



▪ report

**Whangarei Coastal  
Management Strategy -  
Structure Plan: McLeod Bay /  
Reotahi**

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# **Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy - Structure Plan: McLeod Bay / Reotahi**

Prepared for  
Whangarei District Council

By  
Beca Planning

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## **Revision History**

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# 1 Introduction

In September 2002, Council adopted the Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy, establishing a strategic, integrated framework for managing the protection, use and development of the coastal environment within the Whangarei District.

The overall vision for the Coastal Management Strategy is:

***Our Unique Subtropical Coastal Environment: Nurturing a wealth of opportunities to experience, to treasure and to harness for our prosperity***

To achieve this vision, the Coastal Management Strategy is set out in three parts. Parts I and II relate to the District Wide Strategy and Effecting the Strategy at a District wide level. Part III of the Coastal Management Strategy includes specific structure plans prepared for priority areas in the Whangarei coastal environment. This McLeod Bay / Reotahi Structure Plan is the second plan prepared as Part III of the Coastal Management Strategy, identified as a priority area for structure planning.

This Structure Plan is intended as a concept for the local McLeod Bay and Reotahi areas, integrating the protection, use and development of land and resources and setting out how to implement the Coastal Management Strategy vision and mission statements at a local level. In other words, it is a broad physical plan identifying areas for growth, protection, parks and other infrastructure and community requirements over the next 20 years.

The Structure Plan is intended as a partnership between the community and Council and an important step in establishing Community Plans for these settlement areas. This philosophy of partnership is reflected in the Structure Plan development, see Appendix 1.

## 1.1 Vision for Ocean Beach – Whangarei Heads

The Whangarei Coastal Management Strategy recognises the importance of the diversity of the coastal environment in the Whangarei District and identifies a number of 'Policy Areas'. These Policy Areas are not 'discrete units', but rather they are intended to reflect communities of interest or particular environments that warrant management direction, within the context of the District's overall Vision and Mission Statements. Similarly, the Structure Plan further focuses on settlement areas within these Policy Areas. The Structure Planning concepts have been developed in recognition of the overall policy and implementation direction of the surrounding Policy Area 'catchment'.

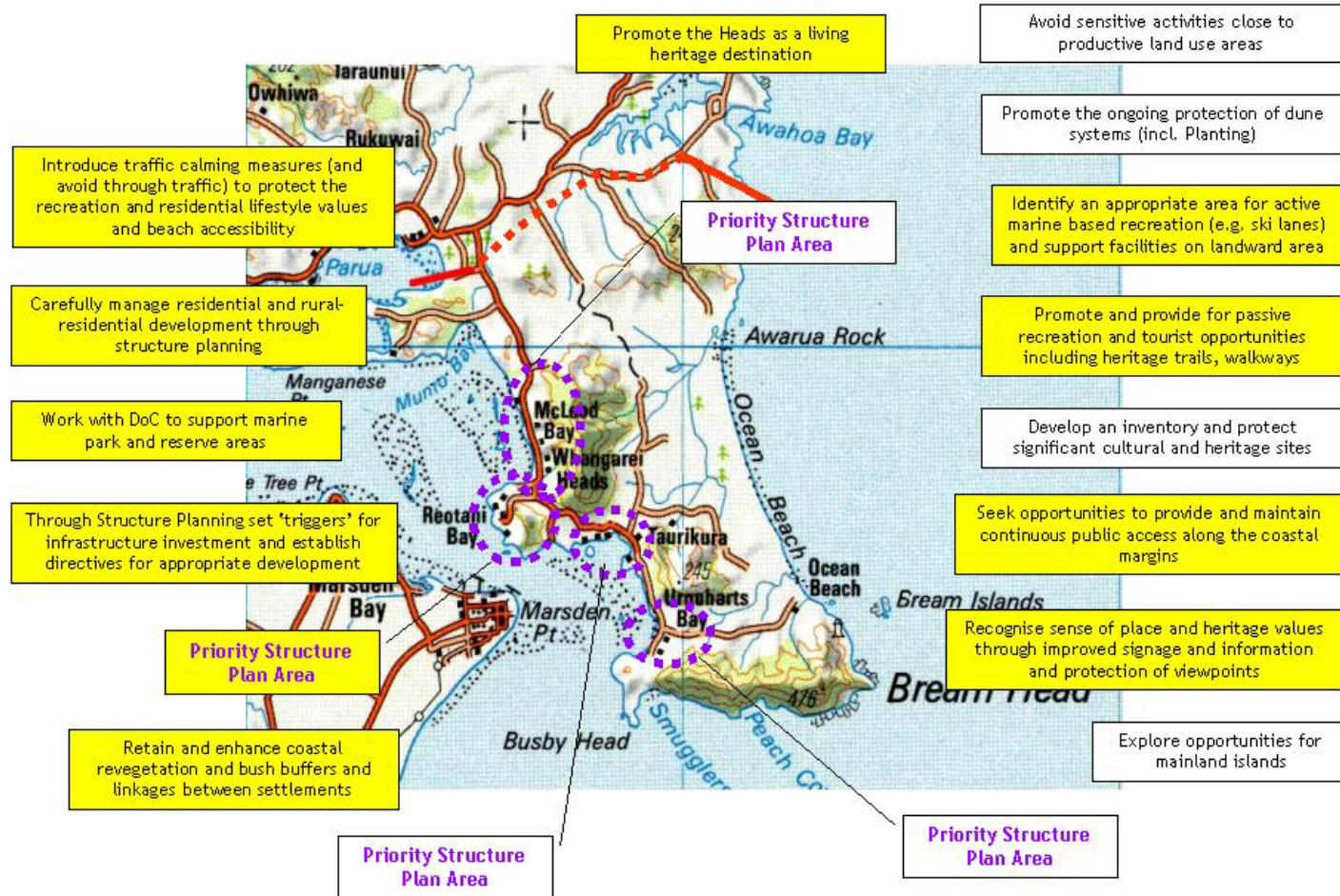
The Ocean Beach – Whangarei Heads Policy Area extends from Kauri Mountain in the north, south along the eastern coastal beach and along the northern beaches of Whangarei Harbour as far as 'The Nook' (south-east of Parua Bay). The area is broadly rural with small clustered residential living environments around bays and beaches. The area has strong natural character values derived from the bush clad hills (largely in public ownership). The **McLeod Bay / Reotahi area** has been identified as a high priority structure planning area in recognition of the importance of maintaining these natural character values and the ongoing development pressure currently witnessed in the area.



## 1.2 Coastal Management Strategy – Policy Area Implementation Map

In addition to the overall Vision for the Ocean Beach – Whangarei Heads Policy Area, the Coastal Management Strategy sets out local implementation directions for achieving this Vision. Those of particular relevance to the McLeod Bay / Reotahi Structure Plan are highlighted:

### Ocean Beach – Whangarei Heads: *Community lifestyle choice clustered amongst natural and heritage landmarks*



## 1.3 Local Outcomes - Direction for the Vision

On the basis of the consultation undertaken for both the District-wide Coastal Management Strategy and this particular Structure Plan, the following identifies the key themes or direction for development of the Structure Plan and management concepts:

### 1.3.1 Live in McLeod Bay / Reotahi by...



- Providing a clustered residential settlement within the dominant natural values;
- Promoting development forms that provide for protection of vegetation and landscape values in hills and backshore – the special sense of place on the area;
- Using natural features and topography to define land use areas and zone boundaries;
- Promoting the special sense of place and character of area, including maintenance and enhancement of the 'pedestrian' friendly character.
- Encouraging a special pedestrian (non-motorised vehicle) friendly lifestyle settlement.

### 1.3.2 Work in McLeod Bay / Reotahi by...



- Promoting eco-tourism and 'home' based work activities;
- Encouraging development without reliance on private motor vehicles, including marine passenger services in future;
- Maintaining the viability of farming and rural activities surrounding settlements; and
- Recognising the importance of the natural character and quality of the coastal marine area for tourism and eco-tourism.

### 1.3.3 Play in McLeod Bay / Reotahi by...



- Recognising active recreation and boating activities whilst maintaining an emphasis on the quiet beach experience and natural character values of the area;
- Recognising the recreation value of the coastal marine area, particularly for boating and fishing activities
- Providing for passive recreation and eco-tourism via a network of walkways, tracks, recreation access points and linkages through the area;
- Maintaining the Coastal Road as a 'scenic experience'; and
- Promoting the special pedestrian and wilderness recreation experience.

### 1.3.4 Protecting McLeod Bay / Reotahi by...



- Protecting important kiwi habitat and natural character values;
- Maintaining the wilderness values between coastal settlements and buffers between residential and conservation areas
- Managing land use and infrastructure to enhance water quality;
- Protecting significant viewpoints, ridgelines and coastal margins viewed from the sea and other key public vantage points (including the road);
- Protecting and enhancing heritage values of the area through establishing walkways (with appropriate signage and interpretative material);



- Encouraging community involvement in reserve management and protection; and
- Promoting restoration and re-vegetation of coastal margins and steep backshore hills.

## **1.4 Structure Plan Development**

The Structure Plan has been prepared in a philosophy of partnership between Council and the community as well as through consultation/participation with other key stakeholders. Appendix 1 provides detail on the structure plan development, including key consultation and community inputs received in the plan's evolution.

The following provides a summary of the key stages of development for the Structure Plan.

### **1.4.1 Technical Investigation and Constraints Mapping**

On the basis of the District-wide Coastal Management Strategy and investigations already undertaken by Whangarei District Council and other agencies (in particular Department of Conservation, New Zealand Historic Places Trust and Northland Regional Council), base information was collected on the key technical issues and 'constraints/opportunities' for use and development in the McLeod Bay / Reotahi Structure Plan Area. (See the *Constraints and Opportunities* section of Appendix 1).

### **1.4.2 Community Participation – Constraints and Opportunities**

In addition to the base information review, consultation was undertaken with the community and key stakeholders asking them to identify key constraints and opportunities. Specifically, this phase sought from the community identification not only of 'technical or physical constraints' but also identification of significant issues and outcomes sought by the community for the long term development of the Structure Plan area (the future social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being and how the community will live, work, play and protect the area). This process in particular assisted in development of the Structure Plan (section 2 of this report). (See the *Constraints and Opportunities* and *Workshop 1* sections of Appendix 1).

### **1.4.3 Draft Structure Plan – Key themes and prioritisation**

Following identification with the community and stakeholders of the key constraints and desired outcomes, the Study Team developed a Draft Structure Plan and a summary of the key themes or principles of the plan. The community and other stakeholders were asked to provide their opinion on the relative importance or priority of the key structure plan outcomes, which has assisted in development of the Structure Plan Priorities and Critical Path (section 3 of this report). (See the *Draft Structure Plan* and *Prioritisation* sections of Appendix 1).

#### **1.4.4 Integration of Structure Plans**

The final stage of the Structure Plan development has been to integrate the outcomes of each specific structure plan with the outcomes and priorities identified for the other High Priority Structure Plan areas and the District-Wide Coastal Management Strategy. This integration is a critical component of bringing together the overall implementation and integration of development and direction for coastal management.

## **2 Implementing the Vision in McLeod Bay, Reotahi & Little Munroe Bay**

This section provides the overall content of the Structure Plan for McLeod Bay / Reotahi area. It is important to recognise that the Structure Plan Concept Map provides a 20 year vision. Guidance on the possible timing and more specifically the prioritisation for implementation is provided in section 2 of this report.

### **2.1 Key Elements of Structure Plan Concept**

Expanding on the directions provided in the Coastal Management Strategy Vision and the desired community outcomes summarised in section 1, the following provides a summary of key elements or future outcomes for development, management and protection of McLeod Bay / Reotahi over the next 20 years. These concepts are geographically depicted or defined in the supporting 20 Year Structure Plan Concept Map (see section 2.2 of this report).

It is important to recognise that a number of Structure Plan elements identified below are repeated, recognising that they reinforce or are common to many of the vision themes.

#### **2.1.1 Outcomes for Living in McLeod Bay / Reotahi to 2025**

##### **(a) A clustered residential settlement within the dominant natural values of Whangarei Heads**

The McLeod Bay / Reotahi area has been identified through the consultation on both the District-wide Coastal Management Strategy and more specifically for the Structure Plan as a 'community' within the wider Heads area. Many people have expressed a strong desire to maintain this sense of community ('...small pockets of development') and cluster residential settlement, rather than allowing sprawl or 'ribbon' development connecting settlement areas.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Expanding the 'Living 1' environment in McLeod Bay, subject to reticulated sewerage, to provide for more clustered residential development and relieving pressure for lower density sprawl on surrounding hills and back-drop of area;
- Limiting the linear extent of the settlement with long term settlement limits or boundaries;
- Providing for 'large lot' residential development in surrounding hills and hinterland. This lower density residential activity provides for expanded 'Living' opportunities in the area while recognising the importance of landscape and natural character in the values of the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area, particularly in the bush clad hills surrounding the harbour and between coastal settlements in the bays of the McLeod Bay / Reotahi coast.
- Maintaining coastal rural activities surrounding the development area. Maintaining the rural surrounds has been identified by the community as an important element of the 'living' environment, particularly for the special character or amenity of settlement areas. In providing for rural activities, it is important to recognise the ongoing need for these activities to provide for their economic well-being. Management of residential building locations and establishing a 'managed' buffer between residential and rural areas has been identified by both the rural and residential community as an appropriate mechanism to

enable 'co-existence' of these activities.

**(b) A special sense of place by protecting vegetation and landscape values**

Throughout the consultation, the community and stakeholders have recognised the special sense of place of this area - provided by the distinctive landscape features and valued vegetation of the backshore hills. While a large area contributing to these landscapes is already in public ownership (e.g. Mt Manaia and Mt Aubrey) the community have identified the importance of maintaining and protecting the character of landscapes surrounding these features and in maintaining the overall sense of place through bush and habitat protection. This issue in particular, was considered a key outcome or high priority outcome for the Structure Plan.

In this regard, while recognising and providing for residential demand in the area, it is considered that such development should be managed to recognise the imperative of the natural character and in particular the vegetation of the backshore hills. Furthermore, it is considered that such managed use of these areas can result in enhanced landscape values through revegetation, as has been seen in a number of recent developments.

It is noted that some community feedback identified the need for purchase of land where the community felt that its protection was such that development should be restricted. This position is accepted, in part, and the Structure Plan identifies a number of areas where expansion of the reserve network should be sought cognisant with development and growth. However, it is also considered that the natural character values and special sense of place and the environmental characteristics which contribute to these values warrant wider protection and management and that this can be undertaken while allowing for appropriate use and development of resources.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Using topography and natural features to guide boundaries of development. In particular, the contour of the area has been used to assist identification of 'residential' areas and long term residential or 'urban' limits. For example, more conventional residential development has been focussed to areas where it will not visually dominate the catchment (valleys and lower lying areas) as well avoiding areas of existing vegetation and provision is made for lower density rural-residential development in transition areas between settlements and bush / protected areas;
- Providing an expanded area of 'large lot' residential development surrounding residential villages, with bush protection in subdivision and development of such areas.
- Establishing bush protection requirements in subdivision, use and development, recognising the contribution that this bush has to the natural character and sense of place of the area and its contribution as habitat to significant fauna (e.g. Kiwi);

- Providing planting guides to encourage use of appropriate species in revegetation, including issues of eco-sourcing. It is recommended that **voluntary** planting guides are used (in comparison to introduction of restoration rules through the District Plan) to achieve the desired outcome of protecting landscape and vegetation values, though such guidelines can also be implemented through the District Plan (e.g. as consent conditions) where resource consents are required for subdivision, use or development.
- Reserve expansion in areas of high or outstanding landscape and natural value to ensure that these values are warranted appropriate protection (discussed in section 2.1.3 below).

**(c) A special lifestyle encouraging pedestrian (non-motorised vehicle) friendly settlement and walkway linkages between settlement areas**

This theme was identified both with respect to 'living' in the McLeod / Reotahi area and with respect to 'work' and 'play', particularly concerning opportunities for low impact or eco-tourism to be promoted in the area. Key concerns identified in the community consultation included the need to slow traffic down to make walking and cycling safe and to provide improved opportunities for footpaths and walkways in and around the community. Also associated with this outcome was provision of passenger ferry services in the area (see the work theme below).

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Preserve and develop walkway linkages, walking tracks and unformed routes through the Structure Plan area and beyond;
- Traffic calming integrated with landscape enhancement, for example speed restrictions and enforcement of speed restrictions through road design (planted chicanes and road 'bridges');
- Alternative, non-road pedestrian accessways along coastal margins and through reserve expansion.

### **2.1.2 Outcomes for Working in McLeod Bay / Reotahi - 2025**

**(a) Promote eco-tourism and home based work activities**

This outcome, linked with (b) below has been developed in recognition of the desire expressed from the community for local work opportunities that can be sustained by the local environment and provide residents of the area opportunities for work that do not rely on a commute to Whangarei city.

Overall, the community generally sought community services at a centralised location, such as Parua Bay. However, within local settlements the community also identified potential for small commercial ventures and facilities. In particular, work activities included light, agricultural and traditional farming activities and eco-tourism and service commercial activities (e.g. local shopping, café's or restaurant type development).

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Identification of a future community or service centre at McLeod Bay. Generally, support was expressed for the identification of an appropriately scaled service centre, providing for limited commercial, service and compatible activities. During the consultation, mixed response was made to suggestions that this centre provide for a retirement village or similar facility. The concerns identified by the community generally related to the scale of such development and the carrying capacity of the area to provide for this type of facility (particularly with regard to water and wastewater infrastructure). It is recommended that further consideration is given to the appropriate scale for development at the service centre at the time of re-zoning for these activities.
- Providing for small scale home-occupation activities. During the consultation, the ability for local initiatives for home occupations and similar low scale commercial activities was identified. Such activities are generally provided for under the provisions of the District Plan. In addition, the consultation identified specific infrastructure requirements to facilitate such activities in the area, in particularly high-speed telecommunication technology.
- Giving recognition to the Whangarei Heads Road as a tourism and recreation corridor to the Heads area, both for vehicles and non-motorised transportation. The community expressed a high degree of support for increased management and control of the speed restrictions on Whangarei Heads Road through settlement areas and integration of the non-motorised vehicles / transport within the road reserve (e.g. pedestrian and cyclist facilities). Support was also expressed for maintenance of the route as a 'scenic' experience, recognising the need for safety and limited capacity improvements but avoiding creation of a 'coastal highway'.

**(b) Encourage development without reliance on the private motor vehicle, including provision for marine based passenger transport**

As discussed above, the community consultation expressed a strong preference for development that does not solely rely on private motor vehicles. During the Structure Plan process (and earlier in the Coastal Management Strategy consultation) the potential for ferry services was raised. The provision of walkway and cycleway linkages has been discussed above and is not specifically addressed here.

The community provided a diverse mix of responses with respect to provision of a ferry service, ranging from complete opposition to any service to some support for a car ferry (providing either for private vehicles or for freight). The community identified the wharf at Reotahi as well as an upgraded facility at McLeod Bay as possible alternatives for launching / berthing locations.

Support for a vehicle ferry was expressed as it was identified as a mechanism to generate more diverse living and work opportunities in the area, particularly for Auckland commuters. However on balance, provision of a vehicle ferry service was not supported by a majority of the community or by the Study Team. In particular, concern was expressed about the ability of the local road network to support freight vehicles and the risk of a coastal highway developing through sensitive areas. This is particularly pertinent for Stuart Road and Reotahi Roads which

are currently narrow and widening or capacity improvements in both cases would require extensive engineering (and / or land take from private property). While load restrictions were identified as an option to avoid this issue, it was generally acknowledged that such controls would be difficult to maintain / enforce and that, even for smaller vehicle loads, substantial upgrading of the road network would still be required (e.g. for vehicle queuing, loading and off loading and potentially for parking).

In contrast, provision of facilities to encourage passenger transport facilities is considered to provide an opportunity to encourage passenger transport in the Heads area as well as facilitating tourism activities compatible with the Structure Plan. While it is beyond the ambit of this Structure Plan to seek provision of the transport services themselves, the Structure Plan has identified possible berthing / launching facilities and supporting infrastructure for passenger ferry services.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Identification of potential infrastructure developments to provide launching / berthing facilities for a passenger transport ferry service at McLeod Bay (Stuart Road);
- Identify opportunity for future protection works on Stuart Road with capacity improvements to service any future passenger ferry service, including limited parking and vehicle pick-up and drop-off facilities.

#### **(c) Maintain and Protect the Farming Surrounds of McLeod Bay and the Heads**

Throughout the consultation, recognition has been given to the importance of the 'rural setting' to the special sense of place and character of the Heads area and the coastal settlement areas. In addition, the importance of rural activities for the economy of the area needs to be recognised. Maintaining the economic viability of rural activities in the area needs to take into account both the amount of land retained in 'Countryside' and 'Coastal Countryside' zones but also issues of reverse sensitivity for areas where residential and living expansion is proposed.

The consultation feedback on the issue of farming activities was mixed. A number of people identified that 'large scale' farming operations in the area were already obsolete, however, this was not an opinion expressed by those farming in the area or by many existing residents. Overall, support was generally expressed across the community for encouraging or maintaining some form of farming activity in the area.

A number of specific elements or instruments were identified to achieve this outcome: both controlling existing rural areas and addressing issues of the potential for adjacent activities to impact on farming. In addition to those elements identified for the Structure Plan below, suggestions from the community included rating relief options or other incentives for farmers and stronger restrictions on rural land to restrict the ability for these properties to further subdivide. Both these issues are considered District-wide issues, the latter already having been identified in the Coastal Management Strategy.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Identification of 'buffers' between rural and residential areas, including generous building setbacks on Countryside and Coastal Countryside boundaries;

- Encourage community and Council initiatives for weed and pest management, including species which impact on rural farming operations;
- Provide education and public awareness information on the nature of farming operations to improve understanding by 'residential' community of the needs and impacts of rural activities.

**(d) Recognise the importance of the natural character and quality of the coastal marine area for tourism and eco-tourism**

Related to the issues and outcomes above, a central concept for successful tourism and eco-tourism development was recognition and protection of the natural character values and quality of the coastal marine area.

The consultation feedback expressed strong preference for recognition, maintenance and protection of the natural character values. In particular, feedback from the community sought restrictions on aquaculture and commercial fishing / shell-fishing, in the area, protection of the bush and habitat (see the outcomes for Protection below) and provision of infrastructure (both wastewater and stormwater) to enhance water quality discharges to the coastal marine area.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Discourage establishment of Aquaculture Management Areas (AMA) in the Structure Plan Area by providing no land-side support for such facilities. While it is recognised that the provision of AMA's is a Regional Council matter, it was considered that clear policy direction could be provided by the District Council, through the Structure Plan;
- Encourage the establishment of a marine reserve in the area. There was mixed support for the establishment of a marine reserve in the Structure Plan area. Overall, support for this element outweighed opposition. Concern regarding a marine reserve related particularly to the ability of the local community to fish in the area. On balance, it is considered that the provision of a small marine reserve in this area is consistent with the overall vision for McLeod Bay / Reotahi, particularly for eco-tourism activities. It is recognised that further detailed consideration will need to be given to the potential effects of any such reserve, through the formal process for establishment of Marine Reserves under the Marine Reserves Act.
- Provision of adequate sewerage reticulation as a pre-requisite for residential and population growth.

**2.1.3 Outcomes for Playing in McLeod Bay / Reotahi - 2025**

**(a) Encourage active recreation and boating activities while maintaining the quiet beach experience and natural character values of the area**

Boating in particular has been identified as an important recreation value in the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area. During the consultation, some support was identified for upgrading boating facilities. However, concern was also expressed by others that such development would encourage greater vehicle movements (as people would drive boats from Parua Bay out to the Heads for launching facilities). On balance, support was expressed for focussed up-grading of



facilities, particularly for boat and trailer parking off the beach and improved land-side infrastructure to support ramps (e.g. toilets, rubbish bins etc).

In addition to boat launching, 'active' marine recreation values were identified (including water skiing, wind surfing and jet skis). Conversely concern was expressed about the impact these same activities have on the recreation values for other users of the coastal marine area and coastal environment (particularly for swimmers and for local residents / walkers and 'passive' recreation users).

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Provide for upgraded boat access in current ramp locations (Reotahi and McLeod Bay), including land-side parking and facilities;
  - Investigation and development of off-beach parking at Reotahi, linked to the parking development proposed for the reserve / walkway;
  - Encourage maintenance and up-grading of the boat ramp and parking facilities at McLeod Bay - Stuart Road, linked to shore stabilisation works and ferry launching / berthing facilities;
  - Maintain beach boat launching facilities at McLeod Bay beach, providing improved off-beach parking.
- Encourage active marine recreation activities at the northern end of McLeod Bay, including:
  - Maintenance of beach launching facilities at northern end of beach;
  - Investigate potential for future reserve expansion to the north, providing pedestrian access to the beach with off-beach parking facilities. While the community identified relatively strong support for this element of the Structure Plan (some 70% support), further investigation needs to be undertaken, on the specific impacts of such development. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the reserve development would only be undertaken at the time of subdivision or development of this area.
  - Encourage Northland Regional Council to establish a dedicated active recreation area north of McLeod Bay, recognising the natural 'wilderness' values of the Nook to the north of the area.

#### **(b) Maintain the natural character values and water quality of the coastal marine area**

The importance of water quality for the sense of place in the McLeod Bay / Reotahi Structure Plan was strongly expressed through the consultation. The Structure Plan seeks to recognise the importance of maintaining natural character and water quality through the following specific elements:

- Discourage Aquaculture Management Area in the area. While the definition of Aquaculture Management Areas is a function of the Northland Regional Council, it is recognised that the District Council and community are key stakeholders in the process for definition of these areas and their future development. Avoiding the use of the Harbour and surrounding coastal marine area recognises the importance of this area for recreation and tourism and acknowledges the imperatives of natural character and water quality values (see above also).

- Requiring establishment of reticulated wastewater as a prerequisite to further residential expansion. This recognises the potential adverse impact of failing on-site disposal systems on the receiving environment and the priority given to this issue by the community.
- Stormwater management and implementation of low impact stormwater guidelines. As with the reticulation of wastewater, the community have identified unmanaged stormwater runoff as an issue for water quality in receiving environments.
- Riparian planting / restoration as part of the development process, particularly for residential and rural-residential activities where economic use of traditionally rural land is no longer required.

**(c) A network of walkways, unformed tracks, recreation access points and linkages through the area and the coastline north and south**

Throughout the consultation, special sense of place values were identified in the ability to access and walk along the coastal marine area. This has already been discussed in some detail with respect to the 'live' theme and outcomes above. A number of informal walkways were identified by the community as popular linkages and recreation areas (e.g. the walkway at Reotahi as an example). In recognition of the importance of these values to the character of the area, and reinforcing the recreation and tourism themes, the Structure Plan identifies a number of specific implementation elements to further develop recreation walkways, unformed tracks and access points to be progressed with development (this is in addition to the pedestrian accessways identified above).

In particular, these specific elements include:

- Provision of a 'mobility impaired' accessway on the Reotahi Reserve, with supporting facilities including parking;
- Extending tracks to provide linkages around the coastal marine area (where necessary linking to the road network), particularly at Reotahi, to the north of McLeod Bay and beyond to east of Little Munroe Bay;
- Provide pedestrian access / reserve link to the heritage cemetery in recognition of the contribution this site has to the sense of place and values of the area;
- Provide pedestrian access to the 'active recreation area' in the north of McLeod Bay (see (a) above); and
- Track development near and into the conservation estate, particularly Mount Manaia and Mount Aubrey.

In addition to the concepts developed for this local Structure Plan area, the importance of walkways and linkages across the Heads has also been strongly expressed through the community consultation. In response to this, a general Concept Plan for the Heads area has been developed (see Appendix 2) this identifies key elements of settlement, rural land use, recreation linkages and ecological networks or linkages in the Heads area. These broad concepts are considered important to achieve both the vision for the Heads Policy Area and the specific visions of the local structure plan areas within the Heads.

In the consultation, mixed response was received to the establishment of wheelchair compatible and mobility impaired walkways. Responses ranged from requesting extensive provision for such walkways to not providing for wheelchair access as it was seen that such access would change the wilderness character. On balance, it is considered that a number of walkways and tracks would not be appropriate for formal or wheelchair access, both with respect to the cost of such development and in acknowledgement that such formalised accessways would detract from the natural character values (particularly along bush clad areas of the coast where clearance and or structure would be required for such an access). However, some walkways could easily be made wheelchair friendly with limited capital work or modification to landform. The Structure Plan has been drafted to reflect the need for a mix of more formal 'walkways' and informal accessways (including low tide accesses and tracks).

#### **(d) The coastal road as a scenic experience**

As discussed above, the community has expressed concern over the future traffic flows on the Whangarei Heads Road. The vision for the Structure Plan is to ensure that the coastal road remain attractive as a local access and 'tourist' route, reinforcing the recreation and tourism function of the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area and the use of non-motorised transportation modes.

As outlined above, specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Maintain road as a 'coastal scenic route' – allowing for safety and capacity upgrades and seeking viewpoint lay-by's in such developments;
- Enforced speed restrictions through residential areas, particularly between McLeod Bay / Reotahi Block Road and the settlement area and incorporating such facilities with opportunities for landscape enhancement, including planting of road 'islands' or chicanes;
- Investigation of a new alternative traffic access road through the McLeod Bay area, cognisant with population / residential growth.

#### **(e) Promote the special recreation experience of the Heads**

As previously noted, McLeod Bay / Reotahi has been identified as a eco-tourism and recreation area, part of the special Heads environment. Maintenance and enhancement of this area for such recreation activities was widely supported. A number of particular recreation facilities and improvements were identified, in addition to comments received on the Draft Structure Plan.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Identify landside facilities and reserves to support marine based recreation, including extension of shade tree planting on foreshore reserve and toilet / rubbish facilities at key reserves;
- Provision of childrens playground facilities in the reserves adjacent to settlement areas in recognition of the function of these areas both for visitors and the resident population. In particular, community recreation facilities clustered at Stuart Road;
- Improved signage to reserves and enhanced information about the area, including heritage features and sites, both within the Structure Plan area but also across the wider Whangarei

Heads Policy Area.

#### **2.1.4 Outcomes for Protecting McLeod Bay / Reotahi - 2025**

Protection of the natural environment in the Whangarei Heads Policy area is the prevailing principle guiding development of all other themes and concept elements for the local Structure Plan areas. In response to the importance of this 'Heads' area as an ecological and environmental 'unit', the Study Team have developed an overall Concept Plan for the Whangarei Heads area. The Concept Plan concentrates on the key elements of the natural and ecological values of the area in defining broad land-use patterns (conservation, rural, living and recreation activities) and ecological and landscape corridors that warrant recognition and protection in overall planning for this area. A copy of the 'Heads' Concept Plan is provided in Appendix 2.

##### **(a) Maintained and enhanced kiwi habitat and natural character values in the surrounding hills**

The bush areas and landscape of the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area were identified by the community as having very high 'sense of place' value, particularly with respect to features such as Mount Manaia and Mount Aubrey and The Nook further to the west of the Structure Plan area. There was strong support for the protection and enhancement of these areas, both in terms of the vegetation and in specific recognition of the habitat these areas provide for significant indigenous fauna, the most notable being the kiwi. In addition, the Department of Conservation has identified a number of bush areas as important habitat for kiwi (most particularly The Nook). The community strongly supported protection of these kiwi habitat areas (with around 90% support) and identified this as a high priority issue for implementation.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Encouraging pet control and pet management. Uncontrolled pets (e.g. dogs and cats) are recognised as a key risk for indigenous species such as kiwi. Further information and education material on appropriate management of pets in areas of known kiwi habitat will contribute to maintaining and enhancing kiwi and other indigenous fauna populations;
- Encouraging bush protection on private land. As well as enhancing the sense of place and natural values of the Living Environment, protection of habitat was identified as important for maintaining and enhancing important wildlife in the area.
- Extending the reserve network and linkages of bush. In addition to bush protection on private land, expansion of the public reserve / open space network was identified as an important aspect to maintaining and enhancing kiwi habitat and natural character values. While a number of reserve linkages were identified for walkways and public accessways, it was also acknowledged that some reserve development should be undertaken for landscape and habitat protection (potentially with limited or restricted public access). Appendix 2 provides detail on linkages beyond the immediate Structure Plan area to the wider Whangarei Heads environment.

**(b) Maintained wilderness and rural values between coastal settlements**

One theme consistently raised throughout the consultation with local communities has been the importance of retaining individual settlements as discrete residential communities. In particular, ribbon development along the Whangarei Heads Road was identified as a significant issue both for the 'sense of place' of communities (see section 2.1.1 above) and for the protection of green corridors and wilderness landscapes.

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Establishing a strong 'urban fence' or limit for residential expansion areas, particularly between Reotahi and Little Munroe Bay, between McLeod Bay and The Nook and between Little Munroe Bay and McGregors Bay (Taurikura). This element is further illustrated in for the Concept Plan for the wider Whangarei Heads (see Appendix 2);
- Extending the reserve network and linkages of bush between Reotahi and Little Munroe Bay and between Little Munroe Bay and McGregors / Taurikura. The bush clad hills between these coastal settlements has been identified for its natural character, outstanding landscape and natural / habitat value and for maintaining discrete settlement areas. Establishment of public reserve land or land set aside as open space (e.g. through covenant) is seen as an appropriate mechanism to protect these landscape features.
- Maintaining 'large lot residential' and Coastal Countryside between coastal settlements. In particular north and south of McLeod Bay / Reotahi and between the existing settlement and the Mount Manaia bush areas. As discussed in 2.1.2, maintaining the rural landscape has been identified as an important element to protect the sense of place and landscape character afforded to these areas.

**(c) Managing land use and infrastructure to enhance coastal water quality**

Specific elements identified for the Structure Plan to achieve this outcome include:

- Reticulated wastewater and stormwater management as a pre-requisite to expanding the Living Environments:
  - Development of low impact stormwater management. Flooding and stormwater management were identified both as issues for the quality of the Living Environment and with respect to water quality. Low impact design principles and on-site management (including maintenance of permeable surface areas) were identified by the community and are generally considered the most appropriate approach to address these issues whilst maintaining the special character and sense of place of the area.
  - Require development of the proposed wastewater reticulation prior to or simultaneously with expansion of Living Environments and provision for residential development. The community identified failing wastewater systems and the limited ability of the local environment to sustain on-site wastewater treatment as a significant concern.
- Discouraging development of Aquaculture Management Areas in the Structure Plan Area (see 2.3.3(b) above).

**(d) Significant viewpoints and coastal margins viewed from the sea and other key public vantage points (including the road) protected**

In consultation with the community, protection of viewpoints and margins was identified as an important outcome for the future of the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area.

The specific elements identified to achieve this outcome have largely been addressed elsewhere and include the following:

- Expansion of reserve and open space linkages and the reserve network (discussed above);
- Encouraging bush protection on private property (discussed above);
- Design guides for development. In recognition of the potential impact that development has on dominant ridgelines and views, the community expressed concern that insensitive development was adversely impacting on landscape values and the 'sense of place'. Suggestions from the community included increasing development controls and restrictions at one end of the spectrum to 'no control'. The Study Team have recommended that a considered approach of careful land-use zoning and the use of design guides may assist the community to greater awareness of the issues of sensitive landscape design. Such guidelines could encourage consideration of ridgelines, viewpoints and sensitive outlooks, without establishing an overly prescriptive and 'blunt' regulatory control. Furthermore, such guidelines can be implemented in consideration of activities which require resource consent (activities which are generally considered to have a greater potential impact on the environment).

**(e) Community Involvement in Reserve Management and Protection**

Throughout the consultation, the community has expressed a strong interest in participating in environmental management and protection, particularly through Land Care Groups and the Manaia Vision Project. The Study Team recognises the importance of community participation in implementing the Structure Plan vision and the philosophy of partnership between the community and traditional 'management' organisations.

The specific elements identified to achieve this outcome have largely been addressed elsewhere and include the following:

- Recognising the role of landowners in bush protection and management. Such recognition might include providing information and assistance to landowners as well as acknowledging the contributions that many landowners have already made (particularly rural landowners) in the landscape and natural character values of the area; and
- Encouraging community lead management planning. This is generally recognised as a District-wide implementation element and has been identified in Part I of the Coastal Management Strategy.

## **2.2 Structure Plan Concept Map**

The attached plan provides an overall development and management vision for the McLeod Bay / Reotahi area for 2025.

MAP HERE

### 3 **Implementation: Priorities and Critical Path**

The following section provides guidance on specific methods or actions to be undertaken to achieve the Structure Plan. It is important to recognise that there are a number of District-wide implementation methods proposed for the Coastal Management Strategy overall. The purpose of this section, is to focus only on those additional specific methods particular to this Structure Plan Area.

#### 3.1 Residential Growth and Development

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.1.1 Expanded residential settlement area within the existing McLeod settlement</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Confirmation of the carrying capacity of the reticulated wastewater system to provide for residential expansion</li> <li>■ Confirmation of topography and land suitability for 'Living 1' boundary at southern end of McLeod Bay</li> <li>■ Change to the District Plan to provide for Living 1, subject to above.</li> <li>■ Enforcing the settlement limits or 'urban fence'.</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.2.5</b>
<b>3.1.2 Expanded low-density residential settlement surrounding the existing settlement areas</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of topography and land suitability to confirm appropriate boundaries for 'large lot' residential living environment</li> <li>■ Confirmation of boundaries for 'large lot' residential on the basis of above and the landscape units and values identified in the Heads Area;</li> <li>■ Change to the District Plan to provide for 'large lot' residential, subject to above.</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.9.1; 3.5.4</b>
<b>3.1.3 Providing for Residential / Commercial Centre at McLeod Bay</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Capacity and needs assessment for boundaries of community commercial / service facility.</li> <li>■ Change to the District Plan, including Business Environment provision.</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	<b>3.1.1</b>



## 3.2 Infrastructure

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<p><b>3.2.1 Traffic Calming within the Settlement Areas</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Traffic Management and Safety Study.</li> <li>■ Development and design of appropriate speed calming methods – chicanes or road ‘bridges’, including landscape design dependant upon Traffic Management study.</li> <li>■ Inclusion of implementation in asset management plans for road maintenance and capital works.</li> </ul>	<b>HIGH</b>	
<p><b>3.2.2 Future Provision for an Inland Traffic Access Route</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of possible route alignments for traffic access inland from the coastal edge at McLeod Bay;</li> <li>■ Inclusion of implementation programme in capital works programmes (with funding through development levies).</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	<b>3.1.1</b>
<p><b>3.2.3 Pedestrian / Cycle provision in Road Reserve</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development and design of pedestrian and cycle facilities in road reserve;</li> <li>■ Inclusion of implementation in road upgrade programme.</li> </ul>	<b>HIGH</b>	
<p><b>3.2.4 Encourage Marine Based Passenger Transport Facilities</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of engineering and design requirements for ferry launching / berthing facilities;</li> <li>■ Design of wharf upgrading at Stuart Road, including road access upgrading as required for vehicle manoeuvring and pick-up / drop-off facilities</li> <li>■ Inclusion of necessary works in capital works plans</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.1.1</b>
<p><b>3.2.5 Implementation of Sewerage Reticulation</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Progress on current implementation of reticulated wastewater system through Structure Plan area;</li> <li>■ Confirmation of capacity requirements of system for future expansion of Living environments (see 3.1 above)</li> </ul>	<b>HIGH</b>	
<p><b>3.2.6 Maintenance of Heads Road as ‘Coastal Scenic Experience’</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identification of future ‘lay-bys’ and viewpoints on the road reserve for ‘tourist’ traffic;</li> <li>■ Focus on road programme to safety improvements only (as opposed to speed or capacity up-grades);</li> <li>■ Inclusion of implementation in road upgrade programme.</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	<b>3.5.2</b>

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.2.7 Implementation of Low Impact Stormwater and Catchment Management Planning</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of existing hydrology of McLeod Bay / Reotahi catchment and development of appropriate low impact stormwater management systems;</li> <li>■ Investigation of existing permeability of ‘residential areas’ and assessment to whether limits or controls required in future development areas;</li> <li>■ Potential amendment to District Plan for permeable surface coverage controls;</li> <li>■ Including of stormwater management plan in asset management programme for stormwater.</li> </ul>	<b>HIGH</b>	

### 3.3 Open Space and Recreation

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.3.1 Up-Graded Boat Launching Facilities at Reotahi</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ With reserve facility upgrading, include provision of boat trailer parking;</li> <li>■ Inclusion in asset management plans and capital works plans provisions for facility upgrades.</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	<b>3.1.1</b>
<b>3.3.2 Up-Graded Boat Launching Facilities at McLeod Bay</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of facility improvements with works proposed for Stuart Road;</li> <li>■ Inclusion in asset management plans and capital works plans provisions for facility upgrades.</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.2.3</b>
<b>3.3.3 Active Reserve Facilities at Northern End of McLeod Bay</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintenance of beach (sand) boat launching facilities at northern end of beach;</li> <li>■ Investigation of future parking area - on eastern side of Whangarei Heads Road to provide off-beach parking for boat launching facilities;</li> <li>■ Investigation of future reserve area, at the time of subdivision / development of land to north of Structure Plan area providing enhanced recreation access to beach;</li> <li>■ Encourage NRC to establish dedicated active marine recreation area at northern end of bay and control use of remainder of McLeod Bay for active marine use;</li> <li>■ Inclusion in asset management plans and capital works plans provisions for facility upgrades.</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.1.1; 3.3.7</b>

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.3.4 New Reserves – Viewpoints and Linkages</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of reserve network cognisant with population growth.</li> </ul>	LOW	Pop growth and reserve contribution
<b>3.3.5 ‘Wheelchair’ Access at Reotahi Reserve</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With reserve facility upgrading, include provision of ‘access impaired’ walkway;</li> <li>Inclusion in asset management plans and capital works plans provisions for facility upgrades.</li> </ul>	MED	(already underway)
<b>3.3.6 Vesting of Road as Esplanade Reserve Along Foreshore to Heritage Cemetery</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquisition of esplanade reserves commensurate with subdivision or development of area pedestrian access from McLeod Bay to Heritage Cemetery</li> <li>Formal vesting as reserve</li> </ul>	LOW	3.1.1
<b>3.3.7 Community Reserve area at McLeod Bay South</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation of suitable location for children’s playground recreation area within reserves at McLeod Bay South – providing pedestrian linkages to community / commercial service centre</li> <li>Formal vesting as reserve</li> <li>Inclusion of works in capital works and asset planning</li> </ul>	LOW	3.1.1

### 3.4 Coastal Hazards

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.4.1 Foreshore protection of Stuart Road</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation of protection / erosion control necessary along Stuart Road;</li> <li>Inclusion of works in asset management and capital works programme.</li> </ul>	LOW	3.2.4

### 3.5 Sense of Place

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<p><b>3.5.1 Recreation / Reserve Signage</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved consistent signage to reserves and walkways</li> <li>Improved information about features in area for promotion of tourism (place marketing and branding strategy)</li> </ul>	<p>MED</p> <p>HIGH</p>	
<p><b>3.5.2 Place Marketing of Reserves, Walkways and Features of Interest</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent signage and interpretative information about features in Structure Plan area (place marketing)</li> </ul>	<p>HIGH</p>	
<p><b>3.5.3 Bush Protection Provisions in District Plan</b></p> <p>See section 2.9</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>District Wide</p>
<p><b>3.5.4 Encourage Enhancement of Bush and Wider Bush Protection</b></p> <p>See section 2.9</p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>District Wide</p>
<p><b>3.5.5 Review Landscape Values of Heads Area</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review boundaries of Landscape Unites identified at Heads</li> <li>Inclusion of findings in amendments to District Plan etc for implementation of Structure Plan</li> </ul>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p><i>Already underway</i></p>
<p><b>3.5.6 Sediment and Earthwork Controls</b></p>	<p>HIGH</p>	<p>District Wide</p>

### 3.6 Heritage

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<p><b>3.6.1 Walkway to and Protection of Heritage Cemetery</b></p> <p>See 3.3.3 &amp; 3.3.5 above</p>	<p>LOW</p>	
<p><b>3.6.2 Interpretative Signage of Heritage Features</b></p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpretative signage of heritage sites and areas, including lighthouse walkway and off-shore wrecks</li> <li>Consultation with tangata whenua and community.</li> </ul>	<p>MED</p>	<p>3.3.4</p>

### 3.7 Rural Development and Subdivision

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.7.1 Buffer ‘Zones’ between Living and Countryside Boundaries</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of appropriate building setbacks and appropriate methods (e.g. building line or yard restrictions);</li> <li>■ Amendment to the District Plan</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	
<b>3.7.2 Education and Awareness Programme on Farming Operations</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Development of a public information flier on nature of farming operations;</li> <li>■ Dissemination programme</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	

### 3.8 Economic Development

<b>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Trigger</b>
<b>3.8.1 Rezoning for Commercial / Community Hub of at McLeod Bay (south)</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of land requirement for service environment establishment;</li> <li>■ Investigation of land suitability and infrastructure capacity for business environment;</li> <li>■ Amendment to District Plan</li> </ul>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>3.1.1</b>
<b>3.8.2 Encourage ‘Tourist’ Route on Whangarei Heads Road</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Roading Upgrades to provide for cyclist / tourists</li> </ul>	<b>MED</b>	<b>3.2.5</b>
<b>3.8.3 Provide no Landside Support for Marine Industry in Structure Plan Area</b>		
<p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consultation with NRC on AMA’s in area;</li> <li>■ Clear policy development on Council’s policy for AMA’s;</li> <li>■ Assessment for need to include policy direction in District Plan.</li> </ul>	<b>HIGH</b>	

### 3.9 Biodiversity

<i>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Trigger</i>
<b>3.9.1 Maintaining Vegetation and Landscape Values in Development</b>		
This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of methods to protect bush protection in subdivision for large lot living environments (District-wide);</li> <li>■ Change to the District Plan.</li> </ul>	HIGH	
<b>3.9.2 Encouraging Enhancement of Vegetation and Landscape Values in Development</b>		
This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Investigation of appropriate species for planting in the Heads Area;</li> <li>■ Preparation of planting guidelines and public information material.</li> </ul>	MED	
<b>3.9.3 Advocate good 'pet management' in areas of important habitat (kiwi)</b>		
This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Encourage appropriate 'pet ownership' in areas of kiwi habitat (e.g. community information / pamphlet)</li> <li>■ Animal / pet control (e.g. training)</li> <li>■ Investigate potential for by-law controls on potentially dangerous pets (e.g. ferrets, stoats).</li> </ul>	HIGH	
<b>3.9.4 Encourage bush linkages</b>		
This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bush protection on private land as part of development process</li> <li>■ Reserve linkages and reserve expansion.</li> </ul>	LOW	3.1.1
<b>3.9.5 Earthwork</b>		
<b>3.9.6 Ecological Value</b>		

### 3.10 Community Resources

<i>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Trigger</i>
<b>3.10.1 Provide for Community Centre at McLeod Bay</b>		
See 3.8.1 above		

<i>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Trigger</i>
3.10.2 Cemetery Investigation		

### 3.11 Integrated Management

<i>Method – Specific Implementation Measure</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Trigger</i>
3.11.1 Advise NRC that area not desired by community as an AMA	HIGH	
3.11.2 Liase with Department of Conservation on potential of marine reserve at Reotahi	LOW	
3.11.3 Work with Department of Conservation on management of reserve / bush areas	HIGH	
3.11.4 Work with NRC on stormwater solutions	HIGH	
3.11.5 DoC, WDC and Community initiatives for kiwi protection	HIGH	
3.11.6 Work with Community Organisations to assist community lead reserve management	HIGH	
3.11.7 Facilitate community lead initiatives for conservation and landscape programmes	MED	
3.11.8 Facilitate provision for under-grounding of power-lines with utility operators		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Advise Community Opportunities for individual underground power lines or communal finding of;</li> <li>■ WDC to liase with community on approach.</li> </ul>	LOW	