

Whitianga Esplanade Waterfront Redevelopment: User Focus Group Conversation Notes

Tuesday 26th March, 6:00 - 7:30 pm, Whitianga Game Fishing Club Room

Around 35 participants with diverse backgrounds and interests attended the session. This first focus group session brought together various local waterfront users to hear their opinions, desires, and hopes in the beginning stages of planning and design.

The participants represented groups representing commercial fishing, recreational fishing, boaties, public open space and playground, ferry operator, event organisers, iwi, council staff, local businesses and organisations, coast guard, harbour master, community board members and the marina.

Welcome and introductory remarks were made by the Councillor Rekha Giri-Percival and project manager Lorenzo Canal along with the introduction of the Project Advisory Board members. The need to begin the process by paying attention to local users and community wishes and expectations was highlighted.

Whitianga Esplanade Waterfront Redevelopment: Background and Context

Whitianga Esplanade redevelopment project - The draft Long Term Plan has allocated funds for the years 2027-2030 to upgrade the waterfront area, accommodate the growth of the activities there and address current health and safety issues.

The current situation and challenges of the Whitianga Esplanade Waterfront were summarised including health and safety hazards, insufficient berth capacity, conflicting commercial, passenger ferry and recreational activities operating on the same wharf; trailer boat parking dominating the waterfront space; limitations on event space, proximity of playground to boat ramp and toilet.

The concurrent process of the 10 Year Long Term Plan consultation and how it relates to the waterfront redevelopment was explained.

Note that the wharf user fees and charges workstream are separate from the discussion.

User Needs and Aspirations: Group Discussion

- The attendees sat in group tables based on their interests and affiliations e.g. Commercial fishing, Charter boat operators, Ferry Operator, Recreational fishing events and trailer boaties, Public amenity and local businesses, Whitianga Marina.
- Each of the groups presented their needs, desires, concerns, ideas, and suggestions for the future of the waterfront.
- Posters used to capture group notes and present ideas attached.
- A summary of the themes presented by topic was noted below:

The commercial / public wharf issues and ideas

Issues raised

- High demand for space and conflicting activities from commercial fishing, rec fishers, swimmers, charter boats, ferry service etc.
- Health and safety concerns as addressed through the wharf user forums.
- Insufficient berth space for existing demand and activities
- No dedicated ferry berth.
- Future of commercial fishing will stay the same.

Desires and ideas to address demand and issues:

- Desire to separate commercial and public activities was widely held view.
- Replacement pontoon to be extended in length and possibly pushed out further to deeper water.
- Add a second pontoon onto the wharf to provide for additional capacity for the tourist boat and charter fishing boat operators.
- The existing wharf could be assigned for commercial fishing only without public access with a new second wharf and / or pontoons for public, ferry and charter boats.
- Retractable bollards to restrict vehicle movements onto wharf.
- More CCTV cameras on wharf.
- Removal or replacement of suitable shelter on wharf to create more space and deter anti social behaviour.
- Keep the wharf open for recreational fishers after hours.
- Create new short-term moorings to free up wharf for longer or overnight stays.
- Provide for a dedicated Whitianga Ferry berth.

Future of trailer boat launching and parking in town and beyond

Issues raised

- Significant growth in boat trailer parking that has become a problem that needs to be addressed in the near term.
- Desire from recreational boating community for more boat trailer parking to accommodate growing demand.
- Boat trailer parking not suited to waterfront area.
- Summer Christmas New Years period is the 'crazy season' with huge demand on the boat ramp. Both boat trailer and tourist parking results in congestion and creating multiple hazards to public, pedestrians and children safety around ramp and esplanade road.
- Trailer parking on valuable and scarce waterfront land is not desirable and could be better used as open public space for amenity and events.
- Children from the playground need to cross the boat ramp to access toilet block making it unsafe.
- No facility for dinghy pontoon or other small craft .
- Dundas Street boat ramp has tidal restrictions and small no of parks.

Desires and ideas to address demand and issues:

- Creation of a trailer boat launching and parking area physically separated from the other activities undertaken on the Esplanade Waterfront area. This could be in the Esplanade Waterfront area or at an alternative location.
- Reclaim area between ramp and northern rec and create new boat ramps and parking on waterfront .
- Relocate recreational trailer boat launching to Robertson Rd and upgrade and increase parking spaces.
- Restrict / control boat launching during 'crazy season' i.e. Christmas New year peak period.
- Allow for some boat trailer parking on the landward / road side of reserve of use Taylors Mistake land for trailer parking.
- Convert existing gravel trailer parking area to a grassed recreation area for events and public open space .

Fishing competitions, weigh ins and community events

Issues raised

- Differing views on game fishing crane to stay on wharf or relocate.
- Many organised fishing competitions are an important to the community and economic benefits to Whitianga.
- A number of large events are held on the area where boat trawler are parked and the northern rec.
- Just enough space for current event, but desire is to have more open space for events.

Desires and ideas to address demand and issues:

- The area of any trailer boat parking and grassed recreation area providing for the annual Whitianga Oceans (formerly Scallop) Festival.
- Make more provision for events by providing toilets and amenities.
- Increase area by reclaiming land for open space reserve area.

WHITIANGA ESPLANADE / WATERFRONT

- 1 FISHING CLUB WEIGH
- 2 RECREATIONAL FISHIN
- 3 COMMERCIAL FISHING BERTHS
- 4 FERRY BERTH
- 5 TOURIST & CHARTER BOATS
- 6 PLAYGROUND / PICNIC AREA
- 7 WHARF WITH MULTIPLE USES CONFLICTS
- 8 JUMPING IN TO WATER FROM ALL PARTS OF WHARF
- 9 PUBLIC TOILET
- 10 BOAT RAMP
- 11 CAFES & RESTAURANTS
- 12 BOAT TRAILER PARK
- 13 NORTHERN RECLAMATION RESERVE

LEGEND:
PROPERTY BOUNDARY

1:500 @ A1
1:1000 @ A3

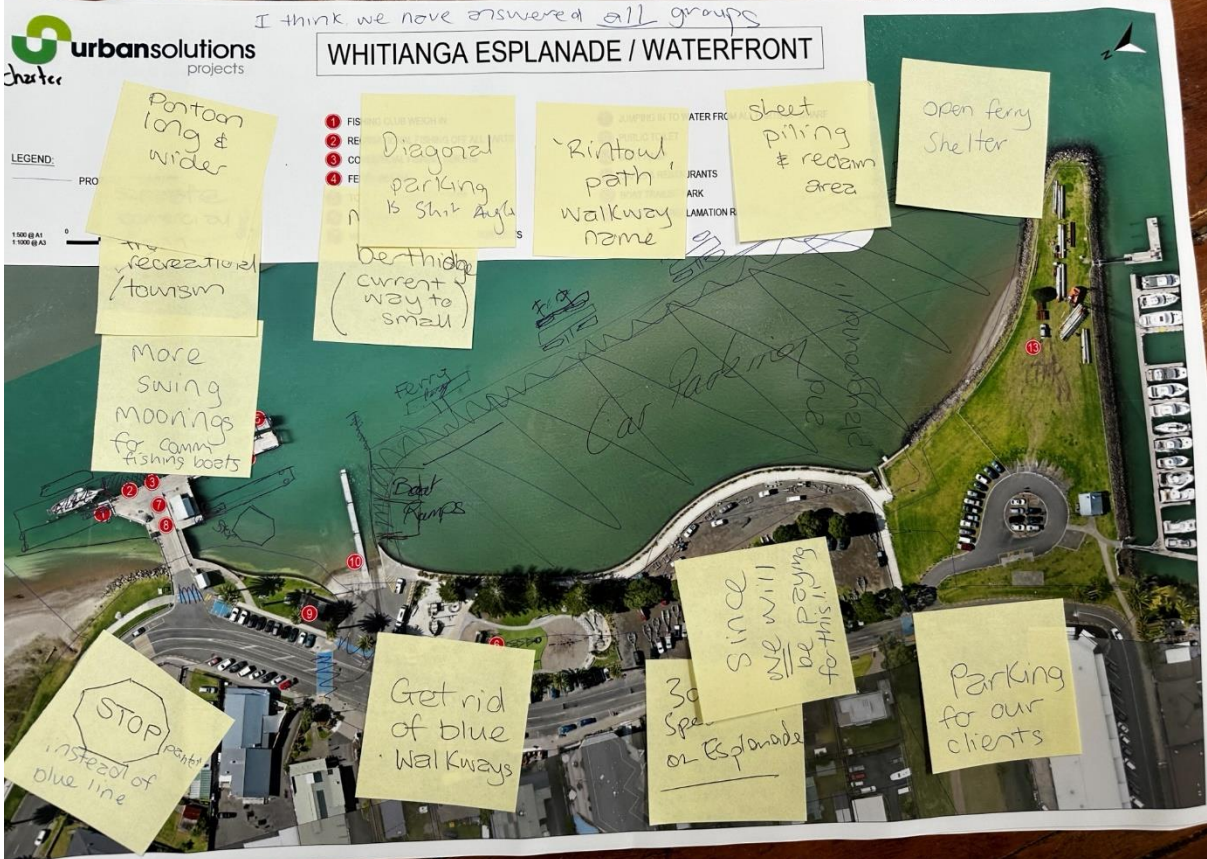


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WHITIANGA ESPLANADE / WATERFRONT

LEGEND:

PROPERTY BOUNDARY

1:500 @ A1
1:1000 @ A2

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1 FISHING CLUB WEIGH IN | 8 JUMPING IN TO WATER FROM ALL PARTS OF WHARF |
| 2 RECREATIONAL FISHING OFF ALL PARTS | 9 PUBLIC TOILET |
| 3 COMMERCIAL FISHING BERTHS | 10 BOAT RAMP |
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| 7 WHARF WITH MULTIPLE USES CONFLICTS | |



WHITIANGA ESPLANADE / WATERFRONT

Shelley Ngati Hei
Nathan Moana NZ
Andrew Ngati Hei
Whitianga

Moana NZ
Ngati Hei

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Fishing future
- stay same.

Extension of
commercial
wharf - gangway
for piles

Commercial
wharf - busy at
certain times:
afternoons.
Trucks accessing
wharf across
pedestrian area

Acknowledge
Ngati Hei
Moana Pacific

Crane
needs work

Everyone has
a right to
access.

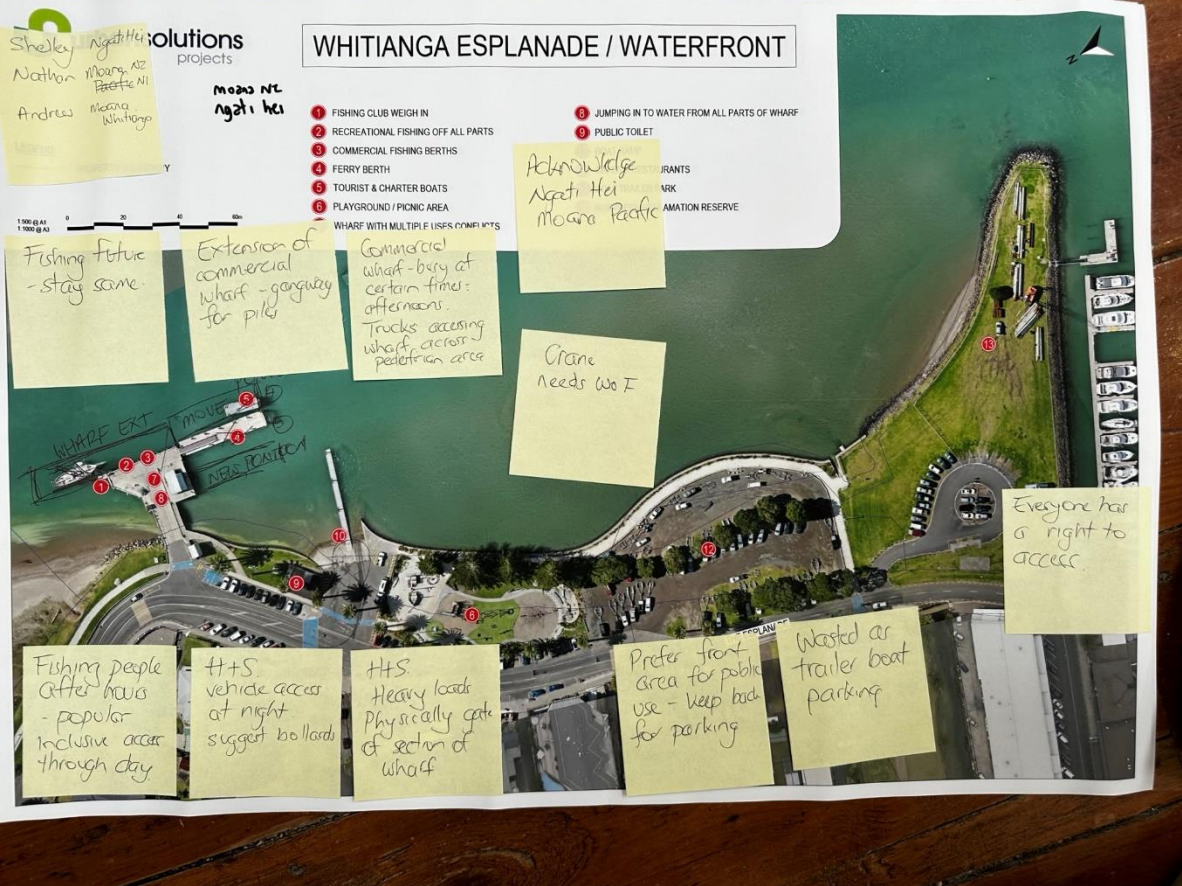
Fishing people
after hours
- popular
inclusive access
through day

H+S
vehicle access
at night
suggest bollards

H+S
Heavy loads
physically gate
of section of
wharf

Prefer front
area for public
use - keep back
for parking

Wasted as
trailer boat
parking



Parks

LEGEND:
PROPERTY BOUNDARY

1:500 (B1)
1:1000 (B2)

WHITIANGA ESPLANADE / WATERFRONT

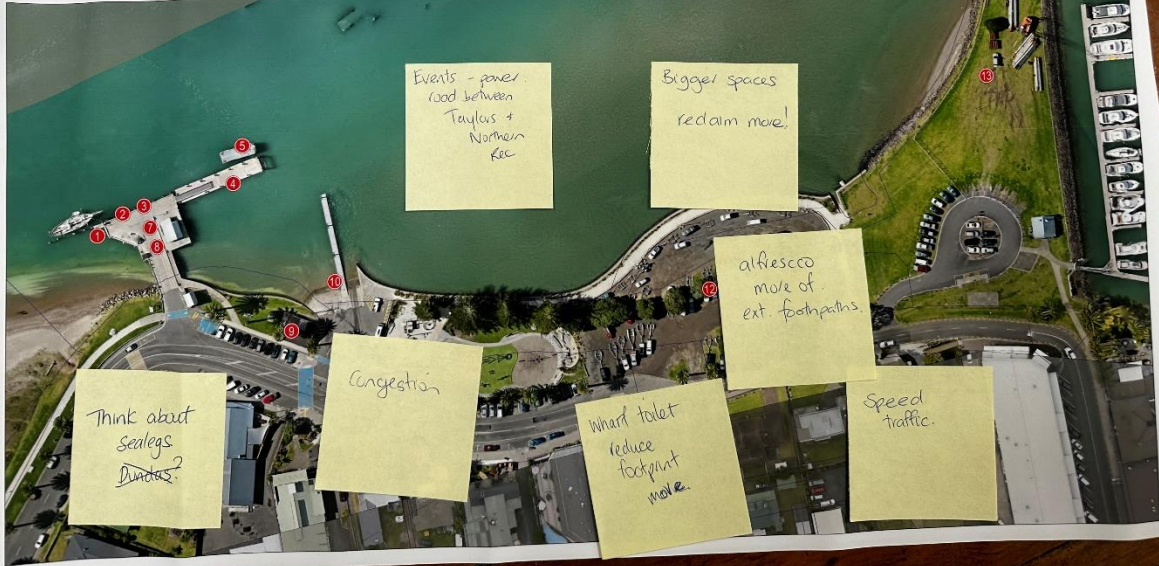
Boat Ramp
between
P. Grand &
Tollet
unsafe.

7 WHARF WITH MULTIPLE USES CONFLICTS

OFF ALL PARTS
RTHS
NTS
SEA

- 8 JUMPING IN TO WATER FROM ALL PARTS OF WHARF
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Boat Ramps
Pindas
Infrastructure
unusable



Rec fish

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1:1000 (B2)

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Separate
Commercial
wharf vs
Public users

