



Kāpiti Coast

Gateway Feasibility Report

MARCH 2020



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1. Introduction

With close to 40 kilometres of sandy beaches, a warm climate, an abundance of native wildlife, friendly people and only a 45-minute drive from Wellington city, Kāpiti offers visitors a great opportunity to engage with the natural environment.

Ngāti Toarangatira (Ngāti Toa), Ngāti Raukawa and Te Ātiawa have strong cultural histories that, along with early European settlement in the area, helped to shape the coastal settlements that reside along that 40 kilometre stretch of sandy beaches.

Given the nature of the Kāpiti Coast and the stunning natural environments that exist within it, there is a lot to do in this district. The district extends to the summit of the Tararua Ranges, and like many regions of New Zealand, boasts plenty of opportunities for visitors to enjoy the outdoors without leaving the mainland.

Just five kilometres off the Kāpiti coastline lies majestic Kāpiti Island, one of the country's most valuable nature reserves, and host to one of the largest accessible island bird sanctuaries in New Zealand. Visitors can engage with the island and its feathered inhabitants on organised day trips from the mainland, and even have the option of enjoying an overnight stay at the northern end of the island, where you can immerse yourself in an evening of storytelling and manaakitanga, Māori hospitality.

1.1 Purpose of this report

The Kāpiti Coast District Council (KCDC) looks to determine the viability of a 'gateway' centre to the Kāpiti Coast. This project is being progressed as agreed through the Kāpiti Coast Toitū Kāpiti 2018-2038 Long Term Plan, and plans to:

- consider the role and function of a visitor facility for Kāpiti as a component of the broader destination experience, and revisit work done previously by TRC Tourism Ltd (TRC) on the concept of a 'gateway' facility as a destination for locals and visitors
- assess the financial sustainability and community acceptance of the development of a visitor facility.

This feasibility report aims to ensure that the 'gateway' development fits with the overall positioning of the district and its local context. The report considers the concept planning for a facility but is not a master plan for the area nor a design of the facility.

1.2 Methodology

The Kāpiti Coast Gateway Feasibility Study has been developed through market research, expert advice, KCDC and inclusive consultation with community stakeholders in the district. The steps in developing the recommendations within this report have been:

1. A comprehensive review of existing documentation and research relating to the development of a 'gateway' for Kāpiti
2. A site visit of the proposed areas within Maclean Park boundary that are open to the scope of this project
3. Inclusive consultation with community stakeholders in the district
4. An analysis of all information gathered during consultation and research to ascertain if a 'gateway' facility for the Kāpiti Coast is feasible and sustainable in the long term.

The resulting recommendation presented within the Kāpiti Coast Gateway Feasibility Report is considered the optimal solution that offers the greatest benefits for the district.

A second round of consultation was then conducted to test the recommendations made, and ascertain the level of community acceptance and comfort. A list of those who attended can be found in Appendix C.

1.3 Report structure

- Chapter 2: Looks at the current situation with the Kāpiti Coast, and includes a brief history of Maclean Park, background to the Kāpiti Gateway Project, and a look into the tourism sector
- Chapter 3: Contains information gathered from consultation with community stakeholders
- Chapter 4: Looks at what the site and function requirements would be for a visitor facility
- Chapter 5: Outlines the broader range of potential sites identified in public consultation during the drafting of the Maclean Park Management Plan
- Chapter 6: Offers the recommendations made at the completion of the Kāpiti Coast Gateway Feasibility Report
- Chapter 7: Discusses the benefits of the facility for the wider Kāpiti community
- Chapter 8: Provides a few international case studies
- Chapter 9: Outlines suggested recommended next steps
- Appendices

2. Current situation

2.1 Maclean Park – a brief history

Maclean Park is known to tāngata whenua as Te Uruhi, and is of strong cultural significance for both Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Toa. The wider area of Maclean Park was originally occupied by the settlement known as Te Uruhi Pā, initially settled by Ngāti Toa chief Te Rangihaeata and his people, before they moved on to Kāpiti Island. It was then allocated to the Ngāti Puketapu hapū of Te Ātiawa. The pā site was a well-established and important landing and departure point for waka travelling between the northern tribes, Kāpiti and surrounding islands, and even down to the top of the south island.

In the 1850s, as with much of the area, the Native Land Court saw that Te Uruhi was divided into various land blocks. The land was then farmed by the Maclean family who owned a significant portion of the land within the Paraparaumu Beach area. The park was named after the Maclean family in the 1920s, and subsequent development of the park occurred as the area saw the construction of the Marine Parade during this time.

Part of the land area now constituting Maclean Park was made a public reserve and vested in 1921 as a result of subdivision. The first Maclean Park Management Plan was written and finalised by KCDC in 1993, and in the 2016/2017 Annual Plan, KCDC allocated funding for an updated and robust Development Plan to be produced.

2.2 Maclean Park Management Plan

The Maclean Park Management Plan was adopted by the Kāpiti Coast Council in December of 2017. The Plan presents a framework for the long term future use, management and development of Maclean Park. The park is a significant district asset with strong historical and cultural links. It receives a high level of use particularly during the summer months. Development of the Maclean Park Management Plan was led by KCDC through its partnership with iwi and consulting with the Kāpiti Community.

The Development Plan for Maclean Park identifies six key principles to help inform all future development of the park. Destination – *He Tauranga*, Play – *Takaro*, Relax – *Whakatā*, Water – *Te Mauri o te Wai*, Movement – *Pae te haere*, and Ecology – *Te Ao Tūroa*.

Any recommendations made in this report will need to fit within the six principles for future development.

2.3 Background to the Kāpiti Gateway Concept

The idea of a visitor centre for Kāpiti Island was the basis of a draft feasibility report prepared by TRC¹ in 1992. The idea behind this was to leverage the attraction of Kāpiti Island as a tourist attraction that would drive further economic benefit to the broader community. The report process investigated multiple areas where a visitor centre might be located and how it might work and, after considering all site options, the recommendation was to utilise the Kāpiti Boating Club (the Boating Club) site with an estimated development cost of \$1.5 million.

In 2013, the TRC team was commissioned by KDCDC and the Department of Conservation (DoC) to once again investigate the viability of a visitor centre for Kāpiti Island. The purpose of this report was to look at opportunities to enhance the visitor experience to those accessing Kāpiti Island, drive growth in visitor numbers to the island whilst ensuring the ongoing protection of the environment, and to increase the profile of the island nationally to stimulate domestic tourism growth.

Multiple site locations were explored at the time, and four options were presented for achieving those objectives.

Option 1. A full blown Gateway Centre on the Boating Club site

Option 2. A full blown Gateway Centre without changes to the roundabout

Option 3. “Departure lounge” facilities in a refurbished Club Building

Option 4. Biosecurity briefing and searches accommodated within the Boating Club building.

Although the preferred option for the team that completed the research was Option 1, without a substantial financial source the recommendation to the Kāpiti Gateway Committee was to implement Option 4 whilst continuing to explore the feasibility, design, issues and funding prospects around the other three options, and stay open to other propositions on other sites that might arise.

2.4 Kāpiti tourism snapshot

In 2018, the tourism and hospitality sector in the Kāpiti Coast employed just over 1,100² people and generated \$172 million in tourism spend³. This was an increase of 1.2% in 2017. There was a decline of 1.45% in domestic spend for that same period, which would suggest that this growth came from international markets.

The domestic tourism market accounts for 78%⁴ of total spend, with the top three markets coming from Wellington, Manawatu-Wanganui and Auckland. The top three international markets for the district are Australia, the United Kingdom and America.

¹ TRC 1992 was Tourism Resource Consultants; TRC Tourism rebranded in 2011

² Source: Infometrics ecoprofile for Kāpiti Coast

³ Source: MBIE Regional Tourism Estimates

⁴ Source: MBIE Regional Tourism Estimates

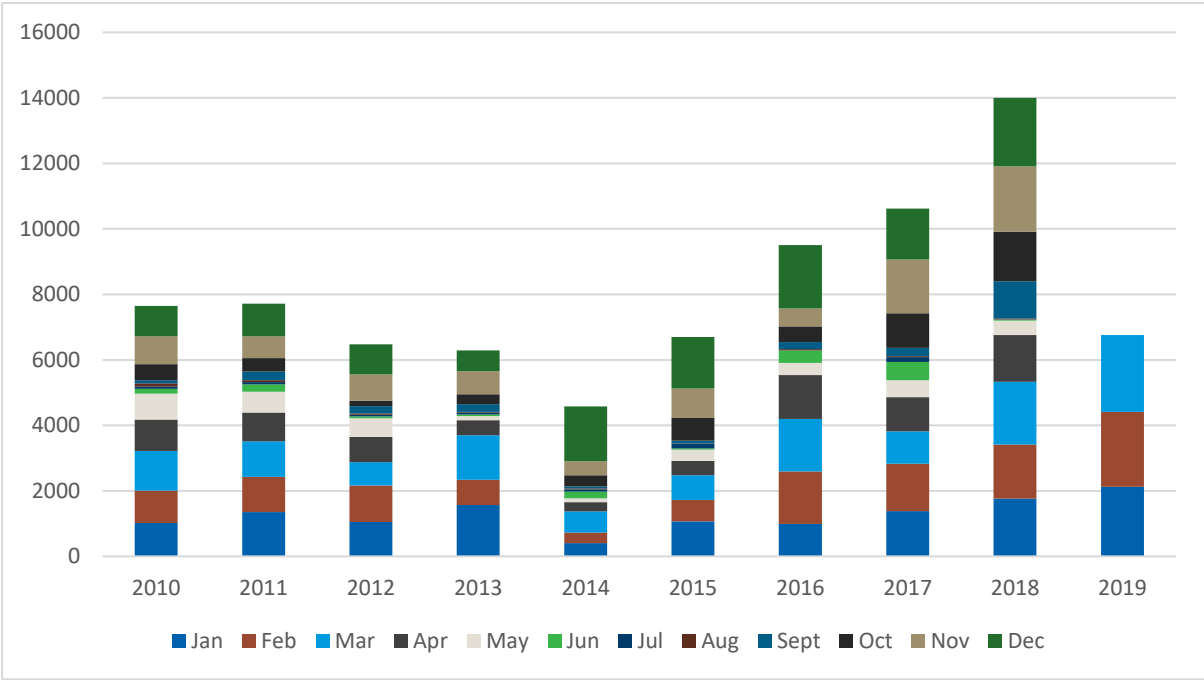
Total guest nights in commercial accommodation on the Kāpiti Coast grew 12% from 2017 to YE 2018 with visitors staying for a total of 199,633 nights⁵. The district has an average yearly occupancy rate across its commercial accommodation providers of 29%.

The Kāpiti i-SITE was closed in 2019. It was located in the Coastland’s Mall and offered visitor information and made bookings for operators and services in the district. It was closed when monitoring made it clear that the cost of operating the site far outweighed the number of people using the services on offer. The location was not appropriate for the target market most likely to use the services of an i-SITE, but still the opportunity to provide visitor information is important.

2.5 Visitors to Kāpiti Island

Kāpiti Island is an important conservation asset for New Zealand and the Kāpiti district. Visitor numbers to Kāpiti Island have been increasing year on year since 2014, with a record 31.8% growth in 2018⁶. Visitor numbers reached just over 14,000 and were ferried to the island with one of two commercial operators who currently hold concessions to access Kāpiti Island.

Figure 3. ANNUAL VISITOR ARRIVALS FOR KĀPITI ISLAND – monthly indicators 2014-2018



The commercial operators have indicated that on average 80% of their guests are domestic/local New Zealanders, with their international business making the balance.

⁵ Source: Commercial Accommodation Monitor
⁶ Source: Department of Conservation Concessions Information

3. Stakeholder and community perspectives

The concept of a facility located on the northern end of Maclean Park in Paraparaumu has been touted within the community for over 27 years. TRC Tourism’s current approach involved inclusive consultation with stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of what community partners and stakeholders would like to see for the site.

TRC Tourism consultants met with a number of community stakeholders identified by KCDC over the course of three days. These sessions were designed to gain insight into the current and future aspirations of each group for a ‘gateway’ facility. These aspirations, along with the research and site investigation of the report team will help inform the recommendations made within this report.

An additional round of consultation was completed, a list of attendees can be found in Appendix C, to test these recommendations and capture their feedback on those recommendations into this report.

3.1 Department of Conservation (DoC)

DoC consider this project as an opportunity to partner with KCDC to deliver certain aspects of the experience for visitors accessing Kāpiti Island. Biosecurity checks for anyone accessing Kāpiti Island are crucial. A ‘gateway’ located close to the beach that could house space to assist with biosecurity compliance is imperative for accessing the island.

Although the biosecurity measures are the top priority for DoC, they recognise that this process can add value to the visitor experience as people become excited and engaged with where they are going to be visiting.

This project provides an opportunity to empower iwi to lead and deliver the experience. DoC is open to innovative product development as long as it is done in a considered way. They would be willing to facilitate iwi into a commercial venture, even on the island as they have access to 1.5ha of Māori land, and assist with experience delivery and biosecurity compliance procedure development. This would be in addition to the privately-owned overnight option available with Kāpiti Island Nature Tours at the northern end of the island.

Island concessions are limited to 160 a day with 100 to Rangatira and 60 to the northern end. Included in that are the 24 passengers allocated to the overnight experience. This equates to just over 58,000 potential visitors a year to the island. The 160 per day maximum might be reached 40 days over the season.

3.2 Concessionaires to Kāpiti Island

At present there are two commercial operations with concessions to take visitors to Kāpiti Island, and they transport 15,000 visitors per year. This number is growing, and is split 80% domestic to 20% international. Both operators have indicated that the majority of their visitors are pre-booked.

Kāpiti Island Nature Tours is operated by the Barrett family at the northern end of the island, and offers ferry trips during the day, guided tours at the northern end, and overnight stays on their family land. They currently meet their guests at a café located across the road from the beach. Here visitors will sign in, receive a health and safety briefing before completing their biosecurity compliance required to access the island. They then make their way across the street, and if they are on the first sailing of the day, they board the boat where it is parked in the Kāpiti Boat Club car park, or where it is located on the beach for subsequent sailings.

Kāpiti Eco Tours is a newly acquired business for the Cooper family who have been running for one season. They offer ferry trips to the Island during the day. Of all the guests they have transported last season, less than 10 have headed to the northern end. They meet their guests in the Kāpiti Boat Club car park, where they complete their biosecurity checks. If they are on the first sailing, they board the boat in the car park, and subsequent sailings board on the beach itself. After the first sailing, guests meet at a table that is set up in the car park usually occupied by the Kāpiti Eco Tours boat before heading to the beach to board their boat. Kāpiti Eco Tours has recently been given approval by DoC to start a sea kayaking business from Kāpiti Island from January 2020.

Both operators complete their biosecurity compliance on the mainland. Their procedures are rudimentary but meet the current requirements outlined within their DoC concessions.

3.3 Kāpiti Coast District Council

A discussion regarding a 'gateway' has been taking place within KCDC and the broader Kāpiti community for 27 years, dating back to an original feasibility study completed in 1992, and an additional report completed in 2013. Feedback from the 2013 report was that the recommendations were for a larger building than the footprint could sustain, and the projected budget for the recommended building was too high.

The scope for this project has shifted because the footprint available has increased in size to include the south side of Tikotu stream, and the roundabout located at the entrance to the Kāpiti Boat Club car park. This increase in scope was identified during the consultation process during the development of the Maclean Park Management Plan. Allowing space for a 'gateway' on the south side of Tikotu stream was a key submission topic captured during this process.

This project has been identified as a priority by council officers and Senior Leaders, who would like to see it achieve a Provincial Growth Fund (PGF) application, but understand that it might not be successful with PGF, and other funding avenues may need to be explored. There is support within KCDC for a feasible and sustainable structure.

3.4 WellingtonNZ

Kāpiti falls under the WellingtonNZ destination marketing umbrella for domestic and international visitors. They believe that the island provides a unique opportunity for visitors, but that currently it is not maximised for commercial operators nor leveraged effectively by the wider community.

They view this project as an opportunity for the Kāpiti Coast to have a facility that would assist current and future operators increasing visitation to the island and improving the quality of the visitor experience.

WellingtonNZ also see the Kāpiti Island Nature Tours as the iconic experience for Kāpiti that is internationally marketed as part of the wider Wellington region visitor experience. It is the catalyst for introducing the Kāpiti district to international visitors. It is therefore important to ensure operators are delivering a quality visitor experience with capacity to grow in order to meet current and future visitor expectations.

3.5 Ngāti Toarangatira (Ngāti Toa)

As identified in section 2.1, Maclean Park is of strong cultural significance for Ngāti Toa. The south side of the stream was part of a treaty settlement claim for Ngāti Toa, and as an alternate, an area in the car park was proposed, but these lands were not included in the final settlement of historical claims. There was a pā site on the south side of Tikotu stream and there is a strong connection for the iwi to the island. The iwi were once a commercial operator in Kāpiti, with a boat that took visitors over to the island. When this option became difficult for them to maintain due to changes made in accessing the island, they sold that boat to Kāpiti Island Nature Tours. They support what Te Ātiawa are doing, and plan to be more visible in the Kāpiti community in the future. This includes accessing the island for their own people, and potentially offering a commercial activity.

The iwi are open to being involved with any development in these areas to ensure their stories and histories are told correctly. There is a balancing act when it comes to what they could share and what they do. The issue they have moving forward is internal capacity and capability to assign resources to work with other stakeholders on a 'gateway' project.

3.6 Te Ātiawa

Te Ātiawa believes that the 'gateway' should be a hive of positive activity with a combination of commercial activities, biosecurity aspects, and visitor information services that would be beneficial to all aspects of the local community. They would like to see a strong experiential element sit alongside it. If the facility is developed the right way, in partnership with Ngāti Toa, KCDC, DoC and themselves, then there are long term opportunities that could help drive economic benefit for the iwi as a whole.

The iwi are currently identifying projects and opportunities that could create commercial enterprise opportunities for them with appropriate resources. They have also signalled that they would like to be involved in discussions around the look of the facility, stories and interpretation that would be given, and the naming of the space itself.

3.7 Kāpiti Boat Club building lessees

There are currently three community groups that occupy the Boat Club building located at the northern end of the reserve. Their current building is one of the options presented as a potential site for a 'gateway' to Kāpiti. Both the Boat Club and the Underwater Club own their respective buildings, but not the land on which they sit.

3.7.1 Kāpiti Boating Club

The Kāpiti Boating Club has been in their current building for fifty years and are happy with the status quo. They do see potential economic benefit if some of the commercial operations suggested for the 'gateway' were offered from the clubhouse. There were mixed views within the Boat Club with the Commodore supportive and other members at the consultation session voicing some concerns. These concerns included considerable change of access and operation of the clubhouse, including loss of the 24/7 access the 500 members of the Boating Club currently enjoy.

Membership has grown slightly over the past few years, but remains stable with approximately 500 members. The club is in the process of developing a business plan with a long term fifty-year strategic view. They see opportunities to grow community and recreational boating activities, using their Boat Club as the base of operations to run national competitions.

The club is in a stable position, and in a year or two believe that they will be in a position to retain grants in order to maintain the building. There is great potential within their strategic plan, and they are looking forward to implementing some of the activities outlined within it. Although having some of the commercial aspects of the 'gateway' in house in order for them to benefit economically from them, they are comfortable with what they have. They believe that nothing that could be built would better suit their needs than what they already have.

3.7.2 Kāpiti Underwater Club

The Kāpiti Underwater Club began in 1967. After a fire that destroyed their clubrooms in 2015, there was a concerted community fundraising effort to raise the money to rebuild. The community raised \$100,000 to put toward the building, and physically supported the rebuild effort with free labour. As such, there is a strong sense of community ownership in the building.

The club does not accept the option to pull down and build a better facility that will house the 'gateway' as well as providing for the Underwater Club, Boat Club and Coastguard. They share the view that there is no 'better' than what they have now. They also raised concerns with regards to any change that might affect the dune structures in front of the buildings.

The club is supportive of the concept of a 'gateway', but believe it will be challenging putting it on the land currently occupied by their club and the Boat Club building. They believe that the commercial boats and biosecurity for Kāpiti Island should be located on the southern side of Tikotu stream.

3.7.3 Kāpiti Coastguard

From an incident response perspective, the activation of the Coastguard and emergency services take precedence in the Boat Club and car park. If something were to happen that required a calculated and planned emergency response then the Coastguard and emergency services will take over the entire building for the time it takes for that incident to be cleared. This includes the car park.

A large issue for all three tenants revolves around the car park. The large commercial boats were never supposed to stay in the car park overnight, but now seem to have their own designated space. The Boat Club lessees are concerned there is a real danger of a serious incident occurring in the car park because of potential conflicts in the movement of vehicles, pedestrians and commercial tours.

3.8 Kāpiti Economic Development Agency (KEDA)

KEDA believe that there is an opportunity with the 'gateway' to position Kāpiti as a destination and tell the Kāpiti story. People come to Kāpiti to access the island, but they need to know what else there is to do here.

The group raised concerns around the Boat Club car park also, and suggested opening up the northern end of the beach would enable the tour operators to park there and operate completely separate to the normal traffic ins and outs of the car park itself. The group were quite concerned around the movement of vehicles and pedestrians in the car park, and believe that capacity issues experienced in that area limit growth of any potential future commercial activities.

Water-based tourism operations are being considered within the district, including water-based community events such as waka ama competitions. Access to the beach, information and commercial operators broader than those operating to Kāpiti Island need to be considered. The facility should be something that fits in with the area.

A link with the retail area of Paraparaumu would be preferred as a focal point for all attractions and activities on the coast, grounded in strong economic and tourism strategies.

3.9 Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce

The role of a 'gateway' needs to provide benefit to the broader community. The facility should be a hub for information on everything there is to see and do along the Kāpiti Coast. The Chamber would like to see more community involvement from businesses, iwi and DoC, and believes there should be someone to champion the build of the facility itself from start to finish.

It was suggested that having a commercial operation based in the facility would be of benefit, but unsure who that might be. If the facility could house it, and if there was community appetite for it, whatever group was responsible for managing the facility could potentially foster other community programs from and within it. These might be educational programmes, business development programmes or simply provide a meeting space for community groups to gather in as the district is lacking in good quality meeting spaces.

3.10 Paraparaumu Beach Business Association

The Association is adamant that the Boat Club is not an option for this project. There is a spirit to the club itself and everything that goes on in that space has a community heart. Their view is that a 'gateway' facility needs to be something separate so that this spirit is not lost.

There are some in the community who would be prepared to put money, resource, time and effort into building this facility for the use as a 'gateway' if KCDC assisted with the consent process. There is also an appetite within the community to save the stream and walkway that leads to the business area.

Parking is an issue in this area. The association suggests putting in a park and ride facility may be at the airport to free up the space in and around the waterfront. This might ease the issues around parking requirements for development which is stifling growth and also provide an opportunity for private enterprise to offer a shuttle bus service.

The association strongly supports a lightweight, small structure sitting above the tussocks that is sympathetic to the natural landscape and will handle the changing coastline and eventual sea level change. They see the role of this facility as providing visitor information on what there is to do within the district, a discovery centre that talks about the coast as a whole and not just the island, biosecurity for existing and future commercial operators to the island, and tell the story that exists here. The association would also like to see strong interpretive signage throughout Maclean Park and the area to create a visitor hub feel to the space.

3.11 Guardians of the Kāpiti Marine Reserve

The Guardians strategy is to place the Marine Reserve and the island on a pedestal and enable people to engage respectfully with it. They are in support of a 'gateway' but would want to see clearly identified values for that space, and would like to see what interpretation the space could provide around the marine stories as well as those from the land. They believe a facility would be beneficial for the community as it would inform visitors of what there is to do in Kāpiti, and provide a designated place for biosecurity.

The group would like the space to connect with the recreational use of the marine reserve as well as access to the beach itself. This includes designated areas for all beach users to make it cleaner and safer to engage with. The biosecurity checks for the commercial operators need to happen close to the beach, but the 'gateway' could be located elsewhere. Suggestions were made with regards to an empty shop located on the main street, and also the Raumati Pools. The Boat Club car parks was once again raised as an issue, and believe that by removing the commercial boats, and potentially offering a designated car park for tours off site with a shuttle service to the 'gateway' this would help reduce congestion.

When presented with the options floated within the scope of this report, the group believed that the south side of the stream was the best option. It didn't have to be large, but something small that fits within the natural environment around it would work.

3.12 Senior Lecturer, Victoria University School of Architecture

In 2017 a group of post-graduate students from Victoria University undertook a project around the idea of a 'gateway' to Kāpiti Island. This was an opportunity to expand public concepts and explore what this space might look like and how it would interact with the landscape and natural environment.

The watchtower concept that was recommended and offered to the Kāpiti community for consultation was a combination of two students work. A Quantity Surveyor priced it at \$2 million for production.

The Watchtower expanded on one of the projects that looked at providing the 'gateway' space as a grid, one that could move with the fluid environments that exist around the south side of Tikotu stream and into Maclean Park. The aim of the building is to encourage visitors to observe the changing landscapes around the space, and this was facilitated with the 18m Watchtower that was added to the final concept. It would provide a powerful lens for observing the natural environments, and elements were included to encourage the use of social media and the images taken from the Watchtower to highlight this changing environment to others.

The university is willing to maintain its involvement in the project.

4. Requirements for a visitor facility

At the conclusion of the stakeholder and community engagement, and as a result of the research undertaken by TRC Tourism, a list of requirements has been identified for a community and visitor facility.

These requirements were consistently raised by those engaged, and this section will identify them across three categories: requirements specific to the physical site of the facility, requirements of the facility itself, and the biosecurity role this facility can play.

4.1 Site requirements

The site for the facility should not impact the needs and access required for a regional Coastguard response if and when required from the Kāpiti Boat Club area. This service is essential for the coast, and any limitations could mean a delay in activating a response as quickly as possible.

A site that did not limit or constrain the growth plans for the boat club, and recognises the investment and ownership of the Boat Club and Underwater Club facilities.

The location of the visitor facility should be close to the beach, with access from the building to an organised and clearly defined area for the commercial operators to load their guests.

A site location that would allow for better parking for people accessing the beach, utilising the facility and moving boats down onto the beach. The area can be quite congested and during the summer months, parking is at capacity, any additional parking within this area would be beneficial.

A location that allows for separation between the commercial boats, and leisure boats, and allows for improved pedestrian safety through the area. Retaining leisure boat access and parking on the beach.

The preferred site should allow for seamless connection with the broader Paraparaumu businesses located along Marine Parade.

4.2 Facility requirements

A visitor facility for the Kāpiti Coast needs to provide a place for visitors to learn more about what there is to do in the district. It would need to be more than just a way to access Kāpiti Island, and it would tell a broader and more rounded story about the history and cultural connections of the district.

Current numbers accessing Kāpiti Island are sitting at around 15,000 visitors annually. The current availability of 160 concessions available per day takes annual capacity to almost 58,000 visitors a year. Therefore, biosecurity compliance activities housed within the space would need to be able to process 160 people in 90 minutes to coincide with the current peak commercial operator departures to the island.

To operate as a facility that benefits the broader regions around Kāpiti and the commercial activities on land and at sea, having a booking space or kiosk with visitor information built within the space would be beneficial.

All believe that the facility needs to be more than for just those accessing the island. It needs to tell the broader story of the Kāpiti Coast itself, positioning Kāpiti as a visitor destination in its own right. It should be unique and tell the story of the area, with iwi providing the interpretation and storytelling from a Māori perspective.

The commercial operators could use the facility as a booking office, meeting point, biosecurity compliance area and information point. It would be a place where they could convert awareness through face to face conversations with those passing through the district and expressing a desire to visit into customers. The booking area of the facility could be used by current operators, but should also be available to new operators coming into the area.

DoC could use the area to build awareness of the conservancy work they are doing, and educating people to travel sustainably. The space lends itself naturally to offering education on the Marine Reserve as well as other ecological areas in the district. KCDC and other local entities could utilise the space to advertise local events and opportunities that arise within the community. Iwi have expressed interest in being able to have artists in residence in the space, or potentially in the park itself at designated locations and times, and to connect visitors with Whakarongotai Marae.

If it was determined practicable, personnel in the space would assist in converting non-island travel days to economic benefit for the district by redirecting customers to other paid and non-paid activities in the area. This would effectively redeploy some of the economic benefit that would have been lost back into the community.

Having an interpretative space within the building or close to its location that told the district's story was seen as an imperative for the facility. Most believe that this should be led by iwi, but that there are other historical elements that need to feature in this space.

The facility should align with the broader scope of the Maclean Park Management Plan and would have to meet all local requirements around resource consent process.

In terms of its character, the facility should be designed sympathetically to the natural environment, while also being a focal point for the beach and the island. There is a desire from the broader community that the building also fit with the vibe and feel of the Paraparaumu township itself.

4.3 Biosecurity requirements

Biosecurity was raised as a functional role for this facility by almost all of those spoken to. It is important as a way to protect the island as the taonga it is, and for the process to be robust but practical. It should include a biosecurity area for all those accessing the island that provides assurance that Kāpiti Island is awarded the highest level of protection.

Whenever visiting a pest-free island, DoC encourage people to check their own gear for pests such as rodents and insects, clean their footwear and gear removing all soil and seeds, and to ensure that all gear is zipped up. Argentinian ants, plaque skinks, and weed of exotic seeds are the biggest threats to the pest-free status of Kāpiti Island. As the only way to access the island is through one of two commercial operators, biosecurity aspects are undertaken by the operators before they leave the mainland for the island.

For day visitors to the island, biosecurity checks cover packs/bags, footwear, clothing they are wearing, general gear they are carrying, and food they are taking with them.

If a visitor is staying over-night, then the check includes camping gear if required, bedding, and any kayaks or other personal equipment they take with them. There is a process outlined on the DoC website to ensure each of these are addressed correctly.

There is an expectation from visitors that the biosecurity aspects for visiting a predator free island are paramount to the experience, and delivered effectively and professionally as part of the experience. The perception is that the process must be robust.

See **APPENDIX B** for more information on best practice biosecurity steps DoC require to be undertaken when visiting pest-free islands.

DoC has 19 visitor information centres throughout New Zealand. Although they have an existing MOU with i-SITE New Zealand, there is still the opportunity to partner with other entities. In Takaka they partner with the Golden Bay Progressive Association. Some sites in areas where it is deemed necessary, will have wash stations to stop the spread of Kauri Dieback, but there are no direct examples of a facility like what we are proposing.

Other DoC estate areas have more stringent biosecurity measures in place. Little Barrier Island is New Zealand's first nature reserve, established in 1896 and is home to a multitude of critically endangered species. It is often described as our most intact eco-system, and is the gold standard in predator free New Zealand.



Figure 4. BIOSECURITY FACILITY FOR ACCESS TO LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND

Like Kāpiti, in order to access this island, you must travel with an authorised vessel and you need a permit. However, it is only open on the weekends, access to areas on the island are strictly managed and limited to one area, and up five tracks. In order to protect this island, visitor numbers are limited to 20 a day.

The biosecurity conditions are a lot stricter, and in addition to the areas involved in the accessing Kāpiti Island, visitors to Little Barrier Island must wash all clothes in sterilene and dry them indoors. All gear is rechecked and resealed in the quarantine area in Warkworth immediately prior to departure, and they are completely unpacked again to double check all items immediately upon arrival at the island. Because of the risk of reinvasion of pests, visitors cannot take their own day packs to Little Barrier Island. Gear will be packed into fish bins during the biosecurity check process, which will then be sealed and not opened again until visitors are in the quarantine store on the island.

This facility is not co-located with any other entity, or offers any visitor services or interpretation.

4.4 Alignment with the Maclean Park Management Plan

A 'gateway' to the Kāpiti Coast located at the northern end of Maclean Park needs to fit with the development plan that already exists for the park. The design of this visitor and community facility could be fully integrated with the adjacent park so that the interpretive displays and stories blend from outdoor areas, to partially covered and through to internal areas so the facility is part of the park itself. It would give park users a place to go to find out more information about the place and the surrounding area.

The facility would fall under the Destination Key Principle identified in the Development Plan. It would be a welcoming space that would help visitors navigate the park and provide an interesting and unique experience. With the interpretive space, and the willingness of both Ngāti Toa and Te Ātiawa to assist in providing the stories told, the facility becomes a physical expression of the culture and history of Maclean Park and Te Uruhi.

5. Options analysis

All groups who were spoken to throughout this process were supportive of a visitor and community facility. Some were still unsure how it would look, or the potential the facility would have for the district, but believed that the concept of a visitor and community facility was beneficial.

When it came to the location of the facility, the discussions were in support of a location near the beach and a new small build. Although the physical location of the Kāpiti Boat Club was considered the best geographical location, most believed that the Kāpiti Boat Club building was best left as is, and utilised by the community as it is today. This sentiment was shared by the Kāpiti Boat Club, the Underwater Club and the Coastguard.

Public consultation conducted during the drafting of the Maclean Park Management Plan identified a broader range of potential sites for a visitor and community facility at Paraparaumu Beach.

These include:

1. The current Kāpiti Boat Club Building and car park area
2. The roundabout located at the junction of Marine Parade, Kāpiti Road and Manly Street
3. The space located on the south side of Tikotu stream.

Consultation during the preparation of this feasibility assessment revealed there is no community or stakeholder appetite for a large building that would come at a high cost, but there is most definitely a desire to see something small, functional and sympathetic to the local setting.

5.1 Locations for the 'gateway' analysis

5.1.1 Boat Club and car park site

The Kāpiti Boat Club building and car park was dismissed as the preferred location due a variety of reasons, not least of which are the emergency response functions of the Coastguard that take precedence and this would disrupt operation of a centre.

It is the desire of the three entities currently occupying the buildings to remain there. There is interest from some within those groups to house some of the commercial activities that might be located within a 'gateway' however this is not unanimous and would require a consensus within those groups. All three entities would prefer the status quo to anything else that could be built.

Building a standalone 'gateway' facility in the car park itself would exacerbate the access and parking issues that have been identified as well as reduce the available parking and circulation area.

Building on a separate site reduces conflicts between recreational boat users, commercial operators and allows the proposed development to proceed without the need for detailed negotiations and lease amendments.

The alternative of creating a separate beach access road north of the Boat Club using the existing paper road would impact dune stabilisation works and may not be as stable as the existing access route. The reason that the current access works is because it is wide and flat along the northern stream edge.

The council outlined other reasons for not pursuing an access via the paper road including:

- Concerns that a vehicle access to the north of the building would be difficult to maintain due to driftwood and debris depositing along the high tide line blocking access.
- The potential for king tides to erode the toe of the dune slope and creating a 'step' at the toe of the dunes - this is an ongoing issue further north at Manly Street.
- Optimal orientation for a beach access being to the south or south west (perpendicular to the prevailing on shore winds).
- Loss of ecological value and coastal protection function of the dunes.
- Modification of the dunes not supported at Senior leadership level.

5.1.2 The roundabout

The roundabout site has good visibility for visitors approaching Paraparaumu Beach, however the building footprint would extend over a larger area than just the roundabout itself and impact on access and parking in the Boat Club precinct north of Tikotu stream.

The roundabout is located quite a distance from the beach and this has the potential to compromise biosecurity if requirements were tightened, as it increases the risk of visitors coming into contact with something that compromises the process while they walk to the commercial vessels.

There were also concerns raised through consultations that by placing the 'gateway' right at the start of Marine Parade, it might reduce foot traffic through the main commercial district. It would make it more difficult to create a seamless connection between the two.

There would be a larger separation from the facility and Maclean Park, and this would not create the hub of positive activity that many of those spoken to have indicated they would like to see as a result of this facility being built.

For these reasons, the roundabout area is not the recommended site for the 'gateway.'

5.1.3 The south side of Tikotu stream

This option was the most preferred option for the community groups consulted, and agreed within the additional round of consultation, and is the recommended site for this facility. There is strong support for this location because it is close to the departure point of the commercial boats accessing Kāpiti Island, and has the potential to be well integrated into the design of Maclean Park. There is room to build a small facility that meets many of the aspirations outlined through consultation.

While this site would displace some car parking, this could be offset by increased parking in the northern car park extension onto the roundabout area.

Estimates of the building requirements recommended in section 6 of this report are minimal, reflecting the expressed desire of the community to minimise the impact of a building in this location. This also responds to the constraints of the site and the desire to integrate the facility with the park as a whole.

6. Recommendations

It was clear from discussions with community groups and our understanding of the district that a visitor and community facility that services the district as a whole is the preferred option.

The idea of a facility exclusive to servicing visitors to Kāpiti Island (the 'Gateway' concept) caused angst and negativity in community and stakeholder discussions. People preferred the idea of a 'touchpoint', or 'pathway' for the Coast.

The existing Maclean Park and Boat Club precinct is a focal point for both residents and visitors to the area. The precinct is well serviced by retail facilities, however is challenged by congestion and a lack of parking in the peak season. Despite this, it is the ideal location for a visitor and community facility. The recommendations made within this section of the report are designed to not only address some of the lost opportunities and challenges faced today, but to provide a positive platform for growth into the future.

6.1 Kāpiti Boat Club car park

The issue of large commercial boats, leisure boats and pedestrian movements in this area should be addressed as soon as possible irrespective of whether the 'gateway' project proceeds.

6.2 Access and parking

Locating a new visitor and community facility in the precinct may exacerbate the existing congestion. Solutions will need to be found for long stay visitors such as those who are staying overnight on Kāpiti Island and existing carpark areas will need to be enlarged and rationalised. The practice of parking vehicles with trailers on the beach will need to continue unless an alternate convenient location can be found. We understand there is a beach bylaw review planned for this area toward the end of 2019. This review will need to consider the recommendations of this report.

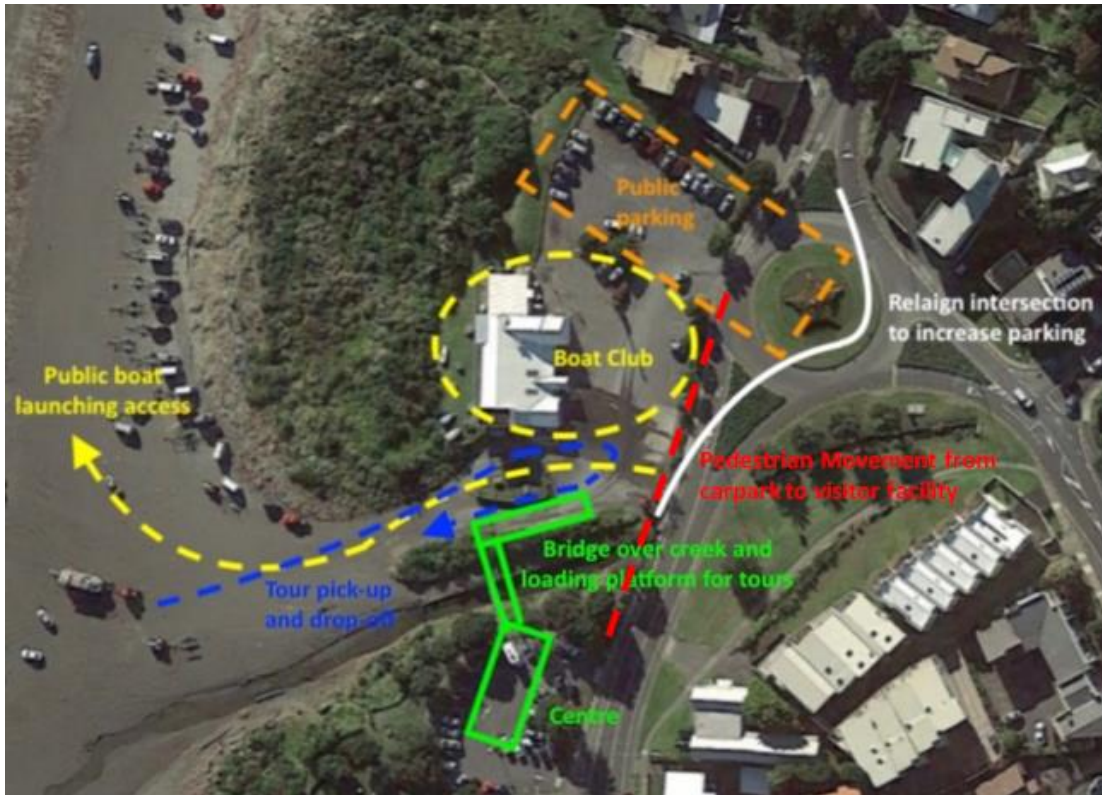
The existing undefined bitumen carpark adjacent to the Boat Club and north of Tikotu stream is problematic. There are numerous vehicle and pedestrian movements in this area including the large commercial vessels, vehicles accessing the beach to launch boats, Boat Club and associated access, and public parking for beachgoers and shoppers.

There is insufficient space to completely separate these functions, however there is potential to separate public parking from the Boat Club access, commercial vessels and vehicles accessing the beach to launch boats. This separation, combined with good pedestrian access from the public car park to Maclean Park and the retail shops along Marine Parade, should minimise conflicts. This separation is shown in Figure 6.

While potential conflicts remain between boat launching and the tour vessels this will be minimal as tour vessel movements are limited and are currently at a maximum of 6 or 8 each day across both operators. Commercial vessels can remain overnight at the loading point so they do not occupy the car park area.

This arrangement may need to be reviewed if there is a significant increase in commercial operators and vessel movements.

Figure 6. PROPOSED NEW SITE LAYOUT



Realigning the Marine Drive - Kāpiti Road intersection and removing the roundabout creates more parking space and allows for a separate access for public parking from access to the Boat Club, commercial vessel and boat launching.

This would create an area approximately 70m long by 25m wide, sufficient for about 50 cars. The creation of additional parking spaces in the roundabout area, plus the additional car parks included in the southern end of the park as part of the Maclean Park Management Plan, should make up for the parks lost in the south side of the stream car park.

The creation of an access from Manly Street separate to a new Boat Club and beach access off Marine Parade would separate casual users from those with boats and the movement of commercial vessels.

Removal of the existing concrete structure on the beach access adjacent to the Boat Club building and repair of the road surface in this area would improve usability for all users and facilitate turning of the commercial vessels. There is approximately 20m between the existing Boat Club building and the proposed dry-land jetty, with a larger turning area available in front of the building. This should be checked with the operators, however there appears to be sufficient space to manoeuvre the commercial vessels into position on the jetty without the need for reversing.

Placing a new facility on the south side of the stream means that the view of the Island is not impeded by the facility itself as you drive into Paraparaumu beach.

We would recommend that improvements be made to Tikotu stream so that the area compliments this new facility.

6.3 ‘Gateway’ Kāpiti Coast interpretive experience and community facility

The focus of the visitor and community facility should be an interpretive experience which highlights the iwi mātauranga of the place, tells cultural and historical stories, and educates visitors about the natural values of the coast and Kāpiti Island.

Including a space for community meetings, artists in residence or simply relaxing will make the facility relevant for the local community as well as visitors and this flexible space can incorporate part of the interpretive experience. This space could be the basis for future revenue generating activities for Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Toa.

Locating the facility in the northern end of Maclean Park places the building in a prominent location as part of the public park while avoiding the conflicts of the Boat Club site.

Given the desire of community members to limit the overall size of the building, and the constrained area available in Maclean Park, we envisage that part of the interpretive and community space would be outdoors. Dependent on the weather the building could be opened to allow for a seamless transition from enclosed, to covered, to outdoor spaces and interpretive experiences.

Detailed site investigation and design may demonstrate the possibility of locating the building closer to Tikotu stream and the beach with the benefit of improved views and a lower impact on the existing parking area, however it will need to avoid disturbance of existing significant trees and dune revegetation.

This area would be a minimum of 200m² plus a public toilet facility of about 50m².

6.4 Commercial tour operators

The commercial operators who hold concessions to the island do not have facilities at the point of departure, and currently have informal arrangements for meeting guests and undertaking biosecurity checks.

One current operator has indicated they would utilise a customer service area and office space to provide a full time service for customers and potential customers. They favour a location near the biosecurity facility and the tour departure point.

If both operators wished to operate from the facility then separate (but adjacent) facilities for the two operators could occupy about 50m² of floor space – this would need to open onto a public area for visitors to gather. These operators would be tenants of the centre.

6.5 Biosecurity facility

A biosecurity facility processing 160 people over 90 minutes would need to be a minimum of 100m² of interior space. This is based on the assumption that each vessel can hold a maximum of 40 guests and that biosecurity processing for 40 takes approximately 20 minutes.

Processing would take place at the northern end of the building. Once processed guests would move on to the bridge across Tikotu stream to the dryland “jetty” to load onto the vessels. There would be interpretation panels on the bridge to connect the experience. This way processed guests remain separate from the public. Some sections of this area should be covered to allow shelter from the sun and rain for guests waiting to board their tour.

This space would need to meet the current requirements of DoC however could be managed by the commercial operators.

Detailed design of the biosecurity area would be subject to discussions with the operators and DoC, however we understand the process involves checking of bags, so would require an area of bench sufficient to process up to 5 bags at a time, plus queuing and milling area for 40 people.

Kāpiti Island is an important conservation asset for New Zealand, and commercial operators providing the opportunity to visit the island is a unique selling point for the district. At the moment, there is no requirement from DoC that visitors must board the boats directly from the biosecurity area and onto the purpose built jetty. The concept and experience of this aspect would add value to the visitor experience if it were at all possible and would increase the level of assurance in the biosecurity process. This would mean the operators would need to load all guests during the day at the facility rather than on the beach which is the current process.

This might not prove feasible at this stage, but allowing for this to occur in the planning stage now, might mean we are future proofing this space for changes to the biosecurity process, whereby the ability for visitors to board boats directly from the facility becomes a requirement. If biosecurity measures to the island are not managed or maintained, then there is a very real risk of biosecurity measures becoming more stringent, much like they are on Little Barrier Island (see Section 4.4 for more detail) or potentially a reduction in the number of visitors allowed on the island per day. The role of the facility as a biosecurity space today is important to limit the potential for anything that might happen to affect access to Kāpiti Island in the future. The design we have recommended, with the option of providing a turning space for commercial boats is future proofing against potential changes.

6.6 Visitor information

There should also be information about activities and services available throughout the district. Whilst this could be provided through static displays, having a staffed service would enhance the experience and provide a management presence for the centre as a whole. This service would need to be open most days of the year. The visitor information area would be around 50m² including a small office.

Food and beverage services are not recommended or necessary at the site as there are many cafes and restaurants nearby and including these would make the building larger.

Table 1. SPACE ALLOCATED PER FUNCTION

FUNCTION	SQUARE METERAGE	LINKS TO OTHER SECTIONS
Interpretive experience space	200m ²	
Bathroom facilities	50m ²	
Operator space	50m ²	Connect with Biosecurity and interpretive space for pre-bookings to gather
Biosecurity space	100m ²	Connect with Operator space
Visitor Information	50m ²	
TOTAL SPACE	450m²	

6.7 Governance and management

There is a strong desire in the community to drive the development of a visitor and community facility. This enthusiasm has the potential to be translated into a community body that could develop and manage the facility, preferably involving iwi, for example Volunteer Kāpiti.

However, ultimately KCDC as the land manager may need to drive the project and actively oversight its management, maintenance and operation. It is recommended that a strong relationship with DoC would need to be maintained for this facility to be successful. DoC are very keen to see this facility be built in partnership with them but are unsure how that might look or be resourced at this stage.

If a staffed visitor information function was to be included, this could provide a management presence at the facility to coordinate community and tenant use.

The commercial operators would be expected to pay rent although this may initially need to be nominal to ensure operators do relocate and adjust their operation to the new facility. Their presence is essential for the successful use of the facility by visitors.

Apart from rental income there would be very little revenue associated with the building. While there may be future opportunities for artists in residence and the like, these would generate little revenue for KCDC.

Depending on the detailed design there may be opportunity for venue hire although as a community facility revenue would be nominal.

While there would be significant community and visitor benefits arising from the development, there would not be a return on the capital expenditure. Dependent on detailed design and future arrangements, revenues may simply cover operating costs.

6.8 Capital expenditure (capex) estimates

The above facilities would make a building of at least 450m². At a basic construction rate of \$2,500/m² this would have a development cost of around \$1.2 million.

To fully integrate the building with the park there would need to be a review of the Maclean Park masterplan and further landscaping and external works. The bridge and vessel boarding jetty would be part of this development. These may cost a further \$500,000.

Depending on the scale and sophistication of the interpretive experience this could cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000/m², so over the 200m² of internal space and a similar external area may cost between \$900,000 and \$1.5 million.

This gives a preliminary estimate of \$2.6 million to \$3.2 million plus site costs. Given this is a predesign estimate a contingency of 50% should be included in budget planning.

6.9 Indicative operational costs (opex) of a 450m² centre

Through the planning process, discussions would be had with the current commercial operators to Kāpiti Island. This would determine how or even if they would operate from the facility, and manage the office spaces. They would share responsibility for the management of the shared biosecurity area.

The facility needs to meet the requirements of today's industry, but also future operational requirements. The office space in the facility is 50m² and requirements in the future may have to look at this area as a co-share space, but would be managed as needs changed.

This means the balance of the centre, a 200m² display area, 50m² public toilets, and 50m² visitor information area, would need to be managed by Council.

The following table summarises the likely operational costs of managing this area as well as the asset maintenance or depreciation associated with the whole development.

Staffing is based on two staff and 365 days. Additional support would be required for special events and activities.

There is an option of providing visitor services via a "kiosk" type arrangement however there would still be a part-time staffing requirement to manage the day to day operation of the centre. This could be contracted to the commercial operator(s) in exchange for rent. Other operational costs would still be incurred.

Table 2. Operational Costs

DIRECT OPEX COSTS*	COMMENTS	RATE	AV. ANNUAL COST
Cleaning	twice weekly contract	\$250 pw	26,000
Electricity	low energy use design	\$100 pw	5,200
General Equipment Lease	Flat cost		5,000
General Expenses	Flat cost		5,000
Insurance	Flat cost		5,000
Repairs & Maintenance	no-building items	\$200 pw	10,400
Security Monitoring	Flat cost contract		5,000
Staffing Costs*	2 FTE incl overheads**	\$70,000	140,000
Total OPEX costs			201,600
Asset related costs*	Comments	Rate	Av. annual cost
Asset Maintenance	whole building and walkway	5% capex	85,000
Display Renewal	annual updates, 3 yearly refit	10% capex	250,000
Total asset related			\$335,000

*assumes staff and building management, marketing and consumables by existing KCDC resources and assumes zero land costs.

** council requirements are for a minimum of 2 staff

6.10 Opportunities for growth in the tourism sector

The domestic market is a major strength for this district due to its proximity to Wellington, but there is benefit in looking at the international markets that are visiting. With increased marketing and a strong online presence for international markets, commercial operators within the Kāpiti Coast district could capitalise on this growth. Operators would benefit from a capability building workshop to assist them in targeting these markets.

Domestically, activities such as marine fishing, swimming, canoeing/kayaking, surfing, and bodyboarding are increasing in popularity.⁷ These activities were all floated as future potential opportunities for tourism operators, current and new, as well as community activities for recreational sportspeople. These activities will see visitors to the district grow and with it the potential to draw more indirect revenue into the district.

⁷ Source: Active New Zealand Survey 2017

7. A platform for growth - benefits of a visitor and community facility

A visitor and community facility would provide the Kāpiti district with a positive platform for growth. It's not just about responding to what is important now, it's about positioning capability to maximise that growth for the future.

A well designed visitor and community facility will provide benefits for visitors, local businesses and the community in general.

7.1 Economic benefits of a visitor facility

- By providing a platform for existing Kāpiti Island operators to enhance their visitor experience, there is opportunity to grow their business and increase yield
- The facility would also allow for new operators to step into this space with opportunities for new product development, and product extension for current operators, much like we see with Kāpiti Eco Tours offering sea kayaking as an option on the island.
- There is scope for visitation to Kāpiti Island to grow 300%
- Promote upcoming events to encourage repeat visitation
- Increase visitor knowledge of what there is to do in the district
- Encourage increased length of stay
- Catalyst for new visitor experience and service development
- Catalyst to build the value of the visitor economy
- Economic dispersal that can be encouraged in a visitor facility such as this for visitors who cannot get to the island due to weather
- An opportunity for economic benefit to upsell a visitor to the district with a Kāpiti Island visit.
- Improving accessibility for guests boarding boats will potentially increase visitation and therefore have positive economic benefit

7.2 Social and cultural benefits for the community

- The facility would give pre-booked visitors a place to meet commercial operators
- Improves the quality of the Kāpiti Island visitor experience, a quality facility for operators to start and end their experience
- Space in the facility for current and future operators to professionally welcome, process and manage the visitor experience
- Improves accessibility and safety for visitors getting on and off boats
- Secures and improves the integrity of the biosecurity process to reduce the risk of an incursion on Kāpiti Island which would impact conservation status, visitation and credibility with DoC
- Attract more Wellingtonians, international and domestic visitors to Wellington City to Kāpiti for the day
- Collaborate with DOC to increase the visibility and education of Kāpiti Island as a significant conservation asset for New Zealand
- Provide first point of contact/welcome for visitors to orientate themselves and gather information to make the most of their time in the District.
- Improve traffic flows
- Improve pedestrian access and safety in the Boating club carpark
- Ensure Coastguard access points remain clear at all times
- Maintain beach access for leisure and recreational craft users
- The community could also utilise the information area of the space for community activities and to advertise local community events
- Providing educational materials on the fragile ecosystems in the area, on land and at sea would also help to bring greater awareness of how to manage areas of ecological significance
- Encourage travellers to experience local events, visit local attractions and finally support community retail, accommodation and hospitality venues
- The Kāpiti Boat Club and Underwater Club buildings will remain and preserve their investment in their club facilities. This allows the Boat Club to focus on their own strategic Plan.
- Provides a boat/marine hub on the beach front
- The facility location and build is responsive to storm surge issues and future proofing for changes in this area
- Reduces the risk of biosecurity breaches on the island
- Provides a platform for iwi to share their stories as part of the visitor experience
- The facility would attract the attention of WellingtonNZ and international travel trade

8. Case studies

A few international examples with concepts similar to what could work with the facility we are proposing.

8.1 Cliffs of Moher County Clare visitor experience, Ireland



IMAGE 1 CLIFFS OF MOHER VISITOR EXPERIENCE CENTRE



The Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland's top tourist attractions and an area of outstanding natural beauty and haven for wildlife. The cliffs are part of the UNESCO Global Geopark, a special region with outstanding geology. The eco-friendly visitor centre was built in 2007 and nestles into the hillside to minimise the visual impact on the location.

The attraction consists of a visitor centre, viewing platforms, walking trails, café, gift shop and craft shops. Admission costs from €8 per person for adults, seniors over 65 years and students over 16 years. Children under 16 years are free of charge. There is a 50% discount available for pre-purchasing admission online.

The Cliffs and the exhibition are self-guided. There is a free Cliffs of Moher audio guide for apple and android devices that can be downloaded in advance. The average stay is 2 hours, with many visitors staying a half day. Visitors are encouraged to not just pass through, but stay overnight in one of the local towns or villages.

In 2018, the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience recently launched a new shuttle bus service aimed at further enhancing sustainable development and management of tourism across the wider North Clare area. The shuttle bus service was among a series of initiatives introduced at the world famous visitor attraction to reduce traffic congestion and to distribute the spend of visitors to the Cliffs to the neighbouring towns and villages.

The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience is operated by Clare County Council and employs 110 staff during the peak season and is a significant employer in North Clare. Since the addition of the centre and the increased focus on commercial initiatives like the shuttle buses, visitors to the area increased by 3.8%. Significantly, the visitor figures revealed that the FIT market showed greater growth than the group market with 55% of all visitors being FITs.

The Cliffs of Moher are a similar offering to Kāpiti, but on a much larger scale. The shuttle bus option is an example of turning sustainable tourism management into a paid experience. The increase in visitor numbers and subsequent economic benefit that would come from that, could be something this facility could support. This would also allow for broader benefits for the region, by providing transport for visitors to other activities or even local transport hubs.

8.2 Malanda Falls Visitor Information Centre Malanda, Queensland



IMAGE 2 INTERPRETATIVE DISPLAY INSIDE MALANDA FALLS

The rebuilt Malanda Falls Visitor Centre and its award-winning modern building reflect the area's geological formations, and the connection to country, as seen through the eyes of the local Ndongji tribe. The Centre is also an environmental education centre, with interpretive interactive displays on the cultural and natural history of the unique Tablelands volcanic region and its wildlife.

Indigenous cultural information is complemented by the Rainforest Dreaming guided walks through the adjacent Malanda Falls Conservation Park with a local rainforest person. Guided walks on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings, need to be booked in advance and offer visitors the opportunity to see the rare Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo, as well as discover traditional ways of the local indigenous people.

An exploding volcano, a tree kangaroo (taxidermy and a VR experience), stories and displays of Indigenous artefacts and flora and fauna, and a children's area give visitors a greater understanding of the area's values and ways to support their conservation.

The centre is co-located with the natural attractions of the waterfall and Conservation Park. It also has an adjacent café. This centre operates on a hybrid staffing arrangement with three part-time staff including the centre manager, admin support and a Cultural Heritage Officer Guide plus the crew of volunteers. The manager roles include engaging with operators and the local community.

The Kāpiti visitor and community facility would provide the opportunity to engage with aspects of the local culture, and learn more about the history of early Māori and European settlers. There is an opportunity for guided cultural walks through Maclean Park with local guides talking about the areas rich history, and the native fauna and flora that exist both within the park, and along the beach.

8.3 Lismore Visitor Centre, New South Wales



IMAGE 3 LISMORE VISITOR CENTRE, NSW AUSTRALIA

Over a seven year period the Lismore Visitor Centre has been transformed from an information point to an attraction in its own right. Over 16 interpretative panels tell the stories of Lismore's history, Aboriginal culture and unique natural environment. Lightboxes in each panel link the content to local attractions, events and tours to encourage visitors to explore and immerse themselves in the region.

An indoor replica rainforest includes rainforest murals, sounds, taxidermy animals, interpretative panels and a waterfall. The centre also has an Aboriginal Gallery space featuring artworks of high profile and emerging Aboriginal artists; rotating exhibitions feature contemporary Aboriginal art from the Bundjalung nation.

A retail outlet is a showcase for the area's producers, with a huge range visitors can take home. School groups to the centre have increased by 500% as a result of their refocus seen years ago. These visits are encouraging the students to return with family members. Visitor numbers overall continue to grow and engagement with the community is strong.

Seven years ago Lismore had two people on the front counter. Now only one is needed while the other engages with visitors via the website and social media channels.

Te Atiawa has indicated that they would like to see artworks featured in the visitor and community facility. This could drive economic return for the facility if art was sold there as well, and a commission paid to the facility, and emerging artists could utilise the space as a way to showcase their art and their skills. Providing opportunities for local schools to use the facility, learn more about the marine ecology, the conservation efforts of their community and the cultural connections that exist within the district could see the facility becoming an important educational asset for schools in the district.

8.4 Clare Valley Wine Food and Tourism Centre, South Australia

When the Clare Valley Visitor Centre was closed in March 2014, the local tourism industry, producers and the community came together to find a way forward from what was considered an unacceptable situation. The local winemakers, grape growers, arts and cuisine groups together with community representatives formed an organisation to run a new Visitor Centre, the Clare Valley Wine Food and Tourism Centre.

The centre showcases the local producers and artisans of the Clare Valley. Visitors can taste and purchase regional produce and local artwork. Wine tasting sessions every Friday afternoon feature local wineries and other producers and are a drawcard for visitors, local businesses and the community to come together.

The centre now attracts 25,000 visitors per annum. The centre leases the Council's original visitor information centre building and receives some funding support from Council in addition to a promotional levy from local businesses featured in the centre. While the centre may never be able to be self-sustaining, the income it can bring in makes the financial support from the council more palatable for the local community.

The Kāpiti facility could hold similar community events in the space. This would bring that positive vibe and community hub feeling to the space that people are looking for. This would foster a sense of ownership among the community.



IMAGE 4 INTERIOR OF CLARE VALLEY FOOD, WINE AND TOURISM CENTRE, SOURCE: EATSA.COM.AU

8.5 Ramaroa Heritage Centre, Wellington

Opened in December 2017, Ramaroa is a heritage centre located in Queen Elizabeth Park’s Mackrays Crossing entrance. The building is an architectural showcase of the rich Māori, European and natural heritage of the park. It tells the story of the regions history, Māori life in the wetland region, and more recent stories around European Settlement and the place of the US Marines in the park. The building also offers a space for community groups and other organisations to use for their own activities.

The building has both indoor and outdoor spaces that highlight the natural environment on which it sits. It was built for a cost of \$1.6M. The building includes artwork from a local Māori carver, and it has been built using timber battens and the layout and look has been created to make a strong connection to a traditional pā site.



IMAGE 5 RAMAROA HERITAGE CENTRE

The Kāpiti facility could look to this as an option to review materials and how a facility with both indoor and outdoor areas might work on the south side of Tikotu stream. It also presents an opportunity to learn how a community could utilise a space such as this.

9. Recommended next steps

This report is not a detailed building plan for the facility, but rather a report that highlights areas of commonality discovered through research and stakeholder engagement, and notes areas of importance for a 'gateway.'

This report identifies the optimal site and mix of provision for the proposed visitor facility.

A series of next steps are recommended to progress this project:

- Establish a project working group that includes KCDC, DoC, Ngāti Toa, and Te Ātiawa
- Identify governance and funding partners and establish a governance structure
- Develop a detailed design brief which will include discussion with existing Kāpiti Island and other regional visitor experience operators
- Develop a Business Case to secure funding
- Identify and apply for funding support
- Review Traffic Management Plan for the site and the beach as a whole
- Contribute proactively to Wellington's regional destination management planning that is imminent and led by WellingtonNZ
- Collaborate with WellingtonNZ to drive visitation to Kāpiti as part of the Wellington experience
- Determine what role the university could play
- Align this with the Kāpiti Story project which is simultaneously underway

APPENDIX A – BIOSECURITY CHECKLIST

The biosecurity checklist provided by DoC for general visitors to pest free islands. For Kāpiti, those visiting must complete these checks (where applicable) with the operator who transports them to the island.

Items Being Carried	Action	Done
Packs	Shake out your pack/bag and check the inside, including the pockets. Make sure there are no holes. Ensure packed bags are zipped and done up tightly.	
Footwear	Clean your shoes/boots of dirt and seeds. Check the soles, laces and tongues of shoes for any seeds. Scrub footwear worn in the bush on the mainland in soapy water.	
Clothing	Check your woolly socks, woollen clothing and velcro closures for seeds.	
General gear and clothing	Once you've checked your gear, put it in a pack/bag with a zip and do up tightly.	
Camping gear	Shake out and thoroughly check tents and groundsheets. Pack checked gear in bags with zips, and do them up tightly. Note: Camping is only allowed on islands with official campsites.	
Bedding	Check any bedding, including shaking out your sleeping bag and packing it inside another closed bag – not inside the stuff sack	
Food	Pack any food into sealed containers.	
Boat/kayak	Check your boat/kayak. It is a good idea to keep a couple of baited traps on board at all times.	

APPENDIX B – CONSULTATION ATTENDANCE

During the initial round of consultation for this report, the following attendees were present within the corresponding session:

Consultation Session	Name of Attendees
Department of Conservation	Rob Stone
Concessionaires – Kāpiti Island Nature Tours	John Barrett
Concessionaires – Kāpiti Eco Tours	Glenn Cooper
WellingtonNZ	David Perks
Ngāti Toa	Naomi Solomon
Te Ātiawa	Chris Gerretzen
Kāpiti Boat Club	Lindsay Helson
	Andy Ashton
	Gary Ashton (member of Boat Club and Underwater Club)
	Ken Harris
Kāpiti Coastguard	Peter Cartwright
Kāpiti Underwater Club	Graham Tunbridge
KEDA	Liz Koh
	Martin Halliday
	Karl Webber
	Keith Wood
	Debbie Martin
	Angela Buswell
Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce	Jacinda Thorne
Paraparaumu Beach Business Association	Sharon Hunter
	Darren Hunter
Guardians of the Kāpiti Marine Reserve	Steve Anderton
	Jean Flemming
	Ben Knight
	Karl Webber
	Angela Buswell
Senior Lecturer Victoria University	Sam Kebbell

APPENDIX C – TEST THE RECOMMENDATION CONSULTATION ATTENDANCE

A subsequent round of consultation was completed to test the recommendations made in this report, the following were taken through the presentation:

Consultation Session	Name of Attendees
Department of Conservation	Rob Stone
Concessionaires – Kāpiti Island Nature Tours	John Barrett
Concessionaires – Kāpiti Eco Tours	Glenn Cooper
	Vicky Cooper
WellingtonNZ	David Perks
Ngāti Toa	Naomi Solomon – Direct with KCDC
Te Ātiawa	Chris Gerretzen – Direct with KCDC
Kāpiti Boat Club	Lindsay Helson
	Andrew Ashton
	Gary Ashton (member of Boat Club and Underwater Club)
Kāpiti Underwater Club	Graham Tunbridge
	Glen Mitchell
KEDA	Liz Koh
	Martin Halliday
	Keith Wood
Kāpiti District Councillor	Angela Buswell
	Alison law
	Darryn Grant
	Morag Taimalietane
	Jamie Roberts
Kāpiti Chamber of Commerce	Jacinda Thorne
Paraparaumu Beach Business Association	Sharon Hunter
	Darren Hunter
Guardians of the Kāpiti Marine Reserve	Karl Webber
Senior Lecturer Victoria University	Sam Kebbell



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