

7. SECTOR INFORMATION

The following information was provided for each sector for consultation purposes on the secondary track network. From the information gained during consultation, key objectives will be developed for the secondary tracks within each sector and included in the implementation plan.

7.1 SECTOR 1 - SPICER

This sector, defined by the Spicer Ridge to the west, is identified in the Outer Green Belt Management Plan as the northern end of the Outer Green Belt. The eastern flanks, with pine and bush cover, form a backdrop the communities of Redwood, Westhaven and Lindenvale and are very visible from Horokiwi Ridge across the Tawa valley.

There are few tracks in the area. Access on Spicer Ridge is via mainly farm/service roads. There is now a link to Colonial Knob via the Te Araroa Walkway, but not to Porirua City Council's Spicer Botanical Forest, or to the airstrip block along the ridgeline to the south.

There are no formal links down into Tawa from the Outer Green Belt. Redwood Bush and Tawa Bush Reserves on the edge of the urban fringe have very limited track systems although there is an extensive network of informal tracks through these reserves and private land up to the ridgeline. The most developed tracks in this sector are short tracks in small local reserves such as Larsen Crescent, Redwood Bush and Willowbank Park. While they provide very different user experiences, they cater for less active forms of recreational use.

7.2 SECTOR 2 - OHARIU (BEST RIDGE)

This sector covers Churton Park, Glenside and the Ohariu Ridge Section of the Outer Green Belt. Ohariu Ridge forms part of the Outer Green Belt and links the Spicer Sector with Mt Kaukau and provides a clear physical and visual separation between the farmlands of Ohariu Valley and the urban growth area of Churton Park. The open, pasture covered, gently undulating ridgeline is very visible from Newlands, Paparangi and Grenada across the valley and forms a natural backdrop to the local urban environment of Churton Park. Glenside, situated on the floor of the Porirua valley, is separated from Churton Park by Stebbings Valley and Marshall Ridge.

While the hills are mainly in pasture, there are small bush remnants in gullies alongside streams on the eastern slopes, some areas of pine plantation and early revegetation on ungrazed slopes close to the urban fringe, consisting mainly of gorse.

This sector is identified in the Outer Green Belt Management Plan as a gap in the network. There are no existing Council tracks in the area. Along Ohariu Ridge, land is in private ownership with no public access, although there is use of private land by horse riders.

7.3 SECTOR 3 - KAUKAU

This sector runs from Old Coach Road on the northern flanks of Mt Kaukau through to Huntleigh Park below the south flanks of the Crows Nest on the Outer Green Belt.

Mt Kaukau is a local and regional landmark, a high point in a distinctive ridgeline that is very familiar to residents of the western suburbs. While the tops of the ridge were grazed, the slopes below Mt Kaukau were left in bush, creating a strong visual presence in an otherwise pastoral landscape. The landscape is now changing, with much of the hillside ungrazed and in the early stages of revegetation.

Mt Kaukau has long provided access to the 'real outdoors' close to urban areas for dedicated walkers, trampers and runners. It is close to the communities of the western suburbs and accessible from Ngaio and Khandallah, with many entry points (both formal and informal) into the area. Mt Kaukau is a destination in itself and the variety of micro-environments such as sheltered urban forest, exposed peak of Mt Kaukau, sheltered grassed valleys and the extreme environment of the upper ridgeline means that it can be used in almost all weather.

While there is an extensive network of tracks with many access points into the area, they are inconsistent in their standard.

.7.4 SECTOR 4 – OTARI WILTON'S BUSH

The focus of this sector is Otari Native Botanic Garden and Wilton's Bush Reserve (Otari-Wilton's Bush), which is nestled in the deep valley formed by the Kaiwharawhara Stream (also known as Te Mahanga Stream). Otari-Wilton's Bush fits discretely into the landform but areas of podocarp/northern rata forest are visually significant when viewed from Churchill Drive, parts of Wilton, Tinakori Hill and further afield, Ngaio and Khandallah. The valley is contained by Tinakori Hill and Te Wharangi Ridge (Kilmister Tops) on the skyline to the northwest, where the regenerating bush conceals the flat open tops of the ridgeline.

Otari-Wilton's Bush provides access into the wider Outer Green Belt and the rich vegetation on the lower slopes is part of the residential green backdrop. The area also provides facilities and destinations such as an information/education centre, canopy walkway, specialist gardens, and the Troup picnic area. There is also vehicle access to the Skyline Walkway at the Chartwell substation.

The existing track system provides a range of recreational experiences from the formal bush walks of Otari Wilton's Bush through regenerating bush to the open ridgelines, pine forest and Karori Cemetery. These tracks complement the formal recreational facilities such as sports grounds, skate ramps, the bike park and bowling club.

Otari-Wilton's Bush has its own management plan and has identified track opportunities and upgraded track networks to create a hierarchy of tracks. However outside Otari-Wilton's Bush, there is an extensive network of tracks, some designed but many constructed informally by users. The track system is variable throughout the network.

7.5 SECTOR 5 - MAKARA PEAK

Makara Peak includes part of Te Wharangi, the main ridge to the north and west of Karori that runs from the southern flank of Makara Peak north towards Porirua Harbour. Here the ridgeline of the Outer Green Belt is broken by Karori Stream, which runs out to the South Coast between Makara Peak and Wrights Hill.

In the last decade Karori Wildlife Sanctuary has developed into a major conservation project and visitor attraction (see Sector 6). Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park is a regional facility for recreation, with a focus on mountain biking. It is managed under the *Outer Town Belt Management Plan* and a planned track layout that includes dual use tracks.

Other tracks in this sector are a mix of old farm tracks, historic tracks that provide informal access to the Kilmister farm and Makara Hill and tracks in Karori Park. They are variable in quality.

There is no local track network. The provision of the Skyline Track links two very different recreational areas and provide benefit to both.

7.6 SECTOR 6 – WRIGHT’S HILL / KARORI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Wright’s Hill forms the southern edge to the Karori basin, and is a local landmark with its distinctive flat topped outline and scrub/pasture cover. The open west-facing slopes are a strong contrast to the sheltered, bush-clad slopes of the ‘ecological reservoir’ that contains the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and the headwaters of the Kaiwharawhara Stream.

This sector has strong contrasts between the sheltered urban forest within the sanctuary and the windswept inland ridgetops with plenty of recreational challenge. Wright’s Hill has a series of tracks that focuses mainly on the World War Two fortification system and lookout, and former links into the sanctuary valley.

Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is not part of the city track system (with the exception of the boundary track). However as a specific facility it has proved popular for a wide range of user groups. It has a combination of Department of Conservation and Sport and Recreation track standards using the first three grades: path with wheel chair access, walking track and buggy (generally without steps) and tramping track.

7.7 SECTOR 7 - CAREYS GULLY

Careys Gully is contained in the deeply divided, fissured ridge/valley system between Te Kopahou and Tawatawa ridges. It runs from a gully south of Ashton Fitchett Drive down to Sinclair Head/Te Rimurapa on the South Coast. The high ridgeline is seen in profile from the eastern suburbs and forms a backdrop to both Island Bay and Happy Valley. Hawkins Hill is a city landmark.

The South Coast is an important regional and local recreational site. The closure of Owhiro Bay Quarry and the ongoing quarry rehabilitation have increased access for walkers and mountain bikers. Coastal erosion will further limit the use of off-road vehicles around the Red Rocks area. This is the most accessible track for the local and wider community, but the need for protection of the coastal ecology limits the range of user groups and potential recreational experiences.

7.8 SECTOR 8 - GRENADA NORTH / BELMONT REGIONAL PARK / TAWA

This sector lies on the western slopes of the Horokiwi Ridge and contains a series of valley systems with grazing on ridges and spurs, and some regenerating bush in valleys. The motorway defines the western boundary of the sector and creates a strong artificial division along the valley floor between Tawa and Grenada North.

There is no track network in this sector and the few tracks around have limited accessibility. Willowbank Park has a small local track network but has no links to any other tracks and is separated from Grenada North/Belmont by the State Highway. Belmont Regional Park is just outside the area, and along the western side of the Tawa valley is the Outer Green Belt with the potential for a wide range of recreational activities. The open farmed hilltops may be exposed to the prevailing wind but they have the potential to provide a different range of recreational experiences, especially on the east side of the ridge. There are wonderful views over the northern section of the Outer Green Belt and the Hutt Valley from Horokiwi Ridge.

7.9 SECTOR 9 - NEWLANDS / JOHNSONVILLE / CHURTON PARK

Newlands is located on the Western Harbour Hills, above the Porirua Stream valley and contained to the south by Ngauranga Gorge. This is an area of growth and expansion.

The track system in this sector is centred in Seton Nossiter Park. There are only a few tracks in other reserves and parks in Newlands, and no links to neighbouring communities. While any potential network is limited by the topography and the motorway system that runs through the heart of this sector, there are opportunities to link patches of remnant bush in gullies and around streams and creeks and to create a track system along the harbour escarpment.

Reserves in Churton Park were specifically planned as part of the subdivision/development process. There are a number of short local tracks of a high standard but no track network or links outside the Churton Park community. Tracks lack diversity. There is no existing track system in the Glenside community. There are no tracks in Johnsonville outside the Outer Green Belt area.

7.10 SECTOR 10 - TRELISSICK PARK

Trelissick Park lies in a deep gorge that separates Wadestown and Highland Park on the slopes of Tinakori Hill, from Ngaio. It contains a rich mix of regenerating forest, the railway line on the south and west boundaries and the Korimako and Kaiwharawhara streams that run along the base of the valley. Trelissick Park maintains a vegetation link from the harbour to both the Outer Green Belt and the north western suburbs.

Tracks have existed within the park for many years but the steep sides of the gorge and the stream itself limit the network. The primary track forms part of the Northern Walkway and is a link (via the street network) between Tinakori Hill and Mt Kaukau. Older tracks follow the stream or are remnants of historic access ways and construction routes. Major tracks tend to be wide and well maintained but with varying gradients, frequent flights of steps, and problems with erosion and slips. There are several narrow tracks for local use. Tracks link the five access points into the park for walkers, and the park is closed to mountain bikers.

There are several smaller track systems in reserves around Ngaio and Kaiwharawhara.

7.11 SECTOR 11 - TINAKORI HILL

Tinakori Hill is part of the Wellington Town Belt. Like most parts of the Town Belt, it is surrounded on all sides by the urban environment. It functions as an important 'island' of green open space and is particularly important as the green backdrop to Thorndon and the central business district.

An extensive network of tracks has existed for many years on Tinakori Hill. Some of the tracks may have had non-recreational origins and have been adapted for recreation.

Many of the tracks have reasonably good form and do not appear to suffer from overuse, however there is a multiplicity of tracks which can make navigation confusing. The tall pine forests remaining on parts of Tinakori Hill suppress the sort of weed growth which is apparent on some other parts of the Town Belt. There are a variety of issues to do with location, alignment and the relationship with key entrances that need to be examined. The area is greatly under-utilised given its size and proximity to the central city, despite having an extensive track network and a strong 'natural' environment quality.

7.12 SECTOR 12 - BOTANIC GARDEN

This sector includes Wellington Botanic Garden, Anderson Park, Bolton Street Memorial Park and Kelburn Park. The Botanic Garden sector sits for the most part on the northwest facing side of the Pipitea Stream valley, with the artificial platform of Anderson Park tacked onto the side of the ridge. Bolton Street Memorial Park and Kelburn Park link the park system to the central city and Victoria University.

In a central city location, the Botanic Garden has numerous entry points with a well-established network of paths (and accessible routes). In fact it draws people both for the attractions of the site and the overall accessibility. There are numerous destinations in the sector including features such as the rose garden, the Begonia House, the Tree House, the duck pond, the historic cemetery, the children's playground and the lookout at the top of the Cable Car, as well as the specialist gardens. The Botanic Garden provides a gentle, traditional recreational experience that most people are familiar with, and enjoy.

The Combined Management Plan for Wellington Botanic Garden, Anderson Park and Bolton Street Memorial Park contains policies on access. Tracks are under review, with constant upgrading to create pedestrian friendly paths that link main features. Two theme or iconic walkway systems meet in this area. The Northern Walkway starts in the Botanic Garden and runs north through Tinakori Hill to Johnsonville via Mt Kaukau. The City to Sea Walkway also starts within the Botanic Garden, passes through Kelburn Park to link with the Victoria University path network and then continues through the city to Island Bay.

7.13 SECTOR 13 - CENTRAL CITY

This sector is centred on the central and western arm of the Town Belt, an area that runs from the Berhampore Golf Course and MacAlister Park in the south to Central Park and Polhill Gully Recreation Reserve. The Town Belt runs along the mid slopes of the MacAlister Park spur/Brooklyn Hill and forms a green link between Brooklyn, Vogelstown, Berhampore, Newtown, Aro Valley and the central city. Intense residential development in these inner city suburbs and within the city itself has enhanced the value of this very accessible recreational resource

Opportunities for the more challenging forms of walking, running and mountain biking exist over the ridge around the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary perimeter track, with access over into Wright's Hill and Makara Peak. This area is very accessible to local communities and there is strong potential for a high-grade access, with a potential dual use track running the length of the Town Belt, with shorter loop tracks for local use. The City to Sea walkway is one of the more prominent tracks in this area.

7.14 SECTOR 14 - MT VICTORIA

Mount Victoria is part of the Town Belt. It functions as an important 'island' of green open space within a dense urban environment and is probably the most intensively used part of the Town Belt for track-based recreation.

An extensive network of tracks has existed for many years on Mt Victoria. Many of the tracks probably had non-recreational origins but have been adapted and maintained for recreation, consistent with the *Town Belt Management Plan*.

The existing tracks lack the necessary coherence of a good recreation network – many being steep, poorly aligned, and of a poor standard preventing wider use by those with limited mobility or buggies.

7.15 SECTOR 15 - MT ALBERT / ISLAND BAY

Island Bay is contained between the Mt Albert and Tawatawa Ridges in a wide valley with a strong coastal influence. The landscape in this area is wilder and more remote than Mt Victoria. Instead of the familiar pines or bush, the exposed hillsides are covered in regenerating native coastal vegetation.

The network is unevenly spread in this sector. It is very accessible to Melrose, Houghton Bay and Lyall Bay but less accessible to the wider communities of Island Bay, Happy Valley and Kingston. All flat land on the valley floor has been developed and tracks exist mainly on ridges and hillsides.

This sector has two major theme walkways City to Sea and the Southern Walkway running parallel on the main ridgelines that contain Island Bay. An extensive network of tracks exists on Mt Albert but as on Mt Victoria, the tracks lack coherence and the hierarchy is ill defined. A major problem is the lack of consistency; a track may vary considerably in gradient, width and surface formation along its length. While the track system covers a wide range of destinations and recreational experiences, it only functions as a network for a limited range of dedicated users.

7.16 SECTOR 16 – MIRAMAR PENINSULA

The southern gateway to the city, this sector has a strong linear form with one main ridge running the length of the peninsular from Orongo Ridge to Mt Crawford. The steep coastal escarpment on the eastern side has limited residential development. The main open areas are on the north and south headlands. Mt Crawford is visible from vantage points around the central city, accentuated by the pine planting on the upper slopes. The Orongo Ridge headland is a dramatic and distinctive landscape: it marks the harbour entrance and has a strong, natural character with an existing walkway on top of the escarpment.

This sector has fewer local tracks than others and the track system is not evenly spread across the peninsular and has fewer short walks and loops for local users. However most existing tracks are in good condition, are of a reasonable standard and appear to have been upgraded recently.

The Peninsula has a range of destinations and unique recreational experiences that focus on the coastal landscape, such as the coastal escarpment, headlands, beaches and character coastal communities (the Eastern Walkway is one of the more prominent tracks). While some tracks can be bleak and exposed, they are all at a human scale and accessible for the wider Wellington community.

7.17 SECTOR 17 - WESTERN RURAL AND COAST

This sector is located west of the urban fringe, outside the Outer Green Belt. It is a diverse and ruggedly beautiful landscape with limited areas of flat land and softer rolling hills, mainly to the north in Ohariu Valley.

Recreational users are increasingly reaching out into this rural hinterland. By virtue of its close proximity to Wellington City, this sector is attracting significant levels of interest.² The remote, wild country provides a unique recreational experience including:

- the wild South Coast
- exceptional views of Wellington, the South Island ranges and the sea
- sites of historic and geological interest
- a range of landscapes.
- distinctive flora and fauna.

² 'Routes, Risks and Restoration' – an assessment of ecological significance and public access linkages within riparian zones. Clive Anstey, Chris Cosslett, Wren Green. August 1998. See Map 3 'Recreational Use Patterns'