

7. Coastal communities

There are a number of communities along the coast of New Plymouth District that are interspersed by rural land and areas of natural vegetation cover. The Coastal Strategy recognises the importance of acknowledging the diversity of New Plymouth District's coastal environment that comprises extensive rural coastal areas and a number of distinct communities. The vision, strategic direction, goals and implementation methods in the coastal strategy provide guidance for the future management of growth throughout the whole coastal environment, while considering the individual characteristics and issues of each coastal community as identified through the consultation process.

Future direction and management for the general rural coast and any local community or area not specifically included in this part is provided for by the Coastal Strategy strategic direction, goals and implementation methods.

A number of challenges and opportunities facing the coastal environment within each of these coastal communities have been identified through background research and a series of public consultation stages. These have led through to the development of a vision for each coastal community as well as goals (what we want to achieve) and actions (what we aim do) for that particular community.

The coastal communities covered by this section of the Coastal Strategy are:

- Tongaporutu
- Urenui
- Onaero
- Waitara
- Bell Block
- Fitzroy/East End
- New Plymouth CBD/Waterfront
- Oakura
- Okato

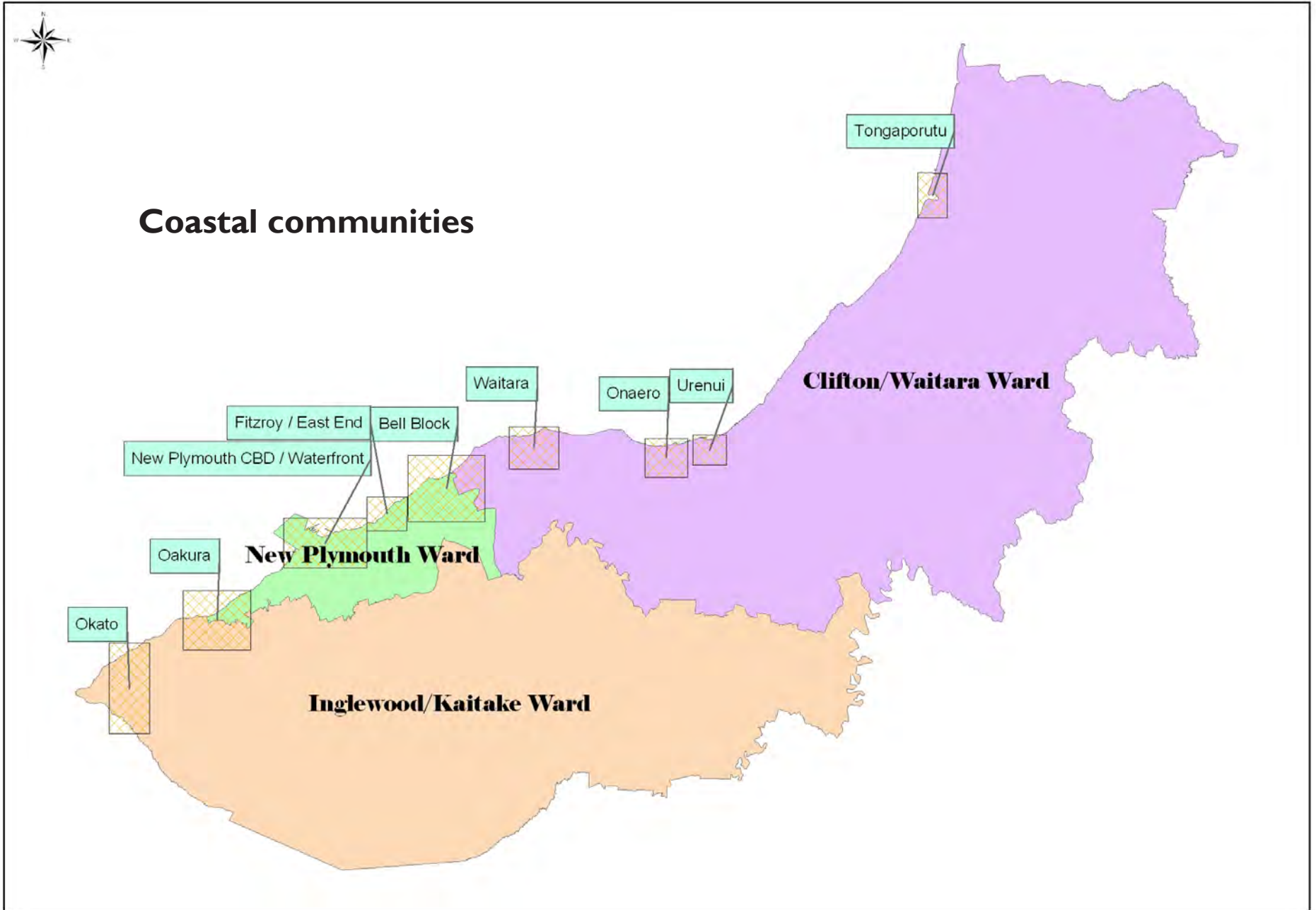
A key part to the preparation the Coastal Strategy has been an extensive consultation process with the local communities of New Plymouth District. The information and ideas received from the community has been integral to developing the Coastal Strategy.

Coastal community goals – what we want to achieve

The coastal community goals (what we want to achieve) have been prepared to help the council and the community reach the local visions, as well as the Coastal Strategy vision and strategic directions. The goals define what we want to achieve for each of the coastal communities.

Coastal community implementation – what we aim to do

This section of the Coastal Strategy identifies the implementation for each coastal community to help the council and the community achieve both the Coastal Strategy and local area visions. Refer to the prioritisation criteria in section 6, Coastal Strategy implementation.



7.1 Tongaporutu

Tongaporutu is the northern most local community identified for the Coastal Strategy. Tongaporutu is generally defined as that area from Ohanga Stream in the south to Rapanui Stream in the north and extends inland to encompass the lower flats behind the settlement. This is in recognition of the coastal processes of the Tongaporutu River and the surrounding hills, as well as the rural community on both sides of the river, with linkages to the coast.

The Tongaporutu community is centred around a low density residential settlement and the community includes rural landuses. The Whitecliffs Conservation Estate is a feature in the landscape between the settlement and New Plymouth City. The settlement has a distinctive character with significant heritage values, including both Māori and early settler history. This is a traditional holiday area within an important landscape setting, that includes the Three Sisters and Whitecliffs.



Tongaporutu is considered by some of the community to be the 'gateway to North Taranaki'. The natural values and landscape of the estuary are important to the community's wellbeing in this settlement. Some consider that there is a feeling of isolation, and uniqueness in Tongaporutu that is important to the sense of place of the settlement.



Tongaporutu vision

“...to be the guardian of North Taranaki... nestled among unique geological, cultural and landscape features”

(Community Workshop Vision)

7.1.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Tongaporutu

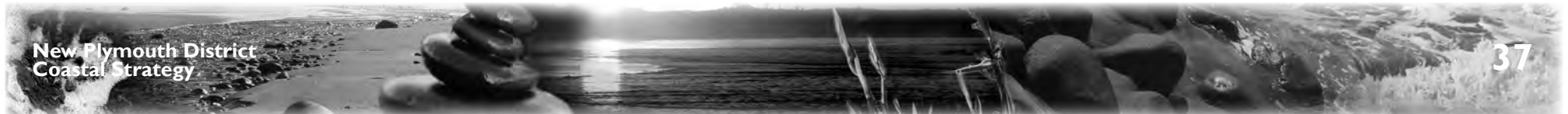
- This area has unique and striking natural features that define the community (river, ocean, bush, beach, etc).
- Residential development has the potential to impact on the natural environment (e.g. water quality) and the important natural and landscape values in this area.
- Recreational use and public access has the potential to impact on the local community and the natural values.
- There is economic potential in tourism that can deliver local benefits (e.g. day trippers demanding facilities such as toilets and rubbish bins, but not spending on accommodation within Tongaporutu).
- The relationship between tangata whenua (Ngati Tama) and the rest of the community is important to support and enhance.

7.1.2 Goals for Tongaporutu - what we want to achieve

- TG1 – Protect and preserve the unique geological, cultural and landscape features that define Tongaporutu.
- TG2 – Retain and enhance the peaceful coastal village feel of Tongaporutu.
- TG3 – Promote enhanced public access to the coast that recognises the importance and needs of farming operations in the rural areas of Tongaporutu.
- TG4 – Promote Tongaporutu as an ‘overnight’ destination that provides a peaceful coastal walkway holiday experience.
- TG5 – Encourage greater understanding and wider appreciation of both Māori cultural heritage values, treaty settlements and European heritage values within the coastal environment of Tongaporutu.



Rapanui



7.1.3 Implementation for Tongaporutu - what we aim to do

Actions for Tongaporutu		Type	Lead (support)	Priority
TA1	Identify and prioritise areas for provision of facilities in Tongaporutu. - In accordance with Coastal Reserves Management Plans.	I	NPDC (DOC)	H
TA2	Prepare appropriate plans and development guidelines to minimise the impact of housing on the landscape features. - Focus on encouraging sensitive development in both the rural and residential areas including consideration of growth options to the north of the river. - Identify development that is compatible with the sense of place.	P	NPDC (local community)	M
TA3	Include opportunities to improve services to Tongaporutu during peak seasons. - To protect the peaceful coastal village feel and to maximise benefit from the White Cliffs Walkway. - Includes the management of rubbish during periods of heavy visitor use.	S	NPDC	M
TA4	Identify any further geological, heritage, cultural and landscape features that require formal protection under the District Plan/Regional Plans. - In addition to those already identified as significant landscapes and coastal policy areas. - Promote mechanisms to buffer these areas from future development (reserves, etc).	P	NPDC (TRC & DOC)	M
TA5	Look at opportunities to promote Tongaporutu through a variety of community based media. - To improve information dissemination on both the local area as well as the New Plymouth District for visitors (e.g. the seaward Domain and on top of Mount Messenger).	C	Venture Taranaki	M
TA6	Build relationships with Ngati Tama, to promote opportunities to improve public knowledge, protection and management of cultural heritage sites. - To include interpretation sites and heritage trails.	E	Ngati Tama	M
TA7	Provide appropriate signage to identify and define public land. - To include Rapanui Reserve. - This should also include advocating to other organisations, e.g. Transit NZ.	S	NPDC	L
TA8	Work closely with the landowners (including Department of Conservation) to identify future opportunities for providing public access to the coast. - To be incorporated into the coastal access action plan and the open space strategy.	I	NPDC (DOC & local community)	O
TA9	Work closely with the community to promote awareness and understanding of recent Treaty settlements and identify opportunities to build and strengthen relationships within the community.	C	Ngati Tama (NPDC)	O

7.2 Urenui

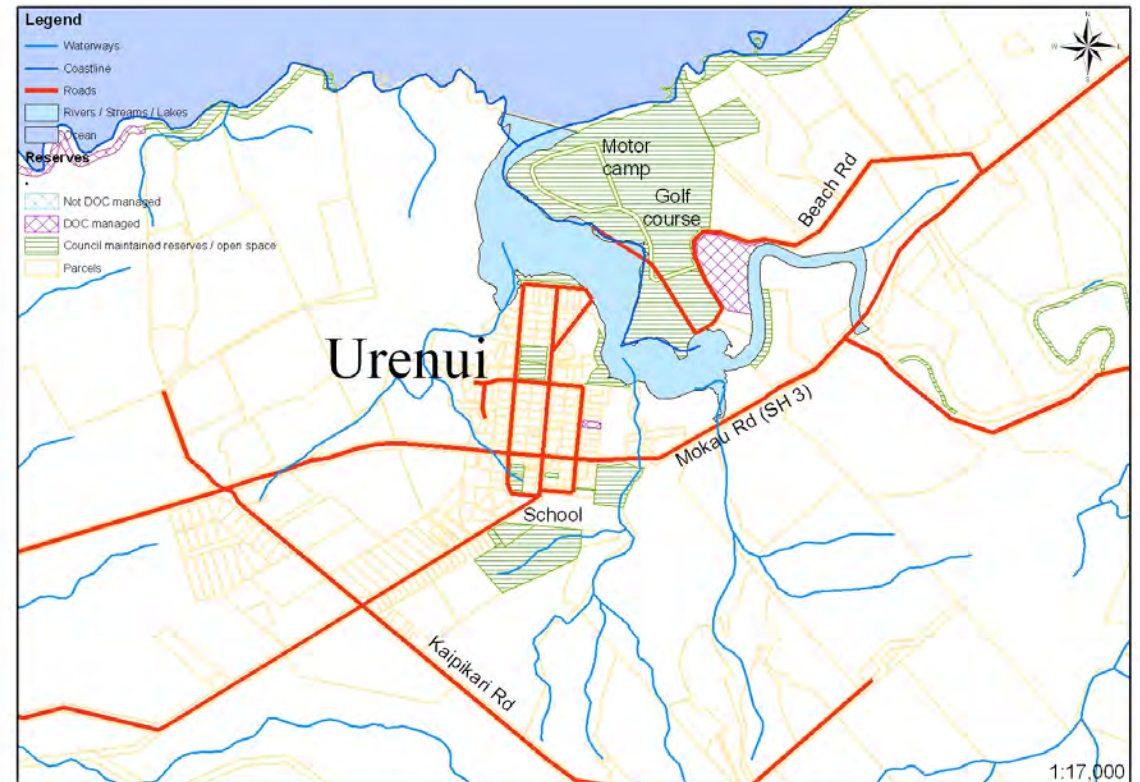
Urenui is a small river settlement with a beach front motor camp, golf course, cemetery, fire station and school.

This local community is generally defined as that area from east of where Beach Road joins Mokau Road, to Wilson Road in the south, to where Kaipikari Road meets Main North Road in the west. This area encompasses the settlement of Urenui, the Urenui River and the foreshore area.

The area is a popular recreational spot with many visitors over the peak summer period. Urenui is unusual in that its main beachfront property is the recreation reserve, which is a focal point for the community. The council managed recreation reserve contains a camping ground, golf course and leasehold baches.

The Urenui community values the landscape, views and amenity associated with the coast, as well as the natural open spaces. The coastal marine area provides traditional resources for Ngati Mutunga. The community's sense of place values for Urenui include links to the coast, the low-density 'village' settlement, and an appropriate level of facilities and services.

New Plymouth District's reticulated wastewater network is programmed for expansion to Urenui in 2006-08. The route for the proposed wastewater network expansion has not yet been finalised. There is limited residential subdivision potential within the existing settlement area and future growth in Urenui may be constrained unless further areas are rezoned for residential use.



Urenui vision

“...a rural village and seaside holiday destination accessible for all”

(Community Workshop Vision)

7.2.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Urenui

- Recognising and celebrating the natural features that define the community (river, ocean, bush, beach, etc).
- There is a demand for growth but concern about the lifestyle development occurring in, and surrounding Urenui, and the impact on natural, cultural and social values.
- There is a desire to promote economic growth of Urenui in a manner consistent with the community values.
- There is some uncertainty about the permanence of residency and changing character at the motor camp.
- There is a demand for holiday accommodation and a growing concern regarding opportunities for affordable camping facilities.
- There is a desire by the community to see improved recreational opportunities on the coast and water. There are however impacts from existing use on resources, such as depletion of the mussel reef over summer periods.
- There are significant concerns related to coastal erosion issues in Urenui and the need to find sustainable solutions.
- There are important Māori heritage sites within Urenui that are being degraded by development and other uses.

7.2.2 Goals for Urenui - what we want to achieve

UG1 – Provide opportunities for residential and lifestyle development in a manner that maintains and enhances the natural environment and the relaxed, coastal village feel of Urenui and its surrounds.

UG2 – Focus recreational facilities in areas of high demand, where natural values have already been impacted (e.g. native vegetation).

UG3 – Identify and promote the natural values and quality of Urenui as an accessible and affordable family holiday destination.

UG4 – There is a particular desire by the community to protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the Urenui River.

UG5 - Promote the natural qualities of Urenui that will accommodate low impact tourism development and opportunities to promote the area as a family holiday destination.

UG6 – Plan and provide for new coastal infrastructure in a manner that is consistent with the desired nature, scale and form of Urenui, giving consideration to the dynamics of coastal processes (erosion), (See Coastal Strategy goals and implementation methods for infrastructure and coastal hazards.)

UG7 – Provide certainty on the future of the campground and golf course and the accessibility of this area for all.

UG8 – Adopt a ‘hierarchy approach’ to coastal erosion management that avoids hazard areas, protects natural buffers and finds solutions most consistent with the vision for the Urenui.

UG9 – Encourage a wider appreciation of Māori cultural heritage values and Treaty settlements within the coastal environment of Urenui.

7.2.3 Implementation for Urenui - what we aim to do

Actions for Urenui		Type	Lead (support)	Priority
UA1	Prepare and adopt a Structure Plan for Urenui to guide development. - Structure planning will consider land use, areas for residential growth, development form and infrastructure (prior to the planned wastewater connection).	P	NPDC <i>(local community)</i>	U
UA2	Investigate development and implementation of rules for regionally significant landscapes.	P	NPDC	H
UA3	Review the coastal erosion policy in respect of Urenui. - Involve the wider community in the process and decisions on managing coastal hazards so that the wider implications can be understood. - To be consistent with district wide coastal erosion policy.	P	NPDC <i>(local community)</i>	H
UA4	Make sure that infrastructure works are designed to take into account the sensitive coastal environment (refer to the implementation methods for Infrastructure).	P	NPDC	H
UA5	Explore options with Ngati Mutunga to place a rahui on the mussel reef.	E	Ngati Mutunga <i>(TRC & NPDC)</i>	M
UA6	Provide information to the community on the nature of water quality in the Urenui River. - To include recommendations on how to reduce pollution levels.	E	TRC	M
UA7	Work with relevant agencies to promote family orientated affordable tourism opportunities in Urenui.	P	Venture Taranaki <i>(NPDC)</i>	M
UA8	Identify opportunities for new passive recreation activities and facilities that link the reserves in Urenui with adjacent coastal areas.	I	NPDC	M
UA9	Work closely with the community to promote awareness and understanding of recent Treaty settlements and identify opportunities to build and strengthen relationships within the community	E	Ngatu Mutunga & NPDC	O
UA10	Use best practice methods for the protection of dunes from human and stock damage.	C	NPDC <i>(TRC)</i>	O



7.3 Onaero

Onaero is located west of Waitara and east of Urenui. The defined settlement area is made up of two parts; the small village with access off Onaero Beach Road and the recreation reserve located off State Highway 3. Onaero Bay Motor Camp is located on a recreation reserve at the mouth of the river.

There has been steady growth in the number of dwellings built in this area. Onaero is a popular recreational spot with many visitors over the peak summer period. The Onaero community are proud of their diverse and friendly community. The history, heritage, views and the micro-climate of the coastal environment at Onaero all contribute to the community's sense of place. The rural-residential lifestyle in the Onaero surrounds is important to the community.



Onaero vision

“...to remain a quiet, relaxed community connected by river, surf and sea”

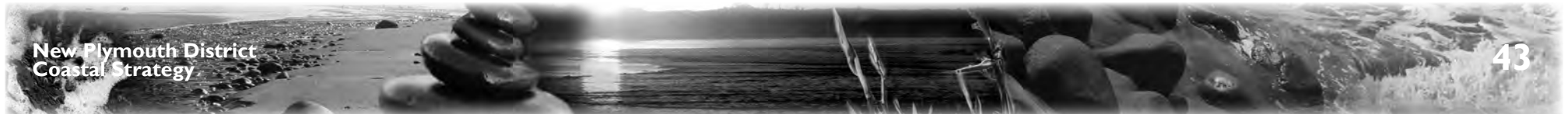
(Community Workshop Vision)

7.3.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Onaero

- There is a desire for rural-residential ‘lifestyle’ development but this has the potential to impact on the unique ‘sense of place’ values important to Onaero and the natural and cultural environment.
- Onaero enjoys a significant increase in peak season visitors and existing facilities, infrastructure and services are not always sufficient to cope with this increased demand. The future provision of infrastructure and facilities in Onaero has the potential to impact on the natural, cultural and social environment.
- Onaero has existing coastal erosion management issues and future development in the area is expected to increase community demands for solutions to this.
- The community would like to have opportunities for greater ‘self-management’ in the achievement of Onaero’s vision.
- There is growing demand for active recreational use of the Onaero coastal environment. As a result there are associated impacts.
- There are important Māori heritage sites within Onaero that are being degraded by development and other uses.

7.3.2 Goals for Onaero - what we want to achieve

- OG1 – Accommodate growth in Onaero to enable rural lifestyle development in keeping with the community’s sense of place.
- OG2 – Make sure the infrastructure works are designed to take into account the sensitive coastal environment. This includes focusing recreational infrastructure in areas of high demand.
- OG3 – There is a particular desire by the community in this local community to protect and enhance the natural and cultural values of the Onaero River.
- OG4 – Provide and expand public access (including esplanade areas) in Onaero, taking into account the need to limit this access where it is necessary to protect natural and cultural sites.
- OG5 – Encourage wider appreciation of cultural heritage values within the coastal environment of Onaero.



7.3.3 Implementation for Onaero - what we aim to do

Actions for Onaero		Type	Lead (support)	Priority
OA1	Investigate the feasibility of an appropriate area for active marine-based recreation and support facilities on the landward area where this does not impact on the natural, cultural and social values of Onaero. - This information is then to be incorporated into the strategic planning for this area (including the coastal reserves management plan) to make sure the facilities are provided in the future.	C/P	NPDC	H
OA2	Plan for tourism and local recreation. - Work with other agencies to develop estimates and predictions of visitor numbers (including day trips) to Onaero. - Improve infrastructure, facilities and services in Onaero to provide for peak seasons - This is to include parking for cars and boat trailers, toilets and changing rooms at the south end, rubbish collection and weed eradication.	P	NPDC & Venture Taranaki	H
OA3	Develop specific guidelines for coastal infrastructure to encourage sensitive infrastructure design and location in Onaero. - This is to include power and telecommunications.	E	NPDC	M
OA4	Promote enforcement of existing bylaws in relation to managing activities in the coastal environment (e.g. dogs). - This should include looking at the feasibility of utilising community rangers/wardens.	P	NPDC	M
OA5	Prepare a coastal erosion management plan for Onaero. - This is to include investigating options for obtaining financial contributions from developers of new land within potential hazard areas to cover risk costs. - To include assessing the feasibility of rezoning any underdeveloped areas in the Onaero surrounds that are at a higher risk from coastal hazards. - To be consistent with district wide coastal erosion policy.	P	NPDC (TRC & local community)	M
OA6	Where there is agreement with Ngati Mutunga, promote opportunities to improve public knowledge of cultural heritage sites. - For example interpretation signs and heritage trails.	E	Ngati Mutunga & NDPC	L
OA7	Identify natural buffers requiring protection from development. - This is to include supporting voluntary methods for protection of the sand dunes from human and stock damage.	C/P	NPDC	M

Actions for Onaero		Type	Lead (support)	Priority
OA8	Identify opportunities for new passive recreation reserves and access (formal and informal). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop an action plan for expanding public access to the coast in Onaero through the Coastal Access Action Plan. - This should include options for the western end car park. 	P	NPDC	L
OA9	Work closely with the community to promote awareness and understanding of recent Treaty settlements and identify opportunities to build and strengthen relationships within the community.	C	Ngati Mutunga (NPDC)	O
OA10	Provide information to the community on the nature of water quality in the Onaero River. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To include recommendations on how to reduce pollutions levels. 	E/I	TRC	M



Onaero Beach

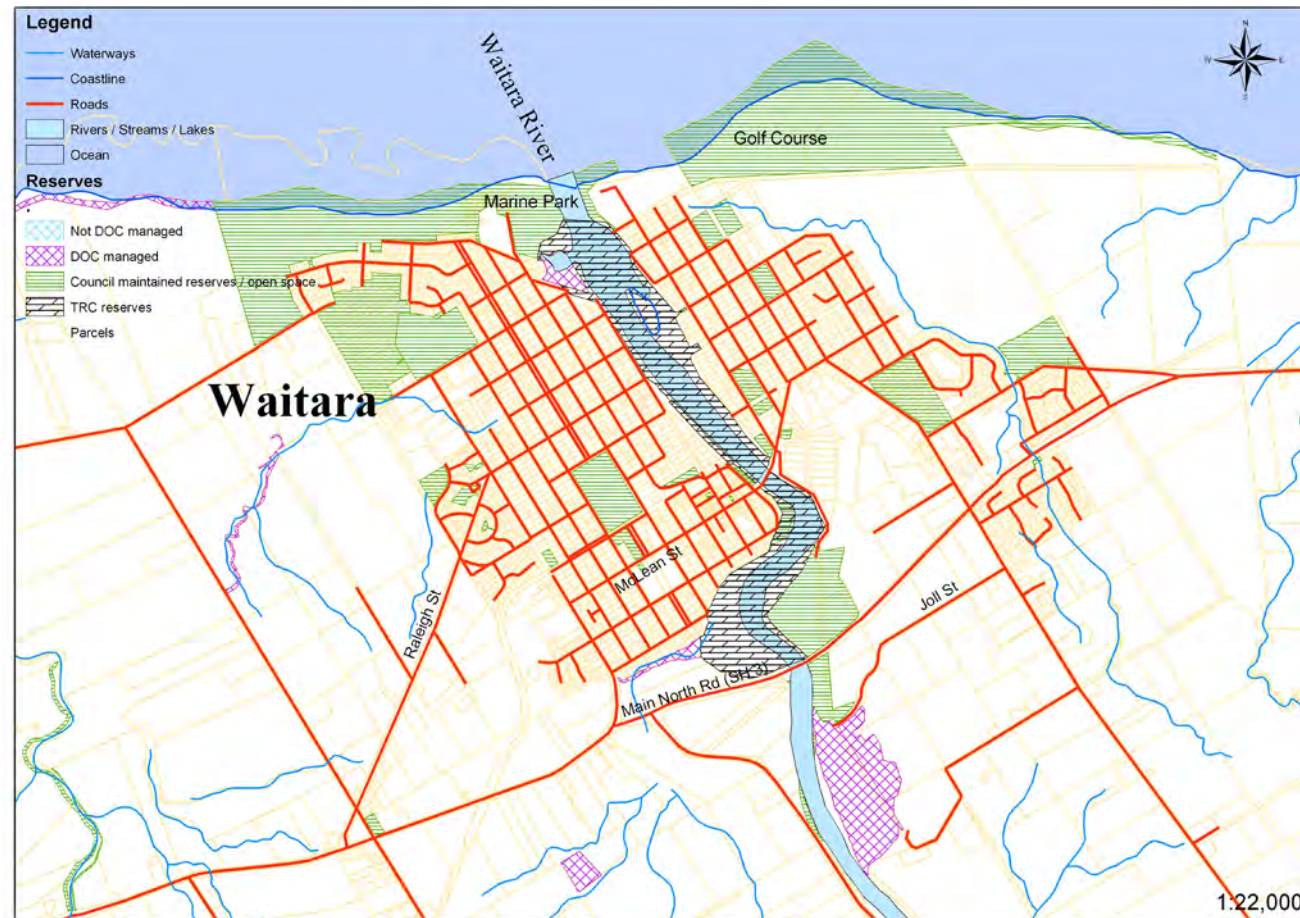


7.4 Waitara

Waitara is the largest coastal township in the district, outside of New Plymouth City, and is a community with a strong sense of identity that is related to its culture, history and natural environment. The township is divided by the Waitara River (Waitara West and Waitara East). Waitara West contains significant coastal reserves including Marine Park.

The Waitara local community is generally defined as the area seaward of State Highway 3, including the golf course to the east and the outer edges of the Waitara settlement to the west.

The significant heritage, cultural and environmental values of Waitara define the sense of place of the community. There are special heritage values that are important to the community in Waitara. The coast within Waitara is well known for its dominance of pohutukawa, which in the summer create a crimson coast effect. Waitara is characterised by the rhythm of the river and sea, by the naturalness of the coastal area and the 'lifestyle without the hustle of the city'.



Waitara vision

“...to be defined by the natural rhythm of river and sea, growing from its unique history, a people working together”

(Community Workshop Vision)

7.4.1 Challenges and opportunities facing Waitara

- There is demand for residential and economic growth in Waitara.
- The community would like to see improved opportunities for tourism but are concerned about the resultant impacts on social, natural and cultural values.
- The wetlands and lagoon in Waitara have important ecosystem values that have the potential to be affected by development.
- The downstream areas of the Waitara River are impacted from the use of land ‘upstream’. Particular impacts include erosion of river banks from planting of pines and rubbish from recreational use.
- There is concern over the depletion of kaimoana beds.
- There are important Māori and European heritage sites within Waitara that have the potential to be impacted by development and other uses.

7.4.2 Goals for Waitara - what we want to achieve

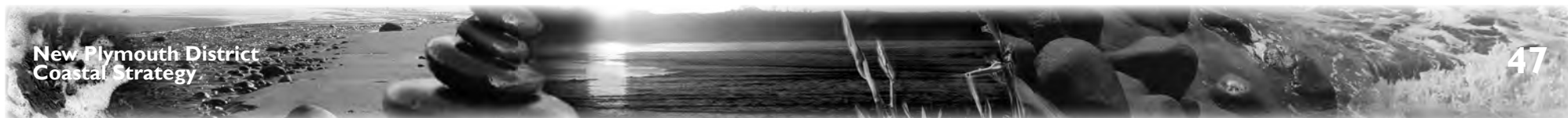
WG1 – Enable residential and economic growth balanced with natural, cultural and heritage values.

WG2 – Provide opportunities for the development of tourism and recreation in a manner that enhances the historical and environmental values of Waitara.

WG3 – Protect the natural character and ecological values of the Waitara wetlands and Waitara River by managing recreational use and promoting appropriate management.

WG4 – Promote knowledge and appreciation of the heritage and cultural values of the coastal environment of Waitara.

WG5 – Recognise the importance of the sea and kaimoana beds to tangata whenua in Waitara.



7.4.3 Implementation for Waitara - what we aim to do

Actions for Waitara		Type	Lead (support)	Priority
WAI	Work closely with the community to protect the natural and cultural values of the wetlands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is to include community-led ecological enhancement and restoration of the wetland areas, including funding sources. - This should include identifying areas appropriate for public access to, and use of, the wetlands and protect 'no go' areas. - In accordance with the Lower Waitara River Management Plan. 	C	NPDC & TRC <i>(local community & DOC)</i>	H
WA2	Establish community-led monitoring of ecological enhancement and restoration measures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This should include provision of educational material. 	C/E	NPDC <i>(local community)</i>	H
WA3	Explore options for an ecological walkway that builds on the Coastal Walkway and the heritage walkway around Waitara. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This needs to acknowledge and enhance the significant ecological sites around Waitara (including the plants and bird feeding/nesting areas). 	C/P	NPDC <i>(local community, DOC & TRC)</i>	M
WA4	Improve education/interpretation about public open space and coastal access points in Waitara.	E	NPDC	L
WA5	Promote opportunities to provide interpretation information on Māori and European coastal heritage in Waitara. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the community to identify special sites that can be promoted to the wider community to improve the knowledge and appreciation of heritage values. - To utilise the existing heritage walkway around Waitara. 	E/C	NPDC <i>(local community)</i>	L
WA6	Provide information to the community on the nature of water quality in the Waitara River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To include recommendations on how to reduce pollution levels. 	E/I	TRC	M
WA7	Advocate and support additional investigations into the impact of upstream land management on the Waitara River.	I	NPDC/TRC	M



Fishing at Waitara

