8.9 Sector 9  Mt Victoria/Matairangi

8.9.1 Character and use

This sector lies at the north end of the long ridge forming the eastern arm of the Town Belt. The area extends from Mt Alfred north to the slopes of Oriental Bay (Sector 9: context map).

There are three distinct areas.

1. The ridge is a long narrow strip of open ground with scattered tree groups that slope southwards for one kilometre from the Mt Victoria summit to Mt Alfred with generally easy gradients. Alexandra Road runs along the ridge.

2. The city slopes above the suburb of Mt Victoria are generally sunny, dry and exposed to the north-westerly wind. These are generally steep slopes dominated by pine and macrocarpa trees with areas of eucalypt and pohutukawa plantings. An understory of native vegetation and some exotic species are regenerating on more favourable sites, generally where there is more moisture, in the gullies and on the lower slopes. Open ground is generally confined to the less visible low ground.

3. The Oriental Bay slopes occupy the mid-slopes with housing above and below, dropping down to sea level at the north end of Oriental Parade. This is also generally steep ground, sunny, dry and exposed to the north-westerly wind. There is a mosaic of vegetation types, including stands of conifers, eucalypt and pohutukawa, areas of rank and mown grassland, and areas of both exotic and native secondary growth.
Mt Victoria is the most intensively used forest area on the Town Belt according to recent market research with 95 percent of residents having visited and 68 percent visiting at least once every six months. The lookout area provides extensive views and information on the city and Town Belt. The forest provides shelter, shade and a variety of environments able to withstand heavy use. This is a popular area for mountain biking.

8.9.2 Land addition and boundary rationalisation

Policies

8.9.2.1 Formally add the following areas to Town Belt:
- Mt Victoria Lookout land
- Lookout Road Open Space lands apart from the driveway associated with easements to 28 and 30 Alexandra Road
- 150 Alexandra Road
- Oriental Parade to Palliser Road
- Point Jerningham Reserve.

8.9.2.2 The Hataitai bus tunnel passing under the Town Belt land in this sector should be surveyed. Following the survey, the legal status of the subsoil, used for tunnel purposes, should be legally removed from the Town Belt and then gazetted road.

The proposed additions to the Town Belt in this sector include Mt Victoria Lookout area, open space lands along Lookout Road, and Point Jerningham Reserve (Sector 9: context map). This land is covered under this management plan.

Please refer to Table 9 at the end of this sector for a complete list of Town Belt land additions, removals and boundary rationalisations.

Mt Victoria Lookout area: The land described as the Mt Victoria Lookout includes the southern section of Lookout Road, the area around the Byrd Memorial, the lower car park and the lookout platform on top of the Mt Victoria summit.

It was originally part of the Town Belt as set aside by the New Zealand Company, but was allocated for public purposes or public utility before 1873. The land was originally used as a signal station by the Harbour Board and subsequently vested in Wellington City Council for road and pleasure ground purposes.
In 2006, the Council completed a major redevelopment of the Mt Victoria/Matairangi Lookout to retain and enhance its role as a major visitor destination.

Mt Victoria Lookout is a prominent high point at the eastern end of the Town Belt’s horseshoe. It is a very obvious landmark and a focal point from the central city. This is accentuated by the steep unvegetated road cut below the lookout.

The site links physically and visually with existing Town Belt land and the adjacent Lookout Road Open Space land (recommended to also become Town Belt).

The site is accessible, with car parking available at the lower car park off Lookout Road, and an informal track leading south along the Te Ranga a Hiwi ridgeline, to the site of the historical Te Akaterewa Pā.

The site has significant historical and cultural significance to mana whenua.

**Lookout Road Open Space land:** In 2000 the Council surveyed and gazetted the northern section of Lookout Road. The process created nine sections of land zoned Open Space B, located from the Mt Victoria Lookout, going north along Lookout Road to Alexandra Road.

These sections do not have any reserve status or protection.

The three sites below Lookout Road are steep west-facing slopes, mainly covered in gorse with some emergent native and exotic species. A track linking Mt Victoria Lookout with the Southern Walkway goes through the larger of the three sites.

The area around the Centennial Memorial has been redeveloped to replace a water reservoir and incorporate a lookout/seating area, and a track linking down to a mown grass area and to Alexandra Road.

The area between the transmitter mast and Mt Victoria Lookout is part of the ridgeline. The trig station is on this section of land. There have been two formal access easements granted off the driveway on the southern edge of this area to private residential dwellings. The driveway looks to be associated with nearby houses and has low Town Belt values and will not be added to the Town Belt. An informal track has been created over the land.

The remaining section of land is adjacent to and a continuation of the grassy slope running from the top car park of the Mt Victoria Lookout down to Alexandra Road.

These sections of land are visually part of the Mt Victoria Lookout and ridgeline landscape, which provides a strong focal point from the central city. They are continuous with existing Town Belt land and creates a link (both visually and physical) from the Mt Victoria Lookout to the Centennial Memorial.

Panoramic views across the city, harbour and Town Belt can be experienced from different parts of this land and along Lookout Road. It is important that these views are protected.

Some parts of this land is suited for passive recreation, such as sightseeing, picnicking and walking. The areas below Lookout Road are steep but a track linking Robieson Street with Lookout Road could be developed in the future.

Although this land was never part of the original Town Belt, it is recommended that all of these lands apart from the driveway with private easements be added to the Town Belt.

**Oriental Parade to Palliser Road:** This is a prominent area behind Oriental Bay. There is a play area and the Southern Walkway starts here.
This land is held as pleasure ground for the City of Wellington and its inhabitants. Lot 3 was acquired as part of a land exchange in 1925. Lot 2 was conveyed to Council in 1883. Lot 2 was original Town Belt.

It is recommended that this land be added to the Town Belt.

**Point Jerningham Reserve:** Point Jerningham is made up of the coastal area of land and steep escarpment that lies at the very eastern end of Oriental Bay Parade. It can be accessed from Carlton Gore Road and Oriental Bay Parade. The escarpment is too steep to be accessible but has significant landscape value given its prominent city location.

There is a building on part of the recreation reserve, which is owned and used by a Dance Club. The land is also the firing base for the Defence Forces ceremonial salute, comprising two buildings and a concrete pad. It is used several times a year for this purpose.

The escarpment is mainly covered by gorse with some emergent native or exotic species.

Point Jerningham is prominent visually from the central city. The recreation reserve and escarpment extends the green backdrop to the central city by visually linking the existing Town Belt with the harbour. The site is a natural extension to the Town Belt.

This land was not part of the original Town Belt as set out by the New Zealand Company, but does have high historical value given that it was used for military purposes in the First and Second World Wars.

**8.9.3 Landscape and ecological management**

**Policies**

8.9.3.1 Develop a master plan for Mt Victoria/Matairangi that looks at landscape, future plantings and rate of removal of pines, as well as recreation development and ways to reduce user conflict.

8.9.3.2 Retain the isolation strips along the ridgeline between the Centennial Memorial and Mt Victoria Lookout at the rear of the properties on Robieson Street.

8.9.3.3 Develop vegetation guidelines for Mt Victoria based on the following intentions:

- Assisting the establishment of native forest on the steep slopes north of Palliser Road.
- Continue the theme of coastal shrub vegetation on the summit ridge between the Mt Victoria Lookout and Centennial Memorial.
- Improve views from Mt Victoria Lookout with vegetation management and selective removal of mature pine trees.
- Identify areas where conifer/eucalypt forest should be retained and perpetuated.
- Maintain the commemorative planting area in Charles Plimmer Park.
- Ensure succession planting of taller tree species.
- Aim to strengthen visual unity along the ridge.

8.9.3.4 Work in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wellington and Mt Vic Revegers on the ‘City to Summit’ project.

8.9.3.5 Continue with animal pest control and the control of weeds.
The vegetation needs to be carefully managed as this is a highly visible area, especially the boundary with Alexandra Road and Palliser Road.

This calls for a conservative approach to vegetation management. Simple large-scale vegetation patterns are required to protect the visual unity of this important city backdrop.

Vegetation choices are influenced by the north-west aspect with exposure to drying winds and the steep slopes with little soil cover.

Some of the earliest plantings of conifers occurred at Pirie Street. This sector still contains extensive areas of exotic conifers (Sector 9: landscape and existing vegetation map). Native species are regenerating in the understorey.

A return to native vegetation would result in low diversity coastal forest on the higher ground with taller species confined to the moister gullies.

Mt Victoria is in a very strategic ecological location given its height and the fact it is roughly an equal distance from Maupuia/Watts Peninsula, Te Ahumairangi Hill, Waimapihi/Polhill Gully and Karori Sanctuary. The taller mature forest canopy is a key stepping stone especially for our larger bird species. It is proposed to continue with the mixed vegetation patterns and have a staged approach to vegetation management on Mt Victoria. It is important to ensure the taller tree species are replaced through succession planting.

Over the past 15 years, there have been the following changes:
- conifer removal (limited to removal of a large stand above Telford Terrace)
- revegetation of gullies above Oriental Bay
- shrubland revegetation around the Mt Victoria summit as part of its redevelopment
- development of a commemorative planting area in Charles Plimmer Park, which is now full.

The summit ridge between the Centennial Memorial and Mt Victoria Lookout is largely unbuilt. In 2000, when the northern end of Lookout Road was partially legalised, it was proposed to establish an isolation strip along the rear of properties on Robieson Street to prevent development and access onto the summit ridge. Several property owners along the newly legalised road negotiated a settlement to prevent the strip being laid. Most were along the built edge at the northern end. One property, at what is now 34 Lookout Road, was on a more visible part of the ridge as seen from the

![Mt Victoria from above Central Park in Brooklyn, 1907](Wellington City Council Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, G 025451 1/1)

![Mt Victoria from above Central Park in Brooklyn, 2012](Wellington City Council Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, G 025451 1/1)
Mt Victoria lookout. The Council has had several requests from other property owners on Robieson Street to have the isolation strip removed. The Council has always declined these applications because of the potential affects on the Town Belt and landscape character of the ridgeline.

There are two community groups working in this sector:

**Mt Vic Revegers** have been working for many years to revegetate the slopes of Mt Victoria with native plants. Recently they have been joined by the **Rotary Club of Wellington** who have commenced an enhancement planting project on Mt Victoria called ‘City to Summit’ to celebrate their centenary in 2021. The objectives of the project are:

1. enhancing ecological values and scenic quality in one of central Wellington’s most popular tourist and walking areas, and
2. fostering a sense of community through the participation and interaction of a range of community groups, including Wellington Rotary.

### 8.9.4 Recreation

**Policies**

8.9.4.1 Develop more single-track mountain bike tracks; and endeavour to separate walkers and bikers in some areas. These will be identified with public input into development of the Landscape Plan (policy 8.9.3.1)

8.9.4.2 Upgrade the Hataitai to City track as a major commuter route for walkers and cyclists.

8.9.4.3 Improve walking access along the summit ridge between the lookout and the Centennial Memorial.

8.9.4.4 Improve access from Pirie Street through to Charles Plimmer Park.

Mt Victoria is mainly used for informal recreation and tourism (Sector 9: current uses map). The forested slopes offer an extensive area close to the city, in which a ‘natural’ environment can be experienced, while the summit ridge offers exhilarating panoramic views. A network of tracks provide walking, jogging and mountain biking opportunities, including the Southern Walkway\(^{59}\), although the section of walkway from Oriental Bay to Palliser Road is closed to biking. The World Mountain Running and international mountain biking events have been held at Mt Victoria.

The summit viewing area is a major tourist attraction, while Alexandra Road provides a scenic driving route along the ridgeline popular with tourists and Wellingtonians alike.

The Mt Victoria/Matairangi Lookout area was improved in 2007 and includes:

- a new viewing platform and a more gently contoured path to the summit
- a more pedestrian-friendly area around the Byrd Memorial
- improved car and bus parking
- new handrails, seats and rubbish bins
- revegetation of the summit slopes into a native shrubland
- improved lighting, traffic management and directional and information signs
- public toilets on the corner of Lookout Road and Alexandra Road.

Interpretation signage covers Māori history and sites of significance on the Town Belt, the history of the Town Belt, the city's major earthquake fault lines and the memorials that are in the area.

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\(^{59}\) An 11km walkway from Oriental Bay to Island Bay
The Centennial Memorial at the northern end of the summit ridge was integrated with a new viewing area at the time of the reservoir upgrade in 2006. There is no car parking at this site and no footpath between the Centennial Memorial and Mt Victoria Lookout.

Leased facilities comprise:

- **Victoria Bowling Club Inc**, with two greens and clubhouse facilities off Pirie Street
- **The Long Hall Trust** at Point Jerningham.

**The Innermost Garden Inc**, next to Victoria Bowling Club, has a licence for a community garden and a lease for the former Bandoliers building.

Two play areas provide facilities for the Mt Victoria and Roseneath communities.

There is a dog exercise area at Charles Plimmer Park.

**Wellington Mountain Bike Club** is building and maintaining some tracks in this sector. They have built dual-use tracks and some single-purpose mountain-bike-only tracks.
Sector 9 - Mt Victoria
Management and proposed future changes

Vegetation management: Implement City-to-Summit planting programme in partnership with the Rotary Club of Wellington

Landscape: Develop a landscape & recreation masterplan.

Landscape: Retain views from Lookout

Landscape: Retain unbuilt character of Lookout Road. Develop path between Mt Victoria Lookout and Centennial Memorial

Alexandra Road removal with Mt Victoria Lookout added to Town Belt

Vegetation management: Retain green framework along Alexandra Road

Legend:
- Hataitai to City Walkway
- Southern Walkway
- WCC tracks
- Land rationalisation
- Proposed removal

Scale: 1:8,500

Other data has been compiled from a variety of sources and its accuracy may vary, but is generally +/- 1m.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site name</th>
<th>Legal description and area</th>
<th>Description, location, current use</th>
<th>Previous policy</th>
<th>Discussion, criteria assessment</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Land covered by this TBMP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lookout Road open space lands</td>
<td>This land is held in three CT's. Part of CT 69533 Sec 2, 4, 5, &amp; 6 SO 303817 CT 123577 - Sec 1 &amp; 8 SO 303817 CT 55700 Lot 2 DP 306858</td>
<td>Adjacent to, along the eastern side of, existing Town Belt and the Pleasure Ground land (at the Mt Victoria summit) is an area of Council owned land that is zoned open space B. This land contains, the Centennial memorial and around to the transmitter mast linking into Alexandra Road. Lookout Road was legally surveyed and gazetted in 2000. The area primarily consists of mown grass. It also has an outlook shelter and a water supply reservoir.</td>
<td>The land is identified in the TBMP 1995 as a potential addition to the Town Belt. (Mt Victoria Summit – the centennial memorial and area around the transmitter mast, as per 11b, Figure 4 TBMP, pg. 17).</td>
<td>These lands are contiguous with the Town Belt. These sections of land are visually part of the Mount Victoria Lookout and ridgeline landscape which forms a strong focal point from the Central City. The lands were never Original Town Belt, nor included in the 1873 Deed, however it is zoned Open Space B.</td>
<td>It is recommended to add these lands to the Town Belt – except Section 7 SO 303817</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Victoria Lookout land</td>
<td>Part of Mt Victoria and part of the land described in the 7th Schedule to the Wellington Corporation and Harbour Board Streets and Lands Act 1892, CT 716/19. Held as Pleasure Ground and vested in the Council, pursuant to the Public Works Act 1928, Proclamation 5579, NZ Gazette 1936 page 917, comprising 1.8678ha.</td>
<td>The land described as the Mt Victoria Lookout includes the majority of the ring road, the Byrd Memorial, car parks and lookout platform on the top of Mt Victoria. This square-shaped land parcel was originally used as a signal station by the Harbour Board and subsequently vested in Wellington City Council for road and Pleasure Ground purposes. The Mt Victoria Lookout was original Town Belt land, but was allocated for public purposes or public utility before 1873. Following its use as a signal station by the Harbour Board, it was then taken for a pleasure ground and roading purposes and vested in Wellington City Council (CT 716/19).</td>
<td>The Town Belt Management Plan (TBMP) 1995 states: The Council shall initiate action to reinstate the land currently held as 'Pleasure Ground to its former Town Belt status and at the same time, shall initiate action to legalise the road looping the summit. (part 2, page 38)</td>
<td>The site borders existing Town Belt and is a significant landscape focal point within the Town Belt and the city. Since the signal station closed, the land has been managed effectively and perceived as part of the Town Belt. It has significant historical and cultural meaning and memory associated with it – both European and Māori.</td>
<td>The Council should initiate action to reinstate the land currently held as 'Pleasure Ground to its former Town Belt status and at the same time, take action to legalise the road looping the summit. This will involve appropriate survey work, gazetting the road, and inclusions to and exclusions from the Town Belt.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mt Victoria Radio Networks site</td>
<td>This land is located on the east side of Lookout Road along the Mt Victoria ridge, between the Mt Victoria Lookout and Centennial Memorial. This land is owned/administered by Radio Networks and the site used for telecommunications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If the ownership and/or use of this site changes then the Council will assess this site for possible addition to Town Belt.</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>150 Alexandra Road</td>
<td>Lot 1 DP11417</td>
<td>This is a Council-owned section next to Centennial Memorial land and located on the corner of Alexandra Road and Lookout Road.</td>
<td>This land adjoins Centennial Memorial (also proposed to become Town Belt). This section of land adds local landscape value to the Lookout Road experience.</td>
<td>This land should be added to the Town Belt.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Oriental Parade to Palliser Road</strong></td>
<td>Lots 2 &amp; 3 DP 10507 Part CT 427/150 3-7365ha Subject to the Deed of Conveyance 144970.</td>
<td>This land is located between Oriental Parade, The Crescent and just south of Wilkinson Street. This land is subject to a right to the trusts and provisions set out in Deed of Conveyance 144970. Lot 3 was acquired as part of a land exchange in 1925. Lot 2 was conveyed to Council in 1883. This land is held as pleasure ground for the City of Wellington and its inhabitants. The start of the Southern Walkway starts here. There is a playground at The Crescent.</td>
<td>This land was included as Town Belt in the 1995 Plan.</td>
<td>This land is a prominent backdrop to Oriental Bay. Lot 2 was part of the original Town Belt (1841).</td>
<td>This land should be added to the Town Belt.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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</table>

| **Point Jerningham** | The area discussed is in two parts, namely: the existing Recreation Reserve at Point Jerningham, being all the land in CT 22B/899, described as Section 167 Evans Bay District, comprising 0.7147ha, and the legal road, which is the green strip of land that lies between Carlton Gore Road and Oriental Parade. | Point Jerningham is the coastal area of land and escarpment that lies at the very eastern end of Oriental Parade, heading around to Evans Bay Parade. It can be accessed from Carlton Gore Road and Oriental Bay Parade. Point Jerningham is Council-owned land with Open Space B zoning. There is a building on part of the Recreation Reserve, now leased for drama, arts, and dance purposes. The land is also the firing base for the Defence Forces ceremonial salute, with two buildings and a concrete pad. It is used several times a year for these purposes. The escarpment is mainly covered by gorse with some emergent native or exotic species. | The Town Belt Management Plan identifies the Point Jerningham reserve as a potential addition to the Town Belt network, management area 11, because of its visual continuity with this part of the Town Belt. The TBMP states: Undeveloped land at the tip of Point Jerningham can be seen as a small but significant extension of the Town Belt, linking the Town Belt open space to the harbour in this key location. (part 3, page 37) | Point Jerningham is prominent visually from the central city. The Recreation Reserve and escarpment extends the green backdrop to the central city by visually linking the existing Town Belt with the harbour. The site is a natural extension to the Town Belt. | It is recommended that: a) the land at Point Jerningham, with Recreation Reserve status, described as Section 167 Evans Bay District, being all the land in CT 22B/899, is added to the Town Belt, because of its visual prominence and location in the city b) the longer term goal to protect the strip of open space land running between Oriental Parade and Carlton Gore Road be agreed to. | Yes |