

May 2026

Port of Tauranga Reconsenting Project Channel Dredging

Recreation Effects Assessment

Final

Rob Greenaway & Associates
www.greenaway.co.nz

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1 Summary

This report reviews the potential effects on recreation values of the Port of Tauranga Ltd's proposal to reconsent its capital and maintenance dredging activities, and use of the associated spoil disposal areas. Dredging has been carried out in Tauranga Harbour since the late 1960s and the current 2013 consents will expire in 2027. The renewal includes allowance to deepen the Sulphur Point and Mount Maunganui sitting basins (alongside Stella Passage and the Maunganui Roads), deepen an area beyond the Mount Maunganui sitting basin at the southern end of Pilot Bay, and minor works to ease a corner of the No. 1 Reach outside the Entrance. These three activities are referred to as capital dredging (creating new assets), and will enable the type of deep draught ships that already call at Tauranga to be less constrained and allow access to wharves as they are replaced with wharves capable of handling modern vessels. The capital dredging will be done in stages to meet wharf replacement and take approximately 6 weeks. Maintenance dredging will be a continuing annual project taking five to six weeks per year.

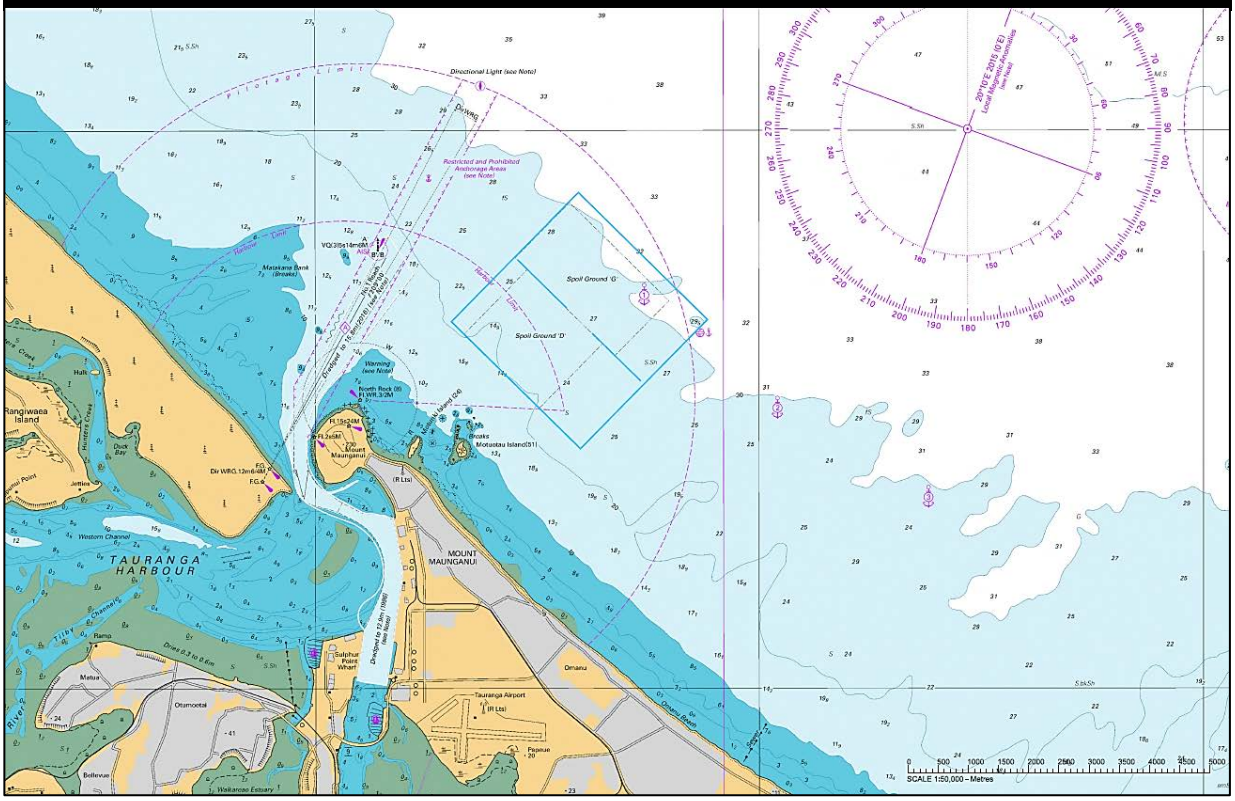
Spoil from capital and maintenance dredging is deposited offshore, and is of good quality (ie, little silt or contamination). Clean sands are deposited in inshore sites off the Maunganui coast to assist with beach replenishment and dune development. Tauranga City Council also relies on clean sands deposited in Pilot Bay to replenish the local beach.

The study area for this recreation assessment is defined in Figure 1 and includes all the outer coastal area and Tauranga Harbour as indicated. This area is considered to encompass all potential effects of the proposed activities, including sediment discharges from dredging and spoil disposal, and changes to bathymetry.

This report is based on desktop review, review of parallel technical reports (such as marine ecology, navigation safety and coastal geomorphology and hydrodynamics) and stakeholder interviews to identify:

- Recreation activities and values in the study area;
- Regional, local and iwi policies and strategies which identify management concerns expressed in those documents as they relate to recreation;

Figure 1: Study area showing spoil grounds – outer Tauranga Harbour and wider coastal setting



- Historic changes in recreation participation over time, related to previous dredge and spoil disposal activities, and the movement of dredge vessels; and
- Projected effects of the continuing operation of the consents as sought.

The majority of this assessment was completed in late 2024 and early 2025 when it was understood that a wider capital dredging project required consenting. However, the majority of the capital dredging is now planned to be completed in 2026 under the Port's existing consents. This updated assessment (late 2025) considers a much smaller scope of capital works, confined largely to non-recreational areas of the Harbour (the sitting basins), a relatively small area south of Pilot Bay, and an immaterial (from a recreational perspective) amount of work beyond the Entrance. The scope of the original assessment would most likely have been reduced considering the limited potential for effects from the now-proposed small-scale additional capital works. However, the maintenance dredging component still encompasses a wide area and needs a broad consideration.

The recreation activities of interest, and relevant potential effects (both positive and negative), are:

- Swimming and diving
- Boating, including sailing, power boating, fishing from boats and small boat activities, such as rowing, waka ama, waka taua, kayaking, personal water craft and stand-up paddle boards (SUP)
- Fishing and shellfishing
- Beach activities
- Surfing

The study area is a high use setting for recreation, treasured for its natural values, shelter (within the Harbour), accessibility, ability to be used for a wide variety of recreation activities (including commercial recreation), and the quality of the waves on the exposed coast. All recreation values in the study area are of very high regional significance. Iwi indicate the cultural significance of waka ama and waka taua activity, and the ability to confidently gather quality and abundant kai moana.

Interviewees and literature review identified a number of areas of interest related to capital and maintenance dredging, although many considered that they were unaffected by those activities. The key effects, and the relevant effects assessment findings, are:

Beach replenishment: Many respondents noted the benefits from clean sands being used for beach nourishment at Pilot Bay and the Maunganui ocean beaches.

Biosecurity risks: Marine pests require increased maintenance and surveillance of biofouling on recreational craft. Dredging – and port activities generally – were considered a potential source of marine pests. The Cawthron Institute Marine Pest Risk Assessment finds that the proposed dredging activities are likely to present an incremental change in marine biosecurity risk over the existing situation, primarily associated with vessel movements and dredge spoil disposal. POT has proposed consent conditions which require a financial contrition to the BOP Regional Council to support ongoing monitoring of marine pests in the Harbour, a Risk Management Assessment when requested and immediate responses to any identified high-risk marine pests.

Navigation safety: Interviewees and literature indicate that increasing crowding of the Harbour by both recreational and commercial craft is a growing concern. The recreational component of this is beyond POT's control. The Navigatus Navigation Safety Assessment finds that the proposed dredge activities will result in minor potential changes to the navigational safety risk profile for the Harbour, with a marginal reduction of risk in some areas, and minor increases that require the implementation of additional controls for the risks to be considered 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP). Overall, the capital and maintenance dredging proposed, along with the intended operation of the shipping channel and designated turning basin,

are considered to not represent a significant change to the status-quo in terms of navigational safety for other recreational users of the harbour – a no more than minor effect.

Recreation groups and iwi almost all sought more information about general Port activities (ship movements) and dredge activities to enable easier event planning and a general understanding of harbour safety issues. The development of a formal advisory system between POT, iwi and user groups is therefore a key recommendation of this assessment.

Increased tidal currents: Several interviewees described increasing tidal currents in the Harbour over time and related these to, potentially, dredge activities. However, modelling and recorded data indicate that dredging generally *reduces* current speeds. Deepening the Harbour has no effect on the quantity of water moving between tides, since this relates to the height difference between high and low tide, and not increases in water depth. Increasing the channel depth increases the flow capacity of the Harbour and so generally reduces tidal current speed. Localised increased speeds may occur where there is a constraint, such as a shoal or physical structure like a causeway. Consequently, there is only a very weak relationship between dredging and tidal current speed, and generally with a slowing effect.

Changes to harbour bathymetry and tidal currents beyond the dredge areas: Dr Willem de Lange's Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics reports very little effects on current speed and sediment transport beyond the dredge areas, noting that the greatest changes occurred subsequent to early dredging in the 1960s, and that effects have been stable subsequently.

Batter slopes on dredge channel sides: The Mount Maunganui Yacht Club noted that the relatively abrupt change in depth on the batter slope of the dredged channel at the southern end of Pilot Bay and Centre Bank, considering it a hazard to yachts approaching the shore and potentially striking a steep bank.

Figure 2: South Pilot Bay dredge area (red)

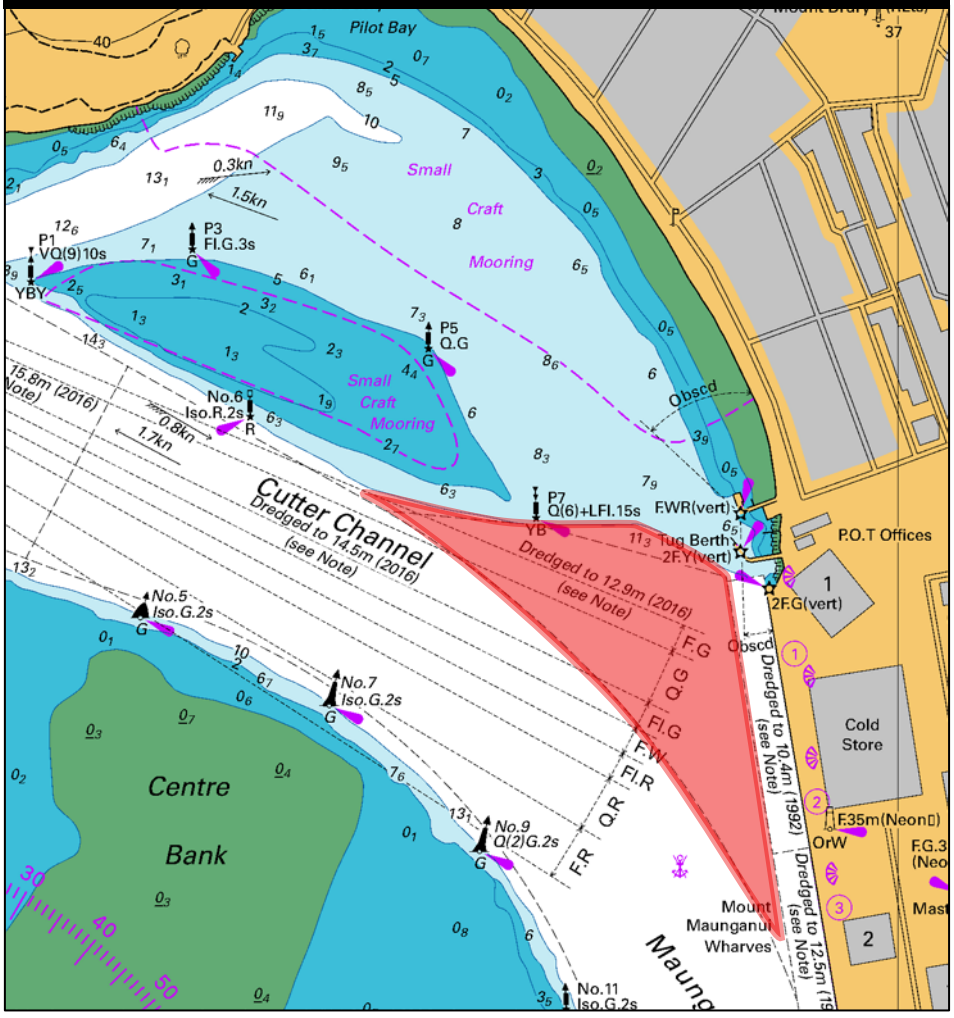


Figure 2 shows the proposed dredge area immediately south of Pilot Bay, showing a current dredge depth of 12.9 m, and a target depth of 16 m. The adjacent depth of the main channel in Pilot Bay is shown as approximately 8 m. The latter is well below the required depth of all common recreational keelers, which would normally feature no more than a 2 m draft (such a Ross 930).

Dr Willem de Lange's Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics reports the formation of reasonably stable batter slopes on the channel edges with limited creep beyond the originally dredged toe line over time. Maintenance dredging does not further increase the extent of the original dredge footprint.

Effects on coastal erosion, particularly Panepane Point: Panepane Point and the southern end of the Matakana ocean beach have eroded substantially since the mid-1990s, after a long period of accretion. These are both important recreation settings. Dr Willem de Lange's Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics indicates that wave patterns caused by La Niña and El Niño weather patterns are the prime influences on local erosion and accretion patterns, with recent frequent La Niña patterns causing the current pattern of coastal retreat. The Matakana Banks ebb tide delta (the extensive area of shallow sands offshore from the Matakana ocean beach) show no long-term trends of accretion or erosion (that is, the sand remains in the system and is available for replenishment of the coast when global weather patterns permit).

Effects on ecological values and water quality: A range of ecological values underpin many recreation values of the study area, particularly the harvesting of kai moana (shellfish, finfish, koura/crayfish, etc). The Boffa Miskell Marine Ecology Assessment finds that no mitigations are required as a result of the capital and maintenance dredging due to the low or very low scale of potential effects on marine ecology values.

The Streamlined Water Quality Assessment found negligible effects for toxicity, water temperature, pH, salinity, and dissolved oxygen from dredging within the Harbour and from spoil disposal. The assessment found the potential for local increases in nutrient levels (and so the potential for algal growth) but that the net effect on the Harbour would be less than minor.

In summary, the direct effects of dredging and spoil disposal on recreation opportunities and value in the study area are no more than minor in nature, considering the issues discussed above. However, the potential conflicts caused by the high and growing levels of recreational and commercial boating activity in Tauranga Harbour were reported by many interviewees as requiring better management. More knowledge about the timing of ship movements and dredge activities was sought by Tangata Whenua and recreational harbour users, enabling better event planning and increased safety generally. This assessment recommends that a formal advisory and communication system be established between the Port, Tangata Whenua and recreational harbour users. Sport Bay of Plenty has established a recreational harbour users group, and this would be the best venue for communication with recreation groups. Advice from this group will inform preferred ongoing communication methods and content, and it is recommended that a representative of the POT join the group.

2 Introduction

Port of Tauranga Limited (POT) was granted resource consents (RC65806 and RC65807) in 2013 to carry out dredging to deepen and widen the existing shipping channels in Tauranga Harbour/Te Awanui and beyond the Entrance, and to conduct routine maintenance dredging.. The specific activities authorised by RC65806 and RC65807 are.

- Disturbance of the seabed by capital dredging;
- Disturbance of the seabed by maintenance dredging;
- Deposition of the dredged material in the coastal marine area ('CMA'); and
- Removal of some of the dredged material from the CMA.

These consents will expire in December 2027 and must be replaced to ensure planned capital and maintenance dredging can occur as and when required.

It is proposed that the proposed capital dredging will occur within the existing shipping channels and consist of (Figure 2):

- Deepening the approach to Berth 1 (by approximately 3m) at the southern end of Pilot Bay;
- Deepening an area of the Passing Lane to smooth the entrance corner (by approximately 7m) beyond the Harbour Entrance; and
- Deepening of the existing Sitting Basins adjacent to the Sulphur Point and Mount Maunganui commercial wharves (by depths vary from 1m to 7m).

The following areas will require maintenance dredging (Figure 4):

- The existing Channel, including areas where capital dredging is required; and
- The proposed extension to Stella Passage (subject to a separate Resource Consent process).

Maintenance dredging at the Port is almost entirely done with the use of a small Trailing Suction Hopper Dredging ('TSHD'). Some isolated work with a Grab Dredger ('GD') or Back-Hoe Dredge ('BHD') may be undertaken in areas that cannot be reached by a small TSHD. This includes areas such as confined areas close to wharves. Due to the small areas and associated volumes associated with the capital dredging the same equipment with the maintenance dredging would be used for the capital dredging.

Common mitigation measures when dredging particles that don't readily settle is to limit the time of overflow from the hopper or undertake the dredging when the current is taking any plume away from the sensitive receiving environment. This maximises the efficiency of the dredging operation and reduces the turbidity of the surrounding water.

Dredging operations can occur 24 hours/6.5 days a week, with the primary TSHD only berthing for refuelling, resupplying or maintenance. Dredge cycle times for the TSHD (the time taken to dredge a full load, then to sail to and unload at the disposal site before returning to the dredge site) are expected to range from two to three hours. The proposed capital works will be undertaken in stages to match wharf redevelopment and each stage is predicted to be approximately six weeks.

Annual maintenance dredging activities will typically take five to six weeks per year. POT is currently relying on a 75 m TSHD called the 'Albatros' for maintenance, and this dredge, or one with similar specifications, would be used in the future. The proposed volume for ongoing maintenance dredging is 250,000 m^3 per annum averaged over ten years with a maximum of 350,000 m^3 in any one year.

All dredging activities will be supported by crew boats and survey vessels. Survey vessels provide accurate and fine scale hydrographic information for the operating dredge and are often around 9 - 15 m in length, and can be fast moving when not surveying. Crew boats transfer shore based crew members and project

staff to the dredging vessels as required. Sometimes a survey vessel will also double as a crew boat for efficiency.

It is proposed that spoil generated from all dredging activities will continue to be disposed in the existing spoil deposition sites (Sites A, B, C, F and H1 and H2 in Figure 5). Consents for these sites also require renewal.

Disposal sites H1 and H2 are the primary disposal sites which were sized and consented to take 15,000,000 m^3 of capital dredged material; the shallower landward H1 site is designated for clean sands and the seaward side for both clean sands and silty sediments. Sediments generated during maintenance dredging are either disposed of into H1 or H2, but additional near shore disposal grounds (A, B and C) are used for clean sand which provides for beach sand replenishment along the Maunganui coast. Clean sand is also provided for beach replenishment in Pilot Bay (F), also shown in Figure 5. Beach renourishment also forms part of the reconsenting process.

2.1 Scope and Method

This report assesses the effects of the proposed capital and maintenance dredging and spoil disposal and sand renourishment activities on the recreation values of Tauranga Harbour and the exposed coast to its north and south. The study area is defined by Figure 1.

This report is based on qualitative stakeholder interviews, literature review, and the review of other available specialist reports prepared for Port of Tauranga.

Stakeholder interviews were completed in early 2025, with catch-up phone conversations with Sport BOP, the Tauranga Yacht Club and Mount Maunganui Yacht Club in late 2025 (considering the completion of consented capital dredge works in mid-2025).

Relevant parallel specialist reports include:

- **Marine Pest Risk Assessment** – Cawthron Institute
- **Navigation Safety Assessment** – Navigatus Consultants Limited
- **Water Quality Assessment** and **Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics**, including contaminants and turbidity – Streamlined Environmental Limited and Dr Willem De Lange respectively
- **Marine Ecology Assessment** – Boffa Miskell Limited

While this recreation assessment does not review the cultural values of the study area, particularly Māori cultural values, it incorporates feedback on a draft consultation version of this report by Ngāi Tamarawaho, Waitaha, Ngāti Ranginui Fisheries Trust, Ngāti Hangarau and Ngāi Tukairangi. It is noted that many cultural and recreation values are intertwined, and recreation activities can be an expression and exercise of cultural values, such as whanaungatanga. This report can advise a cultural assessment by describing relevant aspects of the study area as they relate to recreation – such as water quality and navigation safety – but the further layers of personal and cultural association need to be added by the relevant individuals and communities.

2.2 Statement confirming compliance with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023

As an expert witness, I have read, and I am familiar with the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for expert witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023.

I have prepared my, or provided input into, an assessment of effects for the Port of Tauranga reconsenting project for channel dredging in compliance with the Code of Conduct and will continue to comply with it in this Fast-track Approvals Act process. In particular:

- My overriding duty is to assist the decision-maker impartially on matters within my expertise;
- Unless I state otherwise, my assessment is within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted to consider material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express; and
- I have not, and will not behave as, an advocate for the Applicants.

Figure 3: Areas of proposed capital dredging

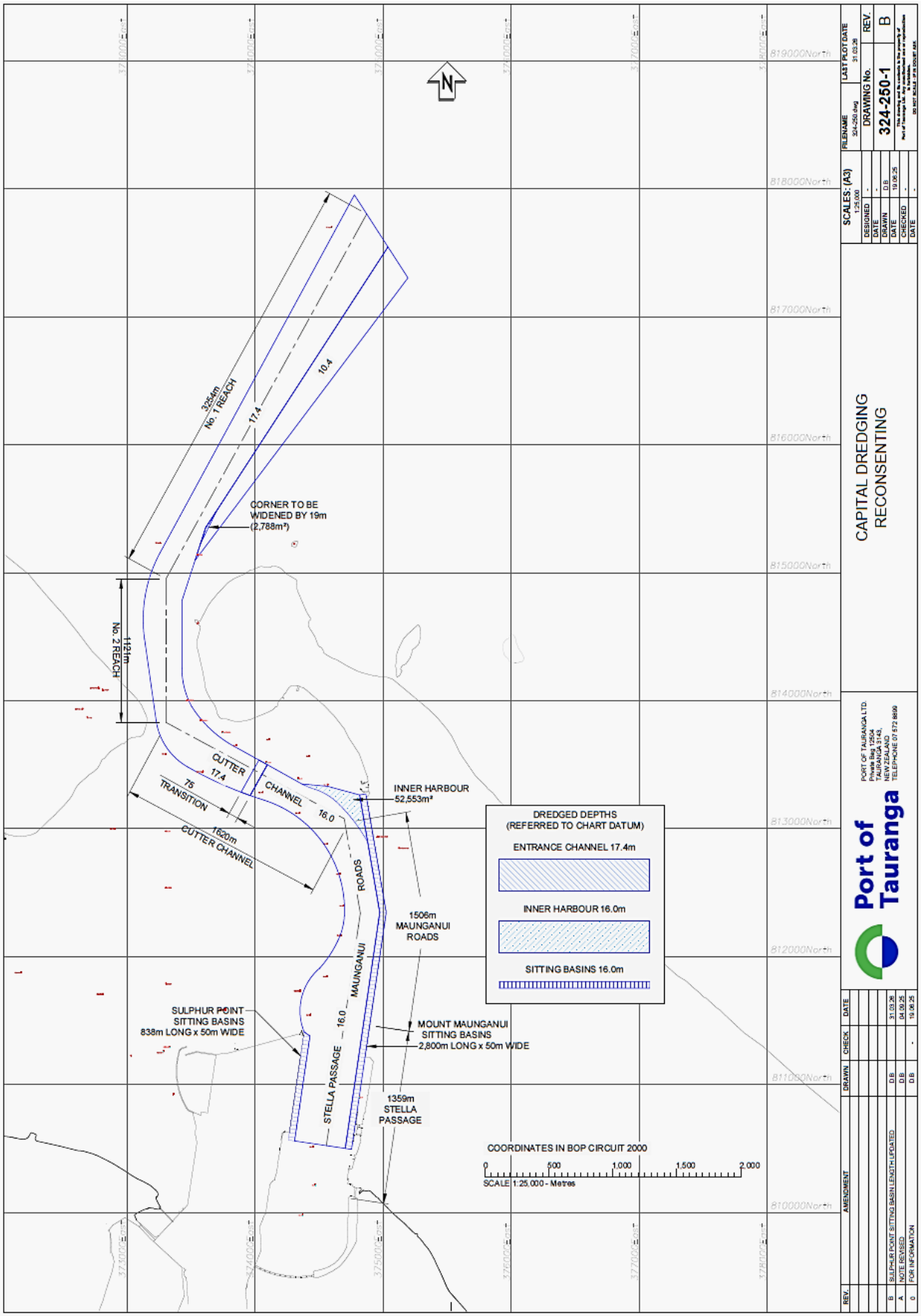


Figure 4: Maintenance dredging areas

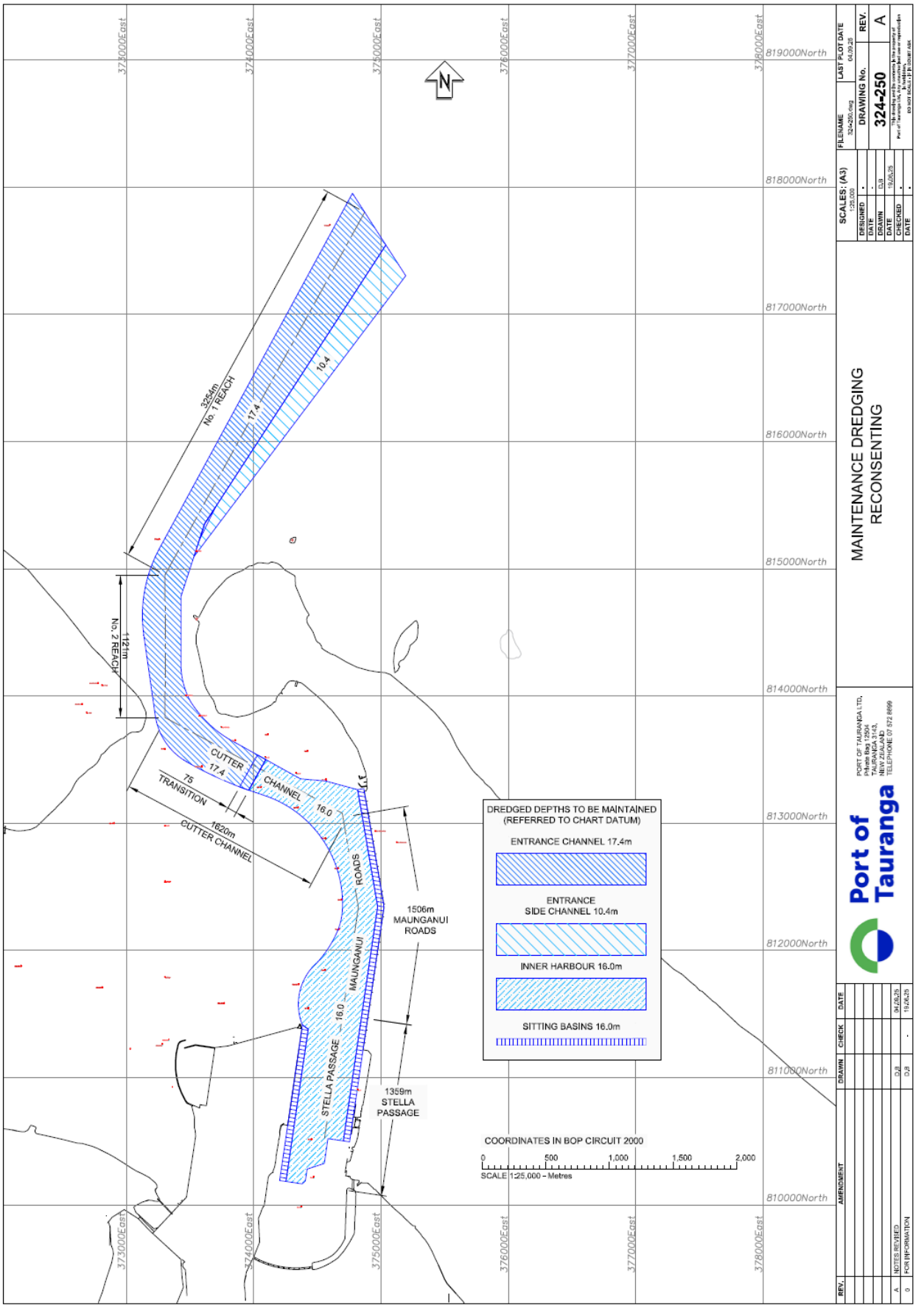
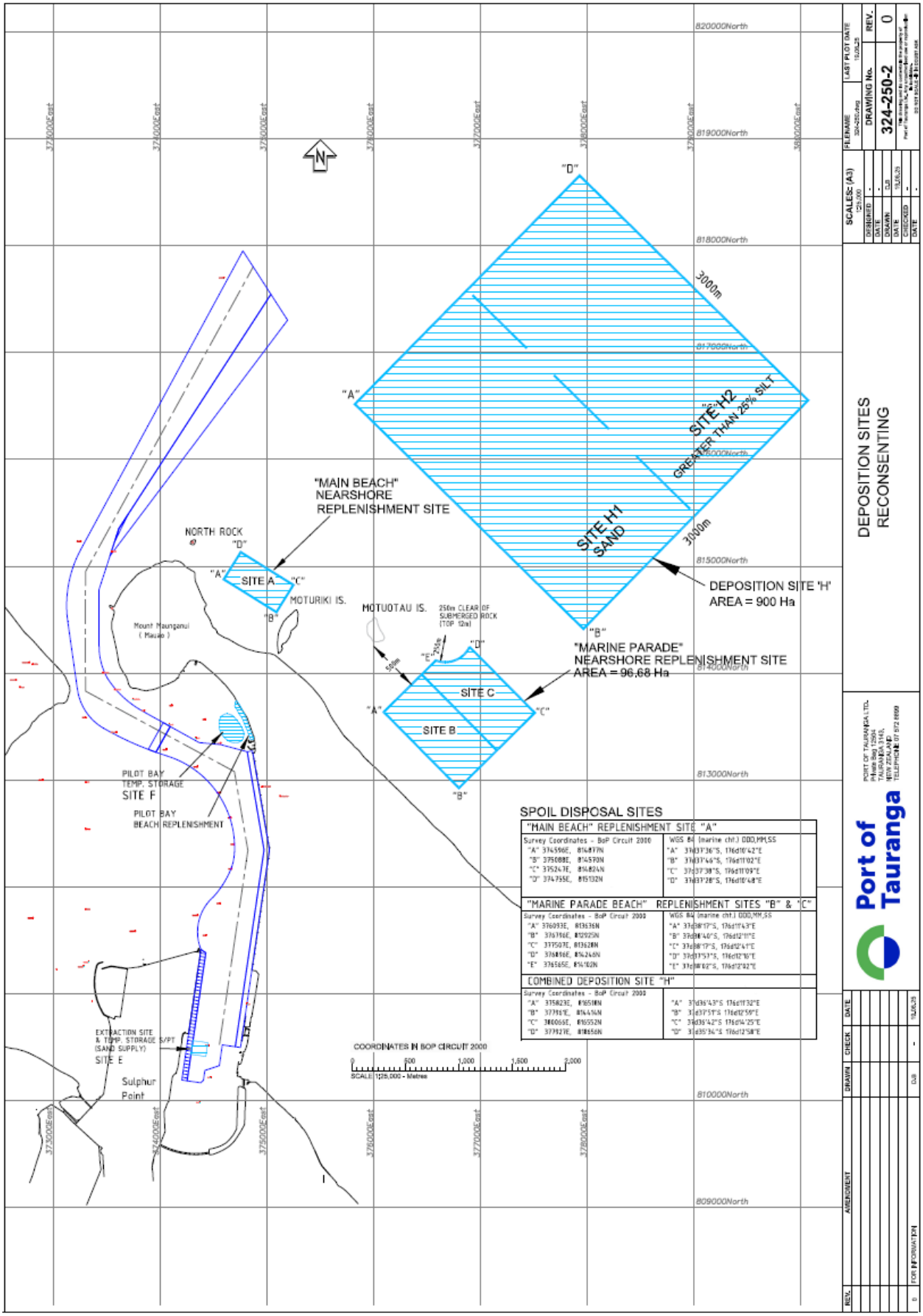


Figure 5: Spoil and sand replenishment areas



3 Policy and strategies

This section considers regional recreation planning material in relation to recreation values of the relevant components of the study area. Planning material more specific to consent conditions and the regulatory planning environment are reviewed in the Assessment of Environmental Effects by Enspire Ltd.

3.1 Environment Bay of Plenty

3.1.1 Regional Coastal Environment Plan

Figure 6 illustrates the 'use' zones defined in the Regional Coastal Environment Plan (RCEP) (EBOP 2019) for Tauranga Harbour and its approaches. These include:

Tauranga Harbour Port Zone – defined as the 'Port Zone' in the RCEP. The RCEP states, in reference to dredging in this Zone:

> *Issue 57. The Port of Tauranga is the largest export port in New Zealand. The Port cannot relocate from its current location and its continued operation and incremental growth is of national significance. Maintenance dredging is required to keep the Port of Tauranga operational. The Port and its shipping channels are identified as regionally significant infrastructure in the RPS* [Regional Policy Statement].
>
> *Issue 58. Capital dredging is required for the Port of Tauranga to deepen or widen existing shipping channels or berths, or to establish new shipping channels or berths. There is a potential for significant adverse effects when establishing new navigation channels or berths.*
>
> *Issue 59. The volume of dredgings from the Port of Tauranga makes full land-based disposal impractical.*

And

> *Objective 52. The current operational needs of the Port of Tauranga are provided for as a matter of priority while avoiding, remedying or mitigating the effects of those activities on cultural values and the environment.*

Policy PZ 5 provides for maintenance dredging within the Port Zone as a controlled activity. Matters of control – of relevance to recreation – include:

> *(b) Effects on the hydrodynamic and geomorphic regime of the harbour and open coastline, including maintenance of beaches and related sediment transport processes.*
>
> *(c) Effects on fisheries, indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems.*
>
> *(e) Coastal water quality including the provisions of Section 3 – Coastal Discharges and Schedule 13 to this Plan* [biodiversity offsets].
>
> *(f) Effects on other harbour users, navigation and public safety during dredging.*

The use of coastal water as part of maintenance dredging activity is, however, a discretionary activity (Rules TD 4 and PZ 13), with a focus on managing marine ecosystems, natural heritage and cultural values (Policies TD 1 and TD 2). Recreation amenity is not referred to, but recreation values often depend on the function of marine ecosystems.

Figure 6: EBOP RCEP Maps 09c and 11c detail - Use



Capital dredging is a discretionary activity in accordance with Rule PZ 13.

Policy PZ 5 (d) directs consideration of, within the Port Zone, the "efficient and ongoing storage of vessels in the Tauranga Bridge Marina". That Policy also states, "Activities that will significantly conflict with the achievement of the purpose or compromise Port operations should be avoided."

Policies PZ 7 and PZ 8 are also of relevance to recreation:

> *Policy PZ 7. Recognise that the Tauranga Bridge Marina and Tauranga Harbour Marine Precinct provide recreation and economic benefits, and enable their continued existence, maintenance and development where doing so is consistent with both the purpose of the Port Zone as set out in Policy PZ 5 and with Policy PZ 6.*
>
> *Policy PZ 8. Have regard to the role of beach replenishment sites for the continued operation of the Port or Tauranga and take into account the potential benefits of using sand from dredging for the purpose of beach replenishment. Drawing No 324-75 of Schedule 9 – Outline Development Plan Port of Tauranga, identifies appropriate beach replenishment sites for sand dredgings from the Port of Tauranga, but other areas may also be appropriate for beach replenishment.*

The latter include the inshore spoil disposal sites subject to the reconsenting proposal (sites A, B and C). This replenishment objective is associated with supporting recreation amenity. The 'dumping' of dredged material at all Spoil Disposal Sites is deemed to be a discretionary activity and is required to address the *Resource Management (Marine Pollution) Regulations 1998* which refer to visual amenity issues (such as water clarity) and effects on aquatic life – both of which are relevant to recreation amenity.

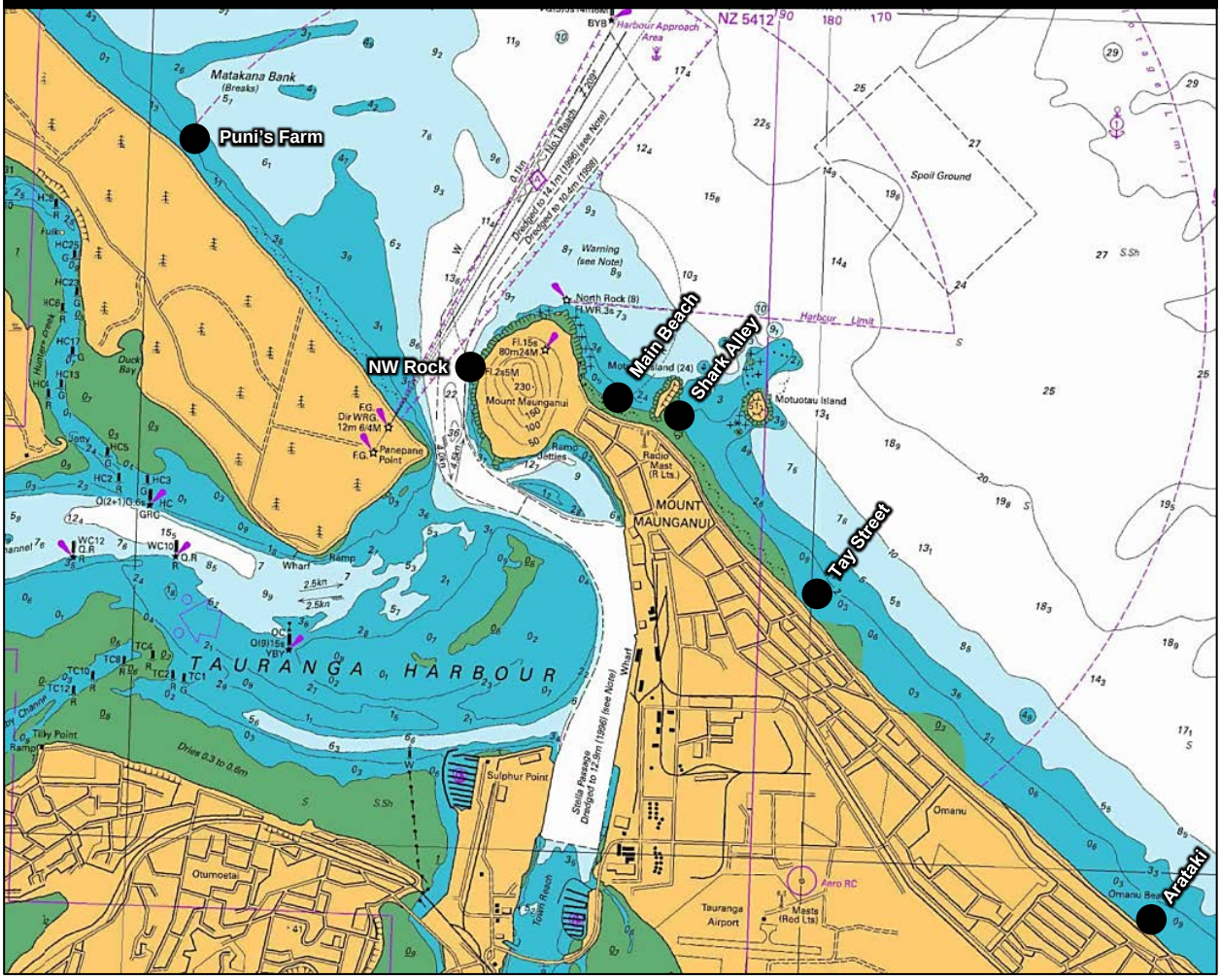
Rule DD 14 applies to the spoil disposal sites other than sites E and F. Policy DD 11 recognises "the potential benefits of using sand from dredging for the purpose of beach replenishment or building up new high-tide bird roosts or breeding sites". Policy DD 12 states that the:

> *Selection of deposition sites in the coastal marine area for dredging material will be subject to the following criteria:*
>
> *(a) Avoidance of adverse effects on areas of existing significant fisheries, or shell fisheries or other areas containing nationally rare or outstanding examples of indigenous ecological community types;*
>
> *(b) Avoidance of areas of heavy commercial or recreational navigation;*
>
> *(c) The capacity to return seawater to ambient conditions before reaching any beach (except where beach replenishment is one of the purposes of dredging), or significant fishery, shell fishery or identified area or value of significance;*
>
> *(d) Minimum size to limit any adverse effects and to allow for effective monitoring to determine any adverse effects; and*
>
> *(e) Maintenance of beaches and related sediment transport processes.*

Policy DD 15 requires minimum adverse effects on, amongst other things, recreational activities and the management of adverse effects on water quality to comply with the relevant Water Quality Classification Standards and Criteria in Schedule 10 of the RCEP. The latter refers to the maintenance of, amongst other things, visual clarity and levels of contaminants suitable for bathing, and ensuring aquatic organisms are not "rendered unsuitable for human consumption by the presence of contaminants".

Schedule 5 of the RCEP defines five regionally significant surf breaks within the study area, and an additional break immediately south Figure 7. The level of use of these sites is best show via Strava data in Figure 24 on page 42.

Figure 7: EBOP RCEP regionally significant surf breaks



Policy RA 1 of the RCEP aims to "Protect access to, and use of, the regionally significant surf breaks identified in Schedule 5 (Regionally Significant Surf Breaks), by ensuring that:"

> *(a) Any activities requiring resource consent that have the potential to have a significant adverse effect on the quality of, or access to, these surf breaks, on a permanent or on-going basis are avoided;*
>
> *(b) Any activities in the coastal marine area requiring resource consent that are proposed within a 1 kilometre radius of the surf breaks as mapped in Schedule 5 clearly demonstrate that the proposed activity will not have a significant adverse effect on wave quality, consistency or rarity or values associated with natural character (such as coastal processes, currents, water levels and seabed morphology), amenity or cultural heritage that contribute to the characteristics of the surf break; and*
>
> *(c) Other adverse effects on regionally significant surf breaks and their swell corridors are avoided, remedied or mitigated.*

Recreation events are permitted in the common Marine and Coastal Area unless they are located in the Port or Harbour Development Zones (Rule SO 1). Rule SO 10 makes the same provision for temporary maimai.

The RCEP notes, in relation to the Harbour Development Zone (1.10, Issue 54):

Although the Harbour Development Zone areas are typically highly modified, these areas have significant cultural, historic and amenity values and the effects of activities on these values need to be managed.

3.1.2 Bay of Plenty Regional Navigation Safety Bylaw 2017

The 2017 BOP Navigation Safety Bylaw is currently under review – with a revised version intended to be adopted by the end of 2023 – but remains operative.[1]

The bylaw sets aside water ski areas and access lanes near the harbour entrance and identifies mooring areas at Pilot Bay (Figure 8). All moorings within the mooring areas require an annual licence issued by the Harbourmaster, and those outside an area require both a resource consent and a licence (3.12). The bylaw states that (3.10.1) "In a non-watersports area, no person shall operate a personal water craft or hovercraft, or land aircraft, or tow people or devices from vessels for recreational purposes other than equipment used for fishing."

Figure 8: EBOP Regional Navigation Safety Bylaw mooring and reserved areas Tauranga Harbour



Provisions for navigating large vessels in Tauranga Harbour include:

3.14 Moving Prohibited Zone

A moving prohibited zone extending 50 metres to each side and 500 metres ahead, following the line of the buoyed channel when changing course, is reserved around any vessel over 500 gross tonnes or any vessel with tugs in attendance, when that vessel is underway and within the pilotage area of the Tauranga Harbour.

When a vessel over 500 gross tonnes or with tugs in attendance is navigating within a marked channel, the moving prohibited zone shall not extend beyond the marked channel to the side of the vessel and the zone ahead shall follow the marked channel.

The owner or master of a vessel must not navigate a vessel within a moving prohibited zone.

[1] See: https://www.participate.boprc.govt.nz/navigational-bylaw

Requirements are defined for vessels entering and navigating in the Tauranga Harbour pilotage area (defined as (Schedule 8) "that area of the Tauranga Harbour and its approaches, bounded by an arc of a circle of radius three nautical miles, centred on North Rock and to include all the commercial areas of Tauranga Harbour." See Figure 1). These include:

> *6.1.2 That part of Tauranga Harbour known as Number 1 Reach, Number 2 Reach, the Cutter Channel, Maunganui Roads and the Stella Passage* [essentially the maintained dredged areas] *shall be deemed to be a narrow channel in accordance with Part 22.9 of the Collision Prevention Rules, Narrow Channels.*
>
> *6.1.3 Prior to entering Tauranga Harbour, the master of a vessel[2] shall call "Tauranga Port Radio" on marine VHF channel 12 and report the intention of the vessel to enter the harbour. Such vessels shall maintain a listening watch on marine VHF channel 12 whilst within harbour limits.*
>
> *6.1.4 The master of a vessel not carrying a working marine VHF radio and unable to communicate with "Tauranga Port Radio" shall not transit the Tauranga Harbour entrance during the hours of darkness or during restricted visibility, except in an emergency.*
>
> *6.1.5 All other vessels, commercial and recreational, (where a VHF is fitted), shall maintain a listening watch on marine VHF channel 12 when approaching and transiting the Tauranga Harbour entrance and whilst within the Tauranga pilotage area.*
>
> *6.1.6 The master shall ensure that while within Tauranga Harbour:*
>
> > *(a) automatic-steering "pilot" devices are not to be used, unless a helmsman is standing by in the immediate vicinity of the helm or wheel, otherwise the vessel is to be in the hand-steering mode; and*
> >
> > *(b) main engines are to be immediately available for reducing speed, stopping or going astern at all times without delay; and*
> >
> > *(c) anchors are to be immediately available for use in an emergency, and capable of being used without power; and*
> >
> > *(d) all information from aids to navigation and charts is fully monitored; and*
> >
> > *(e) all vessels, whether under pilotage or pilot exempt shall have an agreed passage plan for transit within pilotage limits; and*
> >
> > *(f) the number of crew members on the bridge shall be sufficient to safely carry out the agreed passage plan; and*
> >
> > *(g) in determining the composition of the bridge team, due regard shall be taken to the following: the operation of all controls, monitoring the progress of the vessel visually, the use of all available aids to navigation and that the appropriate up to date navigational charts are in use….*
>
> *6.3 Navigational Documents required for Tauranga Harbour*
>
> *When navigating in any part of the harbour all vessels of 6 metres in length and above shall carry and consult a current copy of Charts NZ 5412 and NZ 5411 (or approved electronic equivalent).*

Part 22.9 of the national Maritime Rules (Maritime NZ 2021) *Collision Prevention Rules, Narrow Channels*, require (amongst other things):

[2] A vessel or ship are defined as (p10 and 11): *every description of boat or craft used in navigation, whether or not it has any means of propulsion; and includes: (a) a barge, lighter, or other like vessel; (b) a hovercraft or other thing deriving full or partial support in the atmosphere from the reaction of air against the surface of the water over which it operates; (c) a submarine or other submersible; (d) a personal water craft; (e) a seaplane when operating on the water (f) a sailboard, kiteboard, or paddleboard.*

(1) A vessel proceeding along the course of a narrow channel or fairway must keep as near to the outer limit of the channel or fairway which lies on its starboard side as is safe and practicable.

(2) A vessel of less than 20 metres in length or a sailing vessel must not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.

(3) A vessel engaged in fishing must not impede the passage of any other vessel navigating within a narrow channel or fairway.

(4) A vessel must not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such crossing impedes the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within that channel or fairway.

3.1.3 EBOP Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Strategy

The Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Strategy (EBOP 2006) was reported to have arisen from:

a process carried out under the Local Government Act 2002, brand named Tauranga Tomorrow, to determine the first set of community outcomes for the Tauranga City Council and Environment Bay of Plenty. One of the community outcomes was to develop and implement a Tauranga Harbour Strategy and Action Plan addressing a number of environmental matters.

The study was based on multi-agency consultation and pre-existing consultation and survey reports. The summary main findings were:

Sedimentation has been identified as the issue of most concern to both the community and to Council staff involved in environmental management. As a result, a detailed review of the available science, the management mechanisms and the projected effects of the SmartGrowth strategy is proposed.

Similarly, population growth poses a management challenge for the recreational use of Tauranga Harbour. A strategy to deal with recreation in an integrated way is in preparation.

'Conflicting uses' for recreation were identified:

The Tauranga Tomorrow process shows that the community have a clear preference for maintaining Tauranga Harbour as:

- *A recreational harbour.*
- *A recreational fishing resource.*

The community have a number of concerns about conflicting uses and conflicting users:

- *Port of Tauranga – The Port advise that they have concerns about the conflict between recreation and port related vessels. In future it is expected that usage by both may well increase, leading to further conflict. Currently they have loose agreements with recreational groups that work reasonably well. Likewise other groups are concerned about the extent to which Port operations take priority over other uses.*
- *Over fishing by commercial fishers.*
- *Incompatible uses of facilities e.g. swimming and jumping off jetties v boat usage.*
- *The issue of sedimentation as a result of development is of concern because of the reduction of usable area and with shallowing of navigation channels and the loss of all tide access.*
- *Effect of recreational users on indigenous bird nesting area at Panepane Point, Matakana Island and other coastal sites around the harbour.*

Further detail was provided about the Port of Tauranga:

> *The Regional Coastal Environment Plan, the Navigation and Safety Bylaws and the Ports occupation permit (S384A RMA) provide for port activities. The S384 permit provides for exclusive occupation for an area extending 30 to 60 metres from the wharves. The coastal plan defines a port zone extending from the bridge to the open ocean. One of the purposes for this zone is to "Minimise potential conflict between port activities and other activities". The Navigation and Safety Bylaws provide for a restricted anchorage in the entrance channel. Furthermore the maritime rules under the Maritime Transport Act provide for restricted anchorages throughout the piloted area (narrow channels) and that recreational craft must give way to any vessels in excess of 500 gross tonnes. All of these have been put in place by robust mechanisms and in the case of the coastal plan the process was subject to public consultation, submission and appeals. The issue appears to be not whether the Port has rights above the general public – the relevant policy documents say that the Port does – but that any management should focus on coordinating events to avoid conflict with the Port.*

3.1.4 EBOP Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy

The Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy (EBOP 2008),

> *explores the issues for recreation on Tauranga Harbour and sets out a series of actions to improve recreation opportunities and reduce conflict, while maintaining the quality of the environment. It is a joint strategy between Environment Bay of Plenty, Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council.*

The motivation for the Strategy included:

> *We want to encourage and provide for this demand, and to do this we need to make sure that:*
>
> - *People can easily access the harbour*
> - *There are opportunities for a wide range of activities*
> - *The impacts of recreation on the environment are minimised*
> - *It's safe for everyone*
>
> *An inevitable consequence of high recreational use is conflict - between recreational users and with other types of uses, e.g.:*
>
> - *People that live around the harbour margins*
> - *The port*
> - *Commercial activities (such as ferry and charter services)*
> - *Marinas*
> - *Other boat-related service industries*
> - *Tangata whenua customary activities*
> - *Flora and fauna in and around the harbour*
>
> *At the moment conflicts between harbour users are generally limited to high use areas, for example, the southern entrance to the harbour, Pilot Bay and the Sulphur Point area. There are still many other areas of the harbour where there is still plenty of space for more recreational use.*

Sediment and dredging were identified as management issues in the Harbour, but the focus was on the former and the dredging of recreation channels. It was noted that the Port held consents to dredge for the "entrance and Cutter channels" (4.4.5).

There were few strategic directions relevant to Port activities, and included:

- Considering Harbour development zones when reviewing the Navigation Safety Bylaw – although how was not defined (5.2.1)
- Expand on existing education material/promotions, in conjunction with the key user groups, to increase awareness of (amongst other things) large ship movements (5.2.4)
- Establish a website focused on Tauranga Harbour to include (amongst other things) ship movements.

In terms of describing recreation participation, some baseline data were provided (Appendix 4):

> *Some data on recreational uses has been collected in the past; however it is not consistent across area or methodology. Babbage, 1998 showed a total of 5,000 boats launched in the northern Harbour (between 26 December 1997 and 1 February 1998). A survey by Environment Bay of Plenty (2001) reinforced the recreational nature of the Harbour. Tauranga City Council reviewed its boat ramps from an asset management perspective and showed over 200 launches per day during March (Bickers, 1996). Both Tauranga City Council and Western Bay of Plenty District Council have recently undertaken assessments of ramp usage and demand.*
>
> *The Environment Bay of Plenty Harbour master commented that:*
>
> - *The southern harbour entrance is highly used – with some 2,400 ship movements per year.*
> - *There are approximately 1,500 marina and moored boats within the harbour.*
> - *An estimated 500 trailered boats can be launched on a summer's day.*

3.1.5 EBOP Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2012 GAP Analysis

In 2012 EBOP published the Harrison Grierson report *Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2012 GAP Analysis – Proposed Harbour Access Strategy.* The main reference documents were the *Tauranga Harbour Integrated Management Strategy* (EBOP 2006) (see section 3.1.3) and the *Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy* (EBOP 2008) (see section 3.1.4). The authors drew from the former (2.1):

> *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.*

Nothing of relevance to the Port of Tauranga was taken from the *Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy.*

The analysis was based on review with local and regional authority staff and a limited number of stakeholders. Only one reference was made to Port of Tauranga activities:

> *Mr Meikle* [Maritime Officer] *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.*

3.2 Other Council reports

3.2.1 Recreational Access to Tauranga Harbour

This report *Recreational Access to Tauranga Harbour* (Steiner 2020) was prepared for the Western Bay of Plenty District Council, Tauranga City Council and Bay of Plenty Regional Council. The focus was mainly on the management and development of boat launching ramps in the Harbour, and was based largely on desktop analysis only. The author noted (p5):

> *Tauranga Harbour is the main shipping channel for the Port of Tauranga. It is the largest port in the country both in terms of total cargo volume and container throughput.*

And (p14):

> *In 2009 it was observed that conflicts between harbour users are generally limited to high use areas, for example, the southern entrance to the harbour, Pilot Bay and Sulphur Point.*
>
> *The potential conflict between recreational users of the harbour and Port of Tauranga ships was identified in the past and recognition that this required ongoing management however it was not considered that there was any increasing trend in the degree or nature of conflict. The Tauranga Harbour Management Strategy identified community concerns regarding the increasing conflict between Port of Tauranga activities and recreational activities.*

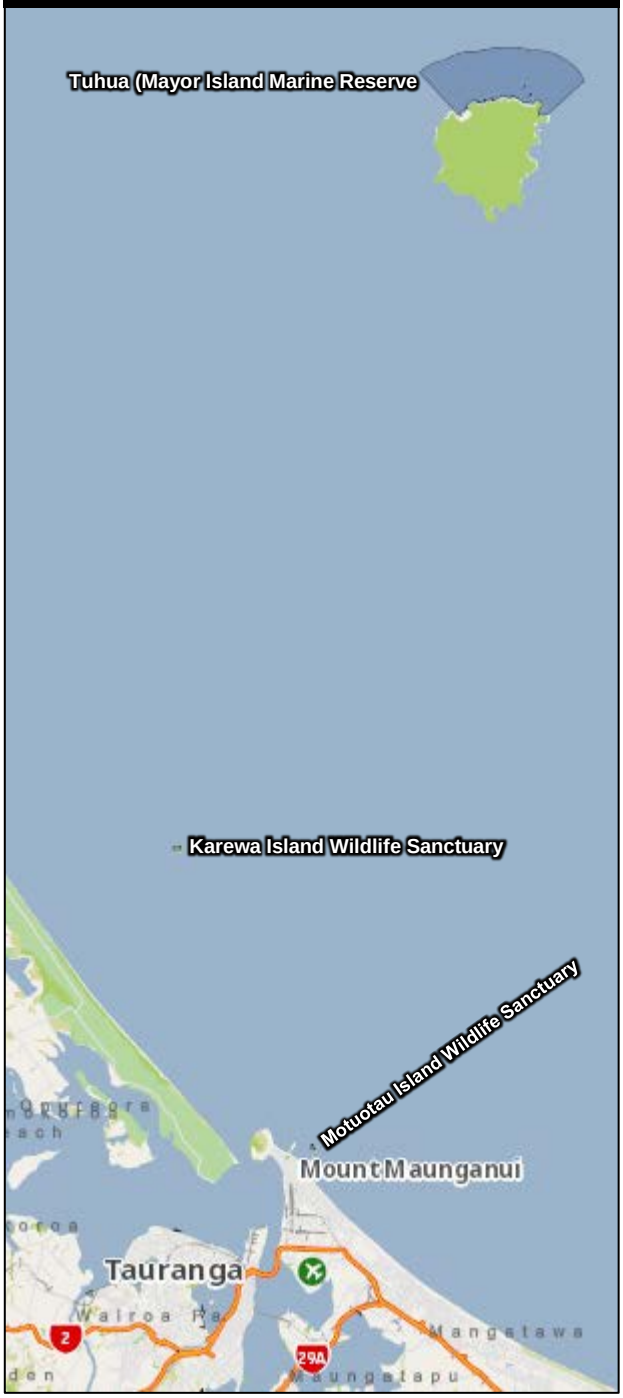
The latter appears to be a direct reference to the *Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy 2012 GAP Analysis* (see section 3.1.5). No other reference was made to Port activities.

3.3 Department of Conservation

The Department of Conservation administers few areas near the Harbour entrance (Figure 9). The only one within the study area (besides a very minor area of marginal strip at Ōtūmoetai) is the Motuotau Island Wildlife Sanctuary immediately off the Main Beach at Mount Maunganui. EBOP notes that:

> *The entire island is a Waahi Tapu site and a rāhui (or closure) applies to the removing of greenlipped mussels from the area between Moturiki and Motuotau. The intension behind the rāhui is to conserve the green-lipped mussel for future populations in the area. The rāhui is in response to local Māori and community concerns.*[3]

Figure 9: DOC reserve areas



[3] https://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/797986/11-motuotau-rabbit-island-waikareao-estuary-waimapu_yatton-park-waimapu_windermere.pdf

The draft 2020 revoked Conservation Management Strategy (discussed below) states (p108) that, "Motuotau Island Scenic Reserve supports native coastal and ngahere vegetation and is home to native species, including kororā / little blue penguin. The island is to be returned to tangata whenua."

3.3.1 Conservation Management Strategies

The Department of Conservation's operative Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for Bay of Plenty 1997-2007 (DOC 1997) is somewhat dated and is under review. A replacement draft was prepared in 2020 but revoked in 2021 while further consultation is completed.[4]

Relevant conservation units in 1997 CMS are the 'Islands' and 'Tauranga' management areas. In the former, reference is made to marine ecosystems and marine protected areas (3.2.2):

> *Extractive use of the marine environment by people has been high. Some inshore areas have been damaged by sediment, nutrients, and contaminants from adjoining land use and discharges. All methods of fishing have depleted fish stocks.*
>
> *Recreational use of islands and the marine environment is high, with the main activities being fishing, boating, diving, and sightseeing.*
>
> *There are marine ecosystems based on chemosynthesis (sulphur bacteria) rather than photosynthesis (plants) found at Moutohora (Whale) Island, White Island (Whakaari) and Calypso Pinnacle.*
>
> *Adjoining Tuhua (Mayor Island) is a marine reserve that extends one nautical mile offshore around the northern quarter of the island. This is administered by the Department. There is a restricted fishing area around the remainder of the island, administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.*

Subsequent policies refer to the desire to establish more marine reserve areas, particularly on the mainland coast, and to (3.2.2):

> *5. Assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in promoting sustainable management of all aquatic life outside marine protected areas.*
>
> *6. Participate in regional and district council planning processes.*

For the 'Tauranga Management Area' there is little reference to recreation values. The 1997 CMS notes (3.3.1):

> *The* [Tauranga] *management area has a sandy coastline more than 170 km long broken by four rocky headlands. The sand dunes along the coast are particularly vulnerable to erosion, building development, and infestation by plant pests. Tauranga Harbour is the dominant feature, with more than 20,000 ha of tidal mudflats, estuaries, and channels. It meets the Ramsar criteria as a wetland of international importance on the basis of its vegetation, water birds, fisheries, and cultural values. It is particularly important as a habitat for both migratory and non-migratory wading birds, and as a spawning area for many fish. It has significant areas of saltmarsh and freshwater wetlands. Matakana Island lies between the Tauranga Harbour and the open sea. At its northern end are freshwater wetlands within a wildlife refuge, on its western side are willow-dominated wetlands, both areas being notable habitats for a wide range of wetland birds.*

In the sub-unit 'Tauranga Harbour and its Margins (including Matakana Island)' identified management issues include (3.3.3), "The harbour ecosystems are adversely affected by inappropriate land and water use and management, for example grazing by stock." Management responses include participating in district and regional council planning processes to establish "appropriate planning provisions to conserve

[4] See: https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/2020-consultations/bay-of-plenty-conservation-management-strategy/

natural and historic resources in and around Tauranga Harbour" and "preservation of the natural character of Tauranga Harbour and environs". Evaluating options for marine protected areas in the Harbour are also recommended.

The draft 2020 revoked CMS places the study area in the Coastal and Marine Place which includes terrestrial and marine environments out to 12 nautical miles offshore. The revoked CMS notes (8.1):

> *The Bay of Plenty has been and continues to be subjected to a range of human activities and climate change, which affect marine biodiversity and associated ecosystem services. Pressures such as commercial and recreational fishing, pollution, coastal reclamation, land use and nutrient input all negatively impact coastal habitats, and can also interact with each other and have cumulative effects. Research indicates that New Zealand's marine species and habitats are under threat. Our activities on land and at sea are polluting the marine environment, and climate change is impacting on marine ecosystems, taonga species and people….*
>
> *Recreation in this Place is nationally renowned for opportunities enabled by the long sandy beaches and sheltered bays. Activities include coastal walks, which offer access along the coast and to each bay, cycling routes and camping. At sea, activities such as fishing, surfing, diving, snorkelling and kayaking are popular.*

In reference to managing natural values the revoked CMS states (8.3.3):

> *a) Fishing (both recreational and commercial) is the most significant threat to coastal and offshore marine biodiversity. The two marine reserves in this Place (Tuhua (Mayor Island) and Te Paepae o Aotea (Volkner Rocks) (Paepae te Hawaiki)) are the only areas in the Bay of Plenty that are fully protected as marine protected areas. Furthermore, while other areas in the Bay of Plenty are protected under mechanisms such as mātaitai reserves (areas where tangata whenua manage all non-commercial fishing by making bylaws) and customary fisheries regulations, marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems are under-represented in New Zealand's marine protected areas network, with only 0.2% of the North Eastern Coastal Biogeographic Region, of which the Bay of Plenty is a part, protected in marine reserves and only 2.6% of this region protected in marine reserves or some other form of marine protected area….*
>
> *b) Sedimentation from changes in land use has the second biggest impact on marine ecosystems after fishing and can lead to declines in species, habitats and ecosystems in coastal and marine areas….*
>
> *i) The increasing number of ships and boats using Tauranga Harbour is resulting in whale strikes, increased marine biosecurity threats and the anchoring of vessels within rat-swimming distance of animal-pest-free islands.*

There is no reference to dredging or spoil disposal. Issues and opportunities for recreation values (8.3.5) focus on coastal land access and protection and the management of existing marine reserves.

3.4 Tauranga Moana Iwi Management Plan 2016-2026

As noted in Section 2.1, the scope of this assessment does not extend to cultural values, although recreation and expressions of culture may rely on many of the same physical resources.

The Tauranga Moana Iwi Management Plan is a joint environmental plan by Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi and Ngāti Pūkenga. The Plan notes that there are (p38) "multiple uses, interests and values within Tauranga Moana. In some areas, this creates conflict between … commercial use and development (including Port, marinas and tourism), Recreational activities (e.g. swimming, fishing)…"

The coastal objective for the Harbour includes (p38):

The mauri of Te Awanui (Tauranga Harbour) and coastal areas is restored and protected. This means that:

- Water is clean enough for swimming and sustaining plentiful and healthy kaimoana.
- Waterways are accessible for our enjoyment and customary use. e.g. gather kaimoana.
- Our coastal sites and areas of cultural significance are acknowledged and actively protected.
- Ecosystems are healthy and diverse and are protected from biosecurity threats, including pest plants, fish and organisms.
- Cumulative impacts on water quality are investigated and managed
- There is balance between natural, cultural, recreational and ecological values of Tauranga Moana and commercial use and development.

Policy 12 of the Plan is to "Maintain and enhance relationship with Port of Tauranga" by (amongst other things) "Tauranga Moana Iwi and hapū to continue working closely with Port of Tauranga to manage the effects of port activities on the cultural health of the harbour, in particular: … c) Dredging and disposal of dredge spoil". Policy 16 states:

Ensure that dredging activities do not adversely affect the mauri of Tauranga Moana.

16.1 Oppose any further adverse effects as a result of dredging, in relation to:

a) The pipi bed known as Te Paritaha o Te Awanui

b) The sandbank area on Matakana Island known as Panepane

Policy 16.2 refers to the need to avoid adverse effects on mahinga kai areas, amongst other things.

4 Recreation activity review

This section identifies and discusses the recreational activities potentially affected by the proposal. Data are sourced from published sources, augmented by stakeholder interviews. A full summary of consultation outcomes is reported in Section 5.

4.1 Regional and national participation

Sport NZ (2018) reports via the Active NZ survey that marine fishing in the Bay of Plenty was its 9th most popular form of outdoor recreation, with 20% of the adult population participating (compared with the national average of 14%, and 29% for Northland). This makes fishing more popular in the Bay of Plenty as a participation activity for adults than, for example, mountain biking (19%), golf (13%), rugby (6%) and cricket (4%), and with similar participation levels to tramping (23%).

Swimming participation in the Bay of Plenty was the same as the national average (35%), but Sport NZ does not differentiate between swimming in pools and in natural settings. Surfing and body boarding had relatively high participation at 13% for the regional adult population compared with 9% nationally. Yachting and sailing participation in the Bay was similar to the national average (2% compared with 3%). Other marine recreation activities – such as scuba diving – had too few respondents in the Sport NZ data to allow comparisons.

Maritime NZ conducts quarterly boating participation research.[5] At the national level, seasonal data between 2017 and 2023 show that approximately 50% of the population is involved in recreational boating (MNZ 2023). The most popular types of boats were (for Q2 2023) kayaks (27%), powerboats <6m (13%), jet skis (13%), stand-up paddle boards (11%, powerboats >6m (7%), dinghies with an outboard (7%) and yachts and sailing dinghies (4%). The Sport NZ data reported above does not considered motorised activities and has a different methodology, and so comparing the datasets is difficult.

4.2 EBOP Tauranga Harbour Recreation Surveys

EBOP (2011) reports on the findings of an intercept survey of recreational use of Tauranga Harbour over three days in January 2011 (the 'peak season'), with 240 respondents. The survey suggested that the most popular activities around the harbour were walking, swimming, fishing from boats, picnicking, kayaking, biking and 'seeking tranquillity'. 'Key issues' were reported:

> *The main 'on the water' concerns for people, were issues around harbour health (see* [sea] *lettuce, mangroves, pollution) and access to the harbour. Some commented about skipper behaviour on the water where the five knot rule was not being followed and about inexperienced or poor skippering of powered craft. Very few people identified 'conflict on the water' with loss of recreation opportunity.*

The report does not provide absolute figures for any results (only bar charts), or a copy of the questionnaire, and so it difficult to summarise the main report findings further. Figure 10 shows reported activity by frequency of participation and location as a chart, although it is not clear how this is calculated, or what the area definitions are. The chart also includes an error with the inclusion of a 'total' figure in pale green, which is a double-count and should be ignored.

EBOP (2012) is a repeat of the 2011 'peak season' survey undertaken over Easter 2011 with 200 respondents. While the study was reported as occurring during the 'off-peak', if would be hard to describe the Easter break as such. The study reported:

> *It is significant that the off-peak survey findings mirrored the peak survey findings in most areas…*

[5] See https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/public/researchers/recreational-research

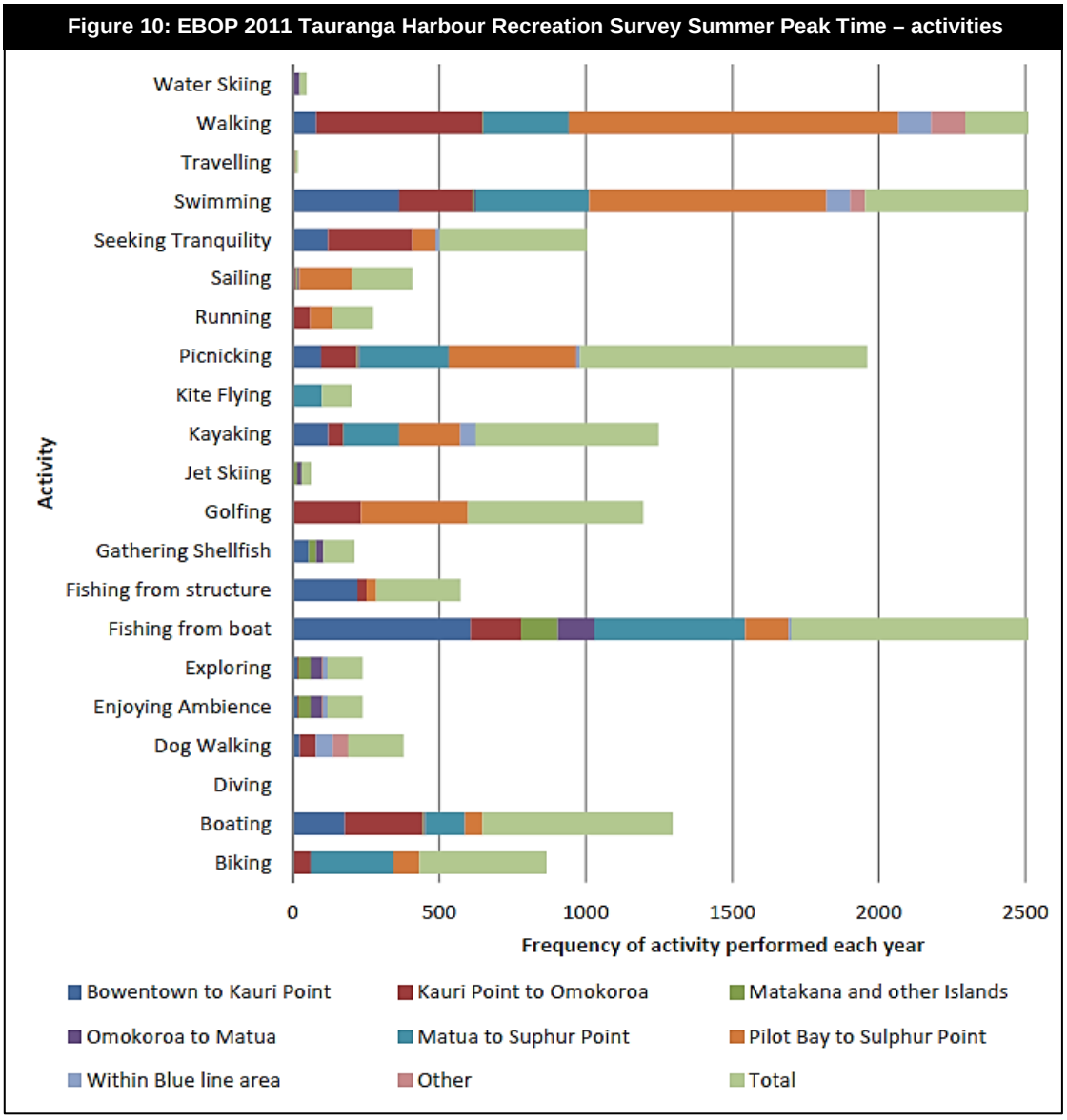
The most popular recreational activities across the harbour locations were walking, fishing and swimming, which is consistent with the peak survey. Off-peak survey results also show that a range of different activities were taking place at different harbour locations, which is consistent with the peak survey. The range of activities and the number of people participating in them were similar to the levels experienced during the peak period. This suggests that weather and time of year does not have a limiting effect on recreation. This finding is interesting given the weather conditions when the off-peak survey was undertaken ["infrequent rain showers, overcast days and mild temperatures"].

However, the activity participation chart in the 2012 report bears very little similarity to its equivalent in the 2011 document (as shown in Figure 10). There are clearly some errors in data collection, analysis or reporting, and the quantitative results should be treated cautiously.

The 'key issues' were compared between surveys:

During the peak survey, the main 'on the water' concerns for people were issues around harbour health (sea lettuce, mangroves, pollution). Concerns related to these harbour health issues were not so apparent during the off-peak survey. This is likely to be a direct result of the absence of sea lettuce in and around the harbour during the off-peak period….. Generally,

Figure 10: EBOP 2011 Tauranga Harbour Recreation Survey Summer Peak Time – activities



the majority of people surveyed were very satisfied with the recreational opportunities they have at the harbour locations.

Other main concerns related to boat ramp congestion, car parking, commercialism (shops) and dogs.

4.3 Boating activity

The Bay of Plenty Regional Council indicates on its online GIS the location of ski lanes and boat ramps in and around Tauranga Harbour (Figure 11). There are also two marinas – Tauranga and Tauranga Bridge – providing berthage for almost 1,100 vessels of more than eight metres in length.

The Tauranga Harbour Recreation Strategy (EBOP 2008) reports:

The Environment Bay of Plenty Harbour master commented that:

- The southern harbour entrance is highly used – with some 2,400 ship movements per year;
- There are approximately 1,500 marina and moored boats within the harbour;
- An estimated 500 trailered boats can be launched on a summer's day.

Figure 11: Ski lanes, boat ramps and marinas. Base map, BOPRC GIS



Boat mooring areas are located within Designated Mooring Areas prescribed by the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Mooring areas, BOPRC GIS



The passage of larger recreational – and other – vessels (generally over 10m in length) is indicated by AIS tracking data. An AIS is an Automatic Identification System installed on a vessel which periodically transmits, via VHF radio signal or satellite, the vessel's 'personal' information – such as name, size and type – as well as its speed and heading. It also receives the same data from other vessels via VHF and can track their courses and warn of collisions. Some navigation buoys or hazards also transmit an AIS signal (or it is transmitted virtually from another location), and they appear live on digital chart-plotters (a digital chart). Shore-based VHF receiving stations and satellite receivers automatically transfer AIS data to a global database, and vessel locations and tracks are displayed online via global marine traffic databases which can be accessed through commercial websites (the dominant one being Marine Traffic[6]). There are multiple VHF receiving stations in the Bay of Plenty.

Certain rules apply to the compulsory use of AIS on commercial vessels, but they are voluntary for pleasure craft. Online AIS data can be filtered by vessel type, such as commercial fishing, pleasure craft, tanker, cargo and passenger vessels, and by vessel size.

There are no data available about the uptake of AIS systems by pleasure craft in New Zealand. However, they are increasingly popular, and in the experience of the author – who has operated AIS on recreational craft for the past seven years throughout the North Island – there is almost always multiple recreational craft transmitting an AIS signal when the weather is good.

For example, Figure 13 shows instantaneous AIS data for the Bay of Islands to Coromandel for 1 January 2025, taken from the Marine Traffic mobile application. Mauve icons indicate the recent location of pleasure craft (identified as 'yachts' in the mobile app and 'pleasure craft' in the web version). Faded icons show old and potentially inaccurate locations for a vessel, and diamonds indicate anchored craft.

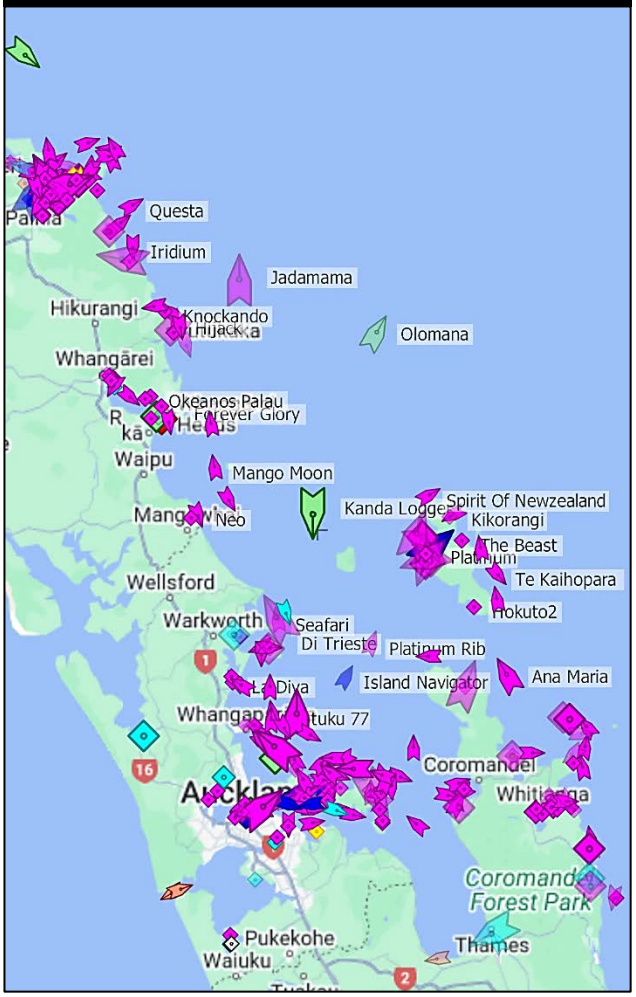
This indicates a high uptake of AIS amongst recreational craft and the relevance of AIS data as an indication of recreational navigation routes.

Figure 14 shows the AIS records as a heatmap for all vessels[7] for 2022 (the latest heatmap data available and at the highest resolution provided), sourced from Marine Traffic. The circular hot spots offshore of Matakana Island and Omanu are anchorages for, predominantly, container ships awaiting entry to the Port of Tauranga. The exclusion areas for large vessels around Penguin Shoal and Astrolabe Reef are evident.

[6] https://www.marinetraffic.com/
[7] 'All vessels' includes 'high speed craft, cargo vessels, tankers, passenger vessels, tugs and special craft, fishing and pleasure craft.'

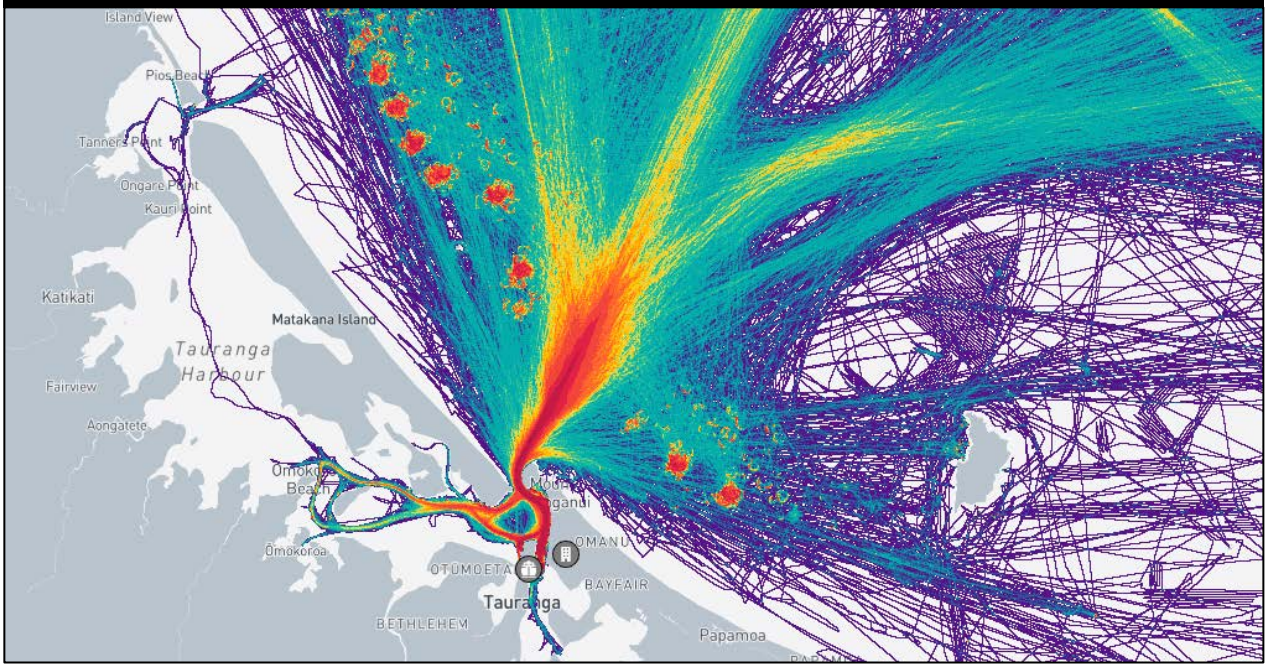
Figure 15 shows the same data filtered for pleasure craft only, also indicating the location of spoil grounds D and G. The main routes are between the harbour entrance and north towards the Coromandel and Great Mercury Island, to Mayor Island and several fishing and diving locations (Astrolabe, Motunau, east of Mayor Island and north of Karewa Island). Vessels passing north of Motiti Island are on track for East Cape. Some vessels are shown undertaking bathymetric survey work for the Bay of Plenty Regional Council around Astrolabe Reef and east of Motiti Island (the vessels Tupaia and Tranquil Image).[8] These vessels may be incorrectly registered as pleasure craft.

Figure 13: AIS data for selected area, 1 Jan 2025



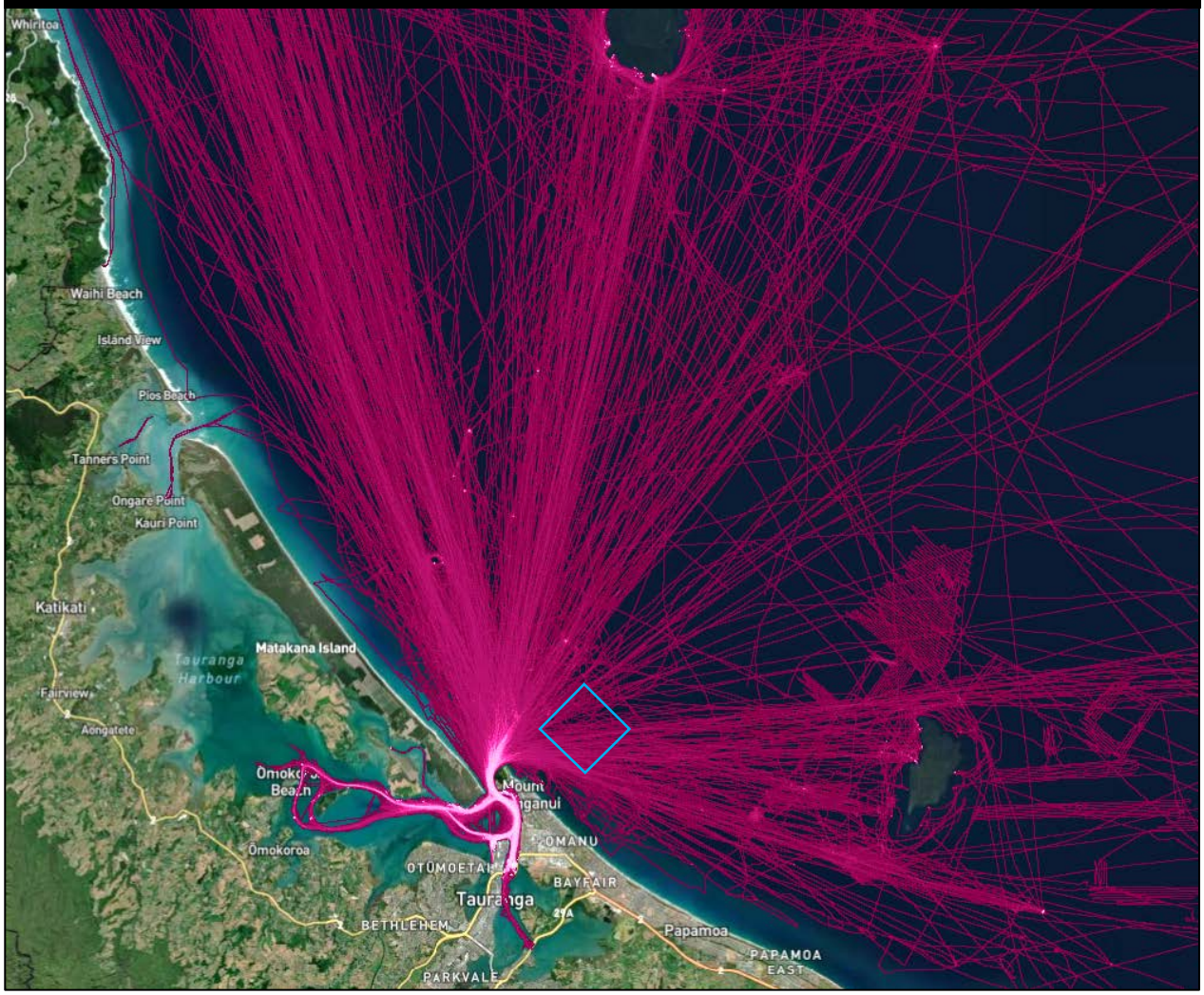
Waka ama and waka taua activity is common in the Harbour, along with much small boat activity including sailing dinghies, stand-up paddle boards and sea and flatwater kayaking. The location of many of these activities are shown in the Strava data in Section 4.5. Waka ama and waka taua activity is, however, not clear in these data, but interviewees (Appendix 1) indicate that the Hoe Aroha Whanau o Mauao Waka Ama primarily operate in Pilot Bay, and the Tauranga Moana Outrigger Canoe Club primarily use Sulphur Point, accessing the channel for paddling activities towards Matakana, Mauao, and Rabbit Island. The Bay of Plenty Dragon Boat Club mainly operate within a 1.5 km either side of the Sulphur Point Boat Ramp, and near the harbour bridges.

Figure 14: AIS heatmap data for all craft, Bay of Plenty, 2022



[8] Rowan Johnstone, Port of Tauranga, pers. comm.

Figure 15: AIS heatmap data for pleasure craft, Bay of Plenty, 2022. Showing spoil grounds D and G



4.4 Surfing

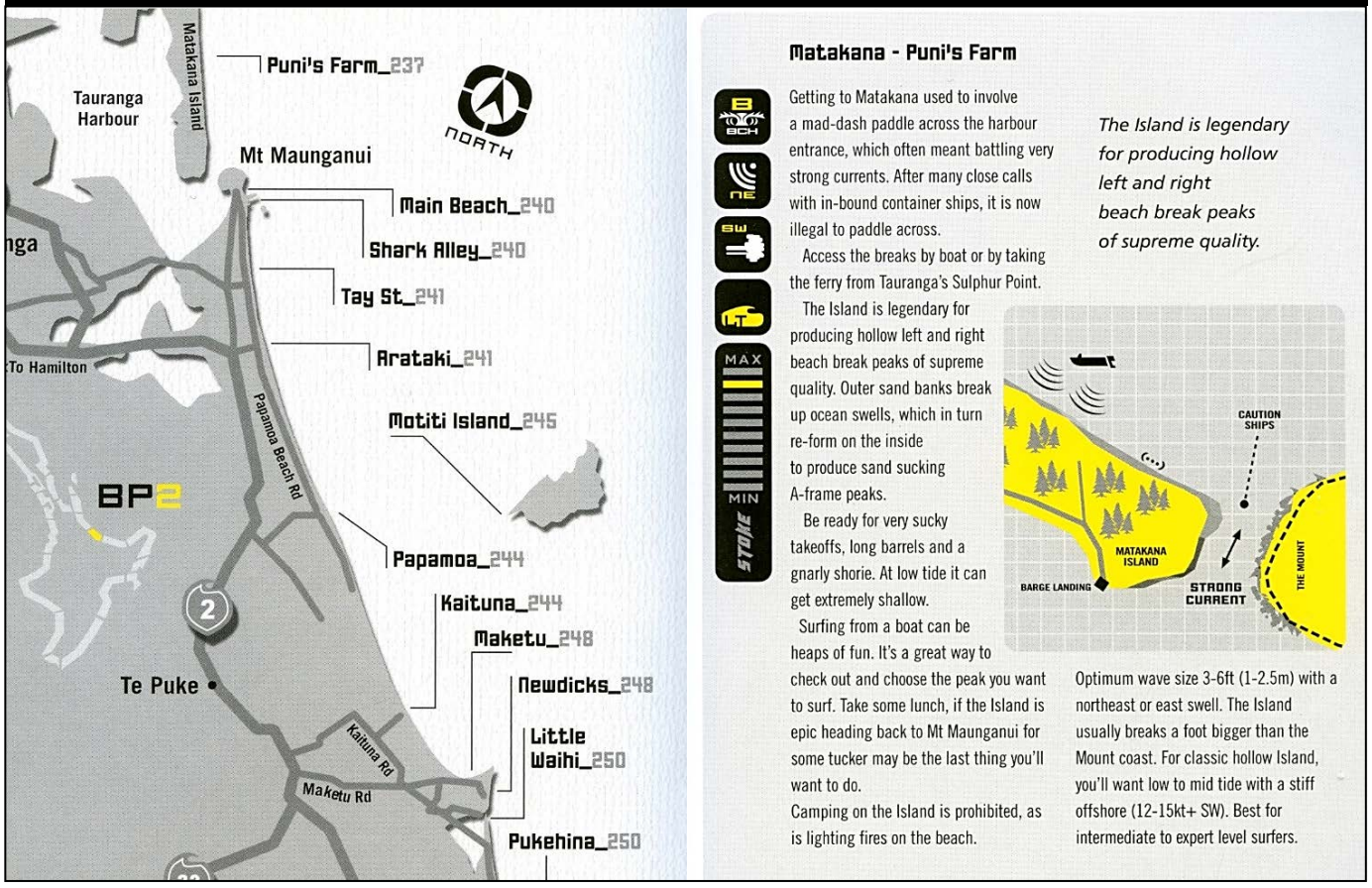
The NZ Coastal Policy Statement (DOC 2010) does not identify any surf breaks of national significance in the Bay of Plenty. Puni's Farm on the southern end of Matakana Island, Mount Maunganui Main Beach, Omanu, Arataki and Papamoa are commonly identified as the top regional sites, with surf webcams located at Main Beach, Omanu and Papamoa. [9]

The *Wavetrack New Zealand Surfing Guide* (Morse & Brunskill 2004) identifies a number of surfing sites between Matakana Island and Waihi (Figure 16 and Figure 17). For surfing in the region Morse & Brunskill state:

> *The area features a range of beach, reefs, points and river bar breaks. Though it gets its share of storms, the Bay of Plenty is on the wrong side of the North Island to get the same regular Southern Ocean sweels the places like Taranaki and Gisborne enjoy. The Bay has a limited window for swell and survives on northeast and east groundswells, stormy wind swells and tropical cyclones during the summer months. When there is swell it rarely lasts more than a few days: the prevailing winds are from the southwe4st and while they help create clean*

[9] For example, see: https://www.surfline.com/surf-reports-forecasts-cams/new-zealand/north-island/bay-of-plenty/western-bay-of-plenty-district/7910073; https://www.bayofplentynz.com/experiences/oceans-and-beaches/the-bays-best-surf-spots/; https://www.surf-forecast.com/countries/New-Zealand/breaks; https://surfseeker.co.nz/surf_breaks/bay-plenty; https://surfing-waves.com/atlas/australasia_pacific/new_zealand/north_island/bay_of_plenty.html

Figure 16: Wavetrack surfing guide – main sites in the BOP and Puni's Farm (Morse & Brunskill 2004)



hollow waves they also blow the swell back out to sea. But when conditions are right the Bay has many breaks capable of producing superb surf.

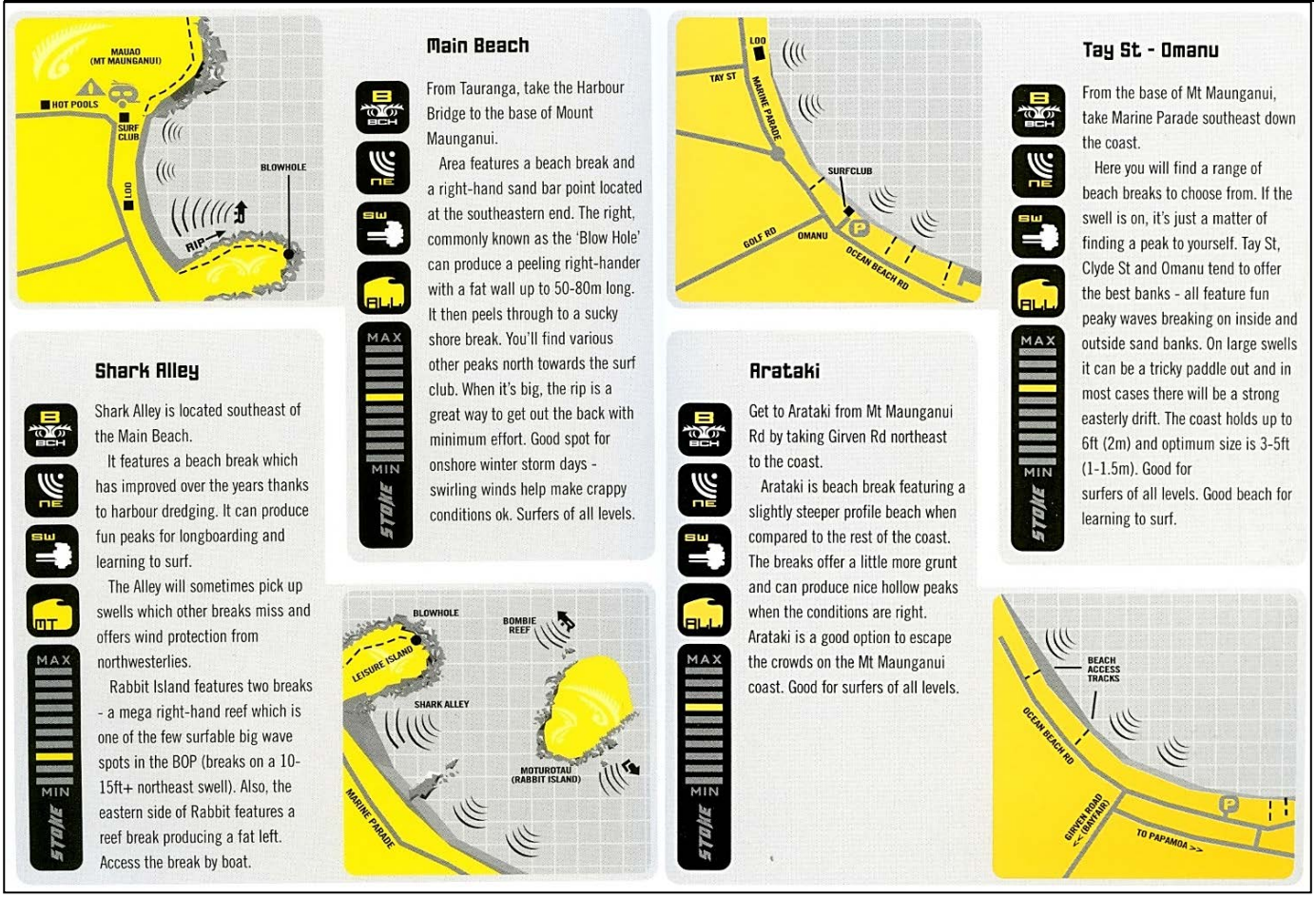
The Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan (RCEP) surf breaks of regional significance are discussed in section 3.1.1 on this report and shown in Figure 7. The regionally significant surf breaks listed in Schedule 5 of the RCEP are based on Peryman (2011). Perryman provides more detail on the characteristics of each break (see Figure 18):

Matakana Island (Puni's Farm)

1 - Wave quality rating: 10/10
2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: The pinnacle of surfing for the western Bay of Plenty. Outstanding beach break consistently producing the region's best surfable waves. Unique 'A-frame' wave form is highly dependent on the offshore wave-focusing feature created by the ebb tide delta of the Tauranga Harbour outlet in the swell corridor. The form of the ebb tide delta and the associated sediment budget of the area are considered critical to the quality of the surfing experience. Changes in the delta influence factors beyond the wave form including the safety of offshore 'parking' for craft used to access the break and the composition of onshore beach and dune systems. The break handles a high level of users and is suited to high performance surfing in optimum conditions. The island is a source of immense enjoyment, health and wellbeing for regular users. It has high scenic value and includes habitat for indigenous fauna which contribute to the surfing experience, contributing to its natural characteristics. The remoteness of the break contributes to a unique surfing experience which consistently attracts significant use and industry attention from beyond the study area. Access is largely by

Figure 17: Wavetrack surfing guide – Main Beach, Sharks Alley, Tay St/Omanu, Arataki (Morse & Brunskill 2004)



motorised craft or a risky paddle across the harbour mouth. This restrictive access is considered to be part of the 'mystique' of the break. The break hosts a highly significant local competition symbolic, known as the 'Island Masters' nationally renowned as a beach break of the highest quality, the break plays a significant role overlain the overall fabric of the surfing community in the Bay of Plenty, particularly for Mount Maunganui locals and surfing culture in this area.

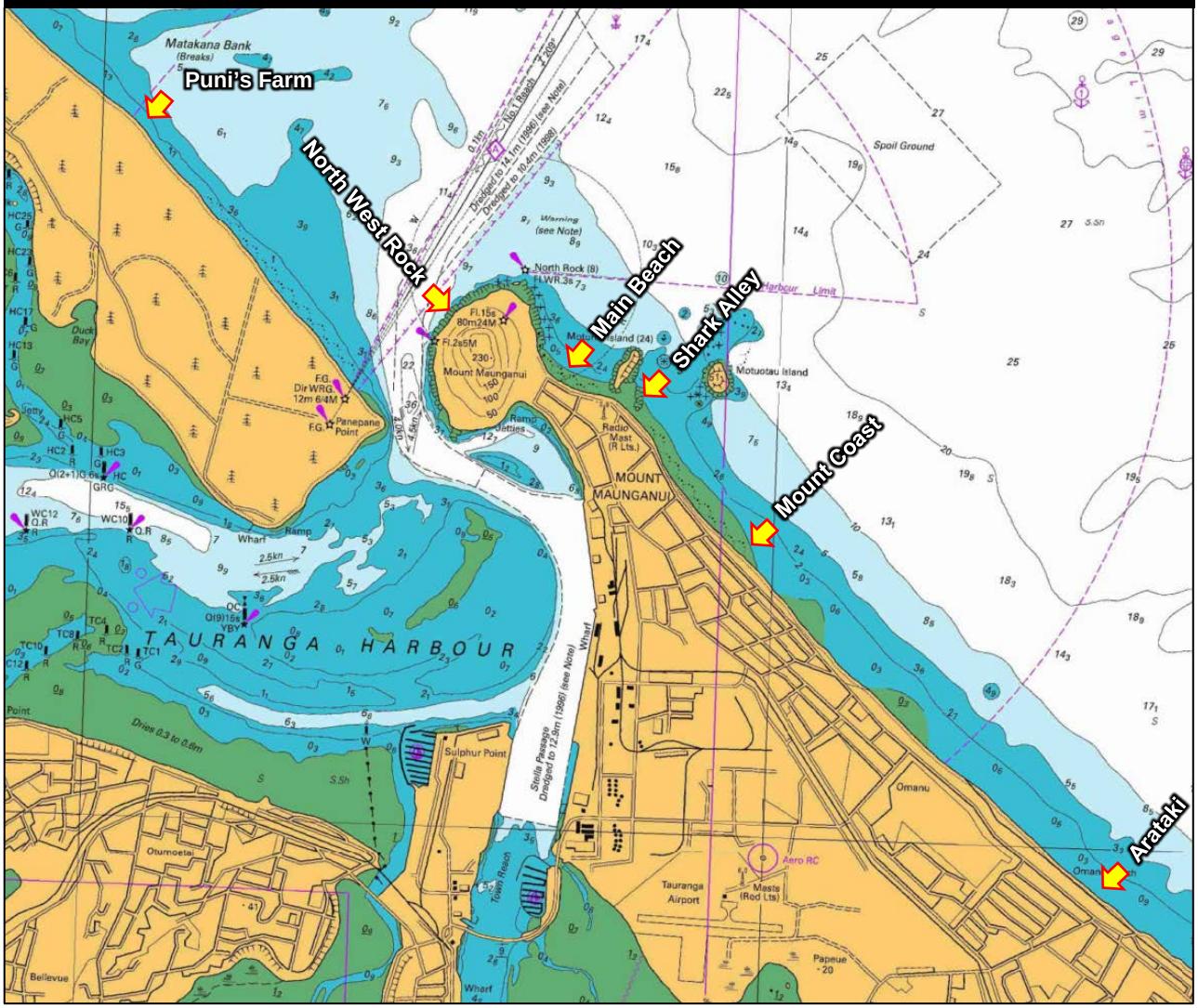
Outstanding components:

4 - Size or diversity of break area
5 - Naturalness/scenery
6 - Level of use
7 - Amenity value and access
8 - Local community and competition
9 - Value as a national/internationally recognised break
10 - Cultural values

North West Rock

1 - Wave quality rating: 6/10
2 - Consistency rating: 2/10
3 - Rarity rating: 10/10

Figure 18: Surf break locations, Perryman (2011)



Description: Rock/boulder ledge producing heavy right-hand break dependent on a narrow set of conditions. 'Freakish' wave form and limited in the range of use it offers, but unique as a rare and highly challenging surf break with a sense of mystique significant to the local surfing community. The break is located in the entrance of the Tauranga Harbour. It has high scenic value being located here, as it is accessed from the walkway on the western side of Mauão and looks over to Matakana Island.

Outstanding components:

5 - Naturalness/scenery

Main Beach – Mount Maunganui

1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
3 - Rarity rating: 2/10

Description: Above average beach break consisting of 3 distinct breaks ('the Blowhole', centre break, west end break) amongst an otherwise typically variable beach break set up. The beach offers both challenging and fun waves for all levels of surf-riding ability. The particular geographical configuration of the land/seascape creates a unique setting with high visual amenity by the back drop of Mauão, Moturiki Island, Rabbit Island and the Domain. Main Beach is an iconic inner city surf beach with a strong surf culture that resonates throughout the

nearby CBD of Mount Maunganui with numerous surf stores and cafes. The break is popular with a diverse range of users. There are many public amenities, service and facilities surrounding the beach. Main Beach is a highly significant focal point for the health and well-being of the Mount Maunganui surfing community. This includes the local surf lifesaving club and the break is an important training ground and competition site for the club. The beach is also important to many other forms of surf based events including rowing, power boating, surf-riding and others. Significant at both at a local and regional scale for the surfing industry based here.

Outstanding components:

4 - Size or diversity of break area
5 - Naturalness/scenery
6 - Level of use
7 - Amenity value and access
8 - Local community and competition
10 - Cultural values

Shark Alley

1 - Wave quality rating: 4/10
2 - Consistency rating: 6/10
3 - Rarity rating: 6/10

Description: Other than wave quality, Shark Alley is inseparable from the Main Beach and thus a subject to all the factors included in the description above. Shark Alley is highly significant learners break and for the development of surf-riding overall. These values also contribute to the social fabric of the local community. Shark Alley is also the location of two reef breaks, which are in its vicinity. One break is an offshore "bombie" (see Glossary for definition) that breaks right on a reef beside Rabbit Island. This is a big wave spot that very rarely breaks, requiring a 10ft swell to start working. On the other side of Rabbit Island is a fickle left hand reef break that only breaks on large swells.

Outstanding components:

4 - Size or diversity of break area
5 - Naturalness/scenery
6 - Level of use
7 - Amenity value and access
8 - Local community and competition
10 - Cultural values

Mount Coast

1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Popular stretch of variable beach breaks. Known as the 'Mount Coast' or 'Ocean Beach', or more specifically by the proximity to a range of significant landmarks (Omanu Surf Lifesaving Club) or the names of streets where they terminate at the beach edge (e.g. Tay St, Clyde St). Wave quality is dependent on the form of sand banks which generally afford a good consistency suited to high level of use for a very diverse range of recreational activities. Stormwater runoff has an influence on sand movement and rip currents that form the surfable sand banks along a beach otherwise lacking geographical delineation. An iconic stretch of white sandy beach with high scenic, amenity and access values including: easy access facilitated by pedestrian boardwalks or access strips; accessibility for competitions, high visual

amenity for onlookers, toilet and shower facilities (although limited further east), close proximity to a large residential area. Tay Street is particularly valued for its facilities and suitability of the reserve as a competition site. Omanu Beach at Surf Road is also of high value for surf lifesaving activities and competition with a surf life saving club located there. Mount Coast is an important stretch of coast for many people as it contains the 'local break' of the population of Mount surfers. Local surf competitions have been organised in the past with teams of surfers from different streets or parts of Mount Coast competing against each other for local notoriety. For these reasons this stretch of coast is highly significant the local community as a source of enjoyment, health and well-being. Also contains the 'Mount Reef' project which remains in an unfinished state.

Outstanding components:

4 - Size or diversity of break area
5 - Naturalness/scenery
6 - Level of use
7 - Amenity value and access
8 - Local community and competition
10 - Cultural values

Arataki (Omanu)

1 - Wave quality rating: 7/10
2 - Consistency rating: 8/10
3 - Rarity rating: 1/10

Description: Above average variable beach breaks, similar in many ways to those identified as the 'Mount Coast' breaks although known to hold more sizeable swells. Stormwater runoff has an influence on sand movement and rip currents that form the surfable sand banks along a beach otherwise lacking geographical delineation. A commonly known focal point is the Girven Road access. This stretch of beach features fewer public amenities, less public access and are subsequently have a lower level of use in general compared to the Mount Coast breaks. The scenic value of the sandy beach, dune environment and the associated visual amenity for both surf break users and onlookers is still high and significant. Some of the amenity of these breaks is coupled with a more 'undeveloped' feel (e.g. less boardwalks, car parking) and the intrinsic value of the coastline in its more natural state.

Outstanding components:

4 - Size or diversity of break area
5 - Naturalness/scenery
7 - Amenity value and access
8 - Local community and competition

4.5 Swimming, small boats, water contact recreation and beach use – Strava analysis

Strava[10] is increasingly becoming a useful tool for identifying the relative levels of interest in various recreation activities by setting. Strava is a social media platform where users record their GPS activity via their smartphones and other devices while recreating. The data are uploaded to a central database, allowing speed and time comparisons with other cyclists, runners, kayakers, surfers and swimmers (for example), and the monitoring of individual activity or training targets. Water-based users rely on waterproof smartwatches rather than phones. While the service is popular with professional athletes, its membership is dominated by casual recreation participants. Strava indicates that it had 95 million international users in 2022 (80% outside the United States) with nearly an additional two million joining per month.[11] It is now popular amongst regular cyclists and runners, and is also used by the likes of rowers, kayakers, walkers, waka ama and swimmers.[12]

International comparisons between different forms of data gathering show a degree of reliability for Strava data with a range of 1% to 12% of users recorded on-site that are connected to the service; and this is growing. The author of this report has recorded participation levels for cycling in Aotearoa/New Zealand up to 20%. Strava is therefore a little like a tag and release programme. Strava essentially tags several thousand active people in an area and monitors where and how they recreate. Its greatest strength is in showing the relative value of settings for different forms of recreation. However, it must be noted that Strava data are biased to a sector of the population which is more likely to be physically active and reasonably tech-savvy. Some Strava data are also recorded while users are driving from their activity (they forget to turn tracking off), and some users miscode their activities (marine cyclists for example). There is also inaccuracy in GPS recording from some devices, with some recorded routes offset.

Strava heatmaps for water-sports give a good indication of preferences for water-contact recreation, including swimming and small boat activity, such as surfing, sea kayaking, rowing, waka ama and stand-up paddle boards. Figure 19 shows one year of data filtered for all recorded marine recreation to January 2026, with a concentration of water-based activity around Mauao, Pilot Bay, the Mount Maunganui Main Beach, the western side of Sulphur Point and off Kulim and Ferguson Parks. The following figures show the same data subdivided for dinghy sailing, ocean swimming, stand-up paddling boarding, kayaking (including surf kayaking) and surfing.

[10] See: https://www.strava.com/maps/global-heatmap
[11] https://www.businessofapps.com/data/strava-statistics/
[12] In the Stuff online daily general knowledge quiz for 15 January 2025, a question was, “You can use the app Strava to track ….” 56% answered correctly ‘The route of a bike ride’. 10% chose ‘Your sobriety journey’, 21% ‘Your fertility cycle’ and 13% ‘A lost digital device’.

Figure 19: Strava data for watersports, 12 months to Jan 2026



Figure 20: Strava data for dinghy sailing, 12 months to Jan 2026



Figure 21: Strava data for ocean swimming, 12 months to Jan 2026

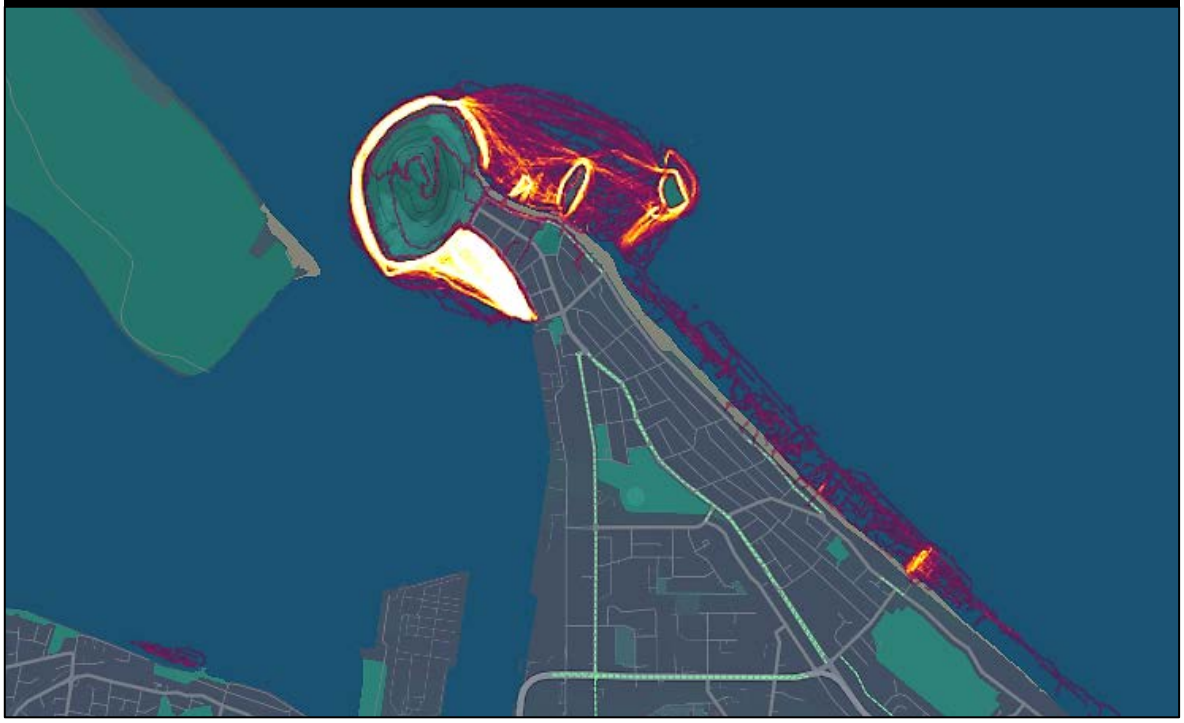


Figure 22: Strava data for stand-up paddle boarding, 12 months to Jan 2026

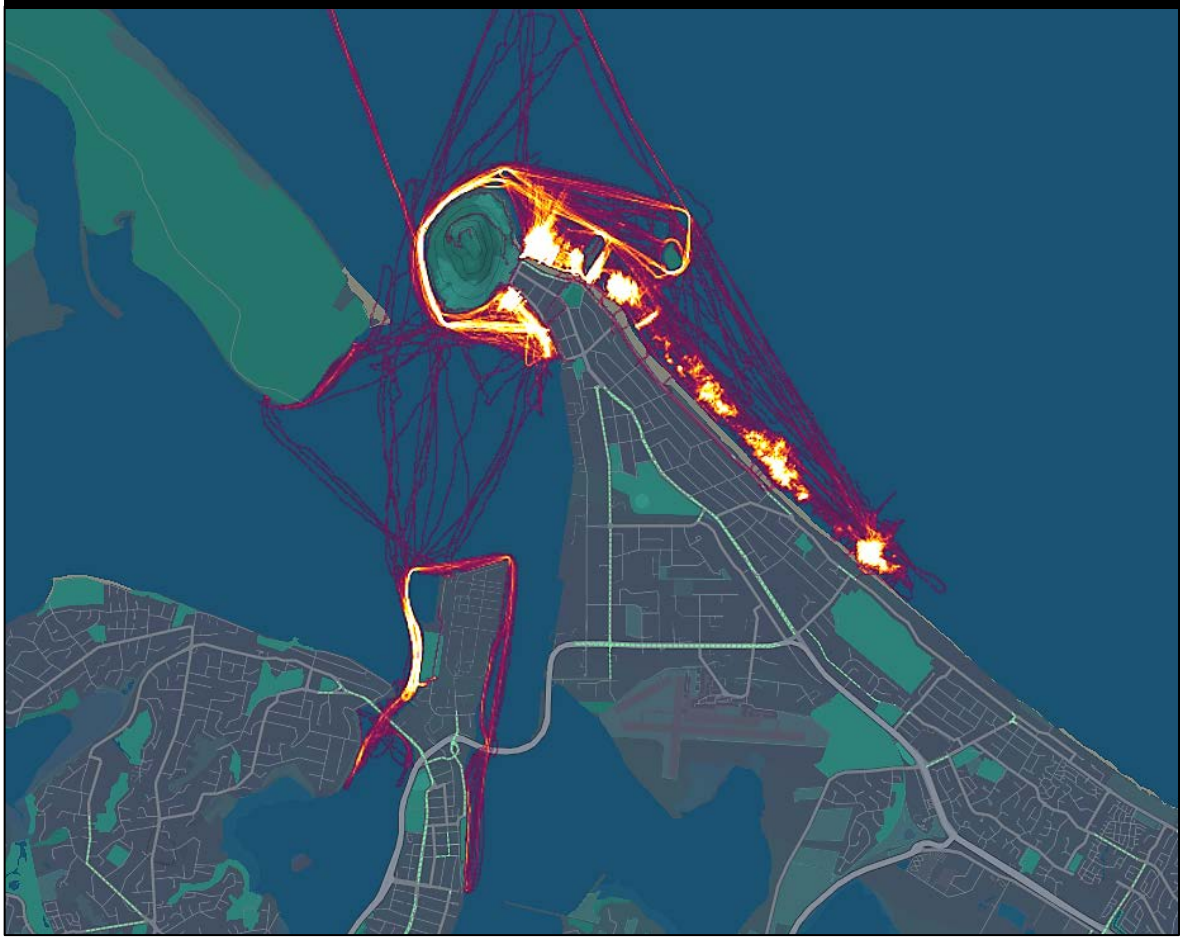


Figure 23: Strava data for kayaking, 12 months to Jan 2026

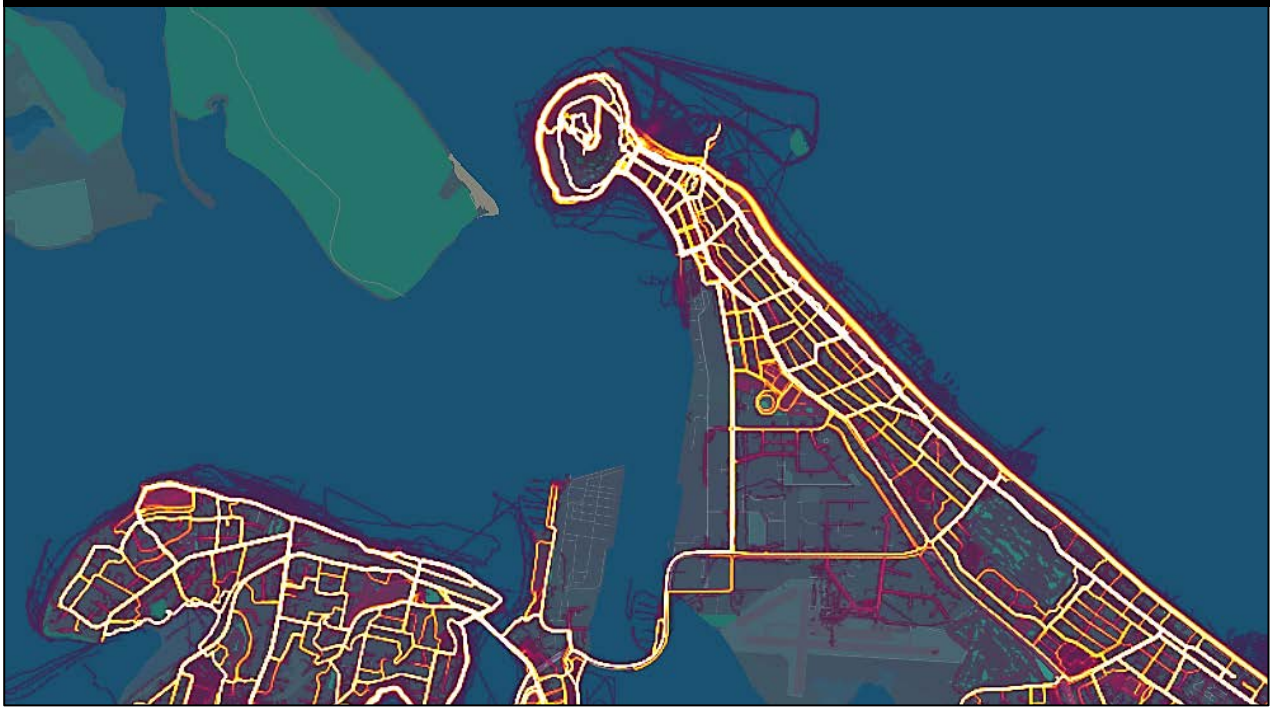


Figure 24: Strava data for surfing, 12 months to Jan 2026



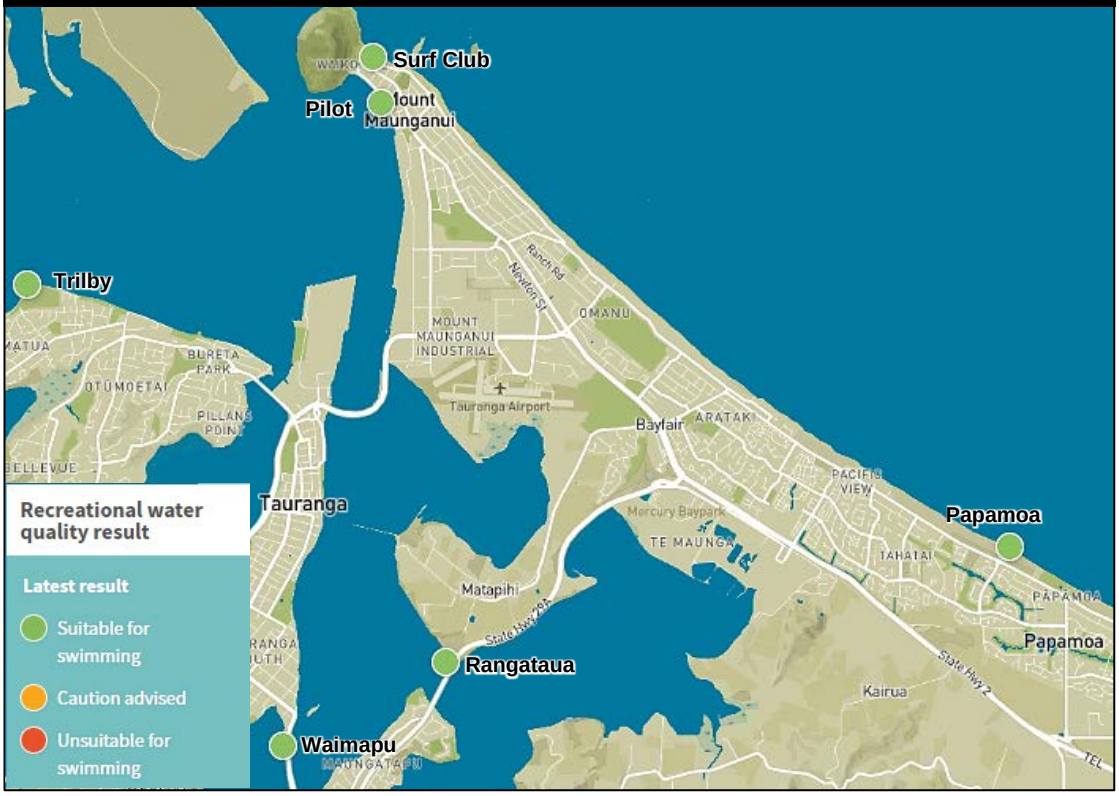
The Strava heatmap for pedestrian activities – walking and running – (Figure 25) show the coastal areas most visited – around Mauao, the ocean beach, Pilot Bay and Ōtūmoetai Beach.

Figure 25: Strava data for pedestrian activities, 12 months to Jan 2026



Water quality monitoring by Bay of Plenty Regional Council for bathing is reported on the LAWA website,[13] with four marine sites within the harbour study area (Pilot Bay, Tilby Point and Rangataua and Waimapu Bays) and two on the coast (Mt Maunganui Surf Club and Papamoa) (Figure 26). At

Figure 26: EBOP bathing water quality sites (latest result at Jan 2026)



[13] https://www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/swimming/

January 2026 Pilot Bay had a reported 'good' long-term grade for contact recreation, while the sites further up-harbour were either 'fair' or 'poor' long-term, all based on *Enterococci* sampling.[14] The long-term grade for the Mt Maunganui Surf Club site was 'excellent' while the Papamoa site was 'good'.

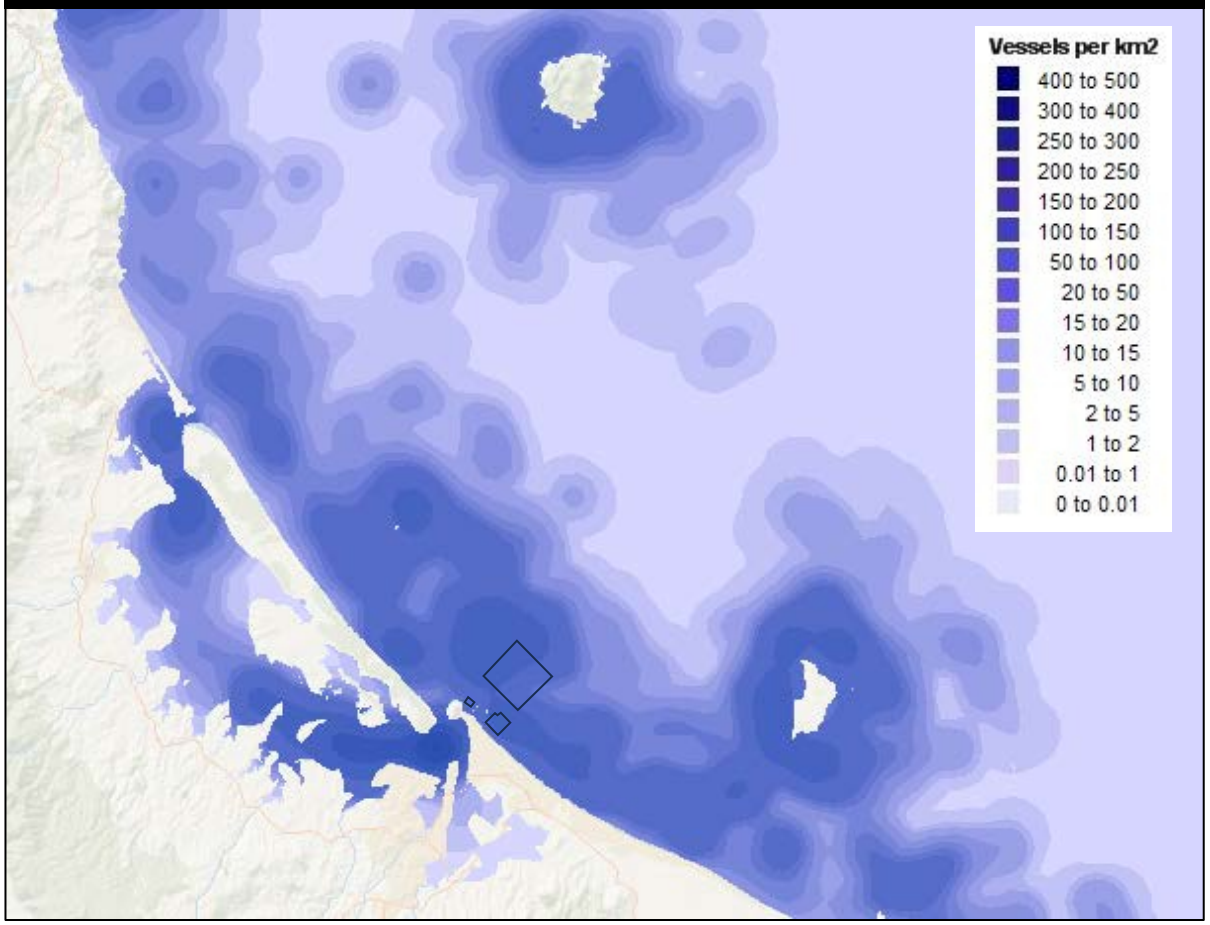
4.6 Diving

Enderby & Enderby (2007) indicate few recommended diving sites near the Harbour, the closest at: Mayor Island, Karewa Island, Motiti Island (Taioma wreck), Penguin Shoal, Pudney Rock and Okaparu Rock. These sites are repeated online[15] with recommendations to avoid swell and wind.

4.7 Fishing

The National Aquatic Biodiversity Information System (NABIS) provided by the Ministry for Primary Industry (MPI) provides results from aerial surveys of recreational fishing effort undertaken over 2004/05 (Figure 27, based on data from Hartill et al 2007).[16] Boats recorded include those scuba diving and so show 'fishing' effort within, for example, the marine reserve north of Mayor Island, although the method of spatialising the data smooths the boundaries of recorded fishing activity areas.[17] The data show Tauranga Harbour and its pilotage area to be a relatively heavily fished setting.

Figure 27: Recreation fishing effort showing offshore spoil disposal areas. MPI NABIS data



[14] Excellent – Risk of illness is less than 1% from contact with the water during the summer bathing period.
Good – Risk of illness is less than 5% from contact with the water during the summer bathing period.
Fair – Risk of illness is between 5 and 10% from contact with the water during the summer bathing period.
Poor – Risk of illness is more than 10% from contact with the water during the summer bathing period.
[15] https://www.divepacific.co.nz/post/six-top-dive-spots-western-bay-of-plenty for example
[16] http://www2.nabis.govt.nz/Map.aspx
[17] The MPI NABIS lineage record for the data states: "A kernel density function was used to contour the data. The density of boats is given as vessels per kilometre squared. The value at each point is determined by calculating the average density over a shifting 2500km^2 window centred at that point. This window size was deemed to give the best trade off between representing the scatter of vessel locations while providing a smoothed synoptic picture of fishing intensity."
https://maps.mpi.govt.nz/NABISLineageDocuments/Recreational%20Fishing%20Effort%20Lineage.pdf

Further aerial surveys have been carried out for MPI subsequently (such as Hartill et al 2013 and Hartill et al 2019), but mapping of the results has not been provided. Hartill et al 2019 reported that 86.5% of vessels identified as fishing in the Bay of Plenty in the 2017/18 season were trailer craft and 10.7% launches, and 1.3% kayak and the remainder 2.8% made up of yachts, jet skis and charter vessels (although the latter had 10.4 fishers per boat compared with 2.5 for trailer craft).

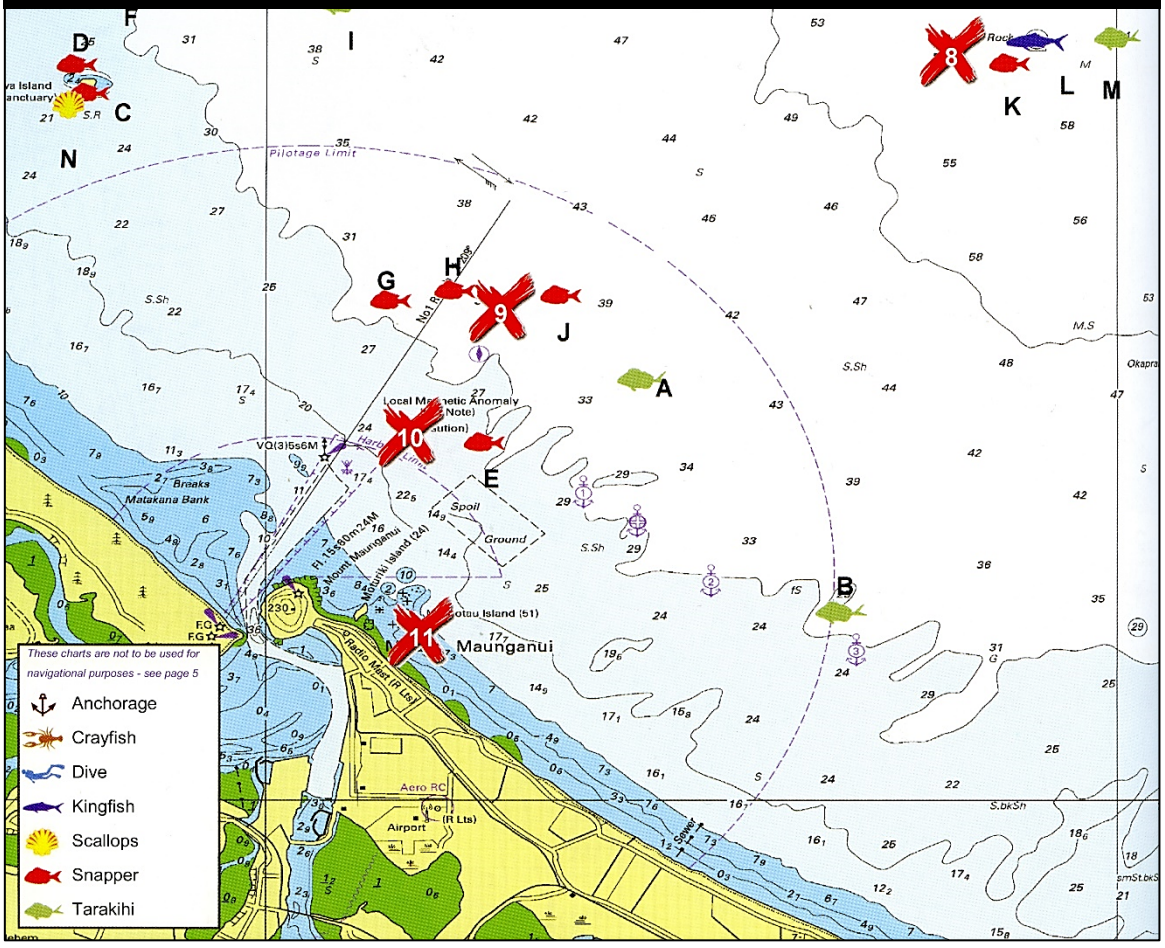
The Spot X national guide for boat fishing (Airey 2004) identifies several specific fishing locations easily accessible from Tauranga Harbour (Figure 28). Advice is given for numbered sites. For example, for site 9, Five Mile, Airey suggests:

> *Species: Snapper. Large patch of reef that sits up from the sand. Search on your sounder for fish signs and anchor with a grapnel, As well as some good snapper, there are tarakihi on the reef fringes and john Dory from November.*

For site 10, Two Mile Reef:

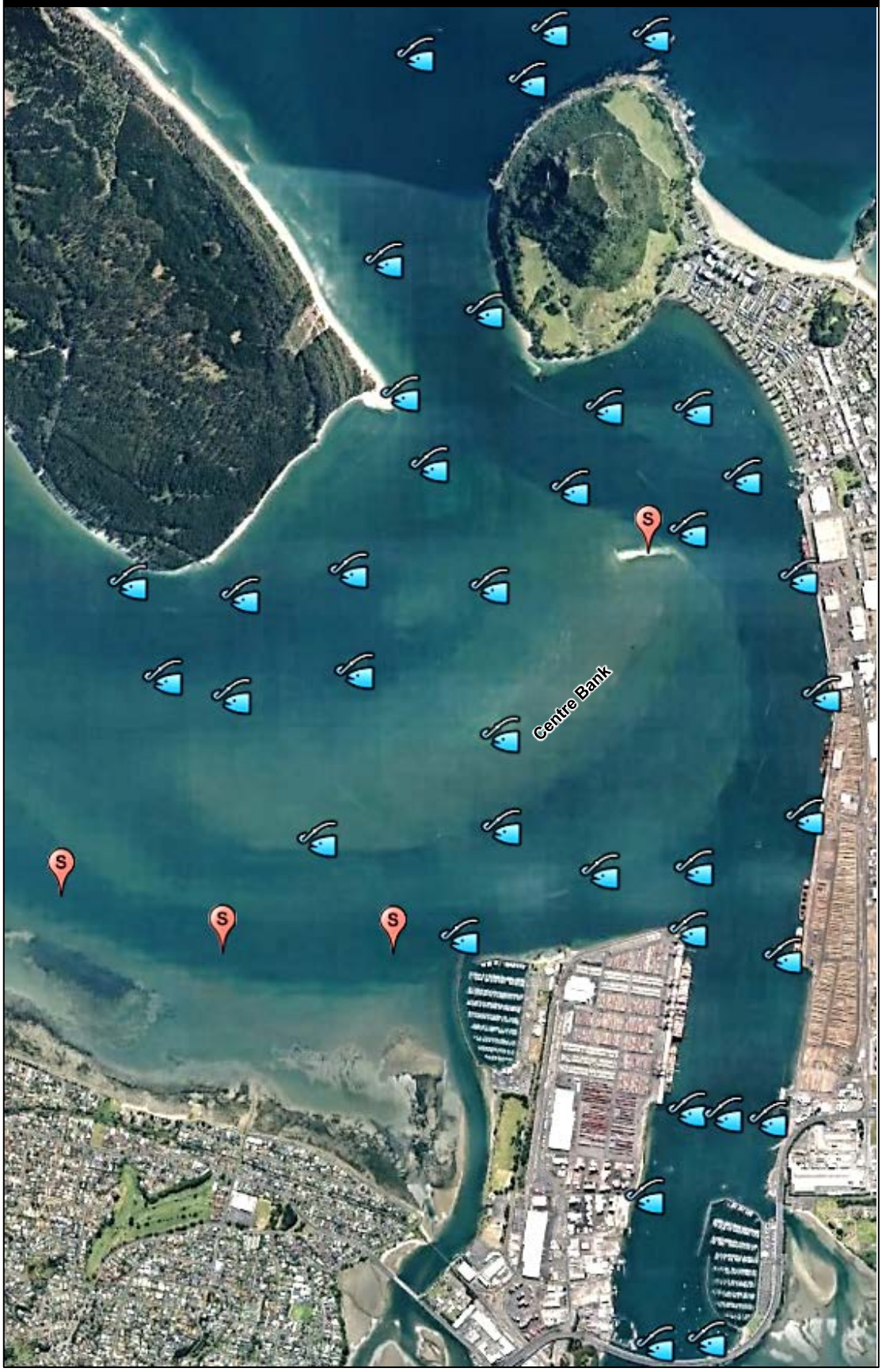
> *Species: John Dory. This is a shallow reef of rugged foul. Hunt the reef with your sunder for fish sign and anchor quietly with a grapnel anchor. Berley up and catch your live bait with a sabiki rig baited with small pieces of squid. Nose hook your live bait using a ledger rig". And for site 11, Rabbit Island: "Species: Bait fish. Hunt the area for schools of mackerel and anchor upcurrent with a grapnel anchor. Use lots of berley and a sabiki rig with small pieces of squid.*

Figure 28: Spot X recommended fishing sites near Tauranga Harbour (Airey 2004)



Airey (2004) recommends many fishing locations within Tauranga Harbour and at the entrance (Figure 29). These are predominantly for snapper, but also for kingfish near structures (such as wharves) and baitfish, with mussels on Centre Bank and scallops north of Ōtūmoetai (marked with a red S pin).

Figure 29: Spot X recommended fishing sites Tauranga Harbour (from Airey 2004)



4.8 Shellfishing

No comprehensive analysis of recreational shellfishing sites within the study area has been located. Various sources indicate several harvesting opportunities:

- Four shellfishing sites are identified by Airey (2004) as shown in Figure 29 - with mussels on Centre Bank and scallops north of Ōtūmoetai (marked with a red S pin).
- The existing POT dredging consent refers to the monitoring of conditions at "The pipi bed known as Te Paritaha o Te Awanui" and "The sandbank area on Matakana Island known as Panepane."
- The Bay of Plenty Regional Council referred in 2021 to a rāhui applying to "the removing of greenlipped mussels from the area between Moturiki and Motuotau. The intension behind the rāhui is to conserve the green-lipped mussel for future populations in the area. The rāhui is in response to local Māori and community concerns."[18]
- Fisheries (Declaration of Mt Maunganui and Part Tauranga Harbour Mātaitai Reserve Bylaw) Notice 2009 (No. F510) describes the Mātaitai Reserve around Mauao (Figure 30) and limits on mussel collection there: *Bylaw 1: Maximum daily limit for mussels The maximum number of mussels that may be taken or possessed in any day by any person from the Mātaitai reserve is 25 mussels per person*.
- Berkenbusch & Neubauer (2015) surveyed cockle and pipi populations near Ōtūmoetai (Figure 31, with the number of shellfish reasonably consistent over time (from 2006), but a reduction in the numbers of large cockles and pipi.

Figure 30: Mt Maunganui and Part Tauranga Harbour Mātaitai Reserve. MPI NABIS data



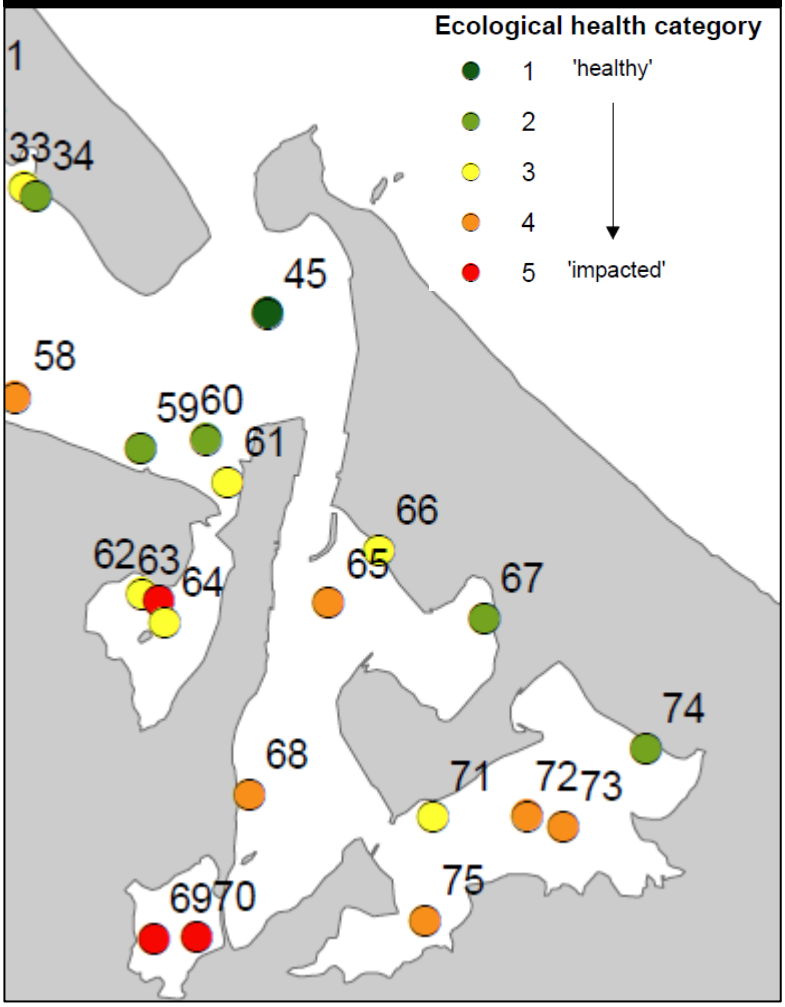
[18] https://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/797986/11-motuotau-rabbit-island-waikareao-estuary-waimapu_yatton-park-waimapu_windermere.pdf

Figure 32: Cockle and pipi beds - Berkenbusch & Neubauer (2015)



Ellis et al (2013) reported on the health of shellfish in the Tauranga Harbour with several sites near Sulphur Point (Figure 32). Te Paritaha / Centre Bank was reported to have a relatively very high count of pipi, and the sites west of Sulphur Point relatively high counts of cockles. Figure 32 shows the levels of contamination in all shellfish samples as a health category grade at the sites shown, with green the healthiest.

Figure 31: Shellfish health category for contamination (Ellis et al 2013)



5 Consultation findings

Telephone interviews, email correspondence and an online workshop convened by Sport Bay of Plenty were used to gain an understanding of perceived impacts of POT's dredging and spoil disposal. The following groups and individuals were represented:

- Tauranga Marine Charters
- Mt Maunganui Yacht Club
- Bay of Plenty Sailing Academy Trust
- Young Mariners New Zealand
- Environment BOP Harbourmaster
- Bay of Plenty Dragon Boat Club
- Omanu Surf Lifesaving Club
- Tri-Tauranga
- Tauranga Coastguard
- Mount Maunganui Surf Lifesaving Club
- Tauranga Yacht and Power Boat Club
- Hoe Aroha Whanau o Mauao Waka Ama
- Tauranga Moana Outrigger Canoe Club
- Tauranga City Council Spaces and Places Team and Event Facilitation Team
- Assault Boardriding Centre
- South Pacific Surf
- Sport Bay of Plenty (as facilitator)

The following groups responded but stated that they were unaffected by POT dredge activities and had nothing to contribute:

- Tauranga Sport Fishing Club
- Katikati Boating Club
- Omokoroa Boat Club Inc
- Tauranga Anglers Club

The following did not respond to contact by email and phone (where a phone number was available):

- Tauranga Boat Hire Limited
- Tauranga Marina – Sulphur Point Marina
- Bay of Plenty Boat Hire
- Hibiscus Surf School
- Mount Surf School
- Castaway Surf School
- Mount Maunganui Surf Academy
- The Seamen Ocean Swim Squad

- Aqua 360
- Valda M Fishing Charters
- Mount Maunganui Underwater Club
- Tidal Yachting
- Bay of Plenty Coast Rowing Club
- Tauranga Rowing Club
- Surfbreak Protection Society (Auckland)

A summary of the feedback from each contact is provided in Appendix 1. The findings indicate a range of perceived positive and adverse effects from dredging and spoil disposal, and a mix of conceptions about natural causes of change and those influenced by POT activities. Key issues were:

- The potential for increased current speeds in the dredged channel, requiring changes to boating behaviour and increasing risks for small craft, such as waka ama.
- Changes to bathymetry near-shore, with steepening of drop-offs in Pilot Bay affecting the ease with which people launch and board small craft, especially sailing dinghies, and the abrupt depth change a hazard for larger craft (striking the channel edge with a gentler batter preferred).
- The growth of Centre Bank / Te Patihaha, limiting access in the area for deeper keeled craft.
- Sand build-up at some launching ramps, for example at Pilot Bay and Sulphur Point, affecting boat launching.
- Erosion at Panepane Point removing a safe eddy for waka ama and other paddle sports, and affecting shellfish harvesting, with shallowing of nearby sandbanks affecting deeper keeled craft. Erosion at Matakana Island ocean beach was identified as a general concern.
- A general lack of information about harbour dredging activities, potential ecological effects and timing of dredge activities – the latter relating to potential navigation conflict.
- Increased congestion within the harbour via more large ship movements and increased recreational traffic. Some interviewees considered dredging an avenue for enabling more ship traffic, with, also, the potential for the introduction of new marine pests.

Interviewees often referred to the benefits of:

- Improved aids to navigation installed by POT.
- Sand nourishment in Pilot Bay and at Main and Omanu Beaches, helping retain beaches and sand dunes.
- The deeper channels improving navigation for recreational craft.

Several interviewees using small craft noted changes to bathymetry in the harbour – largely shallowing – but that their activities were largely unaffected. The Omanu Surf Lifesaving Club reported an increase in marine life in their near-shore area and no adverse effects generally.

The most frequent request was for more information about ship movements and dredge activities to enable event and activity planning, and more information about the effects of dredging on tidal currents, bathymetry and harbour ecological values.

Cultural Values Reports by Ngāi Tamarawaho, Waitaha, Ngāti Ranginui Fisheries Trust, Ngāti Hangarau and Ngāi Tukairangi noted that cultural values expressed through, for example, harvesting kai moana, waka ama and waka taua, are not effectively expressed through a stand-alone recreation assessment. This assessment cannot articulate the cultural values and associations with the area that will be impacted by the Proposal. That is a matter for Tangata Whenua and is something that addressed (as assessed) separately.

Additional cultural value review is required beyond the scope of this assessment. However, common practical concerns, such as navigation safety for waka, are incorporated into the recommendations of this report.

6 Assessment of effects

This section identifies the likely adverse effects on recreation potentially caused by the proposal, and a review of proposed "mitigations" / management responses. This is based on:

- An identification of all potential adverse effects on recreation amenity,
- A review of the technical reports which assess those effects, and the identification of the scale and relevance of each effect,
- A summary of the effects which have the potential to change recreation amenity,
- A discussion of the scale of those effects and their potential for mitigation/management.

Effects on recreation values are assessed according to the matrix in Table 1. This considers the magnitude of the effect and the value of the setting for recreation.

Table 1: Scale of impact on recreation values considering magnitude of effect

		Recreation value			
		Very High	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**
Magnitude of effect	**High or severe**	Significant	Significant	Moderate	Minor
	Moderate or medium	Significant	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	Low or minor	Moderate	Moderate	Minor	Minor
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

A 'significant' adverse effect is likely to displace[19] many or most users from a setting for prolonged periods, but not necessarily for all activities which occur there; although it is likely that amenity for all activities will be degraded. A 'moderate' adverse effect will periodically displace some activities and users, but amenity will not be degraded for all activities. A 'minor' adverse effect will displace a small number of users for short periods, but amenity will almost always be preserved for the majority of activities and users. The scale of effect may be reduced if the area affected is confined and there are ample suitable alternative opportunities for relevant activities.

All recreation activities in the study area have very high regional value due to the high local population and the quality of the setting, ideally suited to a wide range of recreation pursuits. The setting features good water quality, easy access, a high quality landscape setting, and a sheltered Harbour on one side and, on the other, exposed ocean beaches suited to wave sports. Any adverse effects on recreation values and opportunities beyond the level of low or minor magnitude have, therefore, the potential to be significant.

6.1 Potential adverse effects and their scale

The list of potential adverse effects is taken largely from interviewees (Section 5) and literature review (Section 4). Congestion in the harbour from growth in large ship movements and recreational craft is not considered an effect of harbour dredging, and is not referred to.

[19] Force people to recreate in other settings, at different times, or not at all.

6.1.1 Biosecurity risks

Some interviewees indicated adverse effects from the introduction of marine pests, requiring increased maintenance and surveillance of biofouling on recreational craft. Dredging – and port activities generally – were considered a potential source of marine pests.

The Cawthron Institute Marine Pest Risk Assessment finds that the proposed dredging activities are likely to present an incremental change in marine biosecurity risk over the existing situation, primarily associated with vessel movements and dredge spoil disposal. POT has proposed consent conditions which require a financial contrition to the BOP Regional Council to support ongoing monitoring of marine pests in the Harbour, a Risk Management Assessment when requested and immediate responses to any identified high-risk marine pests.

6.1.2 Navigation safety

Interviewees and literature indicate that increasing crowding of the Harbour by both recreational and commercial craft is a growing concern. Safe access across the main channel by waka taua, and for waka ama generally, was identified in cultural values reporting by Tangata Whenua as a particular concern.

The Navigatus Navigation Safety Assessment notes that the dredging works will enable the type of deep draught ships that already call at POT to be less constrained by tide in terms of their arrival and departure times. This has both operational and safety benefits, as it increases safety margins for handling all vessels passaging to and from and while berthing at Sulphur Point and greater use of available wharf space. The proposed dredge activity is not new to the Harbour, and is essentially the same as that carried out in 2015/16, with some minor differences in area covered.

Navigatus finds that the proposed dredge activities will result in minor potential changes to the navigational safety risk profile for the Harbour, with a marginal reduction of risk in some areas, and minor increases that require the implementation of additional controls for the risks to be considered 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP).

Overall, the capital and maintenance dredging proposed, along with the intended operation of the shipping channel, are considered to not represent a significant change to the status-quo in terms of navigational safety for other recreational users of the harbour – a no more than minor effect.

Tangata Whenua and recreation groups almost all sought more information about general Port activities (ship movements) and dredge activities to enable easier event planning and a general understanding of harbour safety issues. The development of a formal advisory system between POT, Tangata Whenua and recreational user groups is therefore a recommendation of this assessment. The effect of dredging in itself, however, is negligible.

6.1.3 Increased tidal currents, and changes to harbour bathymetry and tidal currents beyond the dredge areas

Interviewees reported a perceived increase in tidal current speeds in the Harbour over time, and were interested in the potential for effects on bathymetry and currents beyond the dredge areas..

Dr Willem de Lange reports in his Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics that (section 6):

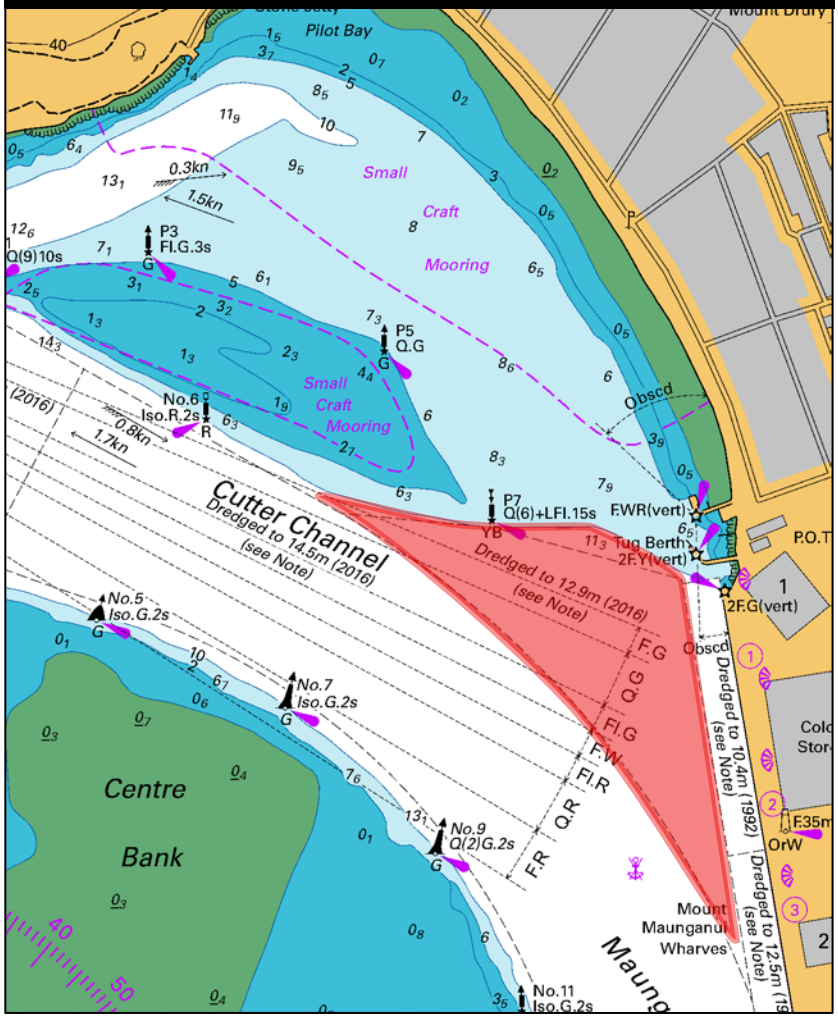
> *Numerical modelling of the originally proposed 2026 capital dredging predicted little change in the tidal characteristics, and hence, unsurprisingly, it predicted a reduction in tidal velocities for the dredged areas of the shipping channels proportional to the increased cross-sectional area. The modelling also showed, consistent with before and after observations of previous capital dredging, that there are no detectable changes to tidal characteristics and tidal velocities beyond the immediate area of the dredged channels. The smaller proposed reconsenting capital dredging will have correspondingly smaller impacts than modelled.*

He also noted that the largest change in velocities were associated with the initial capital dredging in the 1960s, particularly the excavation of the Cutter Channel that resulted in greatly reduced tidal currents in the Pilot Bay Channel. Subsequent capital dredging programmes have had less impact, except for areas of significant deepening in Stella Passage. The changes at the southern end of Stella Passage are also the result of the constriction of flow by the Tauranga Harbour Crossing.

Tidal currents are influenced by the slope of the water surface created by the local tidal range (the difference in height between the high and low tide levels), with maximum speeds occurring at mid-tide. Dredging increases the cross-sectional area of the channel, which increases the volume of water in the channel, but not the amount of water flowing per unit time (the discharge). This results in lower current velocities. Changing the bathymetry can, however, change the shape of the tide, with the tidal range increasing or decreasing. Increased tidal ranges result in higher velocities (a steeper slope) and decreased tidal ranges result in lower velocities. Overall historical dredging and modelled future dredging has and will have a very small effect on tidal ranges (up to 1-2 cm), which is difficult to distinguish from the effects of long period tidal waves (18.6 years and longer)[20] and weather. The main effect therefore has been a reduction in velocity of tidal currents. However, increased velocities can occur if the channel is constricted by infrastructure (causeways for example) and shoaling. This has occurred in localised areas in the Harbour, with shoaling overall a natural consequence of sedimentation in the Harbour.[21]

The Mount Maunganui Yacht Club noted that the relatively abrupt change in depth on the batter slope of the dredged channel at the southern end of Pilot Bay and Centre Bank, considering it a hazard to yachts approaching the shore and potentially striking a steep bank. Figure 2 shows the proposed dredge area immediately south of Pilot Bay, showing a current dredge depth of 12.9 m, and a target depth of 16 m. The adjacent depth of the main channel in Pilot Bay is shown as approximately 8 m. The latter is well below the required depth of all common recreational keelers, which would normally feature no more than a 2 m draft (such a Ross 930).

Figure 33: South Pilot Bay dredge area (red)



Dr Willem de Lange's Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics reports the formation of reasonably stable batter slopes on the channel edges with limited creep beyond the originally dredged toe line over time. Maintenance dredging does not further increase the extent of the original dredge footprint.

The net effect of capital and maintenance dredging on recreational requirements for depth and navigable current speeds is minor or less.

[20] Caused by atmospherically forced ocean general circulation.
[21] Willem de Lange, MetOcean, pers comm

6.1.4 Effects on coastal erosion, particularly Panepane Point

The MetOcean Shoreline Change Assessment reports on changes to the southern end of the Matakana Beach shoreline and the configuration of Panepane Point.

Surveys from 1870 and 1922 indicate substantial accretion of the shoreline up to the early and mid-1990s, with the formation of the Panepane Point hooked point formation in the mid-2000s, and substantial shoreline retreat up to 2023. Over the winter of 2024, the Panepane Point hook of sand virtually disappeared (Figure 34). Interviewees indicate that the shelter of the encapsulated bay was previously a destination for small harbour craft such as waka ama and kayaks, and the Point itself a shellfish gathering area. Matakana ocean beach is a popular surfing area. Considering the proximity of the Point to the dredged channel there was interest in its scale of effect on these changes.

MetOcean reports that surveys of the Matakana Banks ebb tide delta (the extensive area of shallow sands offshore from Matakana Beach) show no long-term trends of accretion or erosion, with significant recent coastal changes the result of long-period La Niña events. These influence more prevalent north-easterly storm conditions in the North Island. Conversely, El Niño weather patterns allow for accretion of the seaward shoreline of Panepane Point due to more westerly and southerly winds and drier conditions in the east.

Dr Willem de Lange also finds in his Assessment of Effects on Turbidity and Morphodynamics that effects of dredging on sediment transport in the Harbour are obscured by changing storm wave conditions, particularly a higher incidence of La Niña conditions over the last decade. Dredging effects appear to have only minor impacts beyond these natural processes.

Figure 34: Panepane Point, February 2024 at left, August 2024 right. Google Earth images



6.1.5 Effects on ecological values and water quality

A range of ecological values underpin many recreation values of the study area, particularly the harvesting of kai moana (shellfish, finfish, koura/crayfish, etc). Cultural values reporting indicates the significance of the ability to confidently gather kai moana as a central cultural value to Tangata Whenua.

The Boffa Miskell Marine Ecology Assessment finds, in summary, that no mitigations are required as a result of the capital and maintenance dredging. Assessment findings included:

- Variations in reef dwelling marine species in potentially affected areas – although highly sensitive to sedimentation – are more likely to be related to harvesting pressure and natural variation, but with generally stable populations and no apparent effects over time from POT dredging activities and spoil disposal.
- Similarly, pipi beds at Te Paritaha have a relatively stable population based on surveys beginning in 2016, with high numbers of juvenile recruitment, and periodic reductions in the number of adults, and normal variation in bed locations depending on sand movement. Harbour dredging was not found to influence species abundance or location.
- For fish, Boffa Miskell found a high level of species diversity and abundance in the Port working area, with no apparent adverse effects from dredge activities.
- Sediment quality was found to be good, with levels of toxicity below recommended thresholds. Adverse effects from dredge-induced turbidity were found to be minimal and very short-term.

The Streamlined Water Quality Assessment found negligible effects for toxicity, water temperature, pH, salinity, and dissolved oxygen from dredging within the Harbour and from spoil disposal. The assessment found the potential for local increases in nutrient levels (and so the potential for algal growth) but that the net effect on the Harbour would be less than minor.

7 Conclusion

This assessment finds that:

- Tauranga Harbour and the Maunganui coastal area is a highly significant marine and coastal recreation setting, used for a wide range of recreation pursuits and valued for its high quality natural values, harbour shelter, ocean beaches and easy access.
- Maintaining the ability to confidently gather abundant and high quality kai moana is a major focus for Tangata Whenua and recreation groups.
- The Harbour is increasingly congested with recreational and commercial craft, and this is likely to be the single largest concern of recreational users.
- There is a range of perceptions about the effects of harbour dredging on recreation opportunities, and a previous lack of ongoing communication appears to have led to various misconceptions about the potential adverse effects of dredging, particularly with regard to changes to marine species abundance, marine and coastal features such as Centre Bank, Panepane Point and the Matakana ocean beach, and tidal current speeds.
- The use of clean spoil in beach replenishment is widely recognised as important and beneficial.
- The effects of capital and maintenance dredging on recreation values and opportunities are considered no more than minor.
- Better communication between the Port, Tangata Whenua and recreational harbour users will benefit all groups.

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Appendix 1: Interview summaries

Interviews were completed over December 2024 to February 2025 and summarised by Sam Strong of Thrive for Rob Greenaway & Associates

Tauranga Marine Charters-Fishing Charters, Brett Keller (by email):

"I have no issues with POT deepening the entrance and increasing the turning circle for ships.

"The sand dumped goes wherever the prevailing swells, tides and currents take it, so dumping outside the beaches would likely be more positive than negative in regard to building up the sand dunes.

"From personal experience, when crayfishing off Gisborne, I had pots buried under 2 m of sand in around 2 5m of water after a storm (I dived on them to see if I could retrieve them). Three months later I jumped over again in hope there might be less sand over them. There was none, they were lying on the papa with hardly a grain of sand to be seen, so where they dump it is pretty inconsequential in my experience."

Mt Maunganui Yacht Club, Adam Yates (8 years as commodore, 28 years member) and Haeg Petterson (Club Captain)

The Yacht Club, located at Pilot Bay, has been hosting sailing races for 60 years and currently has 250 members. Their races primarily utilise the shipping channel, with routes extending from Sulphur Point to A Beacon. The area's deeper waters and visibility from the clubhouse make it an essential location for recreational sailing and spectator engagement.

Over time, changes attributed to dredging and increased shipping activity have raised significant concerns. The steep, hard edges created by dredging along the harbour margin near the yacht club present safety risks for sailboats navigating close to shore. Additionally, shallowing in non-dredged areas adjacent to the dredged channel has made navigation more challenging. Stronger currents resulting from dredging also heighten safety risks, while the increase in larger commercial vessels with deeper drafts has introduced scheduling conflicts and navigational challenges, disrupting up to 14 club events annually. The club recommends a gentler seabed slope of 2.5 meters at low tide to alleviate safety concerns.

Stakeholders identified POT's activities, particularly the increased shipping traffic and downstream effects of dredging, as primary contributors to these challenges. They expressed dissatisfaction with POT's lack of proactive engagement and limited communication regarding the impacts on recreational boating. While the club is up to date on dredging practices, they seek greater clarity on the long-term environmental effects to better plan race routes and mitigate hazards. Concerns also extend to ongoing erosion and shallowing at Pilot Bay, which affects members who use the beach.

The Yacht Club emphasised that POT holds responsibility for addressing safety and navigational concerns and called for improved coordination with recreational users. Stakeholders highlighted the absence of positive contributions from POT and underscored the urgent need for effective communication to address existing and future challenges.

Bay of Plenty Sailing Academy Trust, Roger Clark (Chair)

The Bay of Plenty Sailing Academy Trust (BOPSAT) operates primarily in the sheltered waters in front of the yacht club at Sulphur Point and near Te Patitaha. Their activities focus on sailing, with learners and teams using the area for training and occasional events. The group typically avoids the shipping channel and wharves, with minimal activity near Mauao or the channel, prioritising safety and ease of navigation. The preferred areas include the stretch from the POT side across to Mount Harbour Beach, where conditions are ideal for learners due to sheltered waters and reduced tidal impacts.

Seasonally, the harbour and channel becomes busier in summer, presenting some navigational challenges. However, these do not significantly affect BOPSAT's operations. The area's unique attributes, including its safe and weather-sheltered environment, make it an invaluable training ground for novice sailors and a suitable venue for broader team activities.

Over the past 20 years, the group has observed environmental and operational changes. Marine pests arriving through vessel bilge water have increased, imposing additional costs and administrative burdens, such as obtaining clean hull certificates. The growing number of larger vessels and stronger currents in the channel also discourage academy members from venturing into those areas, particularly for safety reasons. Despite these factors, overall usage trends remain stable for BOPSAT, with minimal direct conflicts or changes in user group dynamics.

The group noted that POT activities have had minimal direct impact on their operations. While dredging and shipping traffic pose potential risks to navigation and increase congestion, these factors are not central concerns for BOPSAT. The academy expressed appreciation for POT's considerate and polite approach to interactions with their organisation.

To better align with POT's dredging operations, BOPSAT seeks timely and detailed information on the locations, timing, and duration of dredging activities. This would enable the group to plan their operations accordingly and maintain safety for their members.

Overall, BOPSAT values the safe and sheltered environment the harbour provides for their activities and appreciates the minimal disruptions caused by POT. Moving forward, improved communication about dredging operations and environmental impacts will help sustain their operations and address any potential concerns collaboratively.

Young Mariners New Zealand, David Pilbrow (Chairman 1 year, 26 years member)

The Young Mariners New Zealand (YMNZ) group has been operating for 16 years at Sulphur Point from the Tauranga Yacht and Power Boat Club. The YMNZ focuses on sailing, kayaking, and rowing, primarily in the area north of Sulphur Point. They avoid entering or crossing the shipping channel, with race courses also staying outside this area. Their activities occasionally depend on shipping schedules but occur only once or twice a year. While the current shallow conditions pose challenges for their operations (specifically with the increase of the sandbank west of the club), YMNZ views the harbour's accessibility and proximity to the club as significant for their recreational pursuits.

Over the years, parts of the harbour have become shallower due to silt accumulation, which has not directly impacted their activities but remains a concern. The port area is busier, with increased commercial and public vessel traffic. However, YMNZ operates outside the consented area, and port-related changes have had minimal direct effect on their operations on the water. The primary impact they experience stems from the port's railway line, which creates access barriers to the yacht club and boat ramp at Sulphur Point.

YMNZ acknowledges that while the port contributes to harbour crowding, it also creates deep areas essential for larger recreational vessels. They appreciate POT's sponsorship but seek better communication about dredging schedules to coordinate their activities. They also support expanding the dredged area to increase the depth in the harbour's western section. Overall, YMNZ backs the port's dredging activities as long as they do not exacerbate shallowing in other parts of the harbour.

Environment Bay of Plenty Harbour Master/Manager, Jon Jon Peters (4 years in this role, previously with Maritime NZ, 5 years)

Jon Jon characterises the harbour area as accommodating high recreational and commercial vessel traffic, hosting diverse activities such as kayaking, fishing, diving, paddle boarding, and kite surfing. Its uniqueness lies in its safe, protected environment and easy public access, making it an important hub for recreation. Seasonal variations and economic factors influence the intensity of use, with peak activity occurring during summer months and holidays.

Over the past 20 years, the size and frequency of ships have increased, accompanied by advancements in navigation technology. These changes have heightened safety risks for recreational users due to reduced margins of space and increased near-miss incidents. While POT's growth has bolstered Tauranga's economy, it has also contributed to changes in recreational dynamics, requiring ongoing education and technology investments to mitigate risks.

From the Harbourmaster's perspective, and from forecasting recreational trends, public recreational vessel use is economically dependent (e.g., when fuel prices rise, there is less motorised personal vessel use than non-motorised). Winter has lower recorded use than in the summer (warmer) months. The Harbourmaster and team conduct year round patrols on the weekends, but from December 15th to mid-February patrols are increased to all week, with the busiest times being from school holidays and public holidays (and Labour Day to Waitangi Day generally).

It was strongly noted that dredging activities are seen as essential for navigational safety, preventing grounding incidents and maintaining harbour functionality. Jon Jon emphasised the importance of clear communication regarding dredging impacts and operational updates. Concerns from recreational user groups have been reported to the Harbour Master (such as by Mount Maunganui Yacht Club), highlighting the need for more communication regarding shipping schedules to support event planning. POT's investment in public facilities and collaboration with regional authorities has been recognised positively by the Regional Council, though the continued balancing of commercial and recreational needs remains a priority.

Bay of Plenty Dragon Boat Club, Karl Nicholson (Club President)

The Bay of Plenty Dragon Boat Club relies on the accessibility of the Sulphur Point boat ramp and nearby waterways. They mainly operate within a 3 km total linear area either side of the Sulphur Point Boat Ramp (1.5 km in either direction) and near the harbour bridges.

Over the years, natural environmental changes have been observed but have not significantly impacted the club's activities. Overall, the club has not noticed any specific effects as a result of POT's operations, including dredging and increased shipping traffic, and overall have not affected the club's use of the harbour. As some shipping traffic has increased and the general use of the area has gotten busier, the club has adapted by focusing on safety measures during high-traffic periods.

Karl emphasised the need for clear communication and proactive planning from POT, particularly around future dredging activities. Transparency and collaboration with the Club and other recreational clubs/users was viewed as essential for balancing operational needs with recreational and environmental values.

Omanu Surf Lifesaving Club, Scott Bartlett (General Manager)

Scott has been a member since 2007 and the GM for the past 18 months. The club primarily operates at Omanu Beach but occasionally participates in events at Main Beach, such as surf carnivals. Scott noted that there has been an observed increase in marine life, including more fish and shellfish in front of and around the surf lifesaving club on Omanu Beach, in the areas where recreation activities are conducted.

The disposal areas, such as the sand nourishment at Main Beach and the larger offshore deposition site, have not had a noticeable effect on activities farther down the beach at Omanu Beach. While there have been no significant changes in currents, sandbars, or conditions affecting participation or safety, the increase in marine life and shellfish has been noted as a positive development.

Overall, the natural deposition of sand along the beach is perceived as a beneficial and naturally driven process, with no apparent harm to the environment or recreation activities.

Tri-Tauranga, Paul Miller (Events and Development Manager)

Tri-Tauranga's primary activities include triathlon events and training, focusing on open water swimming in Pilot Bay and Mount Main Beach, weekly swims around Mauao, and structured triathlons. The club holds three events annually in Pilot Bay (with 2,000 total participants) and one at Mount Main Beach (230–250 participants). Activities are concentrated during the summer season (October–April), with no significant winter training. The club's 250 members value the area's calm, safe waters, diverse depths, and iconic scenery.

Key sites for activities include Pilot Bay (central hub for training and events), Mount Main Beach (triathlon venue), and Mauao (swim route and landmark). The area near the port, from the wharfs to the southern end of Pilot Bay, is also important. A noted improvement has been the addition of distance markers around Mauao.

Over the past 4–5 years, a known sandbar (Te Patihaha) has become more prominent and an additional sandbar has emerged in front of Pilot Bay due to increased sand deposits. Paul was unsure if these changes are linked to natural cycles and maintenance activities, but there has been no disruption to recreational activities or event courses.

Paul noted that dredging by POT is identified as the primary contributor to sandbar formation, but it has not negatively impacted recreational values or safety. He noted that the Port and Tauranga City Council's sand nourishment initiatives maintain beach usability, and previous sponsorships (e.g., Oceanside events) demonstrate positive community engagement. The club coordinates with regional authorities (harbourmaster) to ensure safety, particularly during cruise ship operations.

Concerns and Suggestions:

- Potential effects of proposed dredging: the club suggests that publicly accessible detailed information on how dredging may affect sand deposition, underwater currents, and safety would be appreciated to ensure the longevity of their sport.
- Long-term monitoring: ongoing assessment of environmental and recreational impacts is recommended to balance port operations with user needs.
- Recreation impact considerations: continuation of sand nourishment by Tauranga City Council is vital, alongside monitoring of potential changes in swimming conditions.
- Collaboration with POT: Positive working relationships with the port and regional authorities ensure safety and smooth event operations.

Tauranga City Council, Spaces and Places Team and Event Facilitation Team

The Tauranga City Council Spaces and Places Team and Event Facilitation Team prepared a written response based on a series of questions which framed all interviews.

Context:

This information is being provided by Tauranga City Council (TCC), *specifically from the Spaces and Places Team and Event Facilitation Team*, in response to a request from Thrive Consultants Ltd, who have been engaged to assist the Port of Tauranga (PoT) to prepare a Recreation Impact Assessment (RIA) to support their imminent consent application to continue to carry out dredging in the Tauranga harbour. You confirmed that you are not seeking feedback from any other divisions of teams in TCC.

At an online meeting on 18 December 2024 (attended by you, Rob Greenaway of Rob Greenaway Consultants, and Rowan Johnstone – Engineering Manager for PoT, and myself), you advised that Thrive Consultants is contacting stakeholders in the recreation sector, and that you consider Tauranga City Council to be a key stakeholder. I understood from the meeting that the purpose of seeking feedback from TCC is to gather information to understand recreational uses and values of the harbour, which will be used to help prepare the RIA to support the consent application. The RIA will identify effects of the proposal on recreational values of the harbour.

Our understanding of the proposed works subject to the consent application is per an email from you to Barbara Dempsey, General Manager Community Services at TCC, dated 5 December 2024, where you directed TCC to look at PoT webpage about the upcoming dredging consent application - https://www.port-tauranga.co.nz/environment/dredging/ - which specifically stated that the consent is for dredging and deposition of the dredged material, some of which is used to replenish the dune systems east of Mauao.

Further to this, at the online meeting on 18 December, some additional information was discussed about the proposal, specifically:

- Maintenance dredging is undertaken annually
- Most of the previously consented capital dredging occurred in about 2016
- When dredging and deposition occurs, there are no special requirements for other harbour users to avoid those areas – normal navigation safety requirements apply.
- When undertaking the dredging there's a temporary sediment plume and there are requirements to manage the extent of the plume in terms of tides to minimise water turbidity and effects on recreation.
- Inshore deposits are about 400m away from Mount Maunganui Main Beach at closest – depends on the tide.

TCC has not seen any other consent application material. I confirm that the information provided is factual information and in no way is to be interpreted as TCC providing support or otherwise of any resource consent application.

Feedback:

Based on our understanding of the proposal, and the purpose of your request to us for feedback, please find our feedback below, in the format of the pro-forma questionnaire that you sent to us.

Description of Recreation Activities

What recreational activities do you or your group undertake in the reconsenting area and how long have you been operating there?

TCC response: TCC has assumed the re-consenting area to include Waikorire Pilot Bay, Mount Maunganui Main Beach, Marine Parade, and the coastline all the way eastwards to the end of Papamoa East.

Whilst Tauranga City Council doesn't undertake recreational activities, it owns and manages a number of open spaces/reserves to support recreation and events activities/outcomes, in locations adjacent to the dredging and deposition areas, or that may be affected by the dredging/disposal.

These reserves are included in TCC's Tauranga Reserve Management Plan 2019 (TRMP) (https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/council/council-documents/strategies-and-plans/contributing- documents-to-strategic-direction/reserve-management-plans).

Their names and the TRMP reference number are:

- Pilot Bay Reserve (Waikorire) and Pilot Quay – #3.206
- Whareroa Reserve - #3.286
- Sulphur Point - # 3.229
- Mount Maunganui Main Beach - # 3.169
- Moturiki - # 3.167
- Marine Parade Reserve # 1 - # 3.132
- Marine Parade Reserve # 2 - # 3.133
- Oceanbeach Road Reserve - # 3.175
- Omanu Beach Reserve - # 3.180
- Papamoa Beach Reserve 1 - # 3.195
- Papamoa Beach Reserve 2 - # 3.196
- Papamoa Domain - # 3.197
- Kulim Park - # 3.118

Note: Whilst TCC is *currently* the Administering Body under the Reserves Act, it is owned by the Mauao Trust, and any feedback about Mauao should be sought from the trust.

Management Outcomes relevant to recreation:

TCC's outcomes promoted/desired/sought for these open spaces/reserves that are relevant to them providing for recreation and events are captured within TCC's Tauranga Reserves Management Plan - https://www.tauranga.govt.nz/council/council-documents/strategies-and-plans/contributing- documents-to-strategic-direction/reserve-management-plans.

A summary of key outcomes that TCC promotes/desires/seeks for these open spaces/reserves, to support recreation and events, is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Summary of key outcomes that TCC promotes/desires/seeks for these open spaces/reserves, to support recreation and events

Category of Reserve/Reserve name and TRMP reference #	Key outcomes promoted/desired/sought for open spaces/reserves that support recreation and events
All Reserves – note, these are generic outcomes, and some will more or less relevant to this question than others Sourced from throughout Part B of the TRMP.	▪ Spaces where the community can come together for community activities, events and celebrations ▪ Recognise, develop and enhance recreational opportunities in a way which is consistent with the purpose and values of each reserve ▪ Enable reserves to continue to support the local economy by attracting visitors and promoting events, tourism, and supporting one-off or regular activities that enhance recreational experience ▪ Informal recreation and informal sport are anticipated to occur on reserves, including activities such as socialising, running, walking, cycling, playing, dog walking, enjoying the gardens, relaxing, picnicking, enjoying nature, 'getting away from it all', flying kites, experiencing the ambience, sitting, reading, 'smelling the roses' and having family time, include basketball, skating, scootering, skateboarding, BMX biking, geocaching, drone/model aircraft flying, augmented reality games, frisbee, frisbee golf, swimming, kayaking and access for surfing and other water sports. ▪ Facilitate informal recreation and informal sporting activities in all reserves, where this is compatible with a.1. the reserve classification, if applicable (defined under the Reserves Act) a.2. the reserve category (refer Part A) a.3. the reserve specific information, values and management statements a.4. potential impact on reserve users. ▪ Continue to provide, and enable others to provide, facilities, infrastructure and opportunities at appropriate locations to encourage informal recreation and sporting experiences at suitable locations ▪ Ensure reserves are dynamic spaces that respond to the changing makeup and demand of the community they serve ▪ Continue to provide areas for recreational enjoyment of the environment (such as quiet enjoyment, views, trees and birdwatching) through the reserve network ▪ Encourage the activation of reserves through a variety of methods including enabling events, art, education and interpretation, and facilities and park furniture. ▪ Enable organised sporting activities in reserves, where this is compatible with a.1. the reserve classification, if applicable (defined under the Reserves Act) a.2. the reserve category (refer Part A) a.3. the reserve specific information, values and management statements a.4. potential impacts on reserve users. ▪ Ensure reserves are dynamic spaces that respond to the changing makeup and demand of the community they serve. ▪ Reserves with coastal access may be managed to enable water based sporting activities where any negative impacts on the reserves' values can be appropriately mitigated. ▪ Recognise that some harbour reserves are often appropriate for organised running, cycling and walking activities. ▪ Facilitate appropriate events in reserves, where this is compatible with b.1. the reserves classification, if applicable (defined under the Reserves Act) b.2. the reserves category (refer Part A) b.3. the reserves specific information, values and management statements b.4. potential impacts on reserve users; and b.5 whether the potential effects can be adequately managed. ▪ Where an event crosses the land-water interface, liaison is required with the Bay of Plenty Regional Council (and Harbour Master) to ensure potential effects are considered and addressed ▪ Continue to support events and event's organisers to ensure their events are safe and successful in accordance with the City Events Policy and Council's event application and approval process.

	▪ The sites currently identified as premier events spaces (refer Section j below) include Mount Maunganui Main Beach, Pilot Bay - Coastal Reserve ▪ Premier event spaces are reserves that are popular due to their geography, popularity for event use requests, recreational and passive use, or specific landscape attributes such as access to water for swimming events. Events that use these spaces are expected to warrant the need to take place in the premier location because they hold a high-profile status, or they cannot take place in alternate locations. The need to use premier event spaces can also be driven by other factors that support the city's wider strategic outcomes ▪ Recognise that some coastal reserves provide important sites for sporting events particular to those that require the beach and/or water such as surf lifesaving, beach volleyball, triathlon, swimming and waka ama. ▪ Events within the coastal reserves are permitted only where any potential adverse effects on ecological and landscape values, infrastructure and the community can be minimised ▪ Provide for the installation of appropriate infrastructure to support events in harbour reserves to support appropriate events taking place in appropriate locations, giving specific consideration to potential negative impacts on the natural or passive recreational values of specific reserves or on the network itself ▪ Recognise that some harbour reserves are appropriate for a range of events including running, cycling and walking events ▪ Recognise that some harbour reserves provide important sites for sporting events that require the access to water such as kayaking, waka ama, rowing, kite boarding, and sailing ▪ Dogs are only permitted on reserves in accordance with the Council's Dog Management Policy and Dog Management Bylaw ▪ Horses are permitted on the coastal reserves and beaches in accordance with the provisions of the Beaches Bylaw and they may only access the beach through designated vehicle accessways. ▪ Promote and enhance educational opportunities for natural, cultural, archaeological and historical information within the reserves network through various means including interpretation panels and facilitated education ▪ Recognise, protect, enhance and promote as appropriate the cultural, educational and historical values, and utilise them in reserve design and management. ▪ Continue to provide open spaces for enjoyment of natural elements including natural beauty, bird life, vegetation etc ▪ Maintain and enhance the landscape character of reserves. ▪ The coastal reserves will be restored with native dune vegetation to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural function of the coastal dune area. Some open grass areas will be retained as these provide important access points to coastal areas and support a range of community uses and enjoyment of the coastal environment. ▪ Protect and enhance key vistas from the reserves into the harbour through vegetation management ▪ Re-establish the natural estuary margin vegetation through harbour restoration programmes ▪ Continue to work with Bay of Plenty Regional Council to control sea lettuce in high use public areas, taking into account the effect on the enjoyment of the reserve and reserve values. ▪ As far as practical, preferentially seek implementation of soft engineering solutions to erosion problems as identified within the Bay of Plenty Regional Council's Guidelines for 2019 Tauranga Reserves Management Plan Part B: Management Statements 44 Erosion Protection Works: Guidelines for Tauranga Harbour, such as the strategic planting of appropriate plant species and managed retreat (where costs of protection outweigh the benefits to the community). ▪ The coastal reserves will be restored with native dune vegetation to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural function of the coastal dune area.

	▪ Accessways to and within coastal reserves will be well defined and maintained, located adjacent to areas of high use, and located along desire lines ▪ Provide for access through all harbour reserves (except those identified as SEAs in the Tauranga City Plan) for customary fishing rights purposes (subject to Foreshore and Seabed Act processes). ▪ Vehicle access to the beach is permitted only in accordance with the provisions of Council's Beaches Bylaw ▪ Restrict vehicle access onto sensitive areas e.g. cultural, historical, archaeological, and ecologically significant sites ▪ Consider restricting vehicle access to reserves where there may be a health and safety hazard or the reserve may be damaged ▪ Maintain existing water access where adverse effects on the environment can be mitigated ▪ Reflect the needs and the unique character of individual reserves through the provision of appropriate facilities and park furniture ▪ Public place bins for the use of reserve users (excluding Freedom Campers, unless otherwise identified), including rubbish, recycling, compost and green waste bins/stations, are permitted, but not required, to be installed in all reserves ▪ Council will … progressively seek to increase shade cover over time ▪ Lighting may be provided on reserves where it supports appropriate use of reserves, and there is a clear public benefit ▪ Seating and picnic tables are permitted and provided on all reserves, but are not mandatory ▪ Barbecues may be installed on reserves ▪ Drinking fountains (with separate taps for people and dogs) may be provided within reserves, but are not mandatory ▪ Playgrounds are permitted to be sited and developed on reserves ▪ Use signs to identify and promote reserves and to inform and educate reserve users ▪ Maintain existing boat ramps, jetties and other structures to provide water access where there are no adverse effects on the environment, in accordance with Council's Coastal Structures Policy ▪ Ongoing reserve maintenance will be consistent with the management statements within the Tauranga Reserves Management Plan ▪ The Council may, at its discretion, grant new leases, licenses or agreements, where the activity complies with the Reserves Act, and/or other relevant legislation ▪ Council enables reserves to be booked for a range of activities. Bookings are made in accordance with Council's Outdoor Spaces Booking Policy and Council's Event Approval Process. Council encourages a range and diversity of activities to occur on Council's reserves network
Coastal Reserves Sourced from Part of the TRMP	▪ Protection and enhancement of natural dune processes, as dunes are vital to sustain beach environments, on which to undertake recreation and events (An intact dune system stabilised by native dune binding vegetation provides natural protection from coastal hazards such as erosion, storm events and inundation. The presence of native dune species also ensures the natural character and landscape values of the coastline are maintained.) ▪ Primary use is informal recreation ▪ Facilitation of organised sporting activities and events e.g. those that have a requirement for a beach and sea location, including but not limited to, surf lifesaving, beach volleyball, triathlon and waka ama. ▪ Maintenance of natural character and landscape ▪ Maintenance and enhancement of ecological values ▪ Provision of and enhancement of recreational opportunities ▪ Are considered one of the best natural features in the BOP region

Harbour Reserves Sourced from Part A of the TRMP	▪ Be a sustainable green network connecting people with the harbour environment ▪ Managed in a way that minimises adverse effects of use ▪ Managed in a way to ensure the protection and enhancement of naturally functioning ecosystems and habitats. ▪ Preservation, enhancement and protection of the integrity of the natural character and landscape values of the harbour reserves, including public access opportunities. ▪ Provision of a range of informal recreational opportunities, from enabling access to the water, to peaceful enjoyment and exercise. ▪ Recognition, development and enhancement of people's recreational opportunities in a way that is consistent with the purpose and values of each reserve. ▪ Recognition, protection, enhancement and promotion, as appropriate, of the cultural, educational and historical values. ▪ Recognition that within the harbour reserves network, different reserves have different values, for example harbour access, access linkages along the harbour, cultural values, ecological and biodiversity values. ▪ Play a role in erosion control ▪ Provision of opportunities for organised community activities and events.
Pilot Bay Reserve (Waikorire) and Pilot Quay – #3.206	▪ Passive recreation activities such as sitting, picnicking, swimming, walking and jogging will be encouraged throughout the reserve ▪ The reserve should be managed in a way that creates a high level of amenity and improves the visual quality of the park ▪ The foredune area at the back of the beach should be managed to reduce erosion ▪ A variety of techniques will be used to maintain a high quality turf area behind the beach. This should include minimising sand accretion around structures ▪ The beach will continue to be replenished with sand on a regular basis. Options for additional beach replenishment should be considered ▪ Permit Te Hoe Aroha Whanau Waka Ama Club to store their waka on the beach ▪ Continue to permit events use of the reserve, particularly for significant sporting events that require a harbour location such as triathlon
Whareroa Reserve - #3.286	▪ Permit boat access and associated carpark ▪ Provide signs to direct visitors to facilities and promote the safe use of the reserve (access and navigation safety laws) ▪ Form new cycle/walkway connection through reserve
Sulphur Point - # 3.229	▪ Is the premier recreational boating access point for Tauranga and is the focal point of large recreational boating activities and events ▪ Actively maintain the beach front at the northern end of Sulphur Point through beach replenishment and erosion protection methods ▪ Provide for short term special events in appropriate locations
Mount Maunganui Main Beach - # 3.169	▪ The reserve should be managed in a way that creates a high level of amenity and improves the visual quality of the reserve ▪ The appropriate number, frequency and scale of events and activities occurring on Mount Maunganui Main Beach will be considered to ensure passive recreation and ecological values are not compromised ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues and to ensure the beach can be maintained at current dimensions ▪ A wide open shaded grass area will be maintained at the back of the beach for recreation.
Moturiki - # 3.167	▪ Council will work with the Department of Conservation and other wildlife conservation groups to ensure the ongoing protection of wildlife on

	Moturiki ▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly.
Marine Parade Reserve # 1 - # 3.132	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and is vital to sustain a healthy beach environment, and will be managed accordingly ▪ The reserve should be managed in a way that creates a high level of amenity and improves the visual quality of the reserve ▪ The appropriate number, frequency and scale of events and activities occurring on the reserve will be considered to ensure passive recreation and ecological values are not compromised ▪ Appropriate events will be permitted on the grass areas of the reserve ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues and to ensure the beach can be maintained at current dimensions
Marine Parade Reserve # 2 - # 3.133	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and is vital to sustain a healthy beach environment, and will be managed accordingly ▪ The reserve should be managed in a way that creates a high level of amenity and improves the visual quality of the reserve ▪ The appropriate number, frequency and scale of events and activities occurring on the reserve will be considered to ensure passive recreation and ecological values are not compromised ▪ Appropriate events will be permitted on the grass areas of the reserve ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues and to ensure the beach can be maintained at current dimensions
Oceanbeach Road Reserve - # 3.175	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly ▪ The appropriate number, frequency and scale of events and activities occurring on the reserve will be considered to ensure passive recreation and ecological values are not compromised ▪ When considering events use of the site, priority should be given to events that require the beach or land / water interface ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues.
Omanu Beach Reserve - # 3.180	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly ▪ The appropriate number, frequency and scale of events and activities occurring on the reserve will be considered to ensure passive recreation and ecological values are not compromised ▪ When considering events use of the site, priority should be given to events that require the beach or land / water interface ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues.
Papamoa Beach Reserve 1 - # 3.195	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly ▪ Encourage events use of the open grass areas of the reserve ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues.
Papamoa Beach Reserve 2 - # 3.196	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly ▪ Retain the existing boat ramp ▪ The dunes will be restored with native dune vegetation to address erosion issues.
Papamoa Domain -	▪ Support a high level of multiple uses whilst enhancing the natural character and landscape values of the reserve

# 3.197	▪ The reserve is recognised as being an area of significant biodiversity and will be managed accordingly ▪ Continue to permit use by appropriate events and market style activities
Kulim Park - # 3.118	▪ Provide for informal recreation and active living activities, particularly those which cater to families and take advantage of the open space and the harbour margin ▪ Provide for a high level of service in regard to development and maintenance ▪ Support a high level of multiple uses whilst maintaining and enhancing its amenity values ▪ Recognise and enhance the interface between the park and the harbour margin through vegetation planting and car parking restrictions ▪ Work with BOPRC to manage sea lettuce building up along the harbour margin of Kulim Park areas during the summer months ▪ Manage and improve the harbour edge in Kulim Park through erosion protection measures and beach nourishment ▪ Improve vehicular access and management of car parking within the park

Other ways that Council supports recreation and events on reserves in this area:

Asset Provision and Management:

- Within these reserves, to promote/facilitate recreation and events outcomes, TCC provides and maintains numerous assets, including, but not limited to:
  - public toilets and showers
  - barbecues and picnic facilities
  - bicycle racks/storage
  - seats and shade
  - drinking fountains
  - water and power supplies
  - boat ramps
  - coastal structures such as sea walls
  - play equipment
  - signage – educational and advisory
  - rubbish and recycling bins
  - carparking, pathways, lighting
  - vegetation planting and management – grass areas, trees, dunes, amenity gardens.

Dune Restoration/Preservation:

- TCC has been involved in dune restoration for over 30 years.
- Restoration started out with the goal to reduce windblown sand affecting council infrastructure and residential properties. Dune restoration and preservation has transitioned over the years to biodiversity and habitat rehabilitation, with TCC working closely with Coast Care Bay of Plenty to deliver planting and maintenance activities year-round. Over the past 10 years planting numbers have consistently been 25,000 plants/season, with maintenance delivered over hundreds of hectares of coastal reserve. These efforts have been a great success at Mount Maunganui Main beach, with dunes established, protecting infrastructure, increasing biodiversity, increasing amenity which promotes passive recreation outcomes. TCC's dune restoration programme at Mount Maunganui Main Beach has been aided by the sand disposal off Mount Maunganui Main Beach, used by Port of Tauranga to dispose of dredging material. TCC's efforts on dune restoration have fundamentally improved how the community uses the beach for recreation and given a level of resiliencies to the community from sea level rise and storm events.

Beach Replenishment:

- Due to sand loss as a result of storm damage, drift, wind and wave action, erosion occurs along some parts of Waikorire Pilot Bay. To address this erosion, TCC regularly deposits sand on the beach. An additional benefit of installing sand to protect the beach areas from erosion is the provision of a wide beach area that supports recreation and events. Sand was last

deposited onto a 500m section of beach between Leinster Avenue and Salisbury Avenue in November 2024.

Community and Commercial Leases/licenses:

- In these reserves, we have the following lease/license agreements that support recreation and events:
  - surf lifesaving clubs - Mount Maunganui, Omanu Beach and Papamoa
  - Tauranga Yacht and Power Boat Club
  - Tauranga Marina Society
  - Marina Café
  - Hauraki Marine Ltd
  - Marshall Marine
  - Tauranga Sport Fishing Club
  - Tauranga Volunteer Coastguard Association
  - Annual licenses for commercial operators on reserves along Waikorire Pilot Bay, Mount Maunganui Main Beach, Marine Parade and on Papamoa Domain. TCC caps the number of licenses available in these reserves, and runs a tender process, to restrict overuse (as there is high demand by the operators for these locations), and ensure quality and suitability of the activities provided. For the 2024-25 season, we issued 13 licenses (the maximum we are able under current policy), primarily for water recreation activities (surf schools and water craft hire). We are able to review the number of licenses that we issue annually, which would include consideration of the effects of the operators on the reserves, and the reserve users. We have not significantly changed the number of licenses available in the past several years.

Beach Safety:

- TCC facilitates surf lifesaving services (operating grant to Surf Lifesaving NZ, ability to install lifesaving infrastructure, and use of vehicles on the beaches) at Mount Maunganui Main Beach Reserve, parts of Marine Parade Reserves # 1 and 2, Omanu Beach Reserve, Papamoa Domain and parts of Papamoa Beach Reserve # 2.

Events Facilitation:

- TCC does not deliver events in the area, rather it facilitates events organized by others – provision of space and supporting infrastructure, policies that support events to occur, staff to administer the approval process, to achieve safe and successful events, while minimising impacts and disruption to the environment.

What specific locations within the study area are most important for your recreation?

TCC response: TCC does not have a hierarchy of the importance of these reserves.

Are there any seasonal or event-specific recreational activities in this area?

TCC response:

- Seasonal recreational activities – yes, for example:
  - TCC issues seasonal temporary trader licenses for activities that promote recreational outcomes at Mount Maunganui Main Beach from 1 December to 30 April each year.
  - During summer many visitors arrive in Tauranga, and use the coastal and harbour reserves.
  - Seasonal fishing
- Event-specific recreational activities – yes, the table below lists events 1 June 2024 to 1 July 2025, and is considered typical.
  - This table excludes:
    - Regular beach sports bookings (e.g. social volleyball, beach frisbee)
    - Surf Club beach activities
    - Events on Mauao

Description	Date	Anchor Venue
Lululemon Global Run	05/06/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Mauao Ocean Series - Race 1	15/06/24	Pilot Bay Reserve
Matariki Sand Art Class for Tamariki	23/06/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Mauao Ocean Series - Race 2	13/07/24	Pilot Bay Reserve
Mount Maunganui Half Marathon 2024	24/08/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Zespri AIMS Games 2024	07/09/24	various
AIMS Games Gives Back - Coastal Clean Up	10/09/24	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Mauao Ocean Series - Race 3	14/09/24	Pilot Bay Reserve
Rake Healing	30/09/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - Moturiki
Annual More FM Beach Dig	26/10/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Tauranga City to Surf Run/Walk 2024	10/11/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Volleyball BOP Junior Secondary Schools Championships	13/11/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
GENX/Marra Tinman Triathlon 2024	24/11/24	Pilot Bay Reserve
Volleyball BOP Senior Secondary School Beach Champs	01/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
WBOP Primary School Surfing Championships (Bay Board Riders)	06/12/24	Tay Street Reserve
New Zealand Beach 5s Rugby	06/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Volleyball BOP IPC U17 & U19 beach trials (docs)	07/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Volleyball BOP IPC U17 & U19 beach training camp 1	12/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Volleyball BOP Mauao Challenger Two (2 of 3)	14/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
New Zealand Nationals (Crossfit)	14/12/24	Tay Street Beach
Mount Monster 2024	14/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Surf Life Saving NZ Coastal Challenge	15/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Cool 2 be conscious	22/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
EVES Surfbreaker Triathlon 2024	27/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
NZ Cricket Activation	27/12/24	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Surf Life Saving BOP Local Area Carnival	03/01/25	Papamoa Domain

Volleyball BOP IPC U17 & U19 beach training camp 2	09/01/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Family Sandcastle Event	11/01/25	Papamoa Domain
Volleyball NZ Inter-Provincial Beach Volleyball Championships (inc. Tertiary Champs)	14/01/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Mount Festival of Multisport 2025	18/01/25	Pilot Bay Reserve
Papamoa Junior Surf Carnival 2025	19/01/25	Papamoa Beach Central
Surf Life Saving Eastern Regional Championships 2025	24/01/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Billabong Grom Series Presented by Ocean Bridge - Event 1	25/01/25	Tay Street Beach
Volleyball NZ G.J. Gardner Homes NZ Beach Tour Series (1 of 3)	31/01/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 1	01/02/25	Tay Street Reserve
James Bhutty Moore-morial Race	01/02/25	Pilot Bay Reserve
Waitangi Day Dawn Service 2025	06/02/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Volleyball NZ Secondary Schools Beach Championships	07/02/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
NZ Home Loans XRACE	09/02/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 2	15/02/25	Tay Street Reserve
NZ Festival of Longboarding 2025	15/02/25	Papamoa Domain
Omanu Junior Surf Carnival 2025	16/02/25	In front of Omanu Surf Club
Calley Homes Women's Triathlon 2025	16/02/25	Pilot Bay Reserve
Oceans Festival of Junior Surf Lifesaving 2025	20/02/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Volleyball NZ G.J.Gardner Homes NZ Beach Tour Finals (2 of 3)	28/02/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
King of the Yaks 2025 (Kayak Fishing Competition)	01/03/25	Motiti Reserve
Surf Life Saving NZ - North Island IRB Championships	01/03/25	Papamoa Domain
Ultimate Beach Run 2025	01/03/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve - Soundshell
Volleyball NZ Pro Tour Futures (3 of 3)	06/03/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach - East
Summer Throwdown	08/03/25	Tay Street Reserve
Marra Sprint Triathlon 2025	09/03/25	Pilot Bay Reserve
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 3	21/03/25	Tay Street Reserve
The Great Penguin Waddle- fundraiser walk	29/03/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Oceania Championship Triathlon	29/03/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Mount Maunganui Triathlon	05/04/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 4	06/04/25	Tay Street Reserve
Ultimate Athlete NZ 2025	11/04/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
The Mount Swim 2025 (Ocean Swim Series)	19/04/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
Anzac Day Mt Maunganui Dawn & Civic Services 2025	25/04/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 5	26/04/25	Tay Street Reserve
King and Queen of the Mount	27/04/25	Mt Maunganui Main Beach
We Run The Night Half Marathon 2025	03/05/25	Hopukiore (Mt Drury) Reserve
Bay Board Riders Surfing Club Champs 5	10/05/25	Tay Street Reserve

What makes this area important or unique for recreation?

TCC response: The specific values of these open spaces/reserves that make them important and/or unique for recreation include:

- Their scale/size
- Availability of supporting infrastructure like parking, toilets, showers, drinking water, picnic facilities, barbecues, boardwalks/pathways, play equipment, shade
- Cultural and heritage values
- Outstanding natural character, significant landscape and visual quality values
- High amenity values
- Ecological values
- Significant biodiversity
- Natural systems of beach and sand dunes
- They are central to the lifestyle of many people
- They are considered one of the best natural features in the Bay of Plenty region.
- They provide easy and plentiful access into and long the harbour and ocean, for a range of activities – including a number of "formal" boat ramps.
- They provide a wide range of environments and experiences e.g. ocean, harbour, beach, green spaces (dune vegetation as well as large mown areas with significant trees), passive, active, events, commercial

In addition, other features of the location of the open spaces/reserves helps that make them important and/or unique for recreation include:

- Proximity to an intense and large population base
- Proximity to thriving commercial and retail centres, and hospitality venues
- Proximity to cruise ship arrivals location
- Popular tourist destination
- Ease of access
- Safe swimming and boating opportunities
- Access to fishing
- Great all year climate
- Water quality
- Strong beach culture

Perception of Changes Over Time

How have the characteristics of the port area changed over the last 20 years? (Internal-Consider environmental, navigational, aesthetic, or access changes.)

TCC response: Spaces and Places Team do not undertake systematic monitoring to measure/identify changes in environment, navigation, aesthetics or access in the "port area", since 2005. Bay of Plenty Regional Council hold data on beach profiles and vegetation monitoring.

Department of Conservation may have species/wildlife data.

The Events Facilitation Team do not monitor changes to the environmental, navigational, aesthetic or access characteristics of the port area over time.

How have these changes affected recreational activities in the area?

TCC response: As neither Spaces and Places nor Events Facilitation have systematically monitored changes to environmental, navigational, aesthetic or access characteristics since 2005, we are not able to indicate if there are effects on recreational activities.

Are there any notable trends (e.g., increased or decreased usage, shifts in user groups, conflicts)?

TCC response: TCC is aware of these trends in recreation (based on its monitoring of population data, community and stakeholder feedback from some specific projects/work programmes, observations at popular boat ramps, surveys and research into boat ownership, capacity issues at existing boat ramps):

- Increased use and demand for:
  - boat ramps and associated parking
  - facilities and access for a range of non-powered watercraft
  - Boat storage
  - Family friendly facilities for fishing and access to water
- open spaces and reserves land is becoming busier
  - a key pressure point for activities and events is the Mount Maunganui Main Beach. This is a highly sought-after space for sporting and recreational events as well as drawing large crowds of beach goers and tourists over the summer months.

TCC is aware of the following trends in events – growth, and more frequent occurrences of multiple requests for the same spaces for events at the same time.

Perception of POT's Contributions to Changes

What role, if any, do you think POT's activities have played in these changes?

TCC response: TCC has assumed in that "POT's activities" relates only to the dredging and deposition activities subject to the consent application.

Neither Spaces and Places Teams nor Events Teams know whether POT's activities have played a part in these changes.

Are there specific aspects of POT's operations (e.g., dredging, shipping traffic) that have impacted recreational values?

TCC response: Neither Spaces and Places nor the Event Facilitation Team monitor whether specific aspects of POT's operations impact recreational values.

Have there been any positive contributions from POT's activities to recreation in the area?

TCC response: With respect to dredging and disposal activities:

- TCC is able to use dredged material from the POTs operations for beach re-nourishment at Waikorire Pilot Bay, which benefits recreation and events
- We understand that dredged material from the Port's operation, that has been placed nearshore to the Mount Maunganui shoreline, has contributed

somewhat towards beach accretion along Mount Maunganui Main Beach and Marine Parade (Source: Mount Maunganui to Papamoa Coastal Erosion Assessment, Tonkin and Taylor 2020, prepared for Tauranga City Council).

Stakeholder Information Needs

What information do you feel is necessary to understand the potential effects of the proposed dredging activities?

TCC response: In order to understand the potential effects on recreation values/outcomes of the proposed dredging and deposition activities, we would need to see the final consent application in full.

Are there particular concerns or uncertainties you would like addressed?

TCC response: It has been difficult to understand the actual proposal. Information provided is that which is available on the POT website page, which talks to renewing existing consents, and brief additional information at the online meeting of 18 December 2024.

However, we are aware that expired BOPRC consent 60080, held by POT, was for the deposition of sand within the Pilot Bay Channel, the purpose of which was to replenish Pilot Bay Beach. It is not understood if this current proposal includes deposition in that area, form the information available.

Also, it would be good to clarify the proposed process to enable beach re-nourishment of Waikorire Pilot Bay. Currently, TCC is able to undertake beach re-nourishment through POT's BOPRC consents 65806 and 65807, and engages consultants to undertake reporting to ensure compliance with the relevant consent conditions. TCC seeks that a future consent continues to allow for beach re- nourishment at Waikorire Pilot Bay, that TCC can continue to use. TCC would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue specifically.

Finally, we recognise the difficulties in establishing baseline data for recreation and events activities, against which to make comparisons and assess effects, and also the difficulties in determining the cause of any changes, considering there are a number of factors other than the proposed activity that could affect recreation and events (e.g. population growth, trends in recreation activity, economy activity, climate/weather). Consequently, we presume that the Recreation Impact Assessment will include a number of assumptions. We see merit in POT seeking feedback from TCC about any such assumptions prior to them being finalised.

Do you have any additional comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the reconsenting of POT's dredging activities?

TCC response: TCC would like to re-iterate that this feedback, whilst from TCC, is specifically only from the Spaces and Places Team and Events and Facilitation Team. No other TCC divisions/teams nor Council Advisory Groups have been approached to contribute to this feedback.

We would like to also clarify that this feedback **is not** TCC's assessment of any actual or potential adverse effects of the current dredging and disposal operation on recreation or events values/outcomes, **and nor is it** TCC's assessment of any actual or potential adverse effects of the proposed dredging and disposal activity on recreation and events values/outcomes. As noted above, TCC does not monitor effects on recreation and events as a result of the Port's activities, and we would need to see the full application in order to provide feedback on actual or potential effects of the proposed activity.

Tauranga Coastguard, Richard Van der Jagt, Scott Lee (20 years-Chair of the board)

The Tauranga Coastguard, with over 40 years of service, is integral to ensuring the safety of Tauranga's waterways. Operating from its base at Sulphur Point, the Coastguard relies on 68 dedicated volunteers to respond to approximately 150 callouts annually. Their key areas of activity include the Stellar Passage, around Matakana Island, Maunganui Roads, and the Western Channel, with responsibilities extending up to 12 nautical miles offshore to Mayor Island.

The harbour is a hub for recreational activities such as fishing, diving, and water sports, thanks to its unique accessibility, sheltered beaches, and calm waters. With its easily accessible boat ramps and proximity to destinations like Matakana and Mayor Island, the area continues to grow in popularity. However, environmental changes, such as increased shallowness in areas like Centrebank, the loss of Panepane Point, biosecurity incursions (e.g., pest species), and higher seaweed growth, have transformed the region over time. Navigational dynamics have also shifted, with a rise in personal motorised vessels, increased cruise ship activity, and new bylaws restricting boating in areas like Pilot Bay Beach and Hunters Creek.

The increasing popularity of the harbour has led to growing safety and congestion concerns. A significant rise in personal watercraft and tourism-driven boat traffic has strained the Coastguard's resources and increased life-threatening incidents requiring police intervention. Larger vessels and cruise ships that use the POT-dredged channel contribute to congestion, wash, and navigational hazards, compounding these challenges.

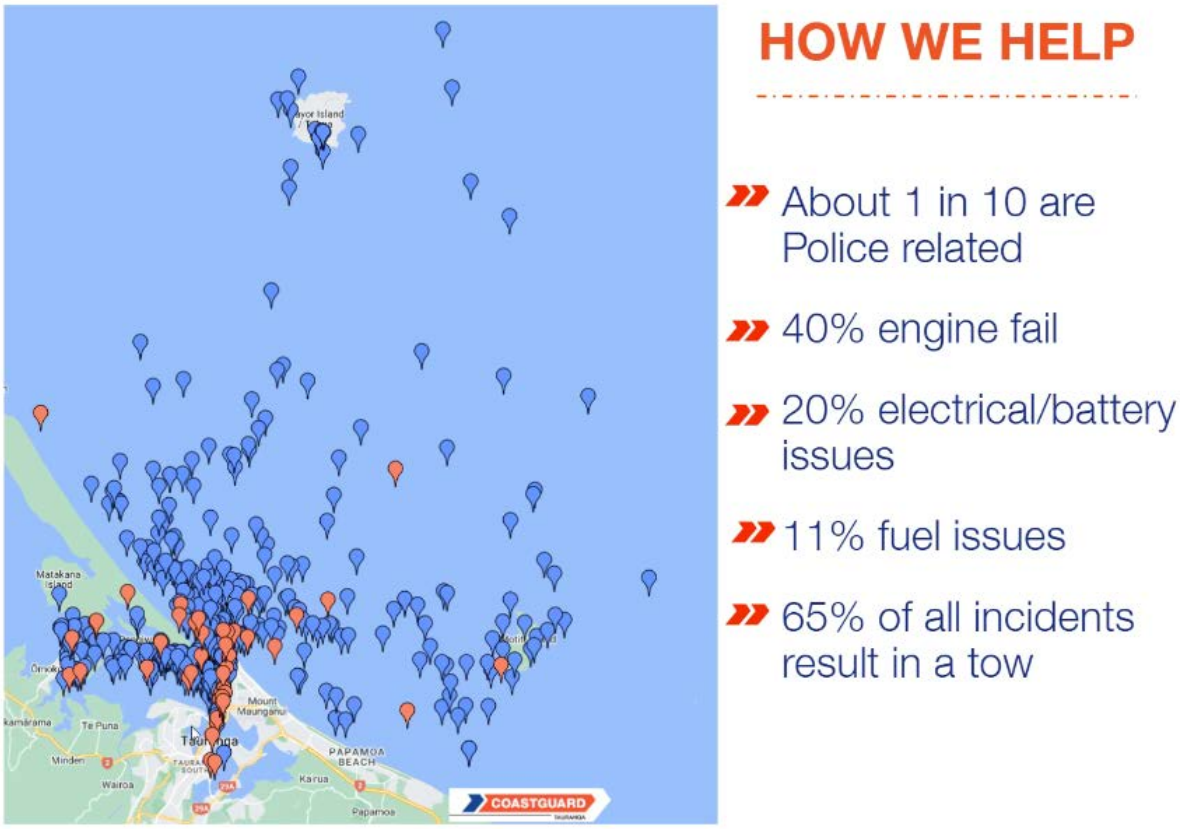
Specific locations within the harbour face distinct challenges. Stellar Passage and Maunganui Roads are critical thoroughfares but are increasingly congested. Pilot Bay, while a popular recreational spot, faces safety concerns due to boating restrictions and rising traffic. Shallower areas like Centrebank, combined with increased vessel activity, raise long-term questions about navigation and safety in the harbour.

POT plays a significant role in shaping the harbour environment. While activities such as dredging and increased shipping traffic pose environmental and biosecurity challenges, the well-maintained navigational aids and deeper channels provided by POT benefit recreational users, especially yachts. However, the coastguard questions the direct impact of dredging on shallowness and navigation hazards.

The coastguard confirmed that public education on the implications of dredging and increased tugboat operations is essential. The Coastguard has also expressed concerns about the wear and tear on their vessels due to the heightened harbour activity and has called for sponsorship or support from POT. Additionally, stakeholders have proposed establishing a collaborative working group with POT to address safety, monitoring and operational coordination.

Looking to the future, there is a strong push for a stakeholder working group to manage harbour issues collaboratively. The Coastguard has also raised the need for compensation for services provided to non-members, who accounted for 25-33% of 2023 callouts. Continued dialogue with POT is crucial for addressing biosecurity concerns and improving navigational safety.

Coastguard provided the following map of Callouts for 2021:



Blue-Not life threatening (break downs/mechanical)

Red are police assisted-life threatening

Mount Maunganui Surf Lifesaving Club, Brent Warner Board (Chair 44 years)

The Mount Maunganui Surf Lifesaving Club, operating for over 44 years, provides lifeguard services, including search and rescue, patrolling, and first aid. Their primary base is at the clubhouse near Mauao, with operations extending to Ocean Beach, Matakana Island, Rabbit Island, Mussel Rock, and Panepane Point. Main Beach is particularly significant as a launch site for rescue operations, and it serves as a hub for local, regional, and national surf lifesaving events. The club also occasionally hosts events in Pilot Bay and Shark Alley, with peak activity occurring between October and March, especially around Oceans Events and anniversary weekends.

This area's unique blend of harbour and ocean environments is vital for recreation, offering conditions distinct from other surf clubs in New Zealand, which typically operate with single beachfronts. Main Beach's dynamic sand movement is primarily attributed to natural environmental factors, with seasonal changes unrelated to dredging or POT activities. Some environmental shifts, such as the growth of a sandbank near Sulphur Point, have been observed but are not seen as hindering recreational activities.

POT's operations, including dredging, are perceived as having minimal to no direct impact on recreational activities at Main Beach or the wider area. Noise disruptions and some changes to fishing conditions near the harbour entrance have been noted but are not considered significant concerns. Despite some public misconceptions about the effects of dredging, the club considers that these are often based on misinformation.

POT is recognised for its positive contributions, including strong sponsorship and support for the club's infrastructure, events, and services. The club appreciates POT's respectful engagement with the environment and its collaboration during official races and events.

For future dredging activities, the club recommends continued communication with the community but does not see a need for increased notifications. Overall, the Mount Maunganui Surf Lifesaving Club fully supports POT's ongoing operations.

Tauranga Yacht and Power Boat Club, Gary Smith (Life Member 52nd year)

The TYPBC (Tauranga Yacht and Power Boat Club) has been active for 104 years and undertakes a variety of recreational activities, including yacht racing, lessons, and coaching. The club races keelboats ranging from 20 to 45 feet throughout the year, with regular events in summer (Oct-April) and winter (May-September). A highlight of their calendar is the Tauranga Regatta, held annually in February, which attracts approximately 150 boats. Key locations for their activities include the Centre Bank sandbar west of the turning bay, areas close to the yacht club at Sulphur Point through Stellar Passage and the main channel, and up to A Beacon. The harbour is widely regarded as one of the safest yachting locations in New Zealand due to its strong currents, protected waters, and benign sailing conditions.

While disposal areas have not impacted racecourses, they do affect local fishing. Over the past 20 years, significant changes have been observed in the port area. Shipping and cruise ship traffic have increased, and more private boats and personal motorised watercrafts now use the harbour, leading to congestion. Dredging activities have caused noticeable shifts in sedimentation and currents. These changes in currents have resulted in long time members having to relearn water conditions in the channel to sail safely. The Centre Bank sandbar has risen by up to 2 meters in just two years, and sandbanks near Panepane Point have grown, restricting access for keelboats. Increased currents, especially near Markers 9 and 11, have also been observed. Environmental changes include reduced accessibility due to sediment build-up, while pollution from palm kernel unloading and rogue logs occasionally impacts TYPBC members. Despite these challenges, dredging has improved safety by creating deeper channels and reducing wave action, with enhanced navigation lights and wider channels supporting more efficient boating operations.

The TYPBC has adapted its activities to these changes, adjusting racecourses and operations to accommodate shifting currents and depths. However, the club has raised concerns about the long-term impact of dredging. Gary noted that deeper and wider channels could lead to increased water flow and potentially exacerbate damage to adjacent areas, including beaches and harbour edges like Matakana Island and Panepane Point. While the harbour's health is a priority, TYBPC believe that the commercial benefits of dredging are seen as overshadowing environmental considerations.

Gary emphasised the need for better communication and transparency around dredging plans and their potential effects on the harbour with POT. He requested detailed assessments of how further dredging, including larger deposits in disposal areas, would affect the harbour's physical and ecological conditions. Specific concerns included the possibility of increased current flow, sediment redistribution, and the visual impact of more containers being stored around the harbour due to a proposed 400-meter extension.

Overall, while the TYPBC recognises the benefits of dredging in improving navigation and safety, they remain cautious about its broader environmental impacts and the future recreational value of the harbour.

Sport Bay of Plenty online workshop: Brent Warner (Mt.Maunganui Surf Lifesaving), Mike Hickson (Hoe Aroha Whanau o Mauao Waka Ama), Rebecca Ryder (Tauranga Moana Outrigger Canoe Club), Delwynne Hahunga (Tauranga Moana Outrigger Canoe Club)

An online workshop opportunity (9 Jan 2025) was widely promoted by Sport Bay of Plenty. Rowan Johnstone from POT attended, along with Rob Greenaway and Sam Strong, along with the attendees listed above.

Both Waka Ama clubs use the consenting area for training. Hoe Aroha Whanau o Mauao primarily operate in Pilot Bay and Tauranga Moana primarily use Sulphur Point, accessing the channel for paddling activities towards Matakana, Mauao, and Rabbit Island. Seasonal and weather conditions significantly influence activity patterns, with the harbour bridge area frequently used during adverse weather. Key concerns raised by the groups include increased currents in Pilot Bay and the channel, changes to sandbanks, and tidal challenges.

Over the past two decades, noticeable environmental and navigational changes have been observed. These include stronger tidal flows and currents in Pilot Bay and around Mauao, erosion at Panepane Point and Matakana Island, and the resulting loss of sandbars, which have altered the paddling landscape. Sedimentation around boat ramps and wharves in Pilot Bay and changes to pipi beds used for gathering have also been noted. Additionally, the deepening and widening of the harbour have impacted wind sports and other recreational uses. Specific areas of concern include erosion at Panepane Point and Matakana Island, which has impacted paddling routes and habitats, and the stronger tidal currents in Pilot Bay and the harbour, which present challenges for novice paddlers.

However, the sand disposal efforts in Pilot Bay to maintain the usability of the beach and boat ramp were acknowledged. Concerns remain about stronger currents and the increased shipping activity leading to potential safety risks and congestion in the harbour. Additionally, the rise in shipping activity has raised concerns about potential collisions and reduced accessibility for recreational users.

Despite these concerns, POT's efforts, in conjunction with Council's sand renourishment schedules in maintaining the usability of Pilot Bay's beach and boat ramp through sand disposal were appreciated. A lack of direct communication with recreational groups regarding maintenance and dredging activities was also highlighted. Users would appreciate continued updates and better direct communication regarding dredging schedules to address safety and environmental challenges more effectively, rather than relying on general public updates.

The stakeholders expressed a need for detailed information on the environmental effects of proposed dredging activities, particularly related to current patterns and erosion impacts.

Tauranga City Council, Paul Greenshields-Principal Specialist for the Environment

Beach sand replenishment are vital to maintaining public amenities like Pilot Bay and Main Mount Beach for the public to enjoy for recreational purposes. These areas face significant erosion challenges due to weather events and coastal processes which require costly and resource-intensive sediment replenishment. For recreation, coastal erosion has reduced space for dinghy storage, picnicking, and water sports vendors, affecting accessibility and public enjoyment. Specific locations, such as Pilot Bay, are high-use areas where erosion and narrowing beaches have pushed recreationists and concessionaires closer to parking lots and grassy areas. Main Mount Beach, a premier location for events and competitions, also relies heavily on renourishment efforts.

The council renourishment programme is undertaken typically between October and November and uses sand collected from POT dredging activities.

Over the past 20 years, increased shipping traffic has confined recreational activities closer to the shoreline, raising congestion and safety risks. Environmental changes, such as habitat loss on Matakana Island and Panepane Point, have shifted wildlife to Mount Maunganui, creating conflicts between conservation and recreational use. Despite these challenges, access to the area has improved, and Main Mount Beach remains a key destination for local and international visitors.

From an operational perspective Council notes the need for more frequent dredging and renourishment to address faster erosion rates, particularly at Pilot Bay. Wider consultation and engagement on dredging plans are needed to explore the potential for increased sand usage and improved access after storm events.

Paul noted that there has been the displacement of endangered species from Panepane Point to Mount Maunganui as a result of the recent erosion, and there is a need for habitat support. Aerial surveys were suggested to monitor shoreline loss, particularly on Matakana Island, to support long-term beach maintenance. Balancing recreational needs and conservation efforts remains a key challenge for council, with strong partnerships between TCC, POT, and environmental stakeholders critical for sustainable solutions. He noted that proactive planning, increased dredging efforts, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement are essential to address future erosion and recreational challenges effectively.

Mauao Adventures, Porina Mcleod (Managing Director and Mauao Trust member)

Mauao Adventures, a tourism and recreation provider, has been operating since 2008 and specialises in paddle sports such as waka ama and paddleboarding. Their main hub is in Pilot Bay, with additional use of Mauao beaches and occasional activities at the Main Beach. The area is particularly valuable for its calm, sheltered waters, accessibility to both shallow and deep water, and proximity to destinations like Matakana Island and the protected pipi bed, Te Paritaha. Pilot Bay is especially prized for not being tide dependent, and well-suited for youth-focused activities. Seasonal operations peak from October to April, and Mauao Adventures provides recreational paddling for over 4,000 students annually.

Perceived changes over the last 20 years, particularly in the last 3–5 years, have impacted key recreational locations. Pilot Bay has seen increased sand erosion, creating steeper embankments and challenging access, especially during storms and king tides. Environmental shifts, such as changing currents and shoreline erosion at Panepane Point, have introduced safety risks for navigating the channel and reduced the usability of some tour stops, including known bird nesting areas along Mauao and Matakana. Dredging activities have altered currents, requiring Mauao Adventures to reassess water safety and navigation routes, especially when crossing the channel. Sand renourishment efforts, while replenishing beaches after weather events, have resulted in inconvenient sandbars in Pilot Bay and sandstorm issues while using the beach. Erosion at Panepane Point has affected its use as a stopover, with safety risks from exposed and falling trees.

Additionally, sand renourishment dredging has contributed to inconvenient sand deposits near the carpark and verges.

Navigational challenges have grown due to stronger currents in some areas, increased vessel numbers, and larger ships. Mauao Adventures reports needing to adapt to these changes by reassessing water behaviours and trip safety for clients.

Mauao Adventures attribute many of these changes to POT's dredging and operational activities. While sand renourishment has replenished beaches after weather events, it is seen as contradictory to the dredging process. Concerns include increased risks from changing water dynamics, the potential widening of Te Paritaha, and the timing of sand dumping conflicting with commercial operations. Mauao Adventures advocates for capping port activity to avoid

further environmental and recreational impacts, with particular emphasis on maintaining current dredging depths to prevent additional risks. Positive contributions from the port have been limited to indirect sponsorship support.

The organisation emphasises the need for better understanding of dredging impacts, future planning for significant sites like Te Paritaha, and practices to minimise disruption to water access. Concerns include avoiding further deepening of the harbour and questioning the broader benefits of dredging activities. Clear and consistent communication regarding dredging operations and their implications remains a key priority for stakeholders like Mauao Adventures.

Surf

Contact was made with six surf schools in the Tauranga area and the Surf Break Protection Society. Responses were limited to two (Assault Boardriding Centre and South Pacific Surf). Changes to the coast at Matakana Island and Panepane Point were noted, and that there were changes to wave patterns over time as bathymetry changed along the Mount coast, but it was difficult to assign causes (natural, or via POT spoil disposal and sand replenishment).