



Kaiwharawhara Point, apart from its beach, is not accessible to the public.

'Hook of Maui' plan revived

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The Hook of Maui may not be sunk after all, as political desire builds in Wellington to revive plans for a "capital gateway" that may include the giant illuminated fish hook sculpture.

Greater Wellington Regional Council says it has talked to CentrePort about building a grand sculpture on a 3.5-hectare slice of reclaimed land next to the Inter-islander ferry terminal in Wellington Harbour, known as Kaiwharawhara Point.

The negotiations come as CentrePort seeks resource consent to pave and develop the port-owned land into a storage facility for logs, containers and vehicles.

But regional council chairman Chris Laidlaw and Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown both want an art installation on the site, and the Wellington Sculpture Trust believes the Hook of Maui could be a good fit.

First touted in 2008, the Hook of Maui involved a towering fish hook split by the motorway at the bottom of the Ngauranga Gorge. A laser would have pierced the night sky, portraying a fishing line.

Legend has it the North Island was fished from the sea by the demigod Maui.

The idea was scrapped in 2012 after its projected cost blew out from \$1.3 million to \$3m, and concerns were raised about the laser being an aircraft hazard.

But sculpture trust chairwoman Sue Elliott said technology had come a long way in four years, and the trust was investigating whether the sculpture could be built more cheaply.

"We would need to be able to build it for less than half the [\$3m] cost to be comfortable, but we think we can."

CentrePort lodged resource consent applications for its Kaiwharawhara Point development in June, hoping to begin work in September.

The area is zoned for port purposes, with the exception of its beach, which is in the Department of Conservation's hands.

CentrePort does not allow public access so the beach is accessible only by sea.



An impression of the Hook of Maui, a potential gateway to the city.

AT A GLANCE

What is Kaiwharawhara Point?

- Reclaimed land on the seaward side of Wellington's urban motorway constructed in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Aside from some port storage activities, it is largely unused.
- A range of uses has been suggested over the past couple of decades, including port expansion, a cycleway, a continuation of the central business district and development of a "Parisian-style boulevard".

Laidlaw said Kaiwharawhara Point was the ideal spot for a "truly symbolic" sculpture to welcome people into Wellington.

The issue of future public access and alternative uses would be "a factor in the consent", but it was nothing that could not be overcome with a bit of political will.

CentrePort was "comfortable" with the idea of doing something more with Kaiwharawhara Point, Laidlaw said.

CentrePort said demand from customers for more space meant expansion into Kaiwharawhara Point was integral to its success.

Its development would not change the status quo of no public access. But the port acknowledged it was in discussions with the councils and community groups about other initiatives.

Wade-Brown said her concern was that the development would put the brakes on plans for the Great Harbour Way cycleway.

She backed calls for an "artistic gateway" on the site and said the Hook of Maui, along with a park and the cycleway, would be a great addition to the city.