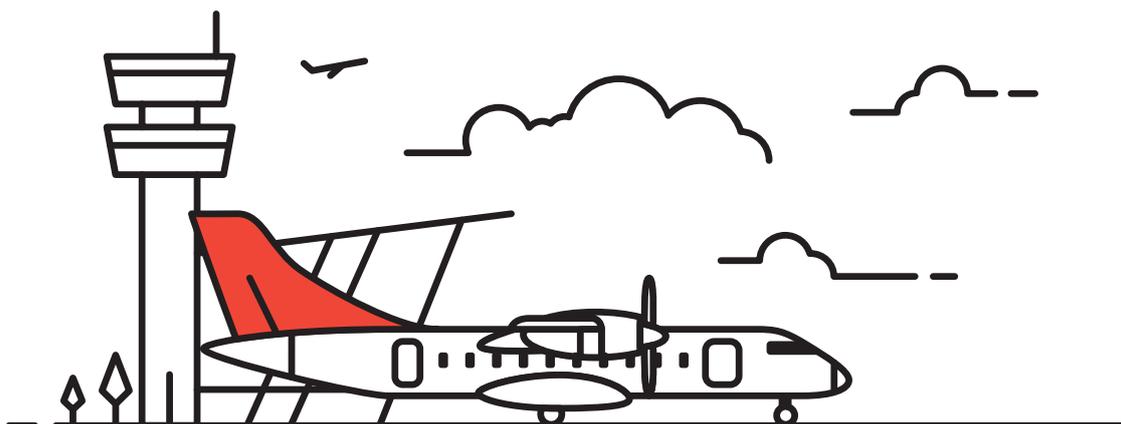


**WHANGĀREI
AIRPORT
LOCATION
STUDY**

**SUMMARY
OF KEY
DOCUMENTS**



ALOS Project Overview

Process

A study was commissioned as part of Council's long-term planning to manage the District's growth and secure future air transport access for the region. Council investigated options to lengthen the runway at Onerahi and an option to shift the airport across the harbour to the Port Nikau area. Neither of these locations met the long-term aviation needs of the District and Council decided to investigate other locations.

Council formed the Mana whenua Advisory Group (MAG) of representatives, appointed by Te Huinga. It also formed a Project Advisory Group (PAG) including representatives from Ministry of Transport, Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Northland Regional Council, Air New Zealand, Northland Inc, Chamber of Commerce and others with a particular interest in the project.

A comprehensive analysis using GIS computer software was undertaken to identify sites that might be flat enough, large enough and have open approach paths. Information gathered in previous investigations, including a study from 1999, the GIS analysis and ongoing engagement resulted in a long list of 28 potential airport locations.

The Long List Evaluation identified 5 potential Short List sites which were further analysed to respond to changes in government policy and ongoing engagement with the MAG and PAG. This process also considered the suitability of Kerikeri airport. The outcome was a list of three preferred sites, which along with Onerahi, comprise the four options currently being consulting on.

Council purchased a large area of the land required for one of the three preferred sites at Ruatangata (Site 9) and undertook more detailed investigations and analysis of the site constraints and potential runway alignments.

The three preferred sites were further evaluated against project criteria, recent district plan change implications and a desktop ecological review. Site 9 emerged as the recommended proposed location from this technical perspective, with public consultation among other inputs needed to inform a preferred site decision.

Council is continuing to engage with mana whenua, partners and stakeholders, and is undertaking a consultation to inform a decision on whether to futureproof for aviation in the district and if so, at which location.

Key Documents

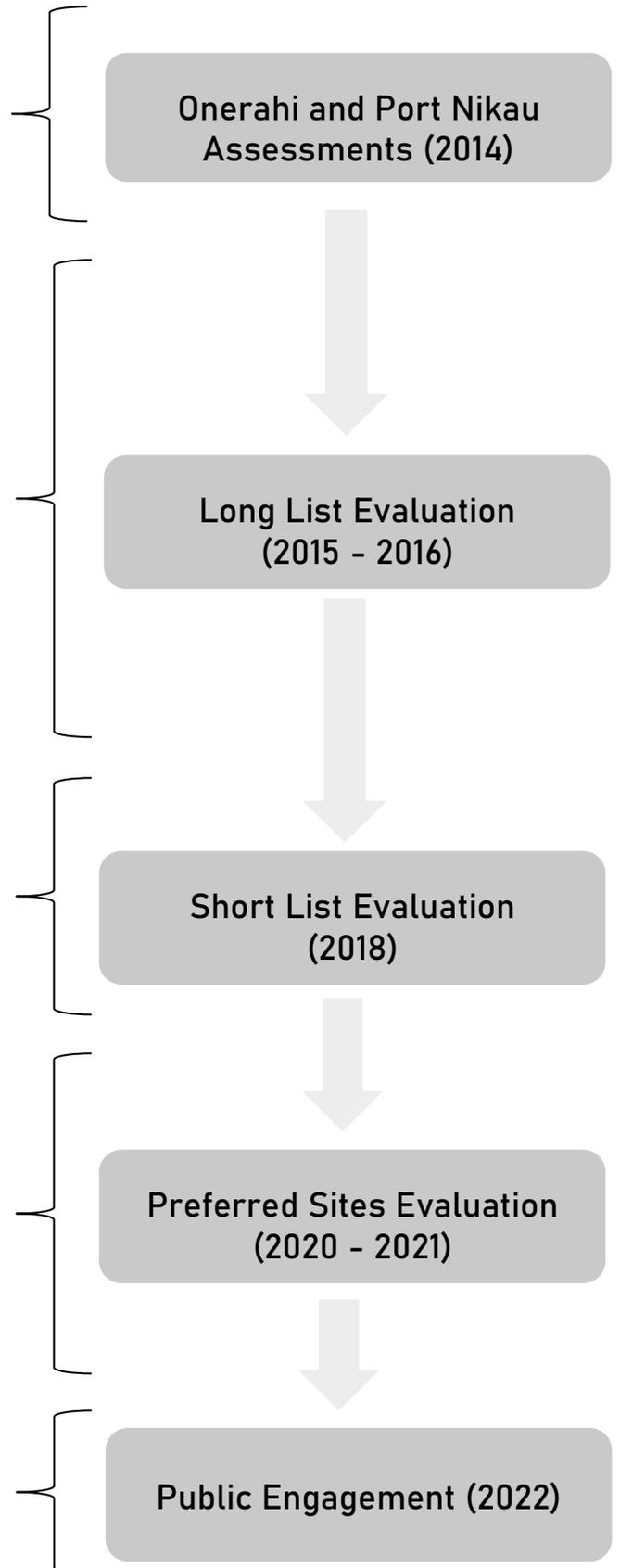
Onerahi and Port Nikau Assessments (2014)

Long List Evaluation (2015 - 2016)

Short List Evaluation (2018)

Preferred Sites Evaluation (2020 - 2021)

Public Engagement (2022)



Onerahi Assessment

The purpose of the Onerahi Assessment was to examine the aerodrome infrastructure and operations at the current Onerahi site and evaluate the potential of this site to meet the future medium and long-term aviation requirements of the District.

The assessment concluded that extending the runway at the current elevation of 40 metres above sea level would be prohibitively expensive and likely face significant consenting obstacles. The site did not adequately meet the long-term needs of users and the District and it was recommended alternative sites should be investigated.

Port Nikau Assessment

The purpose of the Port Nikau Assessment was to evaluate the potential of a site located at Port Nikau to provide an alternative location for an aerodrome to meet the long-term aviation requirements of the District.

The assessment concluded that due to the closeness of hills obstructing flight paths, and the need for coastal reclamation, this location did not meet long term requirements.

Long List Evaluation

The Long List Evaluation objective was “to identify a suitable site for a new airport which meets the long term air transport needs of Whangarei and the wider region.”

GIS software and a detailed terrain model of the District was used to identify 28 potential aerodrome sites that could accommodate a suitable runway length and orientation that was not constrained by surrounding hills. A subsequent peer review and ongoing stakeholder consultation resulted in the identification of additional locations.

The “Long List” sites were evaluated against broad criteria relating to operational suitability, planning issues, requirements and consenting, engineering feasibility, and land transportation links.

The evaluation process identified a “Short List” of potential aerodrome sites from the “Long List” for further evaluation. These were:

- Site 2, Gibbs Road
- Site 6, Hodge Road
- Site 9, Ruatangata
- Site 22, Rosythe Road
- Site 21/24, One Tree Point.

Key Documents

Whangarei District Council Airport Strategic Review Phase 1 – Whangarei Airport (Onerahi) Assessment (Rev 4), 17 December 2014.

Key Documents

Whangarei District Council Airport Strategic Review Phase PN1 – Port Nikau Assessment (Rev 2) Part 1 08 December 2014.

Whangarei District Council Airport Strategic Review Phase PN1 – Port Nikau Assessment (Rev 2) Part 2 08 December 2014

Key Documents

Whangarei District Council Airport Locations Options Study (ALOS) Long List Site Evaluation Rev F Report dated 15 November 2016 and Appendices

Whangarei Airport Long List Evaluation Peer review letter report Opus International Consultants Ltd, 13 July 2016

Short List Evaluation

The purpose of the Short List Evaluation was to further evaluate the “Short List” of sites in consideration of additional investigations to identify two or three preferred sites for the future aerodrome. A range of supporting assessments were undertaken to support this report including:

- Construction of Digital Terrain Models (DTM) at each site to provide more accurate ground levels for the evaluation of bulk earthworks volumes.
- A more detailed assessment of the runway
- A more detailed assessment of the Marsden Point Oil Refinery Controlled Airspace Zone
- A more detailed assessment of Transpower Transmission Tower elevations and the impact on each site.
- An Economic Contribution Study
- Site observations from publicly accessible areas
- Consultation with the Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency.
- Review of the proposed plan changes to the Whangarei District Plan (at the time)
- Review of cadastral, land and capital valuation and deed information
- Preparation of rough order of cost estimates in consideration of potential land purchase costs, airport site development and upgrades to roading access.

As part of the Short List analysis WDC requested an evaluation of the existing airport at Kerikeri, Bay of Islands to determine the feasibility to expand this facility to meet the objective of the ALOS criteria.

While the review suggested that Kerikeri has the potential to be upgraded to serve as a wider Northland Regional Airport, there were identified challenges to extending the runway and on balance it was felt that it did not service the needs of the Whangarei District due to its distance from the District’s population.

Based on the analysis it was recommended that the following sites be selected as the preferred aerodrome locations:

- Site 6, Hodge Road (currently referred to as Ruatangata West)
- Site 9, Ruatangata
- Site 24a, One Tree Point West

Key Documents

Whangarei District Council Airport Locations Options Study Short List Site Evaluation report, Addendum and Appendices, dated 29 November 2018

WDC ALOS Shortlist Analysis Peer Review AECOM NZ Ltd 29 September 2017

Preferred Sites Evaluation

In October 2020 a large block of land at the location of Site 9 - Ruatangata became available for purchase and Council took the option to secure it. This provided direct access to the land and enabled more detailed investigations and analysis of the site constraints and potential runway alignments.

This analysis identified the ecological significance of the Patuwairua Stream, the flood conveyance and consenting challenges of placing a runway over it, and the multiple runway alignments available across the site's landform.

The purpose of the Preferred Sites Evaluation was to present the further analysis undertaken for the three preferred sites identified in 2018, and from a technical perspective identify a "recommended preferred site" prior to wider consultation, design refinement and resource management approvals.

The further investigations for all three sites included:

- The Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS)¹
- Review of the most recent District Plan changes, changes in the planning context and surrounding built environment; and
- A more detailed ecological desktop assessment

With this updated information, these sites were re-evaluated against the previous criteria relating to operational suitability, planning issues, requirements and consenting, engineering feasibility, and land transportation links.

While more detailed information for Site 9 was available, the evaluation was based on the Short List Site 9 runway for ongoing consistency.

The evaluation identified Site 9 as the recommended proposed site from a technical perspective, but recommended further work to be undertaken to inform a decision on a proposed site, including further mana whenua and stakeholder engagement, technical investigations and public engagement - particularly to understand constraints and opportunities across the three sites that is held as local knowledge.

Key Documents

ALOS Site 9 Ruatangata Site Investigation Summary report with appendices

Whangarei District Airport Locations Options Study Preferred Sites Evaluation Report Rev C 19 November 2021

¹ Obstacle Limitation Surfaces of an aerodrome are defined imaginary surfaces in the airspace above and adjacent to the aerodrome used to identify and control obstacles. The identification and restriction of obstacles within the OLS is necessary to enable aircraft to maintain a satisfactory level of safety while manoeuvring at low altitude in the vicinity of the aerodrome.