

# Waikawa Beach Vehicle Access Study

Council Workshop  
6. September 2023



**Horowhenua**  
2040 Vision



# Purpose

- Update Council on engagement process to date.
- Discuss Technical options available to Council.
- Seek guidance from Council on the formal consultation process.
- Seek guidance from Council on additional information requirements ahead of returning with recommended option.

# History Waikawa Beach access

- Historically beach access provided over private land
- Horowhenua District Council previously held the resource consent for the river cut prior to 2010
- During 2000 – 2009 two river cuts initiated by Horowhenua District Council
- March 2010 Renewal of resource consent
- 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010 transfer of resource consent to Horizon (Expiry date 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020)
- 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018 last river cut (done by Horizon paid by Horowhenua District Council)
- 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021 vehicle access washed out
- 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021 submission of petition signed by 158 requesting establishment of new vehicle access over public land @ Reay MacKay Grove
- Horowhenua District Council approved funding for identification and establishment of new vehicle access at Waikawa Beach
- March 2023 start consultation new vehicle access



# Project Progress Update

## Project Timeline



# Access Options

## Key Options:



### Stop Vehicle Access

- Limited to pedestrian and equestrian use only
- Vehicle access closure off Manga Pirau Street
- 'Low impact' option & may improve ecological values
- Would hinder access to beach for recreational and mahingakai activities
- Alternative vehicle access would be Otaki Beach



### Keep Current Access

- Retain existing access and 'Status quo'
- Requires negotiation with landowners to continue public access, manage risk & allow for maintenance
- Antisocial behaviour & property damage could result in access closure
- Access-way vulnerable to erosion and channel movement - community would need to accept access-way is not permanent



### Invest in New Access

- Five (5) possible access locations have been identified
- Included is the upgrade of the existing access-way (Location 3)
- Locations 1, 2, 4 & 5 utilise existing Council owned land
- All locations come with social, financial, planning, ecological and erosion constraints



# Investigations of New or Existing Accesses

- Four possible new locations identified based on Council owned access parcels.
- Review of planning requirements (Regional Plan, District Plan, NZ Coastal Policy Statement and National Environmental Standard for Freshwater Management (“NES-FW”).
- Technical studies of ecological and geomorphological risks have been completed
- High level cost estimate for the establishment of such new vehicle access have been initiated
- Initial discussions with adjacent residents, community representatives, HRC, and DOC Completed.
- Ongoing discussions with Ngāti Wehiwehi and local landowners



# Location 1 – Waikawa Stream Pedestrian Bridge



Well connected to the main access to Waikawa and parking and amenities of Hank Edwards Reserve



Separation from residential properties will reduce potential adverse effects of a new vehicle access at this location.



Existing pedestrian bridge is already identified for replacement. This program is dependant on a decision around the beach access.



Existing bridge would need to be rebuilt to accommodate vehicles – estimated at \$2M cost.



Significant earthworks needed to cross dunes through pine and macrocarpa planting



Large area of wetlands and naturally rare dune ecosystems communities. It is unlikely that disturbance of these areas would be able to be consented.



Introduces vehicles into an area that is currently largely protected from vehicles.



Ownership of the parcel would need confirming. If private ownership this may be another barrier.



Land parcel alignment faces prevailing wind. Potential access prone to wind erosion and dune blowouts.



# Location 2 – Manga Pirau Street - North



Well connected to the Waikawa Beach village.



Alignment passes through relatively low ecological sensitivity area and will have less consenting risk.



Allows access infrastructure and assets to be located on Council land.



Could incorporate some bank armouring to provide additional erosion protection to adjacent properties.



Significant erosion risk from both ocean and Waikawa stream floods could lead to increased frequency of access closure and ongoing maintenance costs.



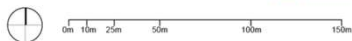
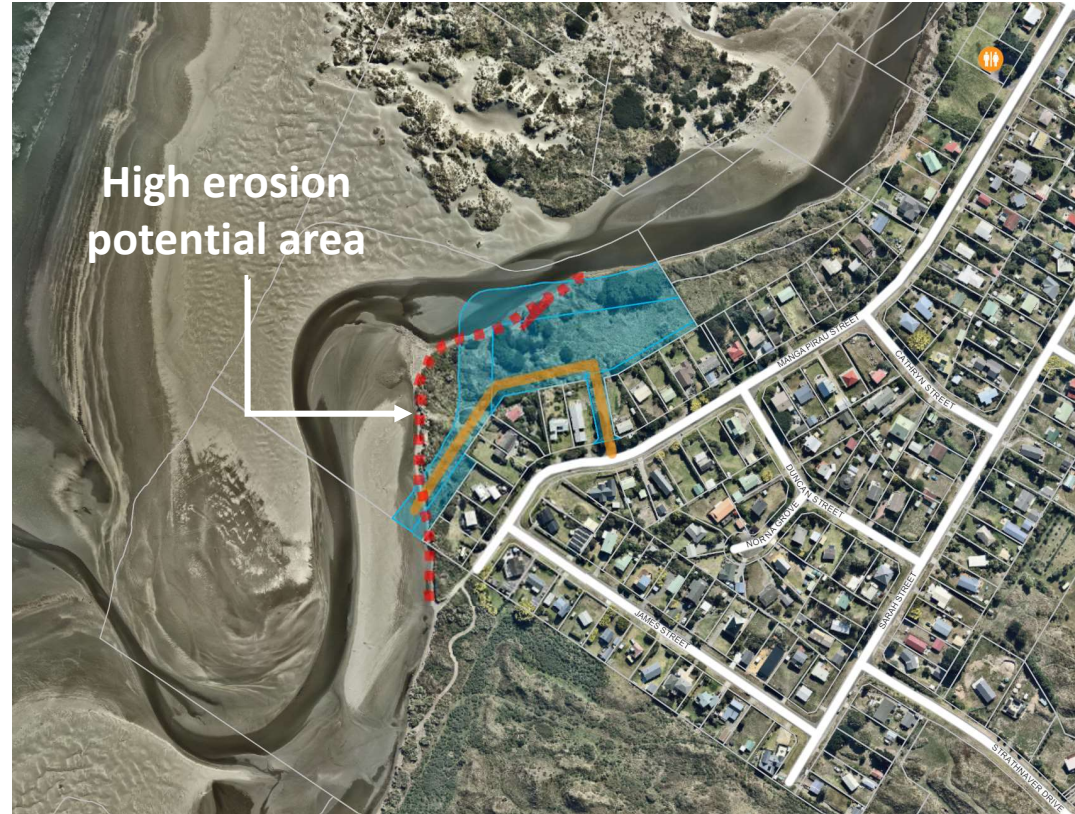
Disruption to residents' enjoyment of the existing park and impacts of vehicles passing directly to the north of 8 properties.



Higher ground elevation will require a longer ramp and increased earthworks to get down to the foreshore area.







Erosion prevention works (channel cutting, hard engineering solutions) present significant consenting and cost challenges





# Location 3 – Existing Manga Pirau Street Access

-  Low ecological constraints and ability to use existing formed access.
-  Well connected to the Waikawa Beach village
-  Existing social license for this access option - no additional disturbance to existing residents.
-  Low consenting risk for landbased works

-  Located on private property, requires agreement with landowners to allow continued public access, council maintenance, and management of safety and liability risk.
-  Poor behaviour by some members of the public could jeopardise ongoing use of the access.
-  Erosion through this area is going to be an ongoing issue and the stream channel forming against the bank will also obstruct access.
-  Requires acceptance of periodic access closure or investment in 'river training' works to direct the channel seaward. River training involves high consent risk and ongoing costs



## Location 2 & 3 - including River Training

Based on previous studies by Tonkin Taylor in 2019 there are several options for protecting the foreshore and encouraging the river channel seaward. These would include a combination of the following:

- a. *Channel Cut – periodic excavation of a channel to direct the stream away from the foreshore. Previous consent lapsed in 2020.*
- b. *Stone Groynes to push channel away from foreshore – historically there were groynes installed at two locations near the option 2 and 3 locations.*
- c. *Rock revetment to protect shoreline*
- d. *Dune reconstruction and planting with native vegetation.*



## Location 4 – 10 Reay MacKay Grove



Far enough south to avoid the worst of the erosion effects from Waikawa stream.



Access alignment would be within council and crown owned land parcels.



Adequate room to construct the access and select an alignment to reduce ecological and erosion risk potential.



While this lot is subject to the Reserves Act and Reserve Management – Recreation Reserve Purposes, this does not preclude vehicle access.



Will still be vulnerable to disturbance due to erosion and debris deposited by extreme weather events.



Long route through this highly mobile dune environment will be costly and physically challenging to build and maintain access



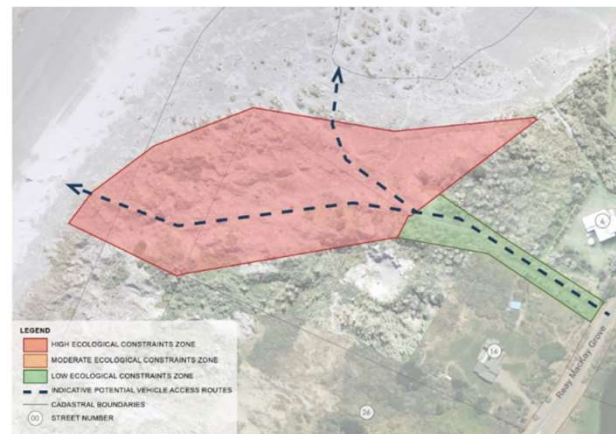
Rare plants and habitats (High ecological constraint) increases consenting risk and could disturb some areas of past community dune restoration planting projects.



Long route to reach the access from Waikawa Beach Village. Increased traffic through Strathnaver community. Demand for parking along Reay MacKay Grove.



Residents concerned about the disturbance of the ecological values in the currently pedestrian only area of the dunes.



# Location 5 – 60 Reay MacKay Grove



Access alignment would be within council or crown owned land parcels.



Located far enough south to currently avoid the erosion effects of the Waikawa stream.



Relatively short access with restricted footprint of disturbance.



Lot is subject to the Reserves Act and Reserve Management – Recreation Reserve Purposes, this does not preclude vehicle access.



Crosses through moderate to high ecological constraint zones increasing consenting risk.



Narrow parcel limits options to avoid steep or unstable areas and safely accommodate vehicles and pedestrians. May require retaining and erosion control structures.



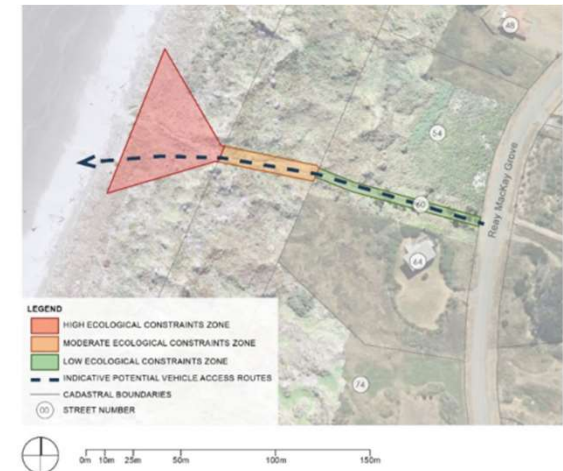
Access is a long circuitous route from Waikawa Beach Village. Resulting effects of increased traffic through Strathnaver community and demand for parking along Reay MacKay Grove.



Concerns from Reay MacKay Grove residents on the impacts of increased traffic, noise and disturbance on the ecological values of this pedestrian only area.



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# Planning Constraints Summary

Resource consents would be required for earthworks within the foredunes, removal of any indigenous vegetation, construction of structures (such as erosion protection), and works within the Waikawa River or a natural wetland.

The planning documents guide how effects will be managed and provide direction to:

- *Protect rare and threatened indigenous biodiversity*
- *Maintain the public access for all people to the beach*
- *Maintain the natural character of the coastal setting, and*
- *If erosion protection is required to give preference to 'soft' protection rather than hard structures (groins/seawalls).*
- *Protect river values*
- *Protect sites of cultural significance*

Location 1 **Very High Consent Risk**

Location 2 **Medium Consent Risk**

Location 2 (+ river training) **High Consent Risk**

Location 3 **Low Consent Risk**

Location 3 (+ river training) **High Consent Risk**

Location 4 **Medium Consent Risk**

Location 5 **High Consent Risk**



# Ecological Constraints Summary

Ecological constraints based on the following components:

- *The distribution and quality of native vegetation communities on active and stable dunes,*
- *Presence of ‘at risk’ plant species,*
- *Presence of wetlands habitats,*
- *Overall area of potential disturbance to form the access,*
- *Current level of disturbance from vehicles.*



From an ecological perspective **Location 3** the existing access at Manga Pirau Street – was the preferred option with **Location 2** to the north having the next least constraints.

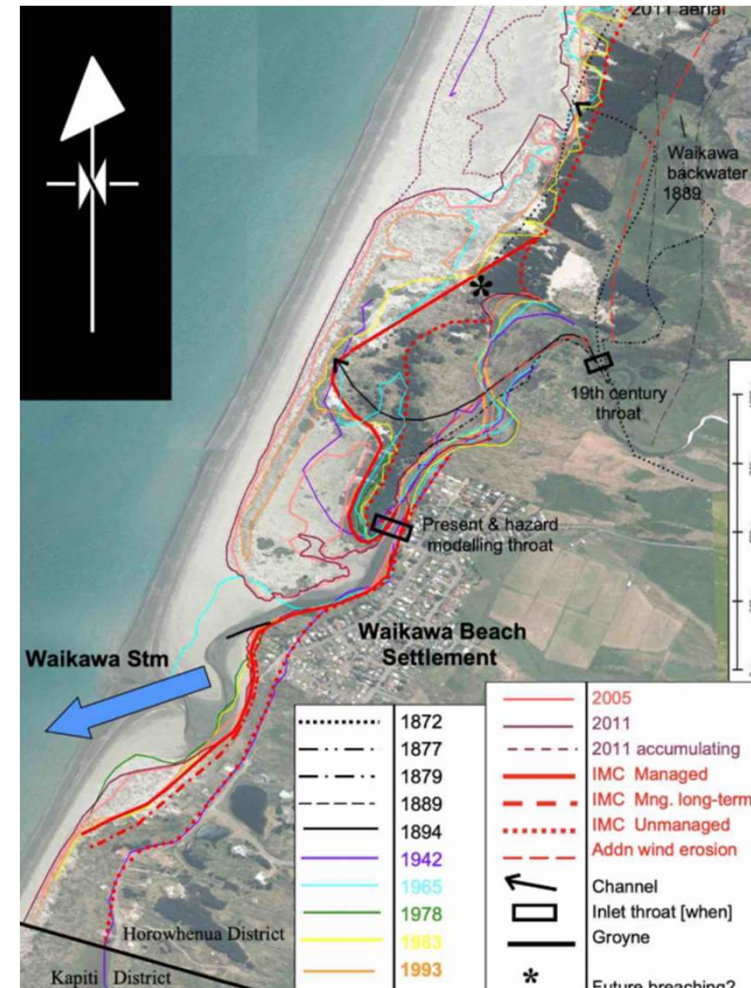
*Note: if channel cutting or rock groyne works are included at locations 2 or 3 additional assessment of effects on birds, sand and mudflats habitats will be required and may change the constraints rating.*

	Level of vehicle disturbance	At Risk taxa present	Indigenous active fore dune	Wetlands present	Indigenous dominated stable dune land	High land area	TOTAL (Max of 6.0)
<b>Location 1 (0.67ha)</b>	0.5	1	0.5	1	0	1	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Location 2 (0.25ha)</b>	0	0.5	0.25	0	0.25	0.25	1.25
<b>Location 3 (0.46ha)</b>	0	0	0.1	0	0	0.1	0.2
<b>Location 4 (0.46ha)</b>	0	1	1	0	0	0.5	2.5
<b>Location 5 (0.13ha)</b>	0	0.5	0.5	0	1	0.75	2.75

# Geomorphology Constraints Summary

The Waikawa Stream is a highly mobile waterway that has historically migrated up and down the coast but is now partly constrained by pine plantations and built development.

- **Location 1** has longest route and a narrow parcel width limiting options to avoid wet or poor ground. The alignment will be very vulnerable to wind erosion.
- **Location 2** has high vulnerability to erosion from both waves and floods. Maintaining a safe and resilient access will likely require ongoing channel cuts and shoreline protection works.
- **Location 3** will also be subject to ongoing erosion and users will need to accept periodic closure or invest in ongoing channel cuts and shoreline protection works to divert the channel seaward.
- **Location 4** is within highly mobile dune system and wind and traffic caused erosion will be the major constraint. Will require significant stabilisation works and adaptability to changing dune forms
- **Location 5** has lowest geomorphology constraints with a stable back dune area and shorter length. The west end will be vulnerable to storm driven wave damage.



# Installation Estimates Comparison

- Ranking based on preliminary high level construction cost estimates derived from approximate area take-offs. More detailed design of grading and engineering will be required to provide more accurate pricing.
- **Does not account for ongoing maintenance and operations costs**
- Hard engineering costs allowances based on Tonkin Taylor 2019 report (needs review)

Location	Est. Cost Ranking
Location 1 – including new vehicle bridge (est \$3-4mil)	<b>6 – Most Expensive</b>
Location 2a– including river cut, new groynes above and below, river cut, and dune restoration	5
Location 2 – no groynes, river cut, or extensive dune restoration	works only with river training
Location 3a – including river cut, new groynes above and below, river cut, and dune restoration	4
Location 3 – no groynes, river cut, or extensive dune restoration	<b>1 – Least Expensive</b>
Location 4 – including new toilet facility	3
Location 5 – including new toilet facility	2



# Feedback – Hapu Partners

Discussion is on-going with Ngāti Wehiwehi. Any resource consent process will require formal review with hapu partners as part of the consent application. Initial feedback includes:

- Vehicle access in general not supported due to effects of kiamoana (eg pipi and tuatua beds), increased erosion, and safety of other users.
- River training to influence the channel of Waikawa Stream not supported.
- Potentially some locations of high cultural value in area particularly along sheltered sides of dunes (still being discussed).
- Concern over landowner liability of allowing public access via the existing Manga Pirau entry & unacceptable behaviours by some access users towards landowners when access is closed due to erosion or channel location.
- Unauthorised cutting of new track over private land from Manga Pirau Street access not acceptable.
- Future of existing access over private land still being discussed by landowner group (this is a separate matter from general iwi engagement process.)



# Initial feedback Selected Residents and Community Representatives

- The beach access matter is highly controversial within the community. Any decision will be closely scrutinised.
- Several parties requested Council progress with a general beach bylaw to regulate beach access (as done in KCDC).
- General concern about further enabling vehicle access to beach area due to environmental and safety concerns including damage and disturbance of bird life and dune vegetation.
- Suggestion to keep using existing access but establishing backup access for temporary use at location 4 or 5 when the existing access is closed.
- Antisocial behaviour noted with groups occasionally congregating in the beach area racing and off-roading on the beach and into the dunes.
- Very strong opposition from residents to public vehicle access off Reay Mackay Grove (locations 4 & 5). Issues cited include:
  - Increased risk of erosion and sea intrusion.
  - Disruption of the special landscape character of the area.
  - Ecological disturbance of dunes and wildlife.
  - Loss of privacy & increased traffic through what is a quiet neighbourhood currently.
  - Noise, rubbish and antisocial behaviours.
  - Lack of suitable additional rubbish and toilet facilities.
  - Inequity of Council establishing a new beach access when all private landowners are legally prohibited from forming vehicle access.



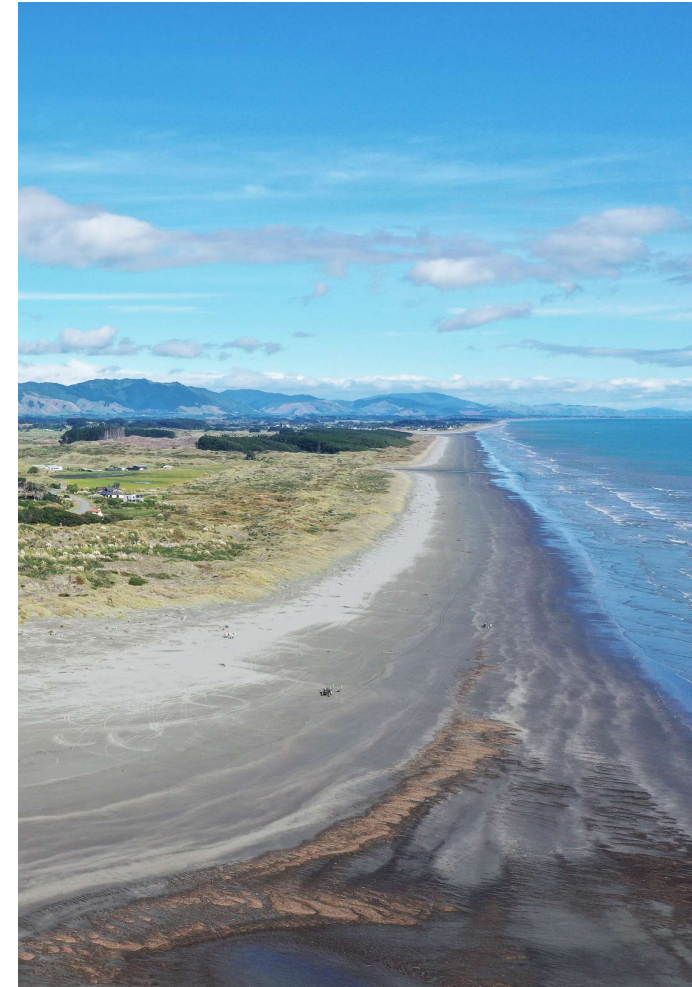
# Initial Feedback – Department of Conservation

- Waikawa Beach is one of the highest value estuary ecosystems in lower north island with high potential for further restoration.
- River cutting would only provide temporary effect, will not necessarily provide protection from storm surge erosion and likely cut through and damage the DOC managed Conservation Area.
- Location 1 is not considered appropriate due to crossing a significant wetland recommended for protection (RAP) area.
- Location 2 alignment still has some rare habitat types.
- Location 4 and 5 are not supported due to indigenous dominated habitats on the active and stable dunes areas.
- Location 3 is preferred option but note vehicle traffic from here does conflict with the important bird feeding area. Further assessment of effects on sandflats, mudflats and migratory birds is required.
- Controlled gated access supported if antisocial or destructive vehicle use becomes an issue.
- Future managed retreat options should be considered.



# Initial Feedback – Horizon Regional Council

- Location 1 presents highest consenting risk due to crossing of wetland and dune habitats likely to trigger a ‘prohibited activity status’.
- Location 4 & 5 were also seen as high risk due to disturbance of rare indigenous habitat in the dunes. Narrow width of location 5 access parcel (5m) would be problematic as it limits ability to avoid high habitat value areas.
- Location 2 and 3 seen as lower risk due to lower terrestrial habitat values however further assessment of aquatic and avifauna values needed if river training or rock protection is proposed as part of an application.
- All locations pose some consenting risk. This may mean that there is a trade-off to be made between the terrestrial habitat (rare foredune vegetation) and the aquatic habitat (river values).
- Based on the information currently available, Horizons preference (from a consenting perspective) would be for locations 2 and 3, subject to further understanding on the potential river cut and aquatic values.



## General Constraints - Practicality

General summary of overall practicality risk of each option not captured in other technical assessments. This relatively ranks how challenging or risky it will be to consent, construct and maintain the options

Location	Issues	Risk Ranking
Location 1	High cost, Lots of variables and risks due to consenting (maybe prohibited), high maintenance cost, uncertainty on land ownership	5 – highest risk
Location 2	High risk of erosion and washouts leaving no access to beach unless costly engineering works are undertaken. Potentially strong opposition of adjacent residents. Location 2 works only with river training.	2
Location 3	Lowest impact to environment as already established, ongoing maintenance cost – requires education to residents to accept closure periodically unless costly engineering works are undertaken. Generally most acceptable to community.	1- lowest risk
Location 4	High maintenance cost due to length and complexity of forming access way over mobile dunes, significant ecological and consenting risks, Strong opposition by residents of Reay Mackay Grove.	4
Location 5	High construction costs and moderate maintenance to form vehicle access in narrow parcel. Safety challenges to manage pedestrians and vehicles sharing the limited space. Strong opposition by residents of Reay MacKay Grove.	3

# Access Locations - Constraints Summary

	1 – Waikawa Stream Pedestrian Bridge	2- Manga Purau North	3 – Existing Manga Pirau Street Access	4 – 10 Reay MacKay Grove	5 – 60 Reay Grove MacKay
Ecological	Very High ecological constraints. Access would disturb high value wetland and dune habitats	Low terrestrial constraints if land based improvements only – limited areas of moderate value habitat.	Lowest terrestrial constraints if land based improvements only – no additional disturbance.	Moderate to high ecological constraints though there is room to place alignment to avoid highest value habitat	Moderate to high ecological constraints though there is room to place alignment to avoid highest value habitat
		Med-High constraints including channel cutting and/or rockwork due to effects on aquatic and estuary habitat	Med-High constraints on including channel cutting and/or rockwork due to effects on aquatic and estuary habitat		
Geomorphology	Med-high constraint - difficult to manage wind erosion risk due to parcel alignment. Difficult to avoid poor ground conditions due to narrow parcel	High constraint due to ongoing erosion risk from steam and storm surges.	High constraint due to ongoing erosion risk from steam and storm surges.	Med constraint due to highly mobile dunes making establishment of a fixed access difficult	Med-low constraint as more stable due system and shorter distance to cross. Narrow width would make it difficult to avoid poor ground.
Planning	Very high risk – wetland disturbance would likely trigger prohibited activity status.	Medium risk if land based improvements only	Low risk if land based improvements only	Medium consent risk due to alignment crossing high ecological constraints area.	High consent risk due to narrow corridor width making it difficult to avoid disturbance to high value habitat
		High risk if includes channel cutting and/or rockwork	High risk if includes channel cutting and/or rockwork		
Indicative Initial Costs	Most expensive option due to requirement for new vehicle bridge crossing over Waikawa.	Low cost if land based improvements only	Lowest cost if land-based improvements only	Moderate – high costs to form access through active dunes and including new toilet facility	Moderate – high costs due to narrow width and need for new toilet facility
		Medium cost due to river training	Medium cost due to river training		
Practicality	High risk – likely not practical given construction and consenting challenges	Moderate risk given erosion issues and potential residents opposition	Lowest risk if land-based improvements only	Moderate - high risk given challenges crossing dunes and confirmed resident opposition	Moderate – high risk given narrow width related issues and confirmed resident opposition

## Options to proceed

Option A	No vehicle access over public land
Option B	Utilization location 3 (existing vehicle access) with lease agreement and provision of maintenance budget, requires community to accept temporary wash outs
Option C 1	Utilization location 3 and river training
Option C 2	Utilization location 2 and river training
Option C 3	Utilization location 4
Option C 4	Utilization location 5
Option C 5	Utilization location 1

# Next Steps....

- Gather additional information on the various options (if required);
- Continue developing proposals as required including the potential to formalize the current access (Option 3);
- Review whether further consultation is required;
- Summarize feedback from engagement process and report back to Council for final decision in October.