessed as a side trip, to and from Tuparoa or Ruatoria. Cost and complexity of construction were the main factors considered in making this change, however, it is supported from a landscape perspective. The new structure would have needed to span the Waiapu over a wider flood plain and as a large structure within sight of the ONFL river mouth, have the potential for adverse natural character effects that would be difficult to mitigate. While offering a more direct line of travel along Te Ara Tipuna, access to these landscapes and coastal communities has been able to be maintained through the amended route.
- 12.3 For the most part, the path will be shared, with all users following the same alignment in this Stage. And in contrast to the Tolaga-Waipiro Stage, there is a return to align the path with SH35, between Ruatoria and Tikitiki, and a greater reliance on formed local roads. Unformed legal roads have been able to be used with fewer adjustments, as they avoid eroding slopes and the requirement to remove protected indigenous vegetation in this Stage. While there are regular access points to and from the coastal edge communities, in contrast to the previous stages, the beaches are not used proposed to be used, due to known coastal hazards and, or lack of navigable areas at high tide.
- 12.4 ONFL areas are largely avoided through this part of the journey excluding the East Cape (Unit 3) and noting, this area will be a focus of investigation in future stages (see below). While less common, compared to the previous stages, ONFL will continue to form the wider context and feature in views from Te Ara Tipuna, including the Waiapu River mouth estuary (Unit 4).

³¹ Port Awanui is proposed as a possible side trip off the end of Reporua Rd, using existing farm tracks and new trail alongside the Wairoa River following the alignment of an unformed legal road, to connect with Waioamatatini Road,

³² Including access to the Mt Hikurangi track and future potential loop track via Tapuaeroa Road and Makarika Road

- 12.5 As in previous Stages, there are numerous waterways in this landscape including the scheduled Waiapu and Maraehara River (where the path uses existing bridges). Scheduled streams also feature to the north of this, including Te Parera Stream and all tributaries to Tunanui Stream flowing through the East Cape ONFL. In contrast to the Tolaga-Waipiro Stage, the pattern of indigenous vegetation is more dispersed and there are fewer protected management areas identified, noting that the path from Rangitukia to the East Cape is predominantly through regenerating bush with sites of ecological interest noted by the Project Ecologist. Other sensitive environments with important natural science values to consider include the areas of regenerating vegetation along the coastal escarpment between Waipiro, Tuparoa and the Reporua Road connection and there are obvious dunes and wetland landforms within the East Cape ONFL.
- 12.6 Existing visual and direct physical access to the coast from SH35 is also limited in this Stage, as the highway follows an inland route from Ruatoria to Te Araroa. The connections to the coast and the marae-based communities are via narrow gravel roads that are regularly cut off by flooding events. The confining topography reinforce perceptions of the area as remote and bring a greater sense of the natural landscape along this coast.
- 12.7 As a further function of distance, and necessary self-reliance, there is a strong connection to the coastal environment and forest areas in these landscapes for 'kai based' activities which may interact with Te Ara Tipuna. Hunting, fishing, and diving has been retained as a pastime with a cultural purpose, to put kai on the table. While kai 'recreation' is a common contributor to landscape values for all communities along Te Ara Tipuna, it is particularly evident in these remote landscapes and is supported by semiprivate, local access routes and hapu-based management. Boat launching, from shingle beaches, and surf casting are part of this pattern of kai gathering. These activities can be dangerous, due to the exposed nature of this coast which lacks sheltered harbours, wharves and where there are narrow beaches above high tide mark along much of this coastline.
- 12.8 The resilience of the Waipiro- East Cape communities and the areas significance for Ngati Porou are reflected in the rich narrative of archaeological and cultural sites and ongoing connections to land and marae. As a clear tohu or marker of these values, Te Maunga Hikurangi, which will be viewed from Te Ara Tipuna, is acknowledged as a sacred place, the first to see the sun, the first point and part of the fish, Te Ika a Maui, to be pulled from the sea by the ancestor and atua Maui, and where his waka now rests.

Stage Specific Components

- 12.9 It is proposed that an ATV trail (Conceptual Document Cross Section 15) be constructed from Tokomaru Bay to Ruatoria to provide an alternative access route should SH35 be closed due to flooding damage. The details and extent of this path type are yet to be confirmed, the concept includes a 3m wide compacted and stabilised gravel track and a segregated 1.5m grassed track alongside (for horses). The standard path types will generally apply in this Stage, however, in parts topography and other context constraints will require a context responsive approach. For example, the 'New Pathway through Existing Vegetation' (Conceptual Document Cross Section 13) will likely need to apply in many areas along Te Parera Stream and the saddle connections to East Cape Road.
- 12.10 New Bridges are proposed in this Stage across the Whareponga and Waitekaha Streams (at Tuparoa). New clip-on bridge structures are required over the Mangakinonui Stream (near Harrison Road, Ruatoria) the Waiapu River and the Mangaoparo River. The remoteness of the area will require further investigation to confirm if any additional bridge structures are required (see below assessment of natural character effects). New toilets/shelter are proposed above Waipiro Bay, where the path intersects with Whareponga Road and in the elevated clearing alongside Rangitukia Road.
- 12.11 With a view to the above summary of the Existing Environment - Project Context and Stage Specific Components, the mitigation measures described in the LMP, and the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, the effects assessment findings for this Stage address:

Alignment and Path Types – Further Investigation Required

- 12.12 It is recommended that further investigation be carried out to avoid adverse landscape effects in the following locations:
- a. through all protected management areas and regenerating bush, wetland, and dune environments, to ensure the least impact on natural hydrological patterns and removal of indigenous vegetation. For example, where the path follows the banks of the Tohoratea Stream to/from Tuparoa and the Te Parera Stream to/from the East Cape Road.
 - b. at all proposed natural stream crossings. While these are assessed as appropriate, given the remoteness of this area and the need for further site investigations, there may be additional bridge structures required, or an alternative lesser impact crossing point (natural or bridged) that can be determined in detailed design.
 - c. along Tuparoa Road, to confirm that all path users will be able to use the existing stream

bed (as do existing vehicles) rather than the unformed legal road alignment – which would require indigenous vegetation removal.

- d. along the 'Ruatoria track' – intended as the first, showcase, section to be constructed along SH35; from its intersection with Waiomatatini Rd to the Waiapu Bridge. This will be an important opportunity to test the landscape logic of the varying path types. For example, to use a raised boardwalk alongside the low-lying wetland areas visible in the farmland adjacent (to the south of the Farmlands Fuel Ruatoria Truck stop) and the ground level boardwalk path type on approach to the bridge, as a strategy to make more visible and uplift its mana. That is: to use a landscape logic to showcase the path types rather than an arbitrary side by side transition of 'samples'.

ONFL - High Level Effects Assessment

12.13 In general terms the landscape effects are assessed as appropriate for ONFL in this Stage, considering the proposed alignment, permitted activity rules, use of existing tracks, the LMP mitigation requirements, and the approach confirmed for the CMP.

12.14 As described in more detail above under Conceptual Design – Further Investigation Requirements, (and as agreed for the responsive approach to be adopted in the CMP), the use of path segregators as a standard path design should be avoided in ONFL.

12.15 In addition, one of the key findings of the assessment in this Stage is further investigation to confirm the appropriate alignment of Te Ara Tipuna through the East Cape ONFL (Unit 3), Noting that potential adverse effects have been avoided by removing the proposal for a possible 'loop' track to the lighthouse area (which is closed to the public) from the Te Parera Stream valley

Natural and Built Landscape - High Level Effects Assessment

12.16 Overall, the concept for Te Ara Tipuna has an appropriate fit with both the natural and built landscape patterns of the existing environment of Waipiro to East Cape and, providing the measures described in the LMP are implemented, and the CMP includes the responsive approach (set out above in The Proposal), adverse effects will be able to be mitigated.

12.17 The remaining matters to be addressed are described above under Concept Design and Stage specific Alignment and Path Type - Further Investigation. Further, there will be a need to pay particular attention to measures that reduce indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks including how the path is constructed in areas with steep terrain and adjacent to waterways.

12.18 Detailed design 'fit' within existing communities is a further matter to be resolved, with high level guidance included in the recommendations of the LMP. This includes the way in which the path types will interface with local roads and the options to avoid additional earthworks and vegetation. For example, along the elevated sections of Rangitukia Road where there is regenerating indigenous vegetation and a narrow carriageway with no shoulders.

Visual Amenity - High Level Effects Assessment

12.19 The matters addressed under Stage E (refer above) to manage visual amenity, are also relevant to this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna.

12.20 Further, and while privacy is not specifically addressed in this assessment, there will be potential adverse visual amenity effects to manage in the detailed design of Te Ara Tipuna as where it connects with very remote communities. High level guidance relating to possible softening and screening options is included as a further recommendation in the LMP.

12.21 Overall, this Stage will provide significant visual amenity benefits to local communities and visitors. Te Ara Tipuna provides a varied journey along the coast including vantage points with views of significant landmarks and a transition from an east facing to a north facing coast. The journey will bring greater connections to unique coastal communities with marae at their centre and contrast this the settlements along the big broad Waiapu River landscapes and enclosed regenerating stream valleys.

Natural Character - High Level Effects Assessment

12.22 Natural character effects are relevant to this Stage, where Te Ara Tipuna follows the coastal edge and is within the coastal environment, and where there are new, or clip on bridge structures proposed and the path is located alongside waterways. Measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character are retained relate to four key matters, as stated above under the previous Stage.

- a. alignment to avoid earthworks and vegetation removal within these areas and measures to ensure rehabilitation.
- b. the nature (design vernacular) and extent of the built elements and their fit with the existing context and relative dominance in the landscape. Noting that the final design for the new bridges and clip on structures and the number of bridges is yet to be confirmed.
- c. the extent with which the path types and their location enhances or detracts from the experience of the natural environment including visual and physical access to the coast and elevated lookouts.

d. in addition, the management of vehicle access will need to be carefully considered in this Stage, where it is proposed that Te Ara Tipuna will form an alternative access route from Tokomaru Bay to Ruatoria should SH35 be closed.

12.23 Notwithstanding the matters identified for further investigation, (related to Concept Design and Alignment and Path Type) the findings of this assessment are that natural character will be able to be maintained in this Stage. This assessment is also dependant on the mitigation, as assumed in the LMP and tiaki, care measures, that will be supported by the Te Ara Tipuna user passport, and with the approach confirmed for the CMP.

12.24 Perceptions of natural character will also be enhanced in this Stage due to enhanced visual and physical access to coastal and river environments. These perceptual benefits are dependent on the sensitive design and spatial arrangement Te Ara Tipuna to avoid unnecessary earthworks, particularly in elevated areas, vegetation removal and bridge structures.

12.25 While not consequential to the above assessment, as would be consistent with Part 2 of the RMA and the NZCPS policies, there are many opportunities to further enhance natural character values in this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna. For example, through the enhancement of wetland and dune areas adjacent to the East Cape Road.

13. EAST CAPE TO TE KAHA, STAGE D -- EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Existing Environment - Project Context

13.1 From the East Cape Te Ara Tipuna is located within the road reserve, for the most part, through to Te Araroa where, in contrast to the previous Stage, the user paths split and rejoin along SH35 through to Wharekahika, Hicks Bay. The cyclist's journey through this area is accommodated within the road reserve of SH35 and formed local roads, apart from a small section of Koao Street in Te Araroa and the Haupara Point connection (for all users). Horses and walkers are proposed to access existing tracks along the foreshore and over Haupara Point (where horses will then follow the highway and walkers will use the existing track down to Onepoto Bay and local road connections. From Wharf Road to Whangaparaoa Bay all users will follow the same shared path, along the Wharekahika River and then alongside SH35 from Potaka apart from the transitions to an alignment off the highway, between the Opotiki-Gisborne District boundary and the existing Whangaparaoa Bridge. Enroute to Te Kaha, there is a continued pattern of cyclists following a separate alignment, along SH35, where it is possible for walkers and horses use the beach. Where the path is shared along SH35 through

to Waihou Bay it is located to the seaside within the road reserve, including on land beyond the paved shoulder. At Waihou all users transition onto the local road and the path links with an existing (narrow) track around Orete Point before continuing its SH35 alignment to the Raukokore River (and likely use of the shoulder from Putiki Rd). From the Raukokore River the shared path is predominantly located to the seaside beyond the SH35 road reserve through to Maraehako Bay and the Waiiti Stream and again from the headland west of Whanarua Bay to Te Huka Island. From Mouriuri Stream to Wharekura Point playground walkers and horses will be able to use the beach, and from the school entrance, there is an existing footpath that extends to the General Store from which a new path will need to be formed in the road reserve to the Te Kaha Hotel Road and proposed crossing to the existing footpath which extends beyond the St Johns Ambulance Station.

- 13.2 In contrast to the previous Stage, Te Ara Tipuna is very much confined to the coastal edge and a SH35 alignment other than its significant off-road sections along the Wharekahika River and between the district boundaries and Whangaparaoa River. Once on the Te Kaha coast there is no real option to use local roads, as these are limited in length, and are typically aligned perpendicular to the direction of the paths travel, reflecting the coasts characteristic landforms of narrow uplifted terraces set against prominent ranges. Where the path is proposed to follow an alignment away from the SH35 road reserve, this generally occurs in both districts in three circumstances: where there is the option for high tide beach access, such as at Whangaparaoa and Te Rangiharu Bay; where there is gently sloping land to the sea side of SH35, such as at Orete Point and Raukokore River; or where the highway is very confined, with limited or no shoulder, for example between Papatea Bay and Maraehako Bay.
- 13.3 ONFL form the immediate context or backdrop for Te Ara Tipuna through much of this Stage. In the Gisborne Region the path is located within the East Cape ONFL (Unit 3) and the Hicks Bay and Te Araroa ONFL (Unit 2) which extends to the Wharekahika River. In the Opotiki District the connections with ONFL are along the coast. From Whangaparaoa Bay, through to the eastern end of Waihou Bay, there are ONFL identified along the majority of the coastal edge, including areas that adjoin SH35 (such as ONFL 19 Whangaparaoa dune field, wetland, and estuary and ONFL 18 Oruaiti Beach, offshore rocks and Waikanapanapa cliffs). All beaches in this area are identified as ONFL and the Otamaoa Inland (ONFL1) forms a backdrop to the Te Ara Tipuna journey. This pattern continues from the Raukorere River mouth to the prominent headland east of Te Huka Island with ONFL identified to the immediate coastal edge, and the ranges behind (ONFL 17 Raukokore River Mouth, ONFL 16 Whanarua Bay, ONFL 1 ONFL 1 Ikawhenua Forest and Urewera Forest Inland). This includes areas where the path is set off SH35, for example between Papatea Bay and Maraekaho Bay. The remainder of the

journey into Te Kaha is set to a backdrop of ONFL 1 Ikawhenua Forest and Urewera Forest Inland.

- 13.4 As in previous Stages, there are numerous waterways in this landscape including those scheduled in planning maps, although for the most part Te Ara Tipuna will cross these using existing bridges. Exceptions to this include the scheduled Wharekahika River in the Gisborne Region (where new bridges are proposed) and natural crossings at stream mouths on the Te Kaha coast, where the path accesses the beach.
- 13.5 In contrast to the Waipiro –East Cape Stage there is a more consistent pattern of indigenous vegetation through this Stage including areas identified for protection management in the Gisborne region and as indigenous biological diversity areas in the Opotiki District. Of note, also, particularly on the Opotiki District Coast, these scheduled areas often extend beyond the ONFL, mainly recognising the pattern of Pohutukawa dominant forest along the foreshore and cliffs including where the path is proposed to be located between Papatea Bay and Maraehako Bay and on approach to Te Huka Island.
- 13.6 Scheduled wetland areas also feature in both districts along and near the path. These are identified as scheduled waterbodies in the Gisborne region, including the Te Whare wetland at Te Araroa, where the path will follow local roads, and in isolated locations alongside the Wharekahika River including the Wharekahika pond and protected management area bush, where the path will pass in proximity. On route to the Opotiki coast, scheduled wetlands also feature along the Te Rereauira Stream (Te Reauria Swamp) through which the path is proposed to avoid a narrow section of SH35. Coastal dune wetland areas also feature at Whangaparoa Bay and Raukokere River adjacent to the path transition back onto SH35.
- 13.7 Areas of high natural character are identified along the coast from Te Ahikehe Point to Cape Runaway (the proposed route goes through on beach at Whangaparaoa) and at Raukokere River and over the rocky shoreline Te Kopua to Papatea Bay.
- 13.8 Other sensitive environments with important natural science values to consider are the apparent (non-scheduled) dune and wetland environments through the East Cape ONFL (parts are identified in the protected management area schedule) and the coastal edge of Orete Point which, as included in the archaeological and cultural impact report, which has significant values to Te Whanau- a- Apanui.
- 13.9 Existing visual and direct or near direct physical access to the coastal environment from SH35 and local roads is distinct feature of this Stage, as the roading network is confined to the

narrow-uplifted platforms with steep ranges behind. The exception to this being the link over to the Opotiki Coast via the Potaka saddle behind Matakaoa Point-Cape Runaway³³. The views from SH35 are spectacular (of very high visual amenity) as its sinuous path provides a varied experience and outlook to the sea, over rivers, prominent headlands, and the ranges behind with the sweep of the wider Bay of Plenty in the background.

13.10 Inland and coastal 'kai based' recreation for local communities continues through this Stage, reflecting the sequence of kainga and marae and hapu-based management. The larger rivers and tributaries contribute further to this including popular swimming holes on the Raukokore River. Hunting and gathering associations are further contributed to by large numbers of visitors to holiday homes and campgrounds, mainly over summer and in greater numbers on the Opotiki District Coast. Visitors to this coast over winter are often in response to the marlin and blue fin tuna season and are reflected in the sequence of fishing clubs and boat ramp and Waihou Bay wharf focused activities. While the landuse activities of the preceding Stages are characterised by more extensive farming operations, forestry, and beekeeping (regenerating manuka), there is a shift in these landscapes to cropping and horticultural activities (kiwifruit) and more intensive farming practices. These patterns reflect the change in soil type and shift to the warmer Bay of Plenty climate and, while SH35 can also be closed by flooding events, the general condition of the transport network is improved due to the underlying geology. And as a result, of these landuse and transport patterns, this Stage is more populated

13.11 The many and rich narratives to be told for Te Whanau -a -Apanui along this coast are further signified in these landscapes archaeological and cultural sites and ongoing connections to land and marae, as described further in other technical assessment reports. As it relates to landscape perceptions and associations, and because of the confined roading network, the sequence of hapu-based communities, including small urupa and local monuments and the Raukokore church feature prominently in the 'built landscape'. In the previous Stages, where marae and hapu connections are just as plentiful and, often, remote; located in discrete coastal communities, at the end of local roads.

Stage Specific Components

13.12 It is proposed that a compacted gravel track (Conceptual Document Cross Section 3) be constructed along the Wharekahika River section of the path, where required (and in line with

³³ Including the potential side trip to Wakatiri (Lottin Point), a popular fishing lodge and summer camping destination

the responsive CMP approach) to provide additional resilience. As in all other Stages topography and other context constraints will require non-standard track types to apply. For example, the 'New Pathway through Existing Vegetation' (Conceptual Document Cross Section 13) will need to apply over Haupara Point for walkers and horses.

13.13 At this concept stage of the Project, four new bridges are proposed along the Wharekahika River and another across the Waiongatiawa Stream at Wairuru mara). New clip-on bridge structures are required in five locations along the East Cape Road, on approach to Te Araroa, and on the existing bridge over the Wharekahika River and on all existing bridges in the Opotiki District through this Stage. Further site investigations are likely to be required to confirm if any additional bridge structures are required along the Wharekahika River, where tributaries are crossed (see below assessment of natural character effects), where beach access currently, rather than a clip on e.g., at Taikawakawa Stream (Te Tahī o te Tau marae) and in other 'off SH35' sections of the path where there are waterways. New toilets/shelter are shown along the East Cape Road at Orutua, along the Wharekahika River at Whangaparaoa Bay and Orete Point.

13.14 With a view to the above summary of the Existing Environment - Project Context and Stage Specific Components, the mitigation measures described in the LMP, and the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, the effects assessment findings for this Stage address:

Alignment and Path Types – Further Investigation Required

13.15 It is recommended that further investigation be carried out to avoid adverse landscape effects in the following locations. Note, and as determined through the Project scoping feedback on landscape matters, the options for alternative path alignment are very limited by the confined topography. These findings are to provide Stage specific examples of mitigation as assumed in the LMP, and as guidance for the responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, rather than to recommend substantive changes to the route.

- a. through all scheduled protected management areas, indigenous biological diversity areas, waterbodies and wetlands and other regenerating bush, wetland, and dune environments, to ensure the least impact on natural hydrological patterns and removal of indigenous vegetation. For example, alongside the river at Wharekahika Lake and through Te Rereauira wetland.
- b. at all proposed natural stream crossings on the Wharekahika River and where beach access is proposed. While these are assessed as appropriate, due to the remote location and need for further site work, there may be additional bridge structures required, or an alternative lesser impact crossing point (natural or bridged) that can be determined

through detailed design.

- c. where the path extends through an ONFL, including where the path it is to be located inside the road reserve and with specific consideration given to areas where there are no existing tracks, such as on the approach to Maraehako Bay. Options to reduce earthworks and indigenous vegetation removal through amended alignment and path type and, small section, narrowed width, should be prioritised. Path segregators should not be used as a standard treatment within, or where the path is used to view an ONFL, nor stripping of grass and ground compaction as a standardised treatment. A functional need for these elements, such as particular safety issues, should be determined as part of the overall path type spatial strategy in detailed design, and in response to further site investigations.
- d. the requirement for a compacted gravel track along the extent of the Wharekahika River is reviewed and applied only where ground conditions require it (in keeping with the responsive approach CMP). A 3-4.5m gravel track along the river will appear as a road in an area which would otherwise offer the opportunity for a naturalised river valley experience and will require additional management such as use of removable bollards, to avoid regular use as an ATV or off-road motor bike hunting track.
- e. the paths alignment through Te Rereauira wetland be refined to avoid wetland areas or the appropriate use of a boardwalk type path to retain hydrology and reduce earthworks and vegetation removal.
- f. That path type at Orete Point be confirmed with the local community including options for a boardwalk which, may be appropriate to uplift the mana of the site. Noting that a compacted lime chip path may not be necessary to achieve all weather access for horses and would, as a more dominant path type, have adverse landscape effects in this context, being out of character with the coastal environment.

ONFL - High Level Effects Assessment

13.16 In general terms the landscape effects are assessed as appropriate for ONFL in this Stage, considering the proposed alignment, permitted activity rules, use of existing tracks, the LMP mitigation requirements, the responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, and the specific matters addressed above.

13.17 Alignment and path type and width refinement during detailed design will be essential to avoid further adverse effects, however the Project shaping stage has set an alignment with reduced impact. In particular, the balance between an alignment within the SH35 corridor which might have reduced earthworks and the experiential benefits of being 'off road' within

an ONFL where there are no existing tracks should be reviewed and confirmed in the detailed stages.

Natural and Built Landscape - High Level Effects Assessment

13.18 Overall, the concept for Te Ara Tipuna has an appropriate fit with both the natural and built landscape patterns of the existing environment of the East Cape to Te Kaha and, providing the measures described in the LMP are implemented, and the CMP includes a responsive approach (set out above in The Proposal), adverse effects will be able to be mitigated.

13.19 Stage specific matters to be addressed are described above under Concept Design and Stage specific Alignment and Path Type - Further Investigation above.

13.20 Detailed design 'fit' within existing communities is a further matter to be resolved and noting that is a much more populated area with a wide range of existing recreation and everyday land and sea-based activities going on. Matters to be address will include the way in which the path types will interface with each of the coastal communities, marae, churches, and other community facilities, such as the fishing clubs, campgrounds, existing footpaths, and tracks including those used for informal recreation along the dunes and by tourist operators offering e.g., horse trekking experiences.

Visual Amenity - High Level Effects Assessment

13.21 The matters addressed under Stage E (refer above) to manage visual amenity, are also relevant to this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna.

13.22 Further, and while privacy is not specifically addressed in this assessment, there will be potential adverse visual amenity effects to manage in the detailed design of Te Ara Tipuna as where it is proposed to access private land and an alignment near existing houses. High level guidance relating to possible screening options is included as a further recommendation in the LMP.

13.23 Overall, this Stage will provide significant visual amenity benefits to local communities and visitors where the alignment and path type refinement ensures low earthworks, vegetation removal and a low key 'fit'. Te Ara Tipuna provides a varied journey along this stunning coast and a more immersive experience through walking, cycling, and riding than on SH35 and includes access to the unique Wharekahika River valley.

Natural Character - High Level Effects Assessment

- 13.24 Natural character effects are relevant to this Stage, where Te Ara Tipuna follows the coastal edge and is mainly within the coastal environment, and where there are new, or clip on bridge structures proposed and the path is located alongside waterways. Measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character are retained relate to three key matters, as stated above under the previous Stage.
- a. alignment to avoid earthworks and vegetation removal within these areas and measures to ensure rehabilitation planting.
 - b. the nature (design vernacular) and extent of the built elements and their fit with the existing context and relative dominance in the landscape. Noting that the design concepts for the new bridges and clip on structures and the number of bridges is yet to be confirmed.
 - c. the extent with which the path types and their location enhances or detracts from the experience of the natural environment including visual and physical access to the coast and other features. A standardised 4.5m wide gravel path alongside the Wharekahika River should be avoided and a boardwalk type path considered where the path needs to cross through Te Rereauira wetland and others identified on site.
- 13.25 Notwithstanding the matters identified for further investigation, (related to Concept Design and Alignment and Path Type) the findings of this assessment are that natural character will be able to be maintained in this Stage. This assessment is also dependant on the mitigation, as assumed in the LMP and tiaki, care measures, that will be supported by the Te Ara Tipuna user passport, and with the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP.
- 13.26 Perceptions of natural character will also be enhanced in this Stage due to the more immersive experience of walking, cycling and horse riding. These perceptual benefits are dependent on the sensitive design and spatial arrangement Te Ara Tipuna to avoid unnecessary earthworks, vegetation removal and standardised use of path segregators.
- 13.27 While not consequential to the above assessment, as would be consistent with Part 2 of the RMA and the NZCPS policies, there are many opportunities to further enhance natural character values in this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna. For example, through the dune environments along the East Cape Road and foreshore in the Opotiki District.

14. TE KAHA TO OPOTIKI, STAGE F – EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

Existing Environment - Project Context

- 14.1 From Te Kaha to Omaio the path is located within the SH35 road reserve, except for a short section along the unformed legal road on approach to the Haparapara River, where the carriageway is narrow and enclosed by indigenous vegetation. For the same reason, an off-road reserve route is proposed over the Waioira Stream to the saddle of Pokohinu Point at Omaio and may be an area where a taxi service is considered through to Maraenui where the river flats offer a short 'off SH35' alternative alongside the Waiopoahu Stream use of existing tracks on the foreshore. The transition back onto SH35 proposed would use existing residential driveways and, what would be a steep, bench cut track back up onto the road reserve. Similarly, it is proposed all users would drop down into Whituare Bay (Te Uritukituki Beach), to travel along the beach, via a likely steep track alongside the Maraenui Hill lookout stream and following the contours along the base of Haumiaroa Point, through regenerating bush. From Hawaii to Torere Beach, walkers and horse riders would follow existing foreshore tracks while cyclists continue along SH35, and all users would travel along the SH35 road reserve up and over Haumiora and Pehitairi Point. All users are then proposed to divert along Opape Rd to access existing tracks along the foreshore of Opape - Omarumutu beach transitioning back onto the SH35 road reserve at the Waiaua bridge and then on to the existing Motu trails through to Opotiki. Horses are proposed to use the beach rather than the Motu trail, through to where it turns up off the coast to cross the Otara River.
- 14.2 As per the previous Stage, Te Ara Tipuna is very much confined to the coastal edge and a SH35 alignment with few options for local road or off-road connections. Where the path is proposed to follow an alignment away from the SH35 road reserve, this generally occurs in two circumstances: where there is the option for high tide beach access, such as at Maraenui, Whituare and Torere; and where there is gently sloping open land to the seaside of SH35, alongside the Haparapara and Motu Rivers. In contrast, a SH35 alignment and continuous connection, may be more difficult to achieve in this Stage due to the existing width of the carriageway and confining topography and indigenous vegetation in the road reserve. As a result, a taxi service may need to be used between Omaio and Hawaii, including for horses and bikes.
- 14.3 The pattern of coastal edge and backdrop ONFL continue through this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna, from Hariki Beach, south of Te Kaha, to Opape (including ONFL 1 Ikawhenua Forest and Urewera Forest Inland, ONFL 13 Motu River Mouth, ONFL 14 Orangoihunui Point & Whitianga Bay, Whitianga Bay to Ohae Point, ONFL 12 Maraenui Escarpment (Whituare Bay), ONFL 11

Whituare Bay, ONFL 10 Haumiara Point, ONFL 9 Pehitariri Point, ONFL 8 Haurere Point and ONFL 7 Tarakeha Point (Opape). As in the previous Stage, there are very few sections of Te Ara Tipuna, other than the Motu Trails, that do not have a direct or relatively immediate ONFL context. This provides an overarching guidance for sensitive alignment and low-key path types even where it is in the SH35 road reserve. Direct alignment within the Maraenui Escarpment (ONFL12) is proposed where the path transitions back up onto SH35 (and noting this section of the path may not be progressed – be ‘bridged’ via a taxi service for all users). Similarly, path to and from Whituare Bay beach (if accessed) would be formed through the Maraenui escarpment and Haumiara Point ONFL (12 +10).

- 14.4 Similarly, a consistent pattern of indigenous vegetation threads along the coastal edge with many scheduled indigenous biological diversity areas extending beyond ONFL, and, in places bordering SH35. Indigenous biological diversity areas are identified over beach areas at Maraenui, Whituare Bay and Hawaii and at Opape including where the path transitions back up to the Waiaua River bridge.
- 14.5 Waterways will be crossed via existing bridges in this Stage, along the beach sections of the path, as in the previous Stage.
- 14.6 Scheduled wetland areas also feature in this Stage, although to a lesser extent than in the previous; near the Waiopoahu Stream at Maraenui (where the path is proposed to follow an existing track where the taxi system does not apply) and at Opape where the path is proposed alongside in the dunes.
- 14.7 Areas of high natural character are identified along the coast from Okahu Point to Waiorore, Whituare Bay to Parinui and Whitianga Bay to Pokohinu Point. Very high natural character values are identified at the Haparapara and Motu Rive mouths and are associated with the ONFL headland and rock points from Hawaii to Opape.
- 14.8 Other sensitive environments with important landscape values to consider are the apparent (non-scheduled) dune and wetland environments, for example, at Opape. Also, likely to be valued by local communities, is the continuing pattern of mature Pohutukawa trees set along the seaside of SH35, such as at Hariki Beach and Waiorore.
- 14.9 Existing visual and easy access to the coastal environment is a continued feature of this Stage, given the confined nature of the roading network which is set to narrow-uplifted platforms with steep ranges behind. SH35 provides a sequence of views and outlook to the sea, over rivers, prominent headlands, and the ranges behind with the sweep of the wider Bay of Plenty

in the background. Views from the sea back to the coast are a further feature of the popular boating experiences.

- 14.10 Coastal and inland areas continue to be valued for hunting and fishing by local communities and visitors alike, linked to a sequence of kainga, marae and hapu-based management. There are popular swimming holes at most of the larger rivers, for example on the Haparapara, often associated with known inland tracks for hunting. The pattern of local settlements set to the sheltered bays continues through this Stage with holiday homes and campgrounds that increase the population over summer, and in response to the tuna and marlin season over winter. Cropping and horticultural activities (kiwifruit) and more intensive farming practices feature along the coast with large scale forestry in the ranges behind and farming becoming more prevalent to the land side of the highway near Torere where the main ranges end.
- 14.11 Te Whanau -a -Apanui narratives and ongoing connections along this coast are further documented through the archaeology and cultural impact reports. As it relates to landscape perceptions, the sequence of hapu-based communities, including small urupa and local monuments continues through this Stage through to the marked transition, at the Waiaua River and the Motu Road, into the larger horticultural blocks and peri-urban areas of Opotiki,

Stage Specific Components

- 14.12 As in all other landscapes, given the confined topography of the area, non-standard track types will likely apply in some parts. For example, the 'Narrow Lane Adjacent Highway' (Conceptual Document Cross Section 7) will likely need to apply in many areas, as is also likely in the East Cape to Te Kaha Stage.
- 14.13 A clip-on bridge structure is proposed on the Haparapara, Motu (may not be needed if a taxi system is used), Waiaua and Torere Rivers. Further site investigations are required to confirm if crossing the stream mouth, beach, crossing of Torere River is possible (where a clip on to the existing bridge structure would provide an alternative). New toilets are proposed at Omaio, Maraenui (not required if the taxi system is used), Hawaii and Opape.
- 14.14 With a view to the above summary of the Existing Environment - Project Context and Stage Specific Components, the mitigation measures described in the LMP, and the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP, the effects assessment findings for this Stage address:

Alignment and Path Types – Further Investigation Required

14.15 It is recommended that further investigation be carried out to avoid adverse landscape effects in the following locations. These findings are to provide Stage specific examples of mitigation as assumed in the LMP, rather than to recommend substantive changes to the route. As determined through the Project shaping, the options for alternative path alignment are very limited in this and the previous Stage due to the confined topography and patterns of indigenous vegetation.

- a. through all indigenous biological diversity areas and schedule wetland areas and other regenerating bush, Pohutukawa stands, wetland and dune environments. Further site work should be used to ensure the least impact on natural hydrological patterns and removal of indigenous vegetation. For example, at Opape transition back on to the highway, the alignment can be further refined to follow existing tracks and consider proximity to the Omarumutu urupa.
- b. at all proposed natural stream crossings where beach access is proposed. There may be additional foot bridge structures required, or an alternative lesser impact crossing point (natural or bridged) that can be determined through site investigations.
- c. where the path extends through or near an ONFL, with specific consideration given to areas where there are no existing tracks and indigenous vegetation, for example to provide access to Whituare Bay. For the most part, through this Stage this requires careful consideration of the options to avoid additional indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks with the SH35 road reserve. Therefore, in terms of ONFL impact, the taxi system between Omaio and Hawaii is likely to avoid adverse effects- where there is very narrow shoulders and additional works would be required.

ONFL - High Level Effects Assessment

14.16 Works within ONFL have largely been avoided in this Stage through the Project shaping iterations, and in general terms the landscape effects are assessed as appropriate for ONFL.

14.17 Should the path be confirmed to access Whituare Bay beach, measures should be used to reduce vegetation removal and earthworks to provide this access and to avoid the use of path segregators, other than on immediate egress on and off the highway.

14.18 Options to reduce earthworks and indigenous vegetation removal alongside the highway will also be important to consider due to the road reserves close association with ONFL. Large scale cuts (above eye height) and loss of mature vegetation, even if alongside an existing road, will have value and works at scale in these areas could have an adverse impact.

Natural and Built Landscape - High Level Effects Assessment

14.19 Overall, the concept for Te Ara Tipuna has an appropriate fit with both the natural and built landscape patterns of the existing environment of Te Kaha to Opotiki and, providing the measures described in the LMP are implemented, and the CMP includes the agreed approach (set out above in The Proposal), adverse effects will be able to be mitigated.

14.20 Stage specific matters to be addressed are described above under Concept Design and Stage specific Alignment and Path Type - Further Investigation above.

14.21 Detailed design 'fit' within existing communities is a further matter to be resolved, and, as per the previous Stage, noting that is a much more populated landscape with a range of existing recreation activities in place. Matters to be address will include the way in which the path types will interface with each of the coastal communities, marae, churches, and other community facilities, including by local tourist operators and existing users of the Motu trails.

Visual Amenity - High Level Effects Assessment

14.22 The matters addressed under Stage E (refer above) to manage visual amenity, are also relevant to this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna.

14.23 Further, and while privacy is not specifically addressed in this assessment, there will be potential adverse visual amenity effects to manage in the detailed design of Te Ara Tipuna as where it is proposed to access private land close to existing houses. For example, at Maraenui (should this section of the path be progressed). High level guidance relating to possible screening options is included as a further recommendation in the LMP.

14.24 Overall, this Stage will provide significant visual amenity benefits to local communities and visitors where the alignment and path type refinement ensures reduced earthworks, vegetation removal and standard path construction, with a low key 'fit'. Te Ara Tipuna provides a varied journey with highly memorable views of the coasts unique natural and built landscape, and a more immersive experience, through walking, cycling and horse-riding.

Natural Character - High Level Effects Assessment

14.25 Natural character effects are relevant to this Stage, where Te Ara Tipuna follows the coastal edge and is mainly within the coastal environment, and where there are bridge structures proposed and the path is located alongside waterways such as at Haparapara and Maraenui. Measures to ensure that both the biophysical and perceptual aspects of natural character are maintained will relate to:

- a. alignment and path type to avoid earthworks and indigenous vegetation removal within these areas and measures to ensure rehabilitation planting.
- b. the nature (design vernacular) and extent of the built elements and their fit with the existing context, to avoid dominance in the landscape. The design concepts for the new clip-on structures are yet to be confirmed.
- c. the extent with which the path types and their location enhances or detracts from the experience of the natural environment including visual and physical access to the coast and other features. In particular, access to the beach and dune areas which will enhance perceptions of natural character will need to be balanced against the requirement for indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks to achieve this.

14.26 Notwithstanding the matters identified for further investigation, (related to Concept Design and Alignment and Path Type) the findings of this assessment are that natural character will be able to be maintained in this Stage. This assessment is also dependant on the mitigation, as assumed in the LMP and tiaki, care measures, that will be supported by the Te Ara Tipuna user passport, and with the site-responsive approach confirmed for the CMP.

14.27 While not consequential to the above assessment, as would be consistent with Part 2 of the RMA and the NZCPS policies, there are many opportunities to further enhance natural character values in this Stage of Te Ara Tipuna. For example, through the dune and wetland environments at Maraenui and Opape.

15. SUMMARY OF EFFECTS AND CONCLUSIONS

15.1 Overall, the findings of this assessment are that the effects of Te Ara Tipuna on ONFL, landscape, visual amenity and natural character effects will be appropriate, with detailed design stages taking the site-responsive approach agreed for the CMP, and implementation of the mitigation assumed in the LMP. The Project shaping stages, including iterative review and feedback on landscape matters, have confirmed a general alignment, options for path types and new structures that bring a focus on avoiding adverse effects and practicable mitigation measures, as included in the LMP. The proposal is to develop a landscape sensitive walking, cycling and horse trekking path which will connect the communities of Ngati Porou and Te Whanau a Apanui and provide for greater immersive experience of the coastal and river environments, for whanau and visitors alike. This will maintain and enhance landscape values such that the proposal is appropriate under Part 2 of the RMA and relevant district and regional objectives and policies.

15.2 The potential for adverse effects can be further reduced through the following stages of the Project by addressing the matters summarised below within the responsive approach for the

CMP, and as are addressed in the LMP and considered in detail within the Conceptual Design and Stage specific assessment of effects above). Include measures to refine/ensure:

- a. final alignment and path type options minimise indigenous vegetation removal and earthworks extents and heights. Prioritise the use of existing tracks rather than vegetated, steep unformed legal roads.
- b. the path type and road crossing designs (typical cross sections) to avoid the use of roading type elements (where the path is outside the road reserve) and, in all areas, to avoid the use of path segregators, grass stripping and compaction as a standard treatment where there is no functional need related to clear cues for movement or safety.
- c. existing tracks and grass surfaces, with simple sight line markers, are used in all ONFL areas (where the path is not located in a formed road reserve).
- d. an overall strategy is developed, using a multicriteria type analysis (including functional need type topography such as steepness of terrain), to confirm where the sequence of path types, including boardwalks and gravel type paths, should apply.
- e. the suite of new and clip on bridge structures and toilet/shelters are fit for their natural and built context, are of a low-key design that avoid visual dominance and respond to their context.
- f. the potential adverse natural character impacts of additional bridge structures and the management of all natural stream crossings are considered including measures that could be used to avoid or mitigate.
- g. the required extent of the Tokomaru/Ruatoria ATV trail and appropriate management of motorised vehicles on this section of Te Ara Tipuna during non-emergency events.
- h. the required management, general exclusion of motorised vehicles on all sections Te Ara Tipuna other than for maintenance and development purposes.

15.3 There are many potential landscape benefits to be further developed through detailed design as can be guided by the LMP and CMP (and other management plan) recommendations and ongoing engagement with the Te Ara Tipuna 'community'. Measures used to enhance natural environments, for example, through additional restoration planting, of dune and wetland areas and to buffer and enhance bush remnants, will provide further landscape benefits. Similarly, the development of an overall narrative including a wayfinding and interpretation strategy (paired with the path type strategy) could be used to help further uplift and enhance the values of the unique landscapes and community of Te Ara Tipuna.

Isthmus
July 2023

APPENDIX A- DEFINITIONS

This assessment uses the following definitions/explanations of **natural character**, **landscape**, and **visual amenity**, taken from Te Tangi a Te Manu, the Aotearoa New Zealand Landscape Assessment Guidelines (July 2022) provided by Tuia Pito Ora, New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA):

Natural Character

“Natural character is the distinct combination of an area’s natural characteristics and qualities, including degree of naturalness.”

“Natural character is an outcome of physical environment and perception. Perception is influenced by what we know of an area’s natural characteristics and qualities (including input from natural sciences) and how we experience them.”

Naturalness

“Naturalness” is a measure of the actual and apparent modification from a fully natural state.”

Natural character is a type of character – the distinct combination of an area’s natural characteristics and qualities. Naturalness is an attribute of that natural character.

As a measure of the extent of modification present, *naturalness* is quantitative.

As a distinct combination of natural characteristics and qualities, (including naturalness), the consideration of natural *character* is qualitative.

Landscape

“Landscape embodies the relationship between people and place. It is the character of an area, how the area is experienced and perceived, and the meanings associated with it.”

Landscape is an integrating concept. While landscape draws strands from diverse sources (natural sciences, humanities, cultural perspectives), it is perceived and experienced as a unified phenomenon. It is an integrated whole. It is more than a summary of data – the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Landscapes have biophysical (natural science), perceptual (sensory) and associative (shared and recognised) dimensions.

Visual Amenity

'Visual amenity' {is} shorthand for 'landscape values that contribute to amenity values.

While such shorthand is widely understood and occurs in some statutory plans, a pitfall is the potential to overlook the whole landscape by jumping to certain aspects. A sound approach is to identify landscape values first, and then explain how such landscape values contribute to amenity values and the quality of the environment.'

The RMA defines amenity values as:

"...those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes."

APPENDIX B: STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Statutory provisions most relevant to this assessment include:

Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA)

Section 6 Matters of national importance

Recognise and provide for the following matters of national importance:

(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:

(d) the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, and rivers:

(e) the relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, and other taonga.

Section 7 – Other matters

Have particular regard to:

(a) kaitiakitanga:

(c) the maintenance and enhancement of amenity values:

(d) intrinsic values of ecosystems:

(f) maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment:

The RMA defines amenity values as:

“...those natural or physical qualities and characteristics of an area that contribute to people’s appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes.”

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement

Objective 2

To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect natural features and landscape values through:

- *Recognising the characteristics and qualities that contribute to natural character, natural features and landscape values and their location and distribution.*

- *Identifying those areas where various forms of subdivision, use, and development would be inappropriate and protecting them from such activities; and*
- *Encouraging restoration of the coastal environment.*

Policy 13

To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- a) avoid adverse effects of activities on natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character; and*
- b) avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment, including by:*
- c) assessing the natural character of the coastal environment of the region or district, by mapping or otherwise identifying at least areas of high natural character; and*
- d) ensuring that regional policy statements, and plans, identify areas where preserving natural character requires objectives, policies, and rules, and include those provisions.*

Policy 15

To protect the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:

- a) Avoid adverse effects of activities on outstanding natural features and outstanding natural landscapes in the coastal environment; and*
- b) Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy, or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment, including by:*
- c) Identifying and assessing the natural features and natural landscapes of the coastal environment of the region or district, at minimum by land typing, soil characterisation and landscape characterisation and having regard to:*
 - i. natural science factors, including geological, topographical, ecological, and dynamic components.*
 - ii. the presence of water including in seas, lakes, rivers, and streams.*
 - iii. legibility or expressiveness – how obviously the feature or landscape demonstrates its formative processes.*
 - iv. aesthetic values including memorability and naturalness.*
 - v. vegetation (native and exotic).*
 - vi. transient values, including presence of wildlife or other values at certain times of the day or year.*

- vii. *whether the values are shared and recognised.*
 - viii. *cultural and spiritual values for tangata whenua, identified by working, as far as practicable, in accordance with tikanga Māori, including their expression as cultural landscapes and features.*
 - ix. *historical and heritage associations; and*
 - x. *wild or scenic values.*
- b. ensuring that regional policy statements, and plans, map or otherwise identify areas where the protection of natural features and natural landscapes requires objectives, policies, and rules; and
 - c. including the objectives, policies and rules required by (d) in plans.

Regional/District Planning

The following provides a summary of relevant planning provisions for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Opotiki District Council and Gisborne District Council. This outline below has been summarised from more detailed information provided by the Project planning team (and confirmed as correct by the planning team).

ONFL

Under the TRMP vegetation removal over 500m²; land disturbance of more than 10m²/10m³; and structures³⁴ over 2.5m in height/25m³ in volume will be considered a Restricted Discretionary activity, meaning that certain landscape-related criteria will need to be addressed for consent.

The ODC District Plan permits vegetation clearance in ONL up to a maximum of 100m² in a 12-month period, with less permissive provision inside ONF (Discretionary status). Land disturbance up to 400m²/200m³/3m cut or fill height is permitted in ONL, with less permissive provision inside ONF (Discretionary status).

Coastal Environment

Under the TRMP vegetation clearance proposed in excess of 1ha; and land disturbance proposed in excess of 50m²/50m³ in a 12-month period, will need to address certain landscape-related criteria for consent (i.e., there will be a Restricted Discretionary status). If the proposed route is within 200m of the MHWS it will likely be considered under the discretionary rule (i.e., standards are less permissive, and any matter can be considered for consent).

³⁴ Outside the Residential Zone.

Under the ODC District Plan vegetation clearance over 100m² in the Coastal Environment Overlay in any 12-month period is Discretionary; Land disturbance up to 400m²/200m³ is permitted.

Coastal Zone (ODC)

The ODC District Plan includes a Coastal Zone with standards relating to vegetation removal and land disturbance. These are slightly more permissive than in the Coastal Environment for vegetation clearance, but the same for land disturbance, in relation to areas visible from public road, reserve, CMA and foreshore.

Formed and unformed roads

Where the route passes through the coastal environment, ONFL, other environmental protection areas, coastal zoning (ODC), and/or is close to riparian areas, standards relating to vegetation removal and land disturbance and structures will apply under both the TRMP and ODC District Plan, with landscape-related criteria needing to be addressed for consent.

Outside of these areas (as listed above) where the track is inside road reserve in the TRMP, the activity will not require a land use consent, but any land disturbance, discharges etc will be assessed under the regional rules. In the ODC District Plan, if the track is within a road reserve (formed or unformed), the underlying zone standards and rules shall apply, as well application of the regional rules.

Riparian

Land disturbance and vegetation clearance in the riparian areas will be a consideration, particularly for those G15c scheduled water bodies. This is for TRMP and ODC District Plan.

The TRMP has controls for bridges and structures over Schedule G18 Outstanding Waterbody. At this stage, the track will not affect any of these scheduled rivers.

Under the TRMP the size of the catchment also determines the provisions applying.