Ōpōtiki District Council -

A site assessment analysis for Freedom Camping Bylaw

Sep 2024

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Environmental strategy, policy and resource consent implementation

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Executive summary

As part of the development of a Freedom Camping Bylaw, Ōpōtiki District Council (ŌDC) has collated information to assess which areas could be included in the bylaw as prohibited, restricted or permitted for freedom camping.

This site assessment was used as a work in progress document to record information and feedback about various areas of freedom camping interest, populated initially by feedback from internal ŌDC staff as well as an analysis of the relevant areas within Reserve Management Plan.

As a result of this process, this document identifies local authority areas, which are areas controlled or managed by Council, which could be used for freedom camping. Each area has been assessed against the criteria outlined in section 11 of the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act) to inform its inclusion in the bylaw.

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1. Introduction

Freedom camping bylaws manage how and where freedom camping can occur by identifying areas where freedom camping is prohibited, restricted, and any additional conditions that may be necessary in certain areas.

The Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act) is permissive by default, which means its starting point is to allow freedom camping on all local authority land. However, the Act does recognise that some areas may not be suitable for freedom camping. Any potential areas for prohibition or restriction must be first assessed against the criteria in section 11(2) of the Act. This section states that councils may prohibit or restrict freedom camping in an area if this is necessary to:

- protect the area - safeguarding environmentally or culturally sensitive areas;
- protect the health and safety of people who may visit the area - ensuring the safety of freedom campers and other visitors;
- protect access to the area - preventing the obstruction of access or damage to infrastructure by freedom campers.

As part of the developing of a Freedom Camping Bylaw, Ōpōtiki District Council (ŌDC) has gathered information for a site assessment. The aim of this assessment is to:

- identify Council owned or vested land which has potential to be used for Freedom Camping;
- provide a clear determination of which areas are to be protected; and
- provide a consistent and fair approach to the classification of Council owned or vested land in relation to restrictions or prohibitions on Freedom Camping within the Ōpōtiki District.

Ōpōtiki District

The main resource management issues facing the District are outlined in District plan as follows:

1. Maintenance of high environmental quality.
2. Protecting the outstanding natural features and landscapes of the District.
3. Preserving the natural character of the environment, especially in the Coastal Environment and around the Ōhiwa Harbour.
4. Managing coastal hazards.
5. Providing for development of the Ōpōtiki Harbour and associated facilities and industrial activities.
6. Enabling activities which will provide employment, including industrial land.
7. Supporting a living environment that promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of the community.
8. Managing activities in the rural environment to avoid reverse sensitivity effects.
9. Maintaining and enabling the use of the District's rural land resource for rural production activities, including versatile land.
10. Managing the quality of the coastal environment.
11. Maintaining the heritage values of the Town Centre.
12. Protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes and significant indigenous habitats.
13. Protecting and providing for regionally significant infrastructure, including the land transport network.

2. Methodology

The following methodology has been applied to this assessment:

1. Assess the scope of land to be included or excluded based on ownership, administration, legislation, or practical access limitations.
2. Define what land needs to be protected under the Act.
3. Develop an assessment matrix to evaluate the degree to which each site requires protection from the impacts of freedom camping.
4. Use the assessment matrix to evaluate each site.
5. Compile and present the findings.

This methodology aligns with national best practice and is consistent with the approaches of other councils in assessing sites for suitability for freedom camping under the Act.

3. Sites to be assessed

Under the Freedom Camping Act 2011, councils are given powers to regulate and enforce any Freedom Camping Bylaws which have been developed and adopted under the Act. It is important to be able to balance the regulatory aspect of enforcing the Bylaw to protect and maintain the natural environment of the district, with the need to promote and encourage the opportunity of freedom camping in the district.

This assessment focuses on camping 'hot spots' – areas identified by Council staff, where there is a specific interest in managing freedom camping. The sites included in the assessment fall within local authority areas, defined in section 6(1) of the Act as land controlled or managed by or on behalf of council.

Certain areas have been excluded from this assessment, including:

- **Private land** - Under section 3 of the Act, the regulation of freedom camping on private land is specifically excluded.
- **Conservation land** - Land controlled or managed by the Department of Conservation is managed by the Department as provided for in subpart 2 of the Act and is outside the scope of council-made bylaws.
- **Crown land** - Land managed or controlled by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) or another Crown entity such as Waka Kotahi is outside the scope of the bylaw. (Waka Kotahi land may be included if this land is contiguous to Council owned or managed land as per section 10A of the Act.)
- **Leased land** - Council owns land throughout the district, which is not allocated at any given time to specific purposes (such as parks and reserves). To ensure that the land is maintained, Council may lease the land for purposes such as camping grounds through a formal contract.
- **Inaccessible land** - Land that is considered inaccessible by vehicle, by way of locked gates or other mechanisms to prevent access or otherwise has been excluded from this assessment.
- **Cemeteries** - Given that all cemeteries in the Ōpōtiki are considered to have a high level of cultural and historical significance, it is deemed to be inappropriate for freedom camping.

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Reserve

The Reserve Act 1977 takes the opposite approach to the Freedom Camping Act 2011 when considering camping. The Reserves Act prohibits camping on reserves unless approved by the Minister, provided for in a campground, or permitted within a reserve management plan. In contrast, the Freedom Camping Act permits camping unless restricted or prohibited under a Bylaw made under the Freedom Camping Act.

The following camping grounds are on reserves administered by the Council where freedom camping is allowed, subject to conditions outlined in the Reserve Management Plan:

- Te Ahiaua Reserve
- Hukuwai Beach Recreation Reserve
- Te Kaha Recreation Reserve, Maraetai Bay
- Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve, Omaio Beach

4. Assessment matrix

The assessment of each site is completed using a matrix which is used by many New Zealand Councils and is considered best practice by the sector. This assessment looks at each of the three elements outlined in section 11(2) of the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (the Act) to determine whether or not prohibiting or restricting freedom camping is necessary on the site.

The matrix provides councils with a standardised and transparent way of applying the Act and demonstrates a clear line of sight between the criteria in the Act, and the bylaw.

The matrix assigns scores for each of the elements as follows:

Protect the area: Considers cultural or historical significance and the natural environment.		**Protect the health and safety of the people who may visit the area:** Considers levels of vehicular traffic (car parks/lookout points), use for other activities (like sports grounds), and issues of persistent vandalism/vagrancy.		**Protect access to the area:** Considers damage caused by vehicular access to flora and fauna and the impact that people accessing the site will have on other users of the area.	
Has historical, cultural or environmental significance and requires full protection.	**5**	Risk to health and safety is too great to allow access to the site, including no vehicle access to, or car parking on, the site.	**5**	No access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause significant damage.	**5**
Contains some significant historical, cultural or environmental areas.	**4**	Significant health and safety concerns.	**4**	Restricted access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause damage.	**4**
Contains some areas that should be protected.	**3**	Minimal health and safety concerns (risk for the elderly or children).	**3**	Moderate access to the site, and any vehicle access would cause minimal damage.	**3**
Low concerns about areas that need protecting.	**2**	Low concerns regarding health and safety.	**2**	Good access to the site, which would not cause damage.	**2**
No significant area concerns.	**1**	No health and safety concerns.	**1**	Fully formed access to the site.	**1**

Application of the matrix

Each area is given a score of 1-5 for each of the three criteria.

If the total score of all three criteria is **9 or more**, restricting or prohibiting freedom camping on the area may be necessary. If the score for **any one of the three criteria is 5**, this also may indicates a need to protect the area by prohibiting or restricting freedom camping.

If the total score of all three criteria is **8 or less** and the area is a reserve*, there is an indication that freedom camping may be permitted on the reserve. For other areas that have a total score of **8 or less**, the tool indicates that it is appropriate for freedom camping to remain permitted.

* NB: freedom camping on gazetted reserves is otherwise prohibited under the Reserves Act 1977 (RA) unless provided for in an individual Reserve Management Plan (RMP).

Assessment of Freedom Camping Category Types

Once a site has been assessed and given a significance score, it will determine if freedom camping is permitted, restricted or prohibited. If camping is restricted, the following restrictions may apply:

- Self-contained: a vehicle designed and built for the purpose of camping which is configured to meet the ablutionary and sanitary needs of occupants of that vehicle for a minimum of three days, without requiring any external services or discharging any waste and complies with NZS5465:2001 or subsequent amendments, as evidenced by the display of a current self-containment warrant.
- Non-self-contained: a vehicle which does not have any in-built on-board ablutionary or sanitary facilities and does not carry a current self-containment warrant issued under NZS5465:2001 or subsequent amendments.
- Tenting: camping in a portable and collapsible temporary structure (which is usually made of fabric), is supported by poles and is fixed to the ground with pegs or attached to a vehicle.

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5. Summary of assessment

The following table shows and overview of the site assessment. For more information about each area, review the detailed assessment in part 6.

No.	Area	Assessment criteria				Result of assessment - Recommendations
		Protect the area	Protect H+S	Protect access	Total score	
1	Ōhiwa Reserve	5	4	3	12	**Prohibited** - High ecological and cultural significance, safety concerns, and access limitations.
2	First pullover area on Ōhiwa Harbour Road	4	4	3	11	**Prohibited** - Environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access issues.
3	Second pullover area on Ōhiwa Harbour Road	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - High environmental and cultural sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
4	Corner of Reeves Road and Ōhiwa Harbour Road	5	4	3	12	**Prohibited** - High significance, moderate safety concerns, access issues.
5	Ōhiwa Boat Ramp	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - High environmental significance, safety concerns, and access issues
6	Bryan's Beach - Reserve	5	4	3	12	**Prohibited** - High environmental significance, safety concerns, and access issues
7	Te Ahiaua Reserve (Pipi Beds)	4	2	2	8	**Restricted** - High environmental significance but with adequate facilities for restricted camping.
8	Area beside Pipi Beds	4	4	3	11	**Prohibited** - Environmental sensitivity, lack of amenities, and access issues.
9	Waiotahe Beach - first pullover area	4	4	3	11	**Prohibited** - High environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
10	Second pullover area next to Waiotahe Beach	4	4	4	12	**Prohibited** - High environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
11	Third pullover area next to Waiotahe Beach	5	3	4	12	**Prohibited** - High environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access issues.
12	Fourth pullover area next to Waiotahe Beach	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - High environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
13	Main Waiotahe Beach entrance	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - High environmental sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
14	Skate Car Parking (Whitikau Reserve)	5	3	2	10	**Prohibited** - Cultural significance, environmental sensitivity, and flooding risks.

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15	War Memorial Park	5	4	5	14	**Prohibited** - Cultural significance, environmental sensitivity, and access issues.
16	Corner of War Memorial Reserve	5	3	4	12	**Prohibited** - Cultural significance, safety concerns, and access issues.
17	Ohui Domain	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - Cultural significance, safety concerns, and access limitations.
18	Hikuwai Beach	4	3	2	9	**Restricted** - High environmental significance but adequate facilities for restricted camping.
19	Hikuwai Beach 2	4	4	3	11	**Prohibited** - High environmental significance, safety concerns, and access limitations.
20	Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve	5	4	4	13	**Restricted** - High cultural and environmental significance, with specific conditions to protect sensitive areas.
21	Area near the entrance of Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve	5	4	4	13	**Prohibited** - High cultural and environmental significance, safety concerns, and access limitations.
22	Te Kaha Reserve	4	3	3	10	**Restricted** - Cultural and environmental significance with conditions to protect sensitive areas
23	Ōpape Beach	4	4	4	12	**Prohibited** - Environmental and cultural sensitivity, safety concerns, and access limitations.
24	Orete Point Road in Waihau Bay	3	4	5	12	**Prohibited** - High usage and specific function of the road reserve necessitate prohibition of freedom camping.

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6. Site specific assessment

Ōhiwa

Site 1. Ōhiwa Reserve (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
The Reserve is recognised for its ecological and recreational importance. The reserve functions as a high tide roost for various bird species, including the endangered New Zealand dotterel, attracting bird watchers. It offers Ōhiwa harbour cycle/walking trails with scenic ocean views and supports activities such as fishing, kayaking, and exploring tidal flats. Visitors should note that there are no rubbish bins and should respect nearby private property boundaries. Further, the Tasman Holiday Park nearby offers additional amenities, including camping facilities. Part of the reserve is currently managed by the Department of Conservation and is in the process of returning to local iwi/hapu.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 5 Significant
Camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan. The site is within an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay and Ōhiwa Spit Coastal Hazard area. Its status as a stop on the heritage trails underscores its cultural and historical significance, necessitating significant protection to maintain its ecological and cultural values. Further, part of the land is in the process of being returned to local iwi and hapū, necessitating full protection to respect cultural sensitivities and preserve the ecological significance of the area.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The absence of rubbish bins poses health and safety concerns, as waste management becomes the responsibility of the visitors, potentially leading to environmental degradation. Also, considering the area is frequently used by cyclists and pedestrians, camping and vehicle movements on the reserve are likely to pose a safety risk to other users of the site.
Protection of access to the area — 3 Moderate
The parking area is quite small with limited space for vehicles, which could lead to congestion and access issues.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the high ecological and cultural significance of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, along with significant health and safety concerns and limited access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location

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Site 2. The first pullover area on Ōhiwa Harbour Road (Road Reserve)

Site Description	
Ōhiwa Harbour Road features several pullover areas that serve as convenient parking spots for day trippers, offering access to various recreational activities and scenic views of the Ōhiwa Harbour estuary. This particular pullover area is located near the entrance to Tasman Holiday Park and is part of the heritage/Ōhiwa Harbour cycle trail, making it a popular stop for those exploring the region.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	4 Some significant
The is located on the edge of the estuary, near an area with an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay and Outstanding Natural Features Landscapes. These environmental sensitivities necessitate protective measures to preserve the ecological integrity and scenic value of the site.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area has no toilet facilities and rubbish bins, posing potential health and safety concerns. Additionally, the area is frequently used by cyclists and pedestrians, and the presence of campers and vehicle movements could increase the risk of accidents, making it unsafe for all users.	
Protection of access to the area	3 Moderate
While the area is easy to access, its limited size and the presence of a cycleway/walkway create potential conflicts between different users. The narrow space makes it difficult for large vehicles to manoeuvre, which could lead to congestion and safety issues, particularly during busy periods.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the environmental sensitivity of the site, along with significant health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

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Ohiwa Harbour Road
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Site 3. The second pullover area on Ōhiwa Harbour Road (Road Reserve)

Site Description
It is located at the entrance to Onekawa Te Mawhai Regional Park and is part of the heritage/Ōhiwa harbour cycle trail. This pullover serves as a convenient parking spot for day trippers, providing access to various recreational activities and scenic views of the Ōhiwa Harbour estuary.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area	5 Significant
It is situated on the edge of the estuary, near an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay and within an Outstanding Natural Features Landscape. Additionally, it is within an archaeological site, further emphasizing the need for protection. The presence of signage indicating no overnight parking or camping highlights the area's sensitivity and the importance of preserving its cultural and environmental values.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area lacks toilet facilities and rubbish bins, which could lead to health and safety concerns. Moreover, being the entrance to the regional park, there is significant foot traffic, making the site unsuitable for camping due to the potential for conflicts between campers and park visitors.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
While the area is easy to access and provides parking space, it is intended for temporary parking only. The site's limited size and the high volume of visitors accessing the regional park make it unsuitable for overnight stays or large vehicle parking.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental and cultural sensitivity of the site, along with the health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

Ohiwa Harbour Road

Site 4. Corner of Reeves Road and Ōhiwa Harbour Road (Road Reserve)

Site Description	
This area is near Ōhiwa Harbour, a scenic location known for its natural beauty and recreational activities. The intersection serves as a key route providing access to several local attractions, including Ōhiwa Spit and the historic Onekawa Pa site. The area is popular for bird watching, swimming, cycling and other outdoor activities. The site itself is a small, undeveloped plot situated directly next to the road and does not currently feature infrastructure such as toilet facilities and rubbish bins. It is noted this area is part of heritage/Ohwia harbour cycle trail.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	5 Significant
The site is located on the edge of an ecologically significant estuary and is near areas with an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay, sensitive coastal hazards, and Outstanding Natural Features Landscapes. Its status as a stop on the heritage trails and limited parking spots for gathering Kaimoana underscores its cultural and historical significance, necessitating significant protection to maintain its ecological and cultural values.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
There are no rubbish bins or toilet facilities on-site, which could pose health risks. The area experiences low to medium vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian traffic, suggesting moderate health and safety concerns.	
Protection of access to the area	3 Moderate
There is no hardstand, which could result in damage to the natural environment and create access issues for different types of visitors, including vehicle, cycle, and pedestrian traffic.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental and cultural significance of the site, along with the moderate health and safety concerns and access issues, it is recommended that freedom camping be **Prohibited** at this location.	

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Site 5. Ōhiwa boat ramp (Road Reserve)

Site Description	
This area is a crucial access point for boating and fishing activities within the Ōhiwa Harbour area. The site is equipped with two toilets, but there are no rubbish bins. It is a popular spot for powerboating, sightseeing, picnicking, and fishing. Additionally, people engage in swimming, collecting shellfish during low tide, kayaking, walking, cycling and biscuiting. The tide does not significantly affect boat launching and fishing activities in this area. The boat ramp provides scenic views of the harbour and the surrounding estuarine environment.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	5 Significant
The site is located on the edge of an ecologically significant estuary and is near areas with an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay, sensitive coastal hazards, and Outstanding Natural Features Landscapes. Its status as a stop on the heritage/Ōhiwa harbour cycle trails underscores its cultural and historical significance, necessitating significant protection to maintain its ecological and cultural values. A camping is prohibited under the Reserve Act 1977.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The absence of rubbish bins poses health and safety concerns noting there are frequent users of the area. The boat ramp is a popular spot for launching boats, but the high traffic may conflict with on-site camping and pose safety risks due to the heavy use for boating activities.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
The area is frequently used by boaters and surfer, leading to limited space for camping. Ensuring clear and safe access for boat launching and retrieval is critical, and the presence of campers could interfere with these activities, leading to congestion and potential conflicts.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental and cultural significance of the site in conjunction with prohibition under the Reserve Act 1977, along with significant health and safety concerns and access issues, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

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Ohiwa Loop Road

Bryan's Beach

Site 6. Reserve area (Local Purpose Reserve)

Site Description
Bryan's Beach is a popular recreational beach for the local community and visitors, offering activities such as boat launching, fishing, surf casting, horse riding, swimming, and walking. The area is located close to Onekawa Te Mawhai Regional Park and is part of an esplanade reserve. The site does not have toilet facilities or rubbish bins. Parking is available only on grass areas, as there are no hardstand areas. The beach is situated in a quiet residential area and the reserve itself is not a massive size, making it necessary to manage its use carefully to maintain its serene and community-friendly environment.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management Plan. The site is located on the edge of an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay, necessitating full protection to preserve its ecological integrity.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
This is a popular spot for beach users/day trippers and camping and vehicle movements within the area likely pose a safety risk to other users, including children and the elderly. Further, the absence of rubbish bins and toilets poses health and safety concerns, as waste management becomes the responsibility of the visitors or nearby residents, potentially leading to environmental degradation.
Protection of access to the area — 3 Moderate
Access for larger vehicles might not be available due to the size of the area. Vehicle or camping activities may damage the grassed areas, leading to further restrictions on access and use.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the high environmental significance of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, along with significant health and safety concerns and access issues, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

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Te Ahiaua Reserve (Pipi Beds)

Site 7. Pipi Beds (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description	
The reserve, also known as the Pipi Beds, is located near the tidal mouth of the Waiotahe River, close to the expansive sandy shoreline of Waiotahe Beach, approximately 8 km west of Opotiki. It is a well-developed and popular destination for locals and visitors for freedom camping, offering a serene environment for nature enthusiasts. The reserve is frequented for activities such as swimming, fishing, surf casting, food gathering, and shellfish collection. Facilities on the reserve include public conveniences, picnic tables, and car parking. The landscape features predominantly mown grass with groupings of native trees and shrubs. It is part of the Waiotahe Trail.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	4 Some significant
It is close to an Indigenous Biological Diversity A area and is part of an outstanding natural features landscape. This proximity to ecologically sensitive area requires careful management to prevent environmental degradation.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	2 Minor
The area currently accommodates camping activities. There is a caravan toilet disposal site 2 km west of the Reserve on State Highway 2. The reserve is equipped with good facilities, including toilets and bins.	
Protection of access to the area	2 Minor
The reserve is easily accessible by vehicle, being close to State Highway 2. It is part of the cycle trails and has good parking areas, ensuring that access is well managed and does not interfere with the natural environment or visitor experience. It is also noted that the area gets busy with day trippers and kaimoana gatherers, as well as freedom campers.	
Recommendation	Restricted
Given the high environmental significance of the site, along with its current capacity to accommodate freedom camping and provide necessary amenities, it is recommended that freedom camping **restricted** at this designated location with appropriate conditions to protect the ecological values.	

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Stake Highway 2

Site 8. The area beside Pipi Beds (Road Reserve)

Site Description	
This green space is located beside Te Ahiaua Reserve (Pipi beds), and its proximity to the designated freedom camping area at Te Ahiaua Reserve often leads people to mistakenly believe that camping is permitted here as well. The area offers similar benefits to those found at Te Ahiaua Reserve, including scenic views and access to outdoor activities. The site is part of the Waiotahe Beach cycle Trail and features a designated cycleway/walkway, making it a popular spot for cyclists and pedestrians.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	4 Some significant
The area is close to an Indigenous Biological Diversity A overlay and is part of an Outstanding Natural Features Landscape. The proximity to these ecologically sensitive areas requires careful management to prevent environmental degradation, particularly given the site's use by day trippers and its close association with the nearby Te Ahiaua Reserve.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area lacks toilet facilities and rubbish bins, which could pose health and safety concerns if not managed properly. The absence of these amenities makes the site less suitable for overnight camping, and any waste left behind by visitors could negatively impact the environment and other users of the site. The presence of the cycleway/walkway increases the potential for conflicts between vehicles and cyclists or pedestrians.	
Protection of access to the area	3 Moderate
The area is very limited vehicular access from State Highway 2 and there is no hardstand, as it is mostly covered by grass. This lack of a solid parking surface could lead to difficulties in vehicle movement, particularly in wet conditions, and could also cause damage to the grassed area.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the environmental sensitivity of the area beside Pipi Beds, along with the lack of necessary amenities and the potential access issues, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

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Waiotahe Beach

Site 9. The first pullover area next to Waiotahe beach (Part of NZTA land)

Site Description
The first pullover area along Waiotahe Beach is located close to the dune area. This narrow area is frequently busy with visitors who stop by to enjoy the beach and its surroundings. The pullover area is fenced along the beachfront and is also part of a Waiotahe Beach cycle trail. Its location makes it a popular brief stop for beachgoers and cyclists.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 4 Some significant
The pullover area is close to the dune area, which is an ecologically sensitive. The proximity to the dunes necessitates measures to prevent potential environmental degradation due to human activities.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The area is designed more for brief stops rather than extended stays. There are no toilet facilities or rubbish bins, which poses health and safety concerns. The busy nature of the area with many visitors stopping briefly could lead to conflicts with campers who might stay longer, creating potential safety risks.
Protection of access to the area — 3 Moderate
While the area is easily accessible, its narrow width limits the space available for large vehicle movements. This limitation makes it difficult to accommodate large cars or campervans, leading to potential congestion and access issues. Furthermore, given that this area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, there is a potential conflict between day trippers and freedom campers, which could exacerbate congestion and impact the overall visitor experience.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the high environmental sensitivity of the dune area near Waiotahe Beach, along with significant health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

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Site 10. Second pullover area next to Waiotahe beach (NZTA land)

Site Description
The second pullover area along Waiotahe Beach is located close to the stream. It is a narrow strip of land situated between Waiotahe Beach cycle trail and the road. This area primarily serves as a brief stop for cyclists using the trail. Its limited space and proximity to both the road and the cycleway make it a convenient yet constrained spot for short breaks.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area	4 Some significant
It is close to the stream and the Indigenous Biological Diversity Area (IBDA) - B. This proximity to ecologically sensitive area requires careful management to prevent environmental degradation.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
There are no toilet facilities or rubbish bins, posing health and safety concerns. The limited space makes it challenging to accommodate different groups for various purposes, potentially leading to conflicts and safety risks.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
The narrow area between the cycle trail and the road limits space for vehicle manoeuvring. It is quite dangerous for vehicles to drive in, considering the traffic on the road and the cycleway. The limited space poses significant access issues, especially for larger vehicles.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental sensitivity of the area near the stream and the Indigenous Biological Diversity Area (IBDA) - B, along with significant health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

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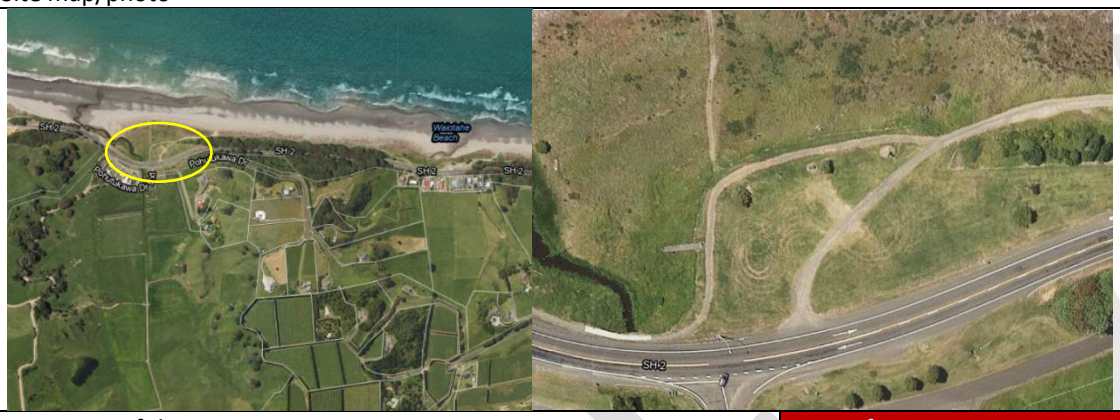
Site 11. Third pullover area next to Waiotahe beach (NZTA land)

Site Description
The third pullover area along Waiotahe Beach is part of the Waiotahe Beach Reserve. It is a predominantly grass-covered area, larger in size compared to other pullover areas along the beach. This area is located near one of the most significant national landmarks, the pōhutukawa avenue, situated on and around State Highway 2. Further, there is a Pou whenua (totem) pole along the beach. The site is also a significant part of the Waiotahe Beach cycle trail, making it a popular spot for cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts.
Site map/photo


Protection of the area	5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan. The area is subject to coastal inundation and rising sea levels, which increases its environmental sensitivity. Furthermore, its proximity to significant national landmarks, such as pōhutukawa avenue and the Pou whenua poles, underscores the need for strict protection to preserve both cultural and natural values.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	3 Moderate
The area has no rubbish bins and toilet facilities, posing potential health and safety concerns. However, it is well set back from residential areas, reducing direct conflicts with local residents. Furthermore, given that this area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, there is a potential conflict among day trippers, fishermen and freedom campers, which could cause congestion and impact the overall visitor experience.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
As the area has no hardstand ground, vehicle movement could damage the grass, especially during wet conditions. Additionally, given that this is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, if the area becomes busy, congestion at the entrance could impact road traffic and cycle traffic, leading to potential safety hazards and access issues.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental sensitivity of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, along with notable health and safety concerns and access issues, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

State Highway 2
Pohutukawa Drive
State Highway 2
1162
8B
Pohutukawa
Drive Extension

Site 12. Forth pullover area next to Waiotahe beach (NZTA land)

Site Description	
The fourth pullover area is located next to the main entrance of Waiotahe Beach and is part of the Waiotahe Beach Reserve. It is a relatively narrow area, fenced along the roadside with a designated vehicle entrance and is part of a Waiotahe Beach cycle trail. This spot is primarily designed for brief stopovers, offering visitors a place to take in the view or rest temporarily. The area is also located near one of the most significant national landmarks, the pōhutukawa avenue, situated on and around State Highway 2.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan. The area is subject to coastal inundation and rising sea levels, which increases its environmental sensitivity. Further, its proximity to the stream and its location within a significant national landmark underscore the need for strict protection.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area has no toilet facilities and rubbish bins, which poses health and safety concerns. As part of the trails, it can become crowded when busy, leading to potential safety issues due to the limited space. Furthermore, given that this area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, there is a potential conflict among day trippers, fishermen and freedom campers, which could cause congestion and impact the overall visitor experience.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
The area has a fence along the roadside with a designated entrance. Noting that this is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, if the area becomes busy, congestion at the entrance could impact road traffic and cycle traffic, leading to potential safety hazards and access issues.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental sensitivity of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, along with significant health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location	

State Highway 2
1230
1232
1234
1236
1238
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1242
1246
1248
1250
1252
1254
1244
1244A

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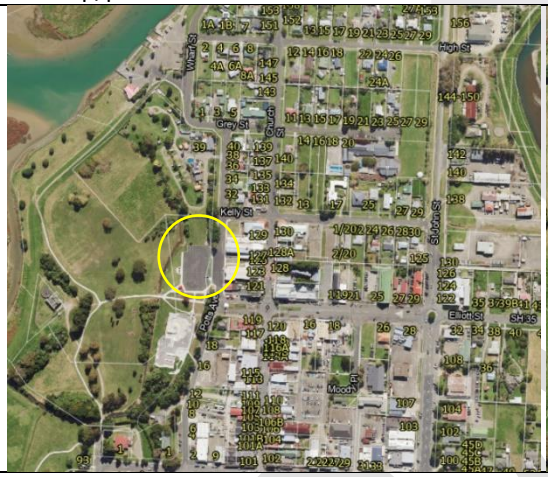
Site 13. Main Waiotahe beach entrance (Part of NZTA land)

Site Description
The main entrance of Waiotahe Beach is part of the Waiotahe Beach Reserve. The area features Pou whenua (totem) poles and is an integral part of the Waiotahe Beach cycle trail. It is a designated car park space for visitors, offering a relatively large area close to an existing holiday park. This site is also located near one of the most significant national landmarks, the pōhutukawa avenue, situated on and around State Highway 2.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area	5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan. The area is subject to coastal inundation and rising sea levels, which increases its environmental sensitivity. Furthermore, its proximity to significant national landmarks, such as pōhutukawa avenue and the Pou whenua poles, underscores the need for strict protection to preserve both cultural and natural values.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
Although there are public toilets at the end of the surf club, they are not close to this area. There are some bins, but not enough to manage the waste generated during busy periods. The layout of the car park can lead to potential conflicts between cyclists and vehicle movements, especially when the area is crowded.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
The area is easily accessible from the road, with designated car park spaces available. However, the space may not be suitable for large vehicle movements due to the designated cycleway and the high volume of visitor vehicle traffic, potentially causing congestion and safety issues. Furthermore, given that this area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, there is a potential conflict between day trippers, fishermen and freedom campers, which could exacerbate congestion and impact the overall visitor experience.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental sensitivity of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, along with significant health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

Ōpōtiki Township areas

Site 14. Whitikau Reserve and skate car parking (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
It is located close to the town centre and near a holiday park, is a well-utilised recreational space that includes a skate park, children's playground, and a large car parking area. The reserve is situated in a low-lying area, making it prone to flooding, particularly during heavy rain events. The site holds cultural significance, as it was historically used for pre-European settlement and cropping by tangata whenua. Additionally, the reserve is part of the coastal bioclimate of the Ōpōtiki ecological district. As part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement process, this land is slated to be returned to Whakatōhea, further underscoring its cultural and historical importance. It is noted the Opotiki Holiday Park nearby offers additional amenities, including camping facilities.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area — 5 Significant
The reserve is part of the Treaty settlement land, and camping is prohibited under the Reserve Act 1977. The area's cultural significance, combined with its environmental sensitivity due to flooding risks, necessitates strict protection to preserve both its historical and ecological values.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 3 Moderate
The reserve is equipped with rubbish bins, toilets, and street lighting, providing a safe and convenient environment for visitors. However, the area's susceptibility to flooding poses a potential safety risk, particularly during adverse weather conditions.
Protection of access to the area — 2 Minor
The area is easily accessible, with a designated parking space that can accommodate a large number of vehicles. The infrastructure supports easy access for visitors, making the site well-suited for recreational use.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the cultural and environmental significance of the site, along with being part of Treaty settlement land and the prohibition under the Reserve Act 1977, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

Potts Avenue

Site 15. Memorial Park (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
It is Ōpōtiki's most significant sports park, featuring a large parking area and frequently hosting various sports events, including rugby and netball. The park is located close to the town's holiday park and is near the Motu trail, making it a popular destination for both locals and visitors. Due to its size and location, the park is a central hub for community activities.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan. Additionally, an archaeological site within the reserve further underscores the need for strict protection to preserve both its cultural and historical significance.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The park is equipped with public toilets but lacks rubbish bins, posing potential health concerns if waste is not properly managed. The area is prone to flooding and lacks street lighting, which could increase safety risks, particularly during evening hours or adverse weather conditions.
Protection of access to the area — 5 Significant
The park is easily accessible with a hard ground surface for parking. However, the site's use as a sports field means that when events are taking place, there could be conflicts between campers and visitors. The designated entrance is limited by established stands, and the cycleway in front of the entrance could cause congestion among users. Large vehicles, such as camper vans, may struggle to pass through the entrance due to its width, further complicating access during busy periods.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the cultural and historical significance of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, and the practical concerns related to health, safety, and access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

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Site 16. Corner of War memorial Reserve (Road Reserve + Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
The corner of War Memorial Reserve is located close to the bridge leading to the harbour entrance. It is part of the Motu Trail and features a small shelter with signage detailing Whakatōhea history, accompanied by a few Pou. The area is close to the river's edge and is somewhat distant from residential areas, offering a quiet setting with cultural and historical significance.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management plan in the part of the area. The presence of signage and Pou representing Whakatōhea history highlights the cultural importance of the site, necessitating strict protection to preserve its historical and cultural integrity.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 3 Moderate
The area has no rubbish bins and toilet facilities, posing potential health and safety concerns. However, it is well set back from residential areas, reducing direct conflicts with local residents.
Protection of access to the area — 4 Some significant
The area includes an informal parking space with a hardstand surface. As a significant part of the Motu Trail, the space could become congested if used for camping, leading to conflicts between campers and trail users, and potentially creating access issues for other visitors.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the cultural and historical significance of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, and the practical concerns related to health, safety, and access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

North Street
St John Street

Site 17. Ohui Domain (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
It, formerly known as Waioeka Domain, is a valued open space within the district, known for its use in both passive and active informal recreation. The park is characterised by low-lying grass fields that often become waterlogged due to poor drainage. Also, it is located along the Motu cycle trail, making it a potential stopping point for cyclists, especially for picnicking. As part of the Treaty settlement process, this land is slated to be returned to Whakatōhea.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area	5 Significant
A camping is prohibited by the Reserve Management Plan. The land's future return to Whakatōhea as part of the Treaty settlement process highlights its cultural and historical importance, necessitating strict protection to preserve its value.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area doesn't have facilities such as toilets, rubbish bins, and street lighting, which could pose health and safety concerns, particularly at night. The poor drainage leading to waterlogged fields also presents safety risks for visitors.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some significant
The park has limited parking space, which may lead to conflicts between campers and visitors, particularly during busy periods. The small size of the parking area also makes it unsuitable for large vehicles, further restricting access and potentially causing congestion.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the cultural and historical significance of the site, its classification under the Reserve Management Plan, and the practical concerns related to health, safety, and access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

DRAFT

Hikuwai

Site 18. Hikuwai Beach Recreation Reserve (Recreation Reserve + Road Reserve)

Site Description
This is the first major beach destination east of the Ōpōtiki Township and is a popular recreational spot for the local community and visitors. The beach is well-known for activities such as boat launching, fishing, surf casting, horse riding, swimming, and walking. The reserve is primarily covered by mown grass with specimen native trees, groupings of shrubs, and dune grasses, while the remaining area consists of undeveloped dunes and sandy beach. The reserve is also part of the Motu Trail, making it a significant stop for cyclists.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 4 Some significant
Hikuwai Reserve holds local ecological significance due to its location within the coastal bioclimate and its role in biodiversity management and monitoring. The presence of ecologically significant native dune species and ongoing conservation efforts underscore the importance of protecting the area from activities that could disrupt these efforts.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 3 Moderate
There are no rubbish bins or toilets within the designated freedom camping area but its proximity which east side of the reserve is equipped with rubbish bins, showers and toilets, providing necessary amenities for visitors. However, the area's popularity and frequent use for various recreational activities may require ongoing monitoring to ensure safety.
Protection of access to the area — 2 Minor
Hikuwai Reserve already accommodates freedom camping and offers ample space for campers, as well as cyclists using the Motu Trail. The reserve is easily accessible from the highway, making it a convenient location for both short-term visitors and those staying overnight.
Recommendation — Restricted
Given the high environmental significance of the site, along with its current capacity to accommodate freedom camping and proximity to necessary amenities, it is recommended that freedom camping remain **restricted** at this designated location with appropriate conditions to protect the ecological values.

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Site 19. Hikuwai Beach Recreation Reserve 2 (Road Reserve)

Site Description	
This is located on the east side of Hikuwai Beach Reserve. Its proximity to the designated freedom camping area on the west side often leads visitors to mistakenly believe that camping is permitted here as well. The area offers the same recreational opportunities as the west side, including boat launching, fishing, surf casting, horse riding, swimming, and walking. The site is also part of the Motu Trail and features a designated vehicular access point to the beach, making it a popular spot for cyclists, fishermen, and day trippers.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	4 Some significant
Hikuwai Reserve holds local ecological significance due to its location within the coastal bioclimate and its role in biodiversity management and monitoring. The presence of ecologically significant native dune species and ongoing conservation efforts underscore the importance of protecting the area from activities that could disrupt these efforts. The area's ecological value requires careful management to preserve its natural environment.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
This side of reserve is equipped with essential amenities such as rubbish bins, showers, and toilets, which help manage health and safety concerns. There is also a clear separation from the road and residential areas, reducing potential conflicts with local residents. However, the site's popularity and frequent use for various recreational activities may require ongoing monitoring to ensure visitor safety. Further, given that the area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach presents a potential conflict among day trippers, fishermen, and freedom campers, which could lead to congestion and impact the overall visitor experience.	
Protection of access to the area	3 Moderate
The area is easily accessible from the road, with designated car park spaces available. However, the space may not be suitable for large vehicle movements due to the designated cycleway and the high volume of visitor vehicle traffic, potentially causing congestion and safety issues. Furthermore, given that this area is a designated vehicular access point to the beach, there is a potential conflict between day trippers, fishermen, and freedom campers, which could exacerbate congestion.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the high environmental significance of the site, along with the health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping remain **prohibited** at this location with appropriate conditions to protect the ecological values.	

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Omaio

Site 20. Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description
This is a coastal reserve that, while lacking permanent facilities, is currently designated as a freedom camping area by the council. The vegetation within the reserve consists largely of mown grass and mature pōhutukawa trees growing on the cliffs, with some revegetation efforts undertaken along the western boundary. The reserve is situated in the coastal bioclimate of the Motu Ecological District, offering a natural and serene environment. The land was purchased by the council in 1966 with specific provisions in the sale and purchase agreement that require the land to be maintained as a pleasure ground and/or campground.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 5 Significant
The reserve is in close proximity to significant archaeological sites, including the Omaio Urupā. It is also classified as an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape at both the district and regional levels and is near an Indigenous Biological Diversity Area (IBDA) - A. These factors make the reserve highly sensitive, requiring strict protection to preserve its cultural, historical, and ecological values.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The reserve lacks permanent facilities for campers, though the council has provided necessary amenities, such as portable and self-contained toilets, during peak periods. Public safety is a concern, particularly along the boundary of the reserve near the cliff face and in accessing the bay from the reserve. The absence of permanent facilities and the rugged terrain pose safety risks that need careful management.
Protection of access to the area — 4 Some significant
The reserve is located above a rocky bay adjacent to the Omaio Urupā, with steep terrain making immediate access to the bay difficult. The access way to the area is narrow, which could pose challenges for two-way traffic, especially for larger vehicles such as campervans. This limited access increases the potential for congestion and safety issues.
Recommendation — Restricted
Given the high cultural, historical, and environmental significance of Hoani Waititi Reserve, along with concerns related to health, safety, and access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **restricted** at this designated location, with specific conditions to protect the sensitive areas and ensure visitor safety.

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Site 21. The area near the entrance of Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve (Road Reserve)

Site Description
The area near the entrance of Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve is a beachfront section of Omaio Bay, a serene coastal area on New Zealand's East Cape. Omaio Bay is known for its stunning natural beauty, featuring a mix of sandy beaches and rocky outcrops. The bay is a popular spot for local residents who come to enjoy fishing, swimming, and other beach activities. This road reserve area serves as a gateway to the Hoani Waititi Memorial Reserve and provides access to the beach, making it a key point for visitors to the region. The site's natural landscape and cultural significance add to its appeal, drawing both locals and visitors seeking a tranquil beach experience.
Site map/photo

Protection of the area	5 Significant
The area is located near a significant archaeological site, the Omaio Urupā, and is in proximity to an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape at both the district and regional levels. Additionally, it is close to an Indigenous Biological Diversity Area (IBDA) - A. These factors highlight the area's cultural and ecological sensitivity, necessitating strict protection to preserve its historical and natural values.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	4 Some significant
The area lacks essential facilities such as rubbish bins and toilets, which could lead to health and safety concerns, particularly if waste is not managed properly. As a popular beach for local residents and an access point to Hoani Waititi Reserve, the presence of freedom campers could create conflicts with other users of the area, including campers, day trippers, and fishermen. The lack of facilities combined with the high volume of mixed usage increases the potential for safety issues, especially during peak times.	
Protection of access to the area	4 Some siginficant
The area is easily accessible by vehicle as it is part of a road reserve. However, there is no hardstand, which can lead to muddy and difficult conditions during wet weather. The site's use as a beach access point can lead to conflicts between campers, day trippers, and fishermen, especially when the area is busy. The limited space and lack of structured parking make it challenging for larger vehicles to manoeuvre, increasing the risk of congestion and accidents during peak periods.	
Recommendation	Prohibited
Given the cultural, historical, and ecological significance of the area, along with the health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.	

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Maraetai Bay

Site 22. Te kaha Reserve (Recreation Reserve)

Site Description	
It is located on a headland between two bays, offering scenic views and access to Maraetai Bay, a popular recreational spot for activities such as boat launching, fishing, surfcasting, swimming, and walking. The reserve is equipped with public conveniences and a children's playground, making it a favoured destination for families and outdoor enthusiasts. The reserve also provides access to an urupā (Māori burial ground) located on the headland and the adjacent Māori Reserve, which becomes a popular overnight camping area during the summer months. Additionally, Te Kaha Reserve is part of the Motu Trail, attracting cyclists who enjoy the coastal route.	
Site map/photo	
Protection of the area	4 Some significant
The reserve's proximity to an urupā and its location on a headland between two coastal bays make it an area of cultural and environmental sensitivity. The presence of these significant sites requires protection to preserve both the cultural heritage and natural landscape of the reserve.	
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area	3 Moderate
The reserve is equipped with toilets but don't have rubbish bins, which could lead to waste management issues during busy periods. A fence along the roadside provides some safety for visitors, but during peak times, there is potential for conflict between campers, visitors, and cyclists, particularly near the camping spot.	
Protection of access to the area	3 Moderate
The reserve offers easy access from the highway, making it convenient for visitors. However, the lack of a hard ground surface for parking poses challenges, especially during wet conditions or when the area is crowded. This could lead to difficulties in vehicle movement and potential damage to the grassy areas.	
Recommendation	Restricted
Given the cultural and environmental significance of the site, along with the practical concerns related to health, safety, and access, it is recommended that freedom camping be **restricted** at this designated location with appropriate conditions to protect the ecological values.	

N
State High
6912
6888
6914

N
State High 35

Opape

Site 23. Opape Beach (Road Reserve)

Site Description
The road reserve near Opape Beach is situated where the sandy beach transitions into rocky inlets, making it a scenic and strategic location for small fishing boats to be launched as they navigate through the channel to the open sea. This area marks the eastern boundary of the Whakatōhea tribe and is the site of the Muriwai meeting-house, which overlooks the sea. Opape also features a well-equipped camping ground set back from the main road, as well as the newly developed Tautarangi Walkway, which offers visitors a chance to enjoy the coastal landscape. The beach and walkway are popular for both relaxation and recreational activities, providing a peaceful setting amidst the natural beauty of the area.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 4 Some significant
The area is close to an Indigenous Biological Diversity A area and the part of outstanding natural features recognised at both the regional and district levels. The proximity to these sensitive ecological zones and cultural landmarks necessitates careful management to prevent environmental degradation and to preserve the area's natural and cultural heritage.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The site has no toilets and rubbish bins, raising potential health and safety concerns. Additionally, the presence of the Tautarangi Walkway in the area requires careful consideration to avoid conflicts between campers, walkers, and vehicle movement, particularly in this busy spot.
Protection of access to the area — 4 Some significant
The access road to the beach is narrow, with a gate that can limit entry and exit as it is Maori Reservation. The limited parking space and the size make it challenging for larger vehicles to manoeuvre, especially during peak times. This could lead to congestion and potential safety issues, particularly given the area's popularity.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the environmental sensitivity and cultural significance of the site, along with the potential health and safety concerns and access limitations, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

Opape Beach Road
78
73A
71
67C
67B
67
67A
76A

Waihau Bay

Site 24. Orete Point Road (Road reserve)

Site Description
This area is a picturesque coastal settlement and a popular destination for fishing, particularly during the summer months, attracting both locals and visitors. The area is known for its stunning natural beauty, with clear waters, sandy beaches, and lush surrounding landscapes. The road reserve in Waihau Bay provides access to a boat ramp, making it a key location for launching boats into the bay. The site is frequently visited by recreational fishers, especially during peak fishing seasons, which contributes to significant vehicle traffic in the area.
Site map/photo
Protection of the area — 3 Moderate
The road reserve is located in a coastal area of natural beauty, which requires careful management to prevent environmental degradation. The high level of activity during peak fishing seasons necessitates protective measures to ensure that the natural environment, including the bay and surrounding landscapes, remains undisturbed.
Protection of the health and safety of the people who may visit the area — 4 Some significant
The site is equipped with toilets but lacks rubbish bins, which could lead to waste management issues, particularly during busy periods. The area experiences significant vehicle movement due to fishing activities, increasing the risk of accidents, especially given the absence of a proper pedestrian path. The combination of heavy traffic and limited pedestrian infrastructure poses safety risks to both visitors and locals.
Protection of access to the area — 5 Significant
While the area has designated parking spaces, these are often filled up by vehicles associated with boating and fishing activities, especially during peak seasons. The high demand for parking and the busy nature of the area can lead to congestion, making it difficult for all visitors to find adequate space. This could result in conflicts between different user groups, particularly when space is limited.
Recommendation — Prohibited
Given the high usage and specific function of the road reserve in Waihau Bay, particularly during fishing seasons, it is recommended that freedom camping be **prohibited** at this location.

Orete Point Road
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State Highway 35