

8. Public Consultation

8.1 Consultation

8.1.1 General approach

The general approach to public consultation has been to understand who is likely to be affected by the proposal, and then to actively engage with them in a manner that is genuine, transparent, and open, and where there is sufficient time for parties to consider the consultation material and respond.

Northport chose to follow the standard resource consent process over potential fast track and Covid-19 legislative processes because it gives the public a better opportunity to be heard. Consultation has been an important part of the development of the project, and the proposal has developed iteratively in response to public feedback.

Northport's overarching view is that the outcome of the process needs to be one where the port can continue to operate as part of the community, and as a responsible business. Public involvement in the project development is a fundamental part of achieving that.

The following groups were identified for targeted consultation:

- Mana whenua (covered separately in Section 7 of this report)
- WDC Consents Manager
- NRC Consents Manager
- WDC and NRC reporting officers and independent consultants
- WDC Parks Division
- Department of Conservation
- Channel Infrastructure NZ
- Marsden Maritime Holdings
- Whangarei Heads and Albany Road communities
- Northport key stakeholders
- Ruakaka Economic Development Group (REDG)
- Northland Inc.
- Ruakaka Ratepayers Association
- Whangarei Heads Ratepayers Association
- Waka Kotahi

- Kiwirail
- Ingrid Visser (marine mammal expert)
- General public

Website

In 2017 Northport launched the *Vision4Growth* website. This website included a video outlining Northport's vision for the growth. The website was subsequently updated in October 2020, and rebranded *visionforgrowth*.

The comments section on the website provided people with the opportunity to make comments, suggestions, or ask questions. It provided a platform for Northport to engage with the community.

The website also extended an invitation to persons and groups to tour the port.

The website has been progressively updated as the project has evolved. Technical reports have been added to the website for public viewing as they become available.

8.1.2 Port tours

Port tours have been conducted since 2018. Attendees have included key stakeholders and members of the general public.

8.1.3 Public consultation

General public

Consultation with the public has been ongoing since 2017. This consultation has included:

- Website consultation (as previously identified).
- A public letter drop was conducted in December 2017, including an information brochure delivered to local residents' mailboxes.
- Northport purchased a van and had it sign written with the project branding, together with pamphlets and other material for use in public meetings/discussions.
- Northport attended the Dargaville field days 1-3 March 2018, providing information and receiving feedback from interested parties.
- Northport attended the A & P show in Whangarei on 5 December 2020 and held a public drop-in at the Marsden Cove boat ramp on 15 December 2020, providing information and receiving feedback from interested parties.
- More specific consultation has been carried out with the key community groups at Albany Road (Marsden Bay) and Reotahi (Whangarei Heads). Further details are set out below.

- Northport engaged *Buildmedia* to prepare visual representations (renders) of the expanded port relative to the existing environment. These representations are now included in the BNZL report (**Appendix 15**).

Marsden Bay

Northport has engaged in written correspondence with members of the Marsden Bay community via both email and face-to-face meetings, including two meetings at Albany Road attended by Northport representatives. Northport has also carried out several mailouts and letter drops to update this community on progress with the project.

Some of the feedback received from this community influenced decisions over the design of the proposal, including the location of the tug facility.

Whangarei Heads

Northport held two community drop-in information days at the Parua Bay Hall and McLeod Bay Community Centre (Whangarei Heads). Attendees on behalf of Northport included the Port CEO, board chairman, internal project manager, and a planning consultant.

8.1.4 Central and local government agencies and representatives

There have been multiple discussions with government agencies since the project inception. These include:

- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment
- Ministry of Transport
- Department of Conservation
- Central government representatives
- Local government representatives
- Kiwirail
- Waka Kotahi
- WDC and NRC Consents Managers
- Whangarei District Council processing planners
- Whangarei District Council Parks Division
- Councillors and senior managers at the NRC and WDC.

Department of Conservation

Consultation with the Department of Conservation included a meeting between technical advisors from the department and Northport, with an emphasis on understanding the effects on indigenous

biodiversity. Some guidance was also sought from the Department on potential environmental enhancement projects in the surrounding environment.

WDC and NRC Consents Managers

Northport representatives met with the WDC and NRC Consents Managers at the inception of the project. These meetings culminated in a decision by the Council to jointly process the applications for resource consent. Independent consultants were subsequently engaged to process the consents on behalf of the respective councils.

WDC and NRC joint processing planners

Northport has regularly kept the WDC/NRC joint processing planners updated on progress towards lodgement of the consent application. Initial draft technical reports were forwarded to the Councils, and they subsequently engaged their own experts to review those reports and provide feedback. That feedback resulted in amendments to the proposal and additional technical assessment to address the matters raised.

WDC Parks Division

Northport representatives met with the WDC Parks Division in early 2021. The Parks Division are a key stakeholder due to the proposed cancellation of the esplanade reserve behind the expanded port. A representative of the Parks Division subsequently attended a port tour in June 2021.

In July 2022 Northport advised the Parks Division that they were preparing a draft concept design which would incorporate vehicle access to a park/reserve area at the eastern extent of the expanded port, and other amenities including a fishing pontoon, swimming steps, carpark, and a public toilet.

In early September 2022 the draft pocket park design was forwarded to the Parks Division for comment. A subsequent site visit was carried out in late September.

Consultation with the Parks Division in respect to the reserve stopping process and potential mitigation remains ongoing. Northport remains open to alternative scenarios to improve public access and recreation facilities in the vicinity of the port and in the surrounding area.

Kiwirail

Consultation with Kiwirail has centred around providing for a potential rail connection into the expanded container port, and in respect to progress on the proposed spur line to Marsden Point. Kiwirail has shared initial design considerations for the spur line with Northport to assist with the concept design for the expanded port.

Waka Kotahi

Northport has a relationship agreement with Waka Kotahi in respect to the general management of SH15. In relation to the proposed expansion, consultation with Waka Kotahi has centred on the

potential impacts on the safety and efficiency of SH15. WSP also engaged with Waka Kotahi in the development of the Traffic Impact Assessment. This has culminated in proposed conditions of consent relating to intersection capacity.

8.1.5 Media articles

There have been several related media articles since the project inception, including in the New Zealand Herald, Northern Advocate, Bream Bay News, Stuff and Newshub.

8.1.6 Media advertising

Northport advertised the project launch in both the Northern Advocate and the Bream Bay News in October 2020.

8.1.7 Other

Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust

Northport has discussed the project with the Bream Bay Coastal Care Trust on several occasions. The Trust has also completed a port tour.

Ruakaka Economic Development Group (REDG)

Northport regularly attends REDG meetings. The project has been presented to this group and they have been provided with regular updates since the project launch.

Northport key stakeholders

Northport has provided its stakeholders with email updates in respect of the project. Key stakeholders include Marsden Maritime Holdings Ltd, and various industry partners.

Channel Infrastructure New Zealand

CINZL has been kept up to date with the proposal since its inception through to lodgement. The most recent communication was in late September 2022 prior to lodgement.

Ingrid Visser

In 2020 Northport representatives met with Ingrid Visser to discuss the potential impacts of the proposal on marine mammals, and to consider any advice she had on minimising impacts of the expanded port facility on marine mammals. Northport has maintained open communication and dialogue with Ms Visser since this time.

8.1.8 Applicants for customary marine title

Northport has notified all applicants for customary marine title as required under the MACA Act. A copy of correspondence sent to the MACA applicants is attached in **Appendix 8**. Two responses have been received at the time of preparing this AEE. One, from Te Whanau Whero (CIV-2017-405-420), confirmed that the activity is outside the area covered by the claim, and the other, Ngapuhi, Ngati Wai, Haki Pereki and Ngawhetu Sadler Whanau Trust (represented by TeKiripute Sadler) (MAC-01-01-60), was generally in support of the project.