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Flood Resilience: Awatoto Pump Station Landscape Scoping

Summary

This Landscape Scoping Assessment has been prepared to identify the potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed Awatoto Pump Station upgrades. Based on a site visit and review of the current concept design, it is considered that the proposal will result in Low adverse effects. This conclusion reflects the modified nature of the receiving environment, the absence of nearby residential receptors, and the limited visibility and contained scale of the proposed infrastructure. The removal of previously proposed ancillary elements (generator and fuel storage) further reduces the potential for visual effects.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that the proposal does not give rise to significant adverse visual landscape effects, and therefore the preparation of a detailed Landscape Plan (as contemplated by Condition 24(2) of the OiC) is not required.

Purpose

Narrative Landscape Ltd has been engaged by Brian Perry Civil Ltd to undertake a Landscape Scoping Assessment for the proposed Awatoto Pump Station. The assessment responds to Condition 24 of the Severe Weather Emergency Recovery (Hawke's Bay Flood Protection Works) Order 2024 (OiC), which requires:

- Identification of potential visual landscape effects, including effects on:
 - adjoining residential properties; and
 - the coastal environment; and
- Determination of whether those effects are 'significant', such that a Landscape Plan (i.e. fencing/planting) is required.

This report addresses the scoping function only, consistent with previous assessments prepared for HBRC flood resilience works.

Methodology

This assessment has been prepared by Josh Hunt, a Registered Landscape Architect (NZILA), and adopts a proportionate methodology, consistent with the NZILA Te Tangi a Te Manu Guidelines, but tailored to the scale and nature of the proposal.



The approach includes:

- Review of concept design information and consent strategy material
- Site visit undertaken on 6 April 2026
- Identification of key landscape and visual receptors
- Qualitative assessment of potential effects using a 7-point effects scale (**Figure 1**)

Very Low	Low	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate - High	High	Very High
Less than minor	Minor		More than Minor		Significant	

Figure 1: Effects rating scale.

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether any effects are approaching a 'significant' threshold, rather than to undertake a detailed LVA.

Proposal

The proposed Awatoto Pump Station forms part of the wider flood resilience programme under the OiC. Based on the current concept design (**Figure 2**), the key components include:

- A replacement pump station structure incorporating three fish-friendly pumps
- Associated discharge pipelines and outlet structure to the adjacent waterbody
- Localised earthworks and hardstand areas
- Access upgrades and utility connections

The design approach seeks to limit above-ground infrastructure, with compact built form and use of precast elements to reduce visual bulk. It is also noted that earlier design components (including fuel storage and additional generator structures) have now been removed, resulting in a reduced visual footprint and simplified built form.

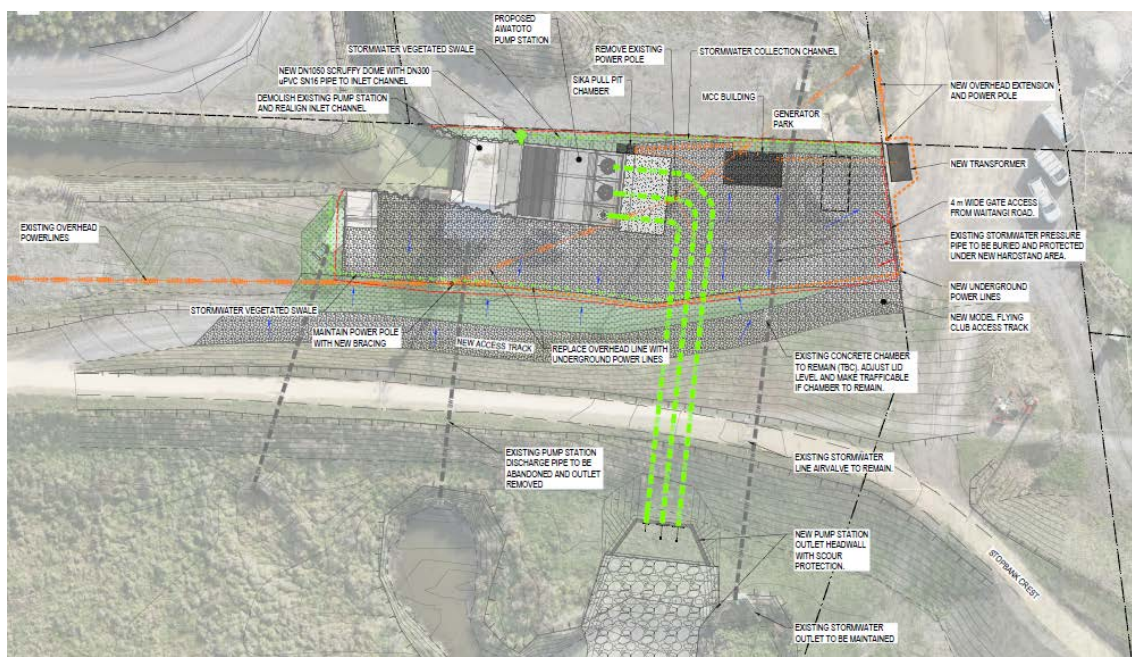


Figure 2: Proposed Pump Station Site Layout

Existing Environment

The pump station site (**Figure 3**) is located at the end of a paper road accessed from Waitangi Road, predominantly within the Natural Open Space Zone (controlled by HBRC) immediately adjacent to the southern extent of the General Industrial Zone of the Proposed District Plan¹.



Figure 3: Proposed Pump Station Site Layout

The surrounding environment is defined by a mix of industrial, transport and river management infrastructure. To the north and north-east are Ravensdown and BioRich Compost facilities, while to the east the Palmerston North–Gisborne railway line and State Highway 51 form a strong transport corridor (**Figure 4**).



Figure 4: Pump Station Site – Looking North

¹ Note: The Operative District Plan has these as 'River Conservation Zone' & 'Main Industrial Zone'.

To the south (**Figure 5**), a stopbank extends along the true left bank of the Tutaekuri River, with the (temporarily closed) Hawke's Bay cycle trail located along its crest. Beyond this, the environment transitions to the Horseshoe Wetland and Waitangi Regional Park and Tutaekuri Estuary, which exhibit higher ecological and amenity values, and a more naturalised coastal experience further east of the transport corridor.



Figure 5: Pump Station Site – Looking South

This area is a highly modified environment, influenced by the adjacent coastline and characterised by flood control infrastructure, engineered waterways, pastoral/industrial interfaces, and major transport corridors. The immediate setting is therefore functional and infrastructure-dominated, with low inherent landscape sensitivity.

While there is a discernible increase in landscape and ecological value within the river corridor and coastal environments to the south and east, these areas are physically and visually separated from the site by the stopbank and transport infrastructure (**Figure 6**). As a result, the site itself is considered to have low landscape sensitivity, with a high capacity to absorb the upgraded infrastructure without giving rise to significant adverse landscape or visual effects.



Figure 6: View toward site from the adjacent State Highway



Visual Effects

In considering potential effects, for many of the OiC Flood Protection projects, nearby residential properties have been a key consideration. However, in this instance, the nearest dwelling is approximately 1.7km away and there are not private views oriented toward the site for amenity or outlook.

The existing elements such as the stopbank, landform, and surrounding infrastructure provide a degree of visual containment. Where views are available (primarily from the adjacent stopbank pathway) the pump station would be read as a relatively minor component within an already modified, working landscape.

In this context, any change in visual amenity is limited, and in a location where a pump station already exists. The proposal does not introduce a new or unfamiliar landscape element, but rather sits comfortably within the established pattern of infrastructure in the area. Furthermore, an initially proposed 'Optional Generator' and 'Optional Fuel Storage' are no longer being sought for this location. This reduces the extent of visual clutter.

Coastal Environment Effects

While the site is located within the broader coastal margin, the immediate environment is already heavily modified, with the character being influence by the adjacent industrial activity and transportation corridor.

In particular, the proposal does not alter the underlying patterns (abiotic or biotic) that define the coastal environment, any change in the experiential qualities of the area is localised and contained within an already developed setting, and the pump station will not be visually prominent in wider views associated with the estuary, wetland, or coastal edge.

As noted earlier, the areas of higher landscape and ecological value to the south and east are separated from the site by both the stopbank and transport corridor. This separation is important, as it limits both visibility and the extent to which the proposal is experienced as part of those environments.

Conclusion

Overall, I consider that potential adverse visual effects are Low. Importantly, there are no properties that are likely to experience effects approaching a 'significant' threshold.

Additionally, I consider that effects on the coastal environment would also be Low, and well below any threshold that could reasonably be described as significant.

Appendix 1: Effects Scale

The following table outlines the scale of effects used within this assessment. It is noted that while the primary consideration is typically in relation to negative effects of a proposal, effects can also be neutral or positive.

Very High	Total loss/modification of key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. amounts to a fundamental change of landscape character or visual amenity.	Significant Effect
High	Major loss/modification or loss of most key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. substantial change to the pre- development landscape character or visual amenity.	Significant Effect
High-Moderate	Loss/modification of several key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. the pre-development landscape character or visual amenity remains evident but is distinctly changed.	More than Minor Effect
Moderate	Partial loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. new elements may be prominent but not necessarily uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape or views.	More than Minor Effect
Low-Moderate	Minor loss/modification to one or more key elements / features / characteristics, i.e. new elements are not prominent or uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape or views.	Less than Minor Effect
Low	No material loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics. i.e. modification or change is not uncharacteristic and integrates seamlessly within the receiving landscape or views.	
Very Low	Little or no loss/modification to key elements / features / characteristics of the baseline, i.e. approximating a 'no change' situation that is barely discernible.	