



BAY OF PLENTY
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy
2012 GAP Analysis – Proposed Harbour Access
Strategy**

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2012 GAP Analysis – Proposed Harbour Access Strategy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to undertake a GAP Analysis of the proposed Access Strategy for the Tauranga Harbour.

A GAP Analysis critically examines current performance or service delivery against a desired or future outcome, which in this case is any deliverables which may eventuate from the proposed Access Strategy.

In developing the methodology for this project, it was decided to focus on the identified Action Points which formed the scope of the proposed Access Strategy.

1.2 WHY IS A GAP ANALYSIS REQUIRED?

The decision to prepare an Access Strategy for Tauranga Harbour was formally adopted as part of the Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2008. Although the proposed Access Strategy was to commence in the 2008/09 year, funding was not provided and as other priorities arose, the proposed Access Strategy was not advanced. The need to consider harbour management and access issues was addressed through the formation of the Southern and Northern harbour Forums and also the Regional Council created a new position of Tauranga Harbour Programme Coordinator.

In recent times, staff at both the Regional Council and the two local councils (Tauranga City Council (TCC) and Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC)) have raised questions about the need and value in completing the proposed Access Strategy. In addition, the ability to fund development of an Access Strategy and implementation of any recommendations has become an increasingly difficult issue as each council is rationalising its expenditure.

2.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

The *2004-2014 Long Term Council Community Plan (LTTCP)* prepared by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council contained the following action point;

*This year (2004-05) we will:..
Prepare a Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Scoping Report.*

The *LTTCP* was the catalyst for investigation and research into the management of Tauranga Harbour which was also supported from other community consultation initiatives such as Tauranga Tomorrow and SmartGrowth. These projects also identified harbour issues as a key matter of community interest.

2.1 TAURANGA HARBOUR INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (2006)

The *Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Strategy (Harbour Management Strategy)* was published in September 2006. The *Harbour Management Strategy* was prepared by the Regional Council with input and assistance from Western Bay of Plenty District Council (WBOPDC) and Tauranga City Council (TCC).

Preparation of the *Harbour Management Strategy* also involved a number of key stakeholders such as Fish and Game NZ, Port of Tauranga, SmartGrowth, Iwi Combined Forum, Department of Conservation (DOC) and a public submission process which attracted 73 submissions.

The *Harbour Management Strategy* provides a comprehensive overview of the management of Tauranga Harbour and issues identified for further investigation. The issues discussed in the report are;

- Water Quality
- Flora and Fauna
- Sedimentation
- Natural Character/landscape
- Recreation/Access, and
- Miscellaneous and Institutional Matters.

In terms of recreation/access, the *Harbour Management Strategy* identified community concerns regarding the increasing conflict between Port of Tauranga activities and recreational activities. The report provided summary data of daily recreational boat launches, mooring and boat ramps facilities and the statutory framework for recreational activities.

The recommendations contained within the *Harbour Management Strategy* for recreation/access included:

- Review of the coastal and district plan policies to provide for the Tauranga Harbour as a recreational harbour with a recreational fishing resource, and
- Carry out monitoring and develop a recreation strategy that integrates planning across the various statutory agencies and users of the harbour.

2.2 TAURANGA HARBOUR RECREATION STRATEGY (2008)

Accordingly, the *Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2008 (Recreation Strategy)* was developed as a multi agency report led by the Regional Council. The *Recreation Strategy* explored the issues for recreation on the Tauranga Harbour and sought to identify actions to improve recreation opportunities and reduce conflict.

The *Recreation Strategy* included an Action Plan with 33 individual actions. Section 5.1.1 of the Action Plan proposed an Access Strategy which was to include:

- Provision of key access links to the Harbour in all neighborhoods (including potential use of paper roads)

- Protection and restoration of areas that are important for plants or wildlife from inappropriate or excessive access (e.g. dotterels at Panepane Point, restrictions on dogs).
- Opportunities for fishing are increased (especially for people who don't have boats).
- Education opportunities (including signage).
- Identifying increased opportunities for interactive recreation between shore and water, such as tidal pools and pontoons.
- Access for people to passive recreational opportunities such as the enjoyment of beaches and recreational areas for the general public (including possible mangrove removal to facilitate this).
- Provision of access opportunities and structures to meet the needs of disabled people.
- Additional opportunities for walking access along the shoreline.
- Issues associated with cultural and traditional Maori access to the harbour.
- Opportunities for further cycle racks and scooter parking areas.
- Consideration of climate change scenarios when addressing access issues and mangrove management.
- A strategic framework for boat launching facilities and associated infrastructure required to meet increasing demand over the next 50 years.

3.0 METHODOLOGY FOR GAP ANALYSIS

The following methodology was originally proposed:

1	Review of Action 5.1.1 (Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy: Action Plan – Appendix 1) and using the sources below (points 2-9).
2	Review the original submissions (and other relevant documents) to the Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy
3	Review of the Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy document, particularly Section 4.1.1 and Chapter 5 Action Plan and identify those matters relating to "access".
4	Review of the Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Strategy, particularly Chapter 7 and 9 and identify those matters relating to "access".
5	Review of the findings from the Easter and Summer Tauranga Harbour Recreation Surveys that relate to access.
6	Meet with Geoff Canham (Opus Consultants) to discuss further the survey findings and his views relating to access.

7	Meet with key council stakeholders (reserves staff and harbour management staff to discuss harbour access.
8	Manage and conduct interactive consultation with members of the Northern and Southern Tauranga Harbour Recreation User Forums.
9	Following the Gap Analysis work/findings make a recommendation as to whether or not an Access Strategy is required and if so, what it could contain.
10	Prepare a Gap Analysis Report and present to the relevant council Committee (if required).

The methodology developed further through the project to ensure that there was full exposure to as many members of the Harbour Forums as possible. A presentation was made to the Joint Harbour Forum meeting held on 4 July 2012 and a comments form was issued to all members of the Harbour Forum to provide input into the GAP Analysis.

It was also decided that the GAP Analysis report should frame the discussion and assessment around the specific Action Points that formed the proposed Access Strategy.

Four discussion and interview groups were identified as part of the project brief for the GAP Analysis. These were reserves staff (TCC and WBOPDC), harbour management staff, technical reserves advisors and the Harbour Forum. The report writer was also approached by representatives of the Northern Harbour Forum and therefore an additional meeting has been recorded.

A list of interviewees and meetings is provided in **Appendix 1**. The Comments Form which was issued to all Forum members is provided in **Appendix 2**.

4.0 RESULTS AND COMMENTS

The following discussion provides a summary of the comments made during interviews and results from the survey of Harbour Forum members.

4.1 TERRITORIAL COUNCIL RESERVES STAFF

A discussion was held with four staff from the TCC and WBOPDC. The minutes from the meeting are provided as **Appendix 3**.

Both TCC and WBOPDC were committed to providing a range of recreation and reserves facilities around the Tauranga Harbour and generally considered that the community was well served with current facilities and reserve plans. In practical terms, there were always projects and additional facilities which cannot be progressed given other council priorities and funding constraints. It was advised that there would be limited opportunity to fund the Access Strategy in the current economic climate.

The council staff recognised that there were ongoing issues with the northern harbour and the provision of all tide boat ramp facilities.

In terms of the methodology for the GAP Analysis, council staff considered that direct consultation with iwi/hapu would be necessary. Although iwi and hapu were part of the Harbour Forums it was apparent that the Harbour Forums were not considered as the 'voice of iwi/hapu'.

Specific comments were made in relation to the Action Points and are recorded in the attached minutes. In many instances, council staff considered that there would be little value gained in undertaking the specific Action Points.

After receiving feedback from other discussions, a further meeting was held on 20 August 2012 with WBOPDC staff (Peter Watson and John Raputu) to discuss specific issues with boat facilities in the northern harbour. Details on the various options for boat ramps and the extensive investigation phase were provided including information on the current policies adopted as part of the LTTCP. WBOPDC staff are firmly of the view that while a solution is yet to be identified which is acceptable to the whole community and which is capable of being supported through the consenting process, the Council has undertaken an extensive assessment of options.

WBOPDC has recently resolved not to fund any further investigations or new capital works for boat ramp facilities in the northern harbour until 2018/19¹. While this decision will clearly be opposed by some members of the community, it does provide a decisive position of WBOPDC in terms of the northern harbour issue.

4.2 HARBOUR MANAGEMENT STAFF

Separate discussions were held with Bruce Gardner, Tauranga Harbour Programme Coordinator and Greg Meikle, Maritime Officer. The minutes of these meeting are provided as **Appendix 4**

Bruce Gardner provided an overview of his role which was first created back in March 2011 and which supported the coordination of the Regional Council's role in managing a wide range of harbour related issues. Bruce considered that the Harbour Forums were useful in terms of communication with various interest groups and noted that the issues at the northern harbour were more contentious than the southern harbour.

Mr Gardner questioned the need to undertake a full Access Strategy. He did consider that there were some Action Points which should be advanced and that there were some gaps in the current service delivery and meeting community expectations. Points that should be advanced included Action Point 4: Signage, Action Point 9: Cultural Issues and Action Point 12: Strategic Framework for boat launching facilities.

Greg Meikle's role as a Maritime Officer is in relation to activities that occur on the water and is not directly concerned with land based activities or the issues which were largely identified as part of the proposed Access Strategy.

Mr Meikle advised that the potential conflict between recreational users of the harbour and Port of Tauranga ships required ongoing management however he did not consider that there was any increasing trend in the degree or nature of conflict. Siltation around moorings and boat ramps were issues that would need to be addressed.

¹ LTP Submission letter to Northern Harbour Forum dated 10 July 2012

Overall, there were limited matters which Mr Meikle as the Maritime Officer would actively need to engage in with many of the Actions Points not applicable to maritime functions.

4.3 JOINT HARBOUR FORUM

A presentation on the Access Strategy and GAP Analysis was provided to the Joint Harbour Forum meeting in July.

The presentation enabled a discussion on the Access Strategy and the comment form was also made available to allow for written feedback and comments.

The discussion and feedback focused on how the report would be presented back to the councils, whether the Forum would be provided with a copy of the report, how the report would affect Council policy.

4.4 OPUS CONSULTANTS – HARBOUR SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

A meeting was held with Geoff Canham (Project Manager – Parks and Reserves) who has previously provided advice and undertaken harbour user surveys for the Regional Council. The minutes of this meeting are provided in **Appendix 5**.

Mr Canham advocated that empirical and baseline information was necessary to assist with and guide the management of harbour issues including the broad interface with recreational users. The initial user surveys provided an initial set of data and showed that there was a high degree of satisfaction among harbour users and that about half of the users were not permanent residents of the region.

Mr Canham considered that the harbour was a significant resource for the whole region and that there was a lost opportunity in terms the recreational potential of Tauranga Harbour and how this could be promoted to serve both community wellbeing and economic objectives.

The concept of recreational access needs to evolve such that it is acknowledged that often users participate in multiple harbour related activities, for example boating, walking, picnicking, swimming, and kayaking. Mr Canham considered that while boating and fishing were obvious examples of recreational uses, any programme to develop recreational facilities should take a broader perspective to be most effective.

4.5 NORTHERN HARBOUR REPRESENTATIVES

At the request of representatives of the Northern Harbour Forum, a meeting was held to discuss the GAP Analysis and issues specific to the northern harbour. The minutes of this meeting are provided in **Appendix 6**.

The main focus of the discussion was on the provision of boat ramps. There was a general level of dissatisfaction with WBOPDC and the perceived failure of the council process to provide appropriate facilities in the northern harbour. The decision making process and assessment of options for facilities was heavily criticised. One of the key challenges for boat ramps was the need to provide all tide access and there was acknowledgement of the need to consult with iwi over potential sites.

Norm Mayo, as a local Councilor made comment that funding issues heavily influenced the ability to develop new facilities.

The central issue which the representatives wished to emphasise was the need to provide the strategic framework for boat launching facilities which was Action Point 12 of the proposed Access Strategy.

4.6 RESPONSES FROM COMMENTS FORM

In total, 8 comment forms were completed and returned for inclusion in the GAP Analysis. This return rate may be considered low given that over 150 comments forms were circulated to Forum members and that they were also made available at the meeting held on 4 July 2012.

Given the limited number of respondents, a generic discussion of the comments is provided as an alternative to providing statistical and comparative analysis of the results.

In terms of Question 1, which asked respondents to identify the most important Action Points, there were five which were clearly preferred. These were:

Action Point 1: Provision of Access links to the Harbour,
Action Point 2: Protection of ecological areas,
Action Point 6: Passive recreational opportunities (mangroves),
Action Point 8: Walking opportunities along shoreline, and
Action Point 12: Strategic framework for boat launching facilities.

Five Actions Points only received one or no affirmative responses. These were;

Action Point 3: Fishing opportunities for people without boats,
Action Point 5: Opportunities for pontoons and tidal pools,
Action Point 7: Facilities for people with disabilities,
Action Point 9: Cultural issues and traditional access and
Action Point 10: Cycle facilities.

Question 2 sought information on how the action points were being achieved at present. There were a number of respondents who identified Actions Points in Question 1 and then made comments on these same Actions Points in Question 2. As such, there was some correlation between the most significant issues for the Access Strategy and existing work programmes which were in place. An example of such an issue is mangrove management.

Overall the comments made to Question 2 acknowledged that the Councils were involved with various service delivery programmes and works however this was often described in general terms.

The responses to Question 3 (least important Action Point) are more difficult to analyse as the responses were evenly spread across a number of Actions Points and there is variable correlation with the information obtained from Question 1.

Action Point 3 which identified additional fishing opportunities for people without boats scored the highest in Question 3 and no respondents identified this Action Point as the most important. Therefore it can be concluded from these results, that the respondents did not consider that additional fishing opportunities for people without boats is a priority.

The responses to Question 4 (general comments) covered a broad range of issues and this reflects the broad range of interests and users involved with Tauranga Harbour. The themes and comments provided to Question 4 include:

- Navigational and safety issues associated with new boat access
- Sedimentation of the Matakana channel
- Need for long term planning of facilities, particularly at northern/central harbour
- Harbour users include beach goers and pedestrians, too much attention is given to boat users
- Protection of the coastal edge and ecological values from development
- Mangrove management
- Control of recreational craft on the water
- Control of the Black Swan population
- Management of sediment runoff from rivers and tributaries

Overall, the survey process did help to draw out specific comments and data on the perceptions of current issues facing recreation on Tauranga Harbour and the local knowledge of what steps and processes are in place to address these issues. It is clear that there are a wide range of perspectives and that some members or groups within the community are focused on particular issues while others have a more holistic view on issues and management options for Tauranga Harbour.

5.0 GAP ANALYSIS – SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS

This part of the report will provide a GAP Analysis of the specific action points which were identified in the proposed Access Strategy.

5.1 ACTION POINT 1

Provision of Key Access Links to the Harbour in all Neighborhoods (including potential use of Paper Roads)

Action Point 1 was identified as a significant issue from the comments form and in discussions it was identified that more information should be available on the location of harbour access and facilities for visitors to the region.

Council reserve staff raised various legal and financial issues with the development of access along paper roads.

It was evident that new capex spending has been severely constrained in recent years and that there is little likelihood of additional projects being successfully added to the LTCCP of either TCC or WBOPDC.

In relation to access links, the most vocal issue raised was the provision of boat access facilities in the northern/central harbour. A number of survey respondents discussed this matter and a number of representatives from this area have participated in the Council annual plan process and recreational studies.

Overall, it is considered that there is good access to Tauranga Harbour however this can always be improved or enhanced. There is also some need to ensure that all access points and facilities are publicised for both the local community and visitors.

Financial and budgetary constraints need to be taken into account and acknowledged in terms of priority for recreational facilities. Each of the councils is having to prioritise capital expenditure and operational budgets. Financial contribution funding has been significantly reduced in the last few years and there is very little appetite for rating increases from the community at large. Any consideration of new capital projects must therefore be considered within this fiscal context.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 1	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Partially Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.2 ACTION POINT 2

Protection and Restoration of Areas that are Important for Plants or Wildlife from Inappropriate or Excessive Access (e.g. Dotterels at Panepane Point, Restrictions on Dogs)

Ecological protection is generally acknowledged as an important part of harbour management and protection. There was some awareness of Council mechanisms to protect ecological areas i.e. through Regional and District Plan mechanisms, Coastcare, mangrove management.

While the need for and importance of ecological protection was discussed in broad terms, there was limited discussion on any specific sites or concerns where council policy or development pressures were having a significant impact on the coastal environment.

It is also apparent there is strong local and community support for environmental initiatives associated with the harbour. This was seen clearly with the recent MV Rena grounding and the cleanup operation which involved significant community participation.

The restrictions on dogs did not come up in discussions however both TCC and WBOPDC have Animal Officers and bylaws to control the movement and access of owners with dogs to the harbour walkways and reserves.

As ecological protection and natural values are a critical elements of Tauranga Harbour, a high significance is warranted. Through existing plan mechanisms and other statutory functions and bylaws, it is considered that the Action Point is generally achieved with a low priority for additional action.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 2	
Area	Assessment
Significance	High
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.3 ACTION POINT 3

Opportunities for Fishing are Increased (Especially for People who don't have Boats)

There does not appear to be a significant issue with access to fishing.

As discussed above, there may be some need for more information on access points to the foreshore and other facilities which may be used for land based fishing, however there is no evidence to suggest that there is an existing problem for serious anglers or more family orientated fishing activities.

The only issue that was raised by a number of people was that there is sometimes conflict between land-based fishermen and boat traffic at jetties and wharves. This issue is more one of common sense and reasonable behaviour which cannot be regulated.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 3	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.4 ACTION POINT 4

Education Opportunities (Including Signage)

There was some consensus that the provision of information and signage for recreational access was inadequate, particularly for visitors to the region. The Bay of Plenty region was compared to the Taupo region which is recognised as being a region that effectively promotes access to Lake Taupo and trout fishing opportunities as key recreational resources.

Although there is good information available from the Regional Council regarding boat navigation, on water facilities such as ski lanes and harbour conditions², this primarily addresses activities on the harbour and not information on access to the harbour. A recent publication, *Tauranga Harbour – our special place, provides some discussion on recreational facilities and activities* however it also covers port operations, cultural values, water quality and Harbour care projects. While this publication provides a wide range of valuable information, it is not focused on recreational facilities.

In addition, both TCC and WBOPDC produce information pamphlets on walkways within their respective districts³. The information within the respective publications does detail walkways along the coastal areas and provides some description of boat facilities and other recreational opportunities, ie fishing, dog walking.

It is therefore evident that information is available however it has not been developed or integrated with regional signage and other branding to delivery information specifically on access to the harbour and recreational reserves and facilities.

The programme to deliver this information will require funding both in terms of hard copy information, electronic information, branding and signage. As discussed further in this report, it is recommended that further action be undertaken in this regard and a 'medium' priority value has been assigned for the action point.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 4	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Medium
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Partially Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Medium

5.5 ACTION POINT 5

Identifying Increased Opportunities for Interactive Recreation between Shore and Water, Such as Tidal Pools and Pontoons

From discussions with council staff, it was identified that a proposal for a pontoon to be located in Pilot bay was promoted some years ago. It was considered that this may be the reason for this Action Point being included in the proposed Access Strategy.

There was a clear consensus of opinion that while the councils would have a role in facilitating a pontoon or similar recreational facility, essentially there would need to be a privately funded or sponsored initiative for the councils to support, rather than any project being council led.

It is also evident that there may well be consenting and technical issues for such projects given the likely locations of any facilities and keen public interest in any facilities.

² Tauranga Harbour user guide (GDS113558), Tauranga Harbour (Recreation Guide) (GDS11-2576) and Bay of Plenty Regional Navigation Safety Bylaw 2010 (GDS10-3342)

³ TCC 'City on its Feet' and WBOPDC 'Walking tracks of the Western Bay'

Overall, these projects do have merit, but do not have a high priority in terms of the core service delivery functions of the respective councils. As such they have been assessed as having a low significance and low priority.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 5	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Not Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.6 ACTION POINT 6

Access for People to Passive Recreational Opportunities such as the enjoyment of Beaches and Recreational Areas for the General Public (Including Possible Mangrove Removal to Facilitate this)

The nature and scope of Action Point 6 is ambiguous as it discusses passive recreational opportunities along beaches and recreational areas and then specifically mentions mangrove removal.

There is a good awareness of the work programme which has been undertaken by the Regional Council for mangrove removal. This has supported and further developed the mangrove removal work which has been undertaken by a number of community groups. It is also acknowledged that there are some differences of opinion in terms of the ecological values of mangroves and whether their removal is justified or desirable.

The Regional Council is currently looking at further consents for mangrove removal and management and therefore it is considered that this aspect of harbour management is fully achieved in the sense that the Regional Council is actively funding and setting in place work programmes.

With respect to passive recreational opportunities, the comments made in relation to Action Point 1 and Action Point 4 above and Action Point 8 below are relevant. It is considered that the local community and visitors have very high levels of service in terms of access to beaches and recreational areas.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 6	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Medium/High
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low -ongoing funding and work programmes currently in place.

5.7 ACTION POINT 7

Provision of access opportunities and structures to meet the needs of disabled people

It was apparent from discussions with Council staff that there is limited lobbying or direct communication from the disabled community for additional or redesigned facilities.

Access to Tauranga Harbour and to recreational facilities should be provided to the whole community however it can also be accepted that with the form and function of some facilities it may not be feasible or practical to provide all purpose disabled access. For example, a recreational boat jetty will not generally support wheel chair access without reasonably significant modifications.

Public toilet facilities do generally provide for disabled facilities.

TCC also provide information on walkways which are more accessible for wheelchair access as part of the *City on its Feet* brochure.

Council staff considered that the provisions of the Building Act would be complied with in any design of a new facility or structure that requires building consent.

It is considered that the Councils are taking a responsible position in relation to facilities for disabled people, and that any design aspects can be considered on a case by case basis depending on the nature of the facility. As such it is concluded that this Action Point is achieved and that there is a low priority for future action.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 7	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.8 ACTION POINT 8

Additional Opportunities For Walking Access Along The Shoreline

There has been some concerns voiced that harbour recreation is dominated by issues surrounding recreational boating. It is fair to recognise that the Tauranga Harbour Forum has strong representation by boating and fishing groups and that the presence of local boating clubs gives a strong voice to those in the community who use the Tauranga Harbour for boating/fishing activities.

From the material which is available from TCC and WBOPDC, there are pedestrian and reserve networks across the Tauranga Harbour and the User Surveys completed for the Regional Council also showed a high level of satisfaction with current facilities.

It may be accepted that there will always be submissions and community demand for additional facilities to serve members or groups within the community, there is no evidence to suggest that there are inadequate facilities or opportunities at this stage. Any additional facilities and growth pressures can be addressed through the annual plan and LTTCP process.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 8	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Medium/High
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.9 ACTION POINT 9

Issues Associated With Cultural And Traditional Maori Access To The Harbour

Although unintended, there has been very limited engagement with local iwi/hapu through this GAP Analysis project. The Harbour Forum was initially developed as one means of engaging with local iwi/hapu on harbour issues, however it is accepted by those involved with the Harbour Forum that this has not been effective.

In discussions and feedback on the Action Points, there was some reference to conflicts which can arise between cultural values and development pressures. In addition, there may also be some tension with the provision of full public access to some areas which can conflict with cultural values.

It is difficult to make an informed comment on any issues associated with cultural and traditional Maori access given that no direct consultation has taken place on these matters. It would therefore be inappropriate to complete the GAP Analysis Matrix without more information.

It is noted that while it appears that local iwi/hapu have chosen disengage with the Tauranga Harbour Forum, there are formal structures and committees in place with each of the councils to enable direct consultation and discussion on issues. In addition, assigned staff and resourcing is available for engagement with iwi/hapu.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 9	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Undetermined
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Undetermined
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Undetermined

5.10 ACTION POINT 10

Opportunities for Further Cycle Racks and Scooter Parking Areas

There were no reported issues with the provision of cycle racks and parking areas. Additional facilities can be considered on a case by case basis and in accordance with management plans and roading upgrade projects.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 10	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.11 ACTION POINT 11

Consideration of Climate Change Scenarios when Addressing Access Issues and Mangrove Management

There were mixed views on climate change which may represent wider issues regarding the science behind climate change and the significance of sea level rise.

Council reserves staff advised that in the development of any new reserves or walkway facilities, future proofing of the network and the objective of providing all tide access were factored into the design. There was no value to be gained in investigating sea level rise further given the existing design parameters that were included on new projects.

With respect to mangrove management, the Regional Council is continuing to take proactive steps in managing mangroves areas around Tauranga Harbour. It is not clear that climate change is a major contributor to mangrove spread and it has not influenced the Regional Council's decision to retain and further develop the mangrove removal and management work programme.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 11	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Low
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low

5.12 ACTION POINT 12

A Strategic Framework for Boat Launching Facilities and Associated Infrastructure Required to Meet Increasing Demand over the Next 50 Years

There was strong representation from some members of the Tauranga Harbour Forum in relation to boat launching facilities and this matter was the subject of the most discussion and comment. It was widely recognised that there are some members of the Northern Forum who are critical of WBOPDC response to the need for additional boat facilities and what is perceived to be a lack of forward planning.

This compares with the southern harbour area where there is generally a high level of satisfaction with existing facilities and comparably very little requests or activity from forum members in relation to new or additional facilities.

From the interview discussions and from the comments form, there are strong views held regarding the need for and potential locations of new boat ramp facilities. The common objective is to provide for new facilities which serve the local catchment and which provide all tide access. In addition the issues of sedimentation and access to the harbour channels are widely recognised. Beyond this there is limited consensus on where and what type of facilities should be provided, how the facilities should be funded and how any consenting issues can be addressed.

WBOPDC staff consider that extensive investigations have been undertaken and that there is an unrealistic perception within the community of how and where any new facilities can be developed. It is evident that in evaluating any new proposals, WBOPDC are acutely aware of the consenting requirements that include cultural considerations, ecological assessments, tidal/coastal processes evaluations and vehicle access considerations.

Documentation from WBOPDC has been reviewed in terms of the extent of investigations which have been undertaken for the northern harbour. It appears that extensive investigations have been carried out and that Council staff have actively been engaged with the evaluation of options in the northern harbour for more than 11 years (Refer **Appendix 7**).

It is fair to conclude that the current level of dissatisfaction from some members of the Northern Harbour Forum will continue until such time as their interests are met.

On balance, it is concluded that the strategic framework for boat launching facilities has medium/high significance; however a low/medium ranking has been given to the priority for further/additional action. This is due to the amount of assessment and evaluation of options which has occurred in recent times. While further evaluation of options for boat ramp facilities will be necessary in the northern harbour, it is considered that the proposed Access Strategy is not the best mechanism to achieve this. There is also some opportunity for private interests and funding to advance these projects.

GAP Analysis Matrix- Action Point 12	
Area	Assessment
Significance	Medium/High
Current Achievement/ Delivery Status	Partially Achieved
Priority for Further/ Additional Action	Low/medium

6.0 IS AN ACCESS STRATEGY NECESSARY?

This GAP Analysis has identified a myriad of opinions associated with the management of Tauranga Harbour and recreational access opportunities and constraints. This is unsurprising given the breath of issues that were identified in the *Recreation Strategy* and the associated recommendations and Action Plans.

The original recommendation to undertake an Access Strategy had merit and many of the issues that were raised in the *Recreation Strategy* are still of relevance today. Many will also be ongoing and possibly exacerbated as the population of Tauranga City and the wider region continues to grow.

It is noted that various programmes are underway to give effect to the recommendations which were included in the Recreation Strategy. These are detailed in a report to the Operations, Monitoring and Regulations Committee of the regional council (Refer **Appendix 8**). It is evident from this report that a number of steps and initiatives have been commenced or completed which address recreational and management issues. In some cases these overlap with the Actions Points which were included as part of the Proposed Access Strategy.

The principal question for this GAP Analysis is to ascertain whether an Access Strategy is required? After taking into account the programmes that are underway and examining the specific Action Points, it is concluded that limited benefit and/or value will be gained in progressing the Access Strategy as originally proposed. As such, it is the recommendation of this report that the proposed Access Strategy be withdrawn from the respective council work programmes.

It is important to place some context around this assessment. In the first instance, staff from the three councils were of the view that there would be limited benefits in undertaking the proposed Access Strategy. The staff interviewed were objective in their feedback and also anticipated dissenting views from some members of the public and interest groups. This is particularly so for the northern harbour where the issue of additional boat ramp facilities is still outstanding, but for which funding is not available.

The GAP Analysis has enabled an independent assessment of the proposed Access Strategy and the current *state of play* with respect to reserve management and recreational access issues. While council staff views and funding implications have been taken into account, these have not influenced the final assessment and recommendations with respect to the individual Action Points.

It is also noted that the Harbour Forum is serving a useful purpose in providing direct communication between harbour users/interests groups and with staff and elected members from the respective councils. This form of direct dialogue has value and is to be encouraged. The Harbour Forum does suffer from issues with how it is mandated, how its views can be presented and who the Forum represents. Therefore, while weighting was given to consultation with the Harbour Forum as part of the methodology for this GAP Analysis, there was ultimately limited response to the survey forms and no comment or engagement was achieved with local iwi/hapu.

Although strictly outside the terms of this GAP Analysis, it is considered that the Harbour Forum would benefit from further consideration and confirmation of its mandate. In terms of iwi and hapu involvement with recreational harbour issues, further direct consultation will be necessary and mechanisms other than the Harbour Forum will be necessary.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The key finding from this GAP Analysis is that there will be limited value in completing an Access Strategy as originally proposed. In most cases, the identified Action Points are either achieved, partially achieved or have a low priority for further or additional action.

There may be some members of the community who will interpret any decision to withdraw the proposal for an Access Strategy as a retrograde step. There may be some general concerns that this would be a lost opportunity to provide an integrated approach to recreational access and facilities across the Tauranga Harbour.

More particular objection is anticipated from those members and interest groups within the northern harbour who are demanding better boat access and facilities.

WBOPDC are very much aware of these demands and have invested substantial amounts of time and funding into providing a solution which can meet the community expectations, within acceptable environmental and consenting constraints and within funding limitations. It is considered that the proposed Access Strategy will not in itself lead to any new solutions. The issue of boat ramp facilities in the northern harbour will need to be further addressed and this will require direct engagement with the local community and interest groups. The reserves management plan process, annual plan and LTTCP process provide for this engagement at present.

The GAP Analysis has not identified any major deficits in terms of existing service delivery and any future service delivery/outcomes that may be achieved by completing the proposed Access Strategy. It is therefore recommended that the requirement for a proposed Access Strategy be withdrawn. Three supplementary recommendations are also proposed to address matters discussed in this report.

KEY RECOMMENDATION:

That the proposed Access Strategy be withdrawn from the respective council work programmes and funding allocations.

SUPPLEMENTARY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That subject to funding priorities, further work be completed on information, signage and branding of harbour access points and facilities.

2. That a copy of this report be provided to the Maori Committees of the respective councils to seek advice on any issues associated with cultural or heritage values and recreational harbour access.
3. That WBOPDC run a workshop/open day with interested members of the public and community groups in relation to the planning, funding and consenting requirements for reserve and boat launching facilities in the northern harbour.

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