
REPORT 2
(1215/12/IM)

DRAFT NORTHERN RESERVES MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Purpose of Report

The intention of this report is to brief the Tawa Community Board on the preparation of the draft Northern Reserves Management Plan (see Appendix 1), the purpose of the plan, and key issues related to the plan.

2. Executive Summary

The Draft Northern Reserves Management Plan is the first management plan for the 106 reserves, esplanade strips and accessways in the northern area between Ngauranga and Tawa.

A draft vision, objectives and policies have been developed to provide long term strategic direction for these reserve areas. These are derived from submissions received on the management plan discussion document 2004, the Northern Growth Management Plan (NGMF), discussions with staff and community groups.

The key issues covered in the Draft Management Plan are:

- Future of the Halfway House and Glenside Reserve
- Upgrading of key community parks including Grasslees and Memorial Park/Alex Moore in Johnsonville
- Need for a community park assessment in Newlands
- Youth needs analysis for outdoor facilities prior to any investment in BMX/skateboard facilities
- Priority listing of new track linkages in the north
- Open Space requirements as a result of future subdivision in Stebbings Valley and Lincolnshire Farms
- Assessment of four local parks and their future role in the park network.
- Priority for future playground development including decommissioning of some playgrounds
- Future provision of sportsfields including development of recreation hubs, partnerships with schools and development of artificial surfaces for training purposes.
- Protection and enhancement of key ecological areas and landscape features

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Community Board:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that Strategy and Policy Committee approved the draft plan for public consultation at the Wednesday 5 December reconvened meeting on 11 December 2007.*
3. *Discuss with officers the key issues and priority areas of the Board.*
4. *Consider whether the Board wish to make a formal submission as part of the public consultation process.*

4. Background

The northern area is defined as the north western corridor from Ngauranga Gorge to the south of Porirua. It is bounded by Spicers, Ohariu and Totara Ridges in the west and the Horokiwi Ridge and Western Harbour hills in the east. This plan covers the management and planning of Council owned reserves and open spaces within the northern area.

There are 106 reserves and Council owned open spaces in the area spread throughout 12 suburbs – Tawa, Takapu Valley, Grenada North, Glenside, Grenada Village, Churton Park, Paparangi, Woodridge, Horokiwi, Newlands, Johnsonville, Ngauranga.

Nearly half of these are local parks, a quarter ecological areas, 13 sportsfields, and 4 community parks.

There are some areas that are reserve within the northern area but are excluded from this plan:

1. The Outer Green Belt has its own Management Plan
2. A 109 hectare bush area (site off Horokiwi Road) is managed by Greater Wellington as part of Belmont Regional Park.

This plan will replace the Seton Nossiter Management Plan 1996.

4.1 *Strategic direction*

The Long Term Council Community Plan includes seven strategies including the **Environmental Strategy** that provide high-level statements about the Council's long-term environmental intentions for Wellington. The Northern Reserves sit primarily under this Strategy, and this management plan is prepared in the context of the following Council outcomes:

- Making Wellington *more liveable*, where Wellington's natural environment is more accessible to all for a wide range of social and recreational opportunities that do not compromise environmental values;

- Creating a *stronger sense of place*, where Wellington recognises and protects significant features of its natural heritage;
- *More actively engaged*, where a collaborative participatory approach is pursued for environmental kaitiakitanga (guardianship) by information sharing and establishing partnerships;
- *Better connected*, where Wellington has a network of green space;
- *Safer*, including clean water and air to protect public health and ecosystems;
- *Healthier*, with the protection of land and water based ecosystems to sustain natural processes;
- *More competitive*, with a high quality environment attracting more visitors.

The Northern Reserves also have the potential to contribute to the three year priorities of the Environment Strategy. In particular; increasing efforts to improve the protection of streams (with policies around stream management and education), alignment with principles of biodiversity management, and actively fostering and managing partnerships with stakeholders.

This management plan is also influenced by the **Culture and Wellbeing Strategy**, which emphasises enhancing elements of the city’s sense of place, including native flora and fauna; and becoming more actively engaged, including access to historical and heritage information, and investing in the city’s public environment.

4.2 Structure of the Draft Management Plan

The draft plan is structured around five themes: landscape, ecology, recreation, access, and culture and history.

The northern area is divided into sectors for the purposes of implementation and ease of understanding for communities. These sectors are:

1. West Tawa
2. Takapu and eastern Tawa
3. Churton Park, Glenside, Stebbings
4. Grenada North, Paparangi, Newlands
5. Johnsonville
6. Harbour Escarpment

4.3 Summary of current planning process

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| 16 September 2002 | ○ Built and Natural Environment Committee approved notification of the intention to prepare the Northern Reserves Management Plan and approved distribution of a discussion document to aid the public in making initial submissions on the plan |
| June – 16 August 2004 | Discussion document released for a two month consultation period. 17 submissions were received. |

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| Late 2004 | ○ Workshops held for submitters – submissions, issues and opportunities were summarised and discussed. Feedback was considered and incorporated into the development of the draft management plan. |
| 2005 - 2007 | ○ Development of draft plan |
| 5 th December 2007 | ○ Presentation of Draft Management Plan to SPC for approval for public comment. |
| 13 th December 2007 | ○ Presentation to Tawa Community Board |
| March/April 2008 | ○ Release of draft plan for comment |
| May 2008 | ○ Receipt of submissions on draft plan |
| June 2008 | ○ Committee hearings on draft plan submissions |
| August 2008 | ○ Completion and approval of final plan |

5. Discussion

5.1 Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Northern Reserves Management Plan (NRMP) is to provide Wellington City Council with clear guidance for the adequate provision and management of the northern reserves for the next 10 years. Objectives and policies give guidance for the development, management, operation and public use of the northern reserves.

Specifically it will:

- Manage reserves in a consistent manner by providing common objectives and policies.
- Ensure appropriate protection and management for important natural, recreation, historical and cultural values on Council owned reserve land and open space.
- Provide prioritised strategic management initiatives.
- Provide a framework to achieve connectivity and sustainability in and between the northern reserves.

5.2 Vision statement and objectives

The vision statement and objectives were developed through an analysis of key issues raised through public submissions on the document *Wellington's Northern Reserves – Management Plan Discussion document June 2004*, discussion with the key stakeholders and staff and with reference to key strategic documents particularly the *Northern Growth Management Framework (NGMF) 2003*.

The objectives represent the strategic steps required to begin to realise the vision, and their implementation is described through the policies and actions.

5.3 Key issues, opportunities and actions

Key issues and opportunities for the future management of the northern reserves have been raised through a review of Council's Strategic Outcomes, discussions with staff, assessment of public submissions on the discussion paper (*Wellington's Northern Reserves – Management Discussion Document*). This included follow up meetings with some of the submitters. Key issues raised in the submissions were:

- Protection of key bush remnants
- Identify and protect key cultural and historic sites
- The ongoing health and vitality of the Porirua stream and need for restoration planting
- Need for track network linkages including the harbour escarpment
- Need to restore the Halfway House and Glenside Reserve
- Set of linked reserves on the eastern hills
- Reserves in the Tawa Valley should be linked with wildlife corridors and access routes
- Need for connections from Horokiwi to Belmont Regional Park
- Need for sites for motor caravan overnight parking

All of the above have been incorporated into the plan apart from the proposal for motor caravan overnight parking. Currently overnight camping is not permitted under the Public Places bylaw. This is a city wide issue that will be dealt with through the review of the Public Places bylaw.

The following sections describe the key issues raised and opportunities relating to these issues.

5.3.1 Landscape

The large number of reserves means that they not only have individual roles in the landscape but collectively provide a landscape framework for the northern area. Reserves vary in size as well as in their purpose. Some are an integral part of a wider network and have ecological values that contribute to the resilience and quality of this. Others are local purpose and stand alone. Local or neighbourhood reserves may contribute to the wider amenity values of the area or they may simply be playgrounds where safety and visibility requirements mean that vegetation is minimal (or at least low in stature). Reserves can be classified into the following:

Large scale reserves affording ecological and recreational connections, such as Seton Nossiter Park.

Medium scale reserves that are not part of a wider connectedness but are never the less attached to waterways and areas of ecological significance. Examples include Willowbank Park, and Wilf Mexted Scenic Reserve.

Small scale local reserves have ecological and amenity values but are isolated from wider networks and accessible only from the road. Examples include Larsen Crescent Reserve in Tawa and Burbank Reserve in Churton Park.

The plan also recognises the role of road reserve and private land and its importance in the landscape

Key policies are:

- Encourage the planting and natural regeneration of native species through all reserves to provide coherence and unifying themes across the landscape. Use exotic trees and shrubs to add interest and diversity and to provide for shade, shelter, and enclosure. Deciduous species can be desirable to avoid winter shade, particularly in road reserves.
- Protect and enhance corridors of vegetation running north to south. Corridors include Middleton Road and the Porirua Stream as well as SH1 and other main roads. Provide variation in the width of corridors and the density of vegetation, with openings to allow views into waterways and out to the wider landscape.
- Work with the developers of new subdivisions to locate reserves in areas that contribute to the consolidation of a wider landscape framework while at the same time maximising amenity values for future residents.

Key actions are:

- Protect the open character of ridges, spurs, and steep slopes in any subdivision through the acquisition of reserves and the pursuit of covenants.
- Ensure that the design and development of Glenside Reserve enhances its contribution to the wider coherence and connectedness of the landscape while enhancing the quality of the reserve and the recreation opportunities afforded.
- Protect the open space character of Marshalls Ridge and the steeper ridges and spurs falling to Stebbings Valley and Middleton Road through the provisions in the District Plan and/or by facilitating covenants.
- Develop long term plans for Erlstoke Reserve and western reserves that link Churton Park with the Outer Green Belt to identify long term landscape management regimes. This will include fencing of bush remnants and long term grazing of open areas.
- Assess the future role and size of Grenada North reserve between Grenada North and the motorway to retain its role as a landscape buffer and to integrate it as part of the Lincolnshire Farms development.
- Develop a concept plan for the ex- Transpower land, Caribbean Avenue Reserve.

5.3.2 Ecology

Due to the relative isolation of the forest reserves in the northern area, ensuring the long term health and resilience (or ecological integrity) of these reserves is a key challenge. The northern management area is an opportunity to incorporate

the principals of ecological connectivity into reserve design, management and acquisition. Several gaps in ecological connectivity of the forest reserve network can be seen around the Tawa basin, Grenada North, Churton Park, Glenside and the Harbour Escarpment. Filling these gaps through restoration planting, pest control, protection or reserve acquisition is an opportunity. There is further opportunity for ecological connectivity when considering forests on private land and for Wellington City Council to take an advocacy role in encouraging landowners to protect these.

For streams, riparian habitat is as important as the in-stream habitat for ensuring ecological health. Native riparian cover is important for providing shade and food for aquatic life, which in turn, helps maintain water quality. Riparian cover can also help filter pollutants washed into streams by stormwater. The Porirua Stream is managed by Greater Wellington Regional Council, however there are a number of Council Reserves sitting alongside the stream that are within the scope of the current management plan.

Key policies are:

- The Council will protect all forest remnants and ecologically important areas on Council land in the northern area.
- The Council will protect all streams and natural water courses on Wellington City Council land in the northern area and work with adjacent local authorities to ensure a coordinated approach to stream management.
- Restoration work carried out by the Council will be prioritised around:
 - a. Ensuring the ecological connectivity of reserve network
 - b. Enhancing the size, shape, and species recruitment of existing reserves
- The Council recognises the important role individuals, community-based organisations, landowners and private businesses play in restoring the indigenous ecosystems of the northern management area and will support community initiatives with advice and, where possible, plants and other materials.

Key actions are:

- Extend the pest control programme to include reserves important for ecological connectivity and biodiversity representation
- Carry out riparian planting where reserves pass through streams
- Negotiate the protection of forest remnants, stream and other important ecological areas as part of the northern greenfields development.

5.3.3 Recreation

The open space system in the northern suburbs provides for a range of outdoor recreation uses and activities through the provision of:

Community Parks – These are key areas of open space generally located within 10 to 15 minutes walk of residential areas. There are gaps in provision in Newlands whilst in other suburbs the current Community Parks need reviewing to ensure they still provide for the needs of the local community. In addition, future subdivision planning needs to ensure adequate provision of community parks.

Local Parks – These are small parks serving the local community and may contain play equipment but generally have limited facilities and amenities. Distribution is inconsistent with some in need of an upgrade whilst others seem to have no role.

Sportsfields - There are thirteen sportsfields in the northern area. Council is investigating ways to meet the growing demand for sports fields from Wellington sports groups. One limitation is the lack of suitable flat land for more sports fields. Using artificial surfaces at some key locations is one option being investigated. These surfaces would provide more utilisation hours per week and take some pressure off neighbouring sports fields. In addition to the above, Council is actively working with sports clubs to ensure they are sustainable and where possible to facilitate amalgamation between clubs to ensure they remain viable and make efficient use of buildings and facilities on sportsfields.

Playgrounds - The Wellington City Council playground policy identifies four categories of playground (centralised, community, local and local basic). There are currently 31 playgrounds in the northern area, 4 community, and 27 comprising local and local basic. An assessment has been carried out over current provision of play grounds in the northern area. This has looked at adequacy of provision within existing suburbs and play area requirements as part of new subdivision development.

Youth facilities - Youth facilities provide for children in the 12-24 age group and comprise skate parks, BMX and half courts. Provision of these has been based on local community demand rather than an overall plan for the northern area.

Key policies are:

- Community parks should be located centrally within communities, ideally within walking distance (10 to 15 minutes) of residential dwellings and provide for a range of informal recreation activities for all age groups. This is consistent with Council's approval for a sequenced upgrade of Community Parks (April 26th 2006).
- Local parks will be provided to serve their local community and contain play equipment subject to the provisions of the playgrounds policy)
- Sportsfield provision in the north will be considered as part of the overall citywide provision
- A significant majority of dwellings should be within 800 metres of a community playground (Playground Policy 2002)
- A significant majority of dwellings should be within 600 metres of a local playground (Playground Policy 2002)

- To improve the access for all citizens to sport, recreation and leisure facilities and activities.
- Make more intensive use of and improve the linkages between sportsfields, recreation facilities and resources in the city.

Key actions are:

- Facilitate a study on youth outdoor recreation needs in the northern area.
- Prepare and implement a master plan for Johnsonville Memorial Park and Alex Moore Park and investigate the opportunities to maximise their respective and complementary facilities.
- Prepare and implement a masterplan for the redevelopment of Grasslees Reserve, including upgrading of the playground.
- Investigate future recreation options for Arthur Carmen Park, Pinkerton Park, Lyndhurst Park (site 1805 north of Lyndhurst Road), and Jay Street Reserve
- Investigate the development of a Community Park in Newlands /Paparangi and how it will fit with the Newlands Suburban Centre redevelopment.
- Confirm the site for a new community park in Lincolnshire Farms as part of a future reserves Agreement.
- Upgrade the following playgrounds: Raroa Park, Coronation Park, Edward Wilson Reserve, Chorley Grove, Lyndhurst Reserve, Cheyne Walk, Grenada North, Brandon's Rock (Edgecombe Street) Salford Street, Lynfield Lane Play Areas, Kipling Street, Branscombe Street, Gilbert Young
- Decommission the following playgrounds: Kowhai Park (over time), Mahoe Reserve, Larsen Park, Burbank Crescent, Meekwood Reserve on the basis that other playgrounds will be upgraded nearby.
- Provide new playgrounds in Pikitanga Reserve, Kentwood Drive Reserve, Lower Stebbings (local), Upper Stebbings (Community) Amesbury Drive, and Lincolnshire Farms (number to be confirmed).

5.3.4 Access

The northern part of Wellington has not had the benefit of access to more extensive outdoor spaces and opportunities. The central part of the City is well served by the Town Belt and there is reasonable access to Wellington's Outer Green Belt and the South Coast. Access to Belmont Regional Park is well developed from the Hutt Valley's western suburbs. For the Northern area of the City there are significant opportunities but access is poorly defined or non-existent both between reserve areas as well as to other areas such as the Outer Green Belt. Council's Open Space Access Plan identifies some of these key links. This work has been extended as part of this plan.

Key policies (based on the Open Space Access Plan):

- A wide range of skill and fitness levels, abilities and interests will be catered for by the access network.
- Tracks will be shared use (ie pedestrian and cycle) wherever this is appropriate. Tracks are open for biking unless otherwise stated.
- The access network will be integrated with the wider city and regional access networks, and the transport needs of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Designated tracks will be available for horses and declared open for horse-riding.
- All tracks are closed to motorised vehicles except by special permission on a case-by-case basis.
- Some tracks within the network will be accessible to those with limited mobility, push chairs and wheel chairs.

Key actions are:

- Facilitate the establishment of the Porirua Stream Walkway and Cycleway with the Tawa community.
- Negotiate access for walking and cycling between Tawa and Upper Stebbings Valley as part of a future reserves agreement.
- Develop a track link between Wilf Mexted Reserve, Woodburn Reserve and into Willowbank Park.
- Negotiate access from the reservoir in Stebbings Valley onto Ohariu Ridge and north to 944 Ohariu Valley Road and investigate a cross valley link from here to Marshall Ridge and down Stebbings Stream to Westchester Drive extension and Glenside.
- Investigate the establishment of a cross valley link between Glenside and Grenada Village via Mark Avenue Extension.
- Investigate a possible track link between Churton Park, Ohariu Valley Road and Old Coach Road.
- Develop a track from Seton Nossiter Park to Horokiwi and into Belmont Regional Park.
- Complete the Harbour Escarpment walkway from Seton Nossiter Park to Ngauranga.

5.3.5 Culture and History

The area covered by the Northern Reserves Management Plan has many cultural and historical associations. This plan highlights the key historical values in relation to the reserves of the northern suburbs.

Key policies are:

- Where appropriate, Maori place names will be used in conjunction with European place names on signs and maps.
- Consultation with the NZ Historic Places Trust and with tangata whenua will be an important part of managing historic and traditional sites and waahi tapu.

- Recognised historic sites on reserves will be protected in a manner reflecting their value and significance, in consultation with any directly affected groups or individuals.
- Where appropriate and subject to the availability of funding, historical features will be suitably restored and interpreted.
- A concept plan for the ongoing protection and enhancement of Glenside reserve will be implemented.
- A process for the refurbishment and reuse of the Halfway House for community purposes will be implemented.

5.3.5.1 *Halfway House and Glenside Reserve*: The Halfway House is listed in the District Plan as a heritage building with high historic significance.

The house has been vacant for many years and is in a poor state of repair. The landscape context of the building has been largely destroyed. The Glenside community is keen to see the building used for some community purpose and see it as an integral part of the Glenside Reserve. The Halfway House is central to the functioning of the most visible and active part of the reserve.

Key actions are:

- An expression of interest process to be undertaken to find a suitable long term sustainable use for the building.

Any use and lease of the house should ensure that it:

- Maximises the building's unique setting, character and layout while minimising the effects on the surrounding amenity values and building's heritage values.
- Is a viable, long-term use for the building.
- Has one or more 'public good' elements, namely; recreation, leisure, community/cultural, or education.
- Will 'actively' use the building, and is not a static activity such as a storage facility.
- Maximises the building's use both temporarily and spatially, i.e. not occupied or used for just a few hours a week, or limited to using just part of the lease area.

5.3.6 General policies

Policies which deal with a range of issues are included in the final policy section of the draft management plan, *Administration*. Key policies relate to:

Reserve Acquisitions: Reserves contributions as part of subdivision shall be taken as land and/or development contribution depending on projected recreation demand as a result of the subdivision.

Reserves shall be acquired in accordance with a prioritised programme of reserve acquisitions; In particular priorities should be given to: The harbour escarpment, connectivity between Tawa and the Outer Green Belt, land for additional sport fields in Grenada North.

Reserve declarations, classification and naming: Most reserves are appropriately classified; however through this plan it has been identified that there is a need to meet the needs of specific user groups and the result of this is that there is a need to reclassify some reserves to more accurately reflect this need.

Community involvement in land management: The communities of the northern suburbs are active in their involvement in the management of the reserves. Council will encourage community involvement through a variety of means including revegetation programmes and development of plans.

Utilities: The effects of utilities will be minimised by only placing those that are necessary to the normal functioning of the city and which cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.

Leases: in accordance with the Council's Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups.

Commercial uses and licences: Council acknowledges the likely demand for commercial recreation uses in the northern reserves. Each application will be assessed against the objectives and policies of this plan and other relevant Council policies.

Encroachments: Encroachments can create the alienation of public land into private interests. This is contrary to the purposes of reserves and will be controlled.

Structures, Buildings and Furniture: Structures are sometimes necessary to support the use of the reserve. However new buildings shall only be built on reserve land where they strongly support the operation of the reserve and the recreational activities on that reserve.

Signage and Interpretation: Signage plays an important part in bringing values of an area to the community's attention. Signage is also necessary to inform users about any activities that are not permitted or that need to be undertaken in a particular manner.

5.4 Implementation

Actions for implementation are listed for each sector, are included in the legal tables and tabulated in the implementation Section of the Draft Management Plan.

The implementation section includes potential funding source and timing for each action. The timing is subject to change depending on funding, but indicates their priority

Submitters on the Draft Management Plan will be invited to comment on these implementation actions and their priority

Once actions are clearly prioritised, costs will be estimated where possible and timeframes given in the final Management Plan. It is expected that actions identified will be funded through the budgets that are developed for the relevant Asset Management Plans and annual plans. Most will be funded through existing projects, although some may require additional funds to be requested through the new initiative process, or the Charles Plimmer Bequest.

5.5 Proposed communication and consultation on draft

The Reserves Act (1977) requires the Draft Management Plan to be publicly notified and available for comment for no less than a period of two months and states that submitters must have the opportunity to be heard in front of Committee prior to recommending the plan to the Minister of Conservation for approval.

Accordingly, the submission period will run from early March 2008 until the end of April 2008 and will be advertised in the local community newspapers in the northern area, and on Our Wellington page in the Dominion Post.

Anyone who wishes to be heard in support of their submission will have the opportunity to speak to Strategy and Policy Committee. This will happen, subject to need, when the results of the written submissions are reported to Committee in June 2008. The final management plan will be presented to SPC after any amendments resulting from the due consideration of submissions.

In addition to these statutory requirements, the communication plan for the Draft Northern Reserves Management Plan includes the use of:

- Media release/s
- Council website
- Direct distribution to key stakeholders and previous submitters
- Distribution to libraries and Service Centres,
- Meetings with the Council's Treaty Partners and with the residents associations
- Meeting with the Tawa Community Board
- Public meetings

6. Conclusion

Throughout the development of this draft management plan, it has been clear that there are endless opportunities for future development and integration of the reserve network in the northern area. The vision and objectives have been developed to in consideration of Council's strategic priorities, feedback from the discussion document and through workshops with the community and staff.

Contact Officer: *Mike Oates, Acting Manager Open Space and Recreation Planning*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The draft management plan supports Council's Environment Strategy, contributing to a number of Environmental Outcomes (see Section 4.1 of the Draft Management Plan)

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Funding for northern reserves is managed under several projects. Many of the implementation actions will be funded through existing budgets. Some new initiative funding may be required.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

The review of the management plan has been discussed with both the Tenth Trust and Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira. Further meetings will be held as part of the consultation process on the draft management plan.

4) Decision-Making

The Board are asked to provide comment on this draft management plan. Implementation represents key strategic actions required to meet public use and demand on reserves in the northern area over the next 10 years and for the draft management plan the decision-making focus is one establishing priorities.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Consultation has, and is, being carried out in accordance with the Reserves Act (1977).

b) Consultation with Maori

Mana whenua were consulted prior to the initial discussion paper and notification of the review of the management plan.

6) Legal Implications

None.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report and draft management plan is consistent with existing policy, including the Outer Green Belt Management Plan (2004), the Recreation Strategy (2003), the Open Space Access Plan (2004), and the Pest Management Plan (2005).

APPENDIX ONE