

# About Mangawhai: Values and Priorities



Prepared for Mangawhai  
Matters  
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## Summary

This report has been prepared for Mangawhai Matters to identify what people value most about Mangawhai and their priorities for managing its growth. It outlines the results of an intercept survey of 308 Mangawhai residents, holidaymakers, and day trippers during January and February 2021.

Commitment to a short survey meant that it could not be exhaustive. However, the consistency of views revealed make it a useful resource for the community as it faces the challenges of growth.

The first part of the survey asked people to identify whether they were permanent residents, bach owners, casual holidaymakers, or day-visitors; whether they were from the Heads, the Village, or the immediate surrounds, and what age group they belonged to. The second part asked respondents to nominate what they most like about Mangawhai and, in the third part to select four priorities (from a list of eleven possibilities) to help manage the growth of Mangawhai.

The survey was not designed to address immediate matters such as the review by Kaipara District Council of political representation, the Long-Term Plan, or future land use proposals. However, the results provide a framework for considering such matters from a community-wide perspective.

The conclusions are summarised below. The detail is contained in the report that follows.

### **What people value about Mangawhai:**

The second part of the survey unsurprisingly saw the physical environment and particularly the beach, estuary, and coastline consistently nominated as what people value. Equally important, though, is the community that has developed on the coast, which the survey shows has its own distinctive appeal to residents and visitors based on character, atmosphere, scale, and people.

### **People's priorities for Mangawhai:**

The third part of the survey gives an overwhelming impression of widely shared priorities (selected from a list of eleven - see Attachment) for managing growth across the different groups of people.

Consistent with the value attached to the coastal environment, protection of the harbour is a priority for almost everyone. This is reinforced by many people prioritising access to the coast by (by providing sufficient amenities) and maintaining dredging and mangrove control.

The second priority area relates to the quality of the existing settlement, with strong support for more walk/cycleways, improved roads, and improved rubbish collection. These areas are prioritised slightly more by younger people and people from the Village. The difference is limited, though.

Other than moderate support across all groups for a recreation centre, there is little support for actions that might be associated with increased urbanisation.

### **Conclusion**

The significance of the coastal environment is overwhelming, related to its accessibility for and use by permanent residents, bach occupants, and visitors. This view is consistent with the positive view of the character of Mangawhai as a town and as a community. It seems that the qualities of the physical and community environments are closely linked. In thinking about the options for development, it seems that any actions undermining one are likely to undermine the other.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

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Following several public meetings Mangawhai Matters (MM) was formed in August 2020. Its aim is to ensure that the views of the Mangawhai community are clearly presented to the Northland Regional and Kaipara District councils.

MM has focused on three matters: the impending review of council representation on the Kaipara District Council, the proposal proposed plan change to double the capacity of Estuary Estates, and the preparation of the Kaipara Council’s Long-Term Plan and its possible impact on local ratepayers.

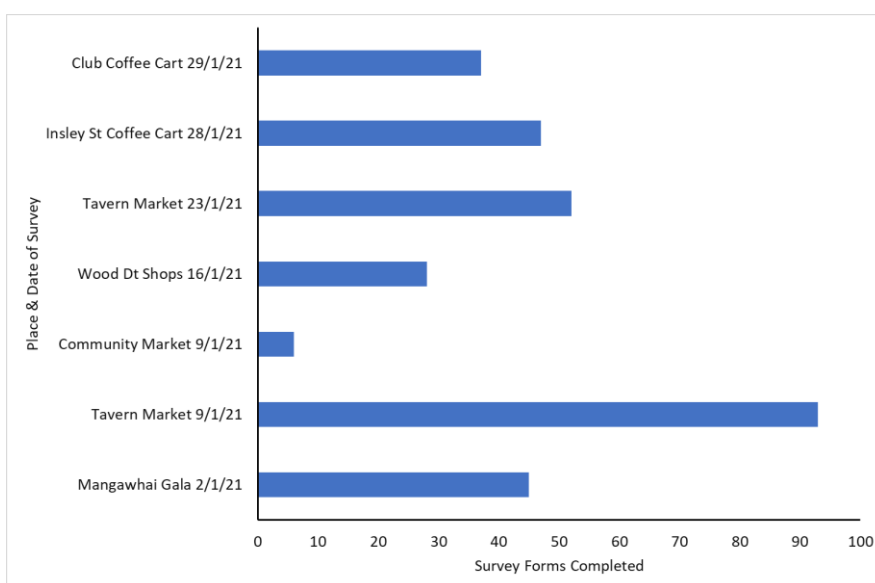
There has been considerable support for these initiatives. However, to ensure that it represents the views and priorities of the whole community and does not overlook any issues of concern, MM surveyed what people like about Mangawhai and the issues important to them for managing its growth.

## 3 THE SURVEY

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MM conducted an “intercept survey” During January 2021 to get the views of a cross-section of the Mangawhai community. People at different venues were asked to take two minutes to complete a one-page questionnaire. The venues were the Tavern Market on Moir St (twice), the Community market at the primary school, Wood St shopping centre, the Insley/Moir St morning coffee cart, and the Community Club coffee cart. Responses varied between locations, the busy Tavern market providing the most (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Survey Places, Dates, and Responses



By interviewing at different times and localities we can draw conclusions about matters cited most frequently across different groups. 308 people completed questionnaires. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A survey in this format is not “random”. Other than the Census, no survey ever is because of bias from the refusal of many people to answer questions and consequently the unknown differences in attitudes and behaviour between those non-respondents and respondents. Unlike remote surveys (by phone, mail, or web), intercept surveys do not rely on the “self-selection” of interested respondents as the as interviewers actively seek out passers-by to complete the questionnaire.

## 4 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

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The questionnaire (reproduced in Attachment 1) was kept brief to make it easy to complete. It started with questions about the residential status and age group of each respondent. 53% were permanent residents and 26% bach owners (Table 1). The balance comprised casual holiday makers (renting accommodation). A small number were day visitors.

Table 1. The People Surveyed

	TOTAL	%
<b>Residential Status</b>		
Permanent Residents	164	53%
Bach Owners	79	26%
Casual Holiday Makers	43	14%
Day Visitors	22	7%
<b>Where Located</b>		
Heads	147	48%
Village	49	16%
The Sanctuary or Tern Point	7	2%
Rural	67	22%
No Reply	38	12%
<b>Age Group (Years)</b>		
Under 20	12	4%
20-39	87	28%
40-64	145	47%
65+	63	20%
No Reply	1	0%

The largest number of respondents came from the Heads (residents and bach owners/occupants). A surprisingly large group came from the surrounding rural area. A reasonable number at the gala and markets were day visitors. Middle-aged people (40 to 64 years) accounted for 47% of respondents. Very few people under 20 completed the questionnaire.

## 5 WHAT PEOPLE VALUE ABOUT MANGAWHAI

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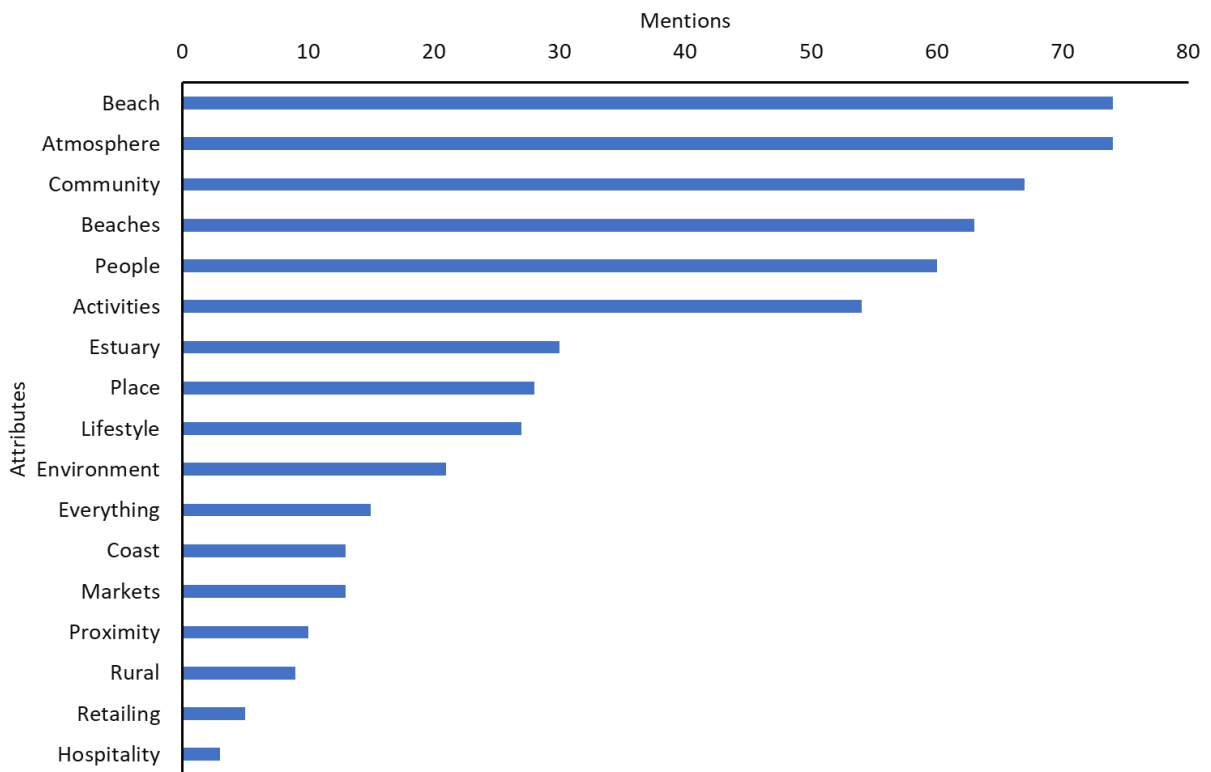
The second part of the questionnaire was an open-ended question, asking, “*What do you most like about Mangawhai?*” This aimed to get people thinking about Mangawhai in their own terms, before asking them to choose priorities from the set list in the following question.

Of the 308 respondents, 297 wrote down what they value about Mangawhai (implying, perhaps that eleven of them, or 4%, could identify nothing). All responses were brief, reflecting the space on the form and the limited time people took. Many were single word responses, others were lists, and a few expanded on a particular item.

In order to analyse them, responses were divided into the items people identified and how they described them. Where only adjectives were used to identify what people value, they were interpreted in terms of an appropriate attribute. This was done most frequently for words associated with the *atmosphere* (especially *relaxing* and *laid-back*) and *people* (*friendly*).

This process revealed 16 distinctive (although no doubt overlapping) attributes valued by respondents. They are presented in order of frequency of mention in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Attributes of Mangawhai that People Value



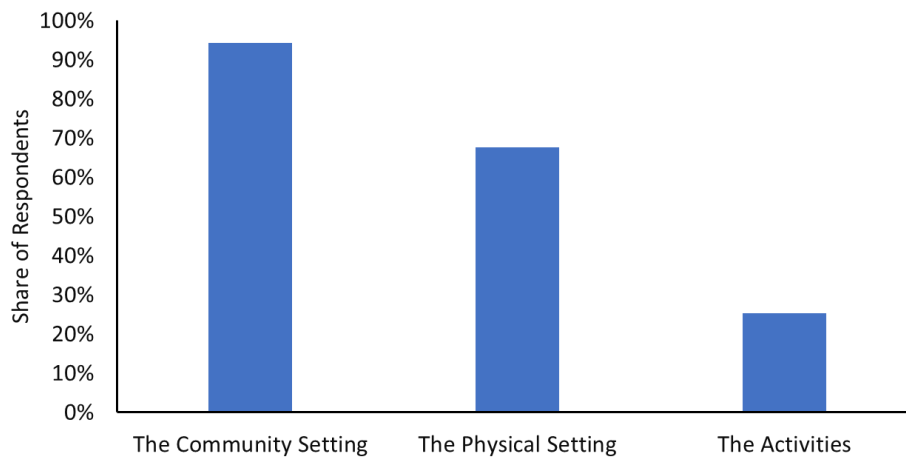
These items were then allocated to three groups: those reflecting the *physical setting*, those relating to the *community setting*, and those *nominating activities*. This allocation involved some arbitrary decisions as some attributes are associated with both physical and community settings. For example, appreciation of “*the country feel*” and “*country lifestyle*”, relate as much to the quality of developed hinterland as to natural landform or landscape. Similarly, with descriptions of atmosphere which, for present purposes, have been associated with the wider character of the settlement rather than specifics of the physical environment.

600 items were nominated, or 1.9 per respondent. Unsurprisingly, coastal features were the most common. Interestingly, though, aspects of the community overall, covering the atmosphere and character, scale, the built environment, and people, received more citations than the natural or physical environment (Figure 3).

Finally, the third general category, activities can be aligned directly with key elements of the physical or community environments, so in some ways expand or explain their value to people.

(Eleven holiday makers and visitors raised the appeal of proximity to Auckland or Whangarei. While significant in understanding the appeal of Mangawhai to these people, this response has not been allocated to any of the three dimensions. Rather, it simply means that the benefits Mangawhai offers are amplified because of its accessibility to larger centres).

Figure 3: The Key Dimensions



#### 4.1. THE COMMUNITY SETTING

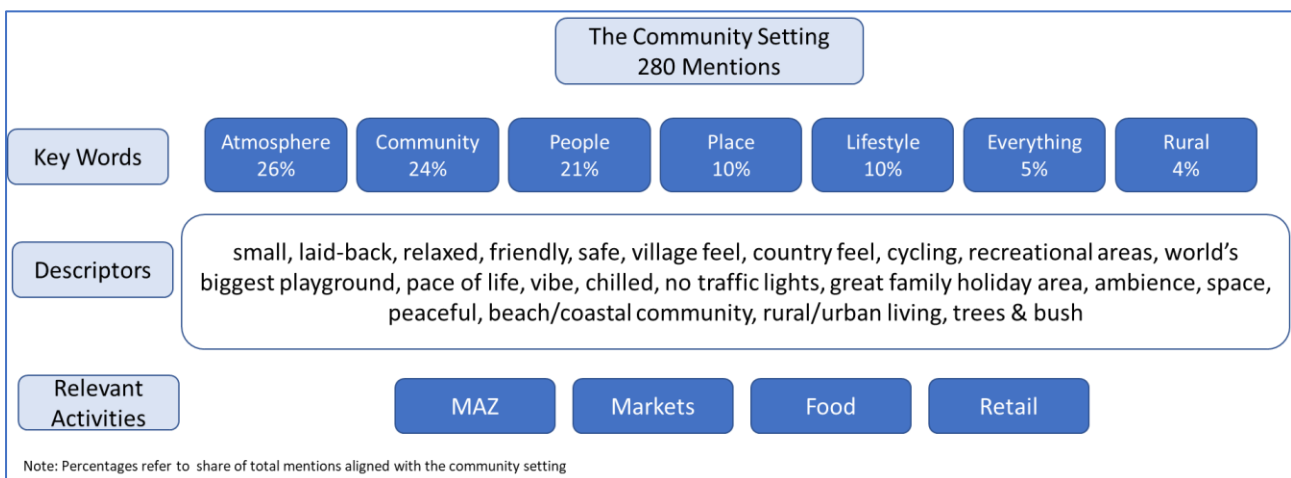
The terms used to identify what it is about the community that respondents value (Figure 4) tend to overlap. This is evident in the descriptive terms used to elaborate some attributes. Many were non-specific, such as those relating to the atmosphere (74 mentions), including *relaxed, laid-back, chilled, (good) vibe, village feel, and lifestyle*. Lifestyle as an attribute itself was described as *peaceful, laid-back, and relaxed*.

Attributes describing the community included *friendly, small town vibe, community life and spirit, caring, work-life balance, feeling, and sense of place*. One description stands out: *“the most community-focussed place I have ever lived in”*.

References to people and community overlap, including similar descriptors: *friendly folk, locals, diverse, kind, and welcoming*. Five respondents acknowledged the importance of being with family in Mangawhai.

Place has been used as an attribute to cover a range of references to the locality generally, including *small town, character, township, great location, low density, diversity, facilities, location, neighbourhood, no big commercial properties, not too built up*. It has also been used for two respondents who indicated that they *“work here”*. The attribute rural refers to responses that refer to the *rural lifestyle* in particular.

Figure 4: What People Value About the Community Setting



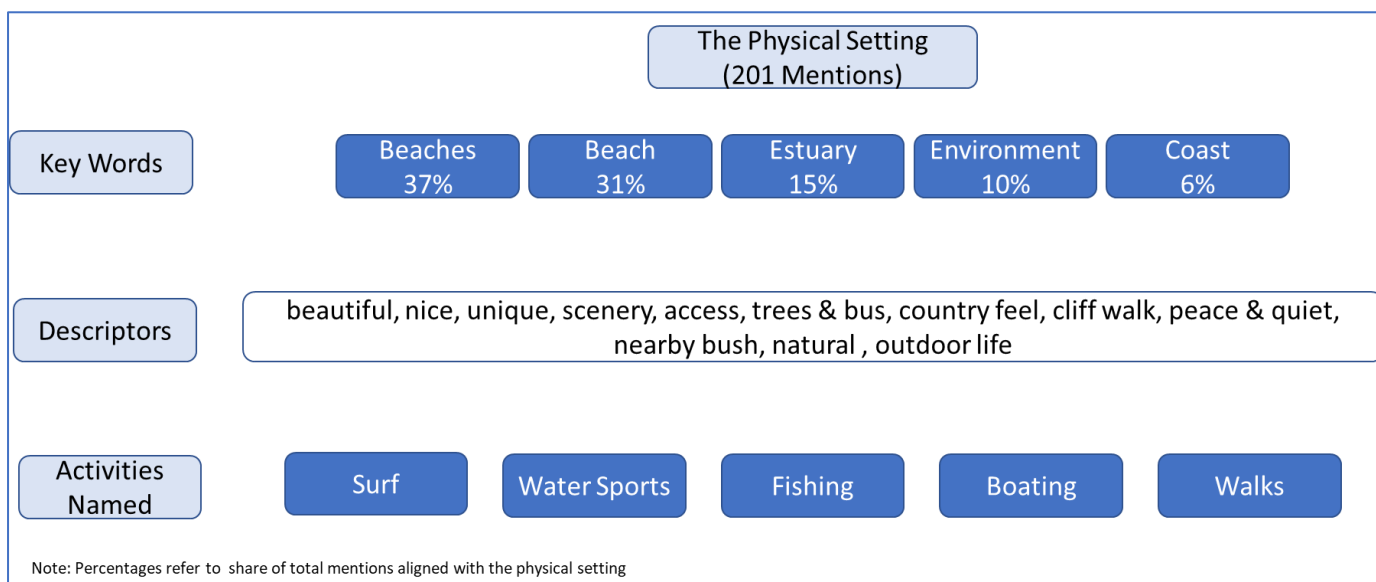
Collectively, responses that highlight the community point to its relaxed lifestyle in a village setting, its limited, low-key scale, and its inclusiveness. The latter may be reflected in the relevant activities: thirteen respondents referred specifically to the markets –key Saturday gathering places for residents, holiday makers and visitors – and eleven to the Mangawhai Activity Zone, a multi-activity recreation facility developed through community funding by community volunteers.

Perhaps the final say, though, goes to the 15 people who responded to the question of what they value about Mangawhai with “*everything*”, without the need for any further descriptors.

#### 4.2. THE PHYSICAL SETTING

The coast dominates what people value regarding the physical environment, although it is referred to in different ways (Figure 5). The most common reference is to *beaches* (74 respondents). Along with references to the *coast* (13), this suggests that access to the wider coastline incorporating the flat-water of the estuary and the selection of nearby ocean beaches is Mangawhai’s most highly valued single attribute.

Figure 5: What People Value About the Physical Setting



Others simply refer to the *beach* (63), presumably Mangawhai Ocean Beach. *Surf* is the most frequent descriptor. The *estuary* was mentioned by 30 respondents.

Some 21 respondents referred to the *environment* generally, using descriptors like *beauty* and *natural beauty, scenery* and *landscape, nature, and bush*.

Activities that can be related directly to the natural setting include water sports, boating, surfing, swimming, water sports, and fishing. Walks comprise a significant activity associated with the wider environment, including reference to the clifftop walk.

#### 4.3. VALUES: THE BIG PICTURE

Identifying Mangawhai’s valued attributes suggests that while the physical environment and particularly the coastline are consistently nominated – the reason that people are here and, indeed, the *raison d’être* for Mangawhai – the character of the community that has been created on the coast is widely recognised and highly valued by residents and visitors alike. Its appeal is based on its scale, character, atmosphere, and people, and the symbolic fact that, as one person highlighted, it “*does not have traffic lights*”.



## 6 THE RESPONDENTS' PRIORITIES

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### 5.1 THE APPROACH

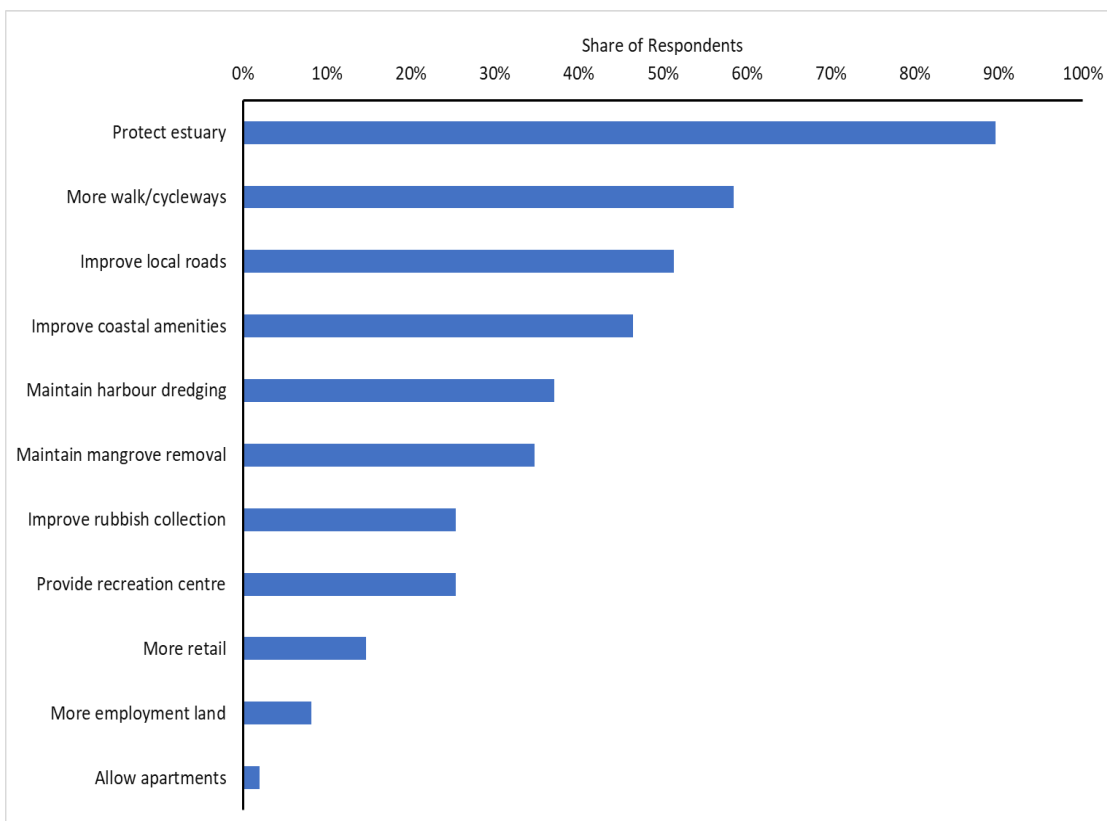
Respondents were asked to nominate four priorities from a list of eleven possible actions for managing Mangawhai's growth. The list was restricted to keep the questionnaire short and recognise the practical limits of people sorting easily through a long list of options.

Choice of items was intended to reflect aspects of the physical and the built environment likely to be affected by growth. An initial list proposed by the author based on recent and current issues and initiatives<sup>2</sup> was refined through discussion by the committee Mangawhai Matters and contacts. The list is indicative rather than definitive, touching on a range of matters likely to be impacted by continuing growth.

### 5.2 THE PRIORITIES

The overwhelming priority is to protect the estuary (nominated by 90% of respondents, Figure 6). While this may be influenced by its placement at the top of the list<sup>3</sup>, the strength of preference and the relative strength of preferences for items much lower on the list suggest that any resulting distortion is not sufficient to reject it as is the top community priority revealed.

Figure 6: Respondent Priorities for Managing Growth



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<sup>2</sup> Informed, for example, by the Community Plan, the Draft Spatial Plan, and evidence presented to the PC 78 Hearing, etc

<sup>3</sup> The order of the list was random – see attachment.

The next grouping focuses on the usability of the harbour by the community, including improved harbour amenities (in terms of access and facilities), continuing to limit the spread of mangroves, and maintaining dredging. Taken together these priorities lead to the conclusion that protection of the harbour is not seen as limiting its use, but maintaining its useability (which includes, of course, protecting water quality).

Interestingly, the next highest priorities were about the quality of the built environment: a desire for more walk/cycleways alongside improvement of the quality of local roading (defined for current purposes in terms of footpaths, channels, and kerbs) and improved rubbish collection.

The items receiving the fewest votes were those associated with urbanisation: increasing capacity for employment, increasing retail capacity, and avoiding excessive density of residential development (at least insofar as the presence of apartments signals that).

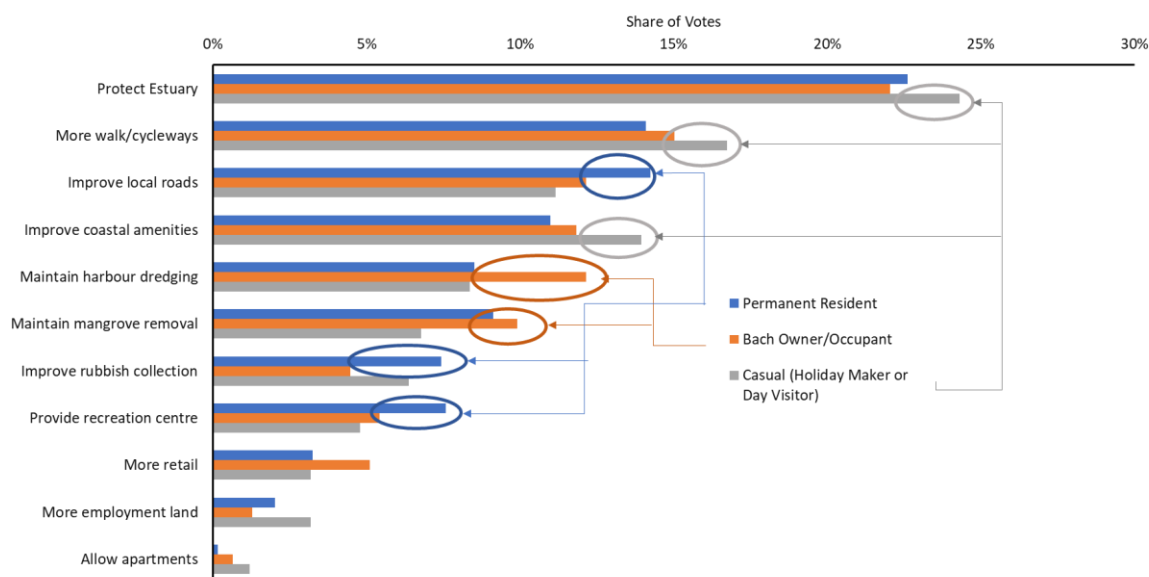
The order of priorities appears to confirm what people value about Mangawhai. The quality of the natural environment sits at the top of priorities, to the extent that this is associated with protecting the estuary. But it is a priority assigned in the context of a distinctive lifestyle built on active access to the coastline and its waters. It is also consistent with the maintenance of a modest scale, village-like community environment, albeit one in which some improvement in local infrastructure would be appreciated.

### 5.3 HOW FAR DO PRIORITIES VARY?

In order to compare priorities among different groups, the votes on each item were converted to the percentage share of all votes within each group. These are compared by residential status in Figure 7.

The order and pattern of priorities is similar across the groups. Minor differences are highlighted by the ellipses and arrows in Figure 7. Bach owners/users and casual holidaymakers and day visitors (combined into one category) are slightly more focused on cycleways, coastal amenities, and the useability of the harbour than permanent residents. Slightly more permanent residents prioritise the quality of local roads, rubbish collection, and the possibility of a recreation centre.

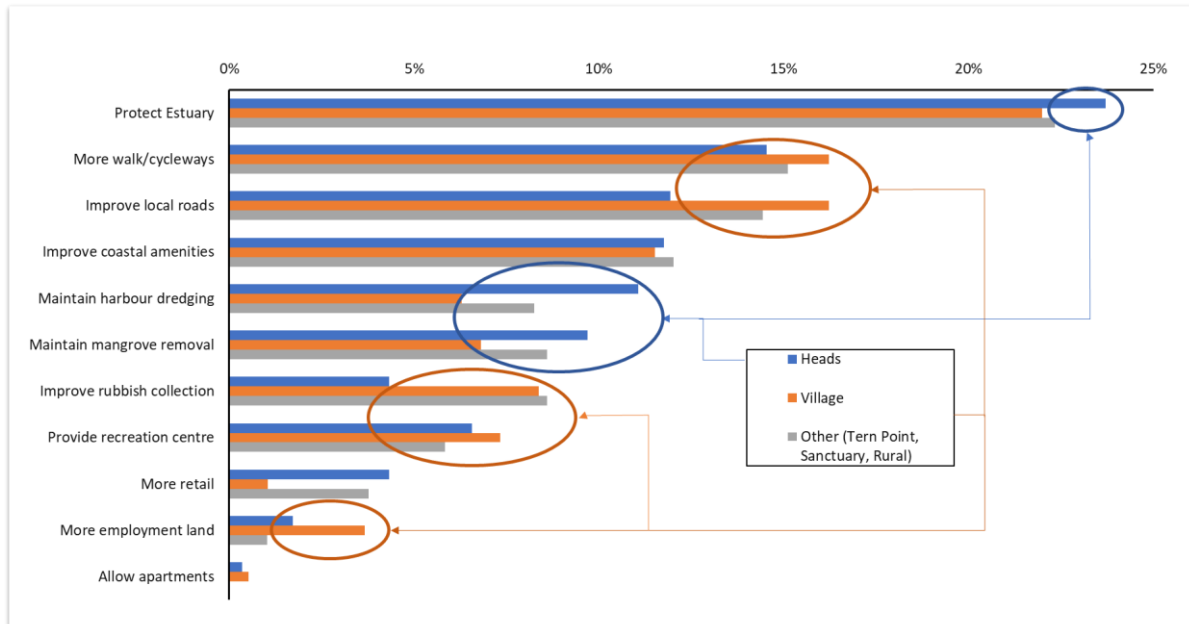
Figure 7: Priorities and Residential Status



Much the same goes for responses sorted by location of residence or bach (Figure 8). For this purpose, residents of the surrounding rural area have been combined with residents of the gated Tern Point and Sanctuary estates. Again, the broad order of priorities is consistent – a strong vote for estuary protection in

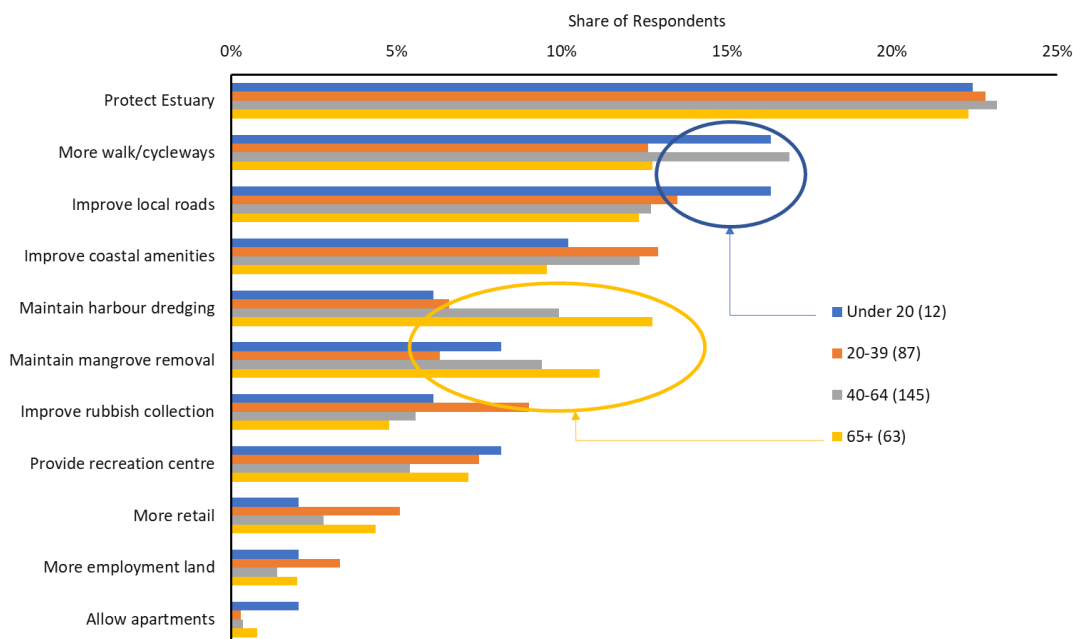
each case, more walkways, and improved local roads – these last two being a little more important among Village residents and people from outside the built-up area than people at the Heads. Consistent with this, more people in the former group are inclined to further development (particularly a recreation centre), while residents of the Heads, recorded a little more support for maintenance of the estuary.

**Figure 8: Priorities and Location of Dwelling**



Much the same goes for priorities sorted by age group: protecting the estuary dominates, followed by improved local infrastructure, including coastal amenities, and then maintaining the useability of the harbour. A difference between older and younger respondents emerges at this point: more older people favour maintaining the harbour and more younger people favour roads and walk/cycleways (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Priorities and Age Group**



## 5.4 PRIORITIES: THE BIG PICTURE

While the preponderance of older people and people from Mangawhai Heads may have influenced the results, the overwhelming impression from the survey is one of preferences shared across the board, with only minor deviations. The protection of the harbour tops the list, reflecting the value that people attach to the Mangawhai coast. This is backed up by the significant weight given to maintaining access and use of the harbour (and the coast) through provision of related amenities and maintenance of the dredging and mangrove control programmes.

The second priority area relates to the quality of the existing urban environment. It is reflected in the strong support for more walk/cycleways, improved local roads, and an improved rubbish collection. More younger people and people from the Village prioritise such improvements than their older and Heads-based counterparts. The difference is limited, though, a matter of detail rather than principle.

Moderate support among residents and across age groups for a recreation centre may be consistent with this desire for improvement to existing amenities (although, not surprisingly, of less consequence to non-residents). Beyond that, there seems to be little support for actions associated with increased urbanisation.

Attachment: The Questionnaire

**What do you value about Mangawhai?**

**Mangawhai Matters** is an incorporated society set up to ensure that the Mangawhai community's values are reflected in decisions for its future made by Kaipara District and Northland Regional councils.

Please take a minute to complete this survey. Your views will ensure that our representations to the councils reflect what matters to you.

You can find out more at [www.MangawhaiMatters.com](http://www.MangawhaiMatters.com).

**1 About you – please circle one:**

<b>Permanent Resident?</b>	<b>Own a 2<sup>nd</sup> home (bach here)?</b>	<b>A casual holiday maker?</b>	<b>A day visitor?</b>
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**2 If a permanent resident or bach owner or holiday-maker, where do you live or stay in Mangawhai? Circle one:**

<b>The Heads</b>	<b>The Village</b>	<b>Sanctuary/Tern Point</b>	<b>Surrounding Rural Area</b>
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**3 What age group do you belong to? Circle one :**

<b>Under 20 years</b>	<b>20-39 years</b>	<b>40-64 years</b>	<b>Over 64 years</b>
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**4 What do you most like about Mangawhai?**

**5 What are your priorities for managing Mangawhai's growth?**

Please tick the four most important measures to you from the following list:

Possible measures:	Tick Four
Protect the estuary	
Enable more retail	
Provide more walkways, cycleways, and cycle lanes	
Improve local roads: wider, more footpaths, kerb and channel edges	
Improve coastal amenities– boat launching , access, beach & boat parking	
Improve rubbish collection	
Provide more land for employment	
Maintain and increase mangrove removal	
Provide a recreation centre and public swimming pool	
Maintain harbour dredging	
Allow apartments, units, and terrace housing	

Please return to the desk, or email to: [info@mangawhaimatters.com](mailto:info@mangawhaimatters.com)