



Kaipara District Council

Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy

Discussion Paper

February 2020





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ADD LATER WHEN DRAFT COMPLETE



Executive summary

This Discussion Paper sets out the case for the development of an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy, to support a coordinated and holistic approach to developing the Kaipara District's visitor economy. The purpose of this document is to support engagement with partners and stakeholders so that a robust Strategy can be developed and implemented effectively.

Background

Northland's tourism industry generated \$592m in GDP in 2019, however only \$58m of this was captured by the Kaipara District (9.8%). There are significant opportunities to:

- disperse visitors, their spend, and visitor sector investment across Tai Tokerau, in particular west into Kaipara;
- improve seasonal spread of visitors beyond the summer high season;
- better manage the impact of the visitor industry on our environment; and
- support the development of high quality, uniquely-Kaipara visitor products and services

Developing an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy

The Ancient Kauri Trail journey map, developed by Northland Inc (in partnership with community), provides a frame for developing a coordinated and holistic strategy for developing Kaipara's visitor economy – an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy. The vision for this strategy is an enduring partnership between Kaipara District Council, Te Roroa, Te Uri o Hau, Ministry of Social Development, Northland Inc and *community* - enabling Kaipara's communities to participate in Northland's visitor industry and the benefits that tourism brings.

An Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy would consider:

- Place - Providing the right level of service to support visitor and community activities
- Journey - Creating sustainable and enjoyable travel options to and within the Ancient Kauri Coast
- People (Te Ara Mahi) - Creating employment and business opportunities for our community.

The development and implementation of the Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy is envisaged over the 10 year period of the next Long Term Plan. A significant proportion of the strategy will be delivered by the community with Council support. Funding sources are expected to include Tourism Infrastructure Fund, National Land Transport Fund as well as local share where appropriate. It is expected that some form of joint governance will be created to oversee the development and implementation.



1 Background

a) Regional context

In 2015 the Tai Tokerau Northland Regional Growth Study was completed, recognising opportunities for transformative economic growth in Northland. In 2016, in response to this study, the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan (TTNEAP) was developed, identifying priority actions contributing to the development of the region.

The Growth Study and the TTNEAP acknowledge Northland's visitor economy as a key sector for growth, and consider the following central to this growth:

- the creation of high quality, uniquely-Northland products and services;
- the extension of seasonal visitation; and
- the widening of visitor dispersal across the region (spreading high visitor concentration on the east coast both west and north).

In 2019, the Kaipara District held only a 9.8% share of Northland's visitor economy.

i. *Twin Coast Discovery Route*

The Twin Coast Touring Route (TCTR) was developed initially in 1993, connecting Auckland with Northland's east and west coast highways. In 2000, the Twin Coast Discovery Route (TCDR) development project was initiated, identifying the need to disperse visitors more evenly across the route (primarily away from the east and into the north and west, including into the Kaipara District).

Supported by the TTNEAP, the Twin Coast Discovery Route Programme Business Case was jointly developed by MBIE, NZTA, Northland Inc and Local Authorities in 2017. In 2018/19, Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) funding was secured to develop a number of critical Business Cases, several of which are relevant to Kaipara's Ancient Kauri Coast:

- Northland Integrated Cycle Implementation Plan – which includes the [add far north ones], Kaihu Valley Trail and Dargaville to Maungatoroto Heartland Ride
- SH12 Opononi Business Case
- SH12 Stopping Places
- Dargaville Township Improvement Plan
- Passing lanes?
- Rest areas?
- Wayfinding?

These business cases have now been approved by NZTA and it is the responsibility of the Local Authority, in partnership with NZTA, to develop the projects through design and into construction. The business cases may also prompt related initiatives led and potentially funded by community, iwi and hapu.



ii. Northland Byway Journeys

Supported by the TTNEAP, the Northland Byway Journeys initiative was developed by Northland Inc (in partnership with Tai Tokerau communities) to promote road 'journeys' along the Twin Coast Discovery Route, with the aim of dispersing visitors, and their spend, around the region. The Ancient Kauri Trail journey, released in 2017, is focused on the Kaipara District and promotes the history, attractions and other points of interest along the Ancient Kauri Coast. This journey is about experiencing the Kaipara's national environment, culture and way of life, and is an ideal framework on which to develop a visitor industry development strategy for the Ancient Kauri Coast.



iii. Provincial Growth Funding

Since the Ancient Kauri Trail journey map was released, several tourism product development initiatives located on the Ancient Kauri Coast have received investment from the PGF:

- Manea – Footprints of Kupe – a visitor experience in Opononi, expected to open in 2020.
- Rakau Rangatira – a DoC/Te Roroa initiative to enhance the visitor experience at Waipoua Forest. This includes PGF funding for roading improvements provided as part of the Kaipara Kickstart PGF
- Kaipara Wharves – the reconstruction of the wharf in Dargaville will be completed in 2020 and will be followed by a number of additional wharfs and associated improvements around the Kaipara following PGF funding.

b) National context

In 2019 the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) released the New Zealand-Aotearoa Government Tourism Strategy, setting out a more deliberate and active role for government in tourism and ensuring that:

- Tourism supports thriving and sustainable regions
- Tourism sector productivity improves
- New-Zealand Aotearoa delivers exceptional visitor experiences
- Tourism protects, restores and champions New Zealand Aotearoa's natural environment, culture and historic heritage
- New Zealanders' lives are improved by tourism.

In early 2020, MBIE released New Zealand Destination Management Guidelines, providing information and a framework for managing New Zealand's visitor destinations to ensure sustainable growth of and support for New Zealand's visitor industry.



c) The Ancient Kauri Coast opportunity

Using the Ancient Kauri Trail journey map as a frame for development, Kaipara District Council has a significant opportunity to partner with iwi, hapu, communities and other stakeholders to generate a strategy for development/management of and investment into Kaipara's visitor industry. This strategy could leverage off existing tourism product development initiatives and incorporate a holistic approach to destination management, aligned with regional and national priorities for growth of the visitor economy.



2 Why we need an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy

a) The Strategic Case

Visitors are our number one industry in New Zealand and in Te Tai Tokerau account for \$592m of our GDP. As mentioned earlier, a key regional strategic priority is to tilt Northland's visitor economy east and west – in terms of both visitation and investment. Only 9.8% of the region's visitor economy, xx% of visitor nights and xx% of visitor spend is derived from the Kaipara. Given that the west coast includes communities with some of the region's lowest social-economic conditions, the opportunity to participate in the benefit of tourism is significant.

The Ancient Kauri Coast also contains some of Northland's most spectacular native bush, kauri forests and coastal environments. Among other challenges, the risk of kauri dieback presents an additional need to manage visitors well and balance growth with our expectations of kaitiaki.

In order to capture great visitor numbers on the west coast, benefit from increased visitor spend, and retain environmental management, a coordinated and holistic approach to developing and promoting the Ancient Kauri Coast as a visitor destination is required – an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy.

[Speak to Snow regarding a paragraph on cultural significance and opportunity]

b) Vision

A key factor of success in developing an Ancient Kauri Coast strategy will be to align key partners and stakeholders around a common mission and development objectives - these will need to be workshopped to ensure agreement and support.

Our suggested vision for the development of an Ancient Kauri Coast strategy is to 'support sustainable visitor growth which creates wealth for our communities, protects our environment and way of life, whilst providing an inspiring cultural and natural experience'.

The vision is unique to the Ancient Kauri Coast. It is not about attracting the most number of visitors that we can. It is not about making the most money or profit. It is about inclusive growth and setting a balance.

Commented [AP-NI1]: Perhaps replace with prosperity?

c) Expected benefits of developing an Ancient Kauri Coast Strategy

It is suggested that benefits would be developed through an Investment Logic Map session as part of establishing the Strategy.

Our early thinking on expected benefits has suggested the Strategy, once implemented, would support:

- Increased visitor spend
- Reduced environmental impact
- Creating new businesses



- Increased capability and capacity in the District
- Outstanding visitor and resident experience, matched to community aspirations

d) Success Factors

Without a joint strategy, there is the potential for adhoc investment in the district which results in competing tourism opportunities, without the supporting infrastructure which does not create positive transformation for our community.

Conversely, establishing a joint Strategy for the AKC would be expected to

- Build community trust in tourism with investment resulting in visible benefits
- Create an efficient and effective delivery framework to optimise investment
- Make best use of resource in the region to create tourism products and build futures

Commented [AP-NI2]: Increased length of stay?
Sustain and grow local businesses and services?
Strengthen communities
Create jobs
Celebration of local cultures and stories

Commented [AP-NI3]: Reflect community aspirations
and environmental aspirations



3 The Ancient Kauri Coast Structure

The suggested structure of the AKC is around three pou -

a) People

Building capability and capacity in the region is critical to the success of the strategy. This can be considered in terms of building infrastructure as well as within tourism as business owners, operators or employees.

Te Ara Mahi Kaipara has been established by MSD and its stakeholders. The role of this group is create the connections between its people, training and employment providers.

Innovative delivery models are being considered. For example, it has been suggested that the Kaihu Valley Trail be delivered through a partnership model between a Cycle Trust, MSD and KDC. This would see workers directly employed and trained in areas such as fencing, planting and general construction.

The opportunities for new businesses in the area should be supported. An AKC Hub would be one way of connecting potential business owners with the right advice and support to develop.

b) Journey

A significant part of the investment in the AKC will be in the infrastructure to transport people into and within the corridor. It is envisaged that there will be a strong focus on alternative transport modes. This both supports the kaupapa of a reduced environmental footprint, as well as creating a unique visitor experience which takes the stress out of driving.

- Water based transport will make use of our most valuable asset, the Kaipara Harbour. There will be wharfs at key locations with connections to passenger transport and cycle hire.
- Off road cycle trails from Opononi to Dargaville (through the Kaihu Valley) and ultimately from Dargaville to Mangawhai, provide an experience in themselves as well as an alternative means of travelling through the corridor.
- Locally provided tours are seen as a vital part of the journey. Already examples exist with journeys on the railway via carts, Marae excursions etc
- Longer term, the potential for rail exists with stations at Kaiwaka, Maungatoroto and Dargaville.

c) Place

The Strategy focuses on supporting existing communities, growing their offering and providing the necessary supporting infrastructure.

- A broader mix of accommodation is required, particularly with an increased number of cycle visitors
- Marae accommodation and tourism opportunities are already being developed and will be better supported through a joined up approach
- Co-ordination of tourism product can be achieved through place based collaboration and greater confidence with regards timing of infrastructure investment

The development of the Dargaville Township Improvement Plan is important as it puts in place the infrastructure to support a central hub for accommodation and support services to the whole AKC. Infrastructure at other stopping places – including wharfs – will be required to take care of community and visitor needs.



4 Implementation Structure

a) Governance and co-ordination

It is expected that an overarching governance structure will be established to ensure that the benefits of the strategy are realised. This is likely to include

- Iwi – Te Roroa and Te Uri O Hau
- Council – KDC and FNDC
- Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
- Department of Conservation (DoC)
- Northland Inc

Co-ordination of efforts and collaboration across different groups will be required. The model to be adopted will be determined through the development of the strategy. It is likely to include the Governance representatives as well as

- MBIE
- NZTA
- Bike Kaipara / Bike Northland

b) Engagement

Building trust with the community will be a critical element of the Strategy. It is important that an understanding of the big picture is shared, the opportunity for the community understood and the concerns of landowners and other affected parties appreciated.

c) Funding

The financial model for the Strategy needs to be developed. There is an opportunity to develop a system which recognises visitor spend – operations & maintenance – community improvements.

The establishment of infrastructure to support the AKC will come from a number of sources, e.g.

- National Land Transport Fund
- Tourism Innovation Fund
- Regional Infrastructure Fund
- Long Term Plan

Trust led development and delivery of aspects of the strategy will also allow for alternative funding sources to be explored.

Commented [AP-NI4]: Led by a Trust or led with trust between parties?

d) Timeframes

Development and Implementation of the AKC Strategy is illustrated below

20/21	21 to 24	24 to 27	
			Confirm Strategy Long Term Plan Engagement
			Design and consenting Phase 1 projects
			Phase 2 projects



Next steps

Engagement with all partners and stakeholders will be undertaken to explore the strategy. Key questions are

- Does your organisation support the strategy? Willing to sign up as a partner/stakeholder?
- What risks does the strategy need to recognise?
- What refinement to the vision, benefits, structure and implementation should be considered?

All Councils are currently developing their Long Term Plans. Draft LTPs are expected to be completed by mid 2020 and these will be finalised by May 2021. Therefore this year is critical in terms of planning and agreement on funding/investment priorities.

Engagement with the community as early as possible is critical to build trust. There are projects within the Strategy that may be of concern to land owners and other affected parties. Early engagement with those parties could reduce anxiety in the community and help foster a positive environment for the future.