

Pouto Recreation Facility Improvements

Meeting: Kaipara District Council
Date of meeting: 14 December 2022
Reporting officer: Andy Brown, Asset Manager, Northland Transport Alliance

Purpose | Ngā whāinga

To seek approval for \$228,347 of District-wide Reserve Contributions funding that will contribute to costs related to Pouto recreation improvement projects.

Executive summary | Whakarāpopototanga

Kaipara District Councils roading department, the Northland Transportation Alliance (NTA), seek approval from Council for a contribution of \$228,347 from the District-wide Reserves Contribution Fund to support committed Recreational Amenity Improvements in Pouto that include carpark sealing, footpath connections to the Pouto wharf and extending the length of the wharf (currently under construction).

The increased budget is requested for amenity and safety reasons which were identified through community consultation during the wharf design, with pedestrian safety being a priority consideration.

The proposed increase in budget does not impact Ratepayers due to funding coming from council's Reserve Contribution fund. The project meets eligibility criteria to access the fund.

Recommendation | Ngā tūtohunga

That the Kaipara District Council:

- a) Approves funding of \$228,347 from the District-wide Reserve Contribution Fund to increase the budget for Pouto amenity improvements, supporting the set-up of the car park sealing, and pathway connection project, and extending the length of Pouto wharf to meet the pathway.

Context | Horopaki

Pouto has received significant investment from MBIE in recent years that includes funding towards sealing 10 kms of Pouto Road, the largest sealing project in Northland in 10 years, investigating the feasibility of a water transport network on the Kaipara harbour, and the resulting Pouto wharf under construction currently. In 2022 MBIE's Tourism Infrastructure Funding (TIF) of \$124,000 was confirmed to create amenity that supports the previous investments. The wharf and amenity projects have progressed this year and are due to be completed early in 2023. The NTA amenity project (carpark sealing and pathway connections) is working closely with the KDC project (Pouto wharf) to ensure a collaborative and seamless concept for the Pouto beach parking and access area.

Throughout engagement with the community it has been identified that safety is a top priority. Additional work has been undertaken by council to ensure safe access to the beach and wharf from the carpark. To complete this work in line with community expectation and ensuring a future proof solution additional funding is sought through Reserve Contributions.

To summarise the key areas that have created the need for funding:

1. Community engagement over the wharf project highlighted necessary safety and amenity improvement leading to the TIF funding application to support the anticipated increased use of the beach, wharf and carpark.

2. When applying for funding, detailed design is not always complete and this is true for Pouto - a concept design occurred post securing TIF funding which highlighted further opportunity and cost to achieve the safety objectives.
3. Increased costs across civil construction due to the challenging economic environment in 2022.
4. For the wharf to connect to the planned pathway the length of the wharf needs to be extended 5 metres. An extension is a simple exercise while the wharf is currently under construction provided a timely decision regarding funding.

The community have received information via council's typical media channels about the confirmed TIF funding from central government and are anticipating a sealed carpark and connective pathways.

The funding and budget increase is requested from councils District-wide Reserve Contribution fund. The project meets the eligibility criteria for this fund. Under the Reserve Contributions Policy funding can be used for –

- a) Land to be set aside and vested in Council for reserve or public open space purposes; or
- b) A cash contribution to Council for it to carry out works relating to developing or upgrading reserves or public open spaces in the district.
- c) Fencing
- d) Landscaping including grassing and tree planting
- e) Provision of play equipment and other recreational facilities (including tables/chairs); and
- f) Provision of footpaths and walking tracks.

Council has sufficient Reserve Contributions to complete the project this financial year.

Discussion | Ngā kōrerorero

In 2022 TIF funding was secured to make improvements that support increased visitors to Pouto beach and wharf and to realise the full recreational value at Pouto. This value proposition started with the Kaipara Kickstart Program investment that funded the sealing of Pouto road and followed with the construction of Pouto wharf underway currently.

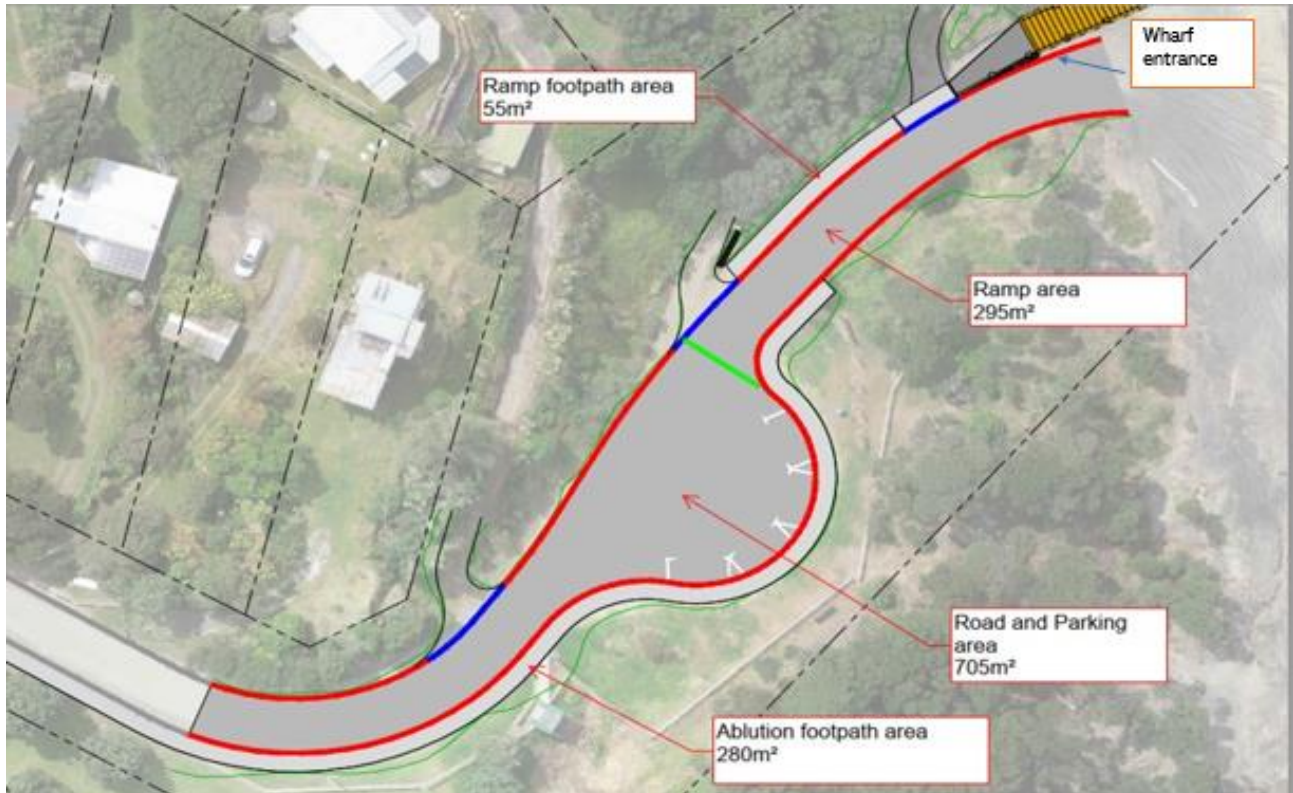
Through consultation with the community that started 3+ years ago and has more recently focused on the Pouto wharf design, the community have consistently been concerned about the current risk related to beach access that involves vehicles and pedestrians having to navigate one another through the limited beach access space, a lack of visibility around the curved entrance onto the beach, and vehicles approaching at speed to get traction through the sand.

Following the community discussion Council staff and NTA considered regulatory requirements for walking, cycling and safety for pedestrians for this area and options to achieve the outcome the community are seeking. A concept plan for the carpark was developed by a design engineer that seals the carpark, connects pedestrians safely to the beach and wharf while providing separation between pedestrians and vehicles to the extent possible. In combination with this the Pouto wharf project is improving the visibility on and off the beach through widening the beach entrance. The wharf is part of the picture and overall challenge as the entrance onto the abutment end of the wharf starts at the end of the beach entrance. See figure 1.

An updated engineer's estimate using current market rates has been developed along with a revision to the carpark sealing estimates considering cost escalations and the high inflation environment council is facing.

The proposal is to complete the carpark sealing and pathway connection project in March 2024 following completion of the wharf construction in March also. The Pouto location will become a key tourism destination and transition zone, particularly for cyclists travelling to Pouto from Helensville with Kaipara Cruises as it is currently. The numbers of cyclists and visitor are projected to increase as outlined in the Kaipara Kickstart and Wharves Programme Business Case.

Figure 1



Options

Option 1 – Council approve the budget requested – recommended.

Option 2 – Council decline the budget request – not recommended as this would result in the TIF funded carpark sealing work not commencing and council forfeiting \$124,000 of external funding.

Policy and planning implications

No implications with policy and planning as the request meets necessary requirements.

Financial implications

\$228,347 is provided from councils Reserve Contributions so there is no extra rates or loan funding required and no burden to the wider community. The balance of the District Reserve Financial Contributions was \$1.6m at June 2022. The project budget is provided in Attachment A.

If the additional Reserve Contribution funding is not approved, council could jeopardise the TIF funding agreement with MBIE which is contributing \$124,000 towards improvement costs.

Risks and mitigations

There are no significant risks other than the risk of not completing the works, and the communities worst fear being realised and an accident occurring at the beach access between pedestrian and vehicle. The mitigation is to widen the beach entrance improving visibility, and separate pedestrians from vehicles through the concept outlined in this report.

Impacts on Māori

Te Uri o Hau have been involved in the consultation of the wharf project which has led to the readjustment of scope the funding is being sought for.

Significance and engagement | Hirahira me ngā whakapāpā

This request does not trigger council's Significance and Engagement Policy.

Next steps | E whaiake nei

If approval is given to increase the project budget, the project will seek final endorsement from Te Uri o Hau and the community on the concept and will progress activities to support the agreed works.

Attachments | Ngā tapiritanga

	Supporting information
A	Project Concept Budget breakdown
B	Concept Design image
C	Reserve Contributions Policy