

6.6 SECTOR 6: WRIGHTS HILL / ZEALANDIA



Wrights Hill (centre right) is a broad flat-topped hill above Karori, which drops down steeply to the Kaiwharawhara Stream valley (left) where Zealandia is located. Sector 7 of the Outer Green Belt continues south along the distant skyline above Zealandia to Hawkins Hill and beyond.

Key features / values:

- Wrights Hill landmark and viewpoint
- Major ecological hub in Wellington, anchored in Zealandia
- Headwaters of Kaiwharawhara and Karori Streams
- Destinations: Zealandia and Wrights Hill Fortress
- Significant World War II heritage
- **Track network connecting Makarā Peak and te Kopahou**

Local communities of interest: Karori, Highbury

Local community volunteer activities: pest animal control, Zealandia perimeter fence monitoring, hosting and guiding at Zealandia

6.6.2 OVERVIEW

Sector 6 (363.2 ha) extends from South Karori Road, across Wrights Hill and the valley of Zealandia, including the saddle at the top end of the Kaiwharawhara Stream valley between Zealandia and Long Gully. **Note: the official name for the hill is 'Wright Hill' but 'Wrights Hill' has become the common usage and so is used in this Plan.**

6.6.2.1 Land administration

Parts of Wrights Hill Road and part of the historic bunker area on the Wrights Hill summit is Crown-owned land, administered by the Department of Conservation. The Department is working with Council through the processes (as provided for under the Reserves Act) to appoint Wellington City Council to control and manage the land. The Council already carries out practical maintenance in these areas e.g. road maintenance.

Various land parcels on Wrights Hill are currently recreation reserve but would be more appropriately managed as either scenic or historic reserves to better reflect the natural and heritage values of the land. Reclassification is proposed as part of this Plan review (see Appendix III).

There are 21 encroachments of private use from adjoining residential properties with addresses on Versailles Avenue and Messines Road onto the Council-owned reserve land. The encroachments vary in extent and are mainly gardens, lawns and outdoor uses (such as trampolines). The private use is

contrary to the purpose of the reserve land, which is for public benefit; in this case a particular role as part of the Zealandia perimeter. The Council considers that the land should be completely revegetated to strengthen the natural buffer between housing and Zealandia, although an additional option could be considered of formalising a walking track through the strip of reserve from the scout den to the reservoir access entrance on Messines Road.

6.6.2.2 Nature

Although much of the sanctuary valley was historically cleared and a large area planted in pines, there is good quality remnant and secondary forest on the steep west face, and significant areas of kanuka / manuka on the southeast slopes, which are important seed sources. Particularly notable is the presence of swamp maire and some original kowhai (*Sophora microphylla*), each of which are found in only one or two other localities in Wellington. Swamp maire (*Syzygium maire*) is particularly vulnerable to myrtle rust because seed cannot be stored viably for any length of time. Moreover, two lakes (former water reservoirs) provide an important opportunity to restore and research freshwater habitats, including for aquatic and bird life.

While Zealandia itself is managed by the Karori Sanctuary Trust, it plays a key part in the objective to restore an ecological corridor along the Outer Green Belt. It has been described as having a role as **‘the mothership’** for animal species reintroductions in Wellington, from where indigenous wildlife in particular will spread out into the surrounding reserves and wider city area. Collectively, all the vegetation in this sector forms a large expanse of indigenous vegetation that, while not as well advanced or impressive as that in **Ōtari-Wilton’s Bush**, **will form a major ecological hub in this part of the city** as restoration efforts progress. This hub will connect west to **Makarā Peak**, north via Birdwood Reserve and the Kaiwharawhara Stream to **Ōtari-Wilton’s Bush**, **east to Polhill Reserve** in the Wellington Town Belt and south along the main ridgeline to Te Kopahou and the South Coast. Already, birds which were absent in Wellington 20 years ago, such as **kākā**, **North Island robin**, **tīeke** (saddleback) and **kākāriki** are spreading from Zealandia into the adjacent reserves and, in some cases, well beyond.

Under its *Living with Nature, Tiaki Taio, Tiaki Tangata Strategy 2016-2035*, Zealandia is now also focusing on Sanctuary to Sea – Kia Mauriora te Kaiwharawhara, a multi-stakeholder project that aims to restore waterways and forest corridors in the Kaiwharawhara water catchment, and help support resilient ecosystems in an urban environment in the face of constant pressures from human development and climate change.

Tackling major threats such as weed and pest animal control is an essential component in managing this sector of the Outer Green Belt as a key nature restoration hub. A network of professional animal pest control is enhanced by the huge volunteer predator control effort in place, primarily through community volunteer groups but also through private landowners who are carrying out trapping in adjacent blocks and in residential backyards. Volunteers have also been involved in cleaning up and restoring the Birdwood Reserve, the first reserve area downstream of Zealandia. Information sharing, education and promotion of benefits and successes are key to the ongoing success of this community-led work.

Small mammal monitoring has been carried out in this sector for some years and expanded to neighbouring private land with landowner agreement. This monitoring is producing good long-term data, which will be helpful in determining whether or not there is a correlation between barberry fruiting and rat population levels.

6.6.2.3 Landscape

Wrights Hill is a landmark flat-topped hill on the southern edge of the Karori Basin, that sits between the Karori Stream valley to the west and the upper Kaiwharawhara Stream valley (containing Zealandia) to the east. Housing extends up its north flanks to some high spurs but, nevertheless, large vegetated areas provide an important open space backdrop to Karori. The comparatively broad summit area has a more utilitarian character than much of the Outer Green Belt hilltops, with a public road and two carparks; various structures; and modified landforms associated

with World War II fortifications, water reservoirs and a cluster of radio transmitter masts. The hilltop is an important part of the Outer Green Belt skyline seen from the central city and harbour and the lookout has a spectacular view, with an almost birds eye view straight down into Zealandia and across to the city, harbour and mountains beyond. It is one of the few places in the Outer Green Belt with drive-on hilltop access and also has an extensive track network that provides local loop routes and longer distance connections, most particularly the Skyline Track that links this **sector with Makarā Peak one way and Te Kopahou the other way. Forest is regenerating well on Wright's Hill, although Darwin's barberry is established, especially on the wind-swept upper slopes and summit.** The summit was one of the first areas where a community group did restoration planting. Important patches of remnant forest include kamahi (locally uncommon), tawa, toro and ramarama, which are good seed sources for forest restoration. A recent masters research project found that **kākāriki (red-crowned parakeet)** are spreading out onto Wrights Hill from Zealandia.

Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne (formerly Karori Wildlife Sanctuary), occupies the 252-hectare valley, **which was one of the city's original water catchment areas in the headwaters of Kaiwharawhara Stream.** It is managed by the Karori Sanctuary Trust in partnership with the Council, to work towards the vision of creating a self-sustaining ecosystem representative of pre-human New Zealand. The goals include re-establishing indigenous fauna and flora, restoring natural habitats, contributing to **other national recovery programmes and educating visitors about New Zealand's unique biodiversity** and nature conservation. The concept has been a ground-breaker in many ways, not least, the research and development behind the 8.6-km pest-proof fence that encircles the sanctuary. After the fence was built, all introduced mammalian pests were removed, enabling vulnerable rare and endangered species to be gradually reintroduced, including plants, birds, lizards, tuatara, invertebrates, frogs, fish and, most recently, in 2018, kahi – fresh water mussels.

6.6.2.4 Culture and heritage

Heritage features in this sector are well recognised and have clear management regimes. The summit of Wrights Hill is a significant heritage site, containing extensive World War II fortifications built to service a 9.2 inch battery gun. The *Wright Hill Conservation Plan* contains a full history of the fortress. The Wright Hill Fortress Restoration Society carries out restoration works and regularly runs popular open days, when the public can explore the fortifications including an extensive underground network.

A number of features of historic interest are also found in Zealandia. These include two dams, historic buildings and other structures from the former water collection days, in some cases meticulously restored by the sanctuary trust. Several gold mining adits (a mine with a horizontal entrance) and diverse conifer plantings are associated with the early settlement period.

6.6.2.5 Recreation and Access

The track network is comparatively well developed in this sector. The track network in Zealandia is accessible only by way of an entry fee but outside the perimeter fence is the Zealandia perimeter track, walking and mountain biking tracks on Wrights Hill including this section of the long-distance Skyline Track and a number of local tracks to nearby housing. The drive-on access to the summit of Wrights Hill provides opportunities for less physically able people to enjoy wide views. Zealandia provides a key destination for viewing natural heritage, especially indigenous fauna, but there is potential to enhance Wrights Hill as a destination and one of a series of main entry points to the Outer Green Belt.

6.6.2.6 Community

The Council will seek to establish a sound working relationship with the Wright Hill Fortress Restoration Society, including consultation over proposed entrance facility development in the hilltop **area and how that could support the society's activities, including open days.**

Private land in this sector lies south of Wrights Hill. It contains a number of important bush remnants, including the 65-ha Long Gully Bush Reserve, which is owned by the Wellington Natural Heritage Trust and protected in perpetuity by a QEII National Trust open space covenant. The

Council has variously assisted these landowners in a number of ways, including with pest control, podocarp planting and covenant fencing.

6.6.3 ACTIONS

N = new initiative; E = Existing; Ex = Expand existing

(Notes: (i) Some 'new' projects come within larger funded programmes but have not yet been started.

(ii) Implementation depends on budget allocations.)

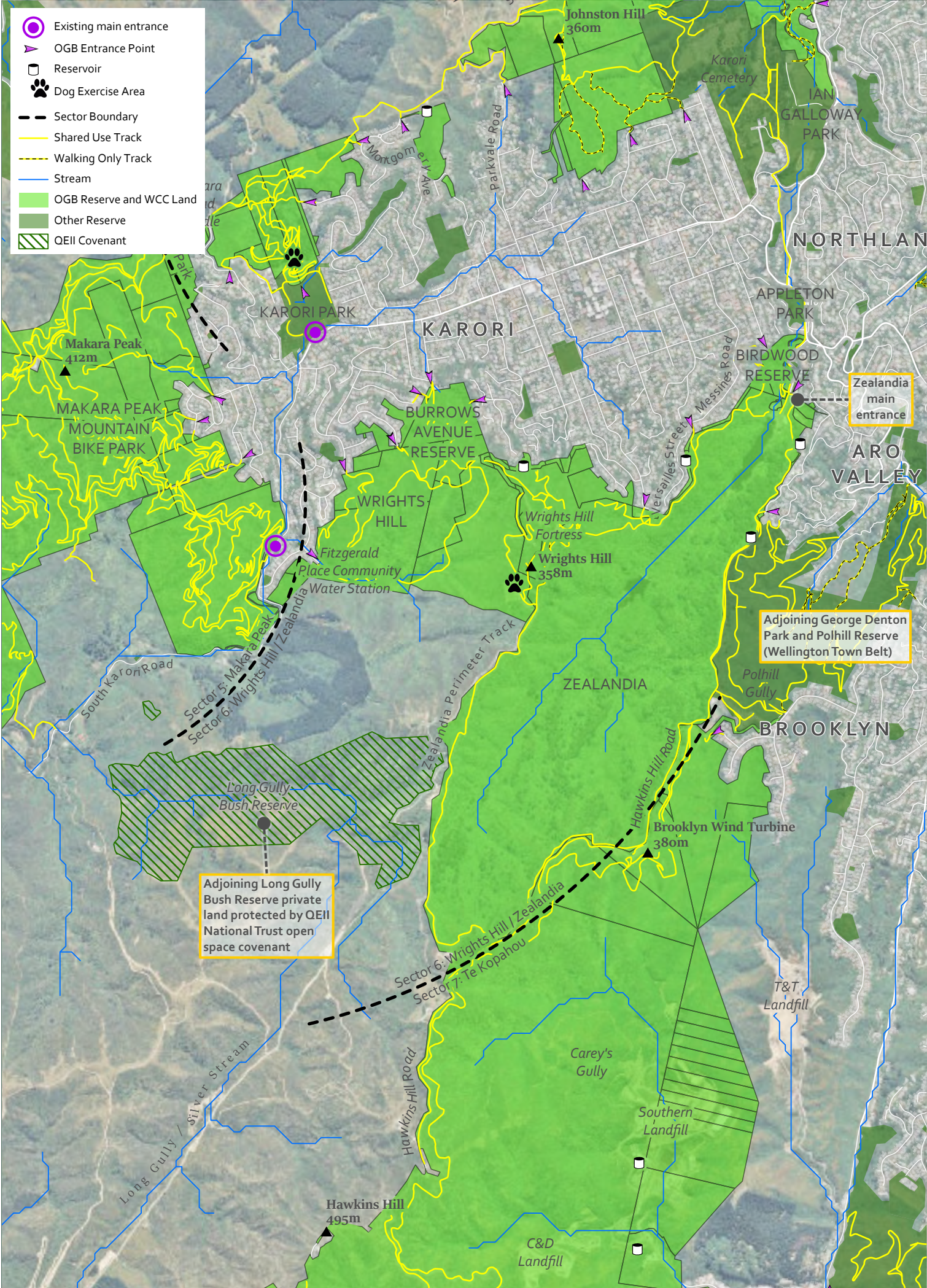
6.6.3.1 Land administration		
Land status		
1. Continue to work with the Department of Conservation on the appointment of the Wellington City Council to control and manage the Crown-owned land on Wrights Hill.	E	ongoing
Encroachments		
2. Begin the process of removing the private encroachments on the strip of reserve land above the western slopes of Zealandia, where a single water reservoir is located, in order to revegetate it as a vegetation buffer between Zealandia and the adjoining residential properties, keeping just a service vehicle access way for maintaining the water reservoir.	N	ongoing
6.6.3.2 Nature		
Caring for nature		
1. Continue to partner with the Karori Sanctuary Trust in integrating biodiversity conservation within Zealandia (via its strategy) and the spread of biodiversity beyond Zealandia's boundaries..	E	ongoing
Streams		
2. Support Zealandia to explore the eradication of pest fish within the lakes and streams of the valley.	E	ongoing
3. Continue to support Sanctuary to Sea – Kia Mauriora te Kaiwharawhara project as a key strategic partner	E	ongoing
Indigenous flora and planting		
4. Plant a native forest restoration buffer on reserve land above Zealandia, as private encroachments are removed. (see policy 6.6.3.1 (2) above)	N	5-10 yrs
Research		
5. Continue with the research being carried out at Ōtari-Wilton's Bush Botanic Garden into ways to successfully store swamp maire and myrtaceae seed as part of myrtle rust threat response and the reintroduction of either uncommon or locally extinct plants into the catchment.	E	ongoing
6. Support research into the factors limiting the dispersal of threatened or locally significant bird species from Zealandia such as tīeke (saddleback), kākāriki (red-crowned parakeet), and toutouwai (North Island Robin).	Ex	ongoing

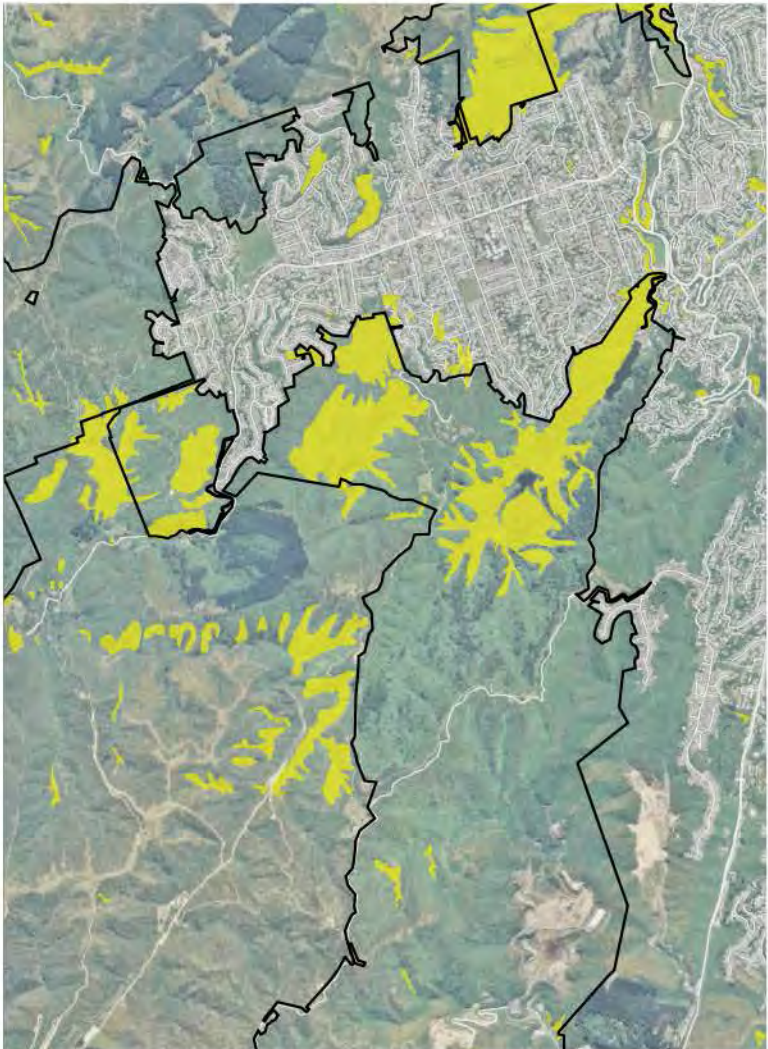
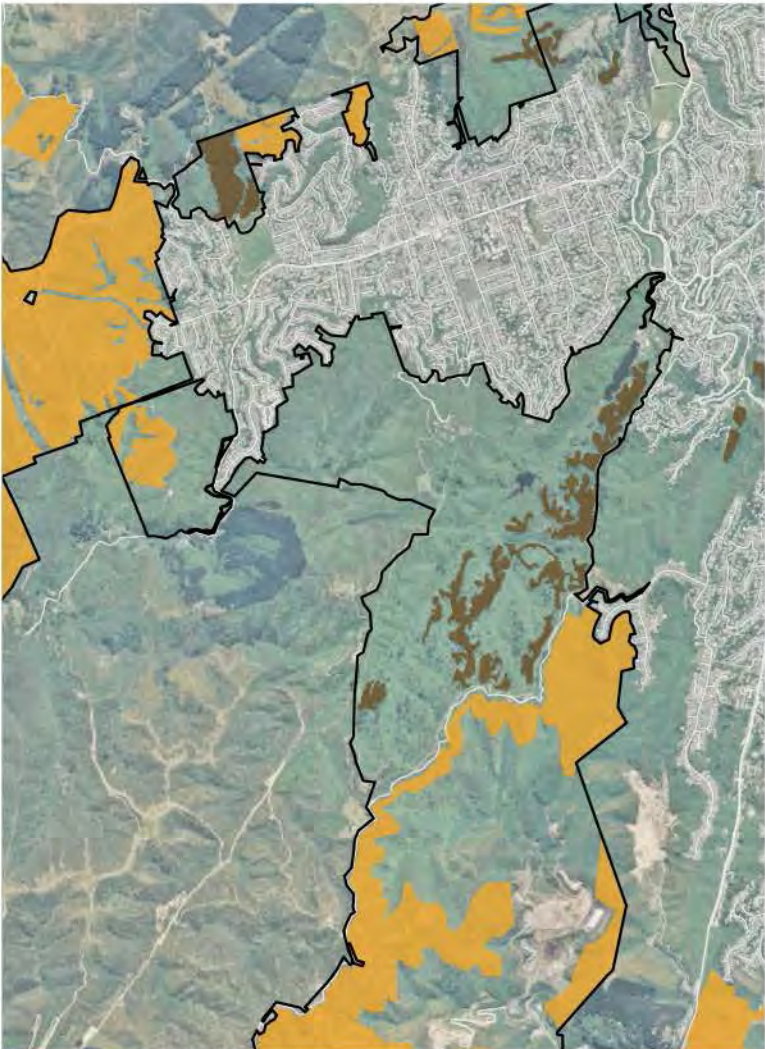
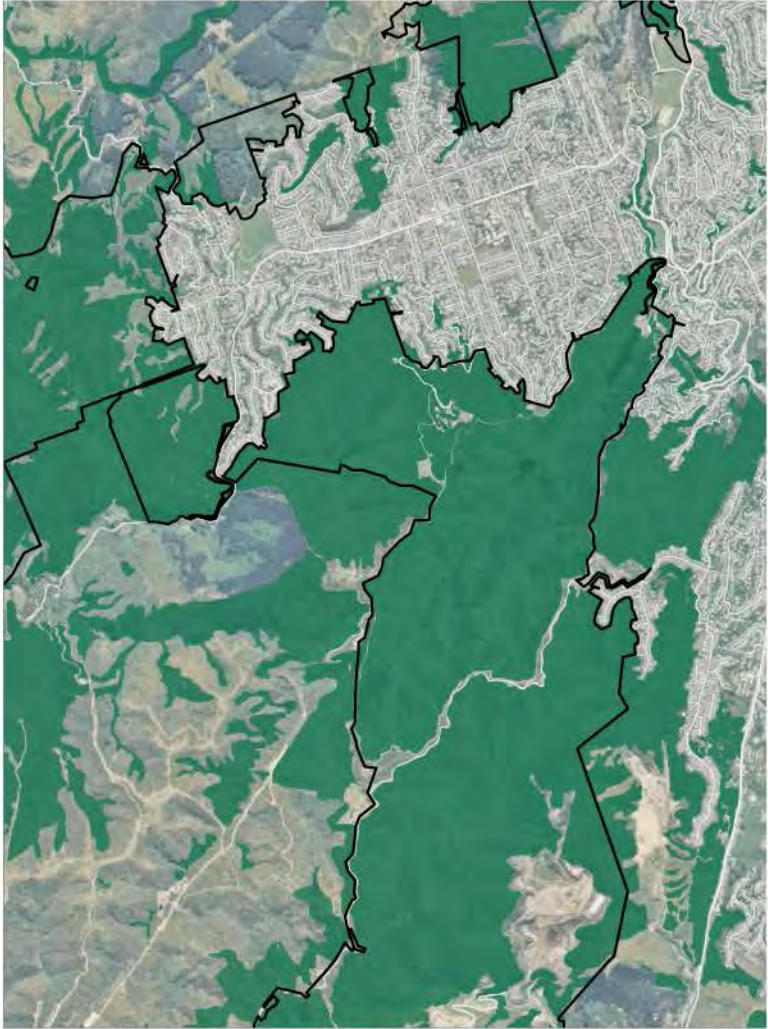
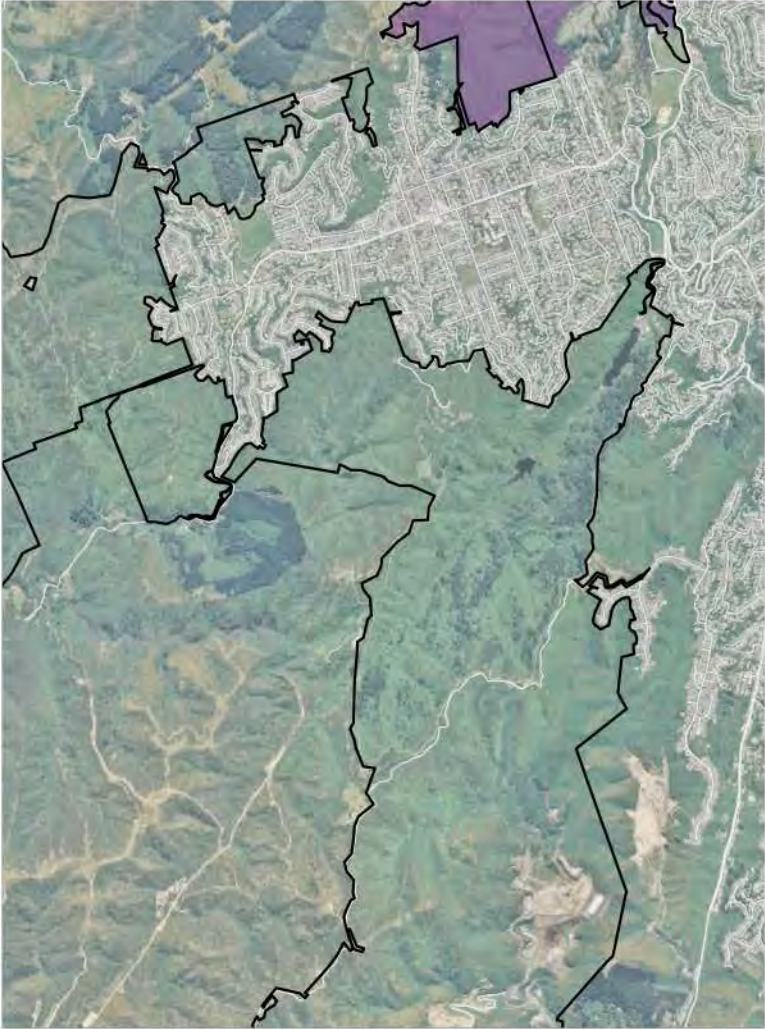
6.6.3.3 Landscape		
<p>Views</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage the vegetation to ensure that the wide views seen from the following places, in particular, are kept clear: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the carpark at the top end of Salvation Track, which is often used as a viewpoint; b) the lookout platform on the summit overlooking the Zealandia valley. 	E	ongoing
6.6.3.4 Culture and heritage		
<p>Wrights Hill fortress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the Wright Hill Fortress Restoration Society to support its activities in implementing the <i>Wright Hill Conservation Plan</i>. 	E	ongoing
<p>Interpretation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop interpretative material in a variety of media about cultural and heritage features and history in this sector, as resources permit and within the overall Outer Green Belt interpretation plan (see policy 4.6.2.7); focusing particularly on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World War II military installation themes; and • the big picture of the Outer Green Belt and Zealandia's place within it and the region, because the Wrights Hill lookout is such a great vantage point directly above Zealandia, with views to much of the Outer Green Belt. 	N	5-10 yrs
6.6.3.5 Recreation and access		
<p>Track network</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the need for and feasibility of modifying the track across the saddle between Wrights Hill and Polhill, with a view to easing some of the very steep gradients. As this is the only track between sectors 6 and 7, it is desirable to make it as user friendly as possible, taking into account the constraints of the topography and the narrow strip of land available outside the Zealandia perimeter fence. 	E	ongoing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop a new track through Birdwood Reserve, if possible, to facilitate access for forest restoration work and provide an alternative walking access to Zealandia from the Birdwood Street parking area. 	N	3-5 yrs
<p>Entrances, facilities and way finding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Investigate and assess the options for improving the existing entrance features in the hilltop area of Wrights Hill, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) reconfiguring the parking to provide an efficient layout for public open days whilst also detering 'boy racer' behaviour, (which is currently discouraged by the placement of large concrete blocks); b) providing public toilets and drinking water; and c) resurfacing / re-grading the disabled access pathway between the main carpark and the summit area, which is currently in poor repair; d) upgrading the summit lookout structure. 	N	3-5 yrs

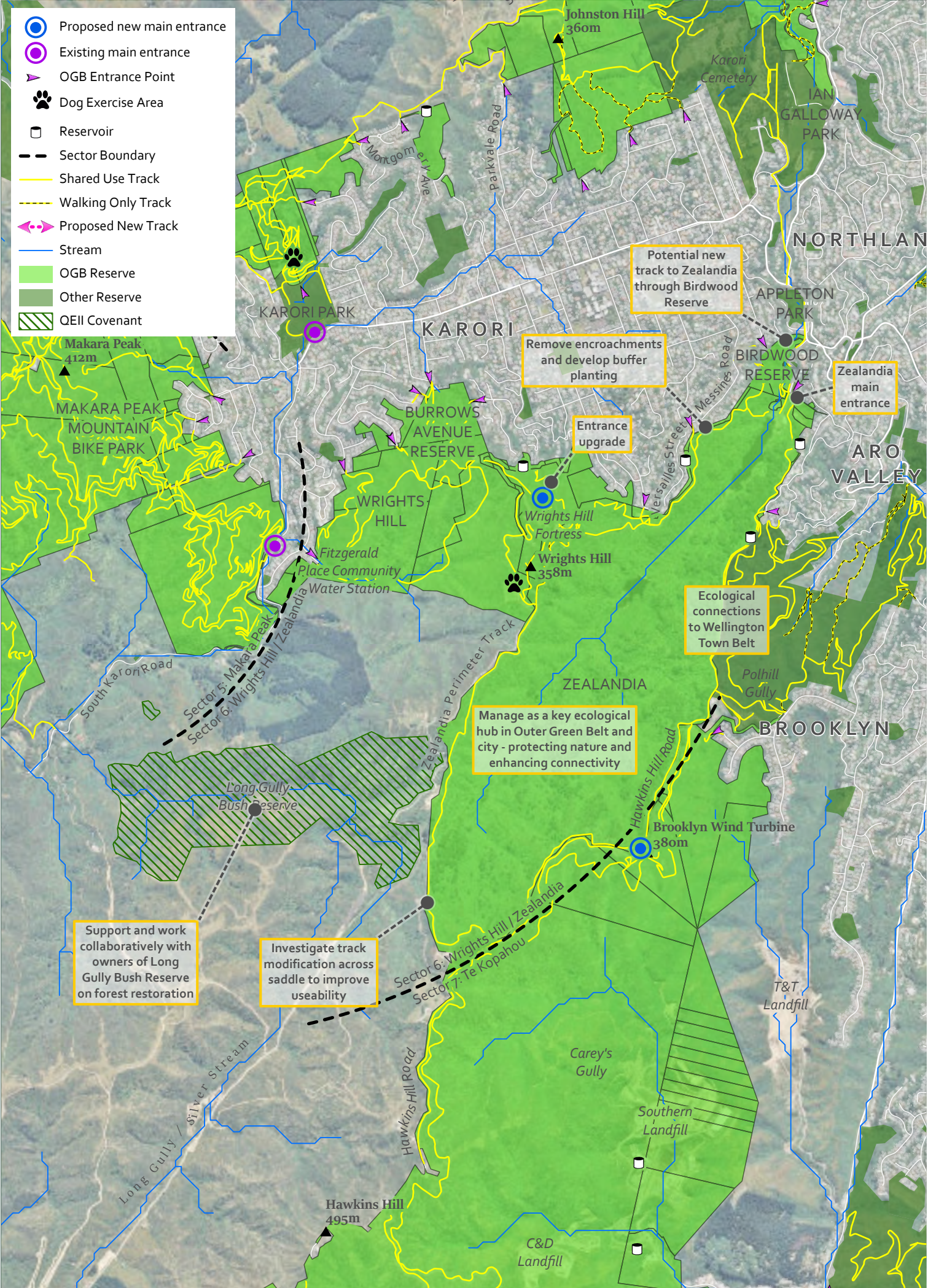
4. Implement any approved improvements.	N	5-10 yrs
Way finding		
5. Continue to update the wayfinding signage to help guide visitors on the track network, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) clearly marking the Skyline Track and the two alternative routes it takes in the Karori Stream Valley (see Management Sector 5); b) non-shared use tracks, namely: Deliverance Track, which is prioritised for downhill mountain biking use. 	E	ongoing
Dog walking		
6. Continue to use the Wrights Hill Parade Ground as a dog exercise area and ensure signage reinforces that dogs must be on a leash elsewhere to reduce the risk dogs might pose to vulnerable native birds spreading out from Zealandia.	E	ongoing
Events		
7. Continue to support the Wrights Hill Restoration Society in running its public open days.	E	ongoing
6.6.3.6 Community		
Work with volunteers		
7. Continue to work with Zealandia and its volunteers to patrol the Zealandia perimeter fence for signs of damage or incursions and to keep the perimeter track clear to prevent pest animals from reinvading the sanctuary via overgrowth.	E	ongoing
8. Continue to support concentrated volunteer pest control efforts in this sector to protect, in particular, vulnerable native birds migrating out from Zealandia.	E	ongoing
9. Continue to work with and support the Wrights Hill Restoration Society and clarify respective roles in the light of the Council taking over management (see 6.6.3.1 (1)) via a Memorandum of Understanding.	N	1-2 yrs

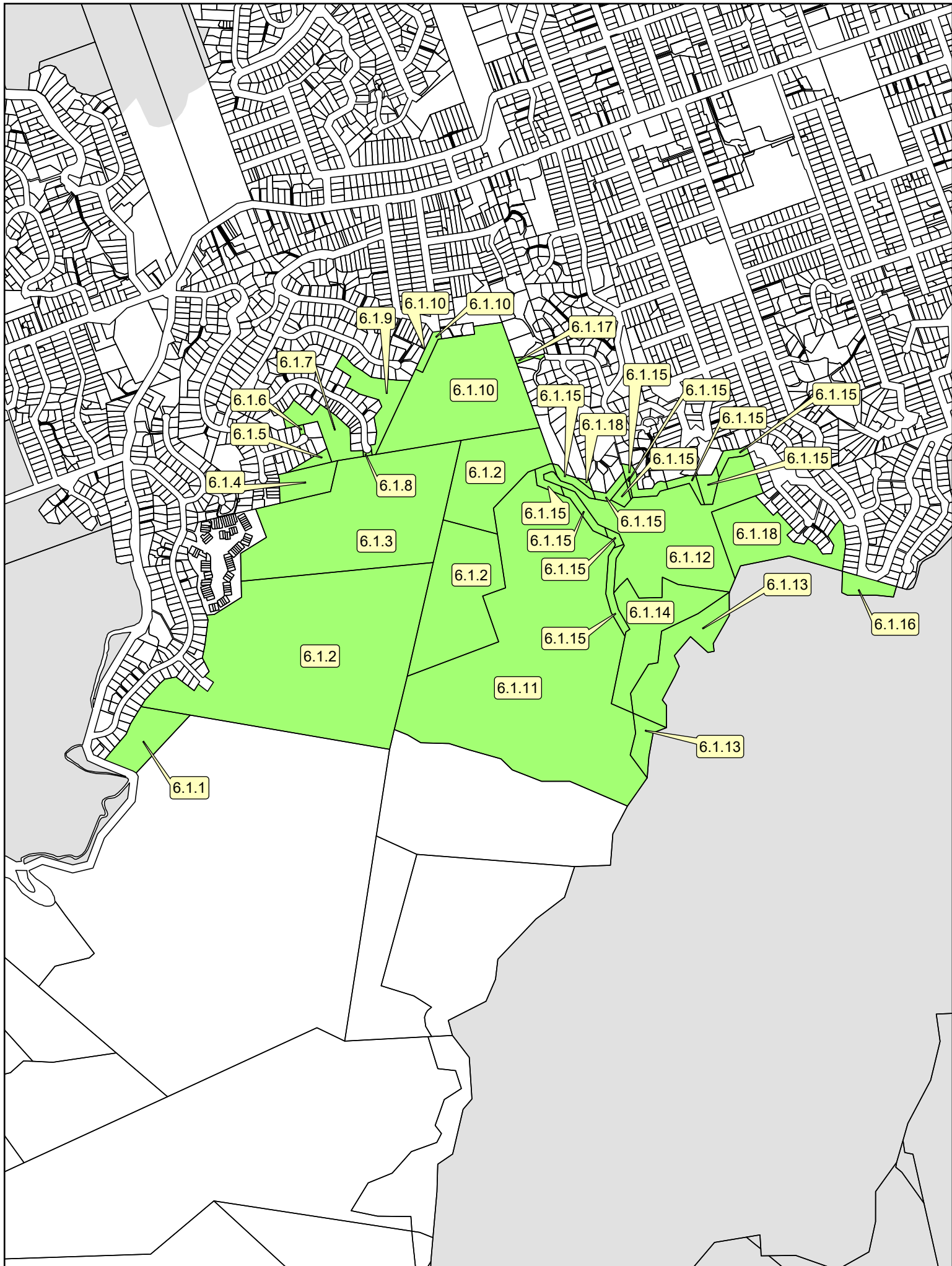
Sector 6: Wrights Hill / Zealandia - Current

Scale: 1:24,000







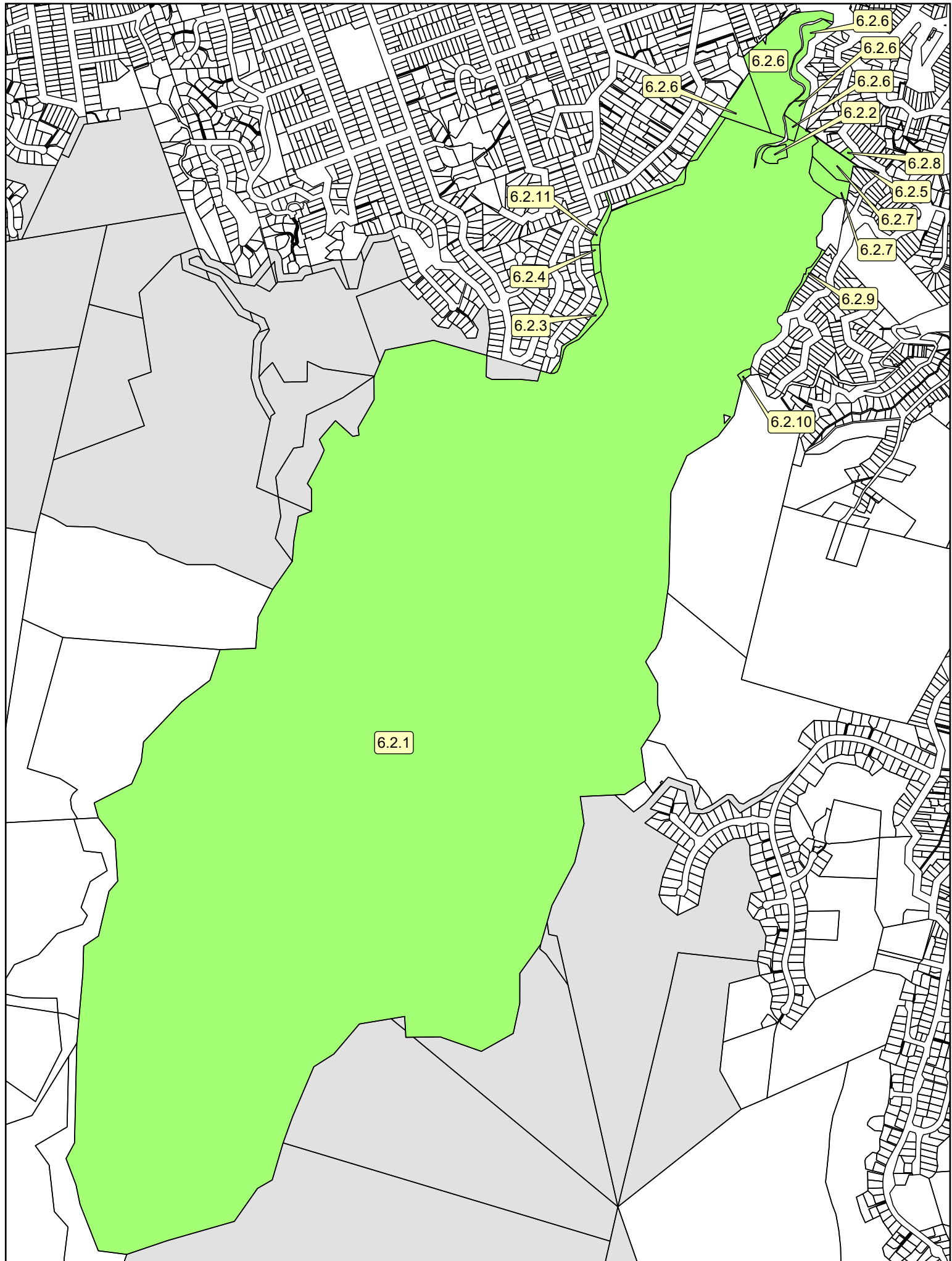


Sector 6: Wrights Hill / Zealandia (map 1)

0 160 320 640 Metres
Scale: 1:12,000

Management Area	Site Name	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	CT Reference /Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	Gazette Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
Sector 6 Wrights Hill/ Zealandia (map 1)	Wright's Hill Reserve	6.1.1	1322	Lot 1 DP 51083	20C/394	1.7318 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B	The within land has no frontage to a legal road. Subject to easement rights for ROW, stormwater, water, power and gas reticulation, see easement certificate 206763.3.	
		6.1.2	1320	Pt Sec 46 and 55, Karori District	Part of 46B/837	Approx 31 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	NZG No. 54 9 May 2013	Open Space B	Transmission lines cross over part of this land. Subject to an easement to convey Telecommunication signals over Part Section 45 Karori District. Compensation certificates, reference 170815.1 & 230179.1 against part of the land under Section 17 Public Works Amendment Act 1948.	
		6.1.3	1320	Pt Sec 46 and 55, Karori District	46B/835	16.9318 ha	Scenic Reserve (b)	NZG No. 54 9 May 2013	Open Space B	Appurtenant to Pt Section 46 is a right of way over Lot 98 DP 77320 (CT43D/167) created by transfer B.372717.9. Compensation certificates, reference 170815.1 & 230179.1 against part of the land under Section 17 Public Works Amendment Act 1948.	
		6.1.4	2228	Lot 9 DP 82773	49C/99	1.0446 ha	Scenic Purposes	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B	This land is a reserve subject to the Reserves Act, consideration of its current zoning is required, an Open Space zoning would be more appropriate than Outer residential	
		6.1.5	2039	Lot 115 DP 71537	646513	0.2195 ha	Scenic Purposes	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B		
		6.1.6	2039	Lot 116 DP 71537	646513	0.0307 ha	Scenic Purposes	GN 9561291.3	Outer residential		Rezone as Open Space B
		6.1.7	2039	Lot 2 DP 77321	43D/169	1.2433 ha	Scenic Purposes	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B		
		6.1.8	2039	Lot 98 DP 77320	3,777,918	0.02 ha	Not Classified		Open Space B		Proposed Classifying Scenic Reserve b
		6.1.9	2039	Lot 3 DP 77321	43D/170	1.3740 ha	Scenic Purposes	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B		
		6.1.10	1036	Lots 1 & 2 DP 10126	426/243	8.4343 ha	Scenic Purposes (b)	GN 9561291.3	Open Space B		
		6.1.11	1404	Sec 16 Upper Kaiharawhara District, S.O. Plan 34500	No CT	28.3590 ha	Recreation Reserve	NZ Gazette 1987/24	Open Space B	Part Heritage area	Proposed re Classifying Scenic Reserve b
		6.1.12	1404	Sec 17 Upper Kaiharawhara District, S.O. Plan 34500	No CT	8.2866 ha	Recreation Reserve	NZ Gazette 1987/24	Open Space B	Part Heritage area	Proposed re Classifying Scenic Reserve b
		6.1.13	1402	Secs 13 & 14 Upper Kaiharawhara	41A/292	3.3705 ha	Recreation Reserve	NZ Gazette 1991/133	Conservation	This land is WCC owned land. Part of this land is identified as a Heritage area in the District Plan.	Proposed re Classifying Historic Reserve
		6.1.14		Sec 15 Upper Kaiharawhara District, S.O. Plan 31460		3.6815 ha	Recreation Reserve		Open Space B Part Heritage area	It is Crown owned land. Department of Conservation are appointing control and management of the reserve to Wellington City Council. The land's legal documentation is held in gazette notices 929260.1 and 929260.2.	Proposed re Classifying Historic Reserve

Management Area	Site Name	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	CT Reference /Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	Gazette Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
		6.1.15		Pt Sec 9 Kalwharawhara, Lot 6 DP 1440, Pt Sec 55 Karori District, Pt Lot 2.5 and 6 DP 1440, Pt Lots, 8, 9 and 10 DP 1543		Approximately 3 ha	Reserve for Conservation purpose		Open Space B Part Heritage area	It is Crown owned land, being the road access to Wright's Hill summit. Department of Conservation are appointing control and management of the reserve to Wellington City Council. The land's legal documentation is held in gazette notices 929260.1 and 929260.2.	
		6.1.16	2482	Part Section 2 Upper Kalwharawhara District	22D/469 Pt	0.98 ha	Scenic Reserve		Open Space B	Site on Scout Hall – access off Junction of Campbell and Croydon Streets	
		6.1.17	2482	Lot 97 DP 303660	6531417	0.07 ha	Vesting on Deposit for Recreation Reserve		Outer Residential		Proposed Classifying Scenic Reserve and re Zone as Open Space B
		6.1.18		Pt Sec 2 Upper Kalwharawhara District	WNSB/488	3.4314 ha		NZG No. 54 9 May 2013	Open Space B		



Sector 6: Wrights Hill / Zealandia (map 2)

- OGB Parcel
- Other OGB Parcel

0 160 320 640 Metres

Scale: 1:12,000

Management Area	Site Name	Mapping Reference	WCC Site number	Legal Description	CT Reference /Parcel Id	Land Area	Reserve Description	Gazette Reference	District Plan Zoning	Notes	Actions needed
Sector 6 Wrigths Hill/ Zealandia (map 2)	Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and boundary properties	6.2.1	2149	Lot 1 DP 313319	6590100	246.5 ha	Not Classified		Conservation and Heritage Area		
		6.2.2		Lot 2 DP 313319	6590101	0.3700 ha	Land Acquired for Water Supply Purposes		Conservation	Greater Wellington City Council owned land	
		6.2.3	2149	Lot 3 DP 313319	6590102	0.3889 ha	Not Classified		Conservation		Classify as Scenic Reserve Resolve issues in consultation with adjoining residents and the Sanctuary Trust, taking account of the wider community's interest in this land.
		6.2.4	1218	Part Section 2 Upper Kaiwharawhara District	3877232	0.15 ha	Water Supply Purposes				Classify as Scenic Reserve Resolve issues in consultation with adjoining residents and the Sanctuary Trust, taking account of the wider community's interest in this land.
		6.2.5	2149	Pt Sec 32 Karori District	3748721	0.3 ha	Drainage Reserve		Conservation		
	Birdwood Reserve	6.2.6	1379	Parts Section 32 & 34 Karori District and Parts of Lots 65 & 66 DP 18/1	22D/469 pt	5.2375 ha	Scenic Purposes (b)	GN 9561291.3	Conservation		
		6.2.7	2149	Lot 5 DP 313319	6590104	0.51 ha	Not Classified		Conservation	Includes building (part of Zealandia)	
		6.2.8	1057	Lot 1 DP 10884	4010337	0.0686	Scenic Purposes (b)	GN 9561291.3	Conservation		
		6.2.9	2149	Lot 6 DP 313319	6590105	0.138 ha	Not Classified		Conservation	Access road adjoin fence line with Zealandia	
		6.2.10	2149	Lot 8 DP 313319	6590106	.0631 ha	Scenic Purposes (b)		Conservation	Park of Croydon Park adjoin Zealandia	
		6.2.11	2149	Lot 4 DP 313319	6590103	0.6748 ha	Not Classified		Conservation		Classify as Scenic Reserve Resolve issues in consultation with adjoining residents and the Sanctuary Trust, taking account of the wider community's interest in this land.