

Waikōwhai Walkway Action Plan

2018

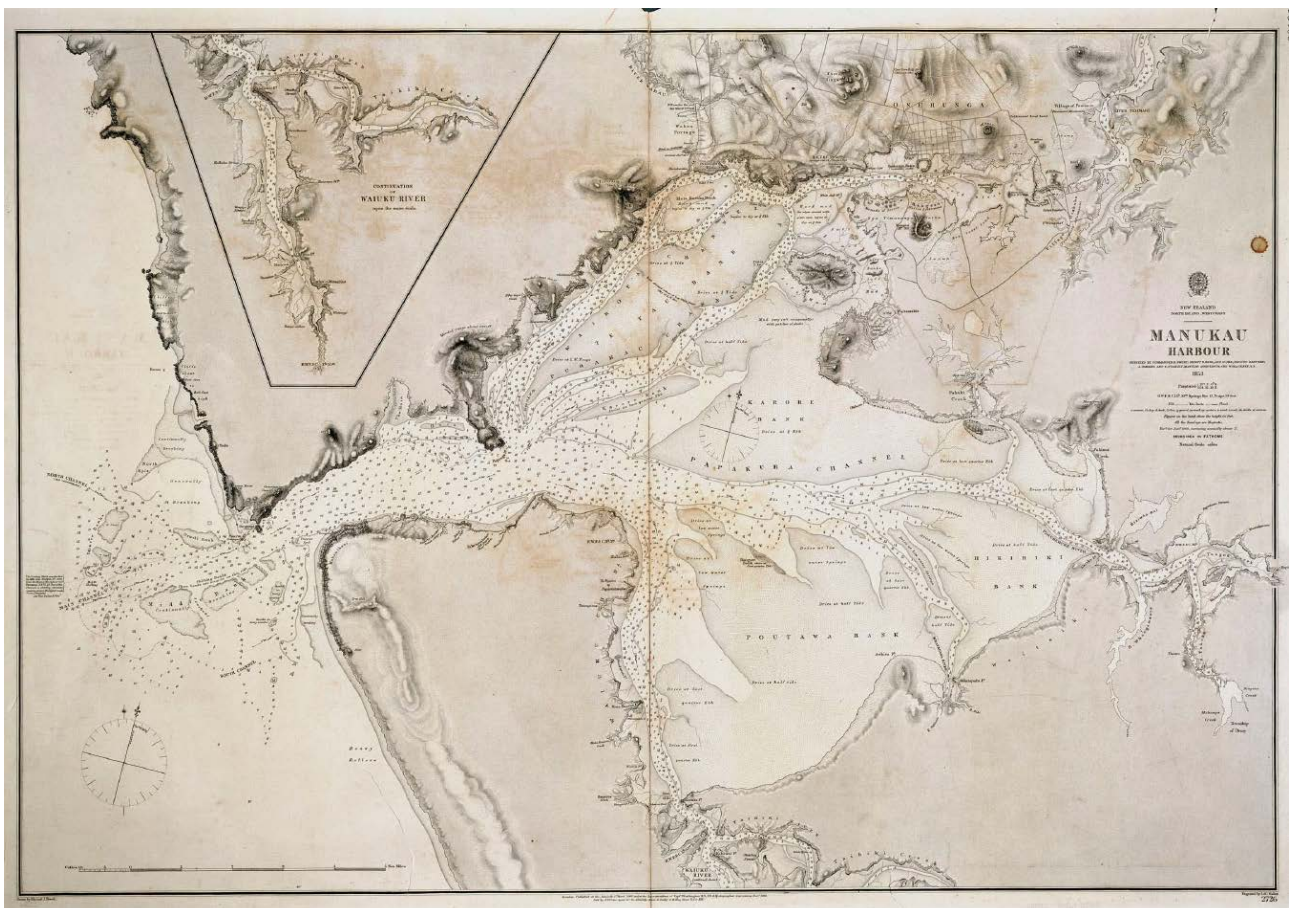


**Produced by Parks Services,
Auckland Council
for the Puketāpapa Local Board**



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1 Introduction

The Manukau Harbour is an iconic landscape feature within Auckland, also acting as one of the largest feeding and roosting grounds in New Zealand for both migratory and resident birdlife. In recent years there has been a growing desire from Aucklanders to connect with, and see the the mana (life) of the harbour restored.

Contiguous coastal forest running from Onehunga to Lynfield Cove along the northern edge of the Manukau Harbour forms the southern extent of the Puketāpapa Local Board area. This forest is an ecological hotspot for the central isthmus of the city of Auckland, providing key habitat for native flora and fauna, and acting as an ecological corridor for native birdlife. Significant cultural heritage sites are also located along the coastline, reflecting the harbour's rich Maori and European history.

A series of connected walking trails known as the 'Waikōwhai Walkway' run through the sixteen local parks and esplanade reserves along this section of the coast, connecting up each end of the network with only a few remaining diversions along local roads. These trails provide opportunities to the public for recreation and to connect with nature. With the temporary closure of a number of tracks in the Waitakere Ranges occurring in 2018, the Waikōwhai Coast is now seen to provide one of the best bush walking experiences of the Auckland region. Use of the walkway is expected to increase accordingly.

Protection and enhancement of the ecological, recreational and heritage values of the Manukau Harbour foreshore is one of the key outcomes which has consistently been identified in the Puketāpapa Local Board Plan. The board's goal is to enhance the ecological and biodiversity values of the foreshore area with the help of the local community. It is also to further develop the network of walkways along the coast, with a long-term goal of a contiguous off-road trail from Lynfield to Onehunga.

The Manukau Coastal Walkway Development Plan 2013 provided an overview of actions needed to achieve this long term goal, helping to set direction for future development along the coast.

This Action Plan is a review of the previous development plan and assesses progress made in the past five years. It outlines renewal and development priorities for the walkway and associated infrastructure for the next five to ten years.

2 Background

Various walkways and tracks have been constructed in parks and open spaces along the Manukau coastal edge in the past century, spanning from Penrose to Green Bay. These walkways are not always linked, and for years were developed in isolation to one another. This has resulted in a complex and indirect route for those looking to walk its full length.

The concept of developing a continuous walkway along the coast had been discussed for many years, but was finally formalised in the Manukau Harbour Coastal Reserves Draft Management Plan in 2007, with the objective of providing an efficient, safe and relatively unstructured pedestrian access for a variety of users, with a priority for pedestrian use.

Building from the draft management plan, feasibility investigations were carried out looking at walkways within the Waikōwhai Coast area. This resulted in the production of the Manukau Coastal Reserves Structure and Track Assessment Plan 2010.

The report concluded that while 50% of existing tracks fell below the required standard (Short Stop Traveller), it was feasible to upgrade most tracks to this level. Development of new tracks to link existing sections was also deemed feasible, though would involve complex resource consenting processes due to working within a significant ecological area and/or coastal marine area.

Investigations culminated in the production of a development plan in 2013, with the aim of presenting a cohesive plan for the Waikōwhai Walkway, including priorities for future development and renewal. Many of the highest priority renewals have been completed since. In addition, the highest priority new route which runs from Taumanu Reserve in Onehunga to Taylors Bay Road Reserve, is currently in its final design and delivery stage.

Numerous other investigations and assessments have been carried out within the Waikōwhai Coast, including a Biodiversity Management Plan (2012), Ecological Assessment (2014), Archaeological Assessment (2014), Heritage Assessment (2014) and Wayfinding Audit (2014).

Information from these reports will be presented in the Action Plan where appropriate, to ensure that the plan provides a holistic picture of future development of the Waikōwhai Walkway in Puketāpapa.

3 Development Plan 2013

The Development Plan for the Waikōwhai Walkway made a number of suggestions related to development and promotion of the walkway. The following is a progress check to outline what has been done in the last five years under each category, and help prioritise effort moving forward:

- *Branding and Promotion*

In 2013, the walkway did not have a recognisable name, nor any branding or promotions in print or online. A number of recommendations were made to increase public awareness of the walkway. Since then the walkway was branded as the 'Waikōwhai Walkway', and both print and digital media in the form of brochures and maps were developed. An assessment of signage identified a number of new signs to improve wayfinding along the walkway, the majority of which have been installed. Finally, a guided walking event along the walkway was held in 2015 and 2016. Continued promotion of the walkway should be a priority, utilising these developed resources, and any final wayfinding signage delivered.

- *Greenways Connections*

The Puketāpapa Greenways Plan was adopted in 2013. It included the Waikōwhai Walkway as a key greenways link. The plan identified connections from the coast to other greenway routes inland which would be required to improve access to the walkway. A review of the Greenways Plan in 2017 included several key routes to connect the existing cycling / walking infrastructure in Mt Roskill and Hillsborough to the coast, which are being considered alongside other routes for funding in future years. Integration with other local board areas was also highlighted as an opportunity in 2013. This has been delivered with a new coastal boardwalk connecting to a key greenways route in Maungakiekie-Tamaki at Taumanu Reserve, and a connection to the Whau Local Board at Lynfield Cove/Blockhouse Bay being flagged for future delivery.

- *Ecological, Landscape and Cultural Values*

The Waikōwhai Coast possesses significant ecological and landscape values. This is captured in the Manukau Coastal Reserves Network Biodiversity Plan, the Auckland Council Regional Plan: Coastal, and more recently in the Auckland Unitary Plan. Waikōwhai is the largest stretch of contiguous coastal forest in the Auckland Isthmus, and its interface with the coastal marine area of the Manukau Harbour. There are also a number of identified archaeological sites associated with previous Maori occupation and use along the coastal edge, as well as significant European historical heritage. Ecological, landscape and cultural values continue to be considered during the development or renewal of walkway sections and assets, typically in the investigation and design phase and during the resource consent process.

- *Coastal Stability*

The Waitemata sandstone and mudstone slopes and cliffs along the coastal edge are subject to a number of erosion processes. This was highlighted as a key consideration in 2013. Significant earth slides have been recorded in a number of the coastal reserves in the last five years, including at Cape Horn, and within Manukau Domain. It is expected that coastal erosion processes will be more pronounced in future years due to climate change, and as such minimising coastal erosion remains a core goal. Current and future land stability and potential increases in sea level must continue to be considered during the design of new/renewed walkways and structures.

- *Community Engagement*

In 2013, many locals and wider Auckland residents were unaware of what the Manukau Coastal reserves network had to offer. Additionally, landowners close to the walkway had concerns about how proposed walkway development would affect them. Close consultation with neighbours on projects including Cape Horn Pine Removal, walkway renewals and stages one and two of the Coastal Boardwalk Project in recent years has raised public trust to deliver these projects. Investment and promotion has also led to increased appreciation of the walkway by the local community, who largely see it as a benefit of living in the area. This has been reflected in increased usage of the walkway, presumably by both local and wider Auckland residents. Continued targeted engagement with the local community is vital to ensure the success of future development and renewal of the walkway in the next 10 years.

- *Cost*

Difficult topography requiring foreshore structures can lead to a higher cost for walkway development. The monetary costs of proposed new walkways will need to be weighed against the benefits in terms of facilitating public access to and along the coast and the public's connection with nature in this unique part of Auckland.

Cost estimates from in 2013 need review, and any future development will have to be investigated thoroughly to ensure accurate costings are provided. This will enable the Puketāpapa Local Board to make informed decisions to ensure the greatest benefit to Aucklanders. This Action Plan does not provide costing estimates. This will be part of an investigation and design phase.

4 Action Plan 2018

4.1 - Methodology

Onsite assessments of the Waikōwhai Walkway were made across its entire length on two occasions in mid-2017 by Auckland Council staff. The current condition of all sections of walkway and of all existing assets was recorded, as well as potential opportunities for further development or improvement.

This information was then compared to the Auckland Council asset condition criteria, provided by the AMIS Team, and with information from previous documents including the signage audit and development plan.

Actions were split into two categories for prioritisation by parks staff; renewal of old or development of new. For renewals, prioritisation focused heavily on the on-site condition assessment and asset scores. Health and safety issues and the usability of each asset helped in this prioritisation. New walkway development was prioritised by assessing how each route would contribute to the creation of a contiguous off-road walking route. Routes which reduced the amount of on-road walking time were prioritised. This largely replicated the order of the prioritised list put forward in the development plan, with some exceptions.

4.2 – Preferred Route

Unlike the development plan, this action plan focuses on the core route of the Waikōwhai Walkway. The following maps emphasize the long term preferred route in bold. This helps to reinforce the ambition of the wider project, to outline a contiguous walking route from Onehunga to Blockhouse Bay.

Supporting routes are less pronounced in each map, but are no less important to the usability and wider connection of the walkway.

Though this is the preferred route, once each of the proposed routes are more thoroughly assessed, it is possible that the significant ecological, landscape and cultural values of the site may prevent some of these connections from being implemented.

4.3 – Walkway Map



LEGEND:

- Open Space
- Existing / completed walkway connection
- Existing / completed walkway on road
- Existing / completed walkway on open space
- Proposed walkway
- Low tide only route



DEVELOPMENT		RENEWALS	
Low Priority	High Priority	Low Priority	High Priority
1. Proposed walkway - Lynfield Cove to Flounder Bay 2. Proposed walkway - Wairaki Stream Reserve connection 3. Proposed walkway - Marco Polo Avenue path connection 8. Proposed walkway - Sylvania Crescent headland	6. Proposed walkway - Manukau Domain to Lynfield Cove track 7. Proposed walkway - Manukau Domain track extensions 12. Proposed walkway - Waikōwhai Bay to Cape Horn lookout 14. Proposed walkway - Waikōwhai Bay track connection 17. Proposed walkway - Kingswood Reserve to Wesley bay 20. Proposed walkway - Grannys Bay to Kingswood Reserve	11. Walkway renewal - Wattle Bay to Cape Horn lookout junction 13. Walkway renewal - Waikōwhai Bay to Cape Horn road 21. Walkway renewal - Hoskins Avenue to Bagley Street 22. Walkway renewal - Hillsborough Reserve lookout to Goodall Street	4. Walkway renewal - Strathnaver Crescent to Lynfield Cove Reserve lookout (point 7) 5. Walkway renewal - stairs from Niagra Crescent 9. Walkway renewal - Sylvania Crescent to Wattle Bay 10. Walkway renewal - Wattle Bay coastline 15. Walkway renewal - changes to walkway as per Waikōwhai Park concept plan 2018 (delivered as part of closed landfill works) 16. Walkway renewal - Captains Bush down to Kingswood Reseve (land slip) 18. Walkway renewal - Aldersgate coastline 19. Walkway renewal - Aldersgate Road to Aldersgate coastline 23. Walkway renewal - Belfast reserve paths

4.4 – Asset Map



LEGEND:

- | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Open Space | Proposed walkway | Existing Playground | Proposed playground | Park bench |
| Existing / completed walkway connection | Low tide only route | Existing Toilet | Proposed toilet | |
| Existing / completed walkway on road | | Existing drinking fountain | Proposed drinking fountain | |
| Existing / completed walkway on open space | | Existing picnic area | Existing signage | |



- | | |
|---|--|
| A Wairaki Stream Reserve | G Proposed new seating |
| • Proposed drinking fountain | |
| • Relocate park ID plinth sign | |
| B Signage renewal | H Waikōwhai Park |
| C Proposed new signage | • Walkway recently renewed |
| D Signage missing - requires renewal | • Road requires renewal |
| E Signage proposed to be removed | • Playground due for renewal 2018 / 2019 |
| F Manukau Domain | • Major changes with landfill works |
| Recommend whole of park assessment. | • Proposed drinking fountain |
| To consider: | I Belfast Reserve |
| • play | • Signage and seating require renewal |
| • toilet | |
| • drinking fountain | |
| • other amenity upgrades | |

4.5 – Area One



LEGEND:

- Open Space
- ↔ Existing / completed walkway connection
- Existing / completed walkway on road
- - - Existing / completed walkway on open space
- Proposed walkway
- - - Low tide only route
- Existing Playground
- Existing Toilet
- Existing drinking fountain
- Existing picnic area
- Proposed playground
- Proposed toilet
- Proposed drinking fountain
- Existing signage
- Park bench

WALKWAYS

DEVELOPMENT		RENEWAL
Low Priority	High Priority	High Priority
1. Proposed walkway - Lynfield Cove to Flounder Bay	6. Proposed walkway - Manukau Domain to Lynfield Cove track	4. Walkway renewal - Strathnaver Crescent to Lynfield Cove Reserve lookout (point 7)
2. Proposed Walkway - Wairaki Stream Reserve connection	7. Proposed walkway - Manukau Domain track extensions	5. Walkway renewal - stairs from Niagra Crescent
3. Proposed walkway - Marco Polo Avenue path connection		
8. Proposed walkway - Sylvania Crescent headland		

ASSETS

- A** Wairaki Stream Reserve
 - Proposed drinking fountain
 - Relocate park ID plinth sign
- B** Signage renewal
- C** Proposed new signage
- D** Signage missing - requires renewal
- E** Signage proposed to be removed
- F** Manukau Domain
 - Recommend whole of park assessment.
 - To consider:
 - play
 - toilet
 - drinking fountain
 - other amenity upgrades

4.6 – Area Two



LEGEND:

- Open Space
- Existing / completed walkway connection
- Existing / completed walkway on road
- Existing / completed walkway on open space
- Proposed walkway
- Low tide only route
- Existing Playground
- Existing Toilet
- Existing drinking fountain
- Existing picnic area
- Proposed playground
- Proposed toilet
- Proposed drinking fountain
- Existing signage
- Park bench



WALKWAYS

DEVELOPMENT		RENEWALS	
Low Priority	High Priority	Low Priority	High Priority
8. Proposed walkway - Sylvania Crescent headland	12. Proposed walkway Waikōwhai Bay to Cape Horn lookout 14. Proposed walkway - Waikōwhai Bay track connection 17. Proposed walkway - Kingswood Reserve to Wesley bay 20. Proposed walkway - Grannys Bay to Kingswood Reserve	11. Walkway renewal - Wattle Bay to Cape Horn Lookout junction 13. Walkway renewal - Waikōwhai Bay to Cape Horn road 21. Walkway renewal - Hoskins Avenue to Bagley Street	9. Walkway renewal - Sylvania Crescent to Wattle Bay 10. Walkway renewal - Wattle Bay coastline 15. Walkway renewal - changes to walkway as per Waikōwhai Park concept plan 2018 16. Walkway renewal - Captains Bush down to Kingswood Reserve (land slip) 18. Walkway renewal - Aldersgate coastline 19. Walkway renewal - Aldersgate Road to Aldersgate coastline

ASSETS

- Proposed new signage
- Proposed new seating
- Waikōwhai Park
 - Walkway recently renewed
 - Road requires renewal
 - Playground due for renewal 2018 / 2019
 - Major changes with landfill works
 - Proposed drinking fountain

4.7 – Area Three



LEGEND:

- Open Space
- 🏞️ Existing Playground
- 🚶 Existing / completed walkway connection
- 🚻 Existing Toilet
- 🛤️ Existing / completed walkway on road
- 🚰 Existing drinking fountain
- 🌳 Existing / completed walkway on open space
- 🌳 Existing picnic area
- 👉 Proposed walkway
- 🎠 Proposed playground
- 🌊 Low tide only route
- 🚻 Proposed toilet
- 🚰 Proposed drinking fountain
- 📍 Existing signage
- 🪑 Park bench

WALKWAYS

RENEWALS	
Low Priority	High Priority
21. Walkway renewal - Hoskins Avenue to Bagley Street	23. Walkway renewal - Belfast reserve paths
22. Walkway renewal - Hillsborough Reserve lookout to Goodall Street	

- ASSETS**
- 📍 Proposed new signage
 - 🗑️ Signage proposed to be removed
 - 🪑 Proposed new seating
 - 📍 Belfast Reserve
 - Signage and seating require renewal

4.8 – Priority Projects

Parks Services staff have prioritised new walkway development.

Each route was assessed on how it would contribute to the end goal of a contiguous off-road walking route, building off the existing walkway network. Routes which reduced the amount of on-road walking time were considered more important than those that did not. Cost was not considered during this prioritisation, as all of the routes are likely to require significant investment.

Walkway Development	
1	Manukau Domain to Lynfield Cove track
2	Manukau Domain track extensions
3	Kingswood Reserve to Wesley Bay
4	Waikowhai Bay to Cape Horn lookout
5	Waikowhai Park track connection (minor)
5	Waikowhai Bay track connection
7	Grannys Bay to Kingswood Reserve
8	Sylvania Crescent headland
9	Wairaki Stream Reserve connection
10	Marco Polo Avenue path connection
11	Lynfield Cove to Flounder Bay

The Manukau Domain to Lynfield Cove connection was prioritised as it removes one of the most urbanised on-road sections of the walkway, which runs along a main arterial road. Other high priority connections include the Kingswood Reserve to Wesley Bay section to create a short all-tide linkage, and the Waikōwhai Bay to Cape Horn connection to activate one of the most spectacular stretches of the Waikōwhai coast.

Considered lower priority are arterial tracks which connect to the main walkway including through Wairaki Stream Reserve, and from Marco Polo Avenue, as well as the Lynfield Cove to Flounder Bay connection as this would require collaboration and funding assistance from the Whau Local Board.

Prioritisation of renewals focuses heavily on the on-site condition assessments and renewal criteria scores analysed at the beginning of the project. Walkways or assets which presented health and safety issues or were no longer usable or functional were considered higher priority than others. Additionally, if an asset was considered to be used more frequently, it was placed higher up the list of priorities.

Renewal Priorities	
1	Captains Bush (walkway to Kingswood beach)
2	Wattle Bay (from Sylvania Crescent & along water)
3	Lynfield Cove walkway (Strathnover to Niagra)
4	Belfast Reserve (all tracks and signs)
5	Aldersgate Esplanade (kingswood to aldersgate rd)
6	Hillsborough Reserve (Hoskins Ave to Bagley St)
7	Waikowhai Entry track from Cape Horn Rd
8	Hillsborough Cemetery tracks
9	Lynfield Cove walkway (Niagra to lookout)
10	Signage Renewals (several identified signs)

Renewal of slips at Captains Bush, and highly overgrown and narrow sections of track at Wattle Bay are priorities. Areas such as Lynfield Cove and Belfast Reserve are in poor condition also and will require renewal in the short term.

Tracks and assets across the length of the walkway will continue to degrade, and this list will need to be updated and reprioritised in future years.

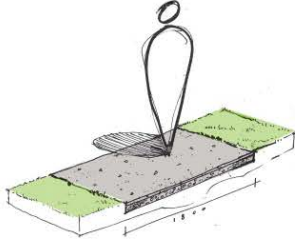
4.9 – Design Guidelines

Design guidelines were produced to help ensure uniformity in design for all renewal and development projects in future, and to keep a consistent feel to the walkway. These guidelines (presented on the following page) are intended as a guide and may not be appropriate for all situations.

Paths

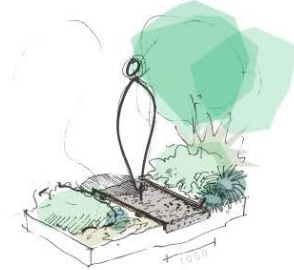
ALL WEATHER PATH

- Paths to be minimum 1.8m wide, as appropriate per site. Concrete at neighbourhood park or exposed aggregate.



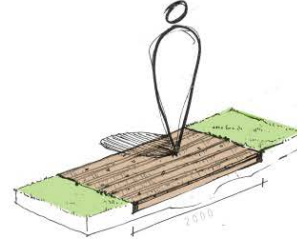
INFORMAL TRACK

- Standard 1m wide. Compacted soil or gravel with a timber frame.



BOARDWALK

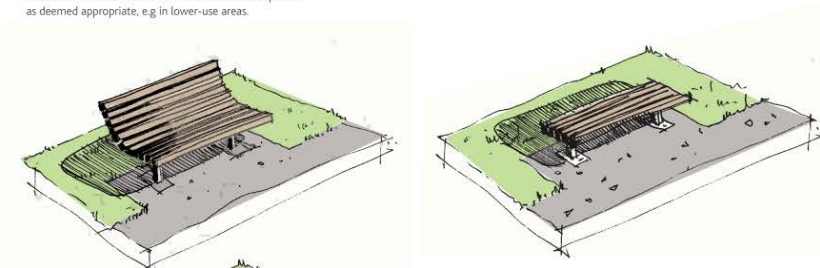
- Standard 2m wide. Timber decking.



Seating

STANDARD

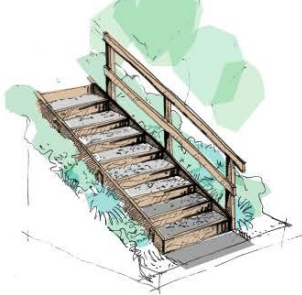
- Standard 'Portland' bench seats with a back are to be located along main paths and within picnic areas. Installation of seats without a back are to be site specific as deemed appropriate, e.g. in lower-use areas.



Stairs

ALL STAIR CASES

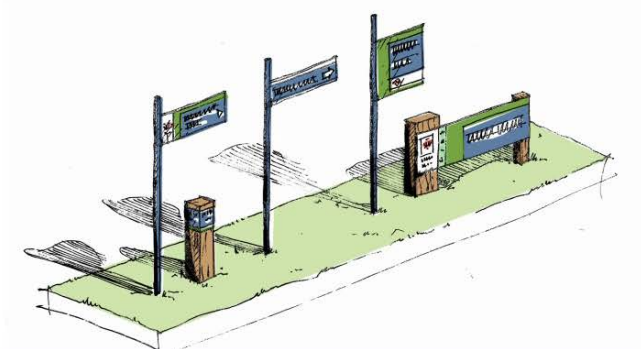
- Generally, timber boxing and gravel fill with timber hand rail (one or both sides depending on conditions)



Signage

WAY FINDING

- Consistent with Auckland Council signage strategy for way finding signage.
- Content to have input from Friends of Oakley Creek and local iwi.



INTERPRETIVE

- Consistent with Auckland Council signage strategy for interpretive signage. Example below as per shared path signage proposed for Waterview project. The use of basalt rocks at the base of the sign is optional but may help to reinforce the Park's identity.
- Content to be coordinated with Friends of Oakley Creek and local iwi and to include Friends of Oakley Creek logo, and tohu bands.



4.10 – Closing Statement

The iconic nature of the Waikowhai Coast, and its importance to the ecology, landscape and cultural richness of the area make it a stand out feature of the Puketāpapa Local Board area. The Waikōwhai Walkway itself helps to activate this coast, enabling local residents and members of the public from across Auckland to be active, socialise, and connect with nature. The popularity of the walkway is only likely to grow as Auckland increases in density, and changes to access of public spaces due to environmental pressures elsewhere lead to people exploring new walkways.

Continued investment into the Waikōwhai Walkway through both renewals and new developments will help to improve walking experiences for Aucklanders, and will ensure that it continues to make a positive impact on the region.

