

MANGAWHAI COMMUNITY PARK

Master Plan



This document is prepared by the Mangawhai Community Park Steering Group. This was adopted by Council on 24 November 2014. The Mangawhai Community Park Steering Group thanks Wingate+Farquhar for their donation of time for the preparation of this document.

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Mangawhai Community Park is conveniently situated along Molesworth Drive between the two established nodal points of Mangawhai Village and Mangawhai Heads. The development of Mangawhai Community Park will inform a central part of the future growth and development of Mangawhai as a readily expanding community. It is important that consideration is given to “how” this space and landscape can be best utilised and designed to achieve an environment and streetscape that results in safe, creative and enjoyable places whilst enhancing Molesworth Drive and the Park environs.

This is a unique opportunity to create a built precinct that engages with the Park-lands and has the potential to become a destination in itself providing amenity, recreation, entertainment and locations of cultural and natural significance that support long-term community sustainability.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Mangawhai Community Park Steering Group

In June of 2012, The Mayor and Chief Executive were contacted by a local Mangawhai resident offering to lead a group representing users to complete a concept plan for the area, in the light of some community disagreement of how the land should be used, and specifically whether it was suitable as a location for St John’s Ambulance facilities. The Mayor and Chief Executive agreed that this initiative should be supported on the condition that it was led by the community and Council played a more minor facilitative role only.

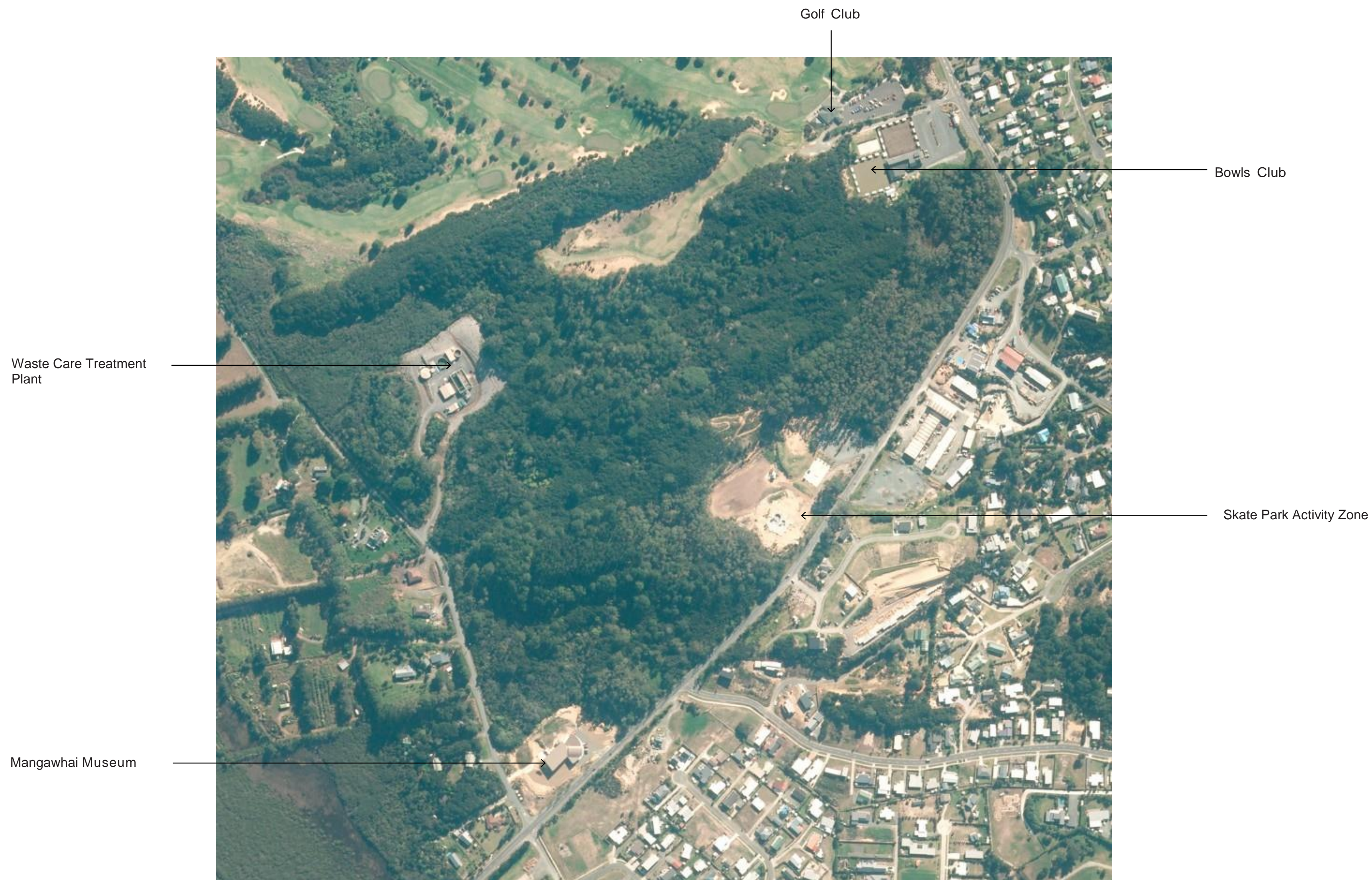
A Steering Group of current users was formed, and an architect with local property volunteered his and his firm’s services pro bono in doing the design work. Mangawhai Ratepayers and Residents Association have a representative who attends meetings of the Steering Group.

The Steering Group has held four open days to gather community views on the future uses of the land. The Steering Group also did a survey to check that the principles developed from the feedback were generally supported by the wider community. A more direct question was also asked on the location of St John’s Ambulance on the land.

This plan is a result of the work of the steering group, and the comments and input gained from the community.

1.2 Legal Status of the Park land

- The land now known as Mangawhai Community Park, together with the land where the golf course is situated, was purchased from a private owner through a willing seller/willing buyer sale in the 1980s by Otamatea County Council.
- Mangawhai Park is Pt Lot 3 DP 108638
- About 33 hectares of land situated on the main road from Mangawhai Village to Mangawhai Heads.
- It is held in fee simple.
- It is neither held as a reserve under the Reserves Act nor zoned as a reserve in the District Plan. It is zoned “rural” with a harbour overlay in the Operative District Plan and capable of being subdivided into 18 sites with an average site size of two-hectares.
- Council purchased the site and has held the site for the purposes of a Park.
- This land now known as Mangawhai Park was issued separate title in the 1990s.
- The Mangawhai Golf Course has a separate title as does the site of The Bowling Club



2.0 Vision and Principles

Vision

Mangawhai Community Park will be visible, predominantly natural, public space at the entrance to Mangawhai Heads, used (freely) by the public for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoor environment.

Principles

Two primary principles underpin this vision:

- The community (residents and visitors) will have free and unencumbered use of the Park
- The natural landscapes (ecological, geological) of the Park will dominate

3.0 Management of the Park

Objectives

In order to achieve the vision:

- Future use and development of the Park will encourage the wider community to use the Park
- In keeping with the concept of free and unencumbered use, purely commercial activities will not generally be permitted

The Park will be managed by the community for the community

- An advisory group called “Friends of Mangawhai Community Park” drawn from the Mangawhai community will be formed. Members will be voted on at an annual public meeting. This group will have a management role.

The Park overall will be governed by Council in partnership with local people

- A governance group will be formed consisting of two Councillors (Commissioners) and the Chair of the Friends group, with one other member from the community appointed by Council.

The land will be legally protected and preserved for public use.

4.0 Site Description

4.1 Landforms, ecology and vegetation

Mangawhai Community Park lies on a fixed sand dune comprised of sand blown in from the coast during the Holocene. This feature is still largely unconsolidated and free draining.

While the area along Molesworth Drive is mostly flat with only slight undulations, much of the remainder of the Park is steep and undulating with relatively dry ridges and damper hollows. Many of these lower lying hollows have developed into wetlands. The Park is also home to an impressive sandstone gully system which is a significant natural feature of the Park.

The Park contains several wetlands, the largest being an extensive kanuka dominant area in the North West corner along Thelma Road. An extensive rush bed is also present in the north east below the Mangawhai Bowling Club car park. A further three wetlands along the south western edge of the Park are dominated by kanuka although the most northern one, and largest has a significant component of manuka (*Leptospermum scoparium*). At their drier eastern ends, tree ferns and even cabbage trees are present. Ground cover is jointed rush (*oioi*) (*Apodasmia similis*). All the wetlands are ecologically valuable.

With the exception of three stands of exotic forestry, most of Mangawhai Park is covered by a closed canopy of tall kanuka forest. This is a distinctively Northland forest type and may also be an example of a sand dune forest, a forest type recognised as being nationally rare. While some areas of this forest are degraded by introduced species, others are essentially pure and of high ecological significance. The more natural areas of kanuka forest are also home to abundant native fungi. There are however no populations of indigenous fauna which need to be protected within the Park. Fortunately, most of the high quality native bush and wetlands are located away from Molesworth Drive and so should not clash with development.

Kanuka Forest

Kanuka (*Kunzea ericoides*) is the dominant native tree species within the Park and forms large areas of continuous canopy. This kanuka forest, covering almost half the vegetated area, is the single most important component of the vegetation cover of the Park. Its dense continuous canopy restricts the establishment of exotic species such as acacia, asparagus fern (*Asparagus densiflorus*) and pines. Canopy height varies from 4 m on the drier ridges to 8 – 10 m in moist valleys. The reasonably dense canopy of this species limits light to the understory with some areas supporting few ground cover and sub-canopy species. Common ground cover species include carex grasses (*Carex lessoniana*), and exotic asparagus fern, with kauri grass (*Astelia*) and sphagnum moss on damper sites, and a sub-canopy of hangehange (*Geniostoma rupestre*), karamu (*Coprosma robusta*), tree ferns (*Cyathea*), and scattered five finger (*Pseudopanax arboreus*) where the canopy is higher.

Pohutukawa

There are also two very large pohutukawa trees located in the Park. These pohutukawa, which are likely to be several hundred years old, are a remnant of the prehistoric forest cover and are arguably the Park's most valuable minor vegetation component. These are also interesting in that they have been partly buried by the once shifting sands of the dune and so have taken on a unique structure.

Exotic Plantings

While a number of exotic tree species occur throughout the Park as weeds there are also three areas of exotic plantations, two of *Eucalyptus* and one of *Pinus radiata*. The age of these plantings have not been determined but appear to be between 30 and 50 years making the trees mature. These plantings are near Molesworth Drive and may be worth harvesting for financial gain.

4.2 Current uses

Walking

The Park contains a network of walking tracks, the location of which is shown in maps 3 and 4. These tracks have been designed to highlight and make accessible the various scenic features of the Park. These include large pohutukawa trees, sandstone gully, wetlands and kanuka forest. These tracks are in good condition and require little maintenance thanks to the free draining nature of the site's geology.

Biking

There are a number of mountain biking tracks around the Mangawhai Activity Zone. There is also the potential to modify the “Last of the summer wine (2)” – the section running parallel to Molesworth Drive, walking track to cater for cyclists as well. This would allow cyclists to pass through the scenic tranquillity of the Park rather than having to bike along Molesworth Drive. This would help to promote cycling and improve connectivity.

Mangawhai Activity Zone

The state-of-the-art activity zone is being built in stages due in part to financial constraints. When the activity zone is totally complete it is expected to feature a large skatepark, basketball courts, playground and BMX bike trails. The Activity Zone includes what is purportedly the country's largest skate bowl. The skatepark was designed by Premium Skatepark Designs and features a manny pad, death box, love seat, stair sets and several pool-style bowls, including one that is 3.3m deep. Incorporated into the Activity Zone are natural landscaping elements giving the space a sense of place.

Museum

The Mangawhai Historical Society have located their new museum building within the Park on the corner of Molesworth Drive and Thelma Road. With significant input and encouragement from Te Papa and Destination Northland, the Society has undertaken to develop a prime tourist destination. In addition to its role as a museum, the new building is also able to serve as a functions centre.

Merz Hut

Two original huts remain, though somewhat decrepit, on the lower end of the Park.

4.3 Adjacent and new uses

Golf course

Adjoining Mangawhai Community Park and located less than 90 minutes north of Auckland, the Mangawhai Golf Club has consistently been regarded as one of the top courses in New Zealand. The course is a demanding mixture of wide and narrow fairways, undulating greens landscaped in a picturesque setting surrounded by native bush and wetlands that attract a wide range of bird life. Developed on a sandy base, weather does not affect Mangawhai even during the wettest winters due to its excellent drainage qualities. The Club has a fully equipped Golf Shop offering a wide range of hire and new equipment. A fleet of Yamaha electric carts are also available. The Clubhouse overlooks the course and offers bar and café facilities.

Mangawhai Bowling Club and The Club

The Mangawhai Bowling Club is located adjacent to the Golf Club clubrooms in the far east of the Park. The club provides out door lawn bowling for its members and the clubrooms are leased to The Club for parallel use as a functions centre.

Mangawhai Information Centre

The Mangawhai Information Centre is manned by volunteers and offers full information on accommodation, eating out, activities and events. It is located on Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai Heads, outside the Golf Club.

St John's Ambulance and Fire Service

These groups have been given the go-ahead to develop on the site above the Activity Zone.

Mangawhai Artists Inc.

This group will join others on the Park.

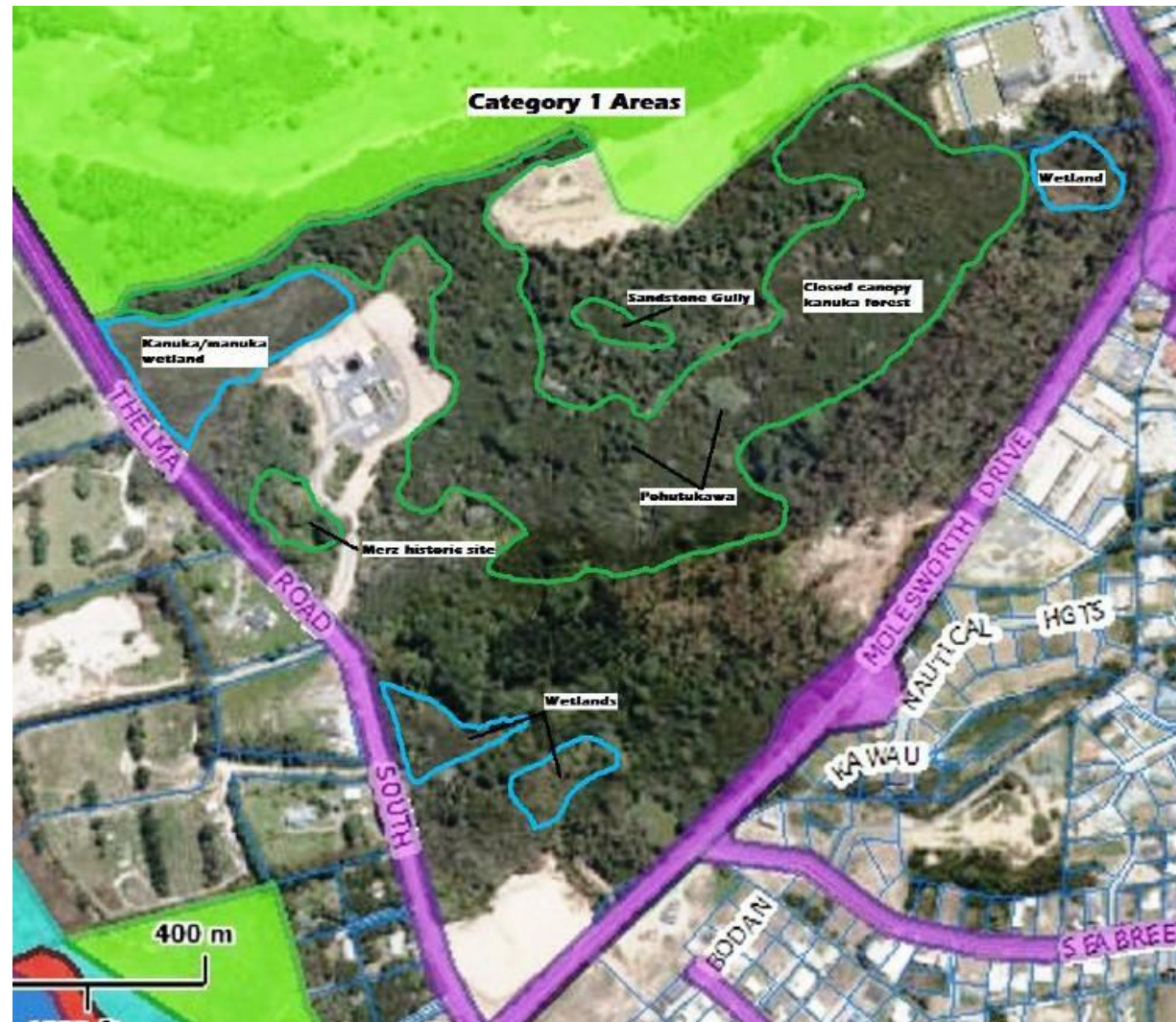


4. Site Description

i. Map of Park



- KEY
- Existing Developments
 - Proposed Developments
 - Walking Tracks
 - Wetlands Historical
 - Area Sandstone
 - Gulley Pohutukawa
 - Covert



4.4 Categorisation of the Site

The site has been divided up into four categories of natural value:

Category 1:

Highest value and protection of category one areas is central to the Park principles. It mainly consists of wetlands and kanuka forest.

Wetlands - fresh water dune wetlands with only limited weed invasion. This area is a priority for weed control and restoration especially removing invasive acacia and pampas.

Kanuka forest - The forest consists of a closed canopy of kanuka with occasional mature acacia and pines. Asparagus fern is well established in most areas and unlikely to be effectively controlled. There is an important subcanopy of astelia, carex, hangehange, five finger and tree ferns in damper gullies. Care should be taken to maintain an undisturbed edge to these areas to reduce weed invasion.

Special areas – included in this category are the Merz Huts, the sandstone gully, and two mature pohutukawa.

Category 2:

This area has valuable cover with a major kanuka component but it has greater invasion of acacia, pines, gorse and other exotic weeds. With effective control of weed species these areas will return to closed canopy kanuka forest.

Category 3:

Exotic planting of eucalyptus and radiata pine comprise two blocks in the south eastern part of the Park. These areas have no or little ecological value with asparagus fern growing thickly under the pines, gorse under the eucalyptus and scattered kanuka and other native shrub species mixed in.

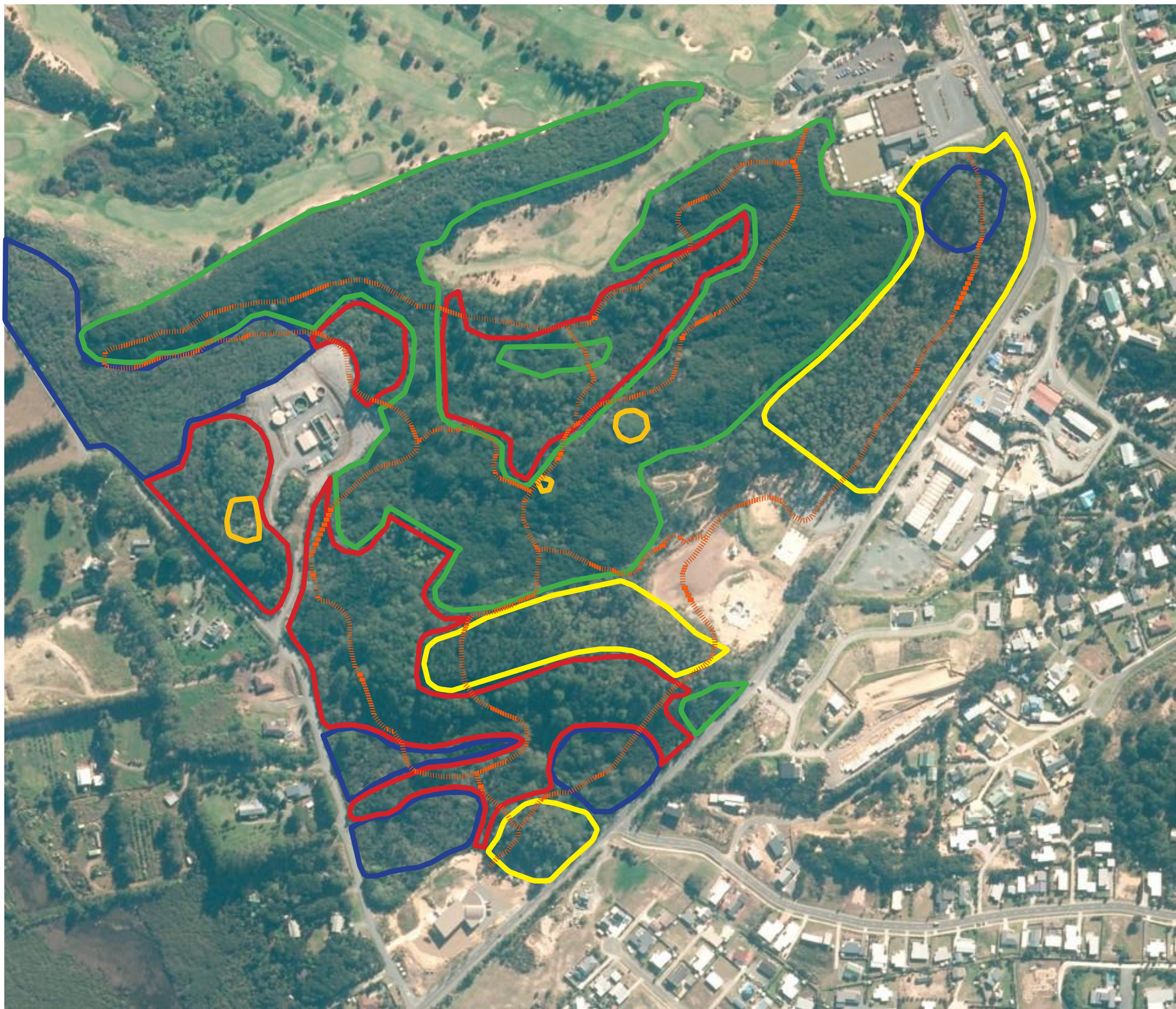
Category 4:

This is the lowest value area. While these areas have a significant component of kanuka they are dominated by invasive weed species.

Conclusion:

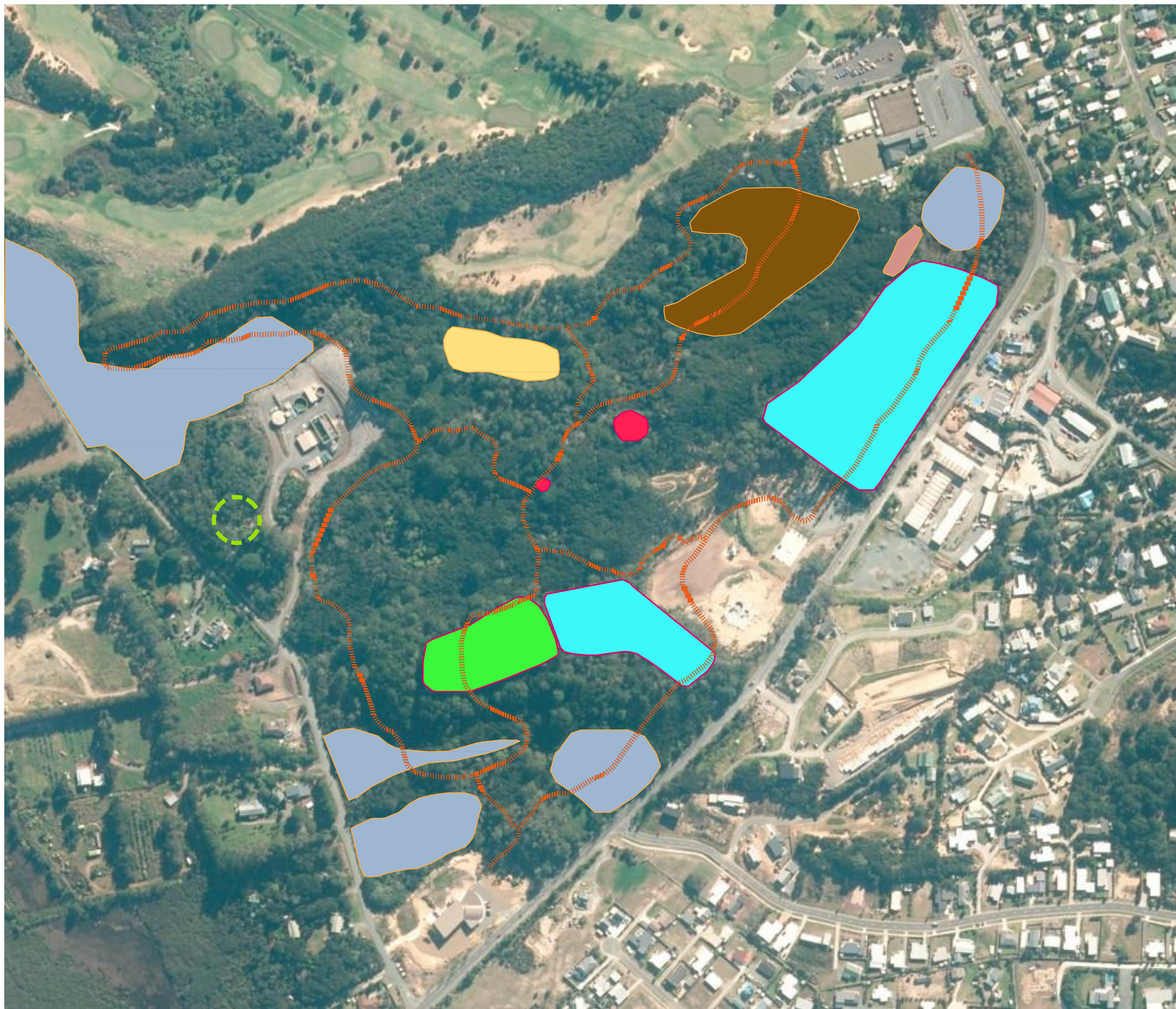
Categories one and two are mainly “no-go” areas to be maintained in their natural form, although there may need to be some exceptions made.

Categories three and four are proposed as containing the main potential development sites. Not all of these areas are suitable for buildings. Further work needs to be done to take out land not suitable because e.g. ground conditions, access issues, avoiding buildings on the skyline.



This study maps out the types of vegetation found across the Mangawhai Park site.

- KEY
- Kanuka
 - Wetlands
 - Exotics
 - Degraded
 - Special Interest



This study identifies areas across the site of particular interest.

KEY

- Walking Tracks
- Wetlands
- Historical Area
- Sandstone Gully
- Pohutukawa Covert
- Radiata Pine
- Eucalypt Forest
- Kauri Grass
- Native Fungi

5. Protecting the valuable natural features of the Park

Objectives

- To protect areas of ecological, landform and natural interest
- By defining category one and two areas as mainly “no-go” areas for development
 - By caring for these areas
- To enhance the natural character through re-vegetation and increased biodiversity
- Through re-vegetation and restoration
 - Through increasing biodiversity
- To ensure the natural character of the Park dominates
- Require existing and new buildings to have and implement a landscape plan
- Improve the ability for people to experience the natural values of the Park
- By maintaining and developing access and connections through the Park

6. Current and Future uses of the Park

Objectives

- Future uses of the Park will only be for recreation, arts and cultural activities that do not duplicate facilities in other parks and reserves
- Commercial uses will not generally be allowed unless they are secondary to the non-commercial use principle for the intent of fundraising, attracting visitors and the like
- Future use and development of the Park will occur in a planned and coordinated way, built only on designated building sites and developed according to the landscape and planting plan.
- Buildings and other facilities will use good urban design practice
- To maximise safety
 - To build an attractive aesthetic
 - No buildings on the skyline
- All buildings need approval pf a registered architect appointed by the “Friends” group.

Building Sites

The future progress and building upon the park-lands will be based on the ecological footprint of the site.

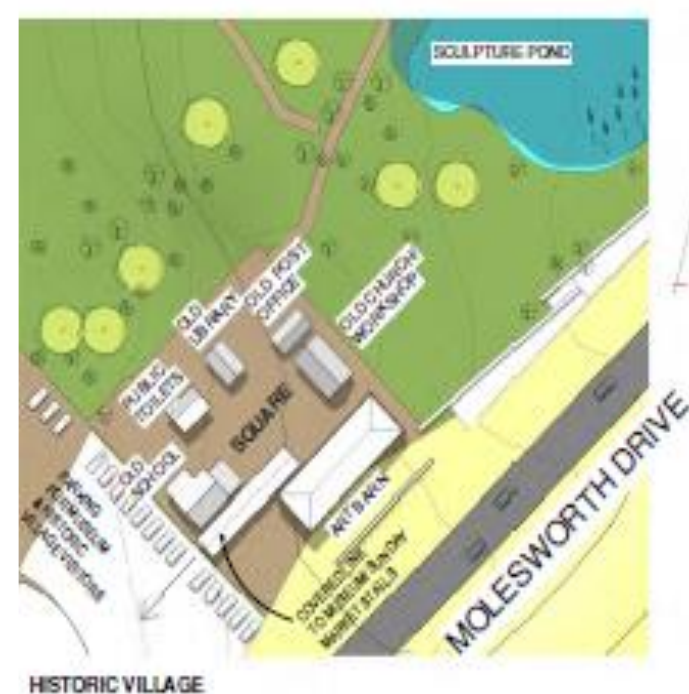
Through mapping and analysis of the current uses/built interventions into the site and the patterns of vegetation it has become evident where the areas for future development should be located. These sites are based on the identification of low-grade vegetation coverage (for development purposes) and high-grade natural coverage (comprised of native species such as kanuka, manuka and pohutukawa).

Areas of degraded ecological quality combined with open space that is currently available presents the sites that will be considered for development without disrupting the ecological hierarchy of the site.

The following plans are indicative only, and actual building sites will be identified on a case-by-case basis. Open spaces not leased by any group will remain available for walking trails, art installations and the like at the discretion of the Friends group.

LEGEND

- SPECIAL IMPORTANCE**
NOTABLE POHUTUKAWA TREES & HISTORICAL SITE (GEORGE MERZ HUTS) & SANDSTONE GULLY
- CATEGORY1**
HIGHEST VALUE & PROTECTION - INCLUDING KANUKA FOREST
- CATEGORY2**
VALUABLE COVER INCLUDING KANUKA FOREST BUT HAS INVASION OF EXOTIC WEEDS (ACACIA, PINES, GORSE etc.)
- WETLAND**
FRESHWATER DUNE WETLANDS WITH LIMITED WEED INVASION - AREA OF PRIORITY FOR WEED CONTROL & RESTORATION
- EXOTIC TREES**
PLANTATIONS EXOTIC TREES (EUCALYPTUS & RADATA PINES) WITH THICK UNDERGROWTH OF ASPARAGUS WEED, NATIVE SHRUB SPECIES etc.
- IDENTIFIED NATIVE PLANT GROWTH AREA**
THIS INCLUDES TALL KANUKA FOREST, ASTELIA BUSH & NATIVE FUNGI GROWTH AREA DUE TO CONTINUOUS DAMPNESS AND COVER OF SPHAGNUM MOSS
- DEGRADED**
THIS AREA FEATURES MIXTURE OF KANUKA AND INVASION OF EXOTIC WEED SPECIES - POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES
- EXISTING ROADS**
- PROPOSED ROAD WIDENING & POTENTIAL VEHICULAR ACCESS THROUGH PARK**
- EXISTING/ PROPOSED WALKING TRACKS THROUGH PARK**
- POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITES**





ECOLOGICAL CATEGORIES & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
REVISION A 12/07/2014

INFORMATION

7. Connections with and into the Park

Objectives

The Park will be well connected to Mangawhai Heads and Village

- Making more of its convenient location between the Mangawhai Village and Mangawhai Heads

Access to the Park from Molesworth Drive will be safe whether you are walking, cycling, skateboarding or driving.

Uses within the Park will be connected by roads, shared car parking and/or walkways

- To maximize planted areas
- To connect uses
- To display features of interest

8. Care of the Park

Objectives

Responsibilities for the care of different areas within the Park are clear.

Areas of the Park covered by a lease or license to occupy are the responsibility of the group who leases the area, and will have maintenance and landscape plans associated with their built facilities.

Council is responsible for the balance of area outside leases or licenses to occupy (common areas) and will have a plan for the care of these areas.

All participants will have maintenance programmes for the areas they are responsible for shared facilities across groups will be favoured, and be located on common areas e.g.

- Toilets
- Car parking
- Access ways

The Friends group has the role of settling all issues of conflict between Park users.

Landscape plan and priorities

General considerations

Only native plant species appropriate to the site should be used in any and all future landscape and restoration plantings in the Park. This condition should include plantings associated with current and future buildings and facilities such as the Museum, St Johns, MAZ etc.

The use of palms, especially those posing health risks such as the Phoenix palms at MAZ, should be avoided at all costs. While existing exotics may well be retained where they contribute to landscaping, e.g. Phoenix palms, Norfolk Island Pines, other exotics such as pines and eucalypts may be removed as required.

Landscaping activities should focus on high use and high visibility areas in the short term. Much of the exotic weedy areas of the Park may never be subject to landscaping and restoration. Efforts should also be made to restore and interplant the area surrounding the sewerage treatment plant.

Landscaping priorities

1. **Molesworth Drive verge Museum to MAZ.** Remove relic fence and posts, clear gorse, leaning pine, and any other exotic plants. Spray out grass and weeds and mulch with pine chip. Plant with appropriate native species. Prune Norfolk Island pines to common height.
2. **Molesworth Drive verge MAZ to Information Centre.** Remove eucalypts and acacia adjacent to road. Remove relic fence and exotic weeds. Spray out grass and weeds and mulch with pine chips. Plant with appropriate native species. Prune Norfolk Island pines to common height.
3. **Sewerage treatment plant surrounds.** Restore and enhance plantings surrounding treatment plant in association with removal of exotic weeds.
4. **Boardwalk to lookout.** Remove weed tree species along boardwalk and inter-plant with appropriate native species.
5. **Creation of suitable space for art work installations east of the heritage village.**

Work programme

	Year one		Year two		Year three		Year four		Year five	
Create historic village	- Clear site - Move old church, library, post office and Tara School onto site	\$38,000	Upgrade buildings for public use Supply power and sewerage	\$50,000						
Deliver planting plan	- Felling of eucalyptus trees stage one - Plant stage one	\$8,000	Continue to deliver planting plan	\$8,000	Continue to deliver planting plan	\$8,000	Continue to deliver planting plan	\$8,000	Continue to deliver planting plan	\$8,000
Develop public car parks	Upgrade MAZ car park	\$10,000	Upgrade Museum car park	\$10,000			Establish car park off right-of-way to Lookout	\$10,000		
Public toilets	Provide toilet at MAZ car park	\$70,000	Provide toilet at historic village/Museum car park	\$70,000						
Signage and interpretation	Erect donated signs	\$500	Erect stage one interpretation signs	\$2,000	Stage two	\$2,000				
Pathways and roads (improving walking access and opening up sites for further development)	Surface path between Club and MAZ suitable for all users	\$11,000	Extend all-weather accessible path to Museum Engineering investigation and design – service lanes	\$10,000 \$20,000	Create service lane from opposite Seabreeze to Thelma over two years	\$80,000	Year two	\$80,000	Develop walking path between MAZ and Museum lane into a drivable service lane	\$90,000
Entrances	Form entrances from Molesworth Drive - MAZ	\$20,000	Entrance to Museum car park	\$20,000						
Sort out boundaries and leases	Subdivide off Bowling Club land from the park Take car parks out of Museum and MAZ leases	\$15,000	Complete licenses to occupy for Fire Service and Artists Inc Subdivide off golf club practice range	Nil \$10,000						
Ongoing maintenance	Weed management, track management, toilet and car park maintenance	\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000
From reserves contributions		\$172,000		\$200,000		\$102,000		\$110,000		\$100,000
From MELA		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000		\$30,000

Note: Volunteer labour is to be used where available and safe