3. Partnership and community participation

The Wellington Town Belt is an essential part of what people recognise to be characteristically 'Wellington'. It is important to Wellingtonians and visitors, whether they visit the Town Belt or not. The Council recognises that it governs the Town Belt in trust for the people of Wellington. The Council will work in partnership with mana whenua and the wider community to involve them in the ongoing management of the Town Belt.

3.1 Partnership with mana whenua

Guiding principle

The Council will work in partnership with mana whenua to manage the Town Belt.

This recognises that mana whenua will have an ongoing role in the management of the Town Belt, consistent with our current relationship.

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5 Governance involves setting the strategic direction for matters involving the Town Belt and ensuring there are funds for implementation.
6 Management means carrying out the governance decisions.
3.1.1 Objective

The Council and mana whenua will work in partnership on the management of the Wellington Town Belt.

3.1.2 Policies

3.1.2.1 Wellington City Council recognises the significance of Town Belt lands to mana whenua

3.1.2.2 Mana whenua and Wellington City Council agree that to the extent that they are able under the Reserves Act 1977 and the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009, and the Town Belt Deed (1873) and any other relevant legislation or future deed of settlement with Ngāti Toa they will have particular regard to the mana whenua view.

3.1.2.3 Mana whenua will recognise the role of Wellington City Council on matters relating to governance of the Town Belt under the Town Belt Deed (1873).

3.1.2.4 Mana whenua and Wellington City Council will meet annually to review and report on the performance of the management year and proposed work programme for the upcoming year.

3.1.2.5 Wellington City Council will work with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust for the protection of former Town Belt land identified as Right of First Refusal (RFR) in the Deed of Settlement.

3.1.3 Mana whenua

The Waitangi Tribunal found that in 1840 the iwi groups that had take raupatu, or rights of conquest over all the lands within the Port Nicholson block were: Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Ruanui, Taranaki, Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Toa Rangatira. However, the Tribunal also found that these iwi each had their own ahi kā over particular areas as follows:

- Te Ātiawa at Te Whanganui ā Tara and parts of the south-west coast
- Taranaki and Ngāti Ruanui at Te Aro
- Ngāti Tama at Kaiwharawhara and environs, and parts of the south-west coast
- Ngāti Toa at parts of the south-west coast

From 1840, when the first New Zealand Company ships began to arrive at Port Nicholson (Wellington), conflict quickly escalated between local Māori (mana whenua) and new settlers. Land inhabited by mana whenua was invalidly 'purchased' by the New Zealand Company and sold to settlers. As settler numbers increased, mana whenua were forcibly displaced and their lands taken – including that area of land now known as the Town Belt.

Following their initial displacement and the subsequent loss of almost all their land, mana whenua struggled to obtain the return of their lands through legal means, eg the McCleverty Award.

For more than 150 years little progress was made to resolve the grievances of mana whenua and address the historical deprivation they had experienced. This changed in 2003, following the

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7 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."

8 Ahi kā refers to non-contestable rights associated with occupation and is described as interests in: "...those areas which a group resided on or cultivated, or where it enjoyed the continuing use of the surrounding resources, provided such occupation or use was not successfully challenged by other Māori groups. Ahi kā is used in the report only in respect of those areas where a group had established non-contestable rights..."

9 Mana whenua means customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area.
release of the Waitangi Tribunal report, Te Whanganui ā Tara me ōna Takiwā, on the Wellington District. In this report, the Tribunal concluded that serious breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi by the Crown occurred in the Port Nicholson Block, and in particular:

“The Tribunal finds that the Crown, in taking most of the Town Belt land from Māori without their consent or any consultation, and without making any payment, acted in breach of article 2 of the Treaty and failed to respect the rangatiratanga of Māori in and over their land.”

The Tribunal recommended that representatives of these groups enter into negotiation with the Crown to settle these grievances.

Following the publication of the 2003 report, the Crown entered into negotiations with the claimants representing the descendants of tūpuna of Te Ātiawa, Taranaki, Ngāti Ruanui and Ngāti Tama. The Crown-mandated claimant collective was named Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika. After six years of negotiation, the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009 came into force on 2 September 2009 following a signing between the Crown and representatives of Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika.

Ngāti Toa Rangatira are in the final stages of the Treaty settlement process. Legislation has been drafted to give effect to aspects of the Deed of Settlement between the Crown and Ngāti Toa Rangatira, signed on 7 December 2011. Part of the redress seeks to acknowledge and compensate Ngāti Toa Rangatira for their exclusion from the Port Nicholson Block reserves (known as the 'tenths') which includes the Town Belt Area.

At present, Wellington City Council’s relationship with mana whenua is managed through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated. Mana whenua have indicated that they wish to be more involved in the future management of the Town Belt.

### 3.2 Community participation

**Guiding principle**

*The Council will encourage and support community participation in the management of the Town Belt.*

This recognises that Wellingtonians will have an ongoing role in the management of the Town Belt. The Council values community input and acknowledges the work of individuals and groups to protect, enhance and use the Town Belt. The Council will support and encourage community participation, which underpins long-term sustainability.

**3.2.1 Objective**

To manage the Town Belt on behalf of, and in partnership with the wider Wellington community.

**3.2.2 Policies**

3.2.2.1 The active participation by the community and the Friends of the Wellington Town Belt in the ongoing management, maintenance, development and monitoring of the Town Belt shall be encouraged and supported.
3.2.2.2 To provide opportunities for individuals, groups and businesses to be involved in activities on the Town Belt, such as habitat restoration; and recreation development, such as tracks; and events.

3.2.2.3 To establish, as appropriate, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with groups that contribute to activities on the Town Belt, such as habitat restoration, recreation development, and events.

3.2.2.4 To support the beautification of the Town Belt by adjacent property owners provided the work is consistent with the objectives and policies of this plan.

3.2.2.5 To report regularly to community groups on progress towards key objectives in the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan

3.2.3 Community groups

There has always been public involvement in the management, development and protection of the Town Belt. This involvement ranges from individuals who look after the area of Town Belt adjacent to their properties, through to organised groups who lease areas and are responsible for managing these areas as, for example, bowling greens or tennis courts. There is the opportunity to get a wider section of the community involved in the Town Belt including urban Māori, ethnic communities and young people.

With the development of the 1995 Management Plan and increased interest in the Town Belt, the Friends of the Wellington Town Belt was established to promote and protect the Town Belt and assist Wellington City Council in its management. A number of other groups also advocate for the Town Belt.

More recently there has been increased interest in the environmental enhancement of the Town Belt, as pine trees have been removed and areas restored to native forest. This interest has been seen in the development of smaller neighbourhood-based groups who have an interest in parts of the Town Belt and work with the Council to restore them subject to an agreed restoration or development plan. There are currently 13 groups working on the Town Belt who have Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Council. These include Friends of Central Park, Coolidge Street Group, and Bell Street Reserve Restoration Group.

There are currently several volunteer groups building and maintaining tracks on the Town Belt. The majority of these tracks are dual-use and are providing more opportunities for all users of the track network.

Many individuals who live in houses that back onto the Town Belt have over time managed the Town Belt in some way be it for private or public benefit. These activities have ranged from effectively privatising parts of the Town Belt by adding structures, fences and so on through to planting trees and maintaining the area to improve its appearance. Privatising parts of the Town Belt are effectively encroachments and require removal within an agreed timeframe. Beautification by planting, provided it does not exclude other members of the public can often improve the appearance and maintenance of the Town Belt.

Arbor Day planting at the former-Chest Hospital in Newtown
There are 42 community leases on the Town Belt covering 5.9 ha. The lessees of these areas manage the Town Belt on behalf of the Council subject to terms and conditions in the lease. In most cases, such as the Renouf Tennis Centre, the organisation owns, manages and maintains the facility.

The future of the Town Belt depends on the active involvement of the community as it did during the early period of development. Council resources are limited and the future work on the Town Belt depends heavily on the involvement of the public to ensure its success. Council staff and community groups need to work closely in organising projects that align with the objectives of this management plan. In particular, getting young people involved in community activity and projects on the Town Belt will help them develop their leadership potential.