
Draft Outer Green Belt Management Plan January 2019



**Rangituhi
Colonial Knob
(in Porirua City)**



Kilmister Tops



Mt Kaukau



Johnston Hill



Karori Park

Please note:

There was an error in the labelling of some of the maps in this document. This has now been corrected.

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Front cover:

Photo taken from Makara Peak looking north along Te Wharangi ridge.

The ridge connects Makara Peak and Mt Kaukau, and comprises a large section of the popular Skyline Track.

The Outer Green Belt carries on for many kilometres behind this viewpoint all the way to the South Coast.

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PREFACE

Wellington's Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2004, is currently under review. This 2018 draft plan (the Plan) has been prepared for public comment in the light of what has been achieved since 2004, changes and trends that affect the Outer Green Belt, and information gathered from community engagement in 2017 / 2018.

The main changes in this 2018 draft are as follows.

- Restructured and rewritten to improve clarity and add new content. The new structure is:
 - Part 1. Introduction: overview and context.
 - Part 2. Vision and Principles (*new section*)
 - Part 3. Description / Key Values
 - Part 4. General objectives and policies applicable to the whole Outer Green Belt
 - Part 5. Rules for use and development (*new section*)
 - Part 6. Objectives and policies applicable to seven management sectors.
- Scope changed to only Council-owned Outer Green Belt reserves rather than applying to a Concept Area, as formerly, which covered private as well as public land.
- Southern boundary extended to the South Coast shoreline rather than the top of the coastal escarpment; significant reserve land added.
- Updates relevant to national, regional and Wellington City Council strategy and policy relating to biodiversity, water quality, urban growth, recreation, health and wellbeing, and resilience.
- Updates to reflect completed tasks (e.g. Old Coach Road Conservation Plan) and on-the-ground change (e.g. new tracks).
- Updates to reflect results of 2017/2018 Outer Green Belt survey and change trends (e.g. patterns of vegetation change or recreational usage).
- Five essential principles introduced to help guide decision-making.
- More explicit about the value of the Outer Green Belt as an ecological corridor for wildlife as well as vegetation and its role in catchment management.
- Proposed phasing out of grazing on the Outer Green Belt and trialling other means of keeping ridgetops open.
- Gradual replacement of forestry plantations with native forest but with some selective harvesting in the short term
- Rather than the 2004 emphasis on establishing a track network, new emphasis on completing and managing the network, based on the *Open Space Access Plan 2016*, including identifying proposed new tracks and entrances.
- New topics on community resilience and Outer Green Belt identity / promotion.
- Updated mapping with current spatial data and revamped map templates to improve legibility.
- Identified '**actions**', to assist in prioritising work programmes and projects, including those with no current funding, to inform future annual planning and Long Term Plan priorities, and to highlight any changes needed to asset management and operational plans

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ABOUT THIS PLAN

1.1.1 THE OUTER GREEN BELT

The Outer Green Belt is the series of reserves that **the Wellington City Council ('the Council') has acquired along the ridges that separate Wellington's urban and rural areas, to create** a corridor of open space from **the City's** northern boundary to the South Coast for multiple environmental, recreational and social objectives. See map below.

1.1.2 PURPOSE

This *Outer Green Belt Management Plan* ('OGBMP' or '**Plan**') has three main purposes:

- to provide a consistent policy, management and decision-making framework for the **Wellington City Council's Outer Green Belt reserves;**
- to promote shared recognition of the Outer **Green Belt's importance** to Wellington;
- to promote co-operation between the Council, neighbours, stakeholders and the community in regard to managing the Outer Green Belt.

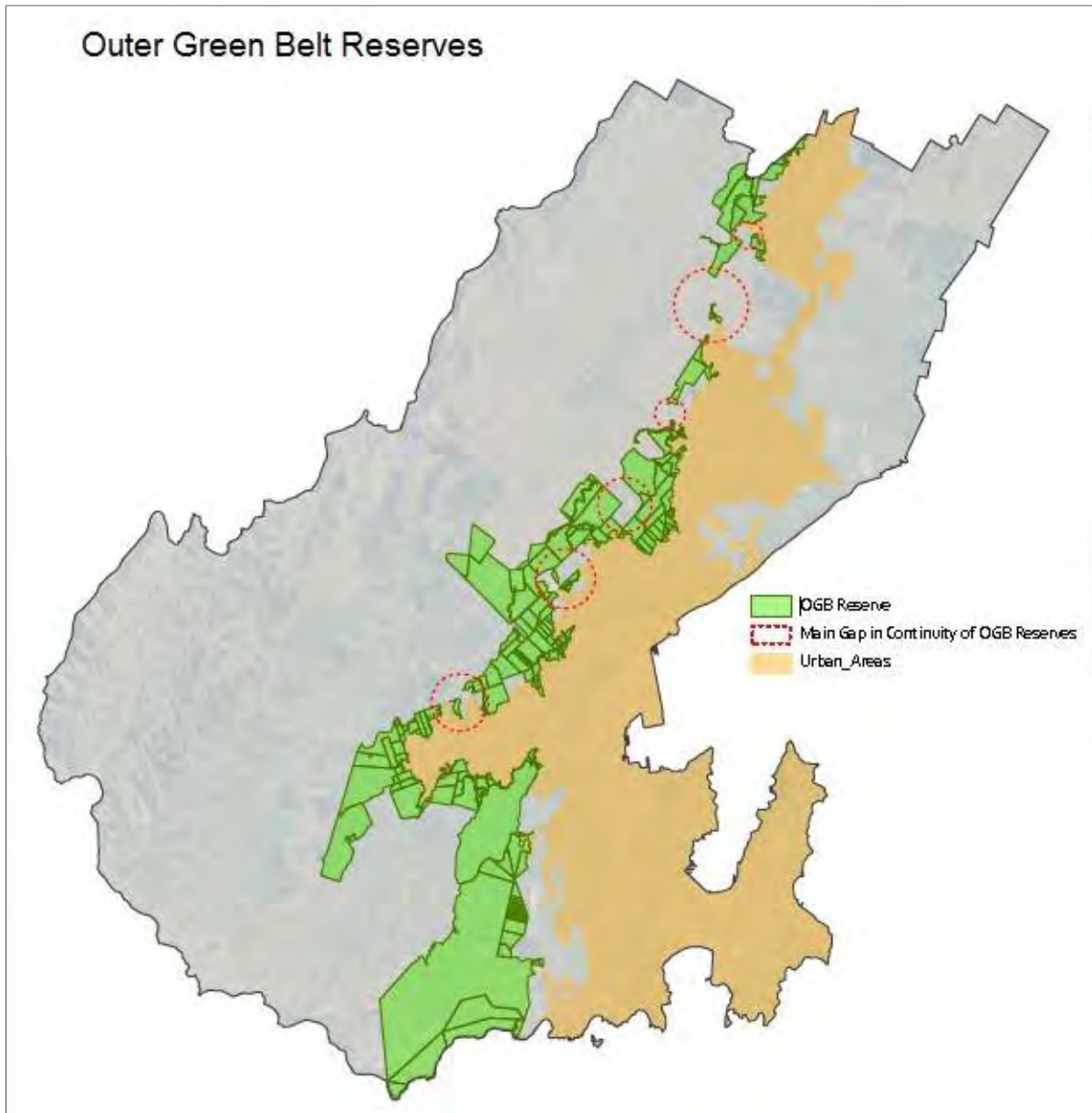
1.1.3 SCOPE

The spatial scope of this Plan has changed significantly from the preceding 2004 management plan. **The 2004 plan covered a larger area, referred to as the 'Outer Green Belt Concept Area', which** included both public and private land along the ridges **west of Wellington's urban area**. The scope of this Plan is confined to only the land along those ridges that the Council either owns or manages on behalf of another agency, such as the Department of Conservation. The main reasons for the change are as follows.

- Under the Reserves Act, the Council can make policies and management decisions in relation to its own reserve land but the owners of other land cannot be bound by the policies in this Plan, a point that was not always clear in the previous plan that had concerned private landowners.
- The 2004 management plan highlighted the need to protect ridgetop values over the private land but could not do so under the Reserves Act. Since 2004, the Ridgelines and Hilltops overlay in the Wellington City District Plan has become operative, providing a protective statutory mechanism for landscape protection over the private ridgetop land in the Concept Area.
- The scope of policies will be clearer if this Plan is written from the point of view of Council administering its own land, and being a neighbour to owners of adjoining land.

Historically, defining a Concept Area was a way of expressing aspirations for a connected Outer Green Belt before much had been achieved. Now, the Council owns sufficient reserve land along the envisaged corridor that it **can be called an 'Outer Green Belt'**, albeit with the need to fill the gaps as opportunity presents, as has happened in recent years (see Appendix I, Timeline).

The Council regards all the land along the Ohariu / Te Wharangi / Te Kopahou ridges to be important to the overall Outer Green Belt vision, regardless of ownership, and will continue to seek opportunities to work with adjoining landowners on voluntary initiatives that would contribute towards the vision through the policies in this plan, including seeking easements and rights of way for public access and through other mechanisms such as city-wide biodiversity and catchment management programmes. Any such initiatives are **subject to the landowner's agreement and** recognise that landowners also have their own objectives for their land.



1.1.4 TIMEFRAME

This Plan is intended to span a 10-year period: 2019-2029. It should be seen, however, as the second in a series of ongoing management plans that will be progressively reviewed and updated over time; always with a much longer-term 50 to 100-year and beyond vision in mind.

1.1.5 PLAN STRUCTURE

The Plan is structured from the broad scale to more detailed area-specific policies as follows:

Outer Green Belt as a whole:

- Vision and principles (Part 2)
- Description (Part 3)
- General objectives and policies (Part 4)
- Rules (Part 5).

Seven management sectors (Part 6)

- Defined to reflect local character, open space values and communities of interest, area-specific issues, opportunities and actions.
- The sectors are shown in the map below.

Note: there are separate site-specific plans within some sectors that are subsidiary to and complement the policies in this Plan. They have been developed to address complex site issues and objectives requiring more detailed planning and/or operational guidance where development and use calls for detailed spatial planning. They are:

- > Makarā Peak – *Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park Master Plan 2017*
- > Zealandia – *Living With Nature - Tiaki Taiao, Tiaki Tangata, Strategy for 2016-2035*
- > Ōtari Wilton's Bush – part of *Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan 2014*

Some areas on the edges or immediately adjacent to the Outer Green Belt are managed under the Suburban Reserves Management Plan as being more appropriate. These areas include playgrounds, the Wilton Bowling Green and the Karori Park playing fields.

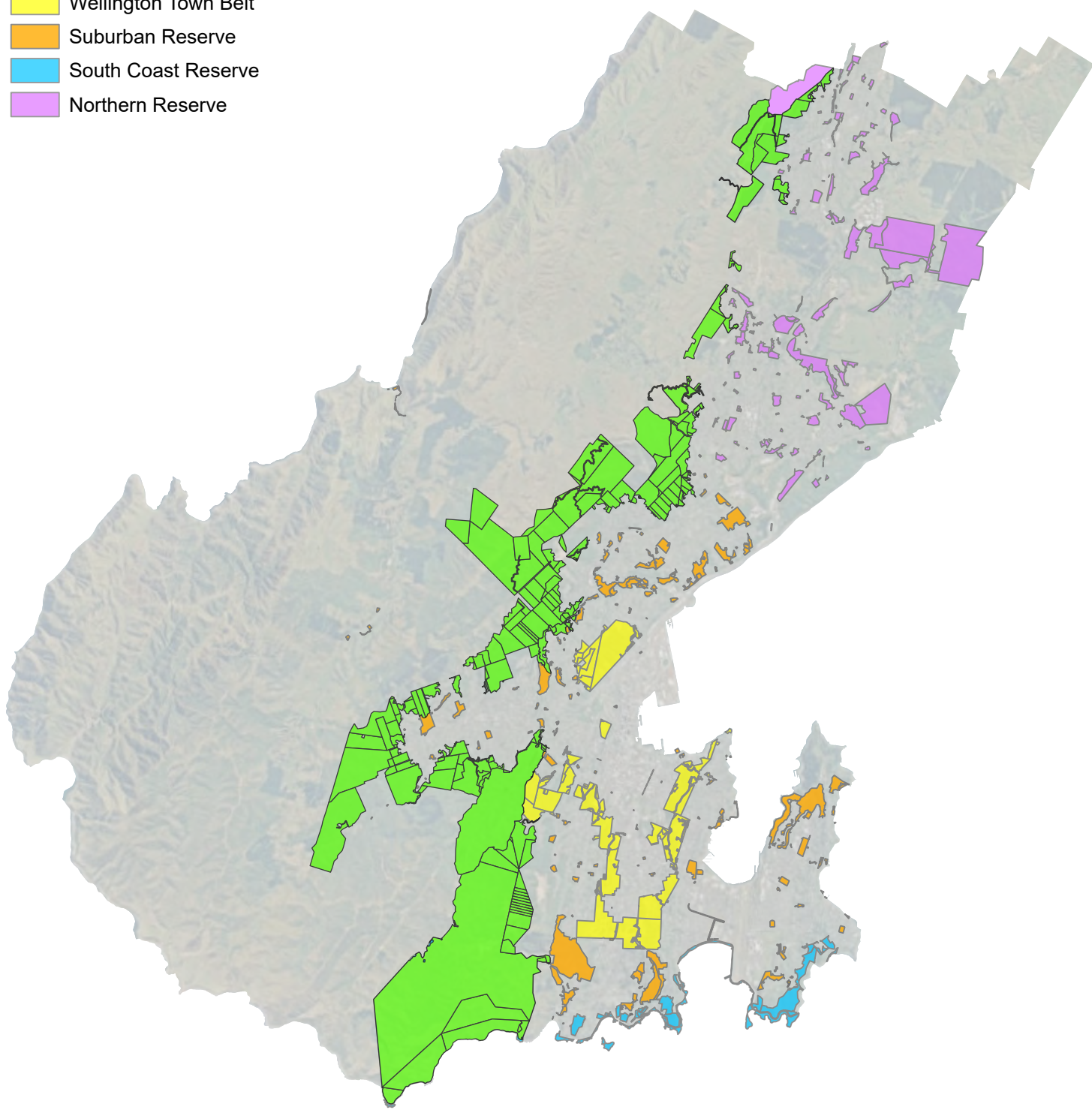
1.1.6 WHERE DOES THIS PLAN **FIT IN THE COUNCIL'S** WORK?

This *Outer Green Belt Management Plan* fits within a broad framework of statutory, regulatory and strategic policies. The relationships between this Plan and the other documents are shown in the diagram on the next page and explained in more detail in Appendix II, Policy & Planning Context. However, some key points follow.

- Most of the other policies and strategies have been updated or initiated since the 2004 version of this Plan, necessitating changes in this Plan for better alignment.
- This management plan is being prepared under the Reserves Act 1977, to provide the guiding framework for the day-to-day management and decision-making of the Council's **Outer** Green Belt reserves. It also provides for working in partnership with neighbours and communities towards the Outer Green Belt vision.
- The Outer Green Belt reserves are managed under the Reserves Act and under other legislation as necessary for any work that requires consents.
- In addition to the policy and strategy documents shown in the framework diagram below, other relevant programmes and initiatives have also been taken into account in this Plan e.g. Predator Free Wellington; the national Te Araroa Trail.
- Cross-boundary contexts are also important, particularly in the north where the Outer Green Belt finishes at the Wellington City / Porirua City boundary. The two councils own adjoining open space with overlapping management issues and opportunities. The two councils and the Department of Conservation are working together to integrate pest control, track networks and recreational opportunities between Spicer / Te Ngahere-o-Tawa forests in the Outer Green Belt, **Porirua City's proposed adventure park and the Department of Conservation's Rangituhi/Colonial Knob walkway.**

Wellington Reserves Network

- OGB Reserve
- Wellington Town Belt
- Suburban Reserve
- South Coast Reserve
- Northern Reserve



Sector 1: Te Ngahere-o-Tawa / Redwood

- Long-awaited access opening up
- Local ecological hub for forest restoration
- Horse-riding priority area
- Recreational and ecological links to Porirua

Sector 3: Kaukau

- Mt Kaukau - popular visitor destination and lookout
- Prominent Te Wharangi ridge: Mt Kaukau, The Crows Nest
- Khandallah and Johnsonville Parks - regionally significant native forest

Sector 4: Chartwell / Karori Park

- Otari-Wilton's Bush - nationally significant native forest/ botanic garden - visitor destination
- Te Wharangi ridge - Klimister Tops and Johnston Hill
- Johnston Hill - lookout and landmark

Sector 5: Makara Peak

- Mountain bike park - national and regional destination
- Makara Peak - rugged landmark and lookout
- Regenerating bush and forest restoration

Sector 7: Te Kopahou

- Rugged coastal landscape
- Rare and threatened biodiversity
- Adventure outdoor recreation
- Red Rocks, Brooklyn wind turbine - popular visitor destinations
- Large area under landfill designation

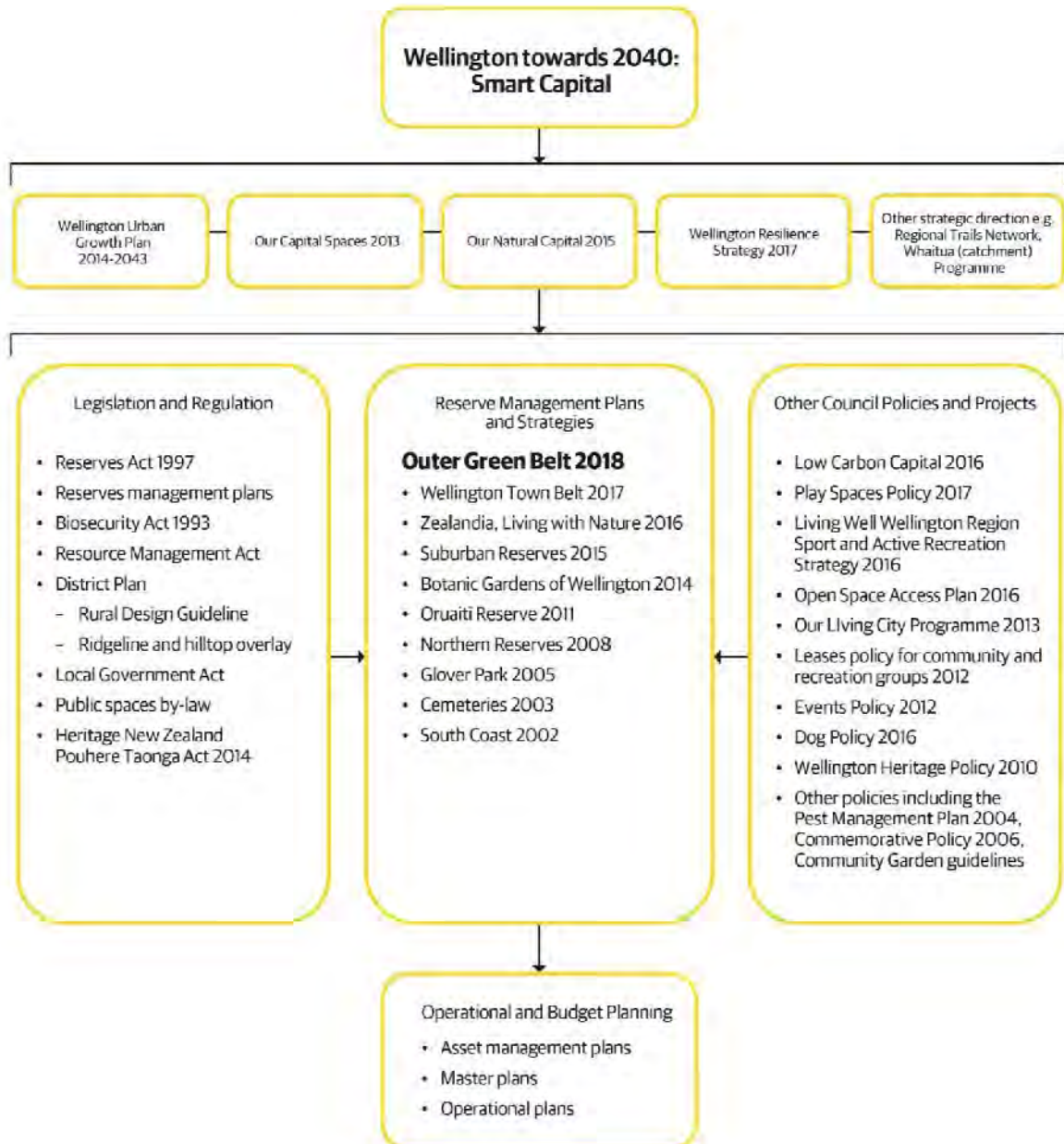
Sector 2: Ohariu Ridge

- Last significant gap in the Outer Green Belt
- Some long-awaited access opening up
- Tiny forest remnants
- Future reserves through Upper Stebbings Valley Structure Plan

Sector 6: Wrights Hill / Zealandia

- Zealandia - nationally significant eco-sanctuary and visitor destination
- Wrights Hill and WWII fortress - landmark and visitor destination
- Hub of native forest and wildlife restoration

Outer Green Belt Strategic Framework



1.1.7 FUNDING AND REPORTING

This Plan has a long-term focus – ensuring that the essential values of the Outer Green Belt are protected and managed, and proposed actions gradually implemented step-by-step. **The Council's** funding is prioritised and set through the Long-term Plan and Asset Management Plans. Operational funding is used for the day-to-day management and maintenance, and development and/or renewal works are funded through the capital works programme. There are often competing funding demands **within the Council's strategic priorities, so funding will be prioritised and allocated taking into account those other demands and the Council's overall, long-term objectives.**

People and groups who use and/or volunteer services to manage the Outer Green Belt need to be kept informed and have opportunities to provide feedback and influence decision-making. There is **potential every three years as part of Councils' Draft Long-term Plan review**, to provide submissions and feedback on the proposed programme of work. This may include advocating for additional investment in support of this management plan's objectives.

1.1.8 RELATIONSHIP WITH MANA WHENUA

Wellington City Council recognises the importance of the mana whenua¹ relationship and has formal memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika (Taranaki Whānui) and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated (Toa Rangatira), based on the following principles:

- Partnership: acting reasonably, honourably and in good faith to ensure the strategic relationship has integrity and respect, in the present and for the future of Wellington;
- Participation: recognising that both parties can contribute, for mutual benefit, in deciding the future of the city – **working towards and achieving the parties' visions;** and
- Protection: actively protecting the taonga of Taranaki Whānui and the taonga of Ngāti Toa Rangatira and safeguarding cultural concepts, values and practices to be celebrated and enjoyed for all Wellingtonians.

The Council has a responsibility to take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to improve opportunities for **Māori** to contribute to local government decision-making processes.

Under the memoranda of understanding, each party recognises the authority of the other to exercise their responsibilities – **kāwanatanga** (governance) by the Wellington City Council and rangatiratanga (customary authority) and kaitiakitanga (guardianship) by tangata whenua.

This draft Plan is intended to reflect these above principles including, in particular, the key relationship understandings recognised in the MOUs in relation to Council Planning and Policy Processes and to Culture and Heritage.

Officers will continue to work with iwi to incorporate the Māori world view and concepts into the management and project work as appropriate. The Council is currently working on implementing the 2018 Te Tauihu – **te reo Māori Policy** which will inform naming and interpretation processes and partnerships with iwi and the wider community.

¹ *Mana whenua* means customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area.

2 VISION: WELLINGTON'S WILD GREEN CONNECTOR

The Outer Green Belt is Wellington's wild green connector:
– it visibly defines the urban edge, protects and connects nature, and invites people to escape the city and explore.

Wellington City is known for its extensive, wild green, relatively undeveloped open spaces, including its ridges and hills, coast, harbour escarpments and steep gullies. The Outer Green Belt is the central connecting element – **an ecological and recreational corridor from the City's northern boundary to the south coast** and plays a critical role in determining the character, quality and function of the city environment at a large scale for **today's and future generations**. Its open spaces contribute to **residents' quality of life and enhance visitors' experiences of Wellington**.

The Outer Green Belt contributes to Wellington's unique sense of place. It protects, restores, connects and supports a rich mix of open space values. It is enduring. It is for all to share and enjoy.

2.1 WHAT IS WELLINGTON'S OUTER GREEN BELT?

The idea of having an Outer Green Belt dates back to the 1960s and 70s when community groups **called for what they called an 'Outer Town Belt'**. The idea was based upon the example of the Wellington Town Belt – an arc of public open space that was preserved on the hills immediately around the original town for public recreation and to separate town from country. With time, the city expanded beyond that inner belt but the line of higher ridges in the centre of the Wellington peninsula remained mainly undeveloped, forming a natural western edge to the urban development. The need to retain and protect the local features and natural open space character of those ridges became apparent and, throughout the last four decades, Wellington City Council has endorsed the concept of having an Outer Green Belt and endeavoured to protect the continuous belt of open space in a number of ways (see Appendix I, timeline). In 2004, **Wellington's Outer Green Belt Management Plan was approved, providing the first comprehensive guidance for the area's management**.

Today, the reserves and other land open space the Council manages as Outer Green Belt totals 3,029 hectares.

2.2 WHY IS THE OUTER GREEN BELT IMPORTANT?

The various hills and skylines of the ridges immediately west of **Wellington's** urban area feature **prominently in people's experience of living in and visiting Wellington**. The proximity of the Outer Green Belt to the city brings numerous opportunities for people to simply enjoy seeing those open spaces daily as part of the Wellington scene or to get out and experience it directly. The increasing continuity of the reserve land from north to south, and its direct link across the **city's northern** boundary to Rangitui/Colonial Knob reserve in Porirua City, gives it a prominent **role in the City's** open space network. Open spaces contribute to a diverse city environment with a wide range of interrelated benefits including amenity value, biodiversity and landscape protection, recreation and social opportunities, ecosystem services, contribution to the health and wellbeing of residents, and both direct and indirect economic benefits. The Outer Green Belt has multiple open space values and increasingly acts as the green buffer between town and country. This management plan will be used to ensure consistent protection and management of the key values and functions below, which are described in Part 3.

- Nature
- Landscape and urban edge
- Culture and heritage
- Recreation and access
- Community and identity
- Resilience and city economy.

2.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Certain characteristics represent the essence of the Outer Green Belt. These characteristics have inspired a set of aspirational ‘guiding **principles**’ that **should** endure over time. Large-scale change has already occurred in recent decades. For instance, the Outer Green Belt has become increasingly forested and its track network has become more extensive. In parallel are changing patterns in outdoor recreation, such as growth in mountain biking, and increasing recognition of the way contact with nature and access to open spaces benefit **people’s lives**. Change will continue and it is likely that as-yet unforeseen trends and events will be influential. The guiding principles highlight what is special about the Outer Green Belt and should be used to help strengthen the Outer Green Belt, manage change, weigh up decisions and prioritise implementation.

1. Natural skylines, undeveloped ridges and hills, and healthy native forests and streams are the foundation of the Outer Green Belt.

The natural values and relatively natural character of the Outer Green Belt is its essence. The desire to preserve that character and rugged backdrop prompted the Outer Green Belt to be established in the first place. The rugged setting and contact with nature underpin the outdoor recreation and visitor experiences now popular throughout the Outer Green Belt. The first question, when considering change, **use or development will be, ‘how will this affect the natural foundation of the Outer Green Belt?’**

- > *Example:* A series of permanent 10-metre-high, way-marking sculptures along the Skyline Walkway is proposed. Even though they are well-designed, are envisaged to also function as information posts for recreational users and be promoted as a tourist attraction, the proposal does not go ahead as it would introduce a visually obtrusive element along the natural skyline contours when viewed from on site and from afar. Temporary way markers of a similar scale for a specific major outdoor event might be allowed, however, provided no permanent environmental damage resulted.

2. Continuity and connectivity is fundamental to the Outer Green Belt concept.

The Outer Green Belt’s large-scale spatial continuity is key to its natural, landscape and recreational values and its role as the urban edge of the city. Its connectivity with other open spaces helps to knit together **Wellington’s** open space network.

- > *Example:* The gradual acquisition of reserves has led to piecemeal land management but once the land is spatially connected a more integrated approach is possible. The fencing and farm track infrastructure that was inherited with each separate land block is reviewed at the larger landscape scale and rationalised e.g. to consistently manage open tops, define the main connector route along an entire ridgeline, and to connect species habitat.

3. **The Outer Green Belt’s diversity**, of landscape character and outdoor experience, is a strength to be reinforced.

Continuity does not mean the Outer Green Belt is or should be the same throughout. In fact, it encompasses a great variety of different places, values and activities. Feedback reveals that

people visiting the Outer Green Belt enjoy it in many different ways: appreciating peace and quiet or seeking adventure and challenge; exploring sheltered forest or taking in wide views. That diversity is one of its great attributes. The idea of providing all things to all people across the whole of the Outer Green Belt has potential to degrade that diversity of values and experiences. Instead, a more optimal approach is to think about the character of the different parts and the opportunities to have focus areas for certain activities.

- > *Example:* horse riding is not compatible with other recreational uses everywhere but has prominence in Spicer Forest, where the wide forestry roads through the pine plantation and accessibility for the rural Ohariu Valley community make it a suitable environment.

If all the activities happened everywhere in the Outer Green Belt it would not offer the diverse recreational experiences Wellingtonians enjoy.

4. **People's enjoyment of the Outer Green Belt is grounded in being able to escape to wild places with a strong 'Wellington' sense of place.**

The Outer Green Belt contributes importantly to Wellington's reputation as a city people visit for its invigorating outdoor recreation within easy reach. People of varied age and physical ability describe vivid experiences of spaciousness and natural elements when they visit the Outer Green Belt. Ensuring activities are accessible to a wide range of people whilst also being appropriate to the 'wild' sense of place is important.

- > *Example:* the Brooklyn wind turbine and Wrights Hill are places where paved roadways provide drive-on access to the ridgetop environment and the immediate topography on the ridgetop itself is not unduly steep. To enable people with disabilities to experience the **spectacular views and the 'wild' ridgetop, facilities and tracks** in the immediate vicinity are designed for wheelchair access and the opportunities are well publicised. For people seeking more challenging recreational experiences, the track network extends out into the more rugged surrounding terrain.

5. Community participation in managing the Outer Green Belt is enabled and supported.

The work of individuals and community groups in helping to protect, enhance and use the Outer Green Belt is enormously valuable. The Council is committed to supporting and encouraging community participation, which underpins long-term sustainability.

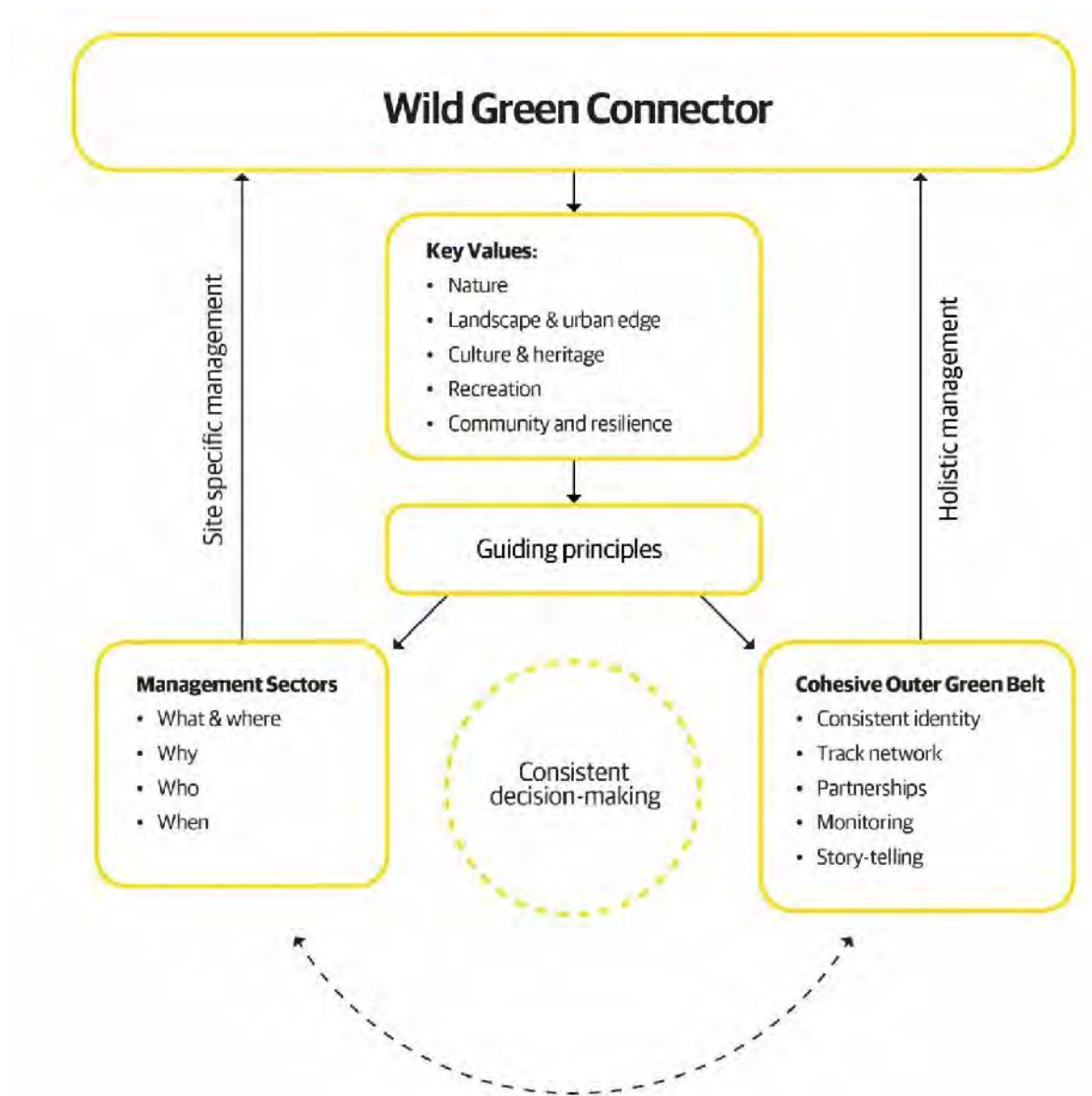
- > *Example:* A group of neighbours offers to clear and plant a weedy gully on the edge of the Outer Green Belt. The Council offers advice and materials to support their voluntary work. Others in the neighbourhood see the visible improvements and join in, strengthening the sense of community as well as enhancing the Outer Green Belt's natural values.

2.3.1 HOW WILL THE VISION AND PRINCIPLES BE APPLIED?

When deciding what to try to deliver across the **Outer Green Belt**, the primary question is: ‘What makes the Outer Green Belt special or different or unique? What things will make the most difference to that – either comprehensively through the whole area, or in particular places?’

As the diagram below shows, the vision and principles will be used as the over-arching elements in the Plan. They will influence decision-making at both the overall scale of the Outer Green Belt and at the scale of the management sectors. The context of the whole Outer Green Belt will be taken into account, weighing up the most suitable combination of environments and activities throughout.

Example: A major objective is the restoration of a broad band of indigenous vegetation as an ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt. So, too, is the use of the Outer Green Belt for a range of outdoor recreation. Ecological restoration is mainly confined to the flanks and valleys and the open character of the ridgetops maintained for its suitability as a recreational environment. In this way, a balance is struck between the different elements of Principle 1 and aligned with the other Principles too.



3 DESCRIPTION / KEY VALUES

3.1 VITAL STATISTICS

<p>3,029 ha of reserves and Council-owned land managed as Outer Green Belt open space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 63% of total reserves and Council-owned open space²
<p>29 km along the Outer Green Belt ridges from north to south</p>
<p>377 ha native forest remnants on the Outer Green Belt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 38% of all native forest remnants on Wellington peninsula
<p>1,308 ha in carbon storage forest under the Government's Permanent Forest Sink Initiative (PFSI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 89% of Wellington's PFSI areas are in the Outer Green Belt
<p>162 km public track network in the Outer Green Belt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 42% of total Council track network > 14 km connected Skyline Track
<p>82,000 Council-supplied plants planted on Outer Green Belt over last 15 years (since last management plan in 2004)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 29,000 planted by community groups > 30% planted in last four years, reflecting increasing trend > 1,000s more plants from the Forest & Bird nursery planted at Zealandia and Birdwood Reserve
<p>More than 35 community volunteer groups helping manage the Outer Green Belt reserves</p>

² These figures include Council-owned land that is classified or is intended to be classified as reserve under the Reserves Act; other Council-owned land that is managed as public open space but is not reserve land (e.g. Zealandia); and public reserve land that Council manages, or is soon to manage, on behalf of the Department of Conservation e.g. part of Wrights Hill.

3.2 NATURE

Our Natural Capital, the city-wide biodiversity strategy, aims to protect and restore our indigenous biodiversity. The Outer Green Belt plays a pivotal role in achieving that vision due to its concentration of ecological values and land area.

3.2.1 PAST ECOSYSTEMS AND LAND USE

In pre-settlement times the ridges of the Outer Green Belt would have been almost continuously covered in forest. Most of it would have been diverse rimu/tawa **forest, typical of Wellington's inland hill country**, which is more frost-prone than coastal areas but less exposed to salt-laden winds. On the **highest peaks (Mt Kaukau, Makarā Hill, Hawkins Hill and Te Kopahou)** the harsh climatic conditions and poor soils would have seen the vegetation dominated by tough wind-sculpted species. At the southern and eastern margins, where strong salt-laden winds are influential, coastal or semi-coastal forest would have occurred, as well as areas of manuka, coastal scrub and shrublands. All the vegetation and stream environments would have supported abundant fauna including numerous species of birds, invertebrates, reptiles and fish. There would have been considerable diversity in habitats due to the variability of valley, hillside and hilltop site conditions, including different combinations of slope, altitude, soil and aspect and related microclimates with differing exposure to wind, salt, frost, sun and rain.

As a result of human settlement, nearly all the Wellington Peninsula, including the Outer Green Belt, was cleared of the original forest and most was converted to pasture. Even the few forest remnants were modified by such factors as the removal of timber, exposure to weather, grazing, isolation and the effects of weeds and pest animals. In the latter part of the twentieth century, with changing **economic conditions and the end of government subsidies, farming on Wellington's hill country** became increasingly marginal. On the Outer Green Belt, a few areas were converted to forestry plantations but, generally, pasture on the steep land began to revert to scrub and, in recent decades, large areas have been completely retired from farming. Gorse and native scrub started to take over and, despite frequent fires, the succession of pasture to gorse to regenerating native vegetation became the dominant trend except for the ridgetops and areas of private farmland mainly north of Mt Kaukau.



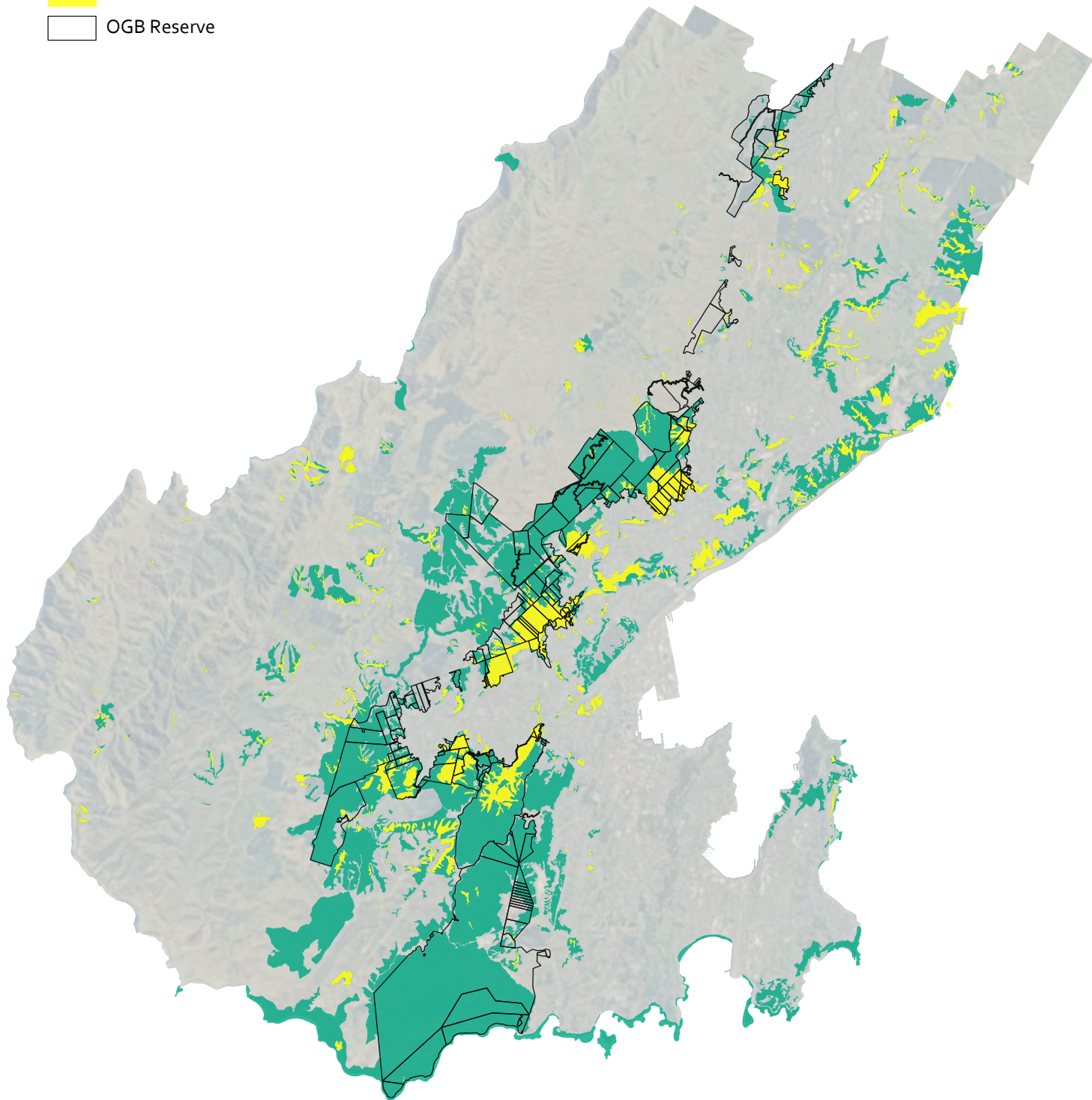
*Johnston Hill 1958 (left); Te Kopahou 2017 (right). The last half-century has seen the landscape transformed by succession from largely pasture-covered to gorse to regenerating native vegetation. **Similar succession seems to be starting to happen with Darwin's barberry, as observed at Wrights Hill, although it takes longer.***

In 1999, the primary forest remnants remaining on the Wellington peninsula were identified and mapped. The map under leaf shows how relatively small and isolated they were but notable is the comparative number and greater size of remnants within the Outer Green Belt. In particular, **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush was an unusually large area and its protection, dating back to the early twentieth century, preserved a rare vestige of original forest.** Protecting the remnants, with their seed sources, was the crucial starting point from which to begin restoring **Wellington's ecosystems.**

Areas of High Natural Value

Forest remnant: Any site containing a stand of forest that appears, from the canopy species present, and/or from its ecological character, to constitute a remnant trace of pre-settlement indigenous forest, or a site where species characteristic of the pre-settlement forest are present within the canopy.

- Important Natural Area
- Forest Remnant
- OGB Reserve



The comparatively large area and connectivity of important natural areas in the Outer Green Belt, as well as the number of larger forest remnants, is notable.

3.2.2 NATURE TODAY

Implementing the Council's *Biodiversity Action Plan 2007* and then *Our Natural Capital, Wellington's Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2015* has influenced the Outer Green Belt's management in recent years – deliberately resetting our relationship with and behaviour towards nature. These plans brought together various earlier initiatives aimed at enhancing natural succession, better connecting natural areas, protecting threatened species and protecting and enhancing streams. Large-scale programmes of integrated pest management, restoration planting **and reintroduction of locally extinct species have benefited the Outer Green Belt's biodiversity.**

The Outer Green Belt's natural values and its role as a continuous northwest-southeast ecological corridor are key to the aims and objectives of *Our Natural Capital*. Many of the programmes and work undertaken or referred to under this plan align with the objectives and actions of that strategy; some are part of city-wide programmes whilst others might be restricted to a management sector or particular area of the Outer Green Belt.

As the map of important natural areas below shows, the forest remnants in the Outer Green Belt are becoming increasingly connected into a continuous corridor of native vegetation as was proposed in the 2004 Outer Green Belt management plan. The preliminary results of an ecological review carried out in 2016, indicates that most of the land south of Johnsonville Park is potentially now a series of connected areas of high natural value. The concentration of sites in the Outer Green Belt compared to the rest of the Wellington City area is striking.

In broad terms, areas of high natural value rank highly in one or more of the following criteria:

- are representative of ecosystems or habitats under-protected or no longer commonplace;
- contain rare and/or threatened species;
- are highly diverse ecologically or contain a rare or nationally uncommon ecosystem or biological community;
- connect, or are rare or diverse, ecosystems and habitats, or provide habitat for protected or threatened indigenous species.

Some areas of the Outer Green Belt are particularly known for their biodiversity value and are at the heart of efforts to gradually expand and restore ecosystems into a connected network. From north to south these areas are:

- Westhaven Bush / Redwood Bush: (refer management sector 1);
- Johnsonville Park / Khandallah Park: (refer management sector 3);
- **Ōtari-Wilton's** Bush/Johnston Hill: (refer management sector 4);
- Wrights Hill/Zealandia: (refer management sector 6);
- Spooky/Hape Gully: (refer management sector 7).

Around these areas, large tracts of regenerating vegetation are developing in diversity of plant species, connecting forest remnants and providing more habitat for indigenous wildlife; serving as wildlife corridors and providing conditions suitable for a wider range of species to gradually establish. **While gorse and Darwin's barberry are still** prevalent in many areas, and while there are occasional pine plantations and other scattered exotic plant species, secondary native vegetation is gradually emerging as the dominant cover. The range of environmental conditions and history of land use has produced a mosaic of plant communities at different stages of transition from open grass through to tall forest. The successional process is slower on the more exposed tops and drier north-facing slopes but scrub is visibly advancing up to these areas in many places.

Native birdlife, too, has been increasing, as it has through much of the city. Tui, for instance, are much more prolific and **kākā**, which were reintroduced into Zealandia in 2002, are living in the suburbs and other open spaces, including the Outer Green Belt. Of great importance ecologically, is the increase in the number and distribution of kereru, a key species in the dispersal of native canopy

tree seeds. They are now a common sight in and around **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush**, the main location of mature native canopy in Wellington, and in Zealandia.

Our knowledge of the biodiversity in the Outer Green Belt continues to expand. We are now starting to learn more about the lizards of the area, for instance, and we are also learning more about our freshwater fish through partnerships with Greater Wellington Regional Council. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to learn, particularly in regard to the invertebrates that inhabit the area. Research, which is a strand in *Our Natural Capital*, is important to help understand how best to manage nature in the Outer Green Belt.

The main exception to the pattern of reverting farmland is north of Johnsonville Park, on Totara Ridge, Ohariu Ridge³ and on the western flanks facing Ohariu Valley, where private farmland remains predominantly in pasture. Nevertheless, several small areas of high ecological value occur within this farmland and there are larger areas at the north end of the Outer Green Belt, notably in and around Westhaven Bush, Spicer Forest and Redwood Bush/Larsen Crescent Bush.

The majority of survey respondents in 2017-2018 supported the following ecological restoration activities in all areas of the Outer Green Belt; on average as follows:



	Support	Neutral	Oppose
Native planting	95%	3%	2%
Pest animal management	92%+	5%	3%
Weed control	91%+	5%	4%

3.3 LANDSCAPE

3.3.1 TODAY'S LANDSCAPE

The Outer Green Belt ridges are one of a series of broadly parallel northwest-southeast ridges and valleys in Wellington formed by tectonic uplift along major fault lines. The higher ridgetops and summits, with their characteristic rocky outcrops, are remnants of an ancient eroded plateau (peneplain). In the case of the Outer Green Belt, the remnant surface provides an almost continuous undulating landform broken only where the Karori Stream flows between **Makarā** Peak and Wrights Hill and with only two low saddles – where Ohariu and Makarā roads cross. The higher peaks are remarkably consistent in height along the entire 29-kilometre length, although overall, the ridgetops are lower and more rounded in the north and higher and more rugged from Mt Kaukau south. Hawkins Hill, at 495 m, is the highest point in the Outer Green Belt. The skylines of the Outer Green Belt include many of the city's highest and most popular viewpoints.

Today's landscape reflects the progress that has been made towards the vision in the 2004 Outer Green Belt management plan of restoring 'a broad and continuous band of indigenous vegetation. . . mainly along the eastern slopes'. The east (city) side is now mainly covered in native forest, regenerating vegetation and a few areas of plantation forest, except between Old Coach Road and Redwood Bush. The hilltops and the western (rural) flanks of the ridges are more open and pastoral in character although pasture is increasingly reverting to scrub on the steeper land, especially south of **Makarā** Road, where there has been no grazing on the Outer Green Belt reserves for some time.

³ For the purposes of this plan, Ōwhāriu Ridge runs from the Ōhariu Valley Road saddle to the saddle at the head of Ōhariu Stream. The northern part of this ridge has formerly been called 'Spicer's Ridge' and the southern part, 'Best's Ridge'.

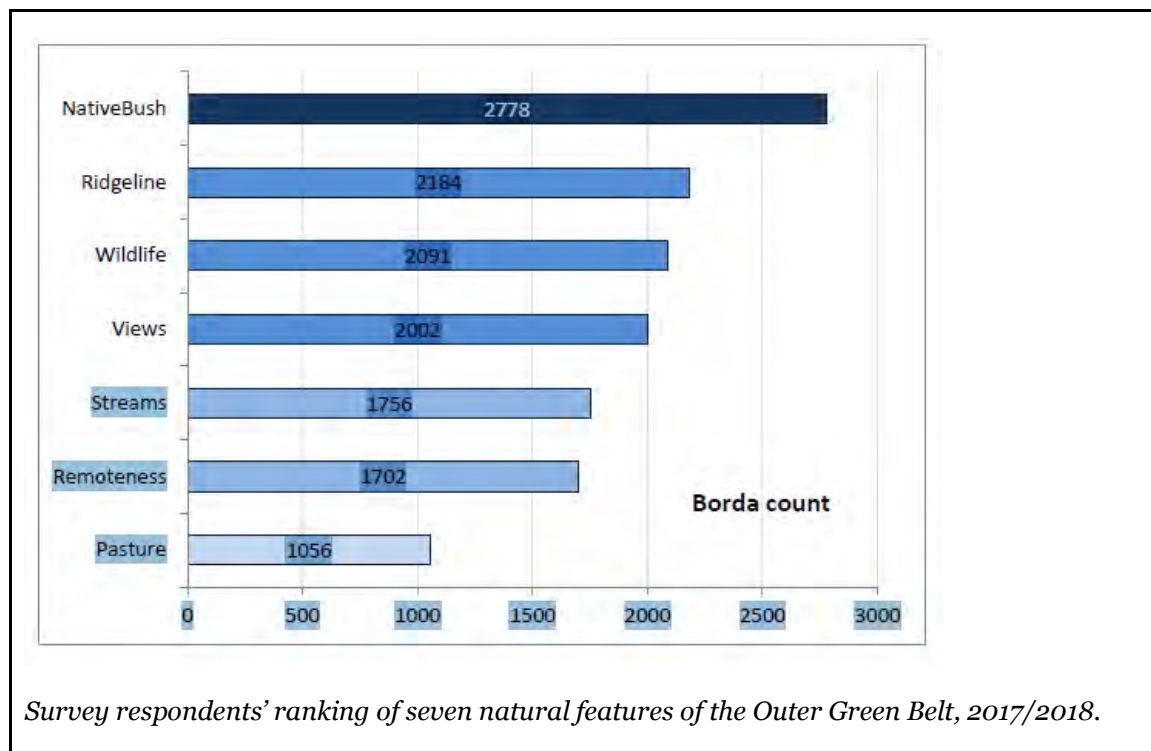
Viewed from the city and suburbs, the Outer Green Belt is seen as a forested ‘natural’ backdrop; viewed from the countryside areas of Ohariu and Makarā, it is still a largely rural landscape.

The relative absence of built development on the Outer Green Belt is important to its character and urban containment role although there are built features involving earthworks or structures, including: roads and tracks; utilities for telecommunication, electricity supply, water supply, landfill and former defence purposes; and features associated with farming, recreation and conservation activities including fences, stockyards, signs, shelters and buildings. Some features are of historical significance (see section 3.4).

3.3.2 LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCE

Contact with nature, the often boisterous weather, the sense of separation from the urban environment and the panoramic vistas add up to a landscape experience that feels surprisingly remote although close to the city.

The ridgetops provide a memorable threshold for visitors –urban one way and rural the other way – with spectacular views over farmland, city, harbour and beyond to distant mountains, Cook Strait and even the South Island. The forested eastern flanks and stream valleys add to the variety of environments people can experience and are important in the way that the Outer Green Belt is perceived as a landscape feature, as revealed in the 2017/2018 survey, in which respondents ranked native bush as the most important of seven listed natural features (see chart below).



3.3.3 CONTINUITY AND URBAN EDGE

The increasing spatial continuity of the Council's **Outer Green Belt reserves** is a key element. It is increasingly a green corridor connecting up nature and offering extensive inter-linked recreational opportunities from north to south. The sheer size of this combined open space provides for values that smaller, separated open spaces cannot.

The almost continuous line of steep ridges and hills has provided a natural edge to the city that has **historically influenced the city's form by limiting westward** urban expansion. The completion of the Outer Green Belt is identified as a key action in the *Wellington Urban Growth Plan 2014-2043*. By kerbing urban development, the Outer Green Belt helps to keep the city compact, with benefits for

Wellingtonians live within the hills, look at the hills and play in the hills – often all three!



transport efficiency, reduced infrastructure and liveability. Further additions to the Outer Green Belt are considerations in the current structure planning in the northern suburbs.

The increasing continuity of the Outer Green Belt reserves also means the people who live here see its open spaces as part of their environment from many different places around the city, in both distant **and local views. Locally, it can be a highly visible part of each suburb's distinctive character** and, at the city scale, it reinforces the city's identity as a place of hills, skylines and wild nature.

3.4 CULTURE AND HERITAGE

The Outer Green Belt landscape holds stories of settlement, changing land use and events that reflect historic change and development of the entire City as well as local communities. A number of (often interwoven) broad themes are evident. Even this plan and its predecessors are a record of the changes that have happened on the ground as well as a record of our changing perceptions, values, expectations and hopes for our extraordinary Outer Green Belt.

3.4.1 SETTLEMENT, LAND & RESOURCE USE

Māori settlement

The history and traditions related to the area that is now known as the Outer Green Belt go back to **the earliest arrival of Māori in Wellington. That time was arguably 850 AD, but perhaps nearer 1200 AD. Ngāi Tara were probably the first Māori to settle in the Wellington area, constructing pā, developing gardens and using the wider area to gather food. Before Ngāi Tara were others, more of the hunter-gatherer groups known by some as the Kāhui Mouna, who moved around taking advantage of the natural resources of the region.**

Settlement was mainly around the Wellington coastline, including the coastal area at the south end of **the Outer Green Belt, recognised in the Wellington City District Plan as the Rimurapa Māori Precinct.** Identified sites of significance to mana whenua within the Outer Green Belt include karaka grove settlements, the sites of Makure Rua Pā, Taumata Pātiti Pā and Whare Rairekau kāinga/settlement, **and the Pari Whero cliff (also known as Red Rocks).** Inland, Māori used the Outer Green Belt as a rich hinterland of resources. The plants and animals of the forest and stream environments provided plentiful food as well as materials. **Māori also crossed the central ridges when travelling from the harbour to the west coast via the Ōwhāriu – Thorndon Track, which is also recognised as a site of significance in the district plan.**

After 1840, when the first New Zealand Company ships began to arrive at Port Nicholson (Wellington), mana whenua were gradually displaced from the Wellington area. However, **Māori names for places in the Outer Green Belt reflect mana whenua's connection to the land and are also often descriptive of features that we still recognise or that once were.** For instance, mana whenua called the central ridge from Makarā Peak to Mt Kaukau **'Te Wharangi', meaning 'broad open space' and also called Mt Kaukau by the alternative name of 'Tarikākā', meaning 'where the parrots rested'.⁴** **The Pari Whero cliff on the south coast is also associated with various Māori legends relating to Māui and Kupe.**

In 2003, the Waitangi Tribunal found that at 1840 the iwi groups that had take raupatu⁵, or rights of conquest over all the lands within the Port Nicholson block, which includes the Outer Green Belt, **were: Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Ruanui, Taranaki, Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.** Historical claims under the Treaty of Waitangi were settled under the **Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009 and the Ngāti Toa Rangatira Settlement Act 2014.** The Council now works with its mandated iwi mana whenua entities **and the wider Māori community** to build on and maintain good relationships.

⁴ <https://teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/page-5>

⁵ Take raupatu refers to rights associated with conquest and is described as interests in: *"...a wider area in which a group had more general rights by virtue of having participated in the conquest of that area, provided the group had sufficient strength to sustain those rights."*

Farming

Forest cover on the Outer Green Belt ridges had largely disappeared by the late nineteenth century, cleared by European settlers to make way for farming, which played an important part in the local economy for many years. Although suburban Wellington expanded inland from the original settlement, most of the steep difficult-to-develop Outer Green Belt remained in pastoral sheep and cattle farming until the latter part of the twentieth century when the withdrawal of farming subsidies made farming on much of the land uneconomic. As described in the nature section, large areas have since reverted to scrub and forest cover. The present-day landscape holds traces of the former farming activities in such features as old fence lines and fence posts, rural tracks, stock yards and shelter planting. The remaining open hilltop areas are a reminder of the former farming landscape.



Totara gate post near Bell's track

Timber resources

Timber from the original native forests of the Outer Green Belt was an invaluable resource for both **Māori and European settlers. The forests provided much-needed firewood for heating and cooking. Māori used timber to build structures and used entire large trees** for making waka.⁶ Large trees were also useful to European colonists for ship masts. Although much of the forest was cleared in the nineteenth century by burning, timber was also logged and processed for a wide range of purposes, such as buildings, furniture, ships and carts. Traces of the former logging activities can be seen in features such as former pit sawing sites, old tree stumps and logs, and old farm structures made from native timber such as totara.

In the later twentieth century timber production re-emerged as a land use when farming became less viable, with exotic conifer plantations appearing in places, bringing a new element into the productive landscape. A number of the plantations in the Outer Green Belt have since reached maturity but have not been harvested due to several factors including changes in ownership, unviable economics and new attitudes favouring management to allow native forest to regenerate instead of harvesting.

Mining and quarrying

A minor gold rush followed the discovery of alluvial gold in the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream in 1869. Gold mining operations were set up in the upper Kaiwharawhara valley and also at Tawa Flats, mainly during the 1870s, to excavate and crush what was hoped to be gold-bearing quartz. Although nothing of significance was ever found, a number of former gold prospecting shafts and other related remains still exist in the Outer Green Belt.

It is likely that minor quarrying would also have occurred in places on the Outer Green Belt to produce rock for metalling local roads, although little is known about this.

Nature conservation

Changing attitudes to **nature and conservation evident in the Outer Green Belt's history parallel a wider story in New Zealand.** The historic changes on the Outer Green Belt exemplify changing attitudes from colonial times, when the natural environment was exploited for its resources and often perceived as a barrier to settlement (as in the case of forest cover). With time, greater understanding **and appreciation of New Zealand's unique biodiversity saw a gradual change in attitudes and an** increasing realisation of the need to protect nature and ecosystem services. This theme is evident in the broad changes in land management on the Outer Green Belt and even more so at specific places associated with the conservation movement, where local individuals or communities have sought

⁶ Boffa Miskell, Thematic Heritage Study of Wellington, p. 30

(and fought) to protect natural values. The widely known **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush** and Zealandia Eco-Sanctuary are two nationally significant examples of visionary leadership in nature conservation.

A further thread in the conservation story is the increasing recognition in the last several decades of the role that nature conservation and ecosystem services play in providing resilience to the City in the face of climate change or natural disasters. This recognition has seen some historic stories come full-circle, such as the return of forest cover to the hills of the Outer Green Belt with benefits flood risk management, water quality and water supply. The Outer Green Belt itself is a part of the nature conservation story, having been conceived at least in part for protection of landscapes and natural values.

3.4.2 PUBLIC UTILITIES /INFRASTRUCTURE

The Outer Green Belt – so conveniently close to the growing city – has attracted a variety of public **utility uses that exemplify aspects of Wellington's historic development. Some of these uses continue;** others have been decommissioned or adapted to new use. An interesting thread within this theme is that of changing attitudes to use of the land for infrastructure. Historically, such use was largely driven by need, cost benefit and convenience but, with time, attitudes changed as citizens sought to protect the land as open space with undeveloped skylines – questioning further utility development and seeking the creation of the Outer Green Belt as a protected area.

Transport

The steep ridges of the Outer Green Belt have always presented a barrier between east and west in the district.⁷ The historic crossing places are a reminder of the arduous journey that early inhabitants faced. These places include the well-known and heritage-classified Old Coach Road; the historic **Māori Ōwhāriu**-Thorndon track **and the nearby Bell's** track that both cross Te Wharangi ridge near The Crows Nest; and the former bridle trail at the **Makarā** saddle. Today there are still only two public roads that connect the rural communities with the city – Ohariu Valley Road and **Makarā** Road.

There are still only two public roads that connect the rural communities with the city across the Outer Green Belt – Ohariu Valley Road and Makarā Road.

Other routes of historic interest in the Outer Green Belt include old farm and other access tracks that are associated with early settlers or historic uses. More latterly, the development of the recreation track network is, at the very least, history in the making, with the trend in recent decades towards community volunteers building special-purpose tracks and the integration of the local track network with regional and national tourism routes such as the Skyline Track and Te Araroa Walkway.

Water, electricity and telecommunications services

Not unexpectedly, the elevated landforms of the Outer Green Belt have attracted certain types of utility development. Water reservoirs were developed on elevated sites in order to provide high pressure water to outer suburbs. An early example was the now-decommissioned reservoir in Johnsonville Park, although a number of more recent tank reservoirs still exist. The development of telecommunications during the twentieth century also saw installations developed that required high points for clear transmission. The radio masts on Wrights Hill, television and radio transmitter on Mt Kaukau (1965) and the airport radar dome at Hawkins Hill are all examples. Growing demand for electricity supply, saw the development in the 1960s of the HDVC transmission lines on Te Wharangi ridge to carry hydro-power to the North Island from the new Cook Strait undersea cable and the first wind turbine in Wellington was built on the necessarily windy high ground near Polhill in 1993.

Valleys in the Outer Green Belt have not been exempt from utility uses. The dams and related infrastructure in Zealandia date from the nineteenth century, when the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream was used for city water supply purposes. The lower dam, completed in 1878, is a Heritage New Zealand category 1 historic place and the upper dam, completed in 1908, is a category 2 historic

⁷ Ridgetops study, p. 95

place. Both are listed in Engineering New Zealand's register of engineering heritage. Typical of many water supply areas in the country, both the upper Kaiwharawhara catchment and the Johnsonville Park catchment were long managed to protect forest cover and are now recognised for their natural values. Storm water management and emergency water supply is another aspect of the valley environments that has become increasingly important with urban expansion. In some cases, infrastructure has once again been developed e.g. the water retention dam at Stebbings Stream and the emergency water supply stations at Khandallah Park and Fitzgerald Place in Karori.

Defence

During World War II, defence fortifications were built at Te Rimurapa (Sinclair Head), Polhill and Wrights Hill where the elevated sites enabled the harbour and harbour entrance to be kept under **observation in case of attack. The Wright's Hill Fortress Restoration Society has been active for many** years in restoring the complex on Wright Hill, the most extensive in Wellington, and running public open days. Other defence-related features on the Outer Green Belt include former military roads above Tawa and recently rediscovered military bunkers at the foot of Mt Kaukau.

3.4.3 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

There is also much local history associated with the people who lived on or near the ridges of the Outer Green Belt. There are stories about families and individuals, and collective stories associated with local communities and the interest groups associated with the Outer Green Belt.

Early settlers and farming families

Farming families and personalities, farmed the hills of **today's** Outer Green Belt from well back in the nineteenth century. Some were influential in the development of local communities and in civic affairs in Wellington. They are remembered in place names and local histories. They include: Charles and Catherine Duncan who had a farm extending over the ridge above Lindenvale and are remembered in several local place names; the Stebbings, after whom Stebbings Stream is named, who farmed in what is now the Glenside area; John and Henry Kilmister, who farmed most of Te Wharangi ridge between Mt Kaukau and **Makarā Saddle, after whom the 'Kilmister Tops' are named.** The suburb of Lindenvale **is named after Charles Duncan's farm 'Linden Vale' and the suburb of** Wilton for the Wilton family who farmed in the mid-Kaiwharawhara Valley. Johnston Hill was named after John Johnston, an early settler who arrived in Wellington in 1843 and later bought the land from the pakeha owner, Judge Chapman. Wrights⁸ Hill is thought to be named after John Wright, a landowner and Wellington provincial councillor in the 1860s. Many descendants of these early settlers still live in Wellington.

Communities

The communities that developed in the valleys east and west of the central ridgelines also have ties to **'their' part of the Outer Green Belt. Originally, the small outlying settlements** would have had strong farming connections to the land which would have continued even as the settlements grew into suburbs. Some place names appear to have originated in local descriptive usage, such as The Crows' Nest viewpoint above Ngaio, referencing the lookout on sailing ship masts. The farmland provided **places to walk and a rural visual setting that contributed to each area's sense of identity.** At times, **local communities actively defended 'their' part of the Outer Green Belt, as with the controversies** over proposed residential developments near the Old Coach Road above Johnsonville and below The Crows Nest in Ngaio. As the Outer Green Belt reserves have grown, and appreciation of its values, local interest groups have also sprung up and become involved in voluntary restoration and awareness projects in numerous places.

Public recreation

The growth of outdoor recreation on the Outer Green Belt is another historic thread that parallels a wider trend in society. Over time, recreational activities and the public provision for recreation has diversified from a focus on organised sport in sports grounds to a wider variety of outdoor recreation

⁸ Wrights Hill has become the common usage, although it was gazetted officially as 'Wright Hill', and the official name for the road is 'Wrights Hill Road'.

in many types of location. An early example in the Outer Green Belt is the popularity of Wilton Bush as a picnic spot in the nineteenth century and the St Johns pools in Birdwood Reserve. For many years recreation on the Outer Green Belt was constrained by private land ownership although some hill walking did happen. In the latter part of the twentieth century, as more of the land came into public ownership, outdoor recreation opportunities opened up. Track and public facilities have been gradually developed, including areas for specific use, such as the **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park, developed since 1998. Public recreation is now a major land use within the Outer Green Belt.

3.5 RECREATION AND ACCESS

The Outer Green Belt offers a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities that are relatively accessible to local communities and the city at large whilst offering a sense of escape from the urban environment. People enjoy a variety of often-contrasting experiences including contact with nature, physical activity, exhilarating weather, peace and quiet, beautiful views. For many, sharing these experiences with others is part of the fun.

3.5.1 WHAT DO PEOPLE DO ON THE OUTER GREEN BELT?

The type of recreation most associated with the Outer Green Belt is ‘active outdoor recreation’, often involving movement through the natural environment. The environment itself is the main attraction and the track network is the main way to facilitate people’s enjoyment of it. Instead of sports fields or club buildings, facilities are generally of a simple ‘comfort stop’ nature. A few places near main entrances offer more intensive facilities that cater for all ages and abilities; such as short gently graded walks, information and amenities, at Khandallah Park or Ōtari-Wilton’s Bush.

Recreational activities on the Outer Green Belt include:

- walking/tramping
- running/jogging
- mountain biking
- e-biking
- sightseeing
- picnicking
- dog walking
- orienteering
- horse riding (in certain areas only)
- nature conservation volunteering – planting, track maintenance, weed control and predator trapping.
- events such as mountain bike competitions, mountain running races and 4WD day trips
- naturalist activities such as bird watching, botanising and guided nature walks
- rock climbing
- geocaching and outdoor reality gaming
- drone flying.

Some activities that were not contemplated in the 2004 management plan have emerged, such as drone flying, geo-caching and a proposed zip line above Carey’s Gully. Organised events, too, have become more varied and popular, including open days at the Wrights Hill fortress; the annual Mt Kaukau challenge for 5-15 year-olds; regular mountain biking championships at **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park; and the Xterra and WUU2K (Wellington Urban Ultra 2K) endurance mountain and trail running events. The idea of providing for overnight camping (possibly in a hut) in more remote areas has been suggested.

A wide range of interest groups represent the recreational users. There are groups specifically representing walkers, mountain bikers and cyclists, horse riders, harriers, buggy walkers, trail builders, cross country vehicle drivers, and orienteers. Residents and progressive associations also represent, more broadly, local recreational interests. Volunteer groups, which have increased noticeably in the last decade, represent those who choose to spend their spare time on activities such

- Walking was the activity most commonly undertaken by respondents in the area they visited most frequently in the Outer Green Belt. The exception was at **Makarā** Peak where biking was the most common activity.
- In the area they most frequently visit:
 - > more than 70% of respondents **undertook ‘foot-based’ activities** most often – mainly walking, running and ecological management (checking traps, weed control);
 - > more than half the respondents said they walked more often than any other activity;
 - > more than 20 % of respondents biked as their most common activity.
- In the area they most frequently visit:
 - > walking was supported by 95% or more of respondents in all areas except **Makarā** Peak (70% support);
 - > running was supported by 80% or more in all areas;
 - > biking was supported by more than half of respondents in all areas, with support levels up to 90% or more in the **Makarā** Peak and Te Kopahou areas.

Wellingtonians enjoy exploring and enjoying the Outer Green Belt in many ways



3.5.2 WHERE DO PEOPLE LIKE TO GO?

Many visitors are locals who mainly frequent their own part of the Outer Green Belt but there are a number of destinations or opportunities that attract visitors from well beyond the local area, including regional, national and international visitors. Well-known destinations include Redwood Bush, Old Coach Road, the Skyline Track, Khandallah Park, the Mt Kaukau lookout, **Ōtari-Wilton's** Bush, Johnston Hill lookout, **Makarā** Mountain Bike Park, Wrights Hill lookout, Zealandia, the Brooklyn wind turbine and Hawkins Hill viewpoint, and the coastal Te Kopahou Visitors Centre. These destinations are well linked by the track network, which people use locally.

3.5.3 ACCESS AND AMENITIES

The track network people use to walk, bike and run is the principal recreational infrastructure in the Outer Green Belt.

Most recreational opportunity in the Outer Green Belt depends on the availability, suitability and design of the access network. Experiencing the natural environment is the basis of most of this recreation and is emphasised by the relative absence of built features.

The existing access network is greatly varied. There are wider old farm tracks and utility access roads; purpose-built recreation tracks of varying widths and quality; 'desire line' tracks that have been worn in simply by use; and less formed routes across open country. Some tracks are extremely steep, others of easier or undulating gradients. Most tracks are unpaved, the exceptions being relatively short distances of public road at Ohariu and **Makarā** Road saddles, Wrights Hill Road and the paved road to Brooklyn wind turbine and Hawkins Hill summit. Complex local networks at **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush**, **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park and Zealandia, provide for shorter and longer routes and loops within relatively self-contained areas. Collectively, the network provides tracks of varying lengths suitable for different abilities and levels of fitness although not everywhere. The numerous entrances to the Outer Green Belt along its length are generally low-key in the level of signage, information or other facilities provided and are not specifically signalled as being entrances to the Outer Green Belt.

The 2004 management plan emphasised securing public access and developing the track network to deliver a continuous route from north to south, with local connections. Since then, considerable progress has been made. The Skyline Track is now accessible from the south coast to Old Coach Road and the purchase in 2018 of land at the Ohariu Valley Road saddle has filled another gap. There is potential for more reserves and recreational access linked to future housing in the Upper Stebbings Valley. Since 2004, the national Te Araroa Walkway has been routed through parts of the Outer Green Belt – at Spicer Forest and from Old Coach Road along the Skyline Track for a distance. More mountain biking tracks have also been developed at **Makarā** Mountain Bike Park, Wrights Hill and along the Hawkins Hill/Te Kopahou ridge, much of it constructed by volunteers.

Future management and development of recreational access on the Outer Green Belt will be guided by the Council's *Open Space Access Plan 2016*, which is aimed at improving open space access opportunities to benefit local citizens and communities by providing equitable distribution and choice of opportunities whilst also providing for tourism. The *Wellington Regional Trails for the Future 2017*, also outlines a framework for **developing the region's trail network as a world-class destination for trail-based recreation**. It is still being developed and each territorial authority will decide the extent to which the framework aligns with its own management objectives. The framework identifies a number of **outstanding 'Signature Trails'** and **significant 'Regional Trails'** for development and promotion, including the following in the Outer Green Belt.

Regional Trails (partly in Outer Green Belt)	Signature Trails
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Polhill Reserve – Brooklyn wind turbine – Te Kopahou Reserve > Northern Walkway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Makarā Peak Mountain Bike Park > Skyline Track

Already, the Outer Green Belt is attracting increased use⁹, which is likely to continue as proposed development and promotion is implemented. Increased use inevitably raises questions about impacts and how to manage them. When we asked about reviewing this Plan, common concerns had to do with how to manage increased use in itself; whether or not to develop and/or upgrade more tracks and, if so, to what standards; and compatibility between different users, most particularly between walkers, runners, mountain bikers, e-bikers and dog walkers. The compatibility of recreational use with grazing stock was also a concern. Other needs identified included better information, signage and way-finding; and more facilities such as toilets, drinking water, seats, rubbish disposal and, perhaps in exposed places, shelters.

The over-riding issue is how to balance providing for different user groups and experiential preferences with the need to ensure that development of the track network does not compromise the other open space values and reasons why people want to recreate in the Outer Green Belt. The issues and opportunities are addressed in more detail under the general policies in Part 4 and, where required, in the appropriate management sectors.

3.6 COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

3.6.1 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Outer Green Belt concept was advocated by community groups from the 1960s and, since then, a wide range of groups, landowners, recreational users and members of the science community have become involved in hands-on projects in many parts of the Outer Green Belt. Without their efforts far less could be achieved.

The growth in outdoor recreation and volunteering of one sort or another has been a key change since the 2004 management plan. Through strategies dealing with biodiversity, open spaces, community wellbeing and recreation, including *Our Natural Capital*, *Capital Spaces* and the *Open Space Access Plan*, individuals and community groups have been encouraged to become actively involved in **helping to manage the city's open spaces**. With Predator-free Wellington, for instance, predator control is being done by volunteer groups within the reserves and by neighbours trapping in their **back yards**. **As well as helping to stretch the Council's resources further**, participation brings multiple other benefits including health and wellbeing through exercise, social interaction and contact with **nature; a sense of empowerment through having greater influence and being able to 'make a difference' to the environment; learning more about 'our places'; and strengthening people's sense of community, belonging and kaitiakitanga (guardianship)**.



⁹ Anecdotal observation from Parks, Sport and Recreation staff

3.6.2 HOW WELL RECOGNISED IS THE OUTER GREEN BELT?

Underpinning the 2004 Outer Green Belt management plan was the objective to **‘unite (and manage) the area as one single, yet complex, entity’ and promote it as ‘one of the world’s best urban green belts’**. For the concept to be viable it had to be consistently understood and supported by all stakeholder communities and be consistent with other Council strategies. So how well is it known now and how well does it fit, strategically?

Overall, **the Outer Green Belt is recognised and supported in the Council’s strategic framework** (see section 1.1.6 and Appendix II) and the Council has made progress on making the Outer Green Belt better known by working extending the Skyline Track and working with the community on projects. However, resident surveys and feedback indicate that many people are still unaware of the Outer Green Belt as a distinct entity, although they might recognise and visit certain parts of it. It is still not as well-known as the Wellington Town Belt.

From a strategic viewpoint, the Outer Green Belt’s open space value will grow as the city grows and that should be recognised. As already mentioned, it brings multiple benefits to the city at a large scale: – urban containment and connected open space for people to recreate and live alongside nature. Promoting awareness of the Outer Green Belt could help reinforce its recognition, protection and use. An important aspect of that will be developing a consistent and appropriate identity in the design of information, signage and facilities.

3.7 RESILIENCE & CITY ECONOMY

3.7.1 RESILIENCE

The Outer Green Belt contributes to another focus **in the Council’s strategic framework** – city resilience. The *Wellington Urban Growth Plan* emphasises the importance to resilience of keeping the city compact and protecting the natural environment. The *Wellington Resilience Strategy 2017* emphasises the need, in the face of natural disasters and climate change, for the environment to be healthy and robust and communities connected and empowered. The Outer Green Belt contributes in a number of ways.

Ecosystem services on the Outer Green Belt are already **strengthening the city’s resilience by helping to maintain clean water and mitigate effects of extreme weather**. The Outer Green Belt encompasses a **large proportion of the city’s stream catchments, where vegetation** cover is improving water quality by holding soil, retaining and filtering water in floods and drought periods, and storing carbon. More than 1,300 ha have been registered to sequester carbon under the Permanent Forest Sink Initiative.

The Outer Green Belt’s skylines and backdrop of accessible open space contributes to Wellington’s unique identity, underpinning its growing reputation as a biophilic city; a place where living close to nature offers an improved quality of life, work and play, and as a place of beauty and adventure. The Outer Green Belt’s natural environment is also a substantial asset in the city’s economy by way of the ‘ecosystem services’ it delivers that help to keep Wellington a healthy, prosperous and sustainable place to live. Those services include breathable air, drinking water, soil, plant materials, carbon storage, stormwater retention and soil conservation (see more in *Our Natural Capital*, p.9).

When people meet and form groups to undertake shared activities on the Outer Green Belt, they develop a sense of common identity, connection with and knowledge of the land in their local areas. That, in turn, strengthens community resilience in disasters because people know each other, are aware of who has useful skills and know their local area.

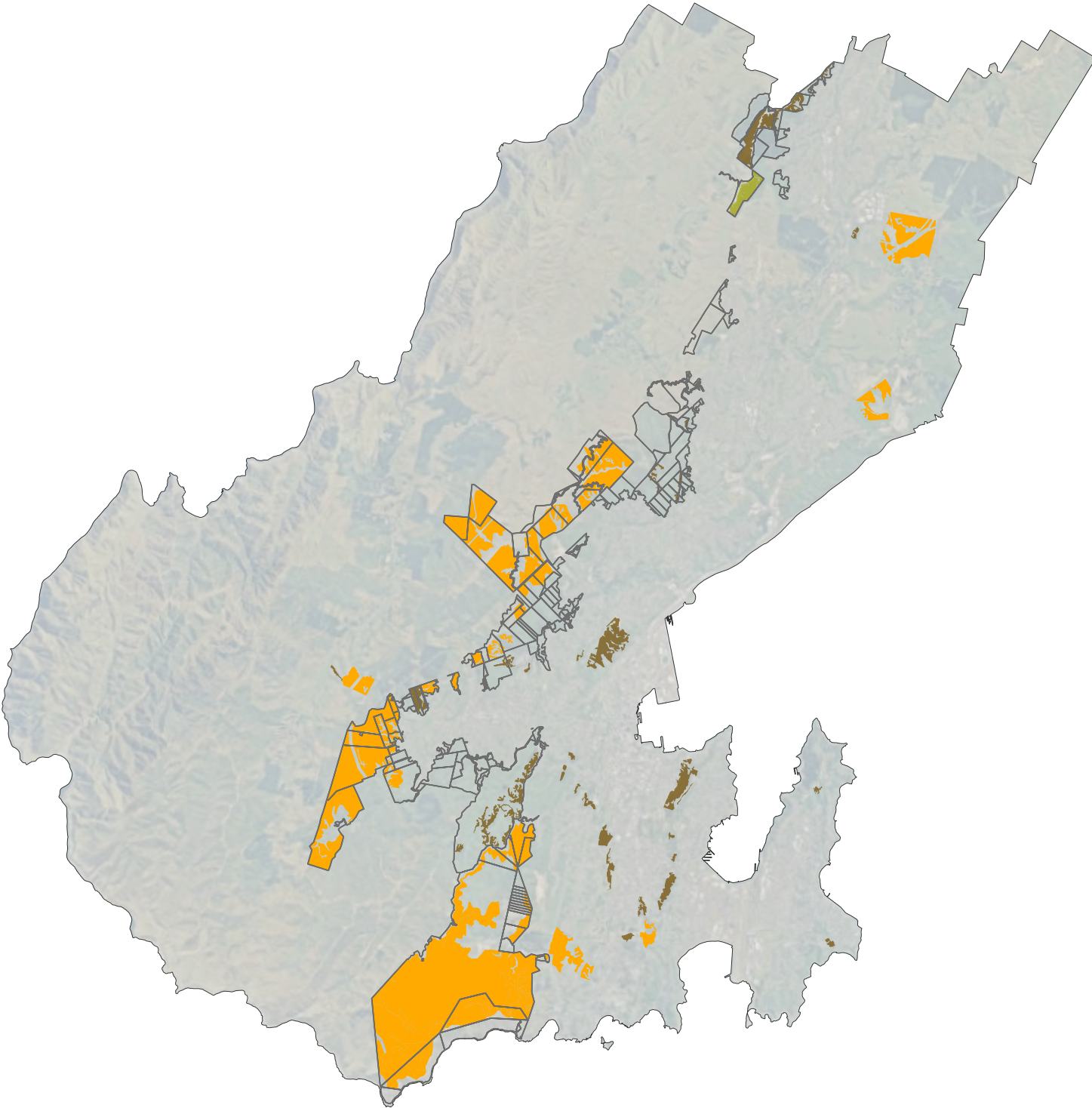
In civil defence emergencies, when built-up areas may be severely damaged and feel unsafe, the open spaces of the Outer Green Belt can provide comparatively safe gathering places, water supply and alternative movement routes via the track network if road and rail transport is disrupted. A tangible example is the community water station installed at Fitzherbert Place in Karori, which will draw emergency water from the nearby stream. Ecosystem services in the forested catchment will improve

the reliability and quality of the water and the open space at the water station will be a gathering place for people.

3.7.2 CITY ECONOMY

The Outer Green Belt contributes a number of tangible and intangible economic benefits.

Already, such destinations as **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, Zealandia, Makarā** Peak Bike Park, the Brooklyn wind turbine, Mt Kaukau summit, the Skyline Track and Wrights Hill fortress are popular destinations that attract regional, national and international visitors as well as citizens. Te Araroa Trail brings visitors into the City via parts of the Outer Green Belt as well. The associated activity helps to support businesses and promote Wellington as a destination.



- OGB Reserve
- Post-1989 Emissions Trading Scheme
- Permanent Forest Sink Initiative
- Pre-1990 Emissions Trading Scheme

4 GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The general objectives and policies need to be read with an understanding, first, of the Vision and the Guiding Principles, which provide the over-arching basis for decision-making; in particular, how to balance competing values. The general objectives and policies are structured around the following themes:

- Land administration
- Nature
- Landscape and land use
- Culture and heritage
- Recreation and access
- Community and identity

Where necessary, these are developed in more detail under the seven management sectors in Part 6.

4.1 LAND ADMINISTRATION

4.1.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To administer and manage the Outer Green Belt reserves in a manner that reflects their reserve purpose or proposed purpose and protects site values relevant to the Outer Green Belt vision.
2. To complete the Outer Green Belt as a connected series of reserves necessary to achieve the vision and guiding principles.
3. To enhance existing values through land management partnership with adjacent land owners or acquisition of land, as appropriate.

4.1.2 POLICIES

4.1.2.1 Reserves classifications, land acquisitions and management mechanisms

1. Identify all Council-owned land intended to be part of the Outer Green Belt that is not a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 but should be or where the current reserve classification is inappropriate and, in accordance with that Act and the objectives of this Plan, undertake the necessary reserve declarations, naming and classification or reclassification.
2. Classify all Outer Green Belt reserves as scenic reserve unless there is particular reason to use an alternative classification.
3. Acquire land along the Outer Green Belt ridges where the Council is satisfied that ownership is the best option for protecting important site values after weighing up the relative merits of alternative mechanisms available.
4. Provide funding to enable the Council to purchase strategically located land to add to the Outer Green Belt as opportunities arise; in particular, in areas where there are gaps in the Outer Green Belt reserves and near areas of future urban growth.
5. Seek opportunities to increase operational funding as the city grows and visitor numbers increase, to provide the services people need and manage the reserves appropriately.
6. Use leases, licences and easements where necessary to facilitate appropriate use and good management of reserve land.
7. Ensure that all land within the Outer Green Belt is appropriately zoned in the Wellington City District Plan to ensure the vision, objectives and policies of this Plan are recognised in statutory documents and are considered in consenting under the Resource Management Act.

8. Manage the removal of encroachments into Outer Green Belt reserves through the process outlined under the Rules section of this Plan: see section 5.3.4, encroachments.

Explanation.

Reserve classification. Declaring land to be a reserve brings it under the provisions of the Reserves Act **which, in general, provides for ‘the preservation and management’ of land with certain values ‘for the benefit and enjoyment of the public’**. Scenic reserve classification is generally most appropriate for the Outer Green Belt, given that land management is to focus first on protecting landscapes and ecosystems and then providing tracks and other facilities to enhance public enjoyment of the natural environment. Where circumstances warrant, other reserve classifications will be considered and some land will not be classified at all. Proposed classifications and zonings are described in the land title schedules for each management sector in Part 6 and Appendix III contains a summary of the proposed new or amended reserve classifications.

Land acquisition/disposal. Land acquisition represents both an immediate capital cost to the Council as well as ongoing operational and management costs. The costs and benefits of land acquisition need to be carefully weighed up against the potential to achieve adequate protection and management via other mechanisms such as easements, rights of way and protective covenants. In some places, for instance, opportunities to negotiate access across private or Crown or Crown Agency land is a way to extend or better connect the recreational network without the Council having to buy land, especially in situations where the landowner has public responsibilities. On the other hand, acquisition may be the only or best way of achieving objectives and can often be funded or part-funded through non-rates mechanisms, such as development contributions or reserve agreements. Acquisition often allows for development over time of multiple values (e.g. recreation, landscape, nature etc.) and also secures lasting protection over land; an asset that does not depreciate.

Leases and licenses. The requirements for issuing leases and licenses will be guided by the provisions in the Reserves Act and, in the case of leases, the **Council’s Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups** where appropriate. The process is set out in Part 5, Rules, in this Plan.

4.1.2.2 Urban containment and continuity

1. Manage the Outer Green Belt as a corridor of protected (Council and Crown land) open space that forms a natural edge to urban development and is wide enough to clearly **separate ‘town’ from ‘country’** and offer multiple open space values’.

Explanation

Wellington’s urban growth plan¹⁰ recognises the distinctive and desirable role of the Outer Green Belt in keeping the city compact by defining the inland edge of **Wellington’s** built environment. The **district plan also recognises the Outer Green Belt’s value in providing an open, undeveloped edge to the city** and the district plan zoning and other provisions support the progressive creation of a **‘demarcation line for the city’**¹¹. The district plan provisions include, in particular, the ridgelines and hilltops overlay, designed to manage inappropriate development within the overlay area. However, the provisions do not prohibit development as such and the Outer Green Belt extends beyond the overlay. Therefore, other methods are also required of formalising the demarcation line. Methods include reserve status and land management to protect open space character.

To achieve its function as a ridgeline ‘spine’ that forms a physical and visual barrier between the urban and rural sectors of the City area and to ensure its highly valued skylines are seen in the context of the hill slopes as well, the Outer Green Belt needs to be wider than a narrow ridgetop strip. This was one of the factors taken into account when the district plan ridgelines and hilltops overlay was defined.

¹⁰ *Wellington Towards 2014: Smart Capital* and the *Wellington Urban Growth Plan 2014-2043*

¹¹ Policy 16.5.1.5 (which refers to ‘Outer Town Belt’)

Ample breadth is needed for people to feel remote from the city when in the Outer Green Belt and for the Outer Green Belt to function as an ecological corridor. This is a unique and valued characteristic of the Outer Green Belt.

The Council's open spaces and recreation framework, *Our Capital Spaces (2013-2023)*, prioritises expanding and protecting gaps in the Outer Green Belt to strengthen its recreational and landscape continuity. This priority recognises the Outer Green Belt's importance in the city's overall open space and reserves network, its part in Wellington's identity and liveability, and its potential to be an enduring and formative element as the city grows and changes.

4.1.2.3 Relationship with overlapping plans

1. Where any policy in this Plan is in conflict with a policy in another overlapping management, conservation or master plan, then the most recent policy will take precedence and provide guidance for the next reviews of the older plan(s).
2. When considering resource consent applications under the district plan for land use in the Outer Green Belt reserves, use this Plan as a Council strategic document and as a general policy and information source, in particular, for understanding existing site values when considering assessments of effects.
3. When future district plan changes and amendments are being considered, seek opportunities to strengthen the Outer Green Belt vision by aligning protection and enhancement of key open space values to nearby private land e.g. protecting significant vegetation on private land.

Explanation.

Certain areas within the Outer Green Belt have site-specific plans where particular site values or uses require detailed guidance on management or development. Examples of overlapping plans include the **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush** section of the Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan; the South Coast Management Plan; the Zealandia Strategy 2016-2035; the Wrights Hill Fortress and Old Coach Rd conservation plans; and the **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park Master Plan. There are also some reserve areas closely bordering the Outer Green Belt, which have been developed as neighbourhood suburban parks (e.g. parts of Karori and Khandallah Parks). These areas are managed under the *Suburban Reserves Management Plan* but nevertheless connect closely with the more natural areas in the Outer Green Belt. The overlapping plans should generally be consistent but because they are reviewed at different times there may be periods when policies in the older plans have not been updated to match more recent policies.

Certain land use activities within the Outer Green Belt are subject to the provisions of the Wellington City District Plan, which is statutory document under the Resource Management Act. The Upper Stebbings Valley Structure Plan growth planning is likely to result in new reserves affecting the Outer Green Belt and district plan changes (see Part 6 management sectors 1 and 2.) See Appendix II, Policy and Planning Context for more on other plans.

4.2 NATURE

Being close to nature is a point of difference for Wellingtonians. The focus in this section is nature for **nature's sake** – its intrinsic value, protection and enhancement, and the opportunity for connectivity due to the long shape and large scale of the Outer Green Belt. Other sections cover what this means for user experience, landscape values, wellbeing etc.

4.2.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To sustainably manage the Outer Green Belt lands with particular regard to protecting and enhancing its mauri and exercising the principles of kaitiakitanga.
2. To restore and protect a continuous ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt, mainly on the city side, that connects areas of high natural value, taking into account opportunities to enhance ecological connections beyond the Outer Green Belt and the need to retain open grassland in specified areas for recreation and landscape reasons.
3. **To contribute to the city's resilience through ecosystem services on the Outer Green Belt**, where appropriate and within the scope of the Outer Green Belt vision.

4.2.2 POLICIES & ACTIONS

4.2.2.1 Caring for nature

1. Ensure local mana whenua have the opportunity to be involved in nature conservation initiatives.
2. Prioritise protection of all important forest remnants and other areas of high ecological value in the Outer Green Belt reserves through appropriate reserve classification and district plan provisions, fencing, weed and pest animal control, and controls on activities (see Rules).
3. Encourage protection of all important forest remnants and other areas of high ecological value on private land neighbouring the Outer Green Belt by working together and supporting good management
4. Protect key areas of high ecological value or species through ongoing and concerted pest animal and pest plant control.
5. Where an action plan exists to protect and manage nationally, regionally or locally significant indigenous species present in the Outer Green Belt, manage the species in accordance with the plan.
6. Support and foster biodiversity research in the Outer Green Belt to inform biodiversity protection, ecological restoration and management efforts.
7. Encourage and support individuals and households to take action in support of biodiversity and to report sightings of threatened or locally important native species in the Outer Green Belt or neighbouring properties.
8. Develop biodiversity interpretation to help tell the stories of natural taonga on the Outer Green Belt through the proposed Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see policy 4.6.2.7).

Actions

- a) **Identify areas of traditional Māori use and biodiversity value, and work with iwi to conduct** an assessment of biodiversity sites of cultural significance.
- b) Review weed management programmes on the Outer Green Belt and identify gaps in habitat type or species protection.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt contains much of **Wellington's most important ecological areas and hosts many** of the nationally and regionally threatened species and locally significant species listed in appendix 5 of *Our Natural Capital*. Protection and ecological restoration needs to be planned strategically over

such a large area to get the most benefit from the outlay of effort and resources. The Council prioritises its biodiversity resources city-wide, informed by restoration objectives, monitoring results, weed and pest animal management issues and community wishes. As set out in *Our Natural Capital*, **the first priority is to protect the best of what we've already got, including buffer areas around them**, so that those high-value areas flourish and can gradually expand. Management of the intervening areas will be focused on optimising the conditions for natural regeneration of native vegetation to **continue and, where needed, 'stepping stone' habitat restoration to enable key or re-introduced species to move along the corridor and colonise new areas.**

It is also important to consider the Outer Green Belt's role in the wider network of natural areas and ecosystem restoration in the city and beyond. It is, for instance, the main corridor for birds such as **kākā, kākāriki** and korimako (bellbird) travelling out from Zealandia to areas where new populations could establish. Restoration at key nodes could enhance the potential spread of native plant and wildlife species beyond the Outer Green Belt into adjoining stream catchments or via open space links to the Wellington Town Belt or Belmont Regional Park. Coastal connections are now an important element also, as the Outer Green Belt has been extended since 2004, from the top of the coastal escarpment down to sea level on the south coast.

4.2.2.2 Streams

1. Protect and restore the freshwater ecology in the stream catchments of the Outer Green Belt, including seeps and wetlands, through fencing riparian land, where necessary to exclude stock, riparian planting, removal of any fish barriers and periodic rubbish removal where necessary.
2. Encourage native forest to regenerate in the steep stream headwater areas of the Outer Green Belt to improve water quality by holding and filtering runoff, and reducing soil erosion.
3. Where possible maintain a 20-metre (minimum 5-metre) vegetation buffer on each side of streams to protect water and soil values and slow runoff.
4. Continue to work with Greater Wellington Regional Council to implement a monitoring programme for Wellington City streams using the Macroinvertebrate Community Index (MCI).
5. Support community initiatives to care for and monitor streams through partnerships and programmes such as Sanctuary to Sea and Whitebait Connection.
6. Encourage neighbouring farmers to fence and plant riparian areas on their land and, where resources permit, offer practical support.
7. Ensure best practice freshwater management is applied when site works are required near or in streams e.g. plantation harvest, construction.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt **contains the headwaters of tributary streams flowing into all the city's main streams** including Porirua, Ohariu, **Makarā**, Ngauranga, Kaiwharawhara, Karori, Silver and Ōwhiro streams as well as short stream catchments draining onto the south coast, such as the Waipapa Stream. The Outer Green Belt is significant for catchment management, a key concept in larger action plans for freshwater in *Our Natural Capital*. Restoring indigenous vegetation cover to the headwater land will improve water quality and habitat for freshwater species.

Wellington City is a stakeholder in the Te Awarua-o-Porirua and Wellington Harbour and Hutt Valley Whaitua, a community-led collaborative planning process to carry out Greater Wellington Regional Council's **obligations under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management**. The Whaitua are required to set freshwater usage and quality objectives and limits in catchments by 2025 in order to maintain or improve water quality. The Whaitua implementation plans are likely to inform freshwater management in the Outer Green Belt over the life of this plan.

4.2.2.3 Indigenous flora and planting

1. Protect threatened or locally significant plant species through weed and pest animal control and enhance distribution through planting.

2. Continue restoration planting programmes to enhance and connect important forest remnants in the Outer Green Belt, taking into account the potential for natural regeneration to occur and the need to ensure a mix of plant types, including emergent trees, climbers and ground covers.
3. Consider reintroducing threatened and under-represented plant species within the restoration planting programme, where appropriate and feasible.
4. Use eco-sourced plants only when planting indigenous plants on the Outer Green Belt and continue to promote the practice to the wider community, including neighbours.
5. Prioritise planting within the Outer Green Belt to enhance stream environments with riparian planting and to provide good habitat for wildlife.
6. Progressively carry out enhancement planting of emergent indigenous tree species, such as podocarps, throughout existing forest areas.

Explanation

While native vegetation is regenerating over large areas of the Outer Green Belt, much is lacking in species diversity, and some plant species are either under-represented or have disappeared locally due to competition and/or loss of habitat.

The Council implements an ongoing city-wide restoration planting strategy to ensure that planting covers a representative range of sites across different ecosystems around the city. The strategy is geared to boost diversity and development of the different plant communities by including a mix of colonising species, emergent trees, climbers and groundcover species, as well as introducing rare and under-represented plants. In many cases planting projects are closely associated with managing weeds and pest animals. Revegetating areas with native species can also help to suppress the regrowth or establishment of some weeds.

4.2.2.4 Wildlife

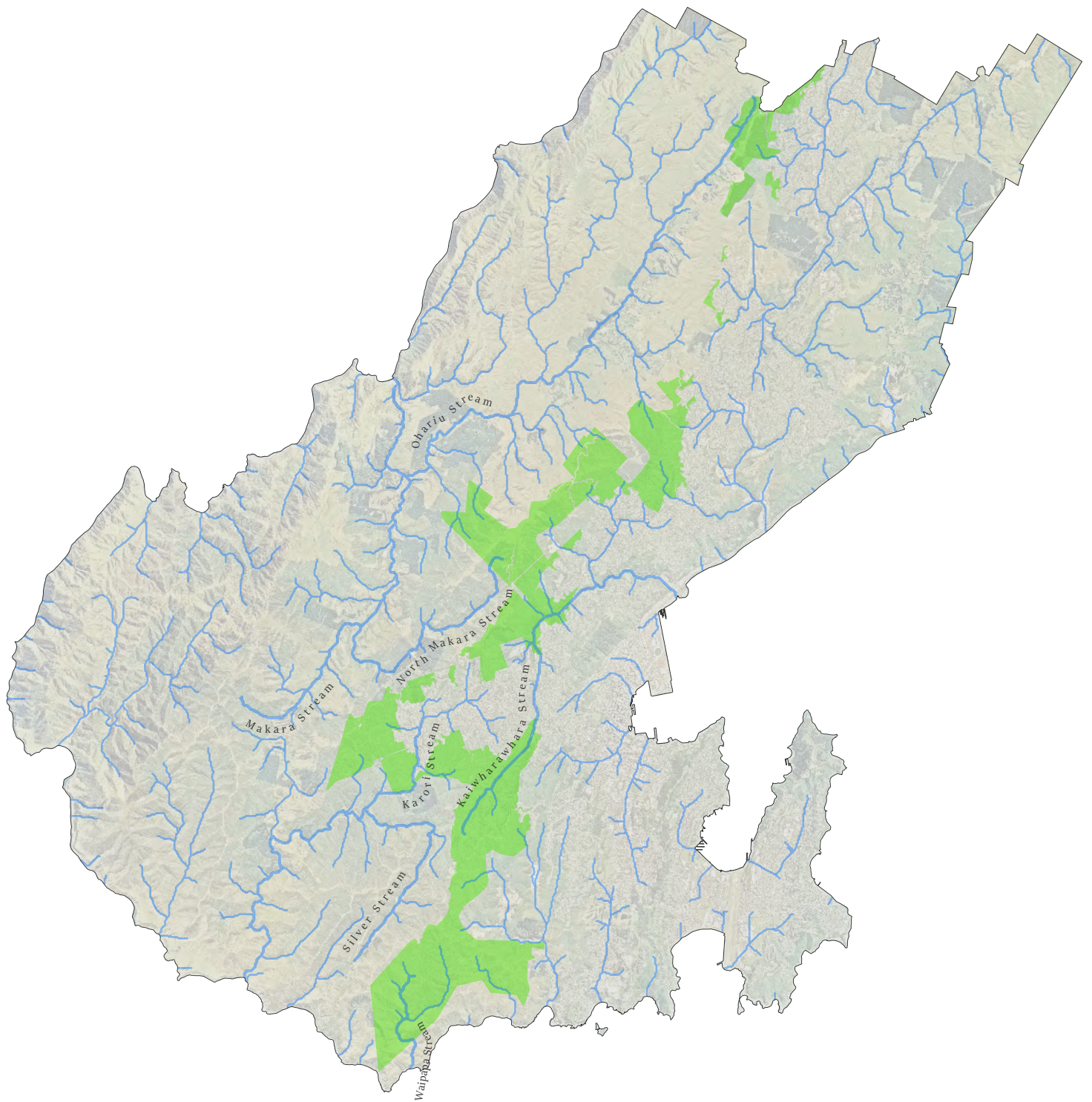
1. Support the proliferation and spread of indigenous wildlife within the ecological corridor in the Outer Green Belt through weed and pest animal control, and planting to enhance safe and sustaining habitat for native wildlife.
2. Work with relevant organisations, such as Zealandia, to investigate the restoration of indigenous fauna through reintroduction programmes and by restoring adequate connected habitat for threatened and locally significant species to establish and spread.
3. Lead or support efforts to restore indigenous wildlife to the Outer Green Belt, such as through **Zealandia's restoration programme**.
4. Continue to enhance our knowledge of birds, lizards and fresh water fish in the Outer Green Belt through surveys and monitoring programmes.
5. Continue to use opportunities for veteranisation (preserving old trees using arborist techniques to enhance/create wildlife habitat) of old exotic trees such as pines, as has been done at Zealandia.

Action

- a) Based on recent lizard surveys develop a lizard monitoring plan.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is the largest wildlife corridor in the capital and holds several threatened and locally significant species such as **kākā**, tieke (saddleback), barking gecko and long fin eels. *Our Natural Capital* **outlines the idea of 'Wildlife Safe Wellington', whereby the city overall becomes a safe haven for indigenous wildlife and, specifically, Council reserves become wildlife-friendly refuges** – increasing the likelihood that people will encounter them. Within the Outer Green Belt, Zealandia is a pivotal area; its wildlife reintroductions and community programme of extending out a halo of safe bird habitat is a key initiative. Restoration of the ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt, including implementing the Predator-Free Wellington programme (see next page) will extend the halo even further.



The Outer Green Belt reserves cover significant areas in the headwaters of stream catchments.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is the largest wildlife corridor in the capital and holds several threatened and locally significant species such as **kākā**, tieke (saddleback), barking gecko and long fin eels. *Our Natural Capital* outlines the idea of ‘Wildlife Safe Wellington’, whereby the city overall becomes a safe haven for indigenous wildlife and, specifically, Council reserves become wildlife-friendly refuges – increasing the likelihood that people will encounter them. Within the Outer Green Belt, Zealandia is a pivotal area; its wildlife reintroductions and community programme of extending out a halo of safe bird habitat is a key initiative. Restoration of the ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt, including implementing the Predator-Free Wellington programme (see next page) will extend the halo even further.



Barking gecko

The Barking Gecko (previously called Wellington Green Gecko) is one of the few species endemic to the Wellington Region (occurs nowhere else).

It is at risk, with a declining population status. Very little is known about its specific habitat choice and there is limited ability to monitor its population—due to its cryptic nature and habits it is particularly hard to survey.

Photograph © Peter de Lange
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

4.2.2.5 Weeds and pest animals

1. Manage weeds, pest animals and feral animals in accordance with *Our Natural Capital*.
2. Work closely with the Greater Wellington Regional Council to implement both statutory and strategic weed and pest animal management requirements on the Outer Green Belt.
3. Manage and monitor ecologically damaging weed species to (i) protect, as a priority, areas of high natural value from invasion and (ii) contain spread into other areas of natural value.
4. Help keep grassland areas open where required by managing weeds.
5. Support research and trials into biocontrol agents of weed and pest animal species that are hard to control on the Outer Green Belt.
6. Work with the National Biocontrol Collective¹² to ensure the continuation of the Darwin's barberry biocontrol programme and advocate for releases of the control agents in key sites.
7. Work in collaboration with Predator Free Wellington to ensure benefits to the Outer Green Belt from pest animal control.
8. Ensure timely management of weed wilding trees to protect native forest restoration efforts.
9. When threatened or locally significant species or populations are identified and are particularly vulnerable carry out reactive and targeted ‘knock-down’ control to protect these vulnerable species (e.g. protect **tūturiwhatu** (dotterel), tieke or **kākā** nesting sites from predators.)
10. Encourage and support community participation in weed and pest animal control.

Explanation

Ecological corridors can be a conduit for introduced pests. Pest species can threaten ecosystems and restoration efforts through competition, damage and predation. The Council recognises and manages this risk in its city-wide biosecurity management, guided by *Our Natural Capital 2015* and its

¹² The collective brings together representatives from local and central government and the research sector to pool resources and decision-making on serious weed issues.

statutory control obligations under the *Greater Wellington Proposed Regional Pest Management Plan 2019-2039*¹³. A list of weeds and pest animals is contained in appendix 6 of *Our Natural Capital*.

Since 2005, weed and pest animal control in the Outer Green Belt has been prioritised in areas of high ecological value. However, available resources limit the extent of weed control that can be carried out.

*Weeds*¹⁴. There are many weed species threatening the ecological values of the Outer Green Belt. Weed control needs to be prioritised; first, according to the biodiversity value of sites, and, then, to target the weed species that pose the highest threat to the ecological values of prioritised sites. For example, in an important forest habitat controlling climbers, **such as old man's beard, banana passionfruit and Japanese honeysuckle**, is prioritised because climbing weeds can smother and destroy the forest structure; and then woody weeds such as holly are tackled. In more open areas, groundcovers like English ivy would be prioritised because they prevent native seedlings from establishing. Another priority is where weeds currently have limited distribution. Weed control is also prioritised according to the level of threat to the particular habitat being managed and the feasibility of control with available methods. For instance, **Darwin's barberry has a comparatively limited** distribution in the southern Te Kopahou area so its control there is prioritised to prevent it taking hold in an area of valuable nature. In other areas, such as the ridgetops of Wrights Hill and Te Wharangi ridge, it is so widespread that control is not feasible at this time. Biocontrol is a potential longer-term solution to control weed species that create large infestations such as Darwin's barberry and tradescantia at various sites.



Megan Banks from Greater Wellington releasing Darwin's barberry seed weevils into a mesh bag tied around the branch of a Darwin's barberry bush. Darwin's barberry is being investigated as a long-term solution to large infestations on the Outer Green Belt.

Photograph: RNZ / Alison Ballance

Pest animals found in the Outer Green Belt include: possums, rabbits, hares, goats, deer, pigs, rats, cats, stoats, weasels, hedgehogs, mice and wasps. Goat and pig numbers have been suppressed, although there is invasion from properties adjacent to Te Kopahou and parts of the Te Wharangi ridge. Ongoing control of feral animals, such as goats, pigs and deer will be required. Since the 2004 version of this Plan, long-running and city-wide control by Wellington City and Greater Wellington Regional councils has seen possum numbers greatly reduced, resulting in significant regeneration in the Outer Green Belt. In 2017, possum control was expanded to the open tops of Te Kopahou Reserve. Much of the Outer Green Belt is under intense possum control compared to adjacent rural land, so reinvasion is a constant issue. Rural neighbours have the opportunity to opt into the greater Wellington Regional Council possum control programme.

¹³ The proposed plan will replace the currently operative Regional Pest Management Strategy 2002-2022

¹⁴ Defined in *Our Natural Capital* as 'any unwanted plant organism that outcompetes, displaces and/or prevents natural succession of indigenous species.' This can include invasive native plants.

In the last few years, community-run volunteer pest animal control has burgeoned and the Council has been building systems to support and empower this community of trappers in their protection efforts. The volunteer work is targeted at small mammals such as mustelids and hedgehogs.

Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and the NEXT Foundation have entered into a partnership to achieve the vision of a Predator Free Wellington, an aspiration of **Wellington's community**. The partners are working on initial project planning, research and co-design to free Wellington from predators, with a focus on possums, rats and mustelids. The primary aim will be to reduce and maintain these predators to zero – the best way to enable wildlife **restoration whilst also improving the resilience of Wellington's urban ecology**. The vision aligns with that of the national Predator Free NZ 2050 aspiration.

4.2.2.6 Fire

1. Manage fire risk by:
 - a) rules in the Rules section;
 - b) planting fire-resistant species in areas of high fire risk;
 - c) informing the public about fire risks and how to avoid causing fires via on-site signs and other visitor information;
 - d) co-ordinating fire management with Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Explanation

Fire has the potential to set back ecosystem restoration. The frequency of fires has decreased in recent years, largely because of regenerating indigenous vegetation supplanting flammable gorse, but there will always be a risk from people causing inadvertent or deliberate fire and from lightning strike. Climate change may exacerbate the risk through likely increase in frequency and/or severity of drought conditions.

4.2.2.7 Ecological values on private land

1. Inform neighbouring landowners about areas and features (e.g. mature native trees) of ecological value on their land and encourage them through advice and, where possible, practical support to protect and restore those areas and features, especially where useful ecological connections would be enhanced or created.
2. Encourage and support neighbours to undertake weed and pest animal control.
3. Encourage neighbours to protect freshwater values on their land, including potentially retiring steep land in the headwaters of stream catchments and restoring or fencing riparian land bordering water courses.
4. Work collaboratively with willing neighbours whose properties contain forest remnants to:
 - establish vegetation that will buffer and connect those remnants;
 - **allow seed collection from specimens in those remnants for the Council's seed collection** programme to strengthen the genetic resilience of eco-sourced plant propagation.

Explanation

Connecting up the ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt will be greatly helped by the support and co-operation of neighbouring landowners. At the small scale, residential neighbours can help by controlling weeds and pest animals on their properties. At the larger scale, farmers often have a strong sense of stewardship for their land and recognise the importance of biodiversity and freshwater values within productive landscapes. However, they might not always have good information about the ecology on their land, how to look after natural areas nor what assistance **might be available to them. While it is the landowner's decision, the Council can facilitate and** encourage conservation on neighbouring land through discussion, advice and information and, where possible, practical support and incentives. The Council regularly sprays weed growth along its rural fence lines to meet statutory requirements and to keep its fence assets clear for maintenance. The

spread of weeds from neighbouring residential properties is an issue best addressed by education and collaboration.

4.2.2.8 Resilience – ecosystem services

1. **Manage the Outer Green Belt's natural areas so that ecosystem services help sustain a healthy and robust environment** through such things as clean air and water, flood control, soil conservation and carbon storage.
2. Where compatible with landscape, ecological and recreational values, investigate the potential for further areas of carbon storage forests in the Outer Green Belt.

Explanation

City resilience has to **do with 'future-proofing' urban environments to be as self-sustaining as possible** in the face of large-scale changes, such as climate change. This includes weaving natural environments through cities, to provide important **'life support'** ecosystem services and allow plant and animal populations to adapt to habitat change. The Outer Green Belt already contributes to **Wellington's resilience because it is** such a large, central and continuous band of green space in the **city's open space network. Importantly, it** contains the headwaters of numerous stream catchments where good land management and forest cover enhances water quality. Damage to the Outer Green Belt environment is likely from more extreme weather events associated with climate change and could include flooding, slips, wind damage and drought. Resilience through increased and healthy vegetation cover is the best defence as it is likely to reduce the risk of soil erosion and slips, help absorb runoff during heavy rain, retain soil moisture in dry periods and filter pollutants and sediment. Downstream benefits include improved water quality and reduced flooding. Under the **city's Low Carbon Capital Plan 2016-2018**, designated areas within the Outer Green Belt have been registered as carbon storage forests under several programmes to generate carbon credits and there could be future opportunities to add more.

4.3 LANDSCAPE AND LAND USE

4.3.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To protect the Outer Green Belt landscape as an enduring part of Wellington's **identity**.
2. To recognise and protect the Outer Green Belt landscape as a setting for a unique and varied recreation experience in the hills at the edge of the city and Cook Strait.
3. To restrict development of buildings and structures in order to protect the relatively undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt, which people value for its intrinsic natural and visual values.
4. To achieve a sustainable balance between maintaining open hilltop landscapes and restoring indigenous vegetation on the Outer Green Belt.

4.3.2 POLICIES & ACTIONS

4.3.2.1 Landscape character

1. Recognise and protect the rugged, relatively undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt landscape and its role as a natural visual backdrop in the city.
2. Maintain an open landscape character on defined summit and ridgetop areas of the Outer Green Belt to facilitate variety in recreational experiences, including places of wide open space and optimal views out.
3. Protect and restore indigenous vegetation on the city side of the Outer Green Belt and in steep gullies and riparian land elsewhere.
4. Keep views clear of vegetation growth at viewpoints, including secondary viewpoints on side spurs and tracks as well as along the main ridges.
5. Recognise the different landscape character in the management sectors, taking into account the different combinations of landform, ecology, land use and local history as the basis for ensuring diversity of places and recreational opportunities within the Outer Green Belt.
6. Provide for exotic tree species to be planted where appropriate for amenity, recreation and wildlife habitat purposes.

Explanation

As described in section 3.3, **the Outer Green Belt is an important part of Wellington's landscape**, particularly valued for its relatively undeveloped skylines and increasingly bush-clad landforms. The interweaving of bush-clad slopes and open tops has historically characterised the Outer Green Belt but this pattern is changing as more of the steep higher slopes revert from pasture to woody vegetation. From a land management perspective, revegetating the steep land and stream headwaters on the flanks of the ridges helps maintain healthy streams by holding and filtering runoff. Visually, the forested eastern flanks are valued as a natural backdrop to the city. Recreationally, the contrasts between exposed open tops and more sheltered forested areas offer variety in the environments people can experience. The gradual reduction in area of open land on the upper slopes and some ridgetop areas **raises the question**, 'If there is a desire to preserve at least some open ridgetops, how can it best be maintained and at what cost?' This is discussed further under grazing (see 4.3.2.2.)

The continuity of ridgeline landforms is a feature of the Outer Green Belt landscape but diversity at the local scale also needs to be recognised; not only to reflect differences in site conditions but also the different history and desires of adjacent communities. Managing that diversity is picked up in the management sector policies in Part 6.

At the edges of the Outer Green Belt are a number of neighbourhood parks and track entrances where tall trees could benefit amenity value. Exotic as well as indigenous species could be planted in these areas for faster growth and to provide food and habitat for wildlife, provided the species is non-invasive in natural areas e.g. *Eucalyptus* species trees.

4.3.2.2 Grazing

1. Trial the gradual phasing out of grazing from Outer Green Belt reserves in stages, in consultation with the current graziers to manage the process, including:
 - a) issuing interim grazing licenses for periods of up to five years;
 - b) replacing cattle grazing with sheep grazing if possible in the interim;
 - c) upgrading boundary fences to fully exclude farm stock from the reserves;
 - d) negotiating exit plans with graziers, subject to the outcomes of the alternative management trials.
2. Maintain ridgetop areas that are to be kept in open grassland with mechanical methods and herbicide spraying, as required, and adapt the management regime as considered necessary from monitoring results (see action (d) below).

Actions

- a) Identify and map the areas to be kept in grassland to maintain views and open ridgetops for recreation, and prepare a fencing maintenance/upgrade plan to help secure funding and guide the staged cessation of grazing.
- b) Formalise interim grazing rights with grazing licenses of no more than 5-year terms.
- c) Implement the fencing/upgrade plan as resources permit.
- d) Set up monitoring of the changes in the grassland areas as a research project to inform decisions about how best to maintain the desired areas of open grassland.

Explanation

Until now grazing has been used to maintain pasture cover on the ridgetops and hilltops north of **Makarā** Road saddle. To the south, there is no grazing on Outer Green Belt reserves. The Council has reviewed the effectiveness, suitability and sustainability of grazing regimes in the light of recreational use, environmental impact and farm consultant advice about the land's grazing capacity and value. It is proposed to gradually phase out grazing. Contributing factors include compatibility issues between recreational users and grazing stock; costly trampling damage to tracks, vegetation and the pasture itself, especially in wet winter conditions; pugging in riparian areas affecting water quality; browse on native vegetation; the marginal productive value of the land; and the cost of fencing. A fencing audit has highlighted the need for maintenance or replacement of boundary fences as well as the need to repair or fill gaps in fencing inside the reserves to exclude grazing stock from forest restoration areas and/or permanent forest sinks. Fencing along the grazed margins of the Wellington Western Forests Key Natural Ecosystem (KNE) which covers a large part of Te Wharangi ridge, is prioritised in the KNE management plan.

Grazing is not necessarily the only or most cost-effective way to maintain the desired areas of grassland, given that the land is marginal farmland at best. Instead, it is proposed to trial the use of a combination of mechanical means and targeted weed spraying.

The outcome envisaged is that the tops will remain open grassland for a long time without grazing although the nature of the grassland **will change. It will become 'rank grass' (long grass), which will** form a thick thatch and is likely to persist for decades or longer due to the harsh conditions in most places – extreme wind exposure and drought, exacerbated by the poor thin soils and likely increased extremes of climate change. It is envisaged that recreational outcomes will be improved by removing the stock and also allowing an alternative kind of lush grassland to develop. Ecological objectives will be supported as there will be less risk of stock damage to forest and riparian areas and the grassland is likely to provide good lizard habitat. It is also thought likely that the thick rank grass thatch will suppress quite a lot of weed growth compared to shorter pasture, as weed seeds are less likely to develop on ground shaded by the thatch.

Grazing stock has not **been effective in preventing or slowing the spread of Darwin's barberry** but the Council has had some success in controlling it with its routine boundary fence aerial spraying. The

Council proposes to spray the edges of the grassland areas to keep the infestations from spreading and continue supporting research into biocontrol.

The change is to be staged gradually, in consultation with the graziers involved, to ensure boundary fencing is in good order before totally excluding stock and so that the Council can progressively trial and monitor the new regime, adapting its management approach as required, including reintroducing grazing if necessary. One factor that will need to be watched, for instance, is whether the taller grass will increase fire risk. In the meantime, where grazing continues for an interim period, sheep grazing will be sought instead of cattle, as sheep have less environmental impact and are less intimidating to recreational users, although the dog-on-leash rule will need to be strictly enforced. This change to grazing currently affects sectors 3 and 4 but could well affect land management decisions in relation to newly acquired reserves in sectors 1 and 2 as well. The existing horse grazing lease in the Chartwell area (Management Sector 4) is to continue in the meantime but is likely to be phased out in the longer-term.

4.3.2.3 Plantation forestry

1. Manage existing forestry plantations to be gradually replaced by regenerating native forest by:
 - staged harvest of selected blocks to maximise timber value so as to help fund native forest restoration and weed control of the sites, or
 - staged removal of blocks following significant weather events, or
 - allowing the exotic trees to age and fall over naturally, unless selective removal is warranted to manage risk and/or potential weed problems; and
 - controlling weed competition and wilding pine regrowth in clear areas.
2. Manage the gradual transition from exotic to native forest to provide, over the duration, a variety of environments for recreational use e.g. areas of relatively open forest beneath mature pines, other areas of dense regeneration in forest gaps.
3. Manage exotic shelter belts and trees that have recognised heritage value for longevity but do not replant, to avoid perpetuating seed production that could threaten nearby ecological or landscape values.

Explanation

The Council generally manages plantations on its reserve land for ecological and/or recreational benefits rather than commercial production. A low-key management approach is generally adopted whereby trees are allowed to age and fall over naturally. Over time, gaps are created and the overall forest canopy thins, letting in more light which encourages a native understorey to regenerate. **The Council's tree team mainly deals with storm damage on a reactive basis but may also take action to manage risk when required.** Given the changes that can occur with weather events as well as the natural ageing of the trees, the Council monitors trees and stands of trees, using internationally recognised methodology.

Some proactive management is also used selectively. For instance, the Council is experimenting with ways to enhance the regeneration process, whilst retaining tall tree habitat for wildlife, by removing or killing single trees or tree groups in the middle of forest stands without affecting the stability of the whole stand. In other situations, staged removal of tree stands might be required where stands have become unstable and/or where weed growth in the tangle of branches and timber that follows tree fall, is likely to be difficult and costly to manage. **The Council's carbon storage obligations will be taken into account in managing conversion from exotic to native forest cover.**

The main plantations (or remnants of plantations) in the Outer Green Belt are at Spicer Forest, Te Ngā-o-Tawa (formerly Forest of Tane), the airstrip block above Stebbings Valley, north of Johnston Hill, Karori Park and Zealandia. Specific management policies for these are outlined under the relevant management sectors in Part 6.

4.3.2.4 Development and land use

1. Protect the relatively undeveloped natural and rural character of the Outer Green Belt by applying the Rules in this Plan (Part 5) and promoting other statutory and non-statutory mechanisms to minimise built development and land use change that would undermine that character.
2. Limit development of buildings, structures or earthworks in the Outer Green Belt to those required for:
 - a) outdoor, informal public recreation, land management or conservation purposes;
 - b) essential public utility purposes that cannot practically be located elsewhere or co-located in an existing utility installation.
3. If existing public utility structures and buildings become obsolete, they must be removed and the sites reinstated as public open space.
4. Locate new buildings, structures and earthworks around the edges of the Outer Green Belt wherever possible and appropriate, to preserve the character of the areas that are more remote from urban development and comparatively free of structures.
5. Avoid siting large structures and buildings on ridgetops and hilltops, unless an elevated location is essential for public utility and cannot practically be located elsewhere.
6. Assess proposed buildings, structures or earthworks to ensure the development is necessary and in keeping with the landscape character, using the assessment criteria in the Rules section, which includes assessment under the district plan if a resource consent is required.
7. Design and locate all built development, including tracks and signage, to minimise the visual and physical impact on landscape and heritage features, landscape character and ecology.
8. Assess requests for commemorative furniture **under the Council's Commemorative Policy**, taking particular care that any such furniture:
 - is appropriate to and does not clutter the surrounding environment,
 - is designed and placed to be unobtrusive in the setting, and
 - does not detract from the remote character in some parts of the Outer Green Belt.
9. Produce a landscape development plan to guide any development that may result in noticeable site modification and intensive site use, such as main entrances or visitor centres, ensuring to apply the assessment criteria in the Rules section of this Plan and best practice design, such as water-sensitive design¹⁵, to minimise adverse visual and environmental impacts
10. Limit the installation of permanent art works in most areas of the Outer Green Belt, as being generally inappropriate to the natural values except at main entrances but consider, in rare instances, **and evaluate under the Council's Public Art Policy 2012**, art work that has been designed as part of a detailed site plan and would complement or interpret site values.

Explanation

The relative absence of structures, buildings and roads on the Outer Green Belt is important to its natural character, urban containment role and the recreational experience it offers. Nevertheless, a limited number of built features do exist and there will, inevitably, be demands for further development of one sort or another. Already increased public use has resulted in calls for more amenities such as toilets, seats and shelters, as well as improved signage and more track development. Collectively these kinds of **features can create the impression of 'clutter' unless well planned and designed**, yet in some situations built features such as pou, entrance markers and **artworks could add to people's experience and sense of place** without undermining the overall undeveloped character of the Outer Green Belt.

¹⁵ See Water Sensitive Urban Design, A guide for WSfUD stormwater management in Wellington.

There may well be new demands in the future that we can't foresee now, just as the proposed zip line **above Carey's Gully** (currently being considered) would not have been foreseen 10 years ago. This management plan will help guide responses to any new demands and whether they should or should not be accommodated through consideration of detailed proposals under criteria in the Rules section including public consultation if impacts are significant and/or the use so unusual that it requires wider input.

Built development that is required for visitor amenities will be generally located at the edge of the Outer Green Belt, particularly at main entrances where existing built infrastructure already exists (e.g. roads and water supply). Entrances and any other built development will need to be low-key, well designed and planned to reflect the emphasis on the **Outer Green Belt's natural values**. Places where such development is planned are specified in the management sectors (Part 6). In the case of utilities, it is accepted that some do require elevated sites but further development will be discouraged from places of particular landscape importance or in currently undeveloped areas. A point to note is that sometimes built structures become iconic landmarks, as in the case of the Mt Kaukau television mast and the Brooklyn wind turbine. As technology changes, some existing infrastructure, such as transmitter towers, may become obsolete but other needs are likely to arise, such as new water reservoir sites to serve urban growth areas or to provide emergency water supplies.

In addition to this management plan, the Council will use the following mechanisms to manage proposed built development or land use change in the Outer Green Belt, particularly where proposals require resource consent.

- *District plan rules (statutory)* to control activities that would affect the open space or conservation values of the land.
- *District plan ridgelines and hilltops overlay (statutory)*: to assess proposed development within the overlay area in terms of criteria aimed at avoiding visually obtrusive development. The overlay area covers much of the Outer Green Belt but not the less visually prominent areas, such as lower slopes and valleys, and some places where the overlay was modified during the Plan Change process.

4.4 CULTURE AND HERITAGE

4.4.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To recognise, protect and interpret the cultural and heritage sites, features and values of the Outer Green Belt.
2. To tell the stories of the places and people of the Outer Green Belt and the part they have played in the history and development of Wellington, including the story of the Outer Green Belt itself.

4.4.2 POLICIES

4.4.2.1 Recognition and protection of cultural and historical features

1. Recognise that the Outer Green Belt is part of a broader cultural landscape of great significance to mana whenua and work with mana whenua to protect its mauri.
2. Recognise, respect and protect waahi tapu (sacred sites), sites of significance to mana whenua or **other Māori** sites listed in the district plan and other places on the Outer Green Belt known to be **significant to Māori, in consultation with the appropriate iwi, and discuss proposed activity** in the vicinity of these sites and places with mana whenua before the activity starts.
3. Continue to identify, recognise and protect other cultural and heritage sites, archaeological sites and valued cultural landscapes on the Outer Green Belt in a manner reflecting their value and significance, in consultation with any directly affected groups or individuals.
4. Subject to the availability of funding, manage heritage, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes (including waahi tapu) to maintain their integrity and assist visitor appreciation.
5. Work with Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga, mana whenua, historic societies and interested individuals and groups to research cultural, archaeological and heritage values of the Outer Green Belt, manage recognised sites of significance, and develop interpretive material.

Actions

- a) Develop and maintain an inventory of all sites and features of cultural and heritage interest or value within the Outer Green Belt.
- b) Where the significance and nature of cultural and heritage sites warrants, prepare heritage conservation plans to guide future protection measures and management.
- c) Undertake an archaeological assessment of the Outer Green Belt to identify and protect archaeological sites. Any modification or destruction of an archaeological site will need to be guided by an archaeological authority.
- d) Identify places where planting, regeneration and vegetation may damage heritage, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes including waahi tapu. Establish a plan to record and manage cultural heritage values.
- e) Undertake a study to identify valued cultural landscapes including waahi tapu in consultation with iwi and other stakeholders.

4.4.2.2 Interpreting culture and heritage

1. Develop interpretive material to assist visitors to **appreciate the Outer Green Belt's history**, according to an Outer Green Belt interpretation plan and subject to available funding, taking into **account the principles in the Council's urban ecology-biodiversity interpretation framework** where subject matter overlaps with that framework.

Action

- a) Develop a heritage interpretation plan as part of an overall Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see 4.6.2.7 Interpretation) to guide how to tell citizens and visitors about the many and diverse historical and cultural features of the Outer Green Belt, via various media.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt provides a unique perspective into the cultural landscape of the Wellington region, including views of Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington Harbour), Raukawa Moana (Cook Strait), Te Waipounamu (South Island), north to Kāpiti and Mana islands and large tracts of land and coast between. Views encompass the lands of both Taranaki Whānui and Ngāti Toa as well as the lands and waters of tribal groups who preceded them. This includes Kupe, the explorer credited with discovering Aotearoa, and Tara, **after whom the harbour is named. Iwi's strong connection with this** cultural landscape and the indigenous flora and fauna it supports, should be woven into the themes of the interpretation plan.

Similarly, as described in Section 3.4, the Outer Green Belt is rich in history associated with colonial times, farming, city development and changing attitudes to environmental use and management. Popular elevated viewpoints such as Mt Kaukau or Wrights Hill are ideal for seeing the Outer Green Belt and its heritage in the context of the wider landscape and city. The themes outlined in Section 3.4 are no more than a preliminary summary and more research and documentation will be necessary to maintain a record of what we know and to provide the basis for interpretation.

4.4.2.3 Place names

1. **Use Māori place names in conjunction with commonly used European place names on signs and maps of the Outer Green Belt.**
2. New names for areas, features or places will be determined in conjunction with iwi, including **joint names, under the Council's Open Space Naming Policy** Kaupapa WhakaingoaWhenua Mahorahora¹⁶.
3. **Consider the adoption of an appropriate Māori name for the Outer Green Belt which is complementary to the existing name.**

Explanation

Many existing Māori and European place names in the Outer Green Belt add to the sense of place. Some names reflect ways that mana whenua and later settlers interpreted features in the landscape; other names reflect past activities and the people who shaped local history.

Using traditional and new Māori names for various places and features in the Outer Green Belt is a way of recognising mana whenua's long connection with the land and highlighting a sense of the cultural landscape and is also one way of implementing the Council's *Te Tauihu: Te Reo Māori Policy* in support of revitalising te reo.

¹⁶ Note: the naming policy, dating from 2001 at time of writing, is due for review.

4.5 RECREATION AND ACCESS

The Outer Green Belt provides a large area of land that supports outdoor recreation in Wellington and **community aspirations for Wellington to be a liveable, 'green', active and connected city**¹⁷. Its large scale means it can provide for extensive outdoor recreation, even **as the city's** population grows, helping to meet needs and desires for active, healthy communities and lifestyles.

4.5.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To provide or allow for both passive and active recreational activities on the Outer Green Belt that are accessible to a broad section of the community and are environmentally sustainable.
2. To facilitate opportunities on the Outer Green Belt for people to get active in the outdoors, have fun and be in contact with nature.
3. To provide recreational opportunities on the Outer Green Belt principally through an interconnected network of paths, tracks and routes, well-linked to local communities, and catering for a range of user interest, abilities, fitness and skills.
4. To complete the Skyline Track from Porirua to the south coast.
5. To apply the principle of manaakitanga (hospitality, care and respect for others) in the way access and enjoyment of the Outer Green Belt is managed – for local, regional, national and international visitors.

4.5.2 POLICIES

4.5.2.1 Recreation

1. Provide for a wide range of informal outdoor recreational activities appropriate to the natural or rural environments of the Outer Green Belt landscape (see Rules for more on types of activity).
2. Provide outdoor recreational infrastructure (access, tracks, signage and amenities) to facilitate safe recreational access and enjoyment, while maintaining the undeveloped, rugged and diverse landscape character of the Outer Green Belt.
3. Encourage access for all to the Outer Green Belt by providing information about public transport connections to key destinations.
4. Promote the health and wellbeing benefits of the Outer Green Belt as a place with opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, contact with nature and community involvement.
5. Provide play opportunities in the form of unstructured creative play for all ages on the Outer Green Belt based upon exploring and learning about natural environments.
6. **Promote the Outer Green Belt to Wellington's** residents and visitors for its outdoor recreation opportunities in a unique landscape setting.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is a wonderful recreational resource on the edge of the city area that offers **uniquely 'Wellington' outdoor recreation opportunities. Experiencing the continuous ridgeline landscape with its variety of 'wild' places, including open hilltops, bush and stream valleys, is** particularly suited to activities such as walking, tramping, running, biking and horse-riding, which involve movement through the natural and rural settings.

There is growing evidence of the human need for contact with nature and the role it plays in health and wellbeing to individuals and communities. Seeing natural places and having access to them in everyday life is one of things people value about Wellington.

¹⁷ Our City Tomorrow, Tō Tātou Taone a Āpōpō, What's Next? (2017) Wellington City Council.

Informal activities that require little infrastructure other than tracks and are based primarily on experiencing the relatively undeveloped landscape are considered the most appropriate. Simply enabling access to open spaces close to nature can be enough and, so, buildings and structures away from entrances will be rare. Suburban reserves and other types of open space sit adjacent to the Outer Green Belt and provide for other recreational experiences such as playgrounds, neighbourhood parks, sports grounds and cemetery space.

Types of use and development of the Outer Green Belt are categorised as ‘allowed’, ‘managed’ or ‘prohibited’. See the Rules section for category lists, assessment criteria and permission processes.

Camping on the Outer Green Belt has until now been a prohibited activity but there have been calls to **allow people to experience an overnight ‘wilderness’ camping experience close to the city**. The majority of survey respondents in 2017 were either neutral or unsupportive but 20-30% supported the idea. **To provide something that equates to a ‘wilderness’ experience would require relatively remote locations but with at least toilet and water facilities, bearing in mind hygiene and safety requirements in a public open space that is more highly used than true national park type of ‘wilderness’**. Bearing in mind the camping opportunities available within a reasonably short distance **in Greater Wellington’s regional parks**, provision for an overnight outdoor camping service is not proposed at this stage. However, requests for one-off overnight camping with an educational focus will be considered through the events application process (see Rules). The possibility of developing a purpose-built **‘tramping hut’ facility** in the vicinity of Management Sector 7 will be investigated. It should be noted that overnight stays are available at the Huntleigh Girl Guiding Centre adjacent to Huntleigh Park and the long-term potential to adapt the woolshed at Chartwell as a nature education centre with facility for overnight stays is to be investigated (see Part 6, Management Sector 4).

The Wellington Play Spaces Policy¹⁸ recognises the benefits of informal play in natural environments, of which the Outer Green Belt offers a wealth of opportunities. The policy also aims to provide playgrounds equitably distributed across the city. Playgrounds have been developed on the edge of the Outer Green Belt in four locations: Brasenose Reserve, Khandallah Park, Silverstream Road and Montgomery Avenue, which are managed under the Suburban Reserves Management Plan. Opportunities to promote informal play in natural settings and the value of it to children and families will be explored through events, programmes and online content.

4.5.2.2 Motorised vehicles

1. Prohibit, or manage through specific approvals for, motorised vehicles on the Outer Green Belt, including commercial vehicle-based recreational activities, except as required for servicing, management, emergency and civil defence purposes.
2. Prohibit private vehicle access except under exceptional circumstances and on a one-off basis.
3. Limit motorised vehicle-based recreational use to organised events that have been approved and had permits issued under section 5.3.2 (Rules of this Plan), taking into account, in addition to the criteria in that section:
 - the number of vehicles involved in a given event;
 - the type of vehicles;
 - frequency of motorised vehicle events in the particular part of the Outer Green Belt;
 - the suitability of proposed routes;
 - the impact on other recreational users and the environment.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt is primarily an off-road recreational environment, where motorised vehicles can potentially **detract from recreational users’ experience**. Therefore, motorised vehicle access is limited. A significant change in this Plan is the proposal to extend the Outer Green Belt to the South

¹⁸ Wellington Play Spaces Policy, April 2017

Coast, which means the unpaved road around the coast from the Te Kopahou Visitors Centre is now part of the Outer Green Belt. Careful management of access along the road is required to provide for a range of recreational users, including those seeking 4WD-drive access around the coast, as well as for owners of historic bachs on the coast. See Part 6, Management Sector 7

Off-road 4WD driving is recognised as a recreational use and local 4WD clubs have run one-off driving events on the Outer Green Belt before, under permits. Provided these events are of a sufficiently small scale, keep to agreed 4WD tracks and are sufficiently infrequent that other recreational users are rarely affected by them, the Council regards these activities as enabling a particular type of recreational group to access and enjoy the Outer Green Belt environment. Commercial motorised vehicle tours on the Outer Green Belt will not be permitted. There could be occasions where infrequent one-off events could enable some people to access the Outer Green Belt who would otherwise be physically unable to do so e.g. a 4WD club providing transport to enable a community group to carry out a botanical survey.

4.5.2.3 Track network

1. Maintain, develop and manage the Outer Green Belt track (access) network in accordance with the network principles **in the Council's *Open Space Access Plan 2016* (OSAP)**, including catering for:
 - a) **a wide range of people's skills, fitness, abilities and interest;**
 - b) minority specialist track users proportional to numbers of users;
 - c) easy access to key destinations;
 - d) some tracks specifically designed to enable access for those with limited mobility.
2. Improve the track network by:
 - a) completing the Skyline Track as a continuous shared track spanning the entire length of the Outer Green Belt, following the high ground of the main ridgelines wherever possible;
 - b) upgrading and adding to lateral tracks to provide adequate Skyline Track exit and entry points, fill gaps in local connections to adjacent communities and provide more local loop walks.
3. Manage all tracks in the Outer Green Belt for shared foot and bike-based use unless otherwise specified in the OSAP or in this Plan.
4. Maintain a primary network of vehicle tracks for adequate off-road vehicle access for Council management, utility servicing and emergency/civil defence vehicle access purposes while also serving as shared-use recreational tracks.
5. Design, upgrade and maintain tracks to the appropriate track specifications in the OSAP, bearing in mind that:
 - Some tracks in suitable locations should be specifically designed for universal accessibility;
 - the track network should reflect and not detract from the relatively undeveloped, natural or rural character of the Outer Green Belt landscape, and
 - tracks should be designed to minimise environmental impact, taking account of the principles for ecologically sustainable tracks in the OSAP, and minimise long-term maintenance.
6. Allow for varied track types and widths in the network, including within single routes, to reflect the local landscape character and provide for the choice and variety of experience that recreational users prefer.
7. Consult with the local community and user groups when considering proposals for any new track that is not already identified in the OSAP or in this Plan and assess under the guidelines in the OSAP, taking particular account of:

- a) **the track's role and need for it within the** Outer Green Belt and wider Wellington track network, including any gaps or duplications in the existing network, levels of user demand and long-term maintenance;
 - b) the principles for ecologically sustainable tracks, the track assessment criteria and the track work priority criteria in the OSAP, which include short and long-term environmental impact, user group conflict and public safety;
 - c) the impact that any proposed changes/new development would have on different track users, the extent to which the network and user experience would be improved, and the potential to achieve shared benefits.
8. Run a community consultation process as per the preceding policy (4.5.2.3 (7)) for the following current proposals:
 - a) Te Ngahere-o-Tawa (engagement already underway);
 - b) Johnston Hill and adjacent pine plantation area;
 - c) Te Kopahou.
 9. In assessing the environmental impacts of proposed track work, seek qualified ecological, professional track building, **and, where appropriate, forester's advice.**
 10. Require track development projects carried out by volunteer track builders in the Outer Green Belt to have been first assessed and approved and that the volunteer track builders operational guidelines proposed under the *Open Space Action Plan 2016* be applied to all volunteer track building and maintenance projects in the Outer Green Belt.
 11. Support the integration of the Outer Green Belt track network within the regional trails framework¹⁹, subject to the policies in this Plan and the *Open Space Access Plan 2016* taking precedence over any policies in the framework that are at variance, in particular with regard to the following proposed regional trail classifications:
 - a) **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park – proposed signature trail;
 - b) Skyline Track, which is also part of the national Te Araroa Walkway route as far south as Khandallah Park – proposed signature trail;
 - c) Pollhill Reserve (adjacent to Outer Green Belt) / Brooklyn Turbine /Te Kopahau Reserve tracks – proposed regional trail.
 12. Integrate the Outer Green Belt track network with wider existing and proposed tracks outlined in the *Open Space Access Plan 2016*, namely, links: across the Porirua City boundary to Rangituhi/Colonial Knob; from **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush west to Makarā** Road and the coast beyond; and from **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park down Karori Stream to the south coast.

Action

- a) Continue to develop well-graded side tracks to bypass or completely replace very steep sections of existing tracks, especially the 4WD sections of the Skyline Track.

Explanation

Variety and choice: The Outer Green Belt contains an extensive track network currently totalling **some 160 kilometres in length or approximately 42% of the Council's total track network.**

Collectively, the existing network already has the capacity to offer a range of experiences in different settings and in different ways, **including some of the city's most challenging and rugged tracks and environments.** For instance, a single excursion might simply be a gentle bush walk or it could follow a range of gentle and steep tracks through bush, stream, pasture and hilltop environments. Some people prefer to use particular types of tracks, others enjoy using a range of track types. Some people enjoy exploring on their own while others prefer to do so in organised groups or in events.

¹⁹ *Wellington Regional Trails for the Future: A strategic framework for trails in the Wellington Region* (2017), prepared by TRC for government authorities in the region.

The intention in this plan and the *Open Space Access Plan 2016* is to facilitate as wide a range of recreational opportunities suited to the Outer Green Belt environment as possible. As described in section 3.5.1, more than 70% of users on the Outer Green Belt are usually on foot, engaging in a wide range of activities (walking, running, trap checking, orienteering etc.²⁰). Correspondingly, the vast majority of the track network is available for on-foot use. The track network is also used by other types of track user. Mountain biking has grown in popularity and more than 20% of users now usually bike when on the Outer Green Belt. Horse riders represent a smaller group but there has been a need to provide more horse riding opportunities for some time, to which parts of the Outer Green Belt are well suited. As a general approach, provision for different user groups will be in proportion to the numbers of users e.g. horse riders or grade-5 mountain bikers represent a small proportion of users, so a small proportion of the track network will be prioritised for their use.

Planning. The Outer Green Belt is of a large enough scale that it can accommodate a lot of tracks but it is also a place that people like because it is less developed, less urban and does, literally, have open spaces. While it can accommodate some of the variety that people prefer – narrow / wide, rough / smooth, steep / graded, accessible / remote – it is not possible, nor desirable, to have all these options everywhere if the track network is to reflect local landscape character and be cost-effective.

Requests for new track development need to be considered at the broad scale in the context of the wider city and regional track network and the considerable existing track infrastructure, which represents both past capital investment and future maintenance. New tracks can also have impacts on other values such as natural values, existing usage patterns and user expectations. All these factors need to be weighed up and some proposed tracks will not be built if there are significant impacts, limited demand and duplication of existing track provision. In assessing the impacts, specialist field advice should be sought from an ecologist, professional track builder skilled in good track design, and, if in a plantation forest, a forester to ensure trees are not destabilised by cutting through root systems. Planning track work will be consistent with *Our Capital Spaces* and the *Open Space Access Plan 2016*, which prioritise completion of the Skyline Track and linking it in with a secondary network of local tracks.

While the vast majority of the track network is available for foot-based use, there has been community concern about the apparent focus in recent years on developing mountain bike tracks. That development has been focussed on providing for a new and still growing recreational activity, which now represents more than 20% of track users. Considerable further development is proposed in the bike-prioritised **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park (see Part 6, Management Sector 5). Elsewhere, new tracks are proposed to meet needs for improved access / loop routes, and in some cases to manage user conflicts. These are discussed further in the management sections.

At some stage, the limit of desirable track capacity will be reached; at that point track building will need to cease and the focus be purely on maintenance and way finding.

Some special interest groups and individuals, who enjoy building tracks as a recreational activity in itself, have been building unplanned and unsanctioned tracks. This activity can lead to issues of track proliferation, confusing layouts, safety risk, user conflict and, in places, poor track design with environmental damage. For this reason, track building is to be authorised first by the Council and **carried out according to approved guidelines, so that the track builders' enthusiasm and skill is directed towards shared community outcomes.**

Compatibility of activities. A great attribute of the Outer Green Belt is that there is plentiful space to offer a diversity of settings and range of activities in the track network but that does not mean every activity can or should be available in every area. The varied topography and local character makes different areas more or less suited to track development and types of activity. Compatibility issues that can arise between different users are being managed by way of a current Council project to develop protocols and, within the Outer Green Belt, designating different tracks and/or areas for shared, prioritised or exclusive use. As demand for tracks grows, it is possible that the specifications

²⁰ Outer Green Belt Survey 2017/18

for certain tracks may need to be changed; in these situations, the assessment process outlined in the track network policies in the *Open Space Access Plan 2016* will be applied.

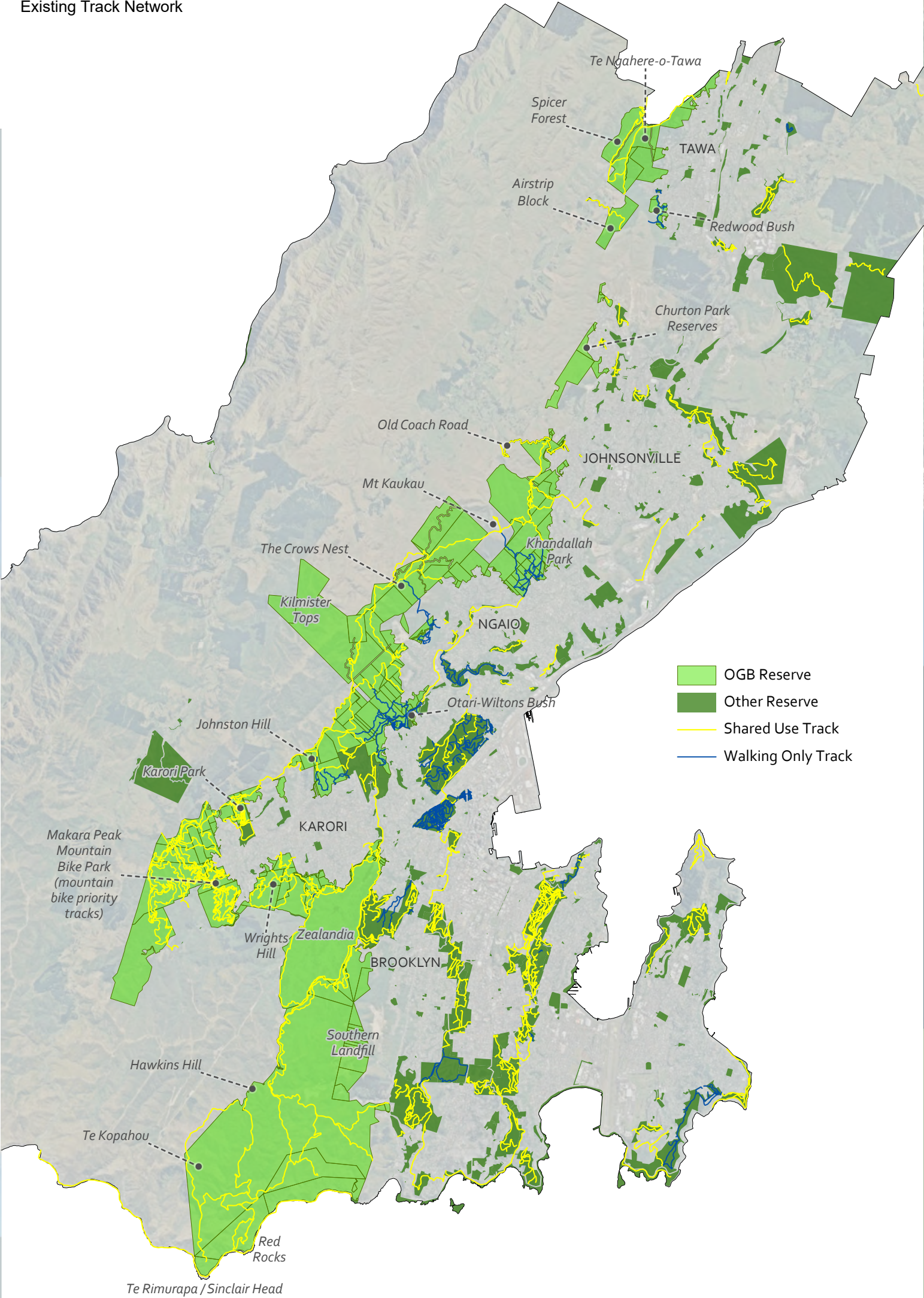
Shared tracks are most suited to the existing farm/utility access tracks where there is sufficient space **for different users to pass comfortably. Some users don't like these wider tracks** and advocate for a wider choice of track type and experiences tailored for particular users, preferably to the exclusion of other users **e.g. mountain bikers have asked for more flowing or 'interesting' tracks; runners for narrow 'challenging' single tracks.** As stated already, the Outer Green Belt is large and can accommodate a lot of tracks but it is not possible to cater for all the specific user needs everywhere without compromising natural values and/or the expectations of other user groups. As a starting point, the Council proposes to develop the type of track network in proportion to the main user groups. Ultimately some compromise is required.

Design and maintenance. The existing infrastructure has been developed over many years, comprising old farm tracks, utility company maintenance tracks, informal routes worn in historically by grazing stock and people, and purpose-built tracks for recreation. The tracks are, therefore, of variable widths, construction and gradients. While that variety adds to the interest and choice of tracks, it also presents some issues e.g. difficult access on very steep gradients; banks slumping on old farm tracks, preventing 4WD service vehicle access; potential erosion and rutting on poorly constructed tracks, especially those without solid subgrade. The track specifications in the *Open Space Access Plan 2016* will generally guide track upgrades and development to improve track sustainability but, in places, rougher less accessible tracks might be preserved to provide preferred options for some user groups e.g. mountain runners.

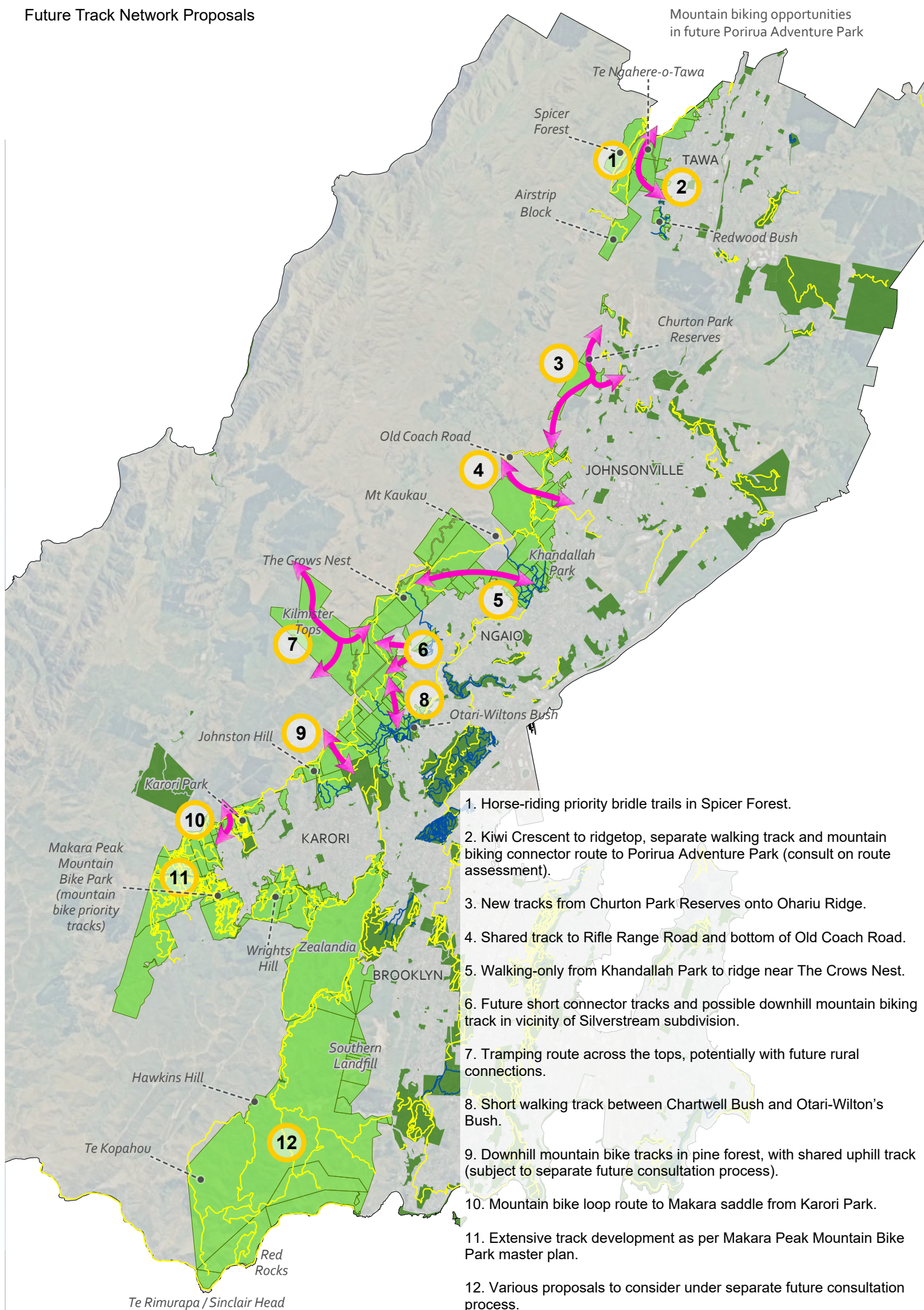
While the Outer Green Belt's rugged nature is an essential part of what it has to offer as a recreational environment, the steep grades on many stretches of track may be off-putting to people who would otherwise enjoy the ridgetop environments. For instance, while the Skyline Track is undulating, there are some short very steep stretches of it based on old farm tracks that were never designed for walking. Therefore, the Council will continue to construct side tracks at easier gradients to bypass the worst of the steep grades and consider completely retiring some very steep sections of track once suitable alternatives are in place. Ultimately, a more gently undulating route along the skyline could be amongst the choices available. While most of the Outer Green Belt topography is unsuitable for disabled access, there is provision at a few places, such as at Wrights Hill and the Brooklyn wind turbine. These will be reviewed and other opportunities identified as part of the inventory project outlined in the *Open Space Access Plan* (p.59)

Regional trails framework. Local government agencies and the Department of Conservation are collaborating towards Wellington region becoming a world-class destination for trail-based outdoor recreation. The framework provides a common overall direction, with potential synergies, particularly in promoting visitor opportunities, but the councils remain autonomous. In the Outer Green Belt tracks will be managed to reflect the varying character of areas along routes. In the case of the Skyline Track, most of it follows pre-existing farm or utility tracks that are already of suitable width to accommodate increased numbers of walkers and bikers; upgrades are likely to affect small sections and be in the nature of some widening or providing for different users where existing track width is limited and/or easing gradients.

Existing Track Network

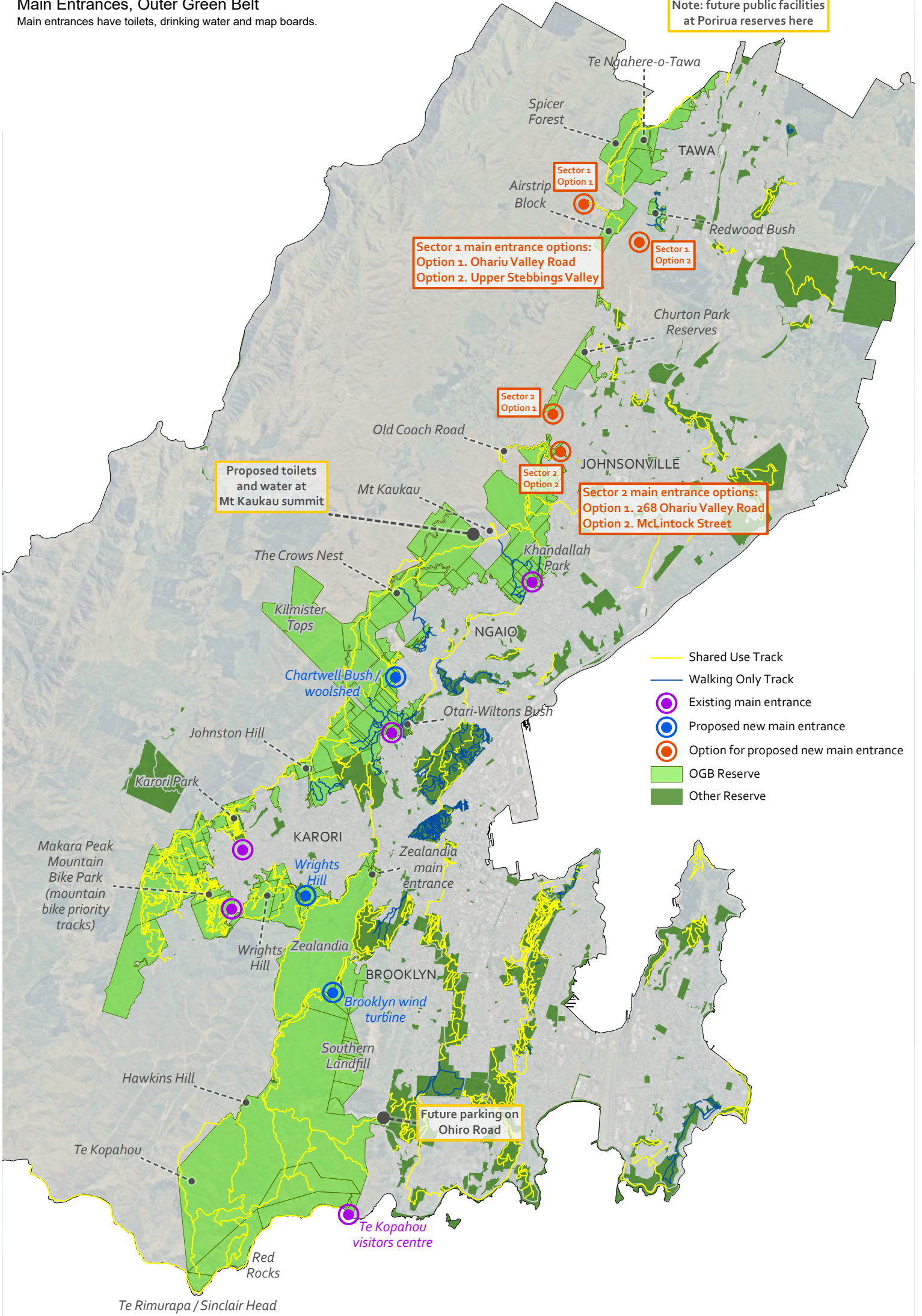


Future Track Network Proposals



Main Entrances, Outer Green Belt
Main entrances have toilets, drinking water and map boards.

Note: future public facilities at Porirua reserves here



4.5.2.4 Entrances, amenities and way-finding

1. Provide on-site facilities and information to **support visitors' safety and enjoyment without** detracting from the predominantly natural landscape setting.
2. Manage and develop a hierarchy of entrances to the track network to provide an equitable distribution of access points with corresponding levels of information and facilities (see main entrances map), bearing in mind the proximity of other public facilities e.g. in Porirua reserves, at Karori Park sports ground.
3. Develop visitor amenities at key nodes as follows:
 - a) main roadside entrances: toilets, drinking water, map board; information about the entire Outer Green Belt
 - b) secondary roadside entrances: map board with basic user information;
 - c) key off-road destinations / track nodes where usage and distance from roadside facilities warrants: composting toilets, drinking water, map board and how to find out more online.
4. Provide site furniture such as seats, picnic tables and lookout structures to facilitate visitor enjoyment of the outdoor environment without cluttering or detracting from the existing landscape setting.
5. **Encourage users to 'pack in, pack out' their own rubbish** through signage and online information and provide rubbish receptacles only at main roadside entrances.
6. Use on-site signage, map boards, way markers and interpretation to inform visitors about:
 - recreation opportunities, including encouragement to explore and experience the range of track types and routes available and, where feasible, give distances and typical walking times on major routes;
 - potential hazards;
 - shared-use tracks and related codes of behaviour;
 - public / private land boundaries and, where relevant, conditions of access over private land;
 - points of interest and the environmental and heritage values of the Outer Green Belt.
7. Provide similar information in online digital formats, such as the Welly Walks app and other social media, and paper brochures (see also 4.6.2.7, Interpretation).
8. Use easily recognised pictograms and/or colour coding of routes to assist visitors find their way on the track network.
9. **Adapt the Council's standard** park signage systems and corporate visual standards to reflect a consistent Outer Green Belt identity (see also 4.6.2.6, Outer Green Belt Identity).

Action

- a) Prepare a conceptual development plan for the main entrances and key off-road destinations/track nodes where facilities are to be developed and identify priorities, timing and funding requirements.
- b) Investigate composting toilet options and feasibility for use in more remote areas of the Outer Green Belt.
- c) Investigate funding opportunities with potential partners e.g. Transpower

Explanation.

The main entrances have been identified to provide key access points to the Outer Green Belt, at reasonably evenly spaced intervals along its length. Their purpose will be to provide essential visitor information and basic comfort stops, particularly for those on longer excursions such as the Skyline Track or multi-day walks traversing the Outer Green Belt. As the map shows, toilets and water are already available at five main entrances but none are at elevated locations, which are the most

accessible for Skyline Track users. Development of elevated main entrances will be prioritised, subject to funding, so people on long-distance routes will not have to descend into valleys for toilet and water facilities. Secondary entrances are at key access points in local communities, from which a range of tracks and loops can be taken. Tertiary-level entrances are simply local connections into the network.

The 2017/2018 survey indicated demand for more amenities, in particular, toilets, drinking water and rubbish bins. Locating these facilities mainly at the main roadside entrances helps to minimise environmental and visual impact in off-road areas as well as costs. However, there are exceptions, such as the summit of Mt Kaukau, where the intensity of visitor use at a distance from toilets is causing problems. Composting toilets are a potential option in such situations. Facilities appropriate to neighbourhood park use on the edge of the Outer Green Belt are generally managed under the suburban or northern reserves management plans e.g. Khandallah Park picnic and swimming pool area; Montgomery Avenue playground.

Rubbish bins will generally not be provided except at main entrances, where there will already be a concentration of site furniture and regular servicing requirements. A pack in, pack out policy will be publicised and promoted.

Updated map boards will gradually be replaced or installed as resources permit; larger ones at main entrances and the start and end of main routes, and smaller ones at other entrances. Generally, wayfinding markers **only will be used on the walkways themselves, to reduce 'clutter' and as extreme weather conditions can be hard on map boards.**

Currently colour-coded way-finding markers have been used along the Skyline Track from Old Coach Road to Mt Kaukau. The colour coding will be continued. On other tracks way-finding will continue to be by way of route and destination naming, and standard pictogram information (e.g. shared track, walking-only track, dogs on leash).

4.5.2.5 Dog walking

1. Provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.
2. Inform dog-owners prominently of the need to keep dogs on a leash in all areas of the Outer Green Belt except in designated dog exercise areas, stressing the need for owners to prevent their dogs coming into conflict with other users, with grazing stock and with vulnerable wildlife (e.g. **kākā**).
3. Encourage dog owners to use dog exercise areas for off-leash dog walking by providing information about the localities of dog exercise areas.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt has a great deal of open space where people are frequently tempted to let their dogs off the leash. When they do, though, compatibility problems can arise with other users, with grazing stock and, with native wildlife. Already there have been instances of dogs killing or injuring native birds, such as **kākā**, and, in future, the risk will increase as more vulnerable species are reintroduced e.g. kiwi. In the Outer Green Belt 2017/18 survey, the majority of respondents supported exercising dogs on leash but there was less support for unleashed dogs.

Currently, five off-leash exercise areas are available in the Outer Green Belt of varying sizes, located at: Flinders Park in Johnsonville; Sersi Terrace track in Khandallah; Silverstream Road Reserve in Ngaio; Karori Park in Karori; and Wrights Hill parade ground in Karori. Some respondents in the 2017/18 survey asked for more dog exercise areas. Suitable sites in edge areas could be considered, subject to assessing the effects in the context of specific sites and weighing up the costs/benefits of allocating an area for single rather than multiple use.

4.5.2.6 Organised outdoor events and programmes

1. Encourage and support outdoor recreation events and programmes on the Outer Green Belt that **encourage people's use of it and sense of connection to the landscape setting** and natural environment.
2. Apply the rules in section 5.3.2: Managed Activities when considering applications for organised events and outdoor programmes and setting conditions of approval, taking into account the assessment criteria and the suitability of the proposal to the Outer Green Belt environment and/or particular area involved, and the impact on the environment and other users of:
 - a) the proposed scale;
 - b) the frequency;
 - c) the temporary nature of infrastructure and services required to provide the event or programme;
 - d) compatibility with other users and the possible need to temporarily restrict access to some areas;
 - e) cumulative effects of the event or programme being considered alongside other events and programmes also happening in the Outer Green Belt;
 - f) opportunities for partnership with event organisers to benefit the Outer Green Belt e.g. contributions to environmental outcomes associated with an event.

Action

- a) **Investigate the feasibility, costs and benefits of developing appropriate signature 'Outer Green Belt' events, to promote** it as a regional outdoor recreation destination and encourage people of various abilities to explore and enjoy what it has to offer.

Explanation

Organised events and programmes are great opportunities to promote awareness of the Outer Green Belt, encourage participation in outdoor recreation, and showcase Wellington, with its unique combination of landscape and outdoor recreation opportunity. Examples to date include the mountain biking competitions based at **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park; the WUU Wellington Urban Ultra 2K, mid-**winter trail running event**; the **'Kids' Mt Kaukau Challenge'** organised as a fundraiser by Khandallah School; Bio-Blitz community science days at **Ōtari-Wilton's Bush**; and **annual 'Play in the Park' theatrical productions**, run by the Khandallah Arts Theatre.

It is likely that, as the Outer Green Belt becomes better known and increasingly connected, the ideas and demand for organised events will increase. It will be important to manage that demand to strike a balance between the expectations of some users who want the Outer Green Belt to be a peaceful escape from the city and others who enjoy participating in organised and, perhaps, large-scale events. The frequency and scale of events are important considerations in this. For instance, how frequently could **Makarā** Peak Mountain Bike Park be closed for mountain biking competitions before non-competitors felt disenfranchised? Elsewhere, while one 4WD excursion a year might feel like the exception, if it happened every month, would others feel the off-road atmosphere was being compromised?

Another way in which organised activities can occur is through commercial operations. For instance, guided walking or cycling tours or trips would potentially bring visibly organised groups into the Outer Green Belt. Such business activities could benefit the city economy by adding visitor attractions but could also potentially detract from the sense of free public open space if the groups were too large, poorly managed or too many.

The Outer Green Belt is a very large open space with the capacity to host a range of events and programmes. It is an attraction and it also plays a role in helping achieve community, health and wellbeing objectives by offering outdoor access and enjoyment. A **regular signature 'Outer Green Belt' event** (or events programme) could potentially be developed and promoted through social media

channels, to attract residents and visitors alike, tied to promoting awareness of the Outer Green Belt. This could help achieve Outcome (iii) in *Our Capital Spaces*, **contributing to Wellington's** outstanding quality of life through being a world-class walking and biking destination, with regional and national events.

Where the limits of organised events lie is as yet unknown, especially as informal recreation use is also increasing. In the meantime, events **will be handled as 'managed activities' requiring an** application and assessment process, and any approvals will be subject to special conditions aimed at minimising the impacts and optimising benefits.

4.6 COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY

4.6.1 OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage and support appropriate involvement of mana whenua, individuals, neighbouring landowners, community groups and organisations in working towards the Outer Green Belt vision.
2. To foster **people's sense of community, belonging, health and wellbeing by encouraging** individual and collective participation in caring and advocating for the Outer Green Belt.
3. **To contribute to the city's resilience through community building and emergency preparedness** on the Outer Green Belt.
4. To promote awareness of the Outer Green Belt as a community resource that contributes to **Wellington's sense of place and people's** quality of life.

4.6.2 POLICIES

4.6.2.1 Partnership with Mana Whenua

1. **Encourage Treaty partners and the wider Māori** community to help determine how this plan can be implemented, including:
 - a) working in partnership to co-manage sites of significance to mana whenua;
 - b) **supporting Māori community**-based groups to practise tikanga and to use open spaces in the Outer Green Belt for the development of indigenous knowledge and traditional activities, such as raranga (weaving), for the benefit of all.
2. Ensure that mana whenua are kept informed about Outer Green Belt management through regular reporting.
3. Use and encourage more use of **te reo Māori in relation to place names and the key tikanga** concepts carried into this plan.

Explanation

The Council's relationship with mana whenua²¹ is managed through Memoranda of Understanding with the mandated iwi entities, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated, based on principles of partnership, participation and protection of taonga and cultural heritage. The Council has a responsibility to take account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to improve opportunities for **Māori** to contribute to local government decision-making processes.

The Outer Green Belt is a recent concept that does not necessarily reflect mana whenua's relationship with the land, either traditionally or currently. The way in which mana whenua wish to collaborate in managing the Outer Green Belt needs to be explored further as well as opportunities to be active partners in activities such as catchment management, habitat restoration, pest control and trail development. **Supporting iwi's capacity and capability to be active partners is an aspect to be considered.**

The Council's Te Tauihu: Te Reo Māori Policy aims to support more **everyday usage of te reo Māori**. **Recognition and use of Māori place names is one way to do so but to also strengthen local identity and understanding of Māori heritage. Māori terms for natural elements and resources are already being used more, such as Māori names for plants and animals. Various tikanga also encapsulate** concepts that align closely with the values and objectives of this Plan, such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality, care and respect for others).

²¹ *Mana whenua* means customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area.

4.6.2.2 Community partnership

1. Inform community groups and local residents about what is happening in their part of the Outer Green Belt, so as to raise awareness of nature and recreational opportunities, development projects and events in local areas and encourage participation.
2. Work collaboratively with communities and interest groups to co-design and explore funding options for projects within reserves.
3. Encourage, support and provide opportunities for individuals, groups and businesses to help manage, maintain and develop the physical environment, outdoor recreational use and general awareness of the Outer Green Belt, and help monitor outcomes.
4. Work with other agencies, such as the Department of Conservation (DOC) and Wellington Regional Council, to co-ordinate management of overlapping interests and responsibilities, including instances where the Council manages DOC land for the department.
5. Encourage and support volunteers and volunteer groups who have a mandate to undertake proposed work by:
 - a) communicating regularly and having clear agreements (usually Memorandum of Agreement) **that define responsibilities and set out the group's objectives, health and safety requirements,** and how achievements will be measured;
 - b) providing guidance to volunteers to help implement this Plan and other Council work such as city-wide restoration planting and pest animal management programmes;
 - c) promoting collaboration and sharing of skills between different volunteer groups;
 - d) helping volunteers to plan their activities realistically, taking into account the time needed for ongoing tasks such as planting maintenance, ongoing track maintenance or year-round trap checking;
 - e) providing practical advice, training and, subject to Council resourcing, assistance with tools and materials;
 - f) **recognising and celebrating volunteers' efforts and achievements.**
6. Maintain open communication with volunteers, volunteer groups and communities, to constructively exchange feedback, knowledge and new ideas about how best to work together to achieve goals.
7. Use technology to enable communities to participate, monitor outcomes and keep people informed about new initiatives and outcomes.
8. Continue to support communities and community groups in organising and promoting local event initiatives (see policy 4.5.2.6, organised outdoor events and programmes).

Explanation

In recent years increasing numbers of individuals, community groups, businesses and neighbouring landowners have contributed hugely by volunteering their time to help manage the Outer Green Belt. Their activities include pest animal control, planting, site maintenance, track building, guiding visitors and monitoring ecosystem health. The Council, in return, offers advice, plants, materials and practical assistance. There are numerous benefits. More is achieved in managing our reserves than the Council could achieve without the extra help; volunteers often get huge satisfaction from helping **to care for places they care about and contributing to a 'greater good'; the exercise and contact with nature benefits people's health and wellbeing; and communities become more resilient as people** meet and work towards common goals, potentially becoming better placed to help each other in hard times and emergencies.

The Council needs to invest time and resources into managing volunteer partnerships to foster a **mutually beneficial relationship. To sustain people's enthusiasm, voluntary effort must be well-** managed. An important aspect of this is to ensure that groups only take on what they can manage in terms of physical capability and time commitment. There is an opportunity for more collaboration

between volunteer groups, given that a high proportion of volunteers tend to be young adult or aged over 60 years. Groups often work separately but there can be practical and social benefits when people of different ages and backgrounds work alongside each other, combining different physical capabilities, objectives, skills and experience.

Also important is the need to optimise positive outcomes in **terms of the Council's overall** management objectives and related budgets. Enthusiasm and the sense of ownership that grows from voluntary effort can lead to different perceptions about what should be done and how particular places should be used and managed. **For instance, 'unofficial' track building in places has led to problems** (see 4.5.2.3). At the same time, community groups often bring fresh ideas and local knowledge. Sometimes their ideas or projects might be of low priority within **the Council's current** work programme and resource allocations but the Council needs to be open to suggestions and consider adding ideas and projects to its future programme and budget allocations.

4.6.2.3 Partnership with neighbours

1. Advocate the Outer Green Belt vision to all neighbours through regular communication and information.
2. Encourage neighbours to manage their land in ways that will help attain the Outer Green Belt vision by providing information, advice and, where resources permit, practical assistance.
3. Inform and support neighbours about options, assistance and incentives that may be available for nature and heritage conservation initiatives on private land in collaboration with other agencies, including Greater Wellington, the Department of Conservation, QEII National Trust and Heritage New Zealand.
4. Foster good neighbour relationships with owners of land adjoining the Outer Green Belt, in particular, seeking ways to mutually avoid, remedy or mitigate cross-boundary issues.
5. Work with the Porirua City Council to connect and integrate open space management objectives across the northern Outer Green Belt boundary to Rangituhi / Colonial Knob and the Porirua Harbour catchment (see Part 6, Management Sector 1).

Explanation

The ridges of the Outer Green Belt are, as described in Parts 2 and 3 of this Plan, an important feature in Wellington City, with multiple open space values, some of which also occur on neighbouring privately owned land. Important native forest remnants, historic sites and riparian land occur on neighbouring private land, for instance. The Council recognises that neighbouring landowners will have their own land management objectives but seeks to collaborate with them to achieve compatible land management where possible. Landowners can be supported in this, depending on available resources, through such things as practical advice, assistance with weed control, pest animal control and planting, and placing protective covenants over areas of high open space value.

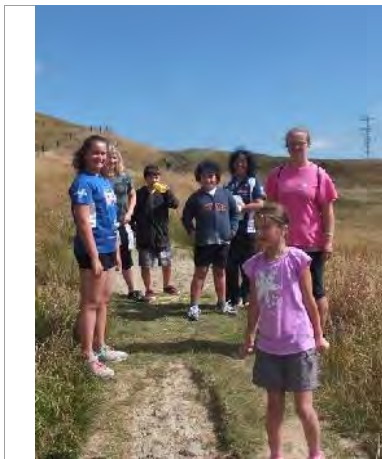
Good neighbour relationships help when dealing with cross-boundary issues that can arise such as boundary fencing, weed and pest animal control, fire risk, dog control and access and trespass **management. The 'good neighbour' principle applies not only to the farming landowners but also to the numerous urban residential neighbours who adjoin the Outer Green Belt reserves.**

4.6.2.4 Resilient communities

1. Help build communities by encouraging citizens to enjoy and care for the Outer Green Belt together.
2. Support the health and wellbeing of Wellingtonians by providing places where people can relax, be active in the outdoors and have contact with the natural environment.
3. Where appropriate and compatible with other open space values, provide places for delivery of emergency services, such as water supply, and for people to meet and seek refuge in emergencies.

Explanation

Communities in resilient cities are actively engaged in caring for the health of their natural environments. **Those bordering the Outer Green Belt often have strong connections to ‘their’ local open space.** By becoming involved in using, defending or caring for those places, people get to know each other and strengthen a sense of community. That leads to better preparedness in times of emergency – knowing their own area, resources, people with useful skills and where to go for support. Furthermore, people with good levels of health and wellbeing are likely to be better able to cope with emergencies and the change and uncertainty that often follows natural disasters. Research **indicates that people’s physical and mental health benefits from physical activity and contact with nature.** The opportunities for outdoor leisure, active recreation and participation in the open spaces **of the Outer Green Belt can contribute to achieving Outcome 1, ‘Getting everyone active and healthy’** in *Our Capital Spaces 20123-2023* and help address some of the issues facing communities today such as obesity and declining physical fitness, social isolation and demands on mental health services.



Active Families Programme. As part of its ‘Green Prescription Active Families’ programme, Sport Wellington supported families in Johnsonville to “conquer Mt Kaukau”. The free programme is designed to help families have healthy lifestyles through being more active and healthy eating.

Photograph: Sport Wellington

4.6.2.5 Community gardens and planting for food production

1. Consider any application for a community garden or orchard under the criteria in the *Wellington City Council Guidelines for Community Gardens, September 2009*, and taking into account the Outer Green Belt values of the site, including that :
 - a) the site context is on the edge of the Outer Green Belt and appropriate (e.g. adjacent to residential housing rather than native forest);
 - b) existing activities at the site are compatible (e.g. a play area, where learning about food could be complementary);
 - c) any garden or orchard planting will not have a negative impact on indigenous biodiversity;
 - d) the site conditions are suited to the proposed planting;
 - e) no commercial gardening is involved.

Explanation

There are currently no community gardens on the Outer Green Belt. The *Wellington City Council Guidelines for Community Gardens, September 2009*, state that community gardens are not appropriate in the Outer Green Belt. Most of the Outer Green Belt is unlikely to be suitable for food **production at any scale, given much of the land’s poor soils, exposed conditions, steepness and** important areas of biodiversity where the risk of invasive exotic plant species spreading into natural / restoration areas needs to be avoided. The Council will only consider applications for community **gardens on sites at the Outer Green Belt’s edge, with the potential to be** contribute to the *Wellington Resilience Strategy 2017*.

4.6.2.6 Outer Green Belt identity

1. Promote the Outer Green Belt to residents and visitors alike as a formative feature that **contributes to Wellington's reputation as a beautiful, invigorating and liveable eco-city – and the uniquely 'Wellington' experience.**
2. **Promote, in particular, the Outer Green Belt's wealth of:**
 - outdoor recreation opportunities and destinations,
 - nature-based attractions.
3. Support and co-ordinate promotion of the main nature-based and recreational attractions located within the Outer Green Belt such as Zealandia, **Ōtari Wilton's Bush** and **Makarā Peak Mountain Bike Park**.
4. Co-ordinate promotion of the Outer Green Belt with:
 - a) Council-**wide promotion of the Wellington's open spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities;**
 - b) the development and implementation of site-based projects (e.g. entrance development) and interpretation planning.

Action

- a) Develop a visual identity for the Outer Green Belt to ensure consistent and appropriate style in site development features e.g. park furniture and signage that reflects a low-key, natural character.

Explanation

The Outer Green **Belt is a prominent feature in Wellington's landscape yet it is still not as well-known** as it might be. **Its sheer scale makes it is a dominant feature in Wellington's landscape, visible from most parts of the central city and suburbs.** Its typically 'Wellington' hills, wild nature and outdoor opportunities are an essential part of our Wellington identity, at both local and city-wide levels. It is arguable that it contributes significantly to **Wellington's top ranking in the 2018** Deutsche Bank liveable cities survey that compared quality of life across 47 cities. Greater appreciation of what it does for Wellington, as described in Part 3, will be important in its protection and management over coming years, in the face of pressures for urban growth.

The development of a visual identity that can be used in signage, maps and other information will help to raise recognition of and awareness of the whole Outer Green Belt. The visual identity can also be quite subtle, such as guiding the low-key design of site furniture appropriate to the Outer Green **Belt's rugged, natural character.**

4.6.2.7 Interpretation

1. **Develop interpretation material to assist visitors appreciate the Outer Green Belt's unique** natural environment and heritage, subject to available funding.
2. Develop easily accessible information about the Outer Green Belt in a range of formats, including on-site, on-line and printed.

Action

- a) Develop a high-level interpretation plan for the whole Outer Green Belt with guiding principles and a broad implementation plan covering:
 - key messages and themes including interweaving nature/culture/history/sense of place;
 - the target audiences and how to engage with them;

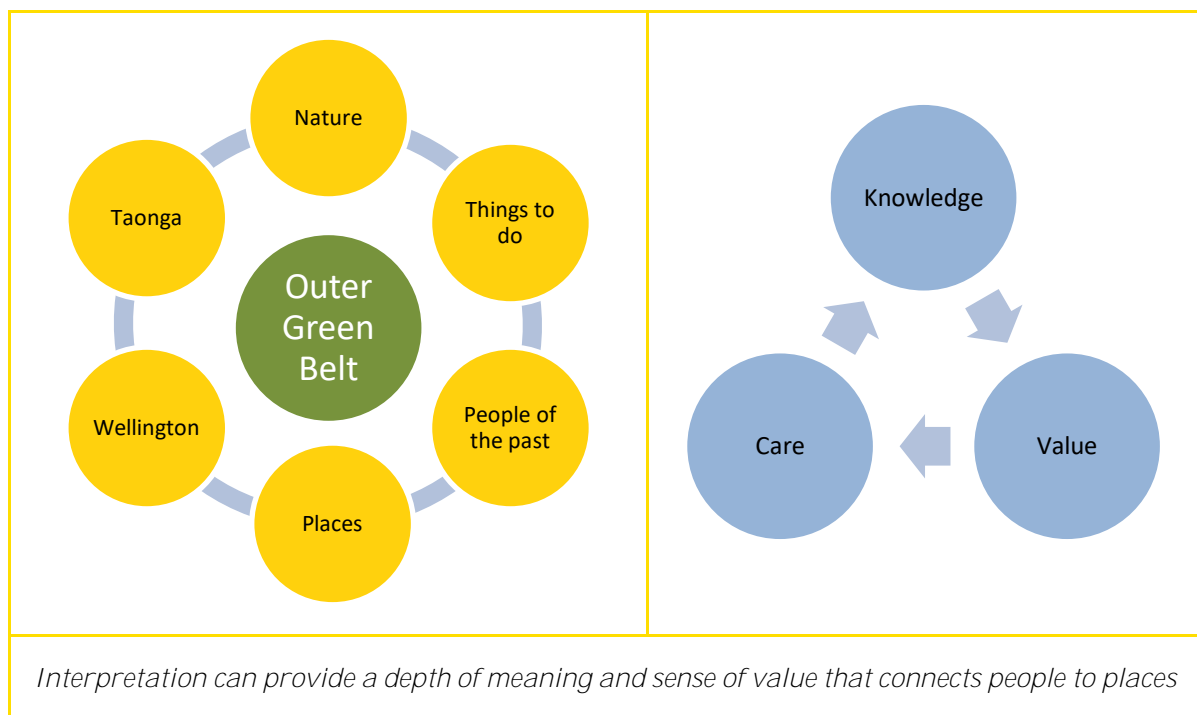
- how the interpretation will fit with and complement other Council interpretation plans.

Explanation

The Outer Green Belt holds stories and meaning that are not widely known but can add to people's sense of place, understanding and appreciation of places and the Outer Green Belt as a whole. Community use of the Outer Green Belt today builds on this sense of place and reflects the value afforded to this land.

An interpretation plan will provide the basis for telling the stories, as resources allow, and guide which of the available media to use. For instance, while physical on-site interpretation can work well for basic information, access to more detailed and/or interactive digital information could hold cost savings, help to avoid visual clutter on site, and widen the reach of interpretation to audiences who prefer or are more accustomed to digital formats.

The Outer Green Belt has numerous interconnected stories and themes (e.g. the history of conservation overlaps with themes about the present day plants and animals). Those stories also overlap with other information and interpretation plans such as the biodiversity interpretation framework being developed in relation to *Our Natural Capital*. Interweaving the various stories, whilst ensuring the key messages and stories are clear, could add to the richness and exciting possibilities for engaging a range of audiences.



4.6.2.8 Education and research

1. Educate neighbours and members of the public whenever possible about principles of good ecological management on the Outer Green Belt, such as safe disposal of weeds and not feeding native birds except through planting suitable food-source trees.
2. Promote the Outer Green Belt as an outdoor classroom by enabling opportunities for field-based environmental learning, such as school activities.
3. Encourage and support research and information sharing into the **Outer Green Belt's open space** values, usage and management through partnerships with research organisations and interested community groups, including but not limited to studies of:
 - a) environmental, recreational, and social issues associated with open space, recreation, and natural environments;

- b) landscape and city character;
 - c) implications of urban growth on the roles of the Outer Green Belt in Wellington,
 - d) pest management (plant and animal)
 - e) biodiversity and urban ecology.
4. Integrate research projects and findings with the need to monitor management outcomes and trends on the Outer Green Belt.
 5. Encourage and support citizen science projects.

Explanation

The spread of weeds into the Outer Green Belt from neighbouring properties through garden escapes or weed dumping is a serious issue, which the Council seeks to address through education about the impacts and advocating suitable garden plants to use instead of problem plants.

There is much to learn about the Outer Green Belt environment, its role in the city, the people that use it, our land management practices and the effects of the numerous activities that take place **within it. Research findings underpin a lot of the Council's broad strategies** and plans, such as *Our Capital Spaces* and *Our Natural Capital*, **but continuing research, coupled with the Council's** monitoring programmes is needed to help guide policy development and improve work programmes.

In accordance with *Our Natural Capital* biodiversity strategy, the Council has been collaborating with universities, including Victoria University of Wellington, and other research organisations on **research aimed at better understanding Wellington's ecosystems, how they are affected by close** proximity to urban areas and how best to restore and manage them. Some of the research feeds into the national initiative, the People, Cities and Nature project. Research, such as lizard or botanical surveys, is still needed to verify whether some species known to have been in the Wellington area are present and, if so, their location and numbers, and to find out what factors might be limiting certain species from establishing or spreading.

Ōtari-Wilton's Bush and Zealandia have been focal points of research activities within the Outer Green Belt that are linked to visitor facilities and public education programmes. The inter-related research and education strands in these facilities are already benefitting the ecological management of the Outer Green Belt through research findings and increased engagement with and support for restoration programmes. Partnerships under the enviro-schools, and Sanctuary to Sea initiatives are examples. Citizen science initiative such as the Bioblitz at **Ōtari** to the Great Kereru Count project are increasingly becoming a part of how we are learning about our natural spaces. With bird sightings and other findings regularly reported into public databases such as Ebird and Naturewatch our knowledge of the Outer Green Belt is constantly expanding.

The interactions of people, including recreational users, neighbouring landowners and restoration groups, with each other and with the Outer Green Belt environment, are also potential areas for social research that might guide future management and partnership relationships. For instance, it would be useful to understand any behaviour change and changing attitudes over time to the Skyline Track being managed as a Signature Trail.

Environmental education.

The proximity of the Outer Green Belt to the urban area and, in particular, schools and pre-schools presents learning opportunities that could be developed in partnership with teachers. Simple **'learning outposts' could be facilitated at places suitable for students to explore and learn, linked to school lesson plans. Local schools could potentially adopt 'their' part of the Outer Green Belt as** part of strengthening neighbourhood identity and connections to nature.

4.7 IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The actions identified in this Plan for programming into work and budget planning are set out in two ways:

- The actions identified in this general objectives and policies section, which are summarised below in section 4.7.1.
- The actions identified for the management sectors, which are set out in tables in Part 6.

In both places, the actions are categorised as ‘existing’, ‘expanded’ or ‘new’ and timeframes for implementation indicated. As explained in section 1.1.7, implementation does depend on allocation of resources under the **Council’s** funding allocations system.

4.7.1 IMPLEMENTATION OF PART 4 (GENERAL) ACTIONS

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing
(Note: implementation depends on budget allocations)

NATURE		
4.2.3.1 Caring for Nature		
a) Identify areas of traditional Māori use and biodiversity value, and work with iwi to conduct an assessment of biodiversity sites of cultural significance.	N	1-2
b) Review weed management programmes on the Outer Green Belt and identify gaps in habitat type or species protection.	E	1-2
4.2.3.4 Wildlife		
a) Based on recent lizard surveys develop a lizard monitoring plan.		
LANDSCAPE AND LAND USE		
4.3.3.2 Grazing		
a) Identify and map the areas to be kept in grassland to maintain views and open ridgetops for recreation, and prepare a fencing maintenance/upgrade plan to help secure funding and guide the staged cessation of grazing.	N	1-2 yrs
b) Formalise interim grazing rights with grazing licenses of no more than 5-year terms.	N	1-2 yrs
c) Implement the fencing/upgrade plan as resources permit.	N	3-10 yrs
d) Set up monitoring of the changes in the grassland areas as a research project to inform decisions about how best to maintain the desired areas of open grassland.	N	3-10 yrs
CULTURE AND HERITAGE		
4.4.3.1 Recognition and protection of cultural and historical features		
a) Develop and maintain an inventory of all sites and features of cultural and heritage interest or value within the Outer Green Belt.	N	ongoing
	N	5-10 yrs

b) Where the significance and nature of cultural and heritage sites warrants, prepare heritage conservation plans to guide future protection measures and management.	N	1-2 yrs
c) Undertake an archaeological assessment of the Outer Green Belt to identify and protect archaeological sites. Any modification or destruction of an archaeological site will need to be guided by an archaeological authority.	N	3-5 yrs
d) Identify places where planting, regeneration and vegetation may damage heritage, archaeological sites and cultural landscapes including waahi tapu. Establish a plan to record and manage cultural heritage values.	N	5-10 yrs
e) Undertake a study to identify valued cultural landscapes including waahi tapu in consultation with iwi and other stakeholders.		
4.4.3.2 Interpreting culture and heritage		
a) Develop a heritage interpretation plan as part of an overall Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see 4.6.2.7 Interpretation) to guide how to tell citizens and visitors about the many and diverse historical and cultural features of the Outer Green Belt, via various media.	N	3-5 yrs
RECREATION AND ACCESS		
4.5.3.3 Track network		
a) Continue to develop well-graded side tracks to bypass very steep sections of existing tracks, especially the 4WD sections of the Skyline Track.	E	ongoing
4.5.3.4 Entrances, amenities and way finding		
a) Prepare a conceptual plan for the main entrances and key off-road destinations/track nodes where facilities are to be developed and identify priorities, timing and funding requirements.	N	3-5 yrs
b) Investigate composting toilet options and feasibility for use in more remote areas of the Outer Green Belt.	E	1-2 yrs
c) Investigate opportunities with potential partners e.g. Transpower.	N	ongoing
4.5.3.6 Organised events and programmes		
a) Investigate the feasibility, costs and benefits of developing appropriate signature 'Outer Green Belt' events, to promote it as a regional outdoor recreation destination and encourage people of various abilities to explore and enjoy what it has to offer.	N	1-2 yrs
COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY		
4.6.3.6 Outer Green Belt identity		
a) Develop a visual identity for the Outer Green Belt to ensure consistent and appropriate style in site development features e.g. park furniture and signage that reflects a low-key, natural character..	N	1-2 yrs
4.6.3.7 Interpretation		
a) Develop a high-level interpretation plan for the whole Outer Green Belt with guiding principles and a broad implementation plan covering:	N	1-2 yrs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o key messages and themes including interweaving nature/culture/history/sense of place; o the target audiences and how to engage with them; o how the interpretation will fit with and complement other Council interpretation plans. 		
Implementation and Monitoring		
4.7.2.1 Monitoring plan a) Set up a plan to monitor and evaluate trends and changes in the Outer Green Belt over the next 10 years to inform future management.	N	1-2 yrs

4.7.2 MONITORING

The amount of information available specifically about the Outer Green Belt is somewhat sparse and inconsistent because, to date, regular monitoring to specifically find out about the trends and changes over the whole area has not been done. Some information about specific places or areas in the Outer Green Belt is available, and some broader information, such as restoration planting areas, has also been recorded. The 2017/2018 Outer Green Belt citizen survey, which was done in the course of this **management plan review, very usefully shed light on a wide range of aspects, including people's** perceptions and awareness of the Outer Green Belt, their usage patterns, preferences, issues and ideas. It provides a potential baseline for further surveys. The photo montages in Appendix IV of this Plan are also a useful record of large-scale and long-term landscape change in the Outer Green Belt.

It is now timely to set up and implement a monitoring programme to record changes in the physical Outer Green Belt environment, how it is being used and by whom, and help measure the implementation of policies in this Plan. The rise in community-sourced data could be a valuable information source, yet to be systematically utilised e.g. Strava, the social fitness network that people use to record routes and other site-based, experiential information online.

4.7.2.1 Monitoring plan

Action

- a) Set up a plan to monitor and evaluate trends and changes in the Outer Green Belt over the next 10 years to inform future management, to cover such things as:
 - 3-yearly citizen surveys to build on the 2017/2018 survey, and gauge trends in user patterns and preferences, and general awareness of the Outer Green Belt and what it has to offer;
 - 6-yearly aerial photography, which the Council already gets, for comparisons of large-scale changes in vegetation cover over time;
 - forest birds on the Outer Green Belt as part of the city-wide bird monitoring;
 - other native wildlife species, such as lizards, although targeted monitoring methods may need to be developed first
 - freshwater monitoring;
 - pest animals on the Outer Green Belt as part of the city-wide monitoring;
 - rare and/or threatened plant species and plant communities on the Outer Green Belt;
 - records of community group activities and volunteer effort on the Outer Green Belt to quantify the value of this activity and quantify resources required to support and manage;

- track counter statistics to gather track usage data;
- visitor surveys, to find out who is visiting the Outer Green Belt, where, and to gauge visitor satisfaction, including experiences of key destinations and the main trails;
- another set of photo-montage images of the Outer Green Belt from the same photo points **as have been used in 2004 and 2018, in 10 years' time**, before the next review of this Plan.

5 RULES FOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

5.1 RULES OVERVIEW

This part of the plan²² outlines rules applicable to the Council's Outer Green Belt reserves for the provision and management of all activities, including development. The Essential Principles in Part 2 should be read in conjunction with the Rules, to help weigh up decisions.

Activities have the potential to impact on the Outer Green Belt environment and people's use and enjoyment of it so activities are managed through approvals by the Wellington City Council (Parks, Sport and Recreation). The rules are intended to guide decision-making at a range of scales from activities that might affect the Outer Green Belt as a whole down to the site-specific. The type of permission required and decision process depends on which of the following three categories applies:

- allowed activities
- managed activities
- prohibited activities.

These rules for use and development **are not intended to preclude the Council's day-to-day** management. For example, use of a chainsaw is prohibited but Council staff or their contractors will be permitted to use them as required for tree management.

Transpower activities are governed by the Electricity Act 1992, Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Electricity Transmission Activities) Regulations 2009, and the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003. Rules for use and development are not intended to preclude activities that are explicitly permitted by that legislation but a partnership approach is anticipated.

5.2 RULES – OBJECTIVE

1. Manage activities for use and development on the Outer Green Belt in a manner that:
 - a) recognises and protects the key landscape, natural, recreation, culture, heritage and community values; and
 - b) helps deliver environmental and recreational outcomes that support aspirations for Wellington to be an eco-city recognised for its liveability.

5.3 RULES – POLICIES

1. Provide for environmentally sustainable activities and uses that are consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan.
2. Manage and maintain discretion over activities to ensure appropriate allocation of resources, protection of Outer Green Belt values, and the safety of users.
3. Maintain discretion over new activities and utilities to avoid or limit impacts on the environment and Outer Green Belt values.
4. Follow a process for determining whether new activities and development are appropriate for the open space directly affected and for the Outer Green Belt in general.
5. Prohibit activities that are inappropriate for the Outer Green Belt.

²² These rules should be read in conjunction with the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008.'

6. Guide balanced decision-making when assessing potentially conflicting activities and/or when assessing effects of activity on the range of Outer Green Belt values.

5.3.1 ALLOWED ACTIVITIES ON THE OUTER GREEN BELT

1. The following activities by individuals or groups are permitted for non-commercial purposes and may be subject to certain conditions and temporary restrictions in order to protect Outer Green Belt values and provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of visitors:
 - walking, tramping and running
 - cycling and mountain biking on shared and designated tracks (refer also to track network policies 4.5.2.3 **and the Council's *Open Space Access Plan 2016***)
 - electric bicycle use (e-biking)²³, subject to the *Open Space Access Plan 2016*
 - dog walking on leash unless in a specified off-leash area, refer to the Council's Dog Policy 2016 and management sector maps
 - the movement of horses through management sectors 1 and 2 and at Chartwell
 - sightseeing and scenic viewing
 - picnicking, cooking on barbecues (gas only), informal gatherings, group games and other similar activities (restrictions may apply to some locations or activities (refer to 5.3.2.1 below)
 - informal games
 - quiet, sedentary, typically individual activities such as reading, painting, craft work, amateur (i.e. non-commercial) photography and filming²⁴ that do not potentially offend or obstruct other Outer Green Belt users
 - nature study and wildlife spotting (for recreation, education and research)
 - orienteering
 - vehicle access to public car parks and leased facilities
 - freedom camping of only self-contained campervans in the designated area at Te Kopahau coastal entrance up to a maximum of four nights in any calendar month
 - vehicle access for park management, emergency and civil defence vehicles.
2. Council will consider allowing recreational activities other than those in the above list in specified areas, following analysis of the benefits and effects and subject to reasonable conditions.

Explanation

Allowed activities are largely informal and unstructured, and traditionally associated with public parks and reserves. Allowed activities generally have a low impact on Outer Green Belt values and other users and need few restrictions. Members of the public do not need to book these activities or seek approval for them (if in doubt, contact a park ranger).

Commercial (business²⁵) **activity is not an 'allowed' activity. Commercial use refers to use by an individual, group or organisation that is carried out for profit or as a means of livelihood or gain. This includes, but is not limited to, recreation and sport, tourism and filming businesses.**

Some activities, like mountain biking, e-bike riding, horse riding and walking a dog off-leash are subject to further rules about the allowed areas or conditions of use. The *Open Space Access Plan*

²³ A electric bike (e-bike) is defined as a bicycle primarily pedal powered by human energy (pedal assist) and may be assisted by a maximum continuous rated electric motor of up to 300 watts (of battery power) as well as limited to 25 km/hr. See *Open Space Access Plan 2016*, S.5.

²⁴ Non-commercial filming that is anything other than a home video-type activity is a managed activity. The need to obtain landowner (i.e. Council) approval for commercial photography and filming will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, primarily considering the impact of the activity.

²⁵ "Business activity" means an undertaking carried on for pecuniary gain or reward.

(2016) lists the tracks and areas closed to mountain biking (Schedule A), prioritised for mountain biking (Schedule B), open for e-bike use (Schedule C), and open for horse riding (Schedule D). Dog walking is also governed by a separate and specific Council policy (*Bylaw and Dog Policy 2016*).

5.3.1.1 Restrictions on allowed activities

1. In order to protect the park, the environment, the health, safety and wellbeing of other users and to facilitate park operations, restrictions may be placed on allowed activities. The following is a guide of potential issues that may result in restrictions:
 - a) group size for informal activities (up to 30 people is generally considered allowed, subject to assessment of the impact of what the group is doing)
 - b) time of the day and duration of activity (assessed on impact)
 - c) location (ensuring there is no user conflict between park users)
 - d) day of the week or time of year (restriction in regards to events during public holidays and considering weekday and weekend activity)
 - e) the weather (restriction of activities and use of certain areas or facilities)
 - f) environment conditions (any impact on the land and surrounding environment)
 - g) compatibility with maintenance or management of Outer Green Belt reserves at certain times.

5.3.2 MANAGED ACTIVITIES ON THE OUTER GREEN BELT

5.3.2.1 Managed activities

1. Managed activities **are those that are not specifically 'allowed' or 'prohibited' and any that are not listed in this management plan or require a case-by-case assessment.** They may:
 - be new activities and development including utilities
 - be existing activities or development that do not have the appropriate approval in place
 - involve access for maintenance in relation to easements;
 - involve the exclusive use of an area for an extended period of time
 - require the development, extension or adaptation of temporary or permanent structures and buildings
 - include commercial (business) activities
 - be large-scale events and a range of other uses.

Explanation

These activities are generally undertaken in a specific location and may involve temporary or longer term allocation of a reserve area or structure for a specific use. A temporary activity is of a non-**repetitive, transient nature, that does not exceed 6 weeks' duration, and does not involve the construction of permanent structures or facilities.** Each application is considered on its merits, compatibility and appropriateness to both the Outer Green Belt in general and the location proposed. Some applications may need to be publicly notified and all applications can either be approved, subject to conditions, or declined.

5.3.2.2 Applications for managed activities

1. Wellington City Council, as landowner, will manage approvals of activities and development through one of the following:
 - concession
 - easement

- lease
 - licence
 - permit (including land owner approval letter)
 - booking.
2. Note that some activities may require other approvals from Wellington City Council and other organisations including:
- resource consent (Resource Management Act)
 - liquor licence
 - archaeological authority (from Heritage New Zealand)
 - adjacent landowners (e.g. if access across adjacent private land is required).

5.3.2.3 Permits and bookings

1. Managed activities that require a permit or booking will be approved or declined by Council staff. These include:
- a) conducting events (e.g. multisport) and including, but not limited to, events and activities **run on a 'cost-recovery' or 'not-for-profit' basis**
 - b) one-off non-commercial motorised vehicle recreational events organised and run by appropriately qualified persons or organisations
 - c) camping for educational purposes only
 - d) conducting one-off activities involving site occupation or use (e.g. weddings, concerts)
 - e) commercial filming and photography (see footnotes under 5.3.2)
 - f) temporary access, such as for infrastructure maintenance, installation of equipment, vehicle use or construction access, (except for park management, emergency access and as identified in the management sector plans)
 - g) parachuting, parapenting, hang gliding, kite carts/boards
 - h) aircraft, helicopter landing and drone and model airplane activity
 - i) storage of materials or plant (such as gravel in parking areas, or construction lay-down sites for infrastructure projects)
 - j) markets and fairs
 - k) collecting natural materials, removal of living plant material
 - l) cultural harvesting, managed sustainably through tikanga
 - m) planting (unless carried out by the Council or its contractors or as approved by Parks, Sport and Recreation)
 - n) tree felling (unless carried out by the Council or its contractors, or as approved by Parks, Sport and Recreation)
 - o) environmental and outdoor education when it supports and complements the objectives of this plan
 - p) total or partial demolition or removal of buildings or structures
 - q) structures and furniture (including track infrastructure, gates, footbridges, track overpasses, fences, walls, retaining walls, artworks, sculpture, plaques, memorials, seats, interpretation, lighting, sun/shade shelters – but not including utilities)
 - r) signs in relation to reserve activity only (signs and/or advertising for non-reserve-related activity are prohibited). Council signs do not require approval.

5.3.2.4 Leases, licenses, concessions and easements

1. Managed activities that require a lease, licence, concession or easement will be assessed by Council staff and Council (or a delegated Committee) will approve or decline. These include:
 - a) sporting activities that require use of and/or exclusive use of purpose-built ground surface such as a playing field or green;
 - b) leasing buildings and/or Outer Green Belt land (subject to the Leases Policy for Community and Recreational Groups) ;
 - c) vehicle access by lease or license holders, as approved under the lease or license;
 - d) commercial (business) activities that are either large one-off events or are concessions for six months or more (including but not limited to multisport events, guided walking, biking or motorised vehicle tours, selling food or drinks or hiring equipment) ;
 - e) commercial land use activities, such as bee keeping and grazing;
 - f) community gardens and orchards (see 4.6.2.5) and bee keeping;
 - g) new buildings, building extensions, car parks and hard surfaces, additions and alterations;
 - h) utilities (essential systems and networks that provide the city with water, energy, communications and wastewater removal) including access across Council land for utility maintenance and management purposes;
 - i) any restriction of public access and charging for entry to areas of the Outer Green Belt, whether commercial or not.
2. The Council will, in general, discourage the erection of club or recreational buildings and ensure structures are appropriate for the use and consistent with the principles of this Plan.
3. The Outer Green Belt will not, in general, be used as a place for locating those activities which, because of their effects, are unable to be accommodated elsewhere.

5.3.2.5 Public notification

1. Applications for managed activities will be publicly notified when:
 - a) it is required under the Reserves Act 1977
 - b) it is required by Council policy (e.g. granting a lease or licence under the Leases Policy for Community and Recreational Groups)
 - c) an application to construct or modify a permanent utility would significantly alter the nature, scale, or intensity of the effect on the park or reserve
 - d) the nature and/or scale of the proposed activity has the potential to adversely impact on reserve values, including permanent public access and open space
 - e) they involve a commercial sub-lease or sub-licence or concession.

5.3.2.6 Information required with an application

1. All applications are required to include the following²⁶ relevant information:
 - a) a description and/or plans of the proposal with enough detail for Council staff to determine all potential effects
 - b) an assessment of the impacts the development/activity will have on the immediate and wider environment

²⁶ The amount of detail required will be in relation to the scale and complexity of the proposal and potential for effect on the reserve and other reserve users.

- c) the purpose of the proposed development/activity and why it needs to take place on the reserve network
- d) an explanation of how the development/activity is aligned with the objectives and policies in this plan
- e) details of other approvals or consents required (e.g. if consent is required under the Resource Management Act 1991)
- f) consultation with affected parties
- g) identification of health and safety issues and how these will be managed
- h) where required, a business plan for concessions, leases, and licence applications
- i) information as required by other Council policy (e.g. the Leases Policy) or as required on any specific application form (e.g. the Temporary Access Permit).

5.3.2.7 Decision-making guidelines

Read and base decisions on the Essential Principles in Part 2.

1. Wellington City Council (Parks, Sport and Recreation) will consider the following when assessing applications for landowner approval:
 - a) the effect, including cumulative effect, on the predominantly natural character of the Outer Green Belt as a setting
 - b) any resulting lost opportunity for connectivity of native vegetation, visual landscape or track network in the Outer Green Belt
 - c) the extent to which the proposal is focused on opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure
 - d) the extent to which an commercial / concession activity enhances and does not detract from the other user experiences
 - e) if the activity and/or development could be co-located
 - f) whether the proposal could reasonably be undertaken in another location, e.g. on non-reserve land, on another park, or at another location in the **Council's** reserve network where potential adverse effects would be less
 - g) the degree to which the proposal is consistent with the relevant objectives and policies of each section of this plan and the relevant management sector plan
 - h) effects (positive and negative) on park infrastructure, approved activities, the surrounding environment, and the enjoyment of other park users (limits may be placed on the frequency of the proposed activity and the need for temporary closure)
 - i) the level of any additional benefits, enjoyment, and use opportunities for park visitors, local and regional community and mana whenua
 - j) the extent to which the proposal affects current or future public access
 - k) assessment of the effects of the location, extent, design and cumulative effect of any infrastructure (such as earthworks, lighting, fencing, car parking, access roads and so on) associated with a development or activity proposal
 - l) the potential to mitigate the effects of the development or activity in a way that is in keeping with the site and wider Outer Green Belt landscape character and values
 - m) the degree of risk associated with any activity (in relation to biosecurity, sustainability etc.).

5.3.2.8 Signs

1. Council signage and interpretation will be used to inform visitors about recreation opportunities and potential hazards, and environmental, cultural, and historic values of the Outer Green Belt and/or immediate site or area, including for:
 - helping visitors navigate tracks successfully and safely;
 - enhancing understanding and appreciation of the Outer Green Belt and its values;
 - managing the interface between private and public land.
2. No signs or hoardings are permitted on the Outer Green Belt that are not immediately relevant to the activities occurring on, or features of, the reserve. This includes election hoardings and any commercial advertising.
3. A high number of signs can detract from open space values, so control on the number, location, and design is necessary. The size, location, design, and appearance of signs and sponsorship information must not detract from the amenity of the area nor appear to dominate other public information signs. All signs must comply with the legislative requirements, district plan and Leases Policy where relevant.
4. In general, the use of Council-owned land in the Outer Green Belt for advertising purposes is not permitted. However, existing and future sponsorship advertising relating to specific facilities and events will be permitted where:
 - a) the wording of the sign is readable only from within the area concerned and the structure supporting the advertising is sited as unobtrusively as possible;
 - b) sponsorship signs are proposed on a building, the name of the sponsor must be incorporated into the external name signs for buildings rather than as a separate sign;
 - c) the Council has the right to refuse permission for the display of any sponsorship or advertising material that may offend any section of the community.
5. Temporary signs relating to special events.

5.3.2.9 Utilities

Use of the Outer Green Belt for public utilities is considered appropriate in some circumstances. This does not mean that the utility must be in public ownership, but it must provide an essential service to the public. All new utilities and all replacements and upgrades²⁷ of existing utilities will be allowed on reserves where the Council's specific conditions have been met (see policies below).

5.3.2.10 Public utilities

1. New utilities, replacement or upgrades of existing utilities may be permitted by granting leases or easements provided:
 - a) it is an essential service to the public
 - b) it cannot be reasonably located elsewhere
 - c) the natural, recreational, cultural and heritage values of the reserve and Outer Green Belt are not significantly disrupted
 - d) the public benefits outweigh any adverse impacts on the reserve or Outer Green Belt.
2. All new utilities and replacement or upgrades of existing utilities shall comply with the following conditions to the satisfaction of the Council:
 - a) The impact of all utilities on reserve land and its values shall be minimised.

²⁷ "Upgrading" means an increase in the carrying capacity, efficiency or security of the facility. It may require a bigger footprint for the easement.

- b) Utility infrastructure shall be as unobtrusive as practicable with forms appropriate for the landscape and finished in low-reflective colours derived from the background landscape. Structures will be screened from view through planting where possible.
 - c) All utility services shall be placed underground, except where it is not practicable to do so.
 - d) Underground services shall be sited to minimise interference with existing features, facilities and vegetation.
 - e) Utility services shall be located so as not to restrict areas usable for outdoor activities or required for future facilities or biodiversity restoration planting.
 - f) Any disturbance of the existing site during installation of a utility shall be minimised and made good immediately after completion.
 - g) Opportunities for the utility structure to benefit the reserve will be explored where appropriate (e.g. an essential maintenance track might provide an alternative walking route for the general public).
 - h) Recorded archaeological sites are avoided and, where required, an Archaeological Authority is obtained from the Historic Places Trust.
3. All utility companies wanting to build new structures or upgrade or replace existing ones on reserve land will need to obtain a lease and/or easement from the Council (as per the Reserves Act 1977). Easements shall be granted for utilities that are located underground in terms of Section 48 of the Reserves Act. Leases shall be granted for utilities that are located on or above the ground and shall be for less than 20 years. This period shall include both the term of the current lease and the term of any right of renewal. Leases and easements will require the approval of Council (or delegated committee).
 4. For existing utilities, where there is no lease or easement, utility companies will need to negotiate an agreement with the Council setting out the terms and conditions of access for inspection, maintenance and emergency repairs. Landowner approval will be required for any non-urgent earthworks.

5.3.2.11 All public and private utilities

1. All existing and future public and private utilities (above and below ground) will be accurately mapped and documented.
2. All costs arising from the application for a new utility or upgrade or replacement of an existing one shall be met by the applicant. This also includes mapping and surveying, resource consent, legal encumbrance, and public notification costs.
3. Subject to the ability of the Council to do so under relevant legislation concerning utilities, the Council shall charge a market rental for any existing installations on a park or reserve if the ownership of the utility service or any of its installations changes (when replaced or upgraded). (Existing utilities do not necessarily have easements and/or leases.)
4. When a utility is no longer required, that utility – including all related services, structures and materials – shall be removed and the site reinstated as necessary.

5.3.2.12 Commercial Activities

1. Any approval to carry out a commercial activity on the Outer Green Belt will only be permitted if:
 - a) the activity is necessary to enable the public to obtain the benefit and enjoyment of the Outer Green Belt or a reserve area within it, or
 - b) the activity is for the convenience of people using the Outer Green Belt or a reserve area within it, or
 - c) the activity does not adversely affect and benefits the OGB environment e.g. bee keeping.
2. Any approval to carry out a commercial activity that requires a new permanent building or structure will only be permitted if the approvals and consents necessary for the building or

structure are considered as part of the application for the commercial activity and the entire proposal is notified publicly.

3. Any commercial activity in a new or existing building must be complementary and ancillary to a community or recreational activity on the Outer Green Belt

5.3.3 PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES ON THE OUTER GREEN BELT

Prohibited activities are considered inappropriate because of the permanent adverse effects on the environment; incompatibility with Outer Green Belt values, characteristics and/or management focus or other approved activities; or where private use alienates public access.

The Council will prohibit activities that would have a permanent adverse effect on Outer Green Belt values or would significantly detract from the enjoyment and safety of other park users.

Prohibited activities include all those activities prohibited by Wellington City Council bylaws or prohibited by the Reserves Act. Enforcement of all activities will be through the Wellington City Council Consolidated Bylaw 2008, and the Reserves Act 1977.

5.3.3.1 Activities that are specifically prohibited

1. Activities²⁸ are prohibited that are not directly related to:
 - the protection and research of the Outer Green Belt natural environment, landscape or heritage; or
 - outdoor recreation and public enjoyment of the Outer Green Belt.
2. Leases and licences for purposes unrelated to outdoor recreation, outdoor education and land management are prohibited (e.g. for childcare, community centres, indoor recreation activities).
3. The following activities are specifically prohibited:
 - spreading of ashes or placenta (unless approved through the commemorative policy)
 - open fires other than permitted under the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw
 - construction of private residential dwellings or landscaping
 - private garden or orchard allotments
 - all mining activities
 - permanent vehicle access for private purposes, except where an existing legal right-of-way exists e.g. at Hawkins Hill
 - firearms and weapons use (unless as approved for pest control or police training)
 - fireworks and/or amplified sound (not associated with an approved event)
 - off-road use of motorised trail bikes or 4 wheel drive vehicles (unless approved for one-off recreational event access)
 - hunting
 - use of a chainsaw
 - firewood collection
 - golf
 - keeping of pets and livestock unless approved under a lease or license agreement
 - camping except as provided under sections 4.5.2.1 and 5.3.2

²⁸ This does not include utilities or those activities expressly permitted or managed.

- recreational access within the operational area of the Southern Landfill.

5.3.4 ENCROACHMENTS

Encroachments into open space are a significant issue for the management of reserve land. The use of public reserve land by private property owners effectively alienates the public from use or enjoyment of that land²⁹. This is contrary to both the Reserves Act and the purpose of provision of public open space.

The Council's Outer Green Belt reserves collectively have a very long boundary that adjoins private land in both rural and residential areas. Private use has encroached along the boundary into the Council-owned reserve land in places. The cumulative effect of encroachments (even those that seem very minor if considered in isolation) considerably reduces public open space and the potential values of that open space are compromised.

The Outer Green Belt is recognised as a unique and very valuable open space in Wellington and requires protection against encroachment.

5.3.4.1 Encroachment policy

1. Encroachments are a prohibited activity.
2. The Council will resolve the existing encroachments with a view to regaining lost land.
3. The Council will protect the Outer Green Belt reserves from new encroachment.

Encroachments range in scale and effect, from the minor and easily removed without effect (such as **washing lines and children's play equipment**), to **access driveways and, in the more** extreme cases, to parts of dwellings or landscaping. Encroachments include access encroachments.

In some cases, owners of encroachments believe these have been authorised by the Council through the resource consent process under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA). Encroachments must be authorised under the provisions of the Reserves Act. Known encroachments are included in Land Information Memoranda (LIM reports).

5.3.4.2 Encroachment management

1. The Council will keep a record of all known encroachments.
2. The Council will require removal of all encroachments either immediately or as a managed process. Managed removal will require issuing a letter of understanding, and a licence or agreement to formalise the removal process.
3. Managed removal of encroachments will result in a signed agreement between the property owner concerned and the Council and will detail:
 - a) a description of the encroachment
 - b) a process for removal
 - c) a timeframe for removal
 - d) responsibilities of each party for particular actions
 - e) the payment of any one-off or ongoing fees
 - f) any other matter the Council deems necessary to manage the encroachment removal.
4. If the encroachment can be practically removed or stopped (it might be a garden fence, a shed, a path, an area of garden, part of a deck, a clothesline, or a private vehicle access) it will be removed with full reinstatement of the land generally within 12 months or sooner. This type of

²⁹ Use and enjoyment may be indirect or indirect. Examples of indirect use and enjoyment include tourist revenue from having an open space, views of open space or ecological value of vegetation.

removal will be managed by way of a signed letter of understanding including details as listed in the preceding policy above.

5. If the encroachment is associated with private vehicle or private pedestrian access and immediate removal is complicated by long-term historic use, then a longer term removal agreement such as a fixed-term licence may be negotiated. This will allow agreement of reasonable terms while also ensuring that the access encroachment is removed as per policy 5.3.4.1 (1), (2), and (3). The maximum period of time for this type of agreement will be until there is a change of ownership or occupation in the property associated with the encroachment. The Council may limit access to manage the removal process by, for example, installing gates, specifying access hours and days, limiting numbers of people and/or vehicles.
6. If the encroachment cannot be removed because of ground stability (such as a retaining wall or part of a building) then a longer term removal agreement may be negotiated unless it is deemed unsafe.
7. Emergency retaining and/or land stabilisation will be managed by way of a licence and only where there is no alternative remedial action available. This clause is only intended to apply to **unforeseen stability issues (it is the landowner and their contractor's responsibility to carry out appropriate investigation before starting any work)** and where there is an immediate need to retain the land and a public benefit to doing the work.
8. If an application is received for a new retaining structure on a reserve boundary, the applicant will be required to provide a survey of the boundary and the completed structure. The completed **structure must be built on the applicant's side** of the boundary and not on the reserve. The applicant can apply for a temporary access permit to build the wall. The completed structure must be contained on the **applicant's property and will be the responsibility of the owner so no encroachment licence is needed**.
9. If the encroachment is part of a house or other building, the timeframe for removal is likely to be longer and an encroachment licence may be negotiated (unless it is new and can be immediately removed) to manage long-term removal. The agreement will generally link removal of the encroachment to a specified situation, such as where there are renovations done to that wall or if the house is removed, demolished or falls down.
10. Any managed removal agreement does not run with the land. Any new owner will have to apply for an agreement. It is expected that change of property ownership will often be the point at which a licence will end and the encroachment is removed or access stopped.
11. The removal of all encroaching features is the responsibility of the owner concerned. If the owner fails to comply with the immediate or managed removal as specified by the Council, the work will be carried out by the Council after consultation with the owner and the owner will be charged for the work.
12. All costs associated with immediate or managed removal, including survey and legal costs, shall be met by the owner of the encroachment. Reserve land will not be sold to resolve encroachment issues. Formalisation of managed removal through a licence may be publicly notified if the Council deems the effects of the agreement to be of a nature and scale that public notification is in the public interest and/or if required under the Reserves Act 1977. All encroachment easements and licences require approval by the Council or a delegated committee.

5.3.4.3 Botanical enhancements/letter of understanding

“Botanical enhancements” are small areas of land that are maintained and/or enhanced by a neighbour through planting or vegetation management in keeping with open space values and character. These are managed by way of a “letter of understanding”, which must be obtained by anyone who has or proposes to undertake “botanical enhancement”. For the purposes of managing encroachments, botanical enhancements are not considered encroachments and therefore are not by default prohibited.

Letters of understanding to permit “botanical enhancement” will only be issued if all of the following conditions are met. The botanical enhancement:

- a) is vegetation only (ie no paths, steps, walls, fences or structures of any kind are permitted)
- b) is in keeping with the values and character of the particular park or reserve
- c) does not include any plant species considered weeds or that may result in unwanted maintenance issues
- d) must provide a level of public good
- e) must not prevent or discourage public access
- f) **must be adjacent to the applicant's property (i.e. you will not be permitted to carry out botanical enhancement on reserve land that affects or is adjacent to your neighbour's property).**

There is no formal right of occupation associated with a botanical enhancement and responsibility of the ongoing maintenance of the area will be negotiated

6 MANAGEMENT SECTORS

This Part describes the main features, existing uses and specific management issues and proposals of seven geographic sectors in the Outer Green Belt. In this way, the differences, distinct identity and management approach for each can be addressed within the over-arching context of the whole Outer Green Belt, for the easy reference of local communities of interest and Council staff. The sectors are, from north to south:

1. Te Ngahere-o-Tawa / Redwood
2. Ohariu Ridge
3. Kaukau
4. Chartwell / Karori Park
5. **Makarā** Peak
6. Wrights Hill / Zealandia
7. Te Kopahou