

b r o w n

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PORT OF TAURANGA EXPANSION PROJECT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT



Prepared for the
Port of Tauranga

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report addresses the landscape and natural character effects associated with the proposed expansion of the Port of Tauranga's berthage facilities at Sulphur Point and Mt Maunganui.

Currently, the Port of Tauranga (POT) is split between the container terminal on Sulphur Point (Berths 23 – 25) and wharves at Mt Maunganui North and South that handle timber exports (Berths 7-11), fuel / petroleum offloading (Wharf 16), cruise ships and other forms of cargo handling (Berths 1-6). The container terminal is also notable for the 8 container cranes that presently line the western side of Stella Passage – connecting the main body of the harbour with Waipu Bay and Tauranga's CBD – while port storage facilities behind the wharves cater for containers, log piles, cold and general freight storage. The Port's custom bonded areas and secure zones directly abut Marine Park and Tauranga Marina off Keith Allen Drive at Sulphur Point, as well as Totara Street, which extends from SH2 / Te Awanui Drive through to the Mt Maunganui CBD on the eastern side of Stella Passage. Presently, the southern end of the Mt Maunganui Port complex terminates near Whareroa Point, immediately north of the Tauranga Bridge Marina and the main harbour bridge that connects Tauranga with Mt Maunganui.

The proposed expansion of wharves both sides of Stella Passage, would involve the construction of additional berthage south of Sulphur Point's current Berth 25, and reclamation in the area of the current 'sand pile' at the southern edge of the container terminal. On the Mt Maunganui side of the Passage, additional berths would be developed either side of the existing petroleum unloading facilities at Berth 16, with additional reclamation behind these new berths. These proposals are described in more detail in Section 2.0 of this report.

The effects associated with these developments are assessed in relation to the current characteristics and values of the wider expanse of Tauranga Harbour. However, with Stella Passage and its port areas already 'sleeved', both physically and visually, by a range of port-side activities – including the existing container terminal, both nearby marinas, the swathe of industrial development and premises both sides of Totara Street, and the Ballance industrial complex off Te Awanui Drive – most attention inevitably falls on the Stella Passage and its more immediate margins. Views from Te Awanui Drive and the harbour bridge, together with The Mall and the top of Mauao near Mt Maunganui's CBD, reinforce this strong focus.

The effects associated with the proposed berthage developments are also evaluated with regard to relevant statutory instruments, including key provisions of the Operative Tauranga City Plan, the Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement, the Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan, the Proposed Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan and Policies 13 and 15 of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement.

This report is accompanied by **27 Attachments**, which include the following:

- Typical views from vantage points around the current port and Stella Passage that help to explain the landscape context for the current applications; and
- Images from key viewpoints that provide a photographic comparison of the existing situation with that anticipated upon completion of the proposed berthage facilities and reclamations.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

The Port of Tauranga is proposing the following developments (see plan showing “Future Wharf / Reclamations and Channels” overleaf):

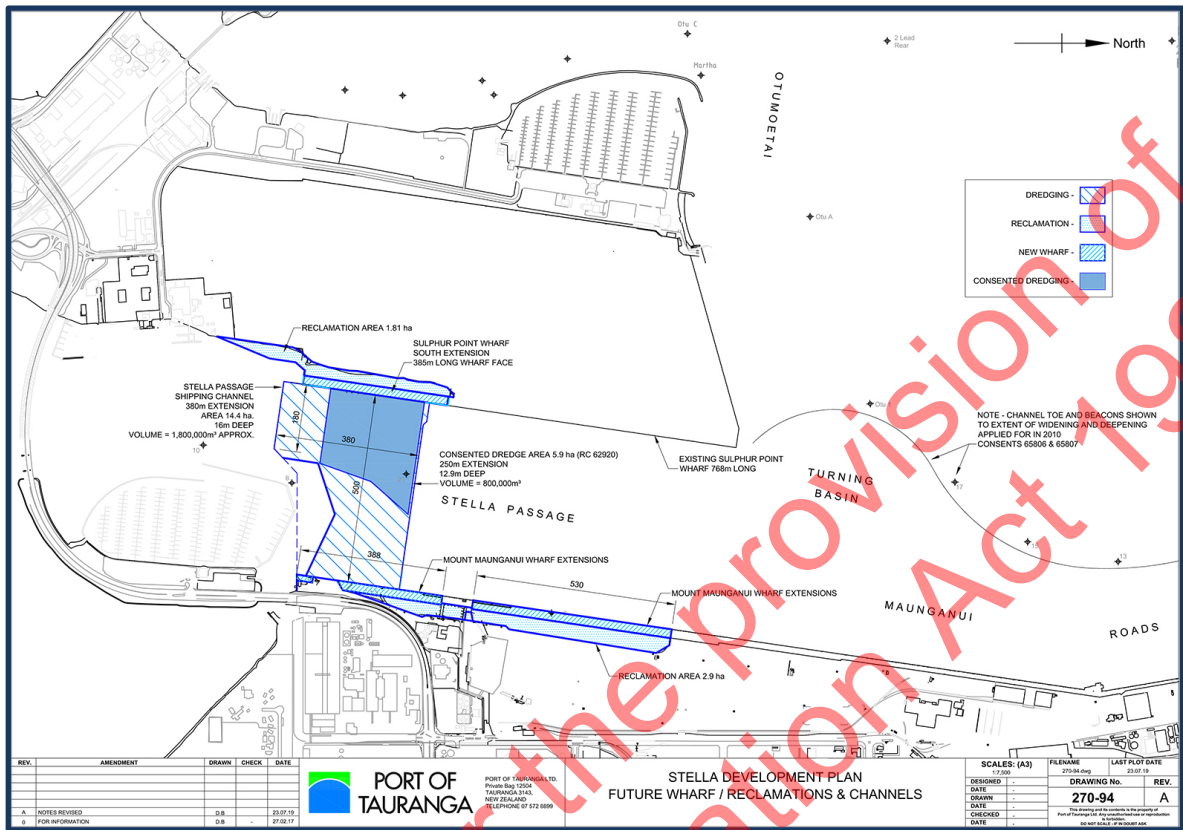
1. Southward extension of the Sulphur Point Terminal wharves over a distance of some 385m. In addition, some 1.81ha would be reclaimed at the southern edge of the new berths, generally within the area seaward of the Port’s current ‘sand pile’ near East Road. This reclaimed area would be lined with rock armouring along its coastal edge, with a residual sand pile, roading and container terminal activities located above and behind this new edge.
2. The addition of five new container cranes to this area of expansion – similar in profile, scale and appearance to the current Liebherr Post Panamax and Super Post Panamax Cranes serving Berths 23-25 at present.
3. Extension of the current log ship wharves between Berths 11 and 16, with the new wharves matching the alignment of those current wharves. This would be accompanied by further extension of the log ship berths some 388m south of Berth 16 – to the edge of the second harbour bridge on Te Awanui Drive, near both the Tauranga Bridge Marina and the Ballance Agri-Nutrients plant.
4. Some 2.9ha of reclamation would occur behind these new wharf extensions, accommodating additional areas for log storage, sheds, and vehicle manoeuvring.
5. Hard standing, roading, lighting and a residual ‘sand pile’ would be located on the proposed berths and reclamation, together with log and chip piles, and – at Sulphur Point – additional container storage areas. The new wharves would be lined by piles and timber headstocks, while the reclaimed area at Sulphur point would be lined (as indicated in Section 1.0) by rock armouring. Some rock armouring would also line the revised interface with the bridge next to the Tauranga Bridge Marina.
6. Dredging would also occur between the two areas of proposed berthage development, occupying an area of 14.4ha to a maximum depth of 16m. Some 5.9ha of this area already has resource consent (RC 62920) accommodating dredging to a depth of 12.9m.

The combination of wharf development and reclamation either side of Berth 16 would effectively absorb Whareroa Point within the infrastructure of berths and log / cargo handling areas at the southern end of the existing port area. However, both areas of proposed wharf expansion and reclamation would primarily affect parts of Stella Passage that are already substantially captured by secure port compounds and occupied by an array of small-scale, wharves, jetties and other areas of port activity. The largest of these is the port company’s ‘sand pile’ near East Road at Sulphur Point, which spills over the edge of the container terminal into part of sea channel.

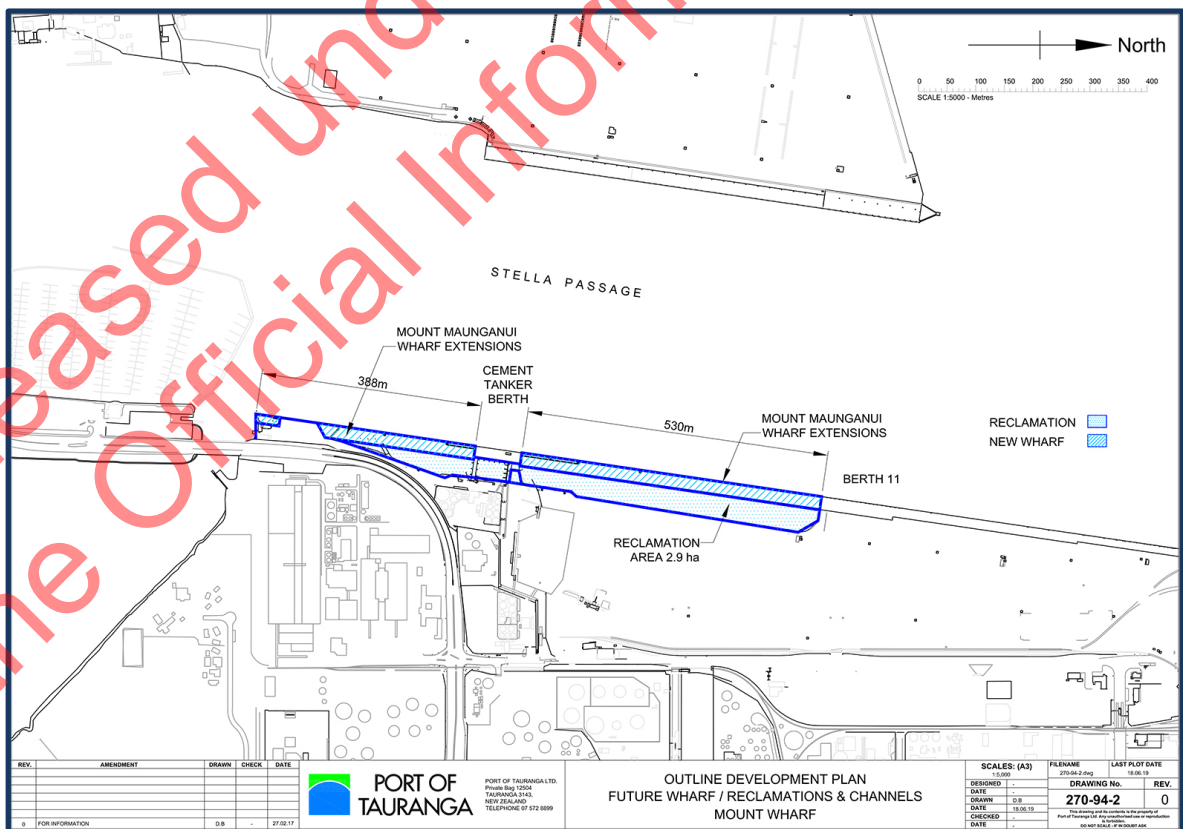
Importantly, therefore, the proposed wharf extensions and reclamations would not physically affect areas that are subject to public access and use, apart from those littoral margins hugging the very edge of Stella Passage at present. Public contact with these proposed developments would therefore be almost exclusively visual in nature – framed by existing landscape components that range from the Bridge Marina and Matakana Island Ferry Terminal, to the Ballance plant and other industrial compounds near Te Awanui Drive, and the more distant, but iconic, profile of Mauao at the distal end of the Mt Maunganui spit.

The proposed dredging, on the other hand, would affect an area subject to regular passage by both private and commercial passenger vessels. Yet, this activity would also occur within a channel that is

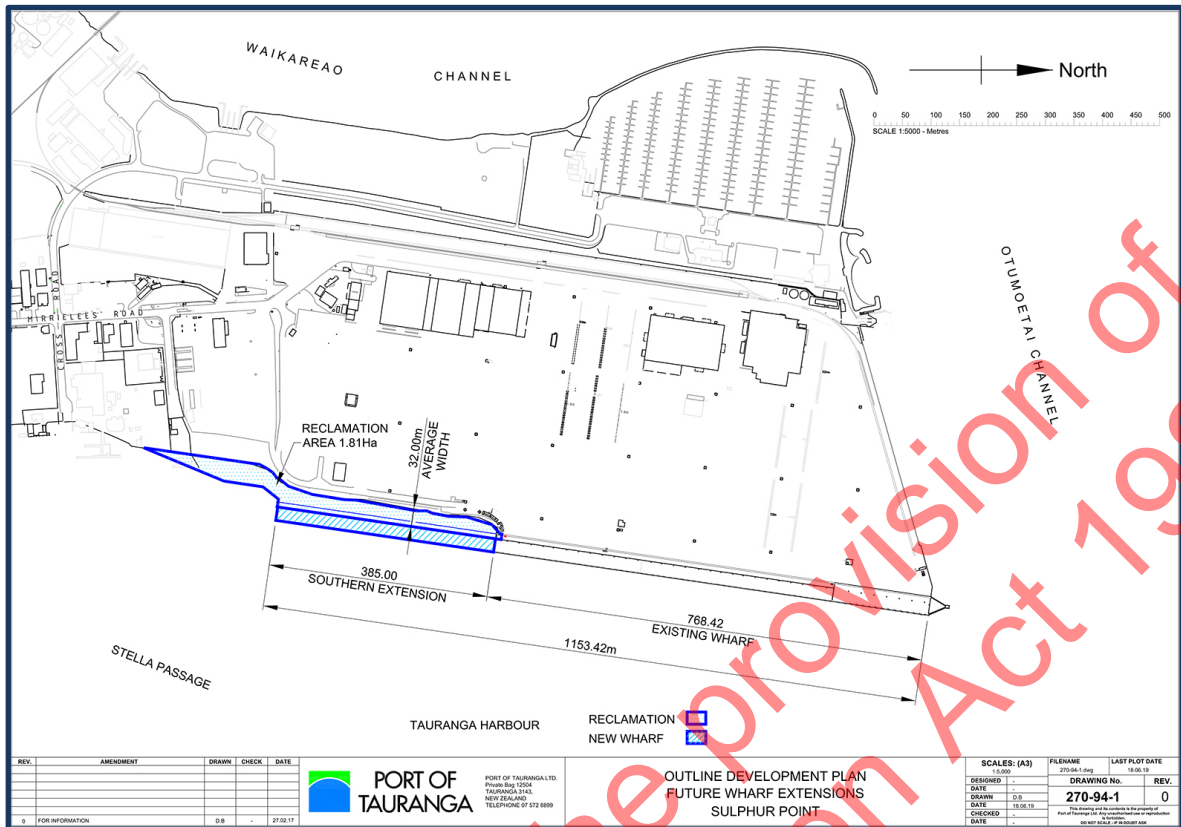
already subject to regular maintenance dredging and for an area that is already – in part – the subject of a resource consent accommodating such activities.



Proposed areas of POT berthage expansion & dredging



Proposed areas of POT berthage at Sulphur Point



Proposed areas of POT berthage expansion at southern Mt Maunganui

Key points to emerge from all of the above are as follows:

1. The expansion of proposed berths would be significant physically: it would result in port developments and activities dominating both sides of Stella Passage, although that is arguably the case already.
2. In a related vein, the new wharves and dock-side areas would be co-located within parts of the Passage and wider harbour that are already substantially shaped, and very heavily influenced, by existing port activities and structures.
3. As a result, even though the combination of proposed port structures and activities – including additional shipping – within Stella Passage would expand the Port's effective 'sphere of influence', such effects would be 'additive', rather than new.
4. Similarly, the proposed dredging associated with these developments would occur next to parts of Stella Passage that are either subject to regular dredging currently or that have consent for additional dredging off Sulphur Point. Again, therefore, such effects would be additional to existing effects associated with dredging, but would be far from the first of their kind within the channel.

3.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Attachments 1-14 capture views towards the POT application sites from a wide range of local vantage points. Looking from as far away as Mauao, these reveal a robust maritime landscape, in which the existing port, its container terminal, both nearby marinas and a swathe of industrial development down both Totara Street and Te Awanui Drive dominate the landscape around Stella Passage.

At a broad scale, Stella Passage is an important physical conduit between the main body of Tauranga harbour, that wraps around Matakana Island to reach as far north as Bowentown, and the sequence of inlets at the southern end of the harbour – Waipu Bay, the Waipu Estuary and Te Tahuna o Rangataua – that frame Tauranga’s CBD, the Matapihi and Maungatapu Peninsulas, and seaside suburbs like Greerton, Welcome Bay and the inland margins of Papamoa. It also establishes an important point of demarcation between Tauranga and Mt Maunganui. Traversed by the Tauranga Harbour Bridge, which acts as the main link between these rapidly growing coastal cities, the area around Stella Passage and Te Awanui Drive, as well as across most of Sulphur Point, is notable as the heavy industrial heartland of the twin centres. Whereas precincts at Tauriko and Greerton provide the focus for lighter industrial activity, the area around Totara Street and Te Awanui Drive is notable for the previously mentioned Ballance industrial complex, Mt Maunganui’s ‘tank farm’, Dominion Salt, logistics centres, forestry storage areas, and a wide range of other ‘heavier’ industrial operations. Tauranga’s Airport is also located close to Te Awanui Drive, at the edge of Waipu Bay. Directly across the narrow channel of Stella Passage, the main spine of Sulphur Point is dominated by stacked containers, with the port’s container cranes dominating the local skyline.

In views from Mauao, The Mall and even the pedestrian promenade on Dive Crescent fronting the Tauranga CBD, this concentration of portside development and industrial operations / complexes is unmistakable. Flanked by the arcing profile of the Tauranga Harbour Bridge, it contrasts with the lower lying terrain of the coastal lowlands and former dunelands that extend from Mt Maunganui southwards, past Papamoa and across the Matapihi Peninsula, before reaching the hills around Kopukairua and Kaiwha at the ‘back’ of Maungatapu and Welcome Bay. Only the pyramidal form of Mauao competes with both the distinctive A-frame profile of the main Ballance building and the port cranes in most such views; especially so when looking down the line of Stella Passage from the Te Awanui bridge.

The industrial area around Te Awanui Drive / Hewletts Road – effectively extending from Tasman Quay and Totara Street to Maunganui Road (from west to east) – sits within the harbour’s former dune and coastal terrace hinterland, establishing a broad buffer between most of the existing port and residential areas closer to Mt Maunganui Beach together with the Mt Maunganui CBD. This is augmented by the Bay Oval and Netball Centre, Blake Park and the University of Waikato Adams Centre near the northern end of this extensive industrial area.

The narrow peninsula form of Sulphur Point, immediately west of Stella Passage, is also low lying, but its broad swathe of port sheds, stacked containers and a matrix of smaller scale industrial premises around Reid Place and Cross Road off Mirrielees Road, also help to contain the port, both physically and visually. In particular, Sulphur Point provides a substantial buffer between the existing port and parts of Tauranga to the west, including Otumoetai and its beach margins, Brookfield and the Waikareao Estuary.

With the greater bulk of the Port of Tauranga therefore hemmed in by a broad range of complementary activities and structures to both the east and west, the main points of public access (visually) to, and contact with, its operations and areas of activity are largely confined to the main harbour bridge, Te Awanui Drive passing the Ballance industrial plant and – to the north – around The Mall and Mauao. Views from the main body of Tauranga Harbour off Otumoetai and Mt Maunganui

are also quite limited, and in looking from this 'main' harbour area the port area is already largely defined and characterised by the wharves, port structures and shipping at the northern end of Sulphur Point, as well as near Mt Maunganui.

Looking from the south, around the margins of Waipu Bay and the esplanade edge of Tauranga's CBD, the sense of contact with the port is less immediate, but the northern harbour landscape is still substantially shaped by the profile of the harbour bridge, the Ballance complex and the container cranes lining the edge of Sulphur Point. Consequently, nearly all such views towards the port and Stella Passage are dominated, to varying degrees, by existing port structures, the industrial buildings and structures nearby and the joint cities' infrastructure. Only Mauao stands apart as a defining natural feature within most such views.

This leaves those boaties and ferry users plying their way up and down Stella Passage, together with users of the bridge marina, as those most directly exposed to both the current port and Stella Passage. The outlook from this quarter is dominated by a wide range of structures and activities that include:

- The scattering of yachts and launches moored mainly between the Tauranga Harbour Bridge and Marina;
- A collection of vessels berthed near the harbour bridge, typically including a two-storey house boat, barges, and several large / luxury launches;
- The Matakana ferry Terminal, ramp and (more intermittently) ferries;
- Industrial premises off Reid Place and Cross Road near the southern end of Sulphur Point;
- The shipping, cranes, containers, roading, lights, buildings and sand pile on, and at the edge of, the current Sulphur Point port area – around Berths 23-25;
- The outer pontoons / breakwaters and piling of the Tauranga Bridge Marina, together with the lines of piers and berthed vessels inside it;
- The port boat ramp, berth / jetty, buildings and hard standing at the southern end of the Mt Maunganui port area;
- The petroleum / fuel jetty, shipping and buildings around Berth 16;
- The log freighters, log stacks, hard standing, lights and sheds of Berths 7-11;
- The more intermittent presence of other freight ships, cruise liners, hard standing, sheds and lighting of Berths 1-6;
- The tank farm behind the Mt Maunganui port area, together with other industrial premises and structures; and
- The very structured, artificially channelised form of Stella Passage, together with its linear water body

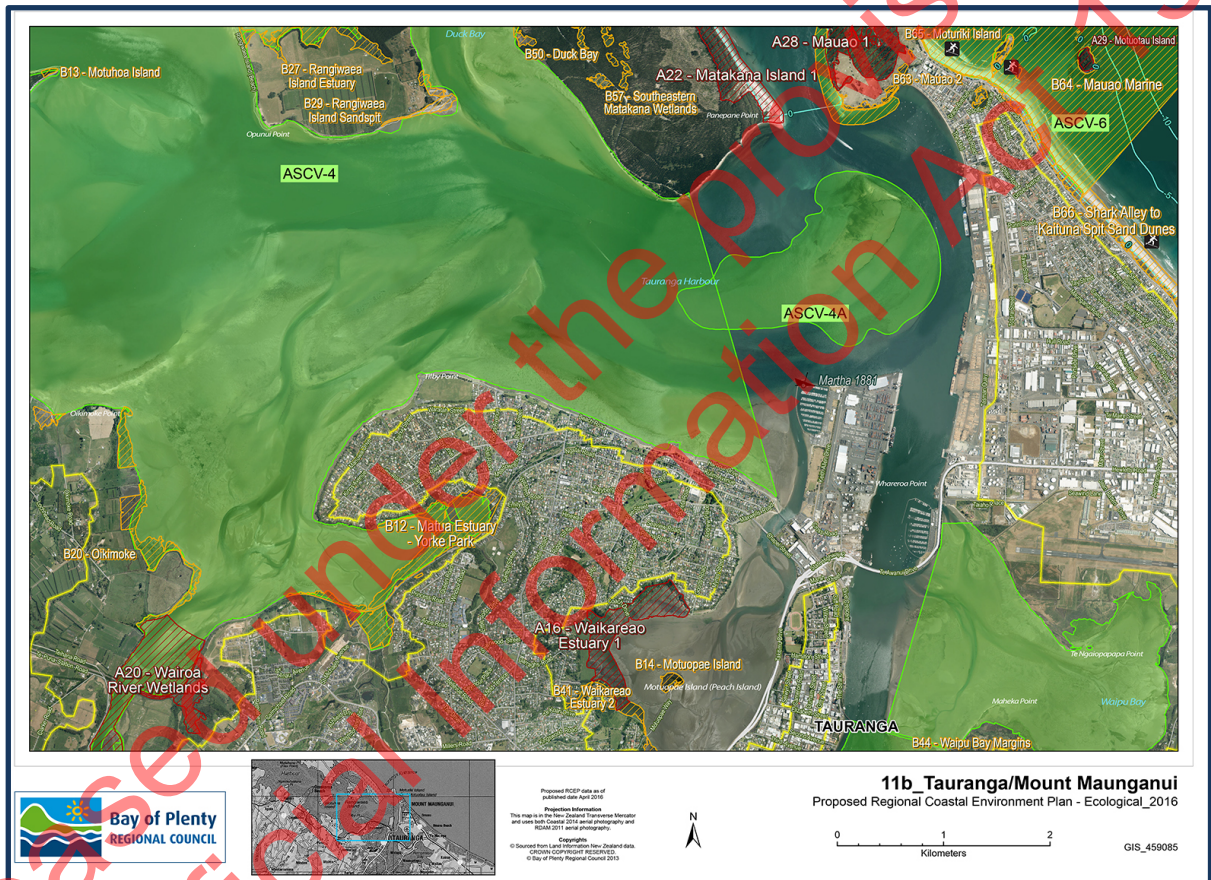
This amalgam of buildings, structures, vessels and activities is symptomatic of a quite 'hard edged' maritime environment. Together with the container terminal and industrial premises arrayed behind POT's main port areas and the Bridge Marina, they contribute to the feeling of a large node of development and uses that is at the highly modified end of landscape and natural character spectrums. This is accentuated by the daily comings and goings of container ships, log ships and fuel carriers, the more irregular arrival and departure of cruise liners, and the use of Stella Passage by a wide range of other vessels. These activities also impact on the public perception of the water area between Sulphur Point and Mt Maunganui that is subject to both current and proposed port dredging.

As a result, both Stella Passage and the areas flanking are quite different from the areas immediately outside this broad 'node': at the edge of the Mt Maunganui and Tauranga CBDs, within most of Waipu

Bay and the Waikareao Estuary, and across the residential areas of Otumoetai and Mt Maunganui (closer to its beachfront).

3.1 IDENTIFIED VALUES

These contrasting values are clearly reflected in the delineation of an Outstanding Natural Feature and Landscape (ONFL) across most of Tauranga Harbour in the Pre-operative version of the *Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan (BOPRCEP)*, which now supersedes the *Regional Coastal Environment Plan* (amended 2011). In **Schedule 3** of the Pre-operative Plan, identifying Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes across the Region, “ONFL3” – spread across most of Tauranga Harbour – specifically excludes Stella Passage and its marine / coastal margins (see **BOPRCE Map 11b** below).



This plan clearly shows ONFL3 avoiding areas that either directly engage with the current Port of Tauranga and that are more obviously influenced by it. This ‘exclusion’ includes both marinas that flank the port, all of Sulphur Point and those parts of Waipoua Bay that form the southern approach and entrance to Stella Passage off Tauranga’s CBD.

An Area of Significant Cultural Value is, however, identified north of Sulphur Point. “ASCV-A” is described as follows in **Schedule 6** of the BOPRCE (below and overleaf):

SITE NAME: TE PARITAHA O TE AWANUI

SITE NUMBER: ASCV-4A MAP SHEETS: 11b

Te Paritaha o Te Awanui is the original name for the large sand bank located offshore from Waikorere (Pilot Bay) Panepane (Matakana Island), Te Papa (Sulphur Point), and Otumoetai. Te Paritaha literally

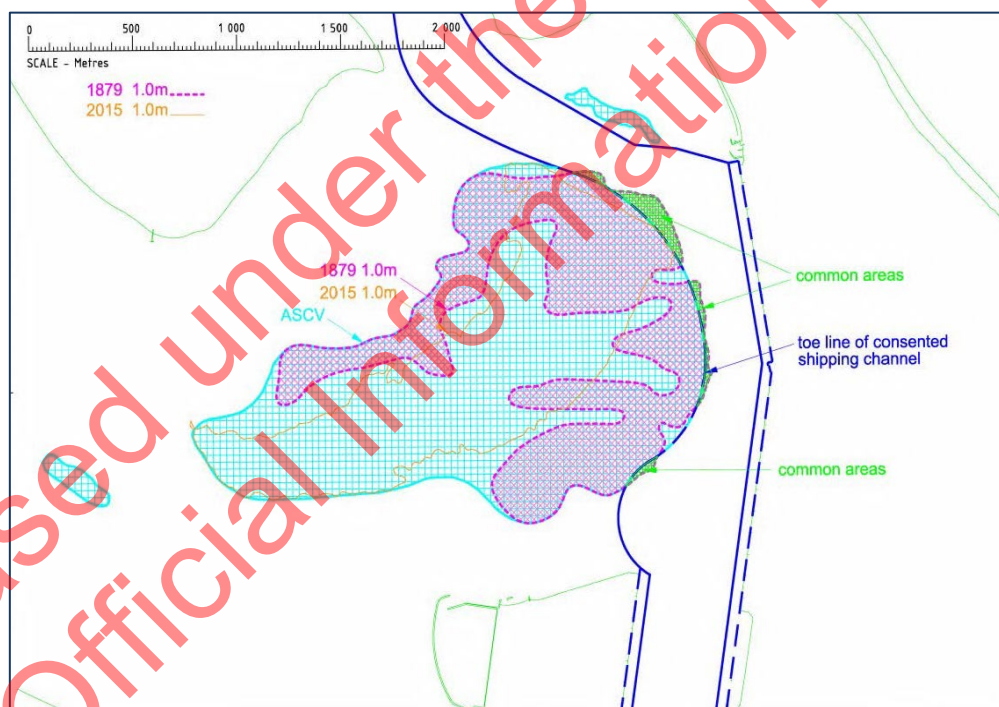
means "to flow over" and Te Awanui is the traditional name for the eastern portion of the Tauranga harbour.

Te Paritaha o Te Awanui is the largest pipi bed within Te Awanui (Tauranga Harbour), and is renowned for its abundant supply of pipi. The bed has been a customary harvesting ground for many generations and is still an important harvesting area today for the whānau and hapū of Ngāti Ranginui, Ngai Te Rangi and Ngāti Pūkenga. Te Paritaha is one of the few remaining sustainable shellfish beds within the harbour.

Te Paritaha is a taonga and a key source of sustenance for whānau, hapū and iwi of Tauranga Moana. Tauranga Moana whānau, hapū and iwi have a duty to protect the sustaining qualities of Paritaha. It is essential to protect the mauri of Paritaha to ensure that intertribal cultural practices of old will continue into the future.

The traditional practice of "ta koha" or reciprocity is the process of providing kaimoana and/or local resources to visitors or to traditional Maori both locally and inter regional events. The significance of these processes should not be underestimated. They are critical to ensuring the maintenance and enhancement of inter-tribal relationships and the physical and spiritual wellbeing of Maori. The practice invokes a deep sense of obligation underpinned by the principles of manaakitanga, Kaitiakitanga and mana.

Te Paritaha is said to be the source of mauri for all other pipi beds in Te Awanui. The role of whānau hapū and iwi as kaitiaki is to protect the mauri of Paritaha. Mauri in this regard refers to the integrity, form, functioning (including natural biological and ecological processes), resilience, physical and spiritual characteristics & qualities, mana-atua, mana-tangata, tapu life principle, tikanga and kawa practices, connectedness & interdependency and accessibility. This involves ensuring that the full physical extent of the integrity of Paritaha is acknowledged. In this way, the kaimoana that Paritaha supports is also protected.



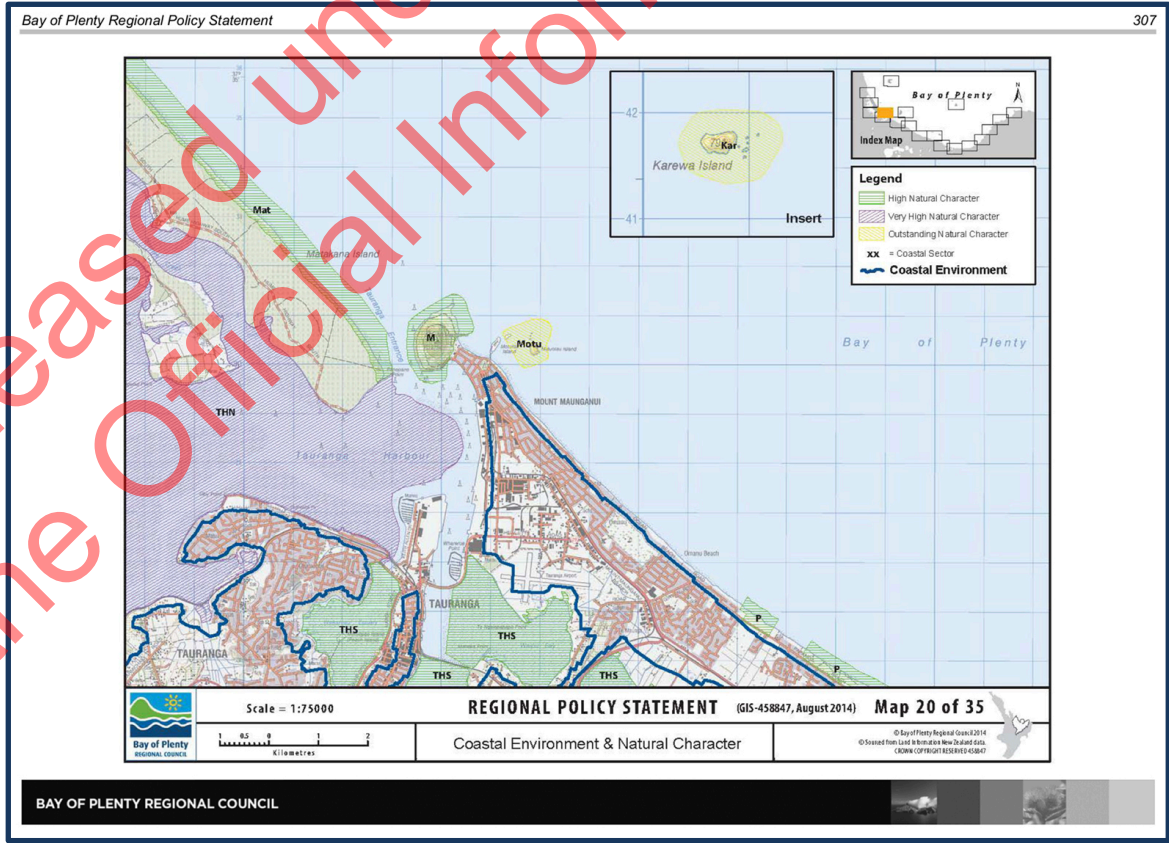
Sheet 11b shows ASCV-4A lying directly offshore of the northern port area, but well away from both areas of proposed port expansion near the southern end of Stella Passage. No other areas of significance in relation to landscape or natural character values are identified in the vicinity of the port expansion areas.

Turning to the operative *Tauranga City Plan*, no ONLs or areas of Significant Landscape Value are identified within or next to Stella Passage (see map below), although it needs to be acknowledged that the delineation of such 'overlays' is largely restricted to the terrestrial parts of Tauranga City.



Map L15 of the Operative Tauranga City Plan

This mapping is mirrored by that in the operative Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement, which also shows Stella Passage free of any overlays indicating areas of outstanding or high natural character and landscape value. Map 20 of the operative RPS is shown below.



4.0 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Landscape & Natural Character Provisions

The area around Stella Passage and the proposed port expansion sites is not subject to any specific landscape overlays in the operative *Tauranga City District Plan* or the Pre-operative *Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan*.

However, the Coastal Environment of, and around, the port is subject to objectives and policies of the *NZ Coastal Policy Statement*, together with those parts of the *Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement*, the *Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan* and the *Tauranga City Plan* that address effects on natural character values. The relevant provisions are set out as follows.

The NZ Coastal Policy Statement 2010

Clause (1) of the NZCPS's Policy 13 includes the following requirement:

- (1) *To preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and to protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development:*
 - (a) *avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment.*

Policy 15(b) similarly goes on to require protection of “*the natural features and natural landscapes (including seascapes) of the coastal environment from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development*” via avoidance of “*significant adverse effects*” and avoidance, remediation, or mitigation of “*other adverse effects of activities on other natural features and natural landscapes in the coastal environment*”.

The Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement

The operative Bay of Plenty RPS contains a number of objectives and policies that also address the preservation of natural character values and the protection of outstanding natural landscapes, in accordance with Sections 6(a) and (b) of the Resource Management Act. Relevant policies include the following.

Policy CE 2B: Managing adverse effects on natural character within the coastal environment

Preserve the natural character of the coastal environment and protect it from inappropriate subdivision, use and development by including provisions in regional and district plans, and when making decisions on resource consents to:

- (a) *Avoid adverse effects of activities on the attributes that comprise natural character in areas of the coastal environment with outstanding natural character as identified in the maps and tables in Appendix I and J;*
- (b) *Avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects of activities on the attributes comprising the natural character in all other areas of the coastal environment, recognising that areas identified in maps in Appendix I as having high or very high natural character can be especially sensitive to the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development; and*
- (c) *Recognise that open coastal water in the region is of at least high natural character.*

Policy CE 3A: Identifying the key constraints to use and development of the coastal marine area

Identify the major constraints to the future use and development of the coastal marine area taking into account:

- (a) The scale, location and requirement of existing uses and activities;
- (b) The natural physical characteristics and values of the coastal environment;
- (c) The particular requirements of identifiable future uses;
- (d) The required links to the landward portion of the coastal environment, integral to the operation of uses and activities located in the coastal marine area; and
- (e) The role of the coastal environment in accommodating regionally significant infrastructure.

Policy CE 8B: Ensuring subdivision, use and development is appropriate to the natural character of the coastal environment

When assessing the effect of subdivision, use and development on the natural character of the coastal environment, particular regard shall be given to:

- (a) The level of natural character as shown in Maps in Appendix I, as described in Appendix J, and the level of protection to be afforded by Policy CE 2B;
- (b) The criteria contained in Set 1 of Appendix F to further refine natural character for resource consents or site-specific mapping;
- (c) Maintaining coastal margins in a natural state and protecting the natural values of beaches and dune systems, including their ability to reduce the impacts of coastal hazards such as tsunami and storm surge;
- (d) The appropriateness of the introduction or accumulation of man-made modifications recognising activities that are:
 - (i) planned (consented, zoned or designated);
- (f) Subject to Policy CE 2B avoiding significant adverse effects and avoiding, remedying or mitigating (including, where appropriate, through provision of buffers) other adverse effects on:
 - (i) Visually, ecologically or culturally sensitive landforms, including ridgelines, coastal cliffs, beaches, headlands, and peninsulas and visually prominent public open space;
 - (ii) Estuaries, lagoons, wetlands and their margins (saline and freshwater), dune lands, rocky reef systems and areas of eelgrass and salt marsh;
 - (iii) Terrestrial and marine ecosystems;
 - (iv) Natural patterns of indigenous and exotic vegetation and processes that contribute to the landscape and seascape value of the area; and
 - (v) Regionally significant surf breaks and their swell corridors, including those at Matakana Island and the Whakatāne Heads;
- (g) Encouraging efficient use of occupied space through intensification and clustering of developments, rather than sprawling, sporadic or unplanned patterns of settlement and urban growth;
- (h) Setting buildings and structures back from the coastal marine area and other waterbodies where necessary, practicable and appropriate to protect natural character, open space, public access and amenity values of the coastal environment, while recognising some structures may have a functional need to be located in the coastal environment, for which a setback would be inappropriate.

Policy CE 14B: Providing for ports

Recognise the national and regional significance of the Port of Tauranga and the need for it to be located within the coastal environment by:

- (a) Safeguarding the capacity and efficiency of:
 - (i) Current port operations
 - (ii) Activities that have a functional need to be located in and around the port;
 - (iii) The strategic road, rail and sea routes to the port; and

- (b) *Providing, as appropriate, in the regional coastal plan, for future port operations and capacity; and*
- (c) *Having regard to potential adverse effects on the environment, providing for the need to maintain shipping channels and to renew/replace structures as part of ongoing maintenance;*

The related “Explanation” for Policy CE 2B also states as follows:

This policy confirms that the effects of some activities may not be adverse in light of an areas’ natural character attributes and a consideration of whether the activity itself is appropriate in this location.

For example, the attributes for Tauranga Harbour include channel markers (scattered throughout the harbour and visible during the night time) and commercial areas. These features diminish natural character but comprise the harbour at the time it was assessed.

This explanation might well go beyond just channel markers to also encompass the fuller array of existing structures and operations within the areas of port operations at both Sulphur Point and the Mt Maunganui coastline. These, together with shipping – which is perhaps the most distinctive and eloquent ‘expression’ of a port environment – must also be considered as part of the natural character and landscape context that has a bearing on the scale and nature of effects associated with port expansion at the Port of Tauranga.

The Pre-operative Bay of Plenty Regional Coastal Environment Plan

The pre-operative BOPRCEP contains a range of issues, objectives policies and rules that address the protection of higher order landscape and natural character values within the Bay of Plenty Region’s coastal environment and Coastal Marine Area, together with additional provisions that pertain to the management of development and uses within Tauranga / Mt Maunganui’s Port Zone:

2.2 Natural Heritage

Objective 2 *Protect the attributes and values of:*

- (a) *Outstanding natural features and landscapes of the coastal environment; and*
- (b) *Areas of high, very high and outstanding natural character in the coastal environment;*

from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development, and restore or rehabilitate the natural character of the coastal environment where appropriate.

Objective 3 *Safeguard the integrity, form, functioning and resilience of the coastal environment and sustain its ecosystems by:*

- (a) *Protecting Indigenous Biological Diversity Areas A,*
- (b) *Maintaining Indigenous Biological Diversity Areas B;*
- (c) *Promoting the maintenance of indigenous biodiversity in general; and*
- (d) *Enhancing or restoring indigenous biodiversity where appropriate.*

Objective 4 *Prevent the further loss of the quality and extent of rare and threatened habitats in the coastal environment of the region. These include coastal forest, seagrass beds, saltmarsh wetlands and sand dunes.*

2.8 Activities in the Coastal Marine Area

Objective 25 *Exclusive occupation of parts of the common marine and coastal area is provided for in appropriate locations (recognising the positional requirements of some activities) for temporary or permanent activities that have a functional need to be in the coastal marine area and are incompatible with other activities.*

Objective 30 Activities and structures in the coastal marine area are located, designed and undertaken in a manner that is appropriate given the values and existing uses of their location.

Objective 32 Inappropriate reclamation or drainage of the foreshore or seabed is avoided.

2.10 Port Zone

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

Objective 53 The future expansion and operational needs of the Port of Tauranga and its shipping channels are provided for in appropriate locations, having regard to the potential adverse effects on the environment.

The Tauranga City Plan

The Tauranga City Plan contains a number of objectives and policies that address the landscape and natural character values of the harbour environs, and effects on those values. Key provisions include the following:

6A.1.7 Objective – Harbour Environment Landscape Character

The landscape character values of the City's harbour environment is maintained and enhanced.

6A.1.7.1 Policy - Maintenance and Enhancement of Landscape Character of the Harbour Environment

By ensuring that subdivision, use and development along the margins of Tauranga Harbour does not adversely affect the landscape character values of that environment by:

- a) Maintaining and enhancing the characteristics and elements that determine the amenity of the surrounding area;*
- b) Ensuring the bulk and scale of built form is compatible with the character of the harbour environment;*
- c) Ensuring the landscape treatment is compatible with the character of the harbour environment;*
- d) Maintaining and enhancing amenity between different land uses by screening, buffering or otherwise providing an appropriate interface treatment;*
- e) Achieving a high amenity interface between private and public space;*
- f) Maintaining and enhancing the natural character interface between urbanised and harbour margins environment;*
- g) Protecting areas of cultural value;*
- h) Avoiding built form of a scale that dominates the harbour's landscape character;*
- i) Siting buildings, structures, infrastructure and services to avoid or minimise visual impacts on the harbour margins environment;*
- j) Selecting materials and colours for external surfaces that assist in integrating the built form into the adjoining harbour environment;*
- k) Maintaining and enhancing indigenous vegetation, notable trees and heritage trees;*
- l) Managing the interface between urban activities and adjoining landscapes to maintain the integrity of identified outstanding natural features and landscapes and important amenity landscapes;*
- m) Ensuring activities maintain and enhance the factors, values and associations of outstanding natural features and landscapes and/or important amenity landscapes.*

6A.1.8 Objective – Interface with the Coastal Marine Area (being MHWS), Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Important Amenity Landscapes

The open space character of the coastal marine area and the factors, values and associations of outstanding natural features and landscapes and important amenity landscapes and their margins is maintained and enhanced.

6A.1.8.1 Policy – Interface with the Coastal Marine Area (being MHWS), Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes and Important Amenity Landscapes

By ensuring that buildings, structures and activities along the margins of the coastal marine area, outstanding natural features and landscapes and important amenity landscapes do not compromise the natural character, factors, values and associations of the those areas, through:

- a) The impact of the bulk and scale of buildings, structures and activities on the amenity of the environment;*
- b) Significant modification of the existing landform or topography and the extent of earthworks;*
- c) Development being of a size or proportion beyond the capacity of the site and surrounding area being able to absorb that development;*
- d) Buildings, structures and activities detracting from the existing open space character and the factors, values and associations of outstanding natural features and landscapes and important amenity landscapes and their margins;*
- e) The effects on indigenous and exotic flora and fauna, with an overall goal to retain existing vegetation patterns and enhance those patterns around the outstanding natural features and landscapes and important amenity landscapes and their margins through mitigation planting.*

6A.1.9 Objective – Urban Landscape Character

The City's urban landscape character values are maintained and enhanced.

6A.1.9.1 Policy - Maintenance and Enhancement of Landscape Character in Urban Areas

By ensuring that subdivision, use and development does not adversely affect the landscape character values of urban areas by:

- a) Maintaining and enhancing the characteristics and elements that determine the character and amenity of the surrounding area;*
- b) Ensuring the bulk and scale of the built form is compatible with that anticipated in the surrounding area;*
- c) Maintaining and enhancing amenity between different land uses by screening, buffering or otherwise providing an appropriate interface treatment;*
- d) Achieving a high amenity interface between private and public space;*
- e) Protecting and enhancing natural waterways and drainage patterns;*

Chapter 6 of the City Plan also addresses the protection of key views to Mauao, both from public vantage points and local marae (Appendices 6C and 6D). Map 15 shows two viewshafts passing over the margins of Stella Passage (see Map 15 overleaf), originating within the grounds of:

- Waikari Marae on the Matapihi Peninsula; and
- On Ohauti Road as it enters Tauranga City from the south-east.

The viewshaft from Waikari Marae to Mauao passes over the eastern side of Stella Passage, traversing the current and proposed log freighter berths, with its base typically sitting 24-28m above the current coastal edge. This equates to some 9-10 storeys, in relation to buildings. The upper superstructures, funnels and cranes of the log freighters using the proposed berths, together with light towers on the new wharves (including reclaimed areas), might well intrude into this viewshaft – as is presently the case in relation to the existing Mt Maunganui port area and berths.

The neighbouring viewshaft from Ohauti Road to Mauao is aligned just west of the area proposed for port expansion south of the current container ship berths and cranes. As a result, it largely avoids the area of proposed berthage expansion at the southern end of Sulphur Point, including the area that

would be occupied by five container cranes down the western side of Stella Passage. Part of the viewshaft passes close to the margins of the proposed reclamation near the existing 'sand pile', but development and structures – with the possible exception of light towers – would stay well below the base of the Ohauti Road Viewshaft.



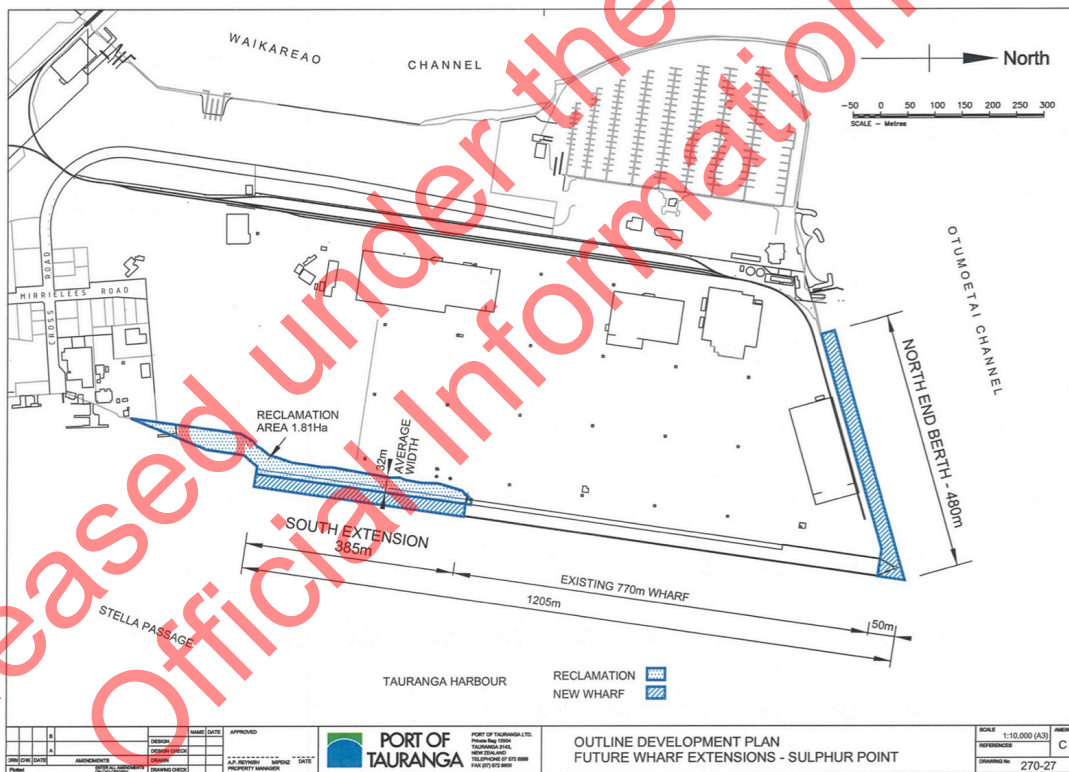
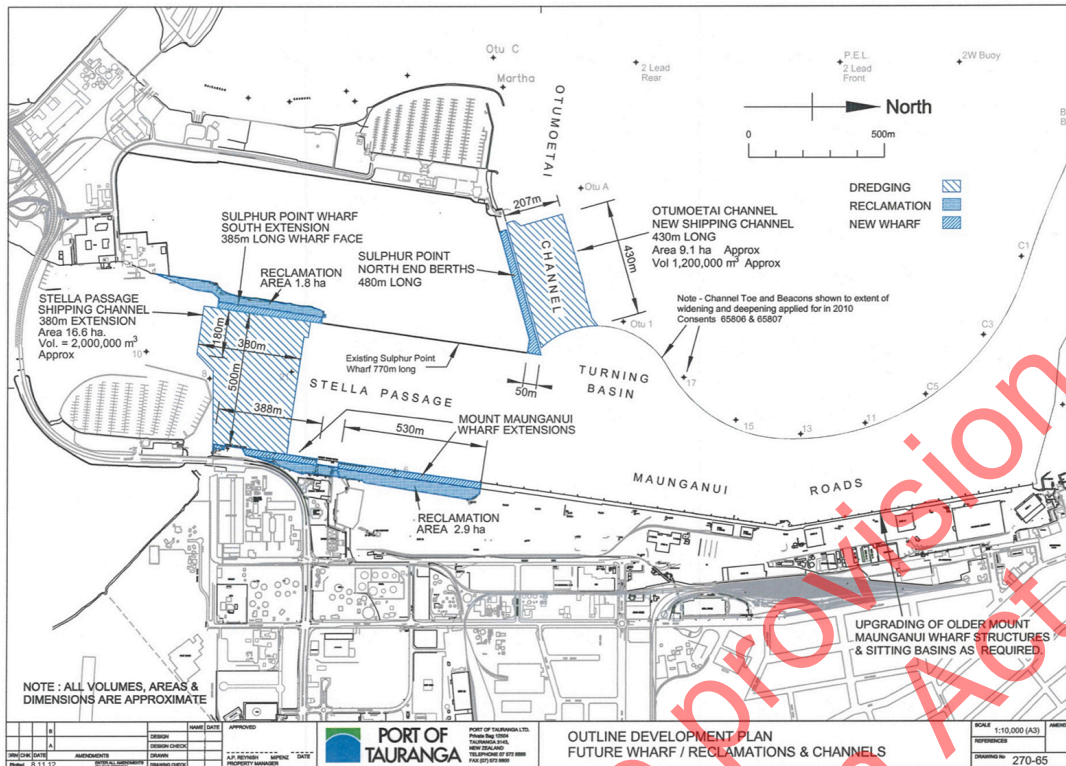
Map 15 of the Tauranga City Plan (both viewshafts show up as 'lighter' areas on the aerial above)

4.2 A Permitted Baseline & The Existing Environment

The issue of the 'context' for the assessment of effects associated with the proposed port expansion is touched on in relation to RPS Policy CE-2B above. Related to this are two key issues:

- The Permitted Baseline established by those activities and structures that are permitted within the current port area, together with designated port expansion areas, under the Pre-operative BOPRCEP and Tauranga City Plan; and
- The visual framework established by existing operations and structures within and around the expansion areas.

Contrasting with the provisions outlined above, Schedule 9 of the BOPRCEP outlines proposals for the future development of the Port of Tauranga, incorporating a series of plans which are aligned with those found in Section 2.0 of this report. In all respects, the application is consistent with the mapping found in Schedule 9. For the sake of completeness, the sheets within that schedule of most direct relevance to the current application are replicated overleaf (pages 387 & 388 of the BOPRCEP):



The Industrial Zone provisions of the Tauranga City Plan also accommodate the following developments and structures within the Port Zone:

- Cranes up to 100m high next to Sulphur Point's current wharves, as well as within the area future area of future wharf development shown above – but stretching 288m south of Berth 25, rather than the full 385m currently proposed;
- Light towers up to 35m high across the area of current port wharves; and

- Shipping down the length of both wharf extensions shown above – largely aligned with the current POT proposals.

In addition, the current areas subject to port operations – at both Sulphur Point and Mt Maunganui – including their container cranes and terminal, log stacks, cool stores, sheds, light towers, jetties and shipping, provide the ‘existing environment’ that further contextualises assessment of the POT proposals. The industrial premises and activities around Te Awanui / Hewletts Road and Totara Street, as well as at the base of the Sulphur Point peninsula, afford an additional layer of ‘existing environment’ and ‘sleeving’ that also needs to be considered in this regard.

These factors are important in relation to assessment of the effects of the port proposals, as a whole, but are perhaps most significant in relation to potential encroachment by future port development into the Ohauti Road and Waikari Marae Viewshafts to Mauao. Although ships’ cranes and funnels, and light towers, are of particular concern in this respect, all of these intrusions are permitted under the provisions of the BOPRCEP and the Tauranga City Plan (Rule 18.12.1.4 *Viewshaft Protection* and Rule 18.12.1.3 *Port Industry Zone* address this issue). As such, they appear to have been anticipated in the formulation of relevant ‘management plans’ and controls for the Port of Tauranga.

It is also worth noting in this regard, that Mauao rises to a height of 231m, well above the height of any intervening funnels and cranes, or lights, in views from Ohauti Road and Waikari Marae, while ships are a transitory feature within such views that have variable heights. Furthermore, existing ship movements and operations (including those by cruise ships that can rise as high as 72m: *Oasis* class ships), together with port structures down the line of Berths 1-11, are already captured in views to Mauao from Waikari Marae. Consequently, future development within the area near, and south of, Berth 16 – which is the area of greatest concern in this regard – would add incrementally to the existing mix of structures and elements below the main viewshaft to Mauao. This factor may well have contributed to establishment of the permitted baseline which effectively accommodates a limited degree of intrusion into both viewshafts.

4.3 Key Questions Arising From The Statutory Provisions

Based on the various provisions identified above, the most critical questions arising in relation to the POT proposals are as follows:

1. To what extent would the proposed developments alter the character of Stella Passage and its margins, bearing in mind the characteristics and values of the current environment?
2. Would the proposed port expansion preserve the current natural character values of Tauranga Harbour, recognising that Stella Channel and its margins are not identified as having an outstanding or high level of natural character at present?
3. Would the proposed port expansion protect the ‘*open space, public access and amenity values of the coastal environment*’ – including the identity and sense of place associated with Stella Passage as part of Tauranga Harbour?
4. Would the effects generated by the POT proposals go appreciably beyond those anticipated in Schedule 9 of the BOPRCEP and in the Industrial Zone chapter of the Tauranga City Plan?

5.0 EFFECTS

The following assessment of effects sets out to address the key questions posed above. It does so by employing the following process:

- a) Identification of key catchments and audiences exposed to the proposed port expansion areas;
- b) Identification of viewpoints that offer representative perspectives of the current and anticipated port environments;
- c) Use of photos and photomontages (that provide an indication of the changes anticipated for Stella Passage), together with assessment criteria addressing visual change, landscape effects and natural character effects, to analyse effects in relation to those viewpoints;
- d) Evaluation of the effects identified as a whole; and
- e) Evaluation of those effects against the relevant statutory provisions set out in Section 4.0 of this report.

5.1 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENTS & AUDIENCES

Many parts of northern Tauranga around its CBD and the northern margins of both Otumoetai and Waipu Bay are exposed to the existing Sulphur Point cranes. They also serve to locate the port in views from Mt Maunganui, the wider harbour and Mauao. However, those areas directly exposed to the actual port and coastal margins of Stella Passage are much more limited – primarily to the following areas / locations:

- Stella Passage itself and the approaches from the both the main harbour and Waipu Bay;
- Te Awanui Drive and the Tauranga Harbour Bridge;
- The margins of Dive Crescent and the coastal esplanade around Tauranga's Coronation Pier;
- The Tauranga Bridge Marina;
- The Matakana Ferry Terminal & ramp – together with surrounding industrial premises;
- The Mall (Mt Maunganui);
- Mauao; and
- Elevated buildings within the Tauranga & Mt Maunganui CBDs;

On the basis of this analysis, the key audiences exposed to the port expansion areas (excluding the proposed Sulphur Point cranes, which would have a receiving environment similar to that of the existing container cranes) comprise:

- The regional populace – local motorists, commuters, visitors / tourists, cyclists and pedestrians – who traverse the Tauranga Harbour Bridge and who use Te Awanui Drive as it traverses the short stretch of road between the Tauranga Bridge Marina and the fuel terminal / port entrance at Tasman Quay;
- Users of the Tauranga Bridge Marina;
- Users of the Matakana Ferry service;
- Boaties and users of the Tauranga-Mt Maunganui Ferry service through Stella Passage;
- Pedestrians atop Mauao and traversing its southern flanks;

- Locals and visitors alike using The Mall and its beachfront;
- Harbour users; and
- Those flying in and out of Tauranga Airport.

As indicated above, those exposed to the proposed cranes and light towers would occupy a much more extensive catchment that extends to the margins of Otumoetai and the Waikareao Estuary, as well as others within, and on the margins of Waipu Bay and the other southern reaches of Tauranga Harbour. However, within such views, the existing cranes are already significant 'landmarks', while the rest of the port is largely absorbed, visually, by the surrounding areas of the Sulphur Point and Mt Maunganui Peninsulas, together with their industrial and CBD margins.

5.2 EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

To assess the effects of the proposed port developments and operations, a sequence of 'before and after' images have been prepared for three key viewpoints – no.s 1-3. These images show the existing port area, then photo images, which show future development accurately aligned in relation to the current shoreline and port features, but without the ships, lighting and other proposed elements having been subject to survey accurate scaling. Even so, it is considered that the images prepared for Viewpoints 1-3 offer a sound basis for comparison of the 'before and after' situations. The effects of the proposed expansion have also been assessed in relation to another four viewpoints, and the combined viewpoints are located as follows (**Attachment 1 & 2-11**):

- Viewpoint 1. **Tauranga Harbour Bridge**
- Viewpoint 2. **Te Awanui Drive** (immediately north of the Tauranga Bridge Marina)
- Viewpoint 3. **Mauao** (southern peak lookout)
- Viewpoint 4. **The Mall** (Mt Maunganui)
- Viewpoint 5. **Hewletts Road** (near Tasman Quay)
- Viewpoint 6. **Coronation Pier** (Tauranga CBD)
- Viewpoint 7. **Tauranga Bridge Marina**

In addition, **Attachments 12-14** (viewpoints 8-10) capture views from Dive Crescent, Otamataha Pa and historic cemetery, and the Matakana Ferry ramp and terminal.

The detailed assessment for Viewpoints 1-7 takes into account the following factors / considerations:

Existing Values:

Reflecting the relative extent to which a landscape / environment is valued in terms of:

- **Biophysical Components:** including landforms, vegetation cover, freshwater body and key cultural elements / features: buildings, other structures and activities
- **Perceptual Components:** aesthetic value, expressiveness, legibility (focusing on the degree to which landscape elements combine to create an attractive composition, 2D patterns, 3D sense of structure) and ephemeral / transient values

Legibility / Prominence:

- **Visibility / Legibility of The Proposed Development / Activities:** indicating the extent to which the activity proposed would be visible and visually prominent in views from around each site

Landscape Effects:

- Impacts on Landscape Elements & Patterns: the extent to which the proposal would adversely affect the structure of the harbour landscape & coastline: its layering of elements, the interplay between different types of land use / structures
- Impacts on Visual Coherence / Unity: the extent to which the proposal would adversely affect the perceived integrity of the Tauranga Harbour landscape and Stella Passage by altering the balance between natural and man-made elements found within that landscape and/or disrupt its visual cohesion
- Impacts on Character & identity: the extent to which the activity would adversely affect public perceptions of Stella Passage and wider harbour, and their related sense of place and identity
- Impacts on Key Features / Views: (where applicable) the extent to which the presence of the proposed activity would disrupt or disturb views to, and of, Mauao

Natural Character Effects:

The degree to which the development proposal would adversely affect perception and appreciation of the following characteristics associated with the existing Coastal Environment:

- Sea Areas / Channels
- Abiotic factors (Landforms)
- Vegetation Type & Cover (native / endemic to exotic)
- Natural Processes
- Uses / Activities: Buildings & Structures (their presence / absence)

Taking all of the above into account, each viewpoint analysis concludes with an overall **Impact Rating** for the individual development component. These ratings employ the following impact scale:

	<i>Landscape Effects:</i>	<i>Natural Character Effects:</i>	<i>Rating:</i>	<i>RMA Rating:</i>
1	<i>Very little or no appreciable change to landscape / natural character & values</i>		<i>No Effect / Very Low Effect</i>	<i>Less Than Minor Effect</i>
2	<i>Limited change to some landscape elements & character; no change to values</i>	<i>Limited change to some freshwater / riverine elements; no change to overall naturalness</i>	<i>Low Effect</i>	
3	<i>Increasingly evident change to some landscape elements & character; limited change to values (naturalness, expressiveness, aesthetic value, etc)</i>	<i>Increasingly evident change to coastal elements & patterns; slight reduction in overall naturalness</i>	<i>Low / Moderate Effect</i>	<i>Minor Effect</i>
4	<i>Appreciable change to some landscape elements & character; more obvious impact on some values</i>	<i>Appreciable change to some coastal elements & patterns; more apparent change in overall naturalness</i>	<i>Moderate Effect</i>	
5	<i>Marked change to some landscape elements, character and values</i>	<i>Marked change to coastal elements & patterns; evident reduction in overall naturalness</i>	<i>Moderate / High Effect</i>	<i>Significant Effect (or greater)</i>
6	<i>Obvious degradation of landscape elements, character and values</i>	<i>Obvious degradation of coastal elements & patterns, and overall naturalness</i>	<i>High Effect</i>	
7	<i>Very serious and obvious degradation of elements, character & values</i>		<i>Severe Effect</i>	

This scale is aligned with the 7-point scale of ratings recommended by the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects (*Best Practice Note: Landscape Assessment And Sustainable Management 10.1*).

Existing Values:

The view northwards from the Tauranga Harbour Bridge is presently dominated by four components: the broad, but also physically confined, channel of Stella Passage; the enclosed matrix of boats, masts and piers within the Tauranga Bridge Marina; the container berths, shipping and cranes lining Sulphur Point and the more distant, but nonetheless distinctive, pyramidal form of Mauao rising above the harbour entrance. A scattering of moored yachts and launches spread across the foreground of Stella Passage close to the harbour bridge is also obvious, adding to the patina of structures and vessels both within, and around, the waterway. Indeed, while the central sea channel and a more distant Mauao are natural 'remnants' of considerable note, overwhelming impressions are of a part of the coastal environment that is fundamentally cultural or man-made: from the wharves and rock armour lining its margins to the cranes, containers, masts, storage tanks and industrial sheds that traverse its skyline. The breakwaters at the edge of the marina, together with Matakana Island Ferry terminal and jetty, and moored vessels directly adjacent to the harbour bridge, add to such impressions in the process of travelling over it.

Although Mauao inevitably draws a significant amount of attention, and the serrated line of Norfolk Island Pines marching across part of Mt Maunganui's skyline add a somewhat different dimension to views from this quarter, impressions remain of a highly developed and modified waterway. This distinctive, port / maritime quality is exacerbated by the way in which both ships and cranes sit 'in front of' Mauao, while a broader expanse of other port and industrial structures encloses both sides of Stella Passage. Together with the movement of container cranes, ships, and smaller vessels up and down the harbour channel, this lends it the strong sense of being dynamic and ever changing. These qualities, combined with the intensity of the visual interaction between the marina, adjoining port facilities and industrial installations, also set the waterway apart from every other part of Tauranga Harbour and its coastal margins. Nowhere else is the coastline of Tauranga Harbour and its margins so clearly shaped, and visually dominated, by human intervention and activity, both past and present.

At the same time, the elevated nature of views from this viewpoint (as well as all others on the harbour bridge) creates both a strong feeling of 'spectacle': of a window being opened up to part of Tauranga's maritime environment that is otherwise largely closed off, and screened, by the existing container terminal and surrounding industry – both at Sulphur Point and around Totara Street. Consequently, views from the bridge are quite different from those experienced from The Mall, Mauao, the main Mt Maunganui beachfront or even near Tauranga's Coronation Pier – all of which celebrate a sense of connection with the more natural form, water areas, margins and surf break of the CMA. Instead, views from the harbour bridge express human manipulation and large scale, modification of the CMA. The dynamic qualities experienced from the bridge aren't those associated with nature, they are defined by on-going development and use of a strategic part of the harbour.

Consequently, as indicated in Section 3.0, Stella Passage lies at the highly modified end of the landscape and natural character spectrums. This is why it is – correctly in my assessment – excluded from the BOPRCEP and Tauranga City ONLs otherwise applied to most of Tauranga Harbour.

Legibility / Prominence:

Attachment 13 shows the same view incorporating expansion of the POT facilities both sides of Stella Passage. Although the southward extension of the current container terminal and associated berthage areas is more obvious in this regard, the development of new berths around Berth 16, on the opposite side of the harbour channel is also depicted. Of particular note, shipping and container cranes south of Berth 25 would 'fill in' much of the current 'gap' to the left of Mauao.

The changes to the southern end of the container terminal and associated berths around the 'sand pile' would be clearly legible, whereas those both sides of Berth 16, on the Mt Maunganui side of Stella Passage, would be less apparent in their own right, but more obvious when ships are berthed alongside, and south of, Whareroa Point.

Landscape Effects:

The proposed expansion of the port both sides of Stella Passage would not change the essential nature of the waterway or its margins. Its 'port' character would be accentuated, most notably because of the closer proximity of container ships and cranes near the current 'sand pile'. Less obvious would be changes to the edge of the channel immediately south of the new container berths, together with changes to the length and configuration of the log freighter berths – which would be masked or limited, to some extent at least, by the complex array of elements within the Tauranga Bridge Marina and the 'forest' of yacht masts rising above it. The log ships and their cranes would also be visually absorbed, to a certain degree, by the existing port buildings and structures around Berths 1-11, and the industrial premises just outside it.

If anything, these changes would strengthen the maritime nature of Stella Passage, making its connection with the Port of Tauranga that much clearer and more visually obvious – perhaps even more coherent. The reduction in open space either side of its waterway would actually 'tighten up' the visual focus on the channel's water area and axis, with less of that space 'bleeding out' into the adjoining container terminal and industrial areas abutting the port. This implies that the proposed changes might actually enhance Stella Passage's linear form and the focus on its water area – as comparison of Attachments 12 and 13 suggests – thus heightening its contrast with the much more open sea and estuarine areas that otherwise prevail around Tauranga and Mt Maunganui. Importantly, therefore, the proposed changes to the landscape of Stella Passage would be more likely to reinforce its identity and sense of place, than to undermine or erode those qualities.

The key 'negatives' associated with this transition would be further masking of Mauao's lower western slopes, when viewed from the eastern end of the harbour bridge (less so, when looking from its Sulphur Point end) and a slight increase in the sense of functionality and utility associated with the harbour channel.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed changes would generate a Low, perhaps even Very Low level of effect in relation to Viewpoint 1 and nearby parts of the Tauranga Harbour Bridge.

Natural Character Effects:

The western side of Stella Channel would appear marginally more hard-edged than at present, with a mixture of gravel and sand lined, banks and loose retaining replaced by rock armouring and new, piled berths.

On the other hand, the alignment and extent of the wharf frontages both sides of Stella Channel would appear little different from at present, with the introduction of shipping to the Passage's southern reaches probably the most obvious sign of real change within the local coastal environment. However, the expanded area of shipping activity and other changes would primarily affect parts of the harbour channel that are already lined by the port's sand pile, the margins of the container terminal, jetties, roading, boat moorings, the Tauranga Bridge Marina, etc. The new berthage areas would merge, relatively seamlessly, with the current alignment of Berths 7-11, 16 and 23-25, while the proposed hard standing, lights and log storage areas would all merge with existing parts of the port that accommodate these structures and activities at present.

As a result, changes to the perceived waterway channel, its vegetation cover and extent, its natural processes (including tidal fluctuations and wave fetch), and its land uses and activities would be quite

limited. On balance, therefore, the Natural Character effects associated with the proposed port expansion are expected to be of a Low order.

VIEWPOINT 1 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Physical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:							
	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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Existing Values:

As motorists, cyclists and pedestrians pass the Tauranga Bridge Marina and traverse the second, much smaller inlet to Waipu Bay Te Awanui Drive near the Ballance fertiliser factory and Whareroa Marae, a view fleetingly opens up to both the port area south of Berth 16 and – more obliquely – the area on the far side of Stella Passage, near Berth 25. Whereas Viewpoint 1 casts more of a ‘spotlight’ on the proposed POT development near Sulphur Point and its container terminal, Viewpoint 2 focuses more directly on the proposed berths south of Berth 16. This would be particularly the case when log freighters are tied up close to Te Awanui Drive, almost directly in line with the views down the road corridor heading towards Mt Maunganui.

Apart from the distinctive conical profile of Mauao, most of the present-day views from this quarter are totally dominated by the infrastructure of Te Awanui Drive itself, including its multiple bridge railings and lights, the adjoining port sheds and storage area, and the northern end of the Tauranga Bridge Marina. Sulphur Point and its existing berths are also clearly apparent across the main body of Stella Passage, while the ‘A Frame’ profile of the main factory within the Ballance works rises above a line of pohutukawas down the eastern side of Te Awanui Drive.

Whereas Viewpoint 1 benefits from its elevated overview of Stella Passage and the current port area, this viewpoint reveals more of the layers of development around the waterway at close hand. Neither Mauao nor the strip of pohutukawa down the side of the road corridor are strong enough to alleviate the feeling of being within a robust, but also largely utilitarian, port-industrial area. This sense of functionality is accentuated by the typically high, to very high, volumes of traffic that typically use the road corridor during daylight and evening hours, while the adjoining marina’s hard standing and boat repair facilities are enclosed by high screens just before this viewpoint and a sequence of sheds, stored port equipment, vehicles, security fencing, log stacks and oil storage tanks emerges just past it on Te Awanui Drive. In addition, views across the harbour – south of Berths 23-25 – are flat and devoid of any real interest, while Stella Passage itself is defined by the structural elements around it rather than any natural features or qualities of note. These factors further compound the predominantly industrial aesthetic associated with this part of the ‘harbour drive’.

As a result, views from this viewpoint and nearby parts of Te Awanui Drive have quite limited value at present, other than to affirm a strong sense of connection with the current port and its industrial hinterland.

Legibility / Prominence:

The proposed modification both sides of Stella Passage would be apparent when ships are tied up at them, less so when ships are absent. Aside from ships, the most obvious features associated with both expanded port areas would be the five new cranes on Sulphur Point and log stacks and lighting closer to Te Awanui Drive. The proposed piling and wharf deck next to the Te Awanui bridge would also be visible, albeit fleetingly, but the majority of proposed reclamation and new wharf areas would be either largely ‘lost’ against the backdrop of the current Sulphur Point container terminal or significantly screened by activity and structures within the port areas that already abut Te Awanui Drive.

Consequently, this sets up a clear dichotomy between times of greater visibility when the new port berths are actively used, and other times, when they are less active and changes to the harbour landscape / environment would be much less obvious.

Landscape Effects:

As for Viewpoint 1, the changes proposed would not be to a highly natural or highly valued landscape; rather, they would accentuate the established qualities of a coastal area that is already notable for

its proliferation of port / industrial buildings, structures, vessels and activities. If anything, the proposed developments would enhance the dynamic qualities of this experience by bringing motorists, cyclists and pedestrians closer to the heart of the port. There would be a much more tangible sense of connection with the loading and unloading of ships, and port activity in general. The maritime nature of the landscape around Te Awanui Drive would be enhanced and the water area of Stella Passage would (as with Viewpoint 1) be more strongly framed – enhancing its centrality and the sense of focus on it. Consequently, as for Viewpoint 1, the proposed port expansion would reinforce, rather than alter and diminish, the identity of the landscape around Te Awanui Drive and Stella Passage.

At the same time, it is recognised that the profile of Mauao would be displaced at times by log freighters and even log stacks. However, given the core nature of most views from this quarter, as described above, it is considered that this loss would be less meaningful than in relation to views from many other parts of both Tauranga and Mt Maunganui that have a more explicit and meaningful sense of connection with the maunga – ie. that are not highly transitory and fleeting. Overall, therefore, it is considered that the proposed wharf developments would have a Very Low level of adverse effect on the landscape experienced from Viewpoint 2 and nearby parts of Te Awanui Drive.

Natural Character Effects:

Expansion of the log handling berths would result in modification of the near side of Stella Passage that is readily apparent, with the new wharf and pilings projecting further out into the waterway than the current POT storage area, sheds and boat mooring. A significant portion of the visible waterway near Viewpoint 2 would, as a result, be lost.

On the other hand, this would not appreciably affect the natural landform or vegetation patterns associated with either side of the channel, nor would it alter the state of natural processes within its margins. The current range of maritime and port-related activities within those same margins would clearly intensify, but would not appreciably change. Ultimately, therefore, the degree of naturalness – or, indeed, relative lack of naturalness – currently associated with those parts of Stella Passage exposed to this viewpoint would not appreciably change, even though the composition of the landscape exposed to passing users of Te Awanui Drive undoubtedly would. As such, the Natural Character effects associated with the proposed sand extraction are expected to be of a Low or Very Low order.

(The Viewpoint 2 Summary Table is shown overleaf)

VIEWPOINT 2 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:							
	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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Existing Values:

The southern lookout on Mauao's crest offer expansive views out over the inshore reaches of Tauranga Harbour, together with the Waikareao Estuary, Waipu Bay and even Te Tahuna o Rangataua. These water areas are framed by Otumoetai, Sulphur Point, the Tauranga CBD, the Matapihi Peninsula and much of Mt Maunganui. These urban areas are backed by a patchwork of farmland, forest blocks and native bush remnants south of Welcome Bay, while the open space of Tauranga Airport is a distinctive feature at the edge of Waipu Bay – providing a foil to Tauranga's CBD and the swathe of industrial development that wraps around the freighters, hard standing, sheds and cranes of the Port or Tauranga. Together with the Tauranga Marina, the port dominates middle distance views directly across the harbour to the south, with its matrix of linear berths, log handling areas, container terminal and container cranes crowding in on the freighters at its edge. Even so, it is the 'jumble' of large industrial buildings around Totara Street – extending eastwards – as well as lining Keith Allen Drive that are the largest 'building blocks' within the panoramic views from this vantage point. Even the massing of buildings within Tauranga's CBD is very much subsidiary, visually, to this broad swathe of industrial development and premises spread across the coastal hinterlands of Sulphur Point and much of Mt Maunganui. Consequently, even though the harbour is the one feature that truly dominates and also unifies views from this elevated quarter, it contrasts very markedly with a highly intensive layering of man-made structures and activities along and behind its nearest margins. As indicated above in relation to the current port, these coastal edges are largely artificial, with more natural remnants and elements (other than the harbour itself) more evident around Waipu Bay and Waikareao Estuary, which form part of the more distant backdrop that frames the main body of the harbour and both cities.

Notwithstanding the content of such views, they remain spectacular because their sheer openness and panoramic nature, while the elevation of Mauao's crest offers a unique overview of both Tauranga and Mt Maunganui. These complement the views available from the more heavily used, lookout next to Mauao's trig point, which focus on much of the rest of Tauranga Harbour to the west and north – towards Omokoroa and over Matakana island – as well as out over Mt Maunganui's main surf beach and break to the broad expanse of the Pacific Ocean. In effect, Viewpoint 3 brings more sharply into focus the interplay between the harbour and those parts of Tauranga City that flank it, including suburban and peri-urban areas that extend well beyond the area framing Stella Passage. As such, the various views available from the top of Mauao are important, irrespective of their detail and content, and Viewpoint 3 is no less significant than other vantage points on the maunga, even though many of the elements revealed in views from it are clearly reflective of a wide range of port-related and industrial activities.

Legibility / Prominence:

The proposed container berths at the edge of Sulphur Point would merge seamlessly with the current container terminal and Berths 23-25. Similarly, the southward movement of cranes, towards the harbour bridge, and the related movement of container ships in that same direction, might be discernible via direct comparison using 'before and after' images, but would be difficult for most viewers to distinguish from the current container berths and cranes otherwise. Across Stella Passage, the seaward projection of berths and log handling areas either side of Berth 16 would be more exposed, visually. Yet, the proposed wharf extensions, log handling areas and freighters would still be aligned with current Berth 7-11 and 16. Again, therefore, it would be difficult to clearly differentiate between 'old' and 'new' without resorting to the sort of visual assistance just described. In effect, the physical changes proposed would be scarcely register without direct comparison.

Landscape Effects:

POT's expansion proposals would consolidate a range of structures, vessels and activities within part of Tauranga Harbour that is already strongly shaped and defined by such elements. The most obvious

change to current views would be the encroachment of the five new container cranes on the arcing profile of the harbour bridge, but given the extent and complexity of the wider panorama exposed to this viewpoint, this change would remain quite limited. It would not alter the basic composition, or values, of the landscape that is exposed to Viewpoint 3. In particular, the interplay between more cultural and more natural elements within such views would remain little changed. Aesthetically too, the outlook from Viewpoint 3 would continue to be much as at present, with the harbour (including its bays and estuaries) still THE defining feature of the maritime landscape in the foreground and middle distance of views from the maunga's crest.

Again, therefore, the proposed POT developments would tend to affirm the identity of Stella Passage and its margins – relative to the wider landscape of Tauranga Harbour and City – and would not appreciably affect the sense of place or identity attached to the composite landscape that unfolds 'in front of' Mauao. As a result, the modified regime proposed would be visually benign and is likely to generate a Very Low level of Landscape Effect.

Natural Character Effects:

The new berths and reclamations proposed would barely register in the context of the existing port, while the new container cranes would affirm a pattern of development and interplay between activities that is well established at the harbour's edge. Furthermore, any visual change noticeable at that interface would occur within part of the harbour that is notable for its highly developed and modified state. Consequently, the current proposals would not appreciably affect the landforms, water bodies, vegetation patterns, distribution of activities, or overall degree of naturalness apparent from this viewpoint. As such, the Natural Character effects associated with the proposed sand extraction are expected to be negligible (No Effect), overall.

VIEWPOINT 3 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

Existing Values:

Viewpoint 4 is located within the beach reserve off The Mall, near Mt Maunganui's main commercial area. It again offers expansive views of Tauranga's inshore harbour – stretching from Mauao to the eastern side of the port and the distant hills in the general direction of Te Puke. However, unlike views from high up on Mauao, this vantage point sits near sea level, so that such the panorama stretching out before The Mall is largely confined to the harbour and visible shoreline traversing (from west to east) Omokoroa through to suburban Otumoetai, then the Tauranga Marina and Sulphur Point, and finally the outer reaches of Stella Passage. This contrasts with a foreground that is dominated, both visually and physically, by the harbour's littoral margins and a sandy beach, then the esplanade reserve's mown swathe of kikuyu, a line of Norfolk Island pines and the boardwalk that Attachment ... was taken from.

There is also a very marked contrast between the open waters of the harbour and the much more confined space of Stella Passage, flanked by the outer berthage areas, container terminal and freight facilities of the current port. Ships and light towers line both sides of the Passage, while cranes swing and move on both sides of the channel. The Tauranga Marina at the entrance to the Waikareao Estuary reinforces this maritime theme, but is much more low-key and visually subdued, while the 'softer', more vegetated, matrix of residential development behind Otumoetai shoreline provides transition into the pockets of rural-residential development, pasture, orchards and shelterbelts stretching up the coast to Omokoroa. The arcing profile of the harbour bridge is also apparent at the 'head' of Stella Passage. Much closer to this vantage point, Berths 1-6, POT's tug berth and the adjacent berths that cater to cruise liners – especially over the Summer months – are clearly apparent at the end of The Mall and its beachfront.

This outlook, particularly on a fine day, is strikingly pleasant and strongly emblematic of Mt Maunganui's close associations with the neighbouring harbour. In addition, it offers a more passive recreational alternative to the surf beaches that line the outside of the peninsula. Even so, it also encapsulates many of the elements now commonly associated with Tauranga's and Mt Maunganui's maritime connections, and the interplay of man-made structures and activities with the harbour – none more so than the highly visible port area. As a result, the landscape captured in views from this quarter is appealing, attractive and distinctive, but it is far from pristine or natural. There remains a sense of separation from the port, but its close proximity still means that it leaves an indelible imprint on impressions of the harbour from Viewpoint 4 and nearby -together with other components of both cities stretching left and right of Stella Passage.

Legibility / Prominence:

The proposed wharf extensions, reclamations, cranes and related shipping activity would also focus on the 'far end' of Stella Passage. As a result, there would be incremental, small scale, changes to the line of shipping and berths down the eastern side of the waterway – beyond the current line of log freighters and berths at Berths 7-11 – but the new wharves, reclamation, shipping and cranes on and next to Sulphur Point would be visually absorbed by the structures and vessels that already line the western side of Stella Passage closer to the main body of the harbour.

Landscape Effects:

The POT proposals would slightly extend the line of log carriers, berths, cranes and lighting either side of Berth 16. But, such changes would be largely 'lost' amid the plethora of current port structures and activities, most of which are already much closer to Viewpoint 4. There would be no appreciable change to the composition of elements within views from this quarter or to the interplay of cultural / man-made elements with more natural elements, including the visible waterway of Stella Passage. If anything, the changes would affirm the maritime content and character of those parts of the coastal landscape already dominated and/or heavily influenced by port and other maritime activities;

and the core identity of the wider harbour landscape would be unaffected by the proposed developments. As a result, the Landscape Effects of the current POT proposals for this viewpoint are considered to be negligible.

Natural Character Effects:

The expanded wharves, reclamations, operational areas / structures and vessels anticipated for Stella Passage would, as indicated above, be difficult to differentiate from the existing port environment and coastal margins. In a related vein, any changes to the coastal landforms and waterway of the channel, vegetation patterns, natural processes and land uses / activities would scarcely register at all within the current, highly modified, coastal environment of Stella Passage. Consequently, any effects in relation to its natural character values would be negligible.

VIEWPOINT 4 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:							
	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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Existing Values:

The western end of Hewletts Road – passing Tasman Quay and a profusion of fuel storage tanks and silos to the north, with the greater bulk of the Ballance fertiliser works to the south – is a profoundly hard-edged environment, made even more utilitarian by security fencing and walling flanking the four lanes of its heavily trafficked roadway. Although softened very slightly by some pohutukawas and Norfolk Island pines, together with a bed of coastal shrubs at the sharp bend that marks the approach to the both the harbour bridge and adjoining marina, the landscape of this corridor is still fundamentally shaped by the heavy industrial environment that it passes through. Moreover, because the road ramps up on its approach to the bend just mentioned, those looking down the road axis tend to overshoot Stella Passage, visually, with their attention fleetingly directed towards the containers on the far side of the sea channel. Otherwise, most attention is directed towards the adjoining tanks and other structures, or the looming bend and surrounding traffic.

As a result, this viewpoint has little aesthetic appeal or intrinsic value, other than offering a strong degree of contrast to the expansive views that open up once on the harbour bridge (Viewpoint 1).

Legibility / Prominence:

Views from the roadway approaching Stella Passage would probably capture berthed log carriers at the proposed wharves, together with light towers, log stacks and even some of the activity associated with loading berthed vessels directly west of Te Awanui Drive. At times, container ships and cranes on the far side of Stella Passage – south of Berths 23-25 – would also be very briefly visible. However, such exposure would typically occur in the context of the road environment described above and, in most cases, would be from vehicles travelling at close to 80kmh through a sharp, 90 degree bend. As a result, any visual connection with the various structures and vessels associated with the proposed berths and reclamation (which would remain largely unseen in their own right) would be fleeting at most.

Landscape Effects:

In addition, the environment framing such interaction would be, as now, dominated by a layering of industrial, then port, structures and facilities. At worst, therefore, the proposed storage, loading and transporting of logs, together with related shipping activity, would simply affirm the existing qualities of this port / industrial area, without either enhancing or further degrading its aesthetic qualities and essential character.

More likely, the activity associated with freighters ‘almost within touching distance’ beyond the end of Hewletts Road might well add some interest and a degree of variety to an environment that is hardly redolent of such qualities at present. It could well enhance the more dynamic qualities of the port environment and create a sense of closer proximity to what is happening within that landscape. Overall, however, it seems most unlikely that the core character of the area framing Hewletts Road then Te Awanui Drive would greatly change. On the basis of this analysis, it is therefore considered most unlikely that the proposed POT development would appreciably affect the landscape values of Viewpoint 5 (and its surrounds) at all.

Natural Character Effects:

Similarly, Hewletts Road offers a very limited degree of connection with Stella Passage at present, and the fleeting views that are available towards the waterway are almost entirely through the lens of an extremely modified, industrial environment. As a result, it is considered that the proposed changes to the port area would have a negligible impact on natural character values associated with Stella Passage’s natural landforms and channel, its vegetation patterns, natural processes and mixture of land uses and activities. Any effects in relation to natural character values are therefore likely to be negligible.

VIEWPOINT 5 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:							
	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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Existing Values:

The views from Tauranga's CBD waterfront near Coronation Pier are extensive, sweeping from a glimpse of Mauao in the north, across the low arch of the harbour bridge and the lowlands around Tauranga Airport, to the Matapihi Peninsula and rail bridge, and the patchwork of farms and hills beyond – above Welcome Bay and Maungatapu. The open expanse of Waipu Bay fills the foreground and most of the middle distance of such views, with the profile of the harbour bridge – anchored by the Fresh Fish Market and Ballance works at each end – effectively separating the harbour catchment abutting Tauranga's CBD from the more distant port and Mt Maunganui. POT's container cranes and shipping operations lie on the far side of this natural point of demarcation in the landscape, and thus form part of the backdrop to the main area of attention within Waipu Bay itself and around its margins.

The outlook from this quarter mixes the more natural values of Waipu Bay's open waters and littoral margins with a low-lying patina of transport infrastructure, industrial premises, and suburban to rural-residential properties, that frame its flat plane. The CBD is also an important part of this enclosing 'frame'. As a whole, therefore, the outlook from around Coronation Pier is pleasant and attractive, but not particularly notable for any dramatic natural features or points of focus, other than a distant Mauao and the hills beyond Rangataua Bay to the south. Much more interest is found in the recently remodelled waterfront esplanade and its interplay with Tauranga's harbour fringe. Overall, therefore, Waipu Bay provides an appealing setting for Tauranga's CBD, but it is not spectacular, nor are its margins highly natural.

Legibility / Prominence:

The proposed container cranes at the southern end of the existing port would be slightly higher than those currently visible above and beyond the harbour bridge, and shipping next to the new container berths would be slightly more prominent than those the vessels that currently 'tie up' at the terminal. Even so, both would remain within the background of views from this viewpoint. The associated reclamation, new berths and development on the eastern side of Stella Passage would scarcely be visible at all.

Landscape Effects:

The new container cranes and closer vessels would have a little impact on the mix and interplay of landscape elements visible from near Coronation Pier; nor would it appreciably affect the overall character and values of that part of Tauranga Harbour beyond the harbour bridge – effectively within the more remote, visual 'backcloth' to Waipu Bay. The cranes and shipping would not impact on views to Mauao, remaining, as now, well to the right of its pyramidal form. As a result, any Landscape Effects would be of a Very Low order.

Natural Character Effects:

Similarly, the POT proposals would not appreciably affect Stella Passage's water channel, its natural landforms and vegetation patterns, its natural processes or mix of land uses and activities. The new cranes and shipping would also remain contained within part of the coastline that is strongly linked to current port activities and highly modified. Again, therefore any effects on Stella Passage's Natural Character values would be negligible.

(The Viewpoint 6 Summary Table is shown overleaf)

VIEWPOINT 6 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							
EFFECTS RATINGS:							
	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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Existing Values:

Currently, views from the Tauranga Bridge Marina, particularly its northern end near Pier A, are dominated by:

- The piers, berths, vessels, breakwaters, refuelling jetty, roading and rock armouring associated with the marina's internal layout and functions;
- The container terminal, Berths 23-25 and container cranes across Stella Passage;
- The southern end of the existing port facilities merging with Berth 16 and ships berthed at it on the 'near' side of the sea channel; and
- The Passage's actual water area – contained and 'subdivided' by a complex array of rock armouring, jetties and piers, ship berths, moorings and vessels.

This robust, maritime environment is devoid of natural features or elements and features apart from the iconic profile of Mauao at the northern end of Stella Passage and the line of pohutukawas between Te Awanui Drive and the Ballance fertiliser works. It is a hard edged, port dominated, environment that is more functional and utilitarian than aesthetic and 'pleasant' – although these qualities have a certain appeal in their own right. In particular, Viewpoint 7 and other nearby vantage points expose those using and visiting the marina to the workings and components of both the port and marina in a way that other vantage points around Tauranga Harbour generally don't. In particular, they offer a feeling of proximity to the comings and goings associated with the container terminal and its current wharves. Again, there is a dynamic quality to the landscape revealed from this locale, with a focus on both structures and activities that are much more structural and man-made than natural. This includes the margins of Stella Passage that are dominated by rock armouring and piled berths or piers, rather than natural landforms.

Overall, views from this quarter have appeal because of their exposure to a working maritime environment, one that is quite different to the many other bays, estuaries and water areas found around the rest of Tauranga Harbour.

Legibility / Prominence:

The new wharves, cranes and berthed vessels on the far side of Stella Passage would be very prominent in general from Viewpoint 7 and other nearby parts of the Tauranga Bridge Marina. However, this vantage point would also be, closer to, and more revealing of, the proposed berths and log handling facilities south of Berth 16 than most other parts of the marina. Both the new wharves and associated shipping would be very apparent just across the narrow channel that passes between the marina and Balance plant to connect Stella Passage with the northern end of Waipu Bay – near the Ngai Te Rangi Settlement Trust's Whareroa Marae.

Landscape Effects:

Presently, the far side of Stella Passage is largely defined by the profile of stacked containers and low sheds near Keith Allen Drive, whereas across the inlet through to Waipu Bay the coastline is notable for its rock armouring, small-scale port berths and moorings, stored POT equipment and the fuel tankers that unload at Berth 16. Extension of the current line of berths, cranes and shipping down the western side of the waterway would actually provide more definition for the Stella Passage landscape and containment in a positive sense – without greatly altering its essential character. The more dynamic qualities of this maritime environment would also be subtly enhanced by closer proximity to the expanded container wharves and shipping activity opposite the marina.

At the same time, expansion of the log handling wharves would build on an existing theme that is apparent down the eastern side of the Passage, although both the piled jetty and ships near the

channel under Te Awanui Drive would come close enough to potentially appear intrusive for some. Ships manoeuvring next to the new log handling berths could also cut into the profile of Mauao, even though berthed freighters, the actual wharves, lighting and other structures would stay clear of it. On the other hand, this coastal margin has little appeal in its own right at present and is clearly part of the current working port landscape – even if the scale of such structures and operations is less than elsewhere within the current waterway environs presently. As a result, any changes to the character and values of this part of the Passage would be limited at most.

In looking at the effects of the proposals on Viewpoint 7, it is also recognised that the marina itself is part of the working environment described above, and many of those experiencing the harbour in the course of boarding, using and unloading vessels within it inevitably view Stella Passage through the lens of activities associated with boating and human use of the wider harbour. Amenity and recreational values would be less directly focused on the immediate environment and more on those parts of Tauranga Harbour and beyond that they are preparing to visit or have returned from. In this context, the marina is also a smaller scale, extension of the port.

On balance, therefore, it is considered that the proposed POT developments would have a Low effect on current landscape values experienced from Viewpoint 7 and other parts of the marina.

Natural Character Effects:

Although the marina's public areas and piers offer clear views of, as well as up and down, Stella Passage, they reveal the sort of highly modified coastal margins and waterway described above. The proposed log handling berths, together with vessels lined up next to them, would encroach more deeply into the Passage's sea channel, but would otherwise be relatively benign in relation to natural landforms, vegetation, natural processes and land uses / activities simply because of this existing level of development and modification – much as for the other viewpoints assessed. The log handling wharves' encroachment into Stella Passage would be more obvious than from any of those other viewpoints, but given the nature of the existing coastal environment within it and the relative absence of even a modest level of natural character around the margins of both the existing port and marina, it is considered that any effects on such values would be a Low order, overall.

(The Viewpoint 7 Summary Table is shown overleaf)

VIEWPOINT 7 SUMMARY TABLE:

EXISTING VALUES:							
VALUE RATINGS:	VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Biophysical:							
Perceptual:							

EFFECTS RATINGS:	NO EFFECT / VERY LOW	LOW	LOW / MODERATE	MODERATE	MODERATE / HIGH	HIGH	SEVERE
LEGIBILITY / PROMINENCE:							
Visibility:							
LANDSCAPE EFFECTS:							
Elements & Patterns:							
Coherence/ Unity:							
Character / Identity:							
Key Features / Views:							
NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS:							
Sea Areas / Channels:							
Landform:							
Vegetation:							
Natural Processes:							
Uses / Activities:							

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5.3 EFFECTS SUMMARY

The following table summarises the effects ratings for all five viewpoints:

VIEWPOINT:	LANDSCAPE EFFECTS RATING:	NATURAL CHARACTER EFFECTS RATING:
VIEWPOINT 1. Tauranga Harbour Bridge	Low Effect	Low Effect
VIEWPOINT 2. Te Awanui Drive	Very Low Effect	Low / Very Low Effect
VIEWPOINT 3. Mauao	Very Low Effect	No Effect
VIEWPOINT 4. The Mall	No Effect	No Effect
VIEWPOINT 5. Hewletts Road	No Effect	No Effect
VIEWPOINT 6. Coronation Pier	Very Low Effect	No Effect
VIEWPOINT 7. Tauranga Bridge Marina	Low Effect	Low Effect

Key factors that have contributed to these low ratings can be summarised as follows:

Landscape Effects:

- The integration and visual merger of 'new' and 'old' berths / wharves, areas of hard standing, container and log handling areas, cranes, lighting, sheds and other structural elements in most views – including from the top of Mauao and The Mall's beachfront;
- The highly modified nature of Stella Passage and the current port environment – that clearly differentiate this part of the coastline from the rest of Tauranga Harbours;
- The highly modified and industrial nature of most of those areas subject to the berthage expansion and reclamation proposals;
- The clear point of division between Waipu Bay near Tauranga's CBD and Stella Passage established by the harbour bridge;
- The separation of development within most of the proposed development areas from key views of Mauao (accepting that this is not entirely the case in relation to the identified views from Waikari Marae and Ohauti Road, but that effects on these viewshafts are specifically addressed in the Tauranga City Plan);
- The very 'hard', utilitarian environment that frames views from Hewletts Road and Te Awanui Drive – most notably on the Mt Maunganui side of the Tauranga Bridge Marina;
- The flat viewing perspective past existing port areas, buildings, structures and shipping in relation to some vantage points – such as those near The Mall, around the lower southern periphery of Mauao, on Hewletts Road and within the Tauranga Bridge Marina;
- The more positive spatial qualities associated with greater enclosure and definition of Stella Passage by the proposed ships and containers cranes especially – helping to enhance the waterway's axial nature and form; and
- The closer degree of contact with the port's operational areas and activities that would be afforded by some public vantage points – that would be appreciated by some (though not all).

Natural Character Effects:

- The highly modified state of Stella Passage already, including the lining of most of its coastal edge by piled jetties, rock armouring, marina breakwaters, jetties and boat ramps;

- The presence of berthed ships, moored vessels and areas subject to consented dredging within the current waterway;
- A relative absence of natural vegetation that matches the highly modified state of local coastal landforms;
- Limited presence of natural processes other than tidal movements and some wave fetch within the sea channel: red beaked gulls and terns are also present – both feeding on schools of fish within Stella Passage and roosting on the rock armouring at the edge of the port – but these are the subject of a separate detailed assessment for POT;
- The alignment of the proposed uses, activities and structures with those already found within Stella Passage;
- The highly developed and modified state of that immediate environment, which establishes a (low) natural character benchmark for the Passage and its immediate hinterland.

Above all else, the integration and consolidation of port activities within part of the harbour that is already known for such activities is a key factor that has contributed to the low Landscape Effects and Natural Character Effects ratings, aided by the 'sleeving' of the proposed development areas and Stella Passage by other industrial premises, two marinas and related uses around the periphery of Sulphur Point and the Mt Maunganui port. Tauranga Harbour is physically very extensive, and its coastline embraces a wide range of land uses and biophysical conditions. However, as indicated in Section 2.0 of this report, the area within and immediately around Stella Passage lies towards the lower end of the naturalness spectrum – both in relation to landscape values and natural character values. This is clearly reflected in the ratings for effects in relation to both landscape and natural character.

It is also important to note that the proposed POT developments would reinforce and consolidate public perceptions of an area that already has a clearly defined identity. The proposed wharf extensions and reclamation would not appreciably alter the identity and sense of place of an area that is already closely associated with existing port, and related maritime, operations.

6.0 NIGHT-TIME EFFECTS

New light towers, together with lights on the five proposed container cranes and berthed ships, and headlight wash within the expanded area of port operations would all contribute to a more 'lit up' environment around Stella Passage. Potential effects derived from this lighting can be divided into those that directly impact on residential amenity, or other amenity values, and therefore have a 'nuisance' value, and those that adversely affect the aesthetic nature and appeal of the night-time 'landscape'. Nuisance effects embody a clear sense of intrusion or incursion in relation to particular receiving environments and communities / audiences, whereas effects on the night-time environment tend to be more subtle. In fact, effects derived from lighting have a limited impact on landscape values *per se*, simply because most landscape elements and features become increasingly shrouded in darkness as night falls. Nevertheless, lighting can have an aesthetic impact upon:

- the relative visual presence and 'intactness' of the night sky and its canvas of stars; and
- the relative blackness, solitude and remoteness associated with some locations at night-time.

The prominence of night lighting can sometimes be further exacerbated by the flashing and 'sweeping' of some lights at night-time – often associated with vehicle movements and warning lights.

To assist with evaluation of such effects, **Attachments 15-19** capture views towards the port and both of its expansion areas from the following locations:

- Viewpoint 11. **Pillans Road Reserve** (overlooking the Otumoetai Estuary)
- Viewpoint 12. **Tauranga Harbour Bridge**
- Viewpoint 13. **Whareroa Boat Ramp** (next to Whareroa Marae Reserve)
- Viewpoint 14. **Sunderland Avenue**
- Viewpoint 15. **The Mall, Pilot Bay**

Tauranga Harbour Bridge currently offers the most expansive views of both the current port and Stella Passage. Activities around the existing container terminal and log handling wharves are already brightly lit and provide a strong focal point, while the flow of traffic across the bridge also commands attention – at the expense of the night sky and its more passive, scenic, qualities. This is also the case in relation to views from Pilot Bay, with the brightly lit, container terminal and outer port already a major point of focus in views from The Mall and its beach reserve.

By contrast, views from Pillans Avenue, on the edge of Otumoetai, and Sunderland Avenue, on part of the main dune ridge within Mt Maunganui's residential area, are more limited by 'darkened areas' created by the western side of the container terminal and the large industrial area stretching down the eastern side of Totara Street – both of which are relatively 'quiet' at night-time. Light associated with the current container and existing port light towers rise above these intervening areas to create a halo of light that is clearly apparent on the skyline, although most lighting and activity closer to ground and sea level is almost entirely screened from view. Of the five viewpoints examined in detail, that near the Whareroa Marae is least affected by the port's current lighting. Instead, it is the activity and lighting along Te Awanui Drive that captures most attention near the boat ramp and marae, with little visual incursion or intrusion apparent in relation to the port's present lighting and activities.

Even so, none of the viewpoints examined could be regarded as particularly tranquil and / or strongly focused on the night sky. Four of the five viewpoints already reveal a significant level of interaction with the port's existing container terminal and lighting down its other wharves, while views from the harbour bridge offer a dynamic overview of Stella Passage and its already strongly lit margins – which

include the marina near the very foot of the bridge. Only the Whareroa Boat Ramp offers any real sense of seclusion and appreciable separation from the existing port area and its night-time environs.

Having said this, both Viewpoints 11 and 14 (Pillans Road and Sunderland Avenue) reveal a higher level of exposure to the port than most neighbouring residential areas. Consequently, the greater bulk of residential Otumoetai and Mt Maunganui are also substantially screened from the port by intervening development and landforms and it appears likely that this would remain the case even with the proposed port expansion.

Given the urban nature of the majority of views associated with Viewpoints 1-5 – and those experienced from within Tauranga and Mt Maunganui generally – there is little likelihood that the expanded area of port operations and lighting would affect the more subtle night-time values outlined above, including any feelings of remoteness, solitude, quietude (visually), or appreciation of a ‘dark sky’. The night sky may well be visible, but the existing light environment of Tauranga’s urban / suburban areas already diminishes appreciation of it as a ‘window on the stars’.

At the same time, the existing container terminal and sheds near Keith Allen Drive on Sulphur Point, together with the Totara Street industrial area and Bay Oval provide a sizeable buffer between the port and its nearest residential ‘neighbours’ on the edges of Otumoetai and northern Mt Maunganui. Moreover, these areas are already exposed to part of the port’s night-time environment – associated with the light towers and cranes both sides of Stella Passage. As a result, the fundamental nature of the night-time environment wouldn’t therefore change with expansion of the port, and the new lighting anticipated – on towers, cranes and ships, for the most part – would have an incremental effect, rather than appearing new and different. Looking towards the expanded port from the direction of Pilot Bay (Viewpoint 5), the additional lighting would sit behind and beyond that already associated with the port’s Mt Maunganui wharves and the container terminal near the mouth of Stella Passage.

The situation in relation to the Whareroa Boat Marae is somewhat different as the extended container terminal and its lighting would become visible beyond Te Awanui Drive, on the far side of Stella Passage, in a way, and to an extent, that is not presently apparent. Yet, awareness of this increased lighting would still be limited by the physical presence and intervention of the Ballance fertiliser works; while Te Awanui Drive, the boat ramp car park and even the marae grounds – which turn away from Stella Passage to address Taiaho Place – would all help to buffer the whareniui and nearby marae housing from the extended container terminal.

Contrasting with these situations, the additional lighting may well invigorate views from the harbour bridge and increase the sense of engagement between the port and very large viewing audience that traverses the harbour bridge on a daily basis. It would create more of a night-time spectacle and sense of drama when looking down the harbour channel towards the current container terminal and the Mt Maunganui’s well-lit commercial centre.

Overall, therefore, it is recognised that the proposed port expansion proposals would have an effect on several catchments represented by the viewpoints set out above. However, such effects would typically be of a low order and incremental in nature. The proposed lighting would not give rise to any significant ‘nuisance’ effects and would not appreciably alter or degrade the nature and intactness of Tauranga’s night sky. On the other hand, they might well might well enhance the night-time presence and drama of the port when viewed from some public vantage points, like the harbour bridge.

7.0 STATUTORY ASSESSMENT

As indicated above, the areas of proposed wharf extension and reclamation are closely aligned with those identified in Schedule 9 of the BOPRCEP, while the structural elements of the applications are consistent with the structures accommodated by the Industrial Zone provisions of the Tauranga City Plan, including in relation to the viewshafts from Waikari Marae and Ohauti Road to Mauao.

This report has addressed the effects of the proposed developments. It is considered that the wharf extensions would generate no effects that go appreciably beyond those anticipated in relation to Schedule 9, while the operation of container cranes south of the 288m limit indicated in the operative city plan would have no appreciable effect above and beyond that foreshadowed by the Tauranga City Plan provisions – for all of the reasons set out above.

In response to the four 'key questions' outlined in Section 4.3 of this report, it is considered that:

1. The proposed developments would have a very limited impact on the character of Stella Passage, and in relation to some perceptual / design qualities may ultimately enhance aspects of the current environment by more clearly defining its margins and providing a stronger degree of focus on both its waterway and even Mauao.
2. The proposed port expansion would maintain and preserve the limited natural character values currently associated with Stella Passage and the wider harbour.
3. The proposed port expansion would enhance the wider community's visual access to the port area and otherwise protect the *'open space, [physical] public access and amenity values of the coastal environment'* – including the identity and sense of place associated with Stella Passage as part of Tauranga Harbour.
4. The effects generated by the POT proposals would stay essentially within the bounds of those effects implicit in Schedule 9 of the BOPRCEP and the Industrial Zone provisions of the Tauranga City Plan.

In a more generic vein, it is considered that the POT applications would generate effects that are consistently of a Low order, and typically *de minimis*. This includes effects on the landscape character and values of Tauranga Harbour, including those areas that also have greater amenity value around Mauao, The Mall and Tauranga's Coronation Pier waterfront. Furthermore, with regard to Policies 13 (1) and 15 of the NZCPS, it is considered that both the natural character effects and landscape effects arising from the proposed developments would fall short of the 'significant adverse effects' threshold set out in those policies (see Section 4.1 above).

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this assessment, including evaluation of the POT applications against relevant statutory provisions, it is considered that the proposed berthage and reclamation developments proposed for Stella Passage are appropriate in terms of its landscape and natural character effects.



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