



reclaiming
kaiwharawhara:
as Wellington's
northern gateway

scoping paper

prepared for Trelissick Park Group
with funding from Greater Wellington Regional Council

December 2009



Why do we need this study?

The Kaiwharawhara Stream, estuary and surrounding reclamation is a significant site for the city. Kaiwharawhara is the largest stream system in Wellington City, and it is one of the few remaining tributaries with a natural estuary mouth into the harbour; is an important ecological corridor; forms a prominent gateway to the city - by ferry, rail and car; the reclamation has significant commercial value; and is a desirable recreational destination and link within the Sanctuary to Sea Walkway and the proposed Great Harbour Way - Te Aranui o Poneke project.

A considerable amount of information, resources and interest have been directed at the wider Kaiwharawhara catchment over the past ten or so years, but few substantive improvements have occurred on the reclamation area and estuary mouth. This can be attributed to a number of challenges, including a range of conflicting interests, and fragmented ownership. Without a co-ordinated and collaborative effort future progress will continue to be stifled and commercial development of the reclamation area may come at a cost to the estuary.

It is timely to be addressing the future of Kaiwharawhara Stream, its estuary and the surrounding reclamation given the current emphasis on improving biodiversity in the region, the recent launch of the Great Harbour Way strategy, Wellington City Council's 30-year framework for Wellington's Central City, and Centreport's current strategic review of the port area.

What are we trying to achieve?

This scoping paper provides the rationale and anticipated process for undertaking a comprehensive 'issues and opportunities' report for the Kaiwharawhara Stream, estuary and surrounding reclamation. This document would provide a strategic, forward looking vision, including key principles and recommendations for future management and enhancement of this site.

The report would seek to:

- Co-ordinate existing information and fill any critical information gaps;
- Identify key recreational, ecological and cultural issues and opportunities;
- Develop a strategic plan and/ or a set of guiding principles for the future enhancement of the site;
- Reconcile ecological, recreational, commercial and other key issues to provide 'win-win' outcomes for all parties;
- Provide a platform for building alliances, buy-in and commitment from key parties.

What is the extent of the study area?

To effectively understand and integrate the various issues, the report would initially consider how the site fits within the broader context of the Kaiwharawhara catchment and how it can be co-ordinated with other council and community initiatives for restoration of the stream. The catchment has its headwaters in the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and flows through Otari-Wilton Bush and Trelissick Park before entering the Harbour at the estuary mouth near the reclamation (refer Figure 1). The stream has lost much of its original vegetation and natural character in the lower reaches and no longer contains the sequence of plant and animal communities that would have occurred between the upper stream and lower catchment estuarine environments.

The stream was identified in 2004 as one of the region's six most degraded water bodies.

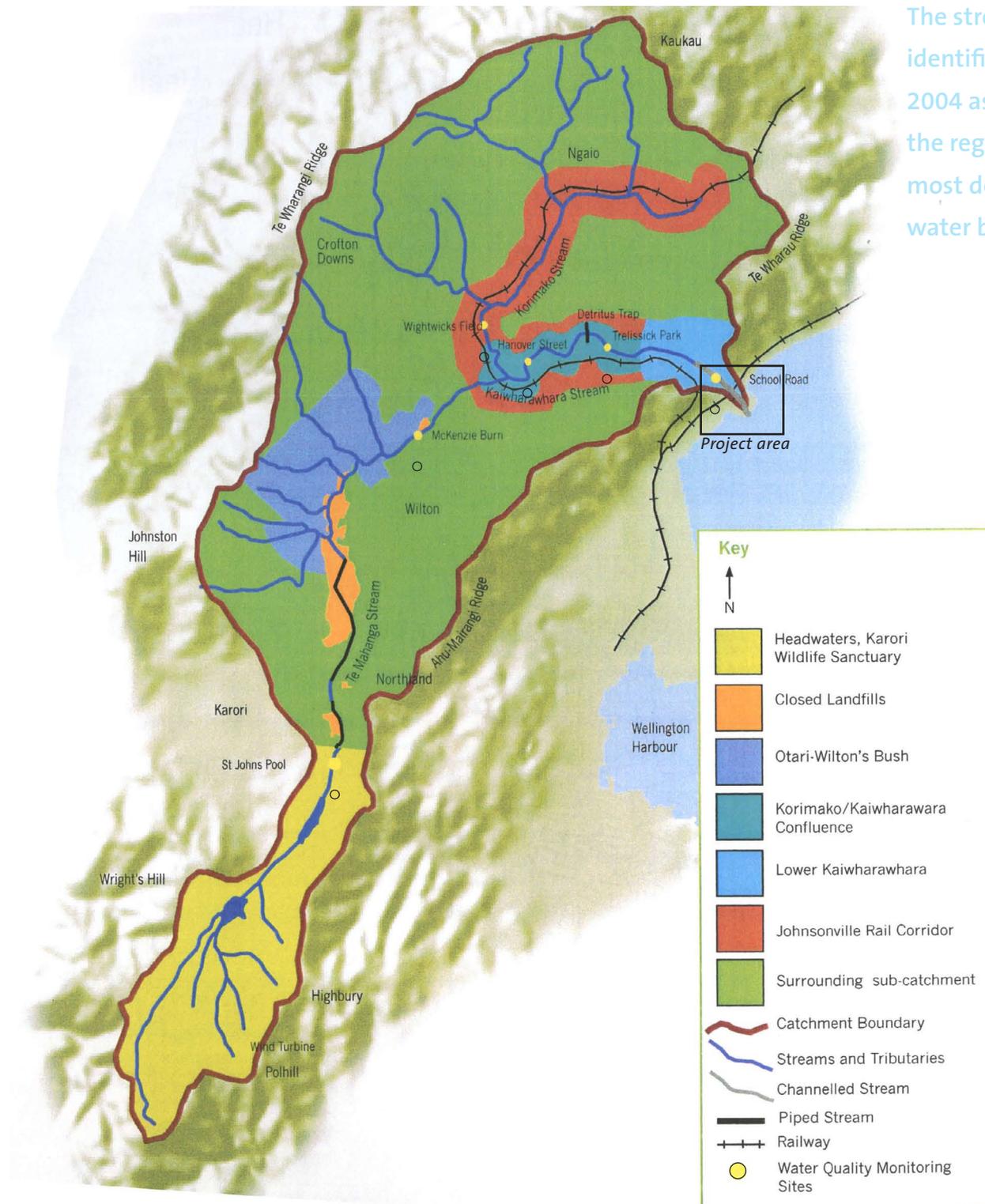


Fig 1: Kaiwharawhara Catchment

Reproduced from the Project Kaiwharawhara Community Kit

After considering how the site fits within the Kaiwharawhara catchment, the study would focus on issues and opportunities centred about the estuary mouth and reclamation. It would encompass the reclamation area, the estuary and stream environs affected by tidal influences. During a spring tide, this would include the area from the estuary mouth up as far as 'Woods Waste Disposal site, on School Road (see Figure 2).



Fig 2: Study Area

Adapted from the Great harbour Way Issues & Opportunities Report, 2009

How does the project fit with existing initiatives?

The site is recognised in a number of key strategic documents, including:

- GWRC Biodiversity Strategy
- WCC Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan
- Project Kaiwharawhara (includes Kaiwharawhara Stream Care Project)
- WCC's Sanctuary to Sea Walkway Concept
- Great Harbour Way Issues & Opportunities Report
- WCC's City Gateway Project
- WCC's 2040: The Future of our Central City
- WCC Open Space Strategy

Current initiatives in the catchment include Project Kaiwharawhara. This is a stream restoration programme that began in 2002, uniting community groups, councils and organisations, and incorporating multi-disciplinary design and planning. It includes the area from Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, the Korimako Stream and tributaries downstream to the harbour. The vision of Project Kaiwharawhara is to protect and enhance the natural landscape, ecosystems, homes and recreation areas, and for the stream to be a local focus. Considerable work has been done in the upper catchment down to Trelissk Park with only small scale planting and rubbish collection around the mouth of the estuary. Independent restoration efforts and maintenance have been undertaken in parts of the catchment. It would be beneficial to have a development plan to co-ordinate these efforts near the estuary mouth.

What are the key issues?

It is acknowledged that the ongoing use of much of the reclaimed area for commercial uses is inevitable and this use makes an important contribution to the sustainable use of the area. Therefore the primary focus of the study will be on restoring and enhancing ecological and recreational values of the site within the context of ongoing commercial use of the area by Centreport and InterIslander.

Key ecological issues include: loss of original vegetation cover, predator control, water quality and pollutants, sedimentation, sewerage contaminants, weed species, flooding, safe fish passage, and rubbish tipping associated with the marshalling area parking which occurs on a regular basis at the estuary mouth.

The area has untapped recreational potential, particularly as an important link within broader recreational strategies such as the Sanctuary to the Sea and The Great Harbour Way. The beach to the north of the reclamation has historically attracted recreational boaters, fishermen, and for picnicking. However, access is currently problematic, and exacerbated by: a lack of physical connectivity along the stream; physical separation by busy transportation corridors (motorway and main trunk line); and safety issues and restricted access from port owned land.

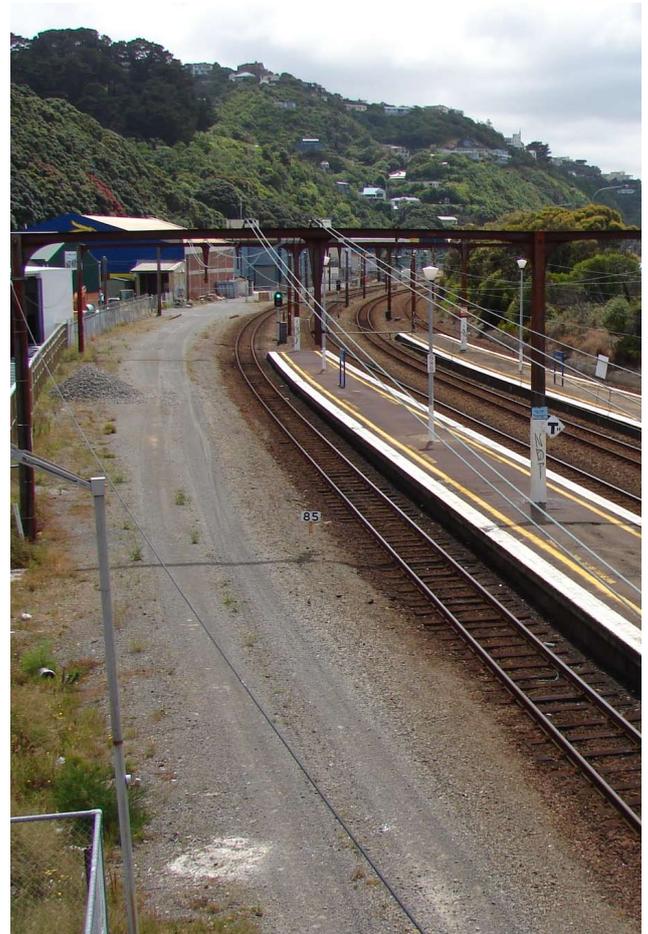
There are a number of other issues which, although of secondary importance to the recreational and ecological issues, would also need to be addressed in the study. These include: visual issues (the site as an important northern gateway to Wellington); historical and cultural values (such as acknowledgement of the fortified pa at the mouth of the Kaiwharawhara Stream); and land tenure issues.

Ownership of land in the Kaiwharawhara area is complex and fragmented and would need to be resolved as part of the study. This has been exacerbated by land transfer which has not been officially gazetted, formally documented, legal technicalities around transfer of reclaimed land, and errors in transfer of titles. Centreport has title to a large portion of the reclamation but Department of Conservation (DoC), Transport Agency (NZTA), and the Crown also appear to own land within the site area.



Fig 3: Site photos

*Above: Kaiwharawhara Stream where it flows adjacent to Spotlight.
Right: Pedestrian access is possible across the rail corridor via the overbridge adjacent to Animates, but is not possible across the motorway to the site.*



How will it be done?

Boffa Miskell would co-ordinate the process of developing this study and preparing a report documenting the investigations and findings. Boffa Miskell would also liaise and consult with stakeholders. The core team would include an ecologist and landscape architect who would co-ordinate this study. Input would also be sought from key stakeholders, such as: Centreport; Interislander, NZTA, DoC, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington City Council and a number of community care groups with an active interest in the area.

The methodology would be as follows:

1. Field work and familiarisation with the site to gather any additional data required to fill any critical information gaps;
2. Description of recreational, ecological, and other key issues and opportunities;
3. Liaison with key stakeholders to ascertain their aspirations for the site and identify any critical constraints and/ or opportunities associated with their interests;
4. Develop a conceptual plan and/ or a set of guiding principles for the future enhancement of the site which strives to reconcile ecological, recreational, commercial and other key needs;
5. Hold a workshop for key stakeholders to share recommendations and seek commitment from parties; and
6. Develop priorities for action, and allocate responsibilities, formalise alliances/ partnerships if necessary.

What information have we already got?

The Trelissick Park Group has collated a large number of relevant documents over the last ten years. This information provides a good platform from which to begin this project, and identify where additional information may be required.

Information compiled to date includes correspondence between relevant parties regarding land tenure, and the general level of support and commitment to the project. It also includes: planting concepts prepared for the estuary and northern beach which have not been realised to date; a study identifying priorities for *Ecological Restoration of the Kaiwharawhara Catchment Wellington City*, and an unpublished survey report of the estuary by contracted by DoC.

What is the timeline?

If funding can be secured, preparation of a comprehensive 'issues and opportunities' report would be commissioned and preparation of this document could be undertaken in early 2010.