

# Te Whai Oranga Pōneke

## Open Space and Recreation Strategy

June 2023

Absolutely Positively  
Wellington City Council  
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



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# Ngā Ihirangi

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# He rautaki kei runga whārangi

## Strategy on a page

Mission

**A flourishing network of parks and recreation opportunities, interwoven into everyday life, that supports Wellingtonians to live well and connect to nature and each other.**

Overarching principles

**Tiakitanga**

**Whanaungatanga**

**Pārekareka**

**Wairuatanga**

**Maanakitanga**

Strategic Focuses and Approaches

- 1.1 Multifunctional
- 1.2 Well-distributed & connected
- 1.3 Proactively grow open space
- 1.4 Share our streets

- 5.1 Equity of diverse activities
- 5.2 Thriving clubs and organisations
- 5.3 World-class experiences
- 5.4 Embrace the wind

- 4.1 Iwi as kaitiaki
- 4.2 Visibility of Te ao Māori
- 4.3 Normalise Māori games
- 4.4 Customary practices
- 4.5 Build mātauranga capability



- 2.1 Universal design
- 2.2 Equity approach
- 2.3 Welcome play and skate
- 2.4 Safe and comfortable

- 3.1 Ki uta ki tai
- 3.2 Waterways
- 3.3 Adapt to a changing climate
- 3.4 Connect with nature
- 3.5 Minimise environmental impact
- 3.6 Reduce carbon footprint

Implementation

**Performance Indicators**

**Action Plan**

**Open Space Categories and Provision Targets  
(See separate document)**

# Te whakatakinga

## Introduction

Wellingtonians love their city's public open spaces and recreational places. Listening to the chorus of birds while wandering through Ōtari-Wilton's Bush, watching the kids hurtle down the slide at Shorland Park, having a splash at the Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre in Kilbirnie, and meeting mates for lunch at Te Ngākau (Civic Square), are all part of what makes living in Wellington great.

Our open space and recreation networks are an essential part of Wellington life. They underpin important aspects of our city's environmental, social, economic, and cultural wellbeing. However, they are coming under increasing pressure as our population grows, as our climate changes and as our communities diversify.

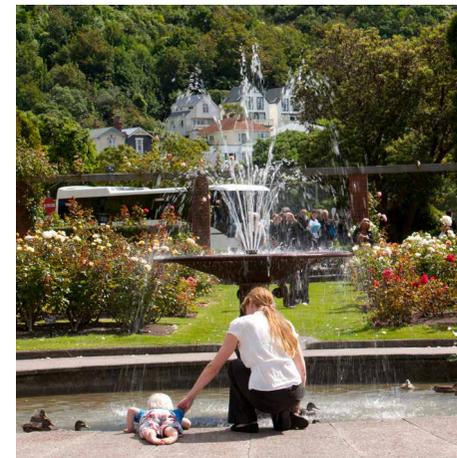
This open space and recreation strategy, *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*, provides an overarching framework and strategic direction for Wellington City Council

(the Council) to manage public open space, recreation facilities and recreation programmes and services over the next 30 years. It will be reviewed every 10 years to update our priorities to guide decisions on funding and investment.

This strategy builds on mahi that the Council has achieved since *Our Capital Spaces Strategy 2013* and before. Since 2013, we have better protected Te Taiao as more people and communities have worked to take on a tiaki role in our green spaces. With their help, we've been implementing our biodiversity action plan, *Our Natural Capital*, achieved our goal of planting two million trees and seen native bird life spread across the city. We've improved the quality and availability of sports facilities, including developing the Waiora sports hub, progressed installation of artificial turf on 8 playing field areas, upgrading 56 play areas and Waitohi swimming pool. More people on low incomes are getting active through our expanded Leisure Card. We've bought more land to help connect up the Outer Green Belt and Skyline Track and have improved our 387km track network with more routes, connections, and upgrades.

We need to build on this hard-won legacy and keep pace with change. Investment will be required to optimise what our existing parks and facilities can offer and to continue expanding and developing our network as the population grows.

To shape this strategy, we have reviewed the existing strategy, conducted a research survey, compiled findings from previous parks and recreation surveys, conducted GIS (mapping) analysis, assessed national trends in recreational participation and benchmarked against other council practices, policies, and strategies.



We also gathered 1452 submissions from the community through our 'Happy Place' engagement survey in April 2022, and then almost 400 submissions on the draft strategy in April 2023, held a wānanga with Taranaki Whānui members, and met with key stakeholders such as Nuku Ora, the Accessibility Advisory Group, and the Regional Sports Leaders Forum. Our community told us open spaces are crucial to mental health, physical health, and feeling connected to nature and one another.

People want well-maintained spaces they can get to easily using active modes, with appropriate facilities so that every person can enjoy Wellington, no matter the time of day, ability, or weather.

At the core of this strategy is our mission for open space and recreation, underpinned by five principles. To meet the mission, we have five strategic focuses with approaches and an action plan. We've developed [open space categories](#) and [provision targets](#) to guide the way we implement and monitor the action plan.

# Te whāinga me ngā mātāpono

## Mission and values

The vision for Wellington, as set out by *Wellington 2040*, is **“an inclusive, sustainable and creative capital for people to live, work, and play”**.

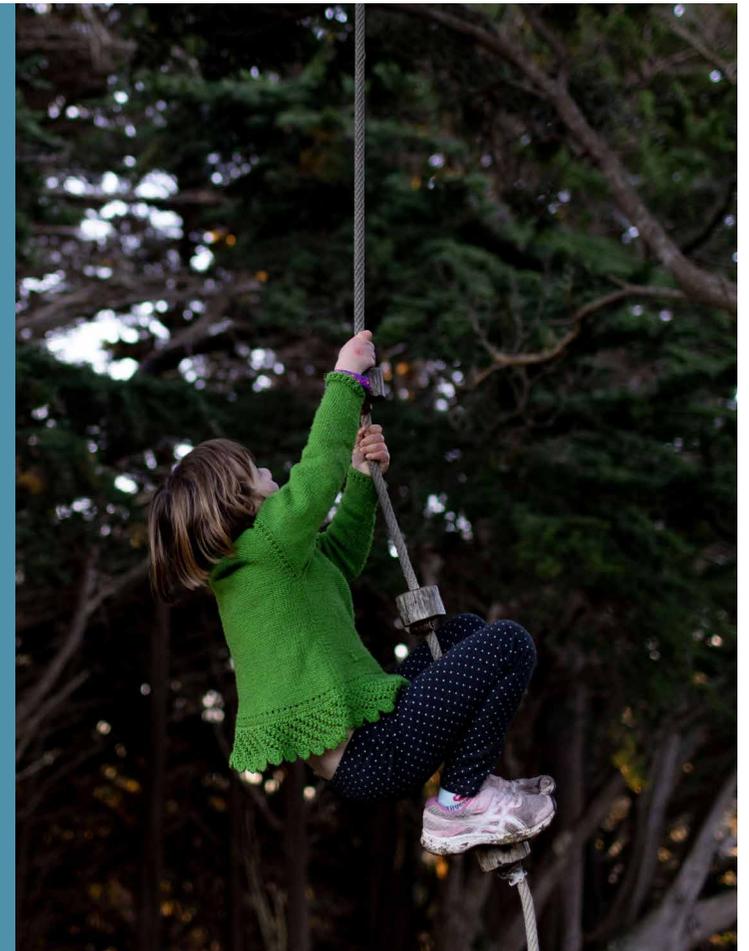
To deliver this vision, the Council's outcome framework focuses on four aspects of wellbeing: environmental, social, cultural, and economic. *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*, the Open Space and Recreation Strategy, will help deliver this vision and will support the four wellbeings. It incorporates inclusivity, sustainability, and creativity in our open space and recreation network.

Te Whai Oranga means 'in the pursuit of wellness' and embodies the core function of open space and recreation: *To support the wellness of people to live and play, and the intrinsically connected health of our environment.*

### Mission

The mission of Te Whai Oranga Pōneke is to create:

**A flourishing network of parks and recreation opportunities, interwoven into everyday life, that supports Wellingtonians to live well and connect to nature and each other.**



## Principles

The principles of *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke* provide the foundation for this strategy. They underpin how the Council will conduct itself, the strategic focuses, and how decisions about public open space and recreation will be made. The principles are based on Te Ao Māori concepts, which support our mission in providing a strong base for the interconnectedness of people and the environment<sup>1</sup>. The principles are:



### Tiakitanga

We recognise our intrinsic responsibility as individuals, as the Council, and as a community, to be guardians and stewards of all our resources. We nurture and manage our open space and recreation resources to be environmentally and economically sustainable for all generations to come.

### Whanaungatanga

We recognise that relationships and social connections are central to our wellbeing, our sense of belonging and social cohesion. We foster relationships throughout our recreation and open space communities, partnering to share our knowledge, backgrounds, and resources, and strengthening our sense of community.

### Pārekareka

We recognise how important it is to have fun, play and enjoy ourselves. Recreation and open spaces will help people to thrive by supporting balanced, fun, and joyful lifestyles.

### Wairuatanga

We recognise that people are intrinsically part of the natural world. By preserving the mana and mauri (life force) of the environment we can help to support balance and connection.

### Manaakitanga

We show respect, generosity and care for others. We are good hosts throughout our open spaces and recreation places, showing humility and kindness, and seeking to support accessible, fair, and equitable opportunities for all.

<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that many of these Te Ao Māori concepts do not directly translate into English. However, we have described these principles to relate them to the open space and recreation context. Hirini Moko Mead's book 'Tikanga Māori' provides more detailed information about these concepts.

# Horopaki Context

Pōneke is abundant with varied and rich open space and recreation experiences that help support Wellingtonians to enjoy a high quality of life. The Council is responsible for 4305 hectares<sup>2</sup> of open space across the city, equating to 203m<sup>2</sup> per resident, and a range of related recreation facilities, including 96 hectares of sport field areas, 108 play areas, seven swimming pools and five recreation centres.

This section briefly defines key terms used in this strategy and outlines the current situation, including the Council's role in providing for open space and recreation, our key partners and why open space and recreation is so important for Wellington. It is important to understand where we are, to get to where we want to go.

<sup>2</sup> This number of hectares excludes streetscapes, some of our hard urban public spaces and some spaces in the road reserve.



## What are our open spaces?

Open space is the publicly accessible, predominately unbuilt land that provides opportunities for passive and active recreation opportunities and supports ecosystem services. Open space includes our parks and reserves, nature spaces, urban public spaces such as plazas and squares, some streetscapes, coastal areas, cemeteries/urupā and our destination parks like the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā. People enjoy our open spaces and parks for exercising, socialising, relaxing, playing and connecting to nature. Our open spaces contain much of Wellington's natural elements such as waterways, forests, shorelines and are home to our native biodiversity. They are also equipped with recreation facilities such as playgrounds and sportsfields.

### Open Space Categories



#### Coastal

Beaches, rocky shores and adjacent public open space on the south coast and around the harbour. Provide opportunities for people to experience the marine environment, whether swimming, boating, exploring rock pools, walking or looking at the view.

Examples: Oriental Bay, Lyall Bay.

**57%** of Wellingtonians visit coastal areas at least monthly

**100km** of coastline



#### Neighbourhood

Multi-use recreation parks that are often used within a neighbourhood. Often flat and provide a mix of informal and formal recreation experiences, from picnicking, playing and relaxing, to organised sports and playgrounds.

Examples: Karori Park, Carrara Park, Macalister Park.

**261** neighbourhood parks in Wellington

**82%** of households live within 10 minutes walk of a neighbourhood park

**70%** of Wellingtonians visit a neighbourhood park at least monthly



#### Urban

Open spaces in associated areas of intensified development, such as town centres and the city centre. Includes squares, plaza and greens.

Examples: Midland Park, Te Aro Park, Constable Street Play Area.

**71%** of Wellingtonians visit an urban park at least monthly





## What is recreation?

Recreation in this strategy, is the things we do for enjoyment in our open spaces and recreation facilities. Some of us like to go walking, ride a bike, swimming, or picnicking. Others like to play sport, play games, write a poem, do some gardening, or simply sit and contemplate life. These activities can be important to us and contribute to our wellbeing.

Recreation can be both active and passive.

- **Active recreation** involves physical activity. It can range from running, walking your dog, dancing, or environmental volunteering, to playing at a park or participating in organised sport.
- **Passive recreation** is about the ways we use our open spaces to relax and enrich our lives through contact with nature, social interaction, and cultural activities. Passive recreation can include sitting and watching the world go by, feeling the sun and wind, reading a book, chatting with friends, or watching an outdoor concert.

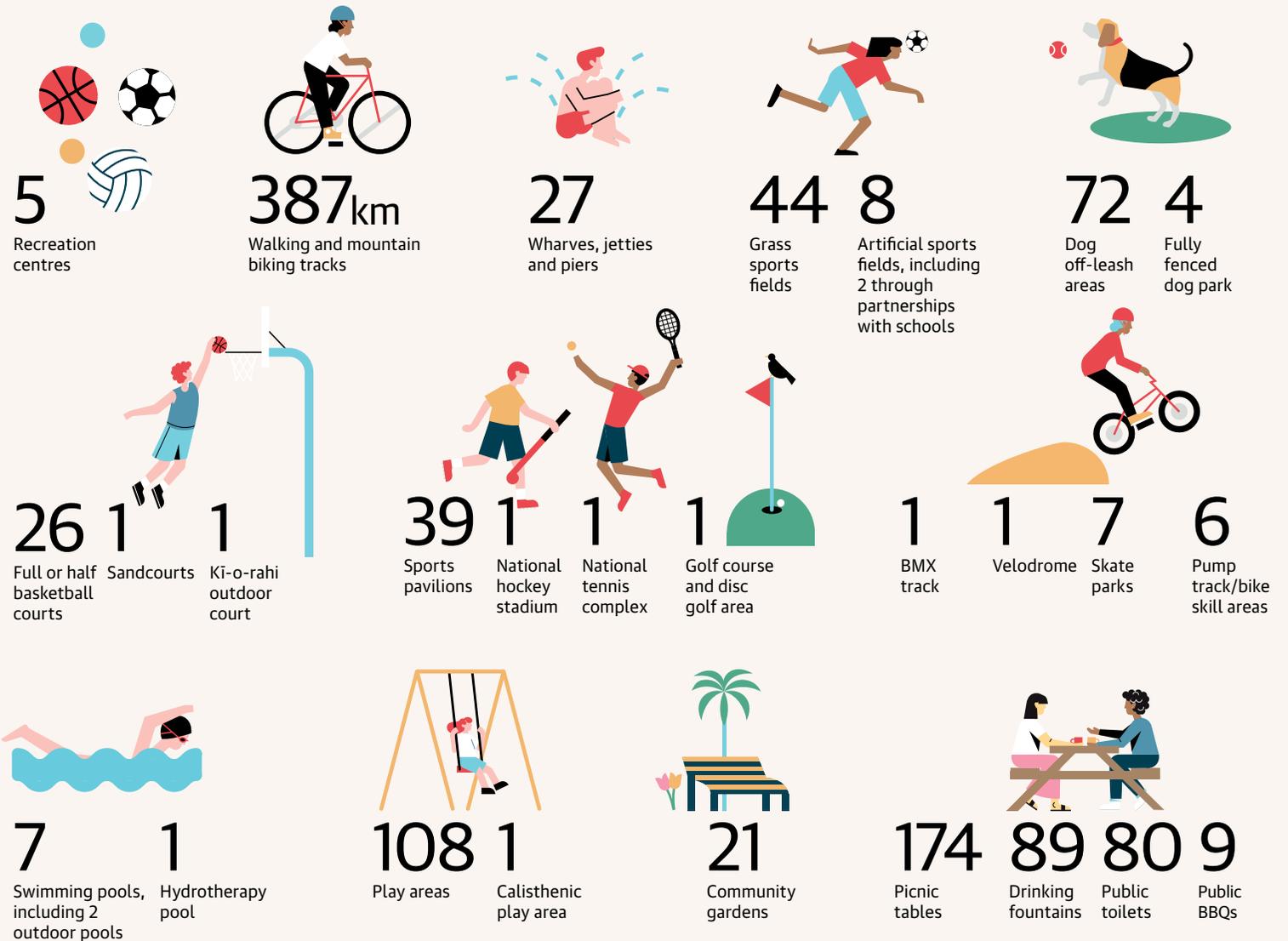
Recreation can be highly structured, and involve teams and organisations, with pre-arranged timing and locations – such as sports like competition football. Alternatively, recreational activities can be flexible, self-programmed and informal, such as shooting hoops, going for a skate on your skateboard or a swim in the ocean.

The Council supports recreation in our city by providing **recreation facilities, programmes and services** and they are important elements of this strategy.



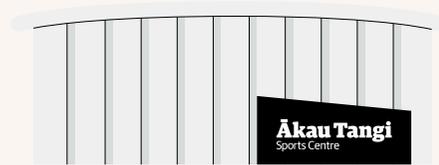
## Recreation facilities

Recreation facilities are the physical structures which accommodate recreation activities. Recreation facilities include green or built assets which are specifically provided and managed for recreational purposes, such as swimming pools, playgrounds, recreation centres, trails, courts, and sports fields; and buildings designed to support general recreation use, such as public toilets. Many of these facilities are provided and managed by the Council, others are developed and run in partnership with the Council (e.g. artificial sports turfs partnership with secondary schools or community-run recreation facilities on land leased from the Council). Other recreation facilities are provided and managed independently of the Council (e.g. private gyms, tennis clubs, and university recreation facilities).



## Recreation programmes and services

Our recreation services and programmes are about raising awareness of and improving access to recreational opportunities. They are services and programmes that support people to recreate. Services include information through websites and signage, or our booking system for use of our facilities and open spaces. They include the range of sports leagues and recreation activities we run, from Gymjam for toddlers, to basketball leagues. Other services help people to get involved and be active, such as the Leisure Card that provides opportunities and fee-discounts for marginalised communities. The Council's Swimwell programme supports over 16,000 participants to learn to swim each year and our Welly Walks programme encourages people to get out and explore our parks.



**900,000+**

Visits a year to Ākau Tangi Sport Centre are supported by Council run services, programmes and leagues including 65 schools in their physical education curriculum.



**16,000**

Children a year are supported to learn to swim through the SwimWell programme.



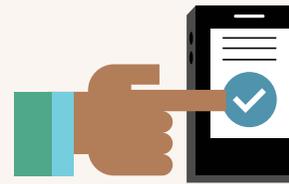
**10,000+**

People from marginalised communities are supported by the Leisure Card.



**160**

Leases and licenses with community groups supported to house community and recreation activities.



**60,000**

Bookings and allocations are managed per year to use our open spaces, sportsfields and recreation facilities



**1.3m**

Visits a year to the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā are supported by park services, programmes and events including Gardens Magic.



**279ha**

Of grass is kept short by our mowing team.



**Up to 25k**

Wellingtonians attend the harbourside markets every Sunday.

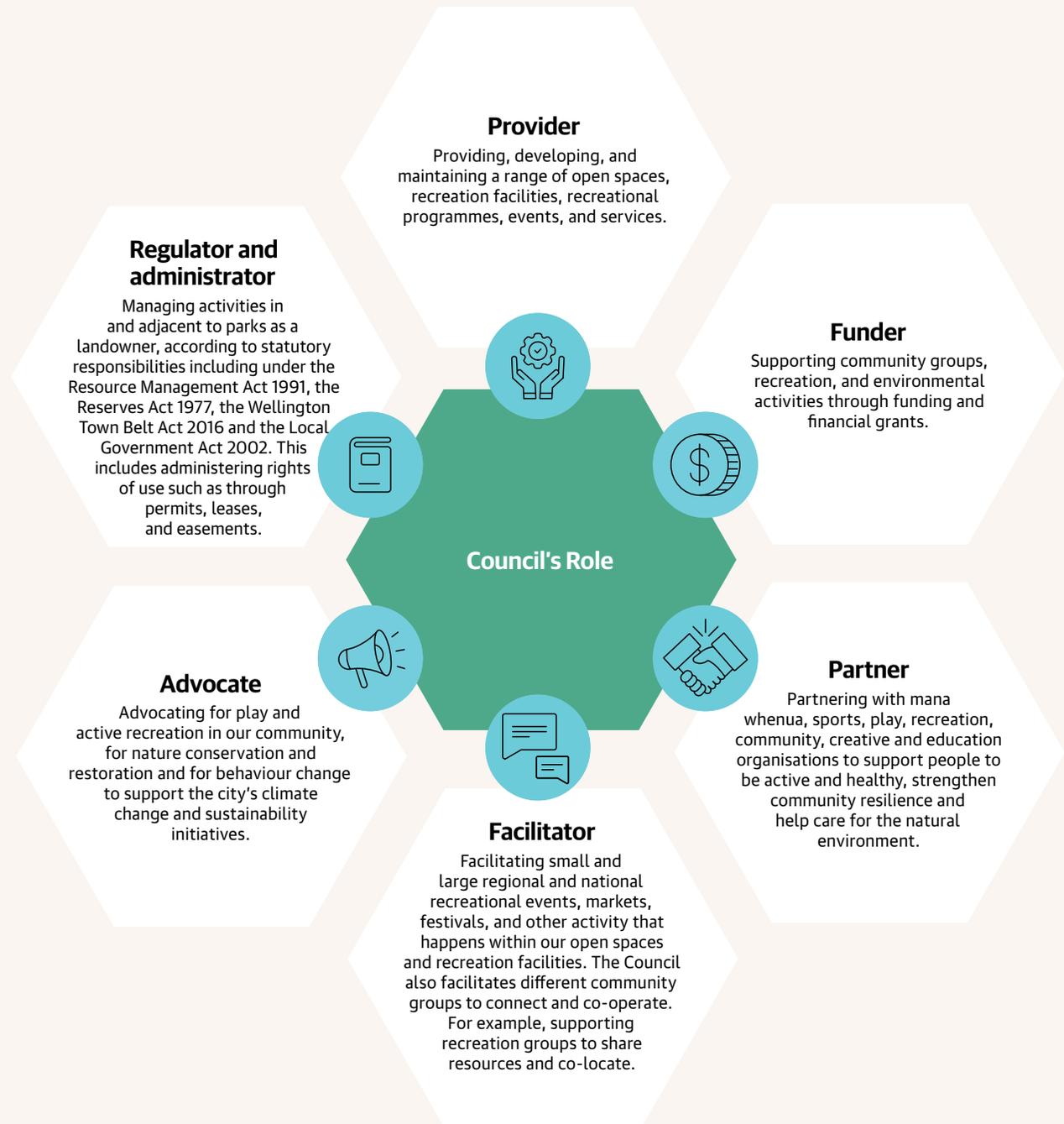


**140+**

Environmental community organisations are assisted by our park rangers to plant, restore and protect our open spaces.

## What is the Council's role?

In providing for open space and recreation, the Council acts in various roles alongside other government and non-government agencies in the sector. Specifically, the Council's roles are as follows.



## Who are our key partners?

The Council doesn't look after or provide open spaces and recreation opportunities alone and neither can it implement this strategy alone.

### Mana Whenua

Aotearoa is a nation founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It is an important part of Wellington's past and future. Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika, Te Āti Awa, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira are the mana whenua groups with whom the Council strives to work in partnership.



In 2022 Council and mana whenua signed a new partnership agreement, Tākai Here. The agreement provides a framework for the way the Council will fulfil its obligations to mana whenua and Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and see Māori thrive in all areas of wellbeing. Tākai Here lays a plan for how mana whenua and the Council will work together for the benefit of the city and region. Under the agreement, all partners, mana whenua and the Council are equal. Through Tākai Here our relationship with mana whenua is ever-evolving.

How we plan for open space and recreation needs to be part of this evolving partnership. However, we also must recognise that the co-management of open spaces has not always been successful, nor an equal partnership. We want to do better in future. We will support mana whenua to exercise their role as kaitiaki in protecting our natural environment and we will work as partners together on our recreation programming and service priorities. Understanding what opportunities exist and how we can re-indigenise our spaces, places, and programmes to integrate indigenous perspectives, cultural identities, and elements into the fabric of the city will be key to achieving this.

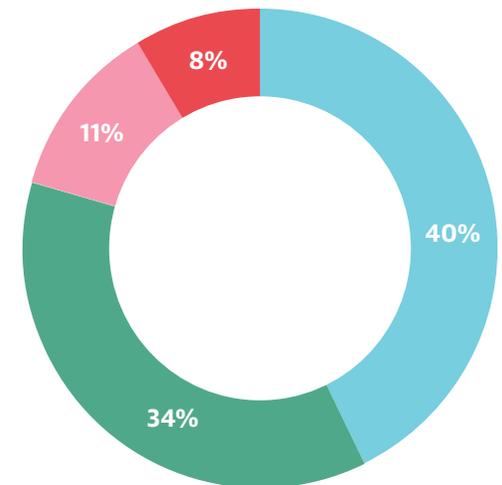
### Regional partners

Wellington's open space and recreation network is part of the wider regional network that crosses territorial boundaries. Key regional partners include: Nuku Ora, WellingtonNZ, Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Porirua City Council, Hutt City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, and other city councils in the Wellington region.

There are numerous ways in which we work regionally to coordinate and optimise open space and recreation provision. For example, the Regional Places and Spaces Plan helps ensure smart investment and avoids duplication of regional-scale facilities within the network. Similarly, we work on destination opportunities and promotion that attract people from within and outside the Wellington region, such as connecting and promoting our trail networks for long-distance walking and mountain biking. We also take a regional approach to catchment management and the care and health of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Wellington Harbour.

### Regional recreation graph

*This indicates that although most recreation happens locally, we do need to work with our regional partners to support recreation activities across the region.*



- Recreate almost exclusively in Wellington City
- Recreate mostly in Wellington City with some in the wider region
- Are equally split between Wellington and the wider region
- Mostly recreate in the wider region

### Community groups and organisations

A wide variety of community groups and organisations are vital to delivering our strategic focuses. Many of these organisations are volunteer led, including:

- **Environmental organisations.**

We work with advocacy and hands-on volunteer groups to protect and care for the natural environment. The Council provides practical support for activities such as tree planting and pest control, and we share ideas on how to advocate for and enhance biodiversity. Key initiatives include partnering with Capital Kiwi, Zealandia and Predator Free Wellington.

- **Sports and recreation clubs.**

We assist and support sports and recreation clubs to deliver a wide range of recreation opportunities and activities to the community. One example is by providing ground or premise leases for club facilities.

- **Regional sports organisations (RSOs) and College Sport Wellington.**

We work with RSOs who lead, promote, and oversee sports programmes and club sport in the Wellington region. RSOs support sports clubs directly to provide sporting opportunities that help create active, healthy communities. College Sport Wellington oversees sporting programmes for secondary school students.

- **Schools and university campuses.**

We work with schools and universities through supporting educational programmes around physical education and getting kids active, and around caring for the environment and planting trees. We also share facilities (such as fields and pools for local community use).

- **Community organisations.**

We work with youth, welfare, ethnic, disability, residents' organisations, and other community groups to support inclusive and accessible play, sport and recreational programmes, activities, and spaces.

- **Landowners.**

We work with private and public landowners to improve access to open space, to provide recreation opportunities and to protect our biodiversity.

- **Arts organisations.**

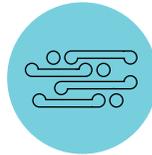
We work with arts organisations by supporting various creative recreation and cultural activities and events in our open spaces and recreation facilities.



## What is the strategic fit?

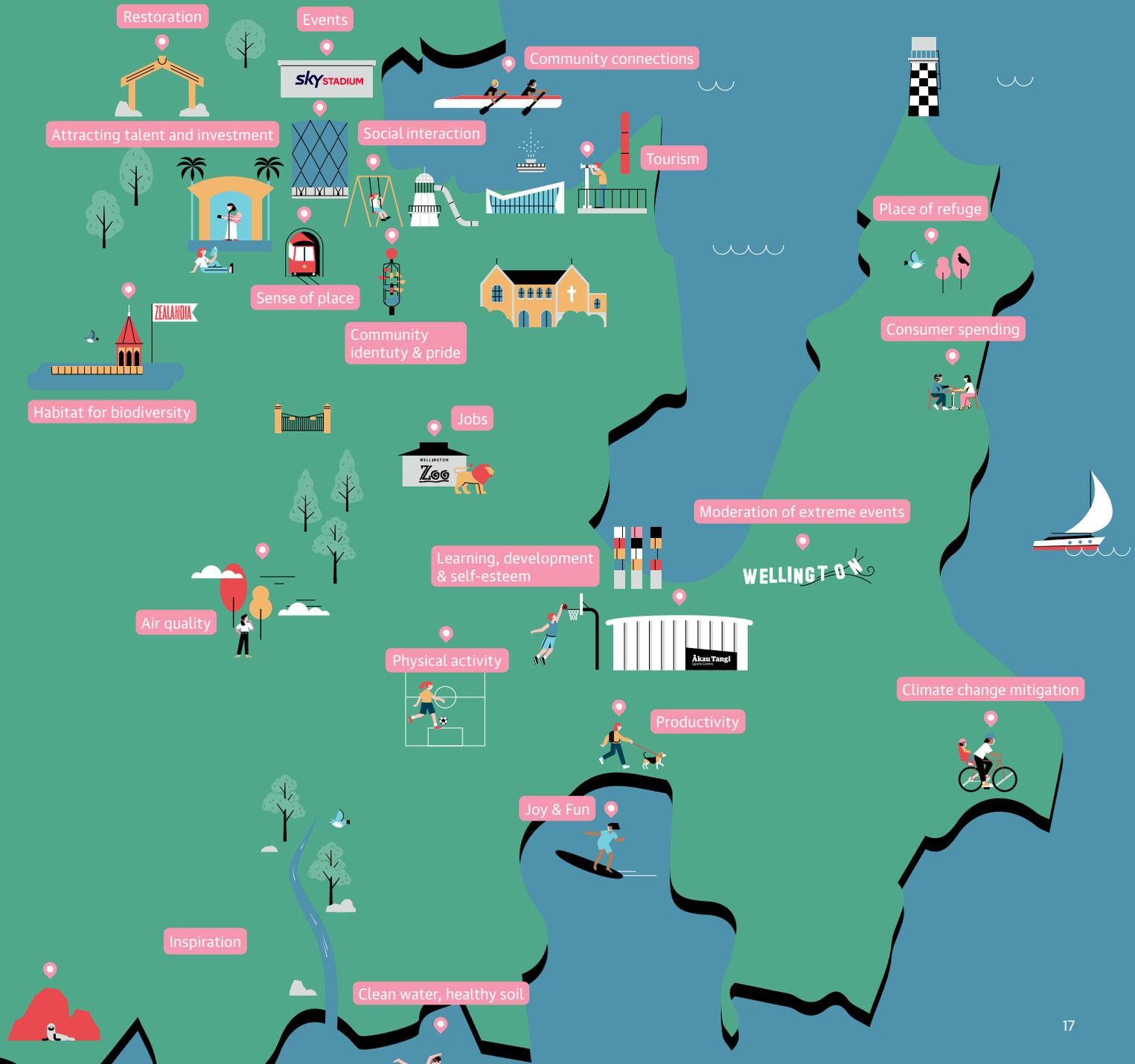
This strategy, *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*, is one of a series of strategies that guide how the Council will achieve its 2040 city vision and four community wellbeing outcomes. While each strategy has a particular focus, they are interconnected and require cross-Council collaboration to implement.

These strategies inform Council's funding and planning decisions. The funding needs of *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke* will be considered alongside other priorities through the Council's Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi					
Memoranda of Understanding with Mana Whenua	<b>Enabling legislations</b>	<b>Local Government Act, Reserves Act, Resource Management Act, Wellington Town Belt Act, Animal Welfare Act, etc</b>			
	<b>City Vision</b>	<b>An inclusive, sustainable, and creative capital for people to live, work, and play</b>			
	<b>Community Outcomes</b>	 <b>Social Wellbeing</b>	 <b>Economic Wellbeing</b>	 <b>Cultural Wellbeing</b>	 <b>Environmental Wellbeing</b>
	<b>Key Council Strategies</b>	Economic Wellbeing Strategy (2022)	Planning for Growth/ Spatial Plan (2021)	Social Wellbeing Framework (2021)	
		Aho Tini (2021) Arts, Culture and Creativity Strategy	Te Atakura First to Zero (2019)	Strategy for Children & Young People (2021)	
Our Natural Capital Biodiversity Strategy (2015)		Let's Get Wellington Moving	Tūpiki Ora (2022)		
<b>Open Space and Recreation related plans and policies</b>	<b>Reserve Management plans</b> For example: Wellington Town Belt Management Plan, Outer Green Belt Management Plan, South Coast Management Plan	<b>Cross council policy</b> For example: Trading & Events in Public Places Policy, Verges Policy, Dog Policy, Naming Policy Te Mapihi Maurea, Grants and Funding Criteria	<b>Activity based plan &amp; policies</b> For example: Play Space Policy, Open Space Access Plan, Community Facilities Plan, Green Network Plan, Our City's Food Future		
<b>Long-term Plan &amp; Annual Plans</b> (Annual Plans allocate the funding to implement the actions)					

## How does open space and recreation contribute to our wellness?

Feedback from Wellingtonians and a significant body of international and local research tell us that open space and recreation contribute significantly to the mental, physical, and spiritual wellness of our people, to our communities and culture, to the environment, and to our economy. This section describes the benefits we gain from investing in open spaces, nature, and recreation.



## Personal health and wellness

Visiting open spaces, having contact with nature, and participating in recreation activities assist our personal physical, mental, social, and emotional wellness.



### Physical activity

Physical activity extends life expectancy and helps reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, arthritis, some cancers, and combats diabetes and osteoporosis<sup>3</sup>. The cost of inactivity to the healthcare system has been estimated at \$530 million a year in New Zealand<sup>4</sup>. Estimates show that eliminating physical inactivity in New Zealand could avoid 9.8% of diabetes cases, 7.9% of heart disease cases and 13.1% of breast cancer<sup>5</sup>. It has been estimated that for every \$1 invested in recreational physical activity, there is a social return of \$2.12<sup>6</sup>. Open spaces and recreation facilities provide space for physical activity.



### Joy and fun

People seek out open spaces and recreational activity purely for enjoyment. Having fun is another way of de-stressing and lifting mood.

3 Warburton, 2006  
4 Deloitte, 2022  
5 Sport NZ, 2017  
6 Sport NZ, 2023



### Restoration

The more time people spend in outdoor green space, the less stressed and anxious they feel, regardless of their age, gender, and socio-economic status<sup>7</sup>. Being outdoors in green places is emotionally and psychologically restorative. Recreation and being physically active reduces anxiety and risk of depression, and helps people sleep better<sup>8</sup>. Approximately 85% of Wellingtonians agree that visiting and experiencing outdoor public space and participating in active recreation has a positive impact on their taha hinengaro (or mental wellbeing)<sup>9</sup>.



### Inspiration

Time out for recreation, especially in green spaces, stimulates the mind and creative thinking. Nature is often a source of new ideas<sup>10</sup>. The natural world can also be spiritually inspirational for many people who find meaning in the rhythms and beauty of nature and connecting to their wairua.

7 WHO, 2016  
8 WHO, 2016  
9 Wellington City Council, 2022  
10 Deakin, 2008



### Learning, development, and self-esteem

Physical activity and outdoor recreation help children and young people to learn and build social and life skills - laying the foundation for good mental health<sup>11</sup>. There is also evidence that recreation and spending time outside is related to improved cognitive thinking and enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence<sup>12</sup>.



### Sense of place

People often develop a deep sense of connection to open spaces, especially those they visit often or that have meaningful associations, such as places of cultural heritage. This supports a sense of belonging and provides opportunities to celebrate cultural identity<sup>13</sup>.

11 Benefitshub, 2022  
12 Barton & Rogerson, 2017  
13 Regional Public Health, 2010

## Community cohesion

Open spaces, recreation facilities and activities support social and community cohesion.



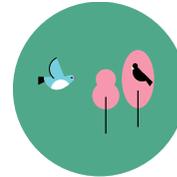
### Social interaction

Public open spaces and recreation facilities are places where people can meet and interact with whānau, friends or others in the community. They are freely available for everyone and provide opportunities for social contact.



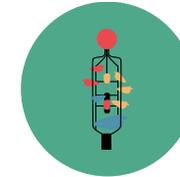
### Community connections

Sport and recreation activities, whether organised or informal, can draw people together from diverse backgrounds, fostering co-operation and strengthening social ties. Recreation activities can help break down social barriers and isolation by encouraging and celebrating participation across all cultures and abilities. These connections can help people feel they belong and create networks that sustain local communities<sup>14</sup>.



### Places of refuge

Wellington faces various risks that could significantly disrupt our lives and the way the city functions. Natural hazards such as earthquake, tsunami and extreme weather events and global pandemics can threaten our way of life. The Christchurch earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic have taught us that open spaces and community facilities, including recreation facilities, are critical infrastructure during emergencies. They provide, for example, places to meet, distribute resources and shelter when people's homes are damaged<sup>15</sup>. During the pandemic, people sought out open spaces for refuge and recreation when indoor environments did not feel safe.



### Community identity and pride

Showcasing our scenic open spaces, premium sports facilities, recreational opportunities, and sporting talent can unite a community with a shared sense of identity and civic pride. Our communities often come together to celebrate our recreation successes<sup>16</sup>.

## Environmental wellbeing

The presence of green open space assists in the wellbeing of our environment.



### Moderation of extreme weather events

Permeable surfaces and vegetation cover in parks and open spaces helps reduce flooding and pressure on stormwater infrastructure by absorbing, storing, and slowing runoff during heavy rain. Vegetation cover helps reduce the effect of extreme heat and drought by providing shade that cools the air and soil<sup>17</sup>.



### Habitat for biodiversity

Green open spaces provide living spaces for plants and animals and maintain a diversity of complex processes, such as soil formation, that underpin other ecosystem services. Plants and animals are an essential part of our natural environment and provide ecosystem services such as pollination, seed dispersal and nutrient recycling. Diversity in species and habitats is an essential part of a healthy environment.



### Climate change mitigation

Ecosystem services in our open spaces, such as carbon sequestration and flood mitigation, help reduce the economic cost of climate change. Trees and vegetation in our open spaces store carbon, which helps offset climate change emissions. Similarly, attractive, and connected trails and pathways, integrated with the city's walking and cycling network, help reduce emissions by encouraging people to use alternative modes of transport and rely less on motor vehicles.

### Air quality



Plants in our open spaces produce oxygen. Plants also reduce air pollution by absorbing harmful gases and catching airborne particles.



### Clean water, healthy soil

Vegetated open spaces support soil formation and water quality. Soils are full of unseen life that generate and recycle the essential nutrients required for plant growth. Soils protect water quality and reduce flooding by absorbing, filtering, and storing runoff. The ecology of natural streams and wetlands helps to keep fresh water clean. Surrounding vegetation further protects water quality by holding soil, filtering runoff, and regulating temperature. This also supports good water quality in our harbour and ocean.

## Economic wellbeing

Public open space and recreation activities provide economic value to cities.



### Consumer spending

High quality open spaces and recreation facilities can improve commercial trading and increase consumer spending by attracting more people and activity to an area.



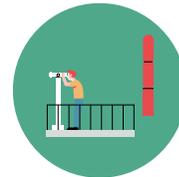
### Jobs

The recreation sector employs people in numerous roles such as managing recreation centres, maintaining sports grounds, managing the delivery of sport, guiding mountain biking tourists, or coaching commercial sports teams. Sport New Zealand estimates that sport and recreation contribute \$388.6 million annually or 1.3% to the Wellington region GDP<sup>18</sup>.



### Productivity

Recreation supports people to be physically active and healthy, which improves productivity by decreasing staff absenteeism, sickness, staff turnover and accidents. Lost production caused by physical inactivity is estimated at 2.3 billion a year in New Zealand<sup>19</sup>.



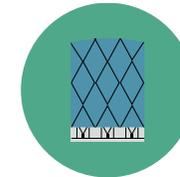
### Tourism

Our open space and recreation networks generate significant tourism opportunities. People are drawn to the city's setting amongst harbour and hills and visit popular spots such as the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā, the Wellington Waterfront and Zealandia. The money people spend when they visit boosts the local economy. Tourism contributed \$1 billion to the Wellington region in 2019 or 3.8% of the Wellington GDP<sup>20</sup>.



### Events

Our open spaces and recreation facilities are used to host events, including major events such as Homegrown on the Wellington Waterfront, the summer concert series in the Botanic Garden ki Paekākā, or the women's football world cup at the stadium. We also host regular smaller events such as a national hockey tournament or a BMX meet up. These events generate ongoing tourist spending and showcase Pōneke as an attractive place to visit and live.



### Attracting talent and investment

Cities worldwide compete for the economic benefits derived from attracting workers, employers, students, visitors, and events. Good quality open spaces and recreation opportunities make Wellington an attractive place to live, work, study, visit and invest in.

# Ngā aronga rautaki

## Strategic focuses

We are ambitious for the future of our open spaces and recreation in Wellington and the benefits they can bring in the pursuit of social, physical, environmental, and economic wellness. This strategy identifies the following five focuses to lead our open space and recreation planning, management, and investment over the next 10 years.

In 2053, our open space and recreation opportunities will be integrated, inclusive, diverse, resilient and will support the regenerating of the natural environment and the re-indigenising of our spaces, places, and activities.





# 01 Pāhekohekotanga Integrated

Well-distributed, multifunctional, and connected spaces, places and programmes that respond to Wellington's current and future needs.



## Why is this important?

Wellington's population is growing and our city is becoming more densely populated as we retain our compact urban form. Of the 50,000 – 80,000 more Wellingtonians anticipated over the next 30 years, about 90-95% are expected to be accommodated in existing urban areas. This will put pressure on many of our public open spaces and recreation facilities as they will be relied upon more intensively. Not only, due to the sheer increase of people living locally, but also as people live in denser housing types (like apartments and townhouses), they will have less private space and will rely on our public spaces for activities that once took place in suburban backyards. Providing nearby, integrated and varied open space and recreation opportunities is how Wellington will 'do density well' and support our communities to be active and healthy.

Related to our compact urban growth, Wellington's transport future is shifting away from car reliance to active and public transport modes. As fewer people use cars for transport, the way

many of us access recreation and open spaces will change. More recreation opportunities will need to be nearby or accessible on foot, by bicycle and via public transport options.

Additionally, we know, from numerous international studies that having green spaces and opportunities nearby to our communities supports active living and wellness<sup>21</sup> – something that is important because of the deteriorating mental health trends across our communities<sup>22</sup>. These trends are compounded by our increasingly busy and sedentary lifestyles where we know many of us struggle to find time to exercise or to spend time in the outdoors. Having integrated spaces nearby, is about making it easier for our communities to overcome these worsening mental health trends and will support our communities to come together.

Integrated open spaces and green infrastructure will also support the city's resilience to a changing climate.



21 World Health Organisation(2016) review of the literature found that several studies in various countries have demonstrated that recreational walking, increased physical activity and reduced sedentary time were associated with access to, and use of, green spaces in working-age adults, children and senior citizens. For example, in the US, Strum & Cohen (2014) found that mental health outcomes related to residential distances from parks with the best mental health score within 400m walking distance of a park. In Australia, Sugiyama et al (2013 ) found that the presence of and proximity to green space helps to maintain recreational walking over time. Another cross-sectional study in Lithuania (Reklaitiene et al 2014) demonstrated that, among individuals who regularly use parks, closer proximity of their home to the nearest park was associated with reduced odds of self-reported symptoms of depression.

22 Treasury (2022) shows that psychological distress over time has increased since 2000. Similarly, StatsNZ (2021) General Social Survey found a significant decrease in the proportion of people who felt it was easy to be themselves, when comparing 2018 and 2021.

## Our approaches

### 1.1 Optimise open spaces and facilities to be multi-functional

Multi-functional places and spaces near where people live can foster active living, community cohesion and be vibrant places where multi-generations love to be. Our spaces and places will accommodate varied activities, enable more intensive use and be available for longer hours, to better cater for higher density neighbourhoods. Our open spaces and recreation facilities will be designed for flexible and varied use, rather than singular activities, to accommodate diverse and changing user needs. New features and increased service levels may be required to accommodate increased use, such as more lighting, more regular maintenance and multi-use playing surfaces.

When planning and designing our open spaces and recreation facilities we will use the 'power of ten' placemaking approach, which recognises that places thrive when there are ten or more reasons for people to be there<sup>23</sup>. Ideally, some of these reasons will be unique to the particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surroundings and community. Ideally,

too, each open space or facility will offer different opportunities at different times and for people of different ages, interests, and backgrounds and abilities.

A simple neighbourhood park- in the morning, can be a place for someone to walk their dog and a pre-schooler to learn to ride; at lunch, it can be a place to meet for a picnic, a place to grow kai and a spot for a senior to listen to nature and try tai chi; in the afternoon it can be a play space for kids to run around, a skateboarder to practice their tricks and a climber to scale a wall, and in the evening it can be a meeting place for a team to practice football and a theatre group to rehearse a play. Once a month, the park could become a market, and every year, birds can nest in the trees. During an extreme storm event, it can even help absorb excess rainwater.

Simultaneously many different people from multiple generations can use the park in different ways.



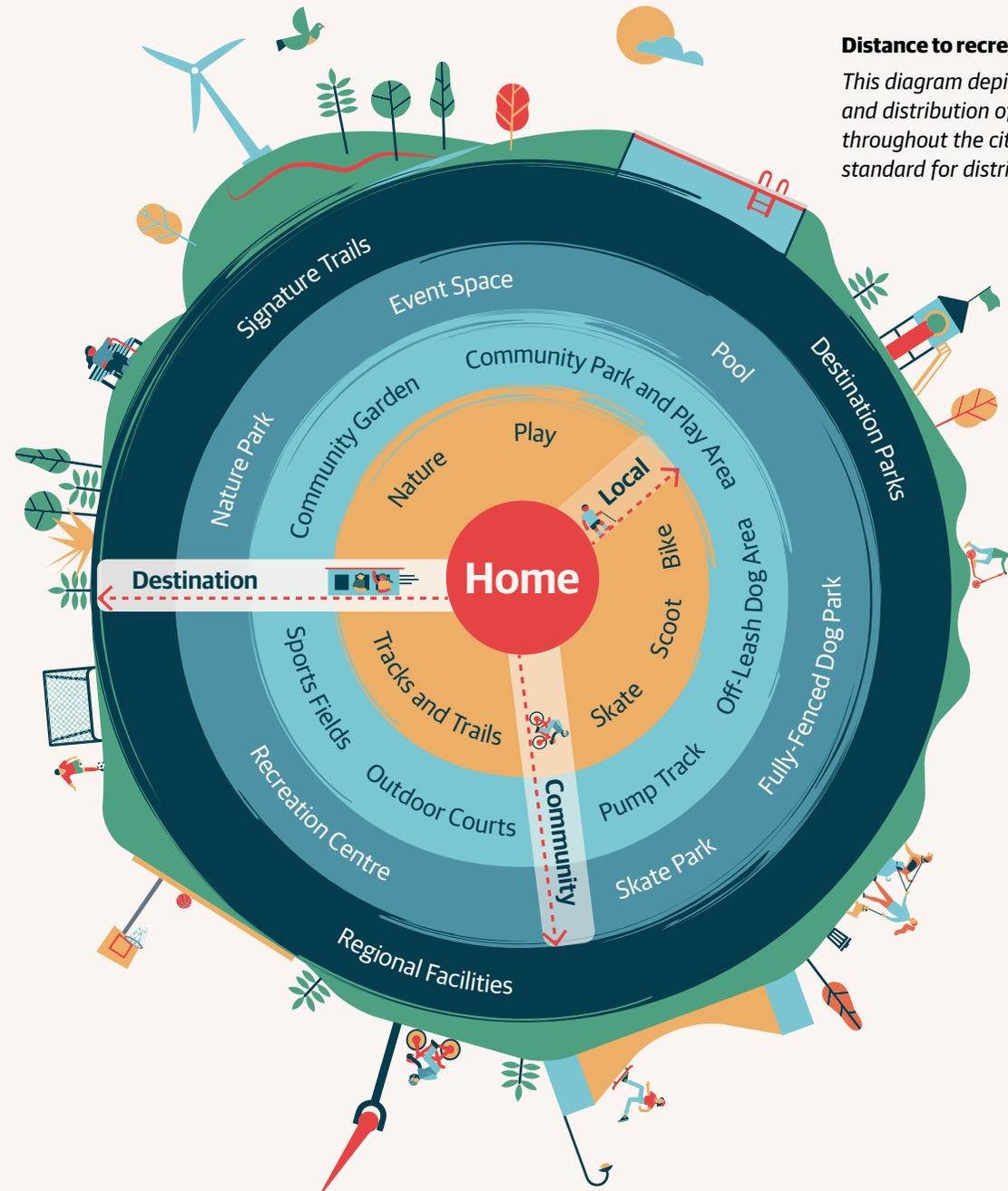
23 The Power of 10+ is a tool developed by the Project for Public Spaces to support placemaking efforts.

## 1.2 Provide well-distributed and connected recreation opportunities

Recreation opportunities will be connected and accessible to people by being distributed fairly across the city. That distribution will aim for a diverse mix of spaces, places, and opportunities, from small green spaces to sportsfields to swimming pools. This diagram outlines the ambition for the expected relative location and distribution of amenities throughout the city. At a minimum, all parts of the city will have access to a number of quality recreation experiences nearby, like having an open space to relax in, an area for children to play and practice scooting, to play with nature, and a trail to go for a walk.

We will evolve our network of recreation opportunities to support fair distribution. The Community Facilities Plan will identify gaps in the facilities network that may require future investment and opportunities to support a holistic network through collaborative models.

We will work towards our key destination and community parks being connected and accessible via safe walking, cycling and public transport routes. This will support the conditions for active travel while ensuring car parks are available for those with mobility needs.



### Distance to recreation opportunities

This diagram depicts the relative location and distribution of recreation amenities throughout the city. It sets the expected standard for distribution.

### 1.3 Proactively grow our open space and green-infrastructure network

Expansion of the open space network will provide a variety of parks and open spaces that accommodate the recreation and social needs of our growing population and support the resiliency of our city.

We need to plan for proactive open space acquisition, focusing especially on plugging gaps in our neighbourhood park network. Wellington has less neighbourhood park space per capita than any other cities in New Zealand<sup>24</sup> and although 82% of households are within a 10-minute walk<sup>25</sup> of a neighbourhood park there are some significant gaps and some of these are also in high-growth areas. Filling gaps will also support finding natural solutions to climate resiliency, as integrated parks and green areas act like sponges, slowing excess rainwater as well as trapping and filtering pollutants.

We will adopt a net zero-loss open space target: as we densify, the open space network and green infrastructure should grow, not diminish.

We need to focus investment on intensification and growth areas identified in the Spatial Plan and enabled by the District Plan as these are the places that are likely to put significant pressure on our open space and recreation network over the next 30 years. The initial focus areas are Newtown, Tawa, Johnsonville, and the City Centre.

Areas identified for future urban development will also require attention as it is much harder to retrofit open space into already developed areas. So instead, we will ensure adequate open space provision at the outset.

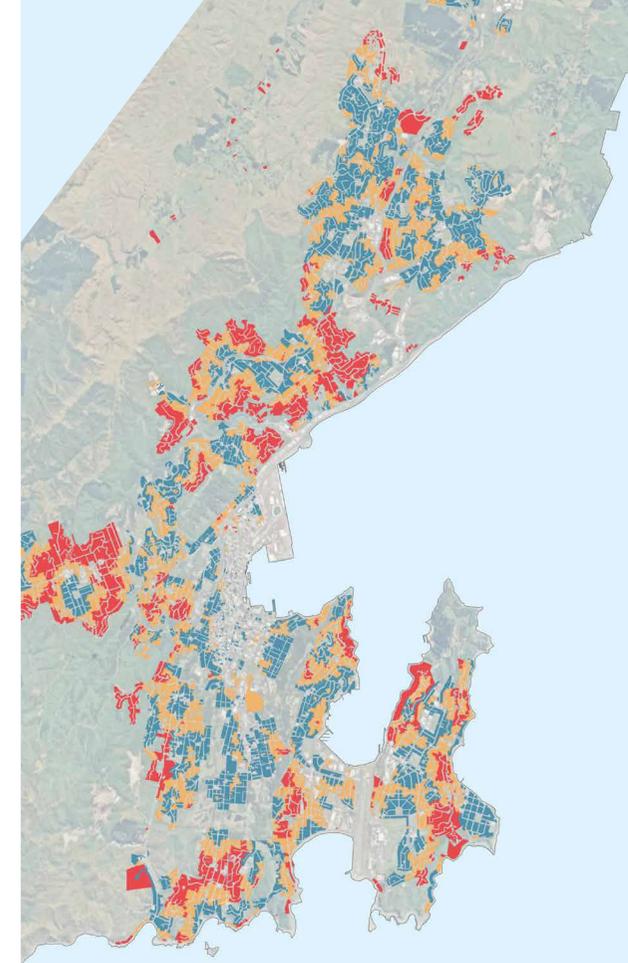
The Open Space Provision Targets set out expectations and targets around the provision of open spaces in both existing and future urban areas to anticipate the needs of our current and future communities. Critically, those targets set out that:

- In a high intensification area<sup>26</sup>, an accessible recreational open space<sup>27</sup> should be within 5-minutes' walking distance of everyone as they will likely have limited private outdoor space to recreate in the future.

- The distance to a recreational open space in most other residential areas should be within a 10-minute walk.
- Also targeted, as part of Wellington City's intensification process, is the need to improve and develop high quality public urban open spaces in our suburban centres, proportionate to the size of the centre. As more people live in apartments, these spaces will often be their closest public space.

Open space investment that responds to growth will be funded partly by development contributions to support the increased level of service needed for an increased population. We will also explore other funding and investment options to support proactive planning and investment in our open space network.

In addition, we will continue our 40-year mission to complete the Outer Green Belt as a continuous wild green connector along the city's urban edge.



#### Neighbourhood Park Provision Gaps

- Residential properties within 5 minutes' walk
- Residential properties within 10 minutes' walk
- Residential properties outside 10 minutes' walk

<sup>24</sup> Comparison is based on Yardstick Park Benchmark Report 2022. This report has Wellington at 1.8 hectares of actively maintained parkland per 1000 residents, well below the peer selection median of 9.8 hectares per 1000 residents. Similar comparisons to Christchurch and Auckland indicate that Wellington has significantly less recreational or social open space per person. Partly this is due to topography.

<sup>25</sup> Walking distances are calculated using average, low to moderate walking speeds based on the Our City Tomorrow, Spatial plan methodology that is described in Generating Walking Catchments (2021). Unfortunately, walking speeds are highly subjective, and no "average" walking speed can be applied to everyone. However, the Council has used time to create walkable catchments because it creates a more accurate, 'real world' result that considers slope gradient, crossing wait times and other factors besides distance.

<sup>26</sup> High intensification areas are defined as areas zoned high density or with height limits of 14m and above as displayed in the notified district plan.

<sup>27</sup> Recreational open space are spaces that primarily achieve recreation or social outcomes. They include [open space categories](#); Neighbourhood parks, Urban parks and some parts of Destination parks.

#### 1.4 Share our quieter streets as recreation and nature spaces

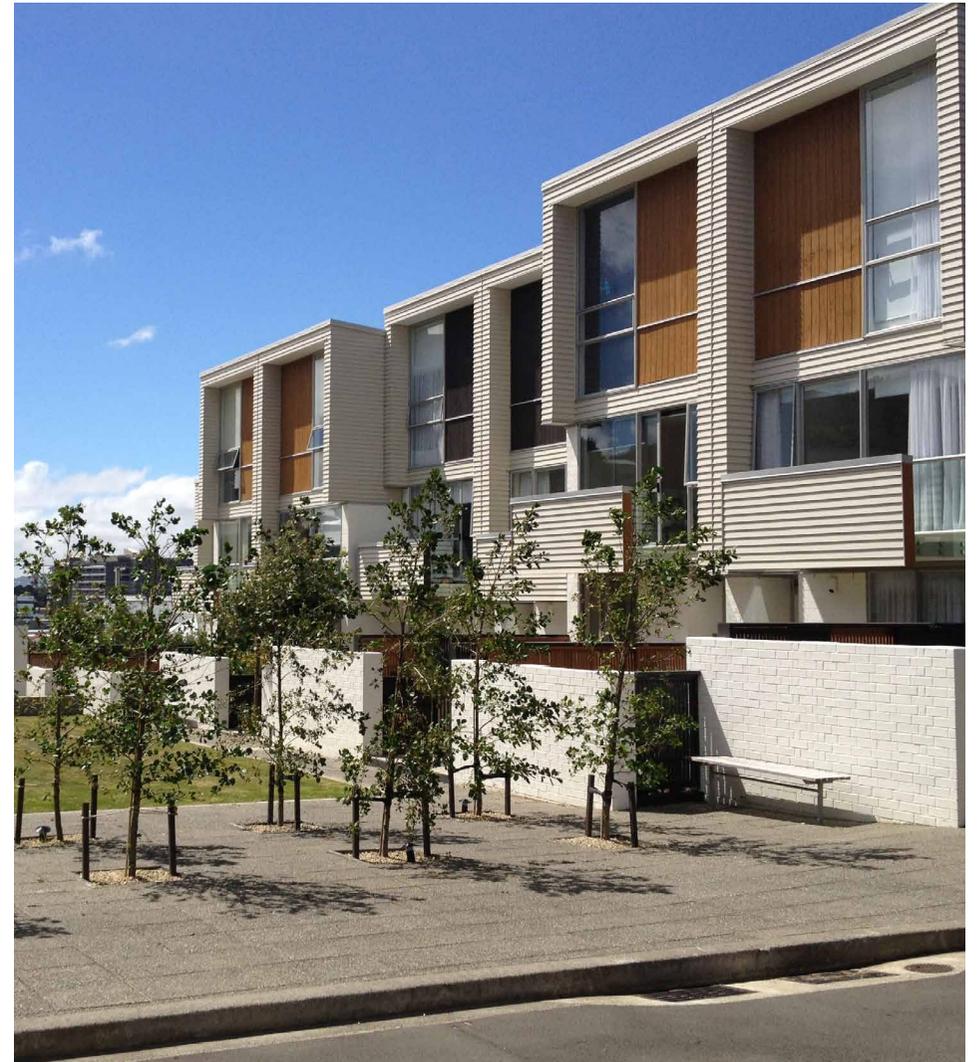
Streets can be more than just movement corridors. Streets can provide essential areas for public life, recreation, and greening. Historically, much of our street network has been primarily designed for fast and efficient movement of motorised vehicles and car parking. In recent times, the benefits of well-designed liveable streets to support open space, active living, recreation and environmental goals has come into focus.

Our streets will need to play a bigger role in supporting wellbeing as Wellington City densifies and where open space is at a premium. How we reshape our streets to be more liveable will be directed through our transport strategies and policies and urban design guidelines.

Where possible, verges and berm will be activated for recreation and nature purposes to provide opportunities for sitting, recreation, socialising and making our journeys enjoyable. Other community purposes could also activate them, like growing kai and organising Play Street<sup>28</sup> events where temporary traffic restrictions enable communities to come together.

In addition, we will explore opportunities for parklets in town centres to support businesses and provide more outdoor space to socialise.

Street trees and vegetated verges also provide a range of important ecological services. We will look for opportunities to increase street trees and provide other green features (including rain gardens and water sensitive urban design infrastructure) where appropriate on our streets. They will support ecological connectivity across the city, connecting our biodiversity corridors and working as stepping stones for species across more built-up areas. We know there are fewer street trees per capita in Wellington than the average city in New Zealand and much can be done here, such as what the Green Network Plan envisions for the City Centre<sup>29</sup>. In addition, we know urban intensification will reduce the number of trees across Wellington. This means planting street trees becomes more critical to offset the loss of trees in residential areas.



<sup>28</sup> Play Street events temporarily restrict vehicle traffic on quiet local streets so children and parents can be active, socially connect, and play in their neighbourhood. They are small, resident-led, local events held on quiet neighbourhood streets during daylight hours. Waka Kotahi has guidelines on how Councils can support Play Streets.

<sup>29</sup> According to the Yardstick Benchmark tool, Wellington has 0.04 street trees per resident. This is below the average for New Zealand cities of 0.11.



## 02 Whai Wāhitanga Inclusive

Inclusive, equitable, and accessible spaces, places and programmes that make everyone feel safe and welcome.



## Why is this important?

All people and communities in Wellington have the right to experience quality parks, recreation, and nature. However, we recognise that not all Wellingtonians have the same opportunities to access these experiences. We know some people feel unsafe, unwelcome, or uncomfortable when using our spaces, places, and programmes. For some affordability is a barrier, for others, it may be that opportunities and facilities are unsuitable or not physically accessible to them. Our engagement survey had an overwhelming response from our communities wanting more accessible and inclusive spaces, places and programmes, including more accessible information.

We also know that 25% of adults in Wellington have self-reported that they lead sedentary lifestyles where they do no physical activity at all<sup>30</sup>. In addition, only 28% of us meet the World Health Organisations' activity guidelines for substantial health benefits<sup>31</sup>. Looking at these results by age, gender, disability, ethnicity, and deprivation we see considerable inequities about who is active and involved in different things. Different groups identify different barriers to being active in our communities and to using our open spaces and recreation facilities.

Creating inclusive open spaces, places, and programs involves addressing the barriers and inequities that prevent certain groups from accessing recreational activities. By making our spaces, places, and programmes welcoming and accessible, everyone can participate in recreational opportunities.



30 Active NZ Survey, 2019

31 The World Health Organisation's activity guidelines for adults is 30 minutes of moderate or 15 minutes of intense exercise for a least 5 days in a week.

## Inequal outcomes in active recreation



### Age

Weekly participation in physical activity, time spent, and average number of different sports and physical activities peaks between ages 12 and 14 and then drops steeply between ages 15 and 17. Participation plateaus between ages 18 and 24 and throughout adult years, before declining from age 65.

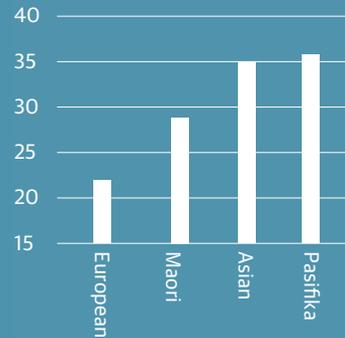
### Gender

There is a 20% gender gap between the ages of 15 and 24 in terms of time spent being physically active.

Young males were physically active for 96 more minutes per week than young females and adult males for 36 more minutes per week than adult females.

Young and adult females are more interested in increasing their participation than males but they also identify more barriers to getting active.

% of ethnic groups in the Wellington region who weren't active over the seven-day survey (Adults)



### Ethnicity

Adult Asian, Māori and Pasifika people participate less per week and spend less time being physically active, compared to Europeans.

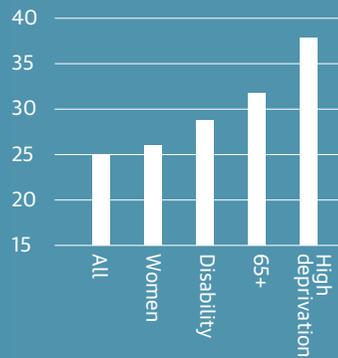
Young Asians also have lower participation rates than other young people.

### Social Deprivation

Compared to all adults, adults from high deprivation areas participate in fewer sports and activities each week, are less likely to participate each week and spend less time being physically active than all adults.

Adults from higher deprivation areas identify more barriers to participation compared with adults from low-deprivation areas.

% of groups who weren't in the Wellington region active over seven-days (Adults)



### Disability

1.1 million, or 24% of New Zealanders are disabled. Disabled adults spend 16% less time participating in a week than non-disabled adults.

For disabled adults, weekly participation is lowest among those with a hearing impairment at 55% active a week, and for visual impairment at 59% active over a week.



## Our approaches

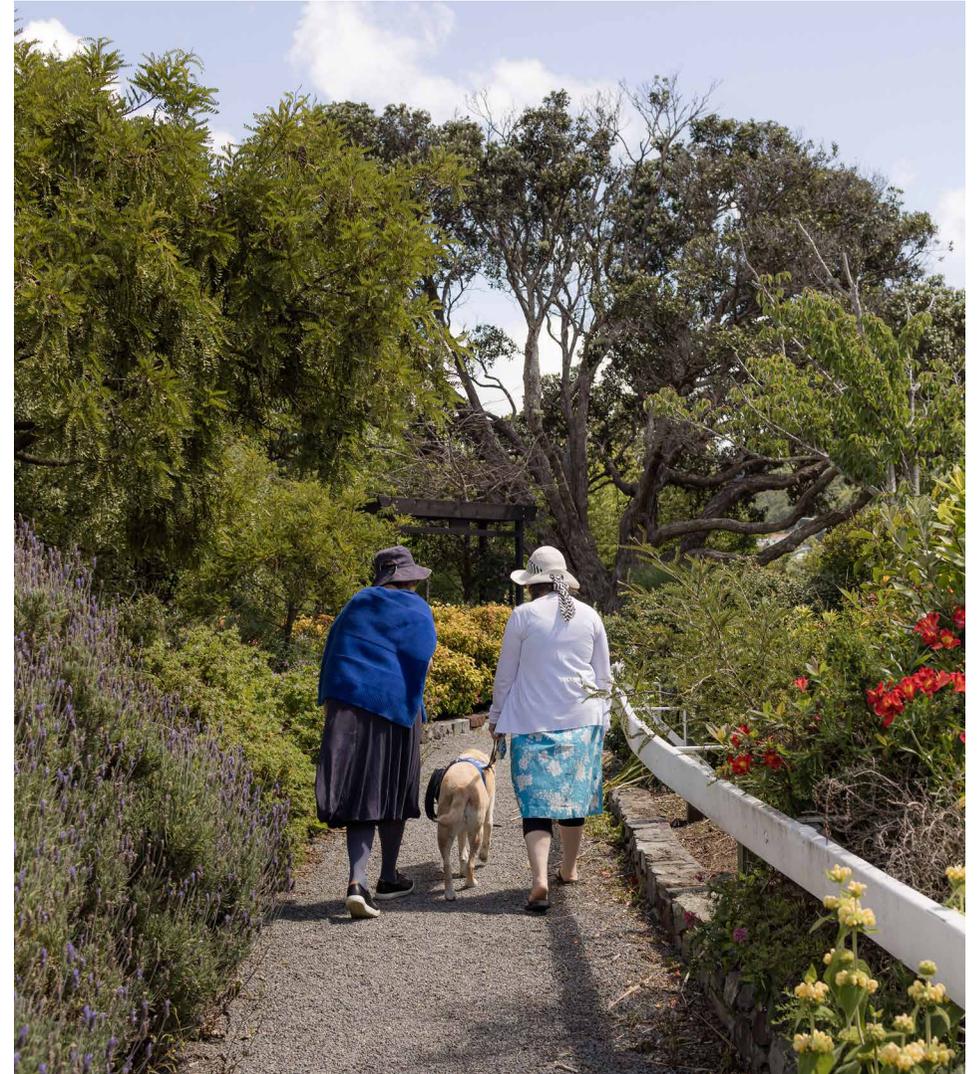
### 2.1 Drive universal design

Universal design means considering the needs of all users, recognising human diversity and different life scenarios that people may experience throughout their lives, such as pregnancy, injury, disability, neurodiversity, and old age. We will consider universal design principles in all our projects to make access to open spaces, recreation facilities and programmes available to as many people as possible.

We will involve diverse communities in meaningful engagement and consultation at the early stages of upgrades or renewals for example and co-design with our disability communities to ensure informed input on accessibility.

Informed design and consideration of universal design principles will support the accessibility, use and enjoyment of open spaces and facilities for all. It means considering elements such as: the availability of toilets; mobility car parking; seats and sheltered spots to rest; use of Braille; tactile guidance; ground surface treatments and providing accessible recreational programmes for diverse and mixed groups. Some of these changes are even more important because of our increasingly ageing population.

We must also provide accessibility information online, on-site and in different mediums to help people know in advance which places are accessible to them and how they can use them. This information will need to accommodate a wide range of literacy and language skill.



## 2.2 Take an equity approach to reducing barriers to active recreation and sport

Not all Wellingtonians have the same opportunities to access and participate in sport and recreation and many encounter significant barriers to participation. Low participation in active recreation is seen in low socio-economic areas and amongst girls and young women, disabled people, Pasifika, and Asian communities<sup>32</sup>. We will take an equity approach to providing recreation, recognising that people and communities have different levels of advantage and, therefore, different approaches are needed to get equal access. An equity approach will mean prioritising investment in our recreational programmes and facilities to support low participation communities and remove barriers to active recreation participation. It means ensuring our facilities and programmes are affordable for users and continue to be free of charge whenever possible. It also means supporting a wider range of opportunities to better reflect our diverse communities' needs.

An example of how the equity approach might work is to target females aged 10-18 years to improve participation in active recreation, because participation declines significantly at this age, compared to males of the same age<sup>33</sup>. In response, we must recognise that recreation and open spaces are often designed in a way that does not meet needs of girls and young women. They may not feel safe, or spaces may be dominated by popular male recreation activities. We will design spaces and recreation programmes for young women and girls by working with them directly and developing spaces, places, and programmes with their needs in mind.



Equality



Equity

32 Active NZ Survey, 2019

33 Ibid

### 2.3 Design our public realm to welcome play, skate and active recreation

To create a truly inclusive and enjoyable city for our tamariki, whānau, and rangatahi, we must embrace play in our public urban environment. This includes not only traditional play activities but also other engaging and active recreation opportunities like skateboarding and parkour. By doing so, we can foster a sense of belonging and promote healthy lifestyles for our young people, making our city a more vibrant and equitable place for all.

Play is often seen as an activity confined to playgrounds, but the built environment offers critical play and learning opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi. Play permeates all aspects of a child's life. Allowing children to play in the urban environment – allows them and their families to be there.

We will welcome play into the fabric of the city's everyday life, allowing children to explore their environment and develop their independence in a safe and supported way. Children need time, permission, and space to play. This is important, in part, because long-term trends show play is in decline. No longer are tamariki and rangatahi able to move freely and independently in their city, and this has impacts on their wellbeing and development.

We will also think about how to include play opportunities throughout the city that support all ages to have fun, socialise and be active such as parkour, calisthenics and skateboarding. We will continue to plan for skate infrastructure and incorporate skate opportunities into our urban realm by incorporating skate-friendly design into the Wellington City Urban Design Manual and implementing the 'Wellington as a Skateable City' Report when finalised.

However, play, skate, and other fun active recreation activities are for more than just tamariki and rangatahi. Being part of a playful and playable city can bring benefits to everyone. Whether it is a diving board, a public chess board, a perfect ledge or a petanque space - there can be opportunities to play for everyone.



## 2.4 Empower our diverse communities to feel safe and comfortable

Inclusivity is about embracing the diversity of people and supporting them to feel safe, comfortable, and welcome in using our spaces, places, and programmes.

There are many ways to support inclusivity, and we heard many ideas through our consultation phases in 2022 and 2023. Some of the things we will do to help inclusivity are (but are not limited to):

- Apply crime prevention through environmental design principles (CPTED) to our open spaces and facilities. CPTED is about ensuring places feel and are safe. In Wellington, 18% of people identified safety as a barrier to using outdoor public spaces, particularly women, girls, our rainbow community, disabled people and young people. This means these groups are not getting the full benefits of these spaces. CPTED includes supporting passive surveillance and appropriate lighting. Busy places often feel safe, so allowing for varied activities at different times of the day is a good idea.

- Care for and maintain our spaces and places at an appropriate level of service that supports people to feel safe and comfortable. Maintenance and the condition of assets impact how welcoming a space feels.
  - Continue to develop events and recreation programmes that are culturally inclusive and varied, listening to what different communities want. For example, a programme designed to meet the needs of kids who experience sensory overload may support some neurodiverse kids to be active, or our Out-in-the Pool days support our LGBTQI+ community to feel safe and welcome when going for a swim.
  - Ensure social and visual representation in open spaces and recreation facilities that resonate with people to create a sense of belonging and empowerment (e.g. local art, cultural elements and historical representation that tell everyone's stories).
  - Avoid using design elements that intentionally deter different communities from feeling welcome in our open spaces. For example, not using seating that is deliberately designed to deter rough sleepers. Council's Design Guidelines will include design guidance for how we can support inclusivity.
- Provide all-gender bathrooms and support the development of transgender-inclusive recreation and sports policies that enable our transgender community to use spaces and places and be active as supported through Sport NZ's 'Guiding Principles to the inclusion of Transgender People in Community Sport'.
  - Provide areas for whānau to gather and share food in open spaces and recreation facilities.
  - Invest in public toilets and changing rooms, recognising they are a vital part of the city's infrastructure, providing an

essential health and sanitation service that enables people's movement and recreational activities around Wellington. In Wellington, 34% of people identified that no public toilets in open spaces were a barrier to using open spaces. Over time we will evolve our network to ensure public toilets are available at or near (5-minutes' walk) of all community neighbourhood parks, destination parks, and significant beaches<sup>34</sup>. They will also be considered at signature and regional trail destinations<sup>35</sup>. Further information on public toilet provision will be detailed in the Community Facilities Plan.



<sup>34</sup> See Open Space Categories and Provision Targets for definitions of what constitutes these types of Open Spaces.

<sup>35</sup> Wellington Regional Trails Framework outlines which trails are signature and regional trails.

**Key barriers and challenges identified for people using parks,  
pools & recreation centres<sup>36</sup>**

**Open Space**

**34%**

absence of  
public toilets.

**22%**

hard to  
travel to.

**18%**

feeling unsafe  
(30% of young people).

**14%**

not accessible  
enough/not designed  
for easy access.

**5%**

not feeling welcome.



**Pools**

**15%**

too busy when they  
wanted to use them.

**12%**

financial reasons.

**11%**

appearance/quality.

**6%**

not open when they  
wanted them to be.

**6%**

did not offer the range  
of pools/experiences.



**Recreation Centres**

**11%**

financial reasons.

**9%**

range of spaces/  
experiences.

**5%**

too busy.

**5%**

not feeling welcome.





## 03 Te Whakahaumanu me te Manawaroa Regenerating & Resilient

The mana and mauri of the environment will be uplifted, supporting the resiliency of our city and our connection with nature.



## Why is this important?

Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua. This well-known whakataukī expresses, that *If we take care of the earth, if we take care of the people, we will take care of the future.* That is, if we want to enjoy a good future, we need to look after Papatūānuku (Mother Earth) today.

Wellington is a wild city, with rugged coastlines, windy peaks, dense bush, and a reawakening dawn chorus. Our city has much to be proud of. We are one of the few cities in the world where the diversity of native birds is increasing, with 50% more species over the last ten years. Our world's first fully fenced urban eco-sanctuary, Zealandia, has enabled birds to spread beyond the fence, and our predator free movement sees tons of volunteers going out, trapping predators, restoring, and protecting our nature. The number of environmental groups helping to restore and protect our natural habitats has grown from 12 to over 140 in the last two decades. We have been ranked as first in the world for environmental security by Safe Cities Index 2021<sup>37</sup>, and we have reintroduced kiwis to our city. These are important steps towards regenerating our natural environment and show that we are innovative and world-leading.

Yet we shouldn't become complacent - there is still a lot more to do and a lot more to reverse. Over time our environment has been tremendously diminished and damaged. The condition of our streams, harbour and ocean are in decline, our biodiversity is still vulnerable, there are rampant weed species taking over habitats, we continue to pump carbon into the atmosphere through our reliance on fossil fuel, and we generate unsustainable amounts of waste. As the population grows, more intense use of our open spaces may damage our green areas. In 2019, the Council declared an ecological and climate emergency, recognising our need to take urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid the disastrous consequences of climate change. Those consequences include damaging fragile ecosystems, severe storms, sea level rise and loss of biodiversity. The open space network protects much of our remaining natural environment in Wellington and plays a key role in how we respond to the emergency and regenerate our natural environment. However, we must go beyond sustaining our environment and instead regenerate it to ensure a good future for us and future generations.

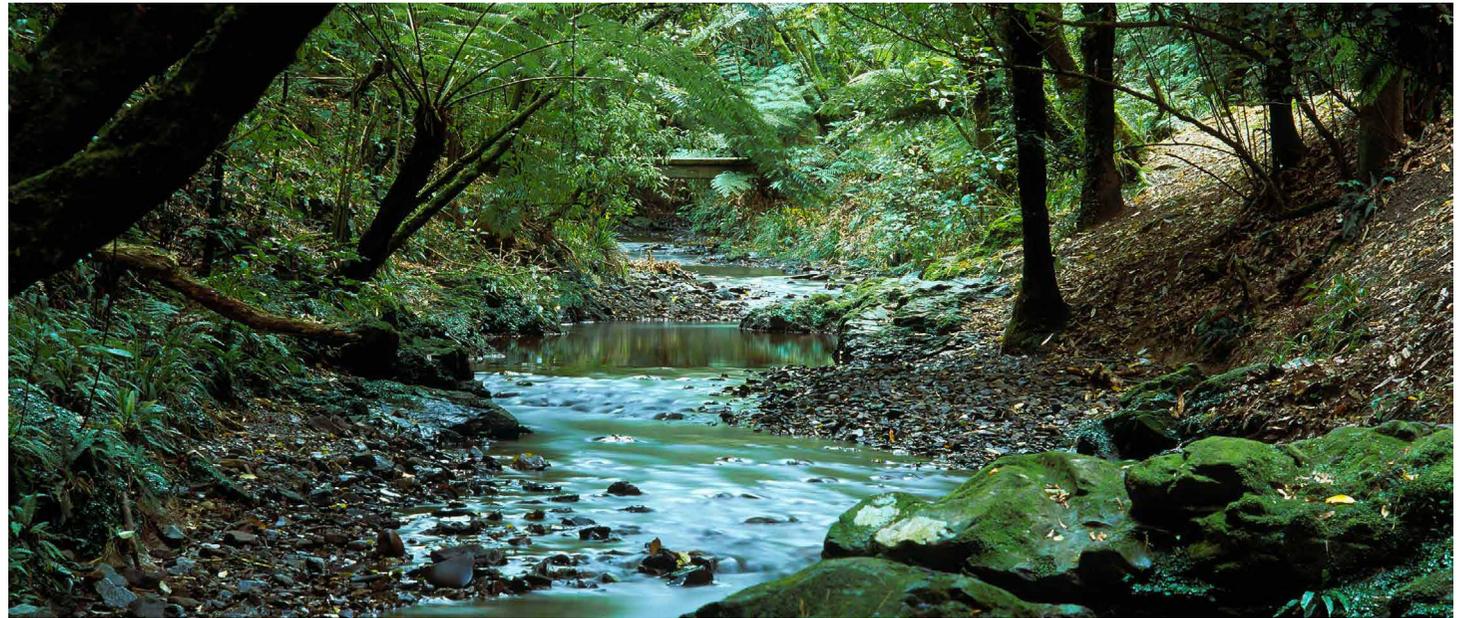


## Our approaches

### 3.1 Embed a ki uta ki tai (from the mountains to the sea) approach in caring for the environment

Ki uta ki tai is about taking a holistic approach to the environment. It encapsulates the need to recognise and manage the interconnectedness of the whole environment and recognises the interactions between freshwater, land, water bodies, ecosystems, and the receiving environments. We will manage catchments in an integrated and sustainable way to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects. Nature areas protect much of our remaining indigenous ecosystems, including threatened species and habitats. There are opportunities to further protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems in our open spaces, including green public spaces in the city's built environments. We will weave biodiversity through our open spaces and streetscapes to support our unique flora and fauna, and create ecological corridors so our birds can thrive.

We will partner with and enable mana whenua as kaitiaki and support our environmental volunteers and the mahi they do to support and restore ecosystems through weed control, planting, and



predator-free trapping. This work is invaluable to Wellington. The Biodiversity Action Plan, Tiakina te Taiao, is the blueprint for how we will achieve this.

### 3.2 Restore the mauri of our waterways

We will work together to heal freshwater ecosystems. Water-sensitive urban design techniques will be standard practice across our public open spaces and will be embedded in new facilities. We will minimise impervious surfaces where

possible, capturing and re-using stormwater, using rain gardens, and maintaining and investigating options to bring back natural drainage systems to absorb and cleanse runoff. We will work on preventing pollution from entering our streams, including pollution from closed landfills. We will also look for opportunities within our open spaces to restore piped streams to the surface and recognise that our piped streams and all streams have intrinsic mauri and are therefore worthy of our respect.

Our open spaces are an important part of integrated catchment management, but they are only one part. We will work with Mana Whenua, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Wellington Water and our communities to support the delivery of the Te Whaitua te Whanganui-a-Tara and Te Te Awarua-o-Porirua Whaitua Implementation Programmes.

### 3.3 Adapt to a changing climate

In the coming decade, we will make significant decisions about how our city will adapt to climate change. This will include crucial choices on how green infrastructure can bolster the city's resiliency. Parks and green infrastructure are not a luxury - they are essential to managing stormwater and mitigating flooding and can play a crucial role in our climate adaptation.

But, also, climate change will impact every part of our city, including our open space and recreation network, from erosion and slips on our trails to rising sea levels affecting beaches, swimming pools and recreation centres on the coastline. Many decisions about these specific impacts will need to be made as part of the city's wider climate change adaptation plan. In some places we may decide to protect our assets and ensure they are resilient, through measures such as building sea walls. Elsewhere, it may be necessary to relocate open spaces, recreation facilities and recreation activities as part of managed retreat because of the intolerable risk of exposure to sea level rise and extreme weather events. We will need new assets to replace the ones we lose.

However, managed retreat may also create an opportunity for our open space network and natural environment. Some parts of the city that are affected most by sea level rise or flooding are likely to be returned to open space. These areas may offer multiple opportunities including flood protection, wave energy absorption, restoring our natural coastal ecosystems, and recreational activities that require minimal built infrastructure. Our open spaces can act as a sponge and collect up excess rainwater that can help reduce flooding risks to built infrastructure. We will make the most of these multiple opportunities to provide important environmental and social benefits for Wellingtonians.

Our partners and their activities will also be impacted by climate change. For instance, changing temperatures may affect the timing of sport seasons and competition play. We will work with them to plan ahead.



#### Open spaces and recreation facilities vulnerable to sea level rising

- Parks and Reserves
- High Coastal Inundation Hazard
- Medium Coastal Inundation Hazard

### 3.4 Ensure opportunities to connect with nature

Wellington is committed to the Biophilic City Project, which seeks to increase the connection between people and nature. Biophilic cities provide abundant opportunities to be outside and to enjoy nature through active and passive recreation. Connections with nature also support the regeneration of the natural environment through education and knowledge. One way to think about these connections is through Denckla-Cobb's<sup>38</sup> 'Nature pyramid'. The Nature pyramid helps us to think about the different qualities of nature and the types of exposure to and experience of nature that will support Wellingtonians to have a healthy life.

At the bottom of the pyramid are the everyday experiences, where people have direct contact with nature and bring a bit of balance to their lives. At the top are nature experiences that are profoundly important and enriching, yet are likely to happen less frequently, perhaps only a few times a year. Through this lens, we will plan for Wellingtonians to have a myriad of nature experiences.

We will green our streets to support casual experiences with nature on a daily basis. We will explore how we can give people a boost of nature in their day through nature-filled commutes, by

providing pockets of quiet green spaces where people can slow down and relax amidst the busy city, and through opportunities for community gardening in higher-density areas.

Nature play experiences will be integrated into parks to enable weekly and monthly experiential opportunities. We will promote and advocate for nature play and nature education

#### Nature Pyramid<sup>39</sup>



38 Beatly, 2012

39 Concept by Tanya Denckla-Cobb

through programmes and funding that support mindfulness and creativity in our spaces and places. This can include play opportunities to access streams and opportunities to encounter wildlife.

We will also increase the accessibility of our nature reserves for people with different needs, including disabled people. This will mean raising the accessibility standard of our trail network in strategic places so that everyone can experience nature.

We will continue to provide opportunities for the highly memorable, full-immersion nature experiences that form the basis of some of Wellington's most popular destination attractions (see approach 5.3).

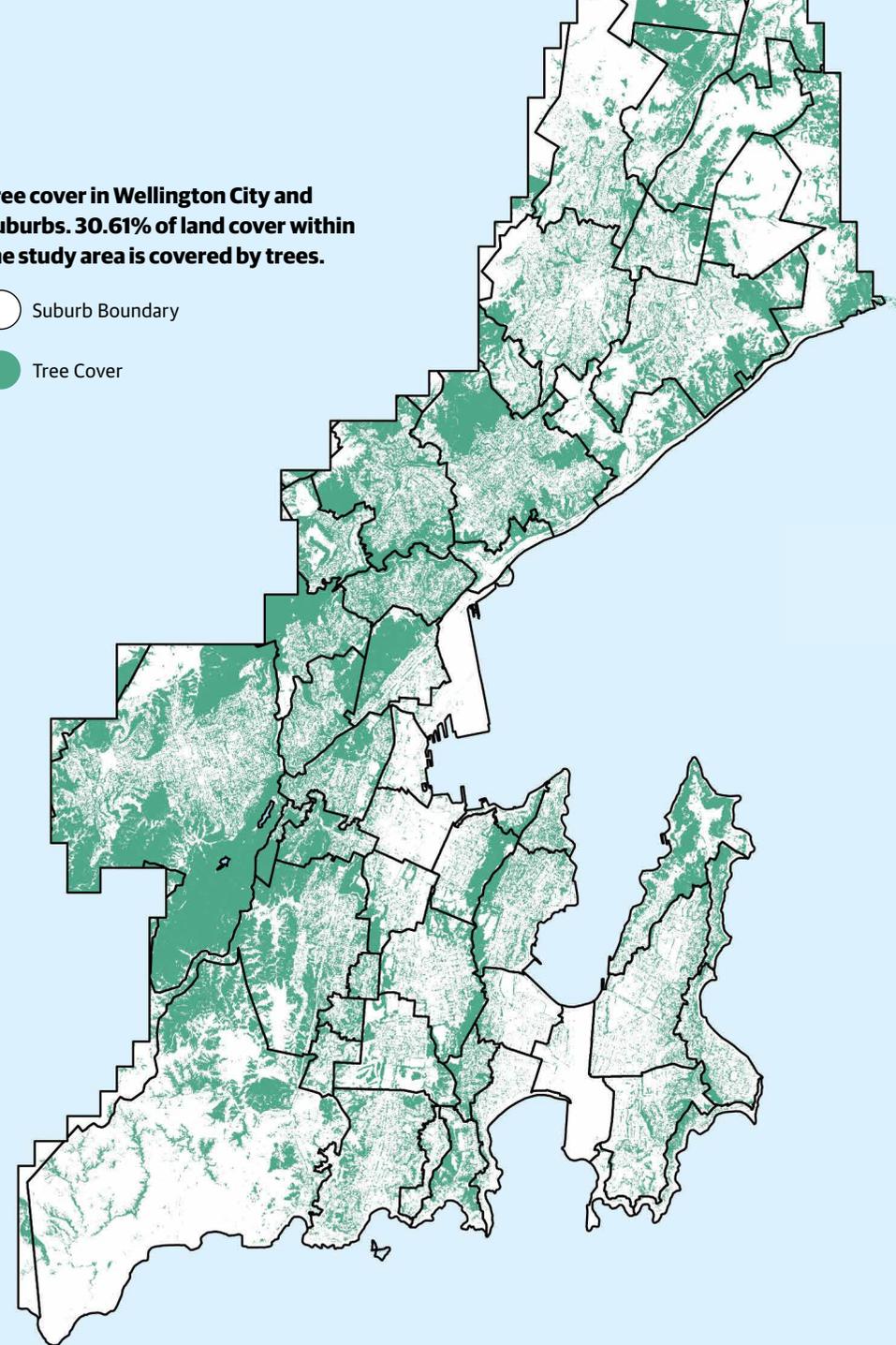
As we support nature connections, we also need to ensure we do not have a significant negative impact on the nature that we are helping people to connect with.

Given the value of having nature nearby and daily, we need to ensure this is available across our city. Tree canopy and vegetation coverage in Wellington varies significantly depending on where you live, and lower-socio economic areas of Wellington tend to be the least green<sup>40</sup>.

Overall canopy coverage is high in Wellington city at 31%, but it ranges from 9% and 10% in Lyall Bay and Kilbirnie, to 60% and even 70% in Wilton and Highbury<sup>41</sup>. Factors such as dense housing, unfavourable soil conditions, climatic conditions, and topography influence why some areas are less green. However, we now have the techniques, such as tree pits, to grow trees and other vegetation more successfully in harsh conditions. An equity lens will be taken to improve greening in lower-socio-economic suburbs that are currently underserved by vegetation.

**Tree cover in Wellington City and Suburbs. 30.61% of land cover within the study area is covered by trees.**

- Suburb Boundary
- Tree Cover



<sup>40</sup> Whitburn's (2014) study of vegetation in Wellington found that the diversity of plants correlated with neighbourhood wealth. Neighbourhoods with older and wealthier people had more plants generally, but also more mature trees

<sup>41</sup> Morgenroth J (2021). Vegetation Tree Canopy Coverage Study

### 3.5 Design facilities and infrastructure to minimise environmental impact

In the future, our recreation facilities and infrastructure will be designed and maintained to not only minimise environmental impact but also support natural values and resilience whenever possible. For example, a sports field should have underground water storage capacity, or a recreation building may have solar panels on the roof.

We will use the Council's climate smart building and infrastructure guidelines – Āhuarangi Whaiwhakaaro – to assist design decisions for our recreation facilities and infrastructure.

We will also design our recreation facilities to complement the natural environment, through elements such as, form, materials, and layout – helping people to connect and engage with their natural environment.



### 3.6 Reduce our carbon footprint

Our open space and recreation network will support the goal of making Wellington City a zero-carbon capital (net zero emissions) by 2050 as outlined in *Te Atakura*, Wellington Council's zero carbon strategy.

Transport produces most of Wellington's carbon emissions. We will plan and advocate for an open space and recreation network that does not rely on people getting there by car. We will also continue to electrify our Council fleet of vehicles and equipment to maintain and manage our open space and recreation networks.

A key opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint will be to reduce energy use and waste in our recreation facilities and assets. We will use a whole-of-life lifecycle approach and support a circular economy when renewing recreation assets. This means keeping up-to-date with knowledge about sustainability; using environmentally friendly products; and repairing, refurbishing, and re-using wherever possible to reduce waste and pollution. For example, when we use artificial turfs, we will factor in how they can be repurposed.

We will decarbonise our facilities to reduce

our carbon footprint. For example, many of our pools currently rely on gas to heat them. We will invest directly in electrifying and decarbonising the systems in council-run facilities. We will also require our recreation clubs and community group partners to reduce their carbon footprints, such as using our levers around lease and event funding agreements.





## 04 Whakamāori mai anō Re-indigenising

Te ao Māori, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and mātauranga Māori are reflected in the decision making, management, activities and the visual presence of our places, spaces, and programmes.



## Why is this important?

*Tūpiki Ora* is Council's Māori Partnership Strategy and was released in 2022.

*Tūpiki Ora* establishes a shared commitment of Wellington City Council, Mana Whenua and Māori, to seek new ways to support our whānau to thrive. It supports a Māori-led response to uplifting the state of wellbeing of whānau, anchored in the whakapapa relationships between people, place, and nature. *Tūpiki Ora* and *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke* have a similar focus around the pursuit of wellbeing. The *Tūpiki Ora* vision is: "Kia mauri ora te taiao, kia mauri ora te whānau, kia mauri ora te ao Māori" - "The vitality of our environment is nourished, the wellbeing of our whānau is fostered, te ao Māori is embraced and celebrated." It has four priority waypoints to get to this vision:



### **Te whakatairanga i te ao Māori**

Enhancing and promoting  
te ao Māori



### **Tiakina te taiao**

Caring for our environment



### **Te whakapakari pūmanawa**

Building capability



### **He whānau toiora**

thriving and  
vibrant communities

Our re-indigenising objectives will translate *Tūpiki Ora*'s waypoints into our open space and recreation network. At the very core we aspire to work in partnership with mana whenua to re-indigenise our open spaces and recreation places and programmes. However, we are on a journey to understand and discover what re-indigenising our open spaces and recreation means, as part of our ever-evolving partnership. In part, it will mean mātauranga knowledge is an essential part of our approach to the open space and recreation network. It will mean that the whakapapa of the whenua and the whakapapa of our people will be visible, and that mana whenua will be empowered to be kaitiaki and co-governors and co-managers of our open spaces.



## Our approaches

### 4.1 Support iwi as kaitiaki in their rohe

A key outcome of *Tūpiki Ora* is, "Tiakina te taiao - caring for our environment". The Council will support Māori to maintain strong relationships with te taiao and support their role as kaitiaki in their rohe. This means partnering as equals with mana whenua in their role as kaitiaki in managing, restoring, and protecting the natural environment.

We will be open to exploring alternative models of park land management and governance with mana whenua that improves our existing partnership arrangements, including through co-governance, co-management and co-design.

- **Co-governance** is when the Council and iwi share governance over a specific topic or area. Governance focuses on strategic matters.

- **Co-management** is when the Council and iwi share management over a specific topic or area. Management focuses on day-to-day operational responsibilities.
- **Co-design** is often at the project level and is when a project is designed by the Council and Iwi together. For example, working together on how specific park assets are designed and maintained.

### 4.2 Raise the visibility of te ao Māori narratives, identities, histories, and landmarks

As *Tūpiki Ora* states, mana whenua and Māori aspire to elevate and celebrate te ao Māori in all Wellington's spaces, normalising te reo Māori and creating a sense of community pride for all things Māori within our city. Our open space and recreation network will support increased visibility and presence of te ao Māori. Our spaces and places will tell mana whenua stories and histories in built and natural landscapes, such as using oral histories in interpretation to bring to life the history of Te Aro Pā or revealing the history of the Basin Reserve as a former wetland. We will work with mana whenua to reinstate traditional te reo names and name new open spaces, facilities, and features. We will include Māori heritage trails, markers, art, pou and interpretation boards across our open space and recreation networks.

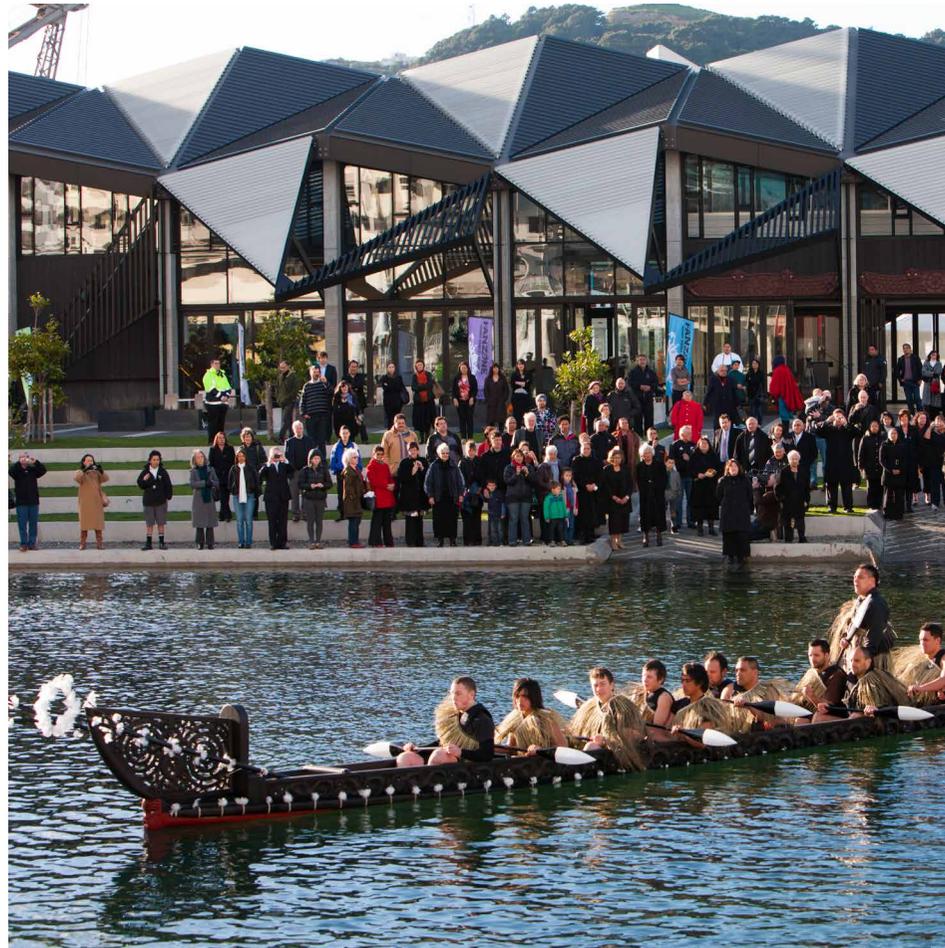


### 4.3 Normalise and incorporate traditional Māori games and initiatives

Despite historical colonial suppression of traditional Māori sports and games, ngā mahi a rēhia and taonga tākarō have persisted and are being revitalised.

In mātauranga Māori, games are often connected with storytelling and whakapapa; they provide knowledge, fun and play. We can embrace and support this revitalisation by incorporating traditional Māori games and initiatives into our open spaces, recreation facilities, programmes, and events, normalising them as recreational activities in Wellington.

We will install Māori play elements, fund activations, and promote nature play places that are inspired by mātauranga Māori knowledge. We will work with our partners to provide a variety of mātauranga games and stories, including games based on physical competition and other quieter games that use other skills. For example, play activation that demonstrates traditional spinning tops and poi, or facility provision for kī-o-rahi.



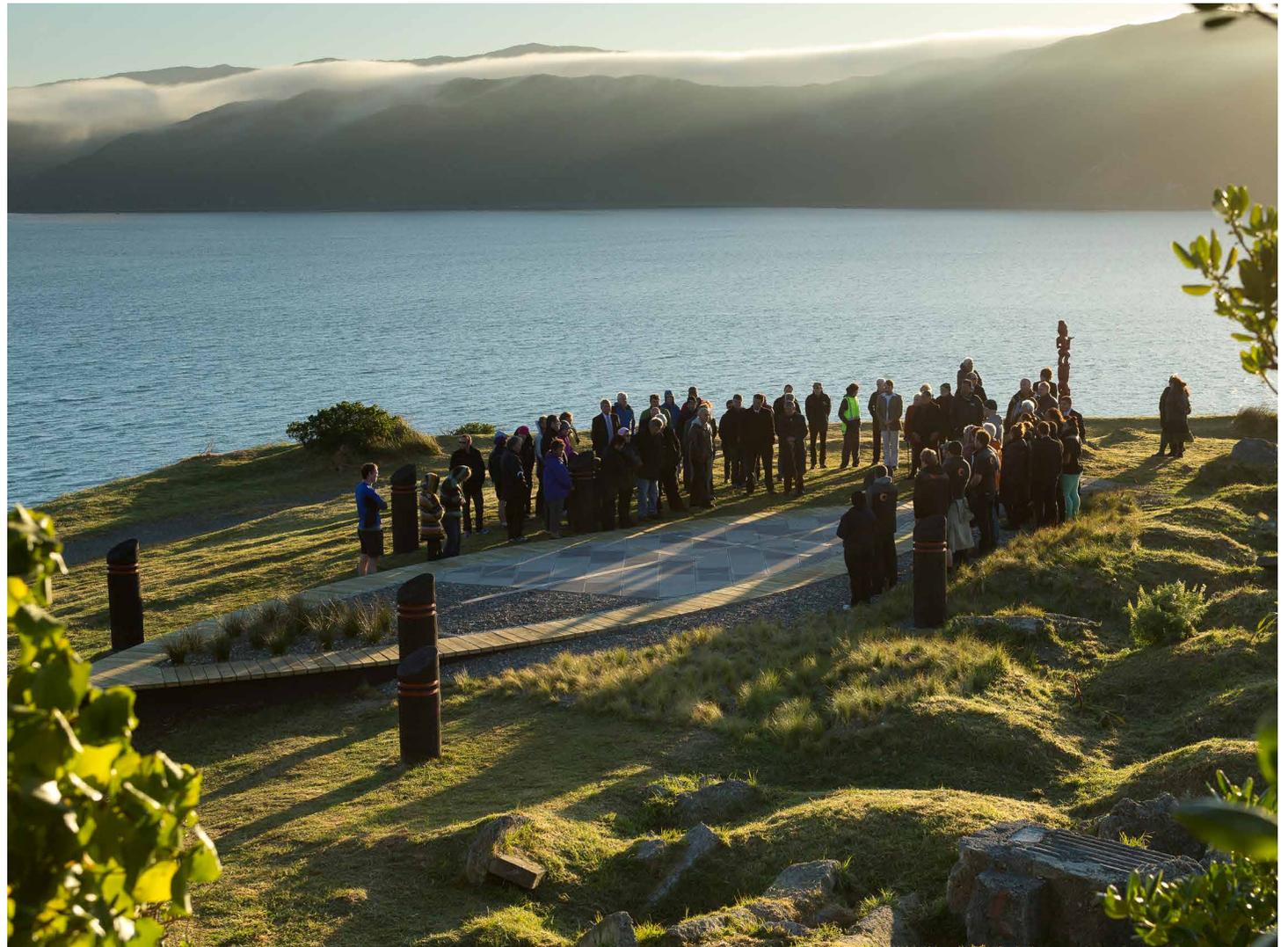
### 4.4 Support traditional customary practices

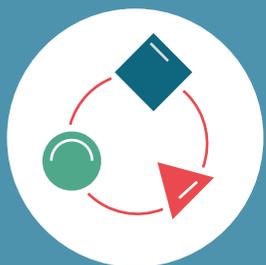
Our open space and recreation places, space and programmes will include elements based on mātauranga that support Māori practices, such as places to welcome people and help people to come together, places for cultural practice, places to speak, places to express manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.

We will support cultural practices around cultural materials, such as supporting rongoā, mahinga kai and other cultural materials across our open spaces. This will be reflected through thriving mahinga kai, māra kai and rongoā gardens which support Māori practices, and through the sharing of knowledge about cultural practices via programmes and information. Rongoā is the traditional healing system of Māori. Rongoā plants, including kawakawa, harakeke, kowhai and manuka are important for healing and illness.

#### 4.5 Build mātauranga capability across our open space and recreation network

A key outcome of *Tūpiki Ora* is, "Te whakapakari pūmanawa - building capability". In the open space and recreation area, we will build our te reo Māori and mātauranga capability to support the mana of mana whenua better. With improved expertise and understanding, we will be better able to develop our relationship with mana whenua, value mātauranga knowledge and expertise, and ensure mana whenua have a decision-making role in our initiatives to re-indigenise our open spaces, facilities, and programmes.





## 05 Kanorau Diverse

Diverse recreation experiences across our places, spaces, and programmes equitably support our communities' physical, social, and restorative wants and needs and enable everyone to be active.



## Why is this important?

Wellingtonians are diverse – between us, we represent different ages, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, abilities, physical and mental health, beliefs, and socio-economic circumstances. Our city is home to 131 ethnicities and the population is expected to get more ethnically diverse over the next 30 years. Our recreation needs and wants are correspondingly diverse. To cater to this diversity the Council must support varied recreational opportunities to meet people's varied recreational needs and expectations, and therefore we are supporting the health and wellbeing benefits that are derived from these experiences.

With that in mind, participation in our diverse recreation activities in New Zealand is changing. Key social trends include a decline in traditional organised sport participation<sup>42</sup>. Social trends such as people working longer, and having busier lives means there is less time for people to be involved, to be active and to contribute to volunteer work<sup>43</sup>. There is a decline in children spending time outdoors, and a decline in volunteers for clubs coaching and administration<sup>44</sup>. On the other hand, there

is an increased interest and participation in a more diverse range of recreation activities, including some fast-emerging new activities such as pickleball, kī-o-rahi and disc golf.

To respond to these social trends, we need to be flexible in how we support a range of recreation and opportunities that responds to our future community needs. That includes supporting long-standing but sometimes struggling sports and recreation clubs with specific needs while taking an equity approach to supporting emerging and less traditional forms of active recreation. Many clubs and recreation groups rely to a greater or lesser extent on access to our spaces and places, Council grants, subsidies, and lease agreements to maintain and upgrade their facilities and buy equipment.

Planning for diversity is complex as our community has competing needs and wants for limited spaces and resources. We will support a diverse range of groups, experiences, and opportunities in Wellington with an equity lens.



42 Active NZ 2021

43 Volunteering NZ 2019

44 Sports NZ 2021

## How are we active?

We are involved in more than **95** types of diverse physical activities

32% of us have started a new activity in the last month, with the most popular new activities being: yoga, individual work outs, group fitness classes, walking, gardening, running and mountain biking, pilates, playing games with kids and swimming.

This tells a story of people getting out and being involved in a range of recreation activities that this strategy needs to continue to support.

These activities are supported by volunteers. 25% of us have volunteered in the last 12 months.

The most common physical activities adults in Wellington have participated in the last 12 months were:



31% of us participated in competition activity over the previous 12 months when measured in 2019.

The most common activities for adults were:



Children & young people participate in even more activities, when measured, in the last 7 days the most popular activities in Wellington for under 18 year-olds were:



The statistics on this page come from the Active NZ 2019 Main Participation Survey and relate to the wider Wellington Region, except where they specify otherwise.

## Our approaches

### 5.1 Take an equity approach to supporting diverse recreation and sporting activities

In some cases, there is historical inequity in how the Council has supported recreational activities. For example, sports codes such as football, rugby and cricket have been subsidised through the Council provision of sports fields and long-term provision of lease land for their clubrooms. Whereas support for gymnastics, dancing or martial arts are often accommodated in short-term and not-fit-for-purpose community spaces. Sometimes, inequities result from continuing historic allocations. For example, the historic use of courts, fields or swim lanes determines who gets access and when. These inequities make it difficult for new or emerging sports to access space and facilities and to get support through funding and investment

in new facilities. The Council recognises that emerging and growing recreation activities can open opportunities for more people to participate in physical activity. These activities may sometimes be preferred in communities where participation rates are lower and recreation trends indicate that people are increasingly preferring emerging sports.

This equity approach will also be vital to addressing competing demands for spaces, places, and resources. We will not just listen to the loudest voices. We will be transparent and apply a fair, consistent, evidence-based decision framework that balances communities' needs, wants, and experiences and keeps an eye out for our most vulnerable groups. For example, in our track network, we will balance investment tensions between our quiet and large interest groups with our vocal and smaller groups.



## 5.2 Support recreation clubs and organisations to thrive

Volunteer effort underpins many of our open space and recreation activities. In recent years, active recreation volunteers have declined, making it harder for many of our recreation groups to survive<sup>45</sup>. More clubs are struggling financially, and those with their own facilities are finding it harder to meet maintenance and renewal costs, putting many clubs at risk.

We will support diverse community groups to partner, co-locate and create more multi-functional and flexible community hubs. Sharing facilities and expertise helps build an inclusive, integrated community and reduces building and maintenance costs. The Communities Facilities Plan will provide direction and a framework to ensure our network of community facilities is collaborative and cohesive.

Developing shared hubs also allows us to repurpose open spaces and facilities. For example, some of our old, leased buildings, which are at the end of their life, will be costly to fix and/or are underused because they are no longer fit for purpose. These buildings could be replaced with a new open space or a new hub facility that can accommodate a range of diverse

users rather than single activities. We will also encourage sharing and multi-use by supporting our lessees to sub-lease their facilities as win-win opportunities to offset costs while enabling new recreation groups to find a base.

In some cases, community recreation organisations may pursue creative approaches to generating revenue to support their financial sustainability. Where possible, we will continue to support these activities on Council land where consistent with legislative requirements.

Getting Council support can be complex, especially for new and emerging sports that must be organised in a certain way to get funding and facility support. So, we will look at reframing our processes to be more flexible and easier to use. In addition, we will investigate ways to support volunteer groups to learn about administration and management through partnerships with organisations like Nuku Ora.

Also, an increasing number of community groups are looking after local neighbourhood spaces and natural areas. We will encourage community involvement in maintaining and managing open space by providing support and celebrating these contributions.



### 5.3 Provide world-class experiences

Wellington already offers a diversity of world-class recreational experiences in our open spaces and recreation facilities. These experiences bring economic benefits from tourism and attract people to live and work here. We will promote Wellington's unique identity through the range of experiences and cultural interest our public open spaces offer. We will ensure our destination parks are of a high quality, capable of supporting high visitor numbers, and accessible for all. We will ensure they are significant cultural, recreational, and learning hubs and continue to promote them as experiences not to be missed e.g. the Wellington Waterfront, Ōtari Wilton's Bush, the Wellington Botanic Garden ki Paekākā, Mākara Peak. We will continue a busy programme of events in our destination spaces and places and support international, national, and regional events. Examples include sports tournaments, arts and cultural festivals, endurance races and other events that bring diverse opportunities and experiences to Wellington.



A particular focus will be to build on the growing reputation of Wellington City, and region, as a world-class walking and mountain biking destination. This will require investment to maintain and develop our track network to a world class standard for Wellingtonians and visitors alike.

### 5.4 Embrace and accept our furiously windy and wild city

Wellington is recognised as one of the windiest cities in the world, averaging 173 days a year with wind gusts greater than about 60 km/h<sup>46</sup>. The wind and changeable weather are often identified as a barrier to people getting outdoors but it doesn't need to be a barrier - in fact, it can be an invigorating point of difference to celebrate. We propose to work with the wind. We will enable diverse recreation experiences when it is windy as well. Our open spaces and recreation facilities should be designed with regards to and in connection with the wind. This means, both mitigating the impact of the wind and making a fun feature of it, where possible. Some days embracing our weathered city means ensuring we provide sheltered recreation experiences, for example, promoting indoor play facilities and using wind barriers in open spaces. We need to provide a diverse range of opportunities for windy days in Wellington. We will promote knowledge about what places are sheltered in what wind directions and work to adapt outdoor areas to moderate climatic conditions.



# Te āhua o tā mātou whakatutuki

## How we will do it

Implementation of this Open Space and Recreation Strategy, *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*, will be incorporated into the Council's asset and activity plans, management plans, projects, business plans, and promotion with accompanying responsibilities, resources and timeframes identified.

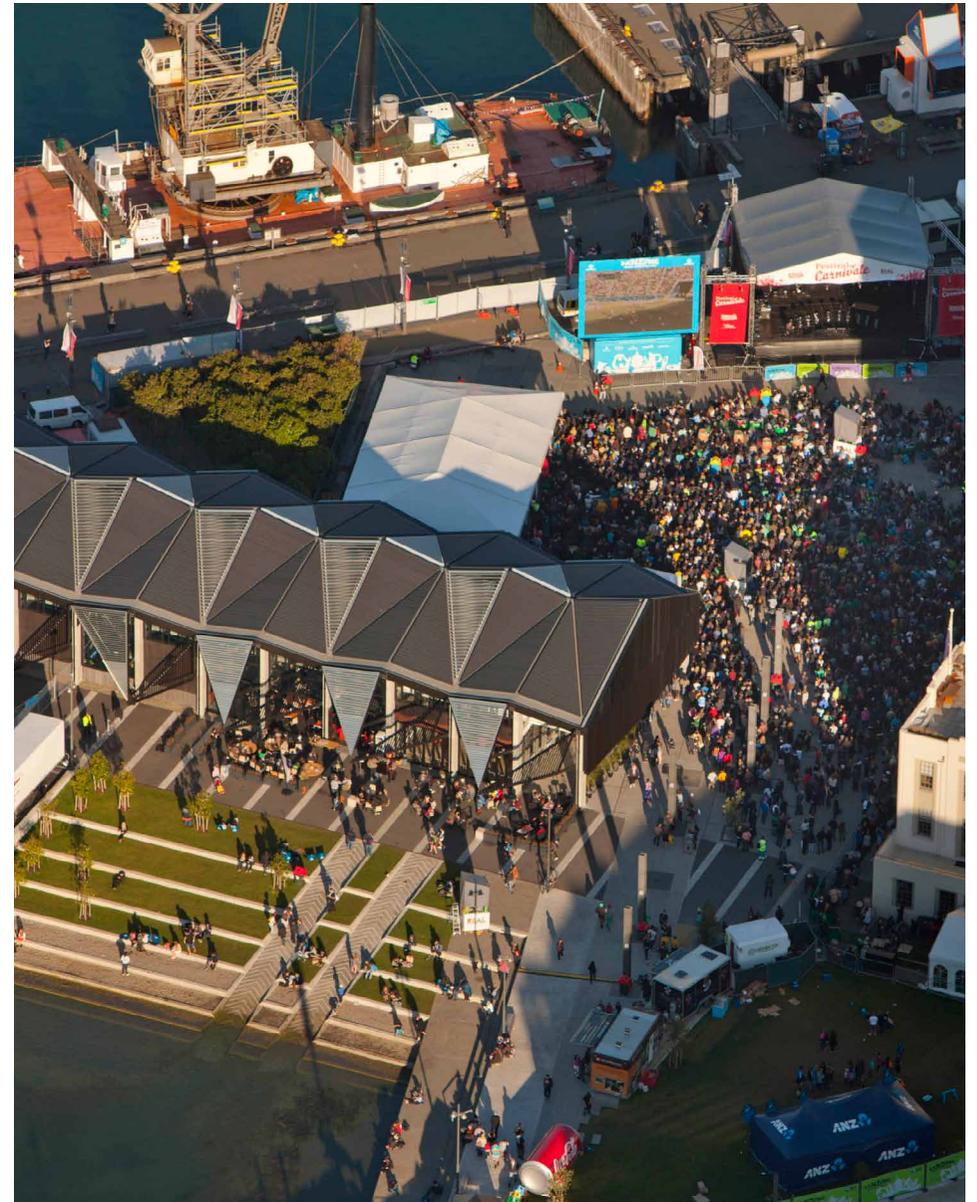
The strategy's implementation will be reported bi-annually and supported by annual internal implementation planning which will identify the priorities for action with accompanying responsibilities and timeframes.

We will seek funding for delivering parts of this strategy through Long-term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

### Performance indicators

Indicators are an important tool in ascertaining the progress in implementing *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*, as well as maintaining the ongoing commitment to improved outcomes for open space and recreation within the Council, our community, and our partners.

The Council will monitor progress against the following indicators to measure how we are tracking against the goals of this strategy.



Key performance indicator	Measure	30-Year Target	Baseline Measure	Rationale and comment	Data Source
<b>KPI 1 (Integrated)</b>	Proportion of dwellings that are within 10-minutes walking distance of a recreational open space.	90%	82%	The city is becoming more compact, and people will have less access to cars. These indicators measure how easy it is to walk to a recreational open space, something that is necessary for a high-quality of life.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 2 (Integrated)</b>	Proportion of dwellings in high-intensification areas within 5-minute walking distance of a recreational open space.	100%	57%		
<b>KPI 3 (Integrated)</b>	Quantity of open space in Wellington City.	4305ha	No net loss	The need for public open space will increase as the population grows and the effects of climate change increase. This indicator tells us if we are maintaining the amount of public open space as a bottom line or, better still, increasing the amount.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 4 (Inclusive &amp; Integrated)</b>	Perception that recreation facilities and programmes are easy to access.	85%	68%	Not all Wellingtonians find our recreation facilities, programmes, and open spaces easy to access. These indicators shows whether perceptions of ease of access are changing.	Residential Monitoring Survey (2023).
<b>KPI 5 (Inclusive &amp; Integrated)</b>	Perception that types of open spaces are easy to access, including walkways and trails, local parks and reserves, forested reserves, beaches, and coastal areas.	95%	83%		
<b>KPI 6 (Inclusive)</b>	Perception that people feel safe in parks during the day.	90%	Unknown	Not all Wellingtonians feel safe in our parks, even during the day. This indicator will help us understand whether we are making progress in this space of making our parks feel inclusive and safe for everyone.	Residential Monitoring Survey. (Future measure)
<b>KPI 7 (Inclusive)</b>	Community parks, destination parks and significant beaches have access to a public toilet during the day. (These are defined in the Open Space Categories and Provision Targets.)	100%	68%	A barrier identified for park use was access to public toilets within our open spaces. This indicator will show how we are doing in reaching this target. Although only 68% of our community, destination and significant beaches currently have access to parks, another 23% currently have access to bookable toilets as part of organised sport.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 8 (Diverse)</b>	Overall participation in physical activity (adults/last 7 days).	85%	76%	Participation in physical recreation supports our wellness. Council has a role in supporting physical activity. This outcome measure shows the general trend for physical activity across Wellington. This indicator shows how active participation changes across Wellington City.	Sport NZ Activity Survey.
<b>KPI 9 (Diverse &amp; Inclusive)</b>	Participation in physical activity amongst demographics with current disparity: (Adults/last 7 days). People in areas of high deprivation, amongst disabled people, Māori, Pasifika and Asian communities.	No group below 75%	Deprivation high (8-10): 69% Disabled: 71% Pasifika: 69% Asian: 71% Māori: 73%	Not all Wellingtonians have the same opportunities to participate in active recreation. This indicator shows how active recreation participation across groups known to have low rates of participation changes in Wellington.	Sport NZ Activity Survey.

Key performance indicator	Measure	30-Year Target	Baseline Measure	Rationale and comment	Data Source
<b>KPI 10 (Diverse &amp; Inclusive)</b>	Participation of tamariki & rangatahi in organised sport and recreation (5-17 year olds/three hours or more each week).	90%	81%	This outcome measure shows the general trend for physical activity across Wellington for young people. This indicator shows how active participation changes across Wellington City.	Sport NZ Activity Survey.
<b>KPI 11 (Reindigenising)</b>	Additional parks and recreation facilities that include Māori interpretation or storytelling information.	2 a year	Not measured	Our open spaces and recreation facilities often do not express their indigenous history. This indicator will measure progress on new interpretation information.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 12 (Reindigenising)</b>	Additional open spaces and recreation facilities that have been named or renamed with te reo names.	2 a year	2 in 2022	Our open spaces and recreation facilities do not reflect our indigenous history. This indicator measures the progress of bringing new te reo names to our open spaces and facilities.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 13 (Reindigenising)</b>	Agreement that Māori culture and te reo Māori is visible in Wellington city.	70%	60%	Wellington is on its journey to be recognised as a culturally rich city. This indicator will tell us whether we are making progress towards a te reo Māori presence in our open space and facilities.	Internal analysis.
<b>KPI 14 (Diverse)</b>	Agreement that Wellington provides a high number of recreation opportunities.	90%	72%	Recreation activities and interests are changing and will continue to change. This indicator shows whether the Council is keeping pace with recreational trends and expectations.	Residential Monitoring Survey.
<b>KPI 15 (Inclusive)</b>	Net satisfaction with quality and maintenance of open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities.	85%	74%	Outdoor recreation facilities should feel welcoming and inclusive and the level of maintenance has an impact on this feeling. This indicator shows whether people are satisfied with maintenance on outdoor recreation facilities.	Residential Monitoring Survey.
<b>KPI 16 (Inclusive)</b>	Net satisfaction with quality and maintenance of indoor recreation facilities.	85%	83%	Indoor recreation facilities should feel welcoming and inclusive and the level of maintenance has an impact on this feeling. This indicator shows whether people are satisfied with maintenance on indoor recreation facilities.	Residential Monitoring Survey.
<b>KPI 17 (Regenerating &amp; resilient)</b>	Number of street trees.	Net increase of 10% over 30 years	13000 estimated	Trees in streets increases ecosystem services and people's day-to-day contact with nature. This indicator measures progress on greening streets.	Internal analysis.

KPIs relating to Regenerating & Resilient: To be developed as part of Our Natural Capital, the Biodiversity strategy review.

# Ngā hohenga Actions

This section outlines how we will turn our approaches into 'on the ground' changes to the way we plan, develop, manage, and partner on, open space and recreation over the next 10 years.

The actions identified do not cover all the work that the Council does in relation to open space and recreation - they focus on key additional initiatives for the Council to undertake, or to continue progressing, in order to deliver on our strategic focuses over the next 10 years.

The actions are grouped into four activity areas:

- Enabling Māori aspirations actions
- Planning & policy actions
- Development, management, and promotion actions
- Regional and community partnership actions



## Enabling Māori aspirations

The actions identified in this section will contribute towards achieving mana whenua aspirations identified in *Tūpiki Ora* and will be confirmed through ongoing engagement with mana whenua on implementing *Te Whai Oranga Pōneke*. While mana whenua share many of the aims of the strategy, some of the actions that significantly relate to mana whenua aspirations include the actions listed in the table below.

### Actions to enable Māori aspirations and support our re-indigenising focus

### Related Tūpiki Ora Priority Way points

1	In partnership with mana whenua, explore ways to restore indigenous names or introduce new te reo names to our open spaces and recreation facilities, including the intention for all recreation centres and pools to have a te reo name and identity.	Te whakatairanga i te ao Māori - Enhancing and promoting te ao Māori
2	In partnership with mana whenua, explore opportunities throughout our open spaces and recreation facilities to bring indigenous histories to the forefront; and develop our understanding of mana whenua's expectations and aspirations for how these opportunities might be brought to fruition. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>acknowledging the presence of our buried streams through story telling and</li> <li>investigating the use of online interpretation and display techniques and resources.</li> </ul>	Te whakatairanga i te ao Māori - Enhancing and promoting te ao Māori
3	In partnership with mana whenua, proactively identify and re-indigenise sites of cultural significance and interest in our public open spaces. Including protecting, preserving, and managing wāhi tapu and other places of significance in our open space network.	Te whakatairanga i te ao Māori - Enhancing and promoting te ao Māori
4	In partnership with mana whenua and community groups, support and undertake initiatives to enhance the biodiversity value of our parks, open spaces and waterways through planting programmes, community groups and volunteer programmes.	Tiakina te taiao - Caring for our environment
5	Incorporate spoken and written te reo and te ao Māori design in our recreation facilities, open spaces, and published information.	Te whakapakari pūmanawa - Building capability
6	In partnership with mana whenua provide targeted education opportunities for rangatahi to learn about kaitiakitanga.	Te whakapakari pūmanawa - Building capability
7	In partnership with mana whenua build on our model of co-managing and co-governing our open spaces through the development of a mana whenua-led partnership approach driven by <i>Tūpiki ora</i> .	Te whakapakari pūmanawa - Building capability
8	In partnership with mana whenua, and in conjunction with the Crown, work to develop the end of Te Motu Kairangi as a distinctive national heritage, recreation, culture and arts reserve.	Te whakatairanga i te ao Māori - Enhancing and promoting te ao Māori

To achieve these actions, further funding will be required to support internal and external capability.

## Planning & policy actions

Open space and recreation related policies, plans and guidelines help inform strategic and transparent decision-making, backed by extensive analysis. Planning helps prioritise actions and funding needed to improve our open space and recreation network.

	Delivery timeframes			Focuses guiding the action				
	Next 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Integrated	Inclusive	Regenerating & Resilient	Reindigenising	Diverse
P1 Develop an Open Space Investment Plan to guide strategic decision-making about open space development and land acquisition to respond to growth and changing community needs for the next 30 years. Use this plan to develop a programme of investment that prioritises improvements in the quality and multi-functionality of existing open spaces, and provides quality neighbourhood parks to meet our Open Space Category and Provision Targets.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P2 Develop a land acquisition and disposal guideline to support decision-making about Council land ownership for open space and recreation purposes. The guideline will include an outline of relevant legal mechanisms and land-holding options.	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P3 Acquire land to complete the Outer Green Belt as a continuous wild green connector along the city's urban edge (see Outer Green Belt Management Plan).	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
P4 Develop a street tree and road verges greening policy/ plan that supports greening, play and recreational uses of street space across the city. (This will complement the Green Network Plan for greening the City Centre).	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P5 Develop an ocean recreation and facility plan to plan for water-based coastal recreation activities such as waka ama, ocean swimming, sailing, boat ramps and surf lifesaving, including looking at options for sharing infrastructure such as changing and storage facilities and supporting the collection of kai moana. This plan will respond to the implications of sea level rise and may be included within the scope of a Coastal Reserves Management Plan.	✓			✓			✓	✓
P6 Investigate our recreation fees framework - considering inequities in the provision, quality, and access to sport and recreation facilities and the need to support diversity in recreational activities. The investigation will consider the subsidy level on fees charged for using council facilities and ensure transparent decision-making about fees and charges. The review of Sports facilities fees and charges will assist in informing this investigation.	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
P7 Review the criteria for grants and funding that we provide to sports and recreation groups.	✓				✓		✓	✓
P8 Review the Open Space Access Plan to raise the accessibility of our existing track network to a broader range of users. This does not mean every trail will be accessible to all groups. The review will also consider the impact of climate change and how the trail network can support commuter routes, while also considering the cumulative effects of trails on the natural environment.			✓	✓	✓			✓

	Delivery timeframes			Focuses guiding the action				
	Next 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Integrated	Inclusive	Regenerating & Resilient	Reindigenising	Diverse
P9 Review the Play Spaces Policy with a focus on providing a broad range of opportunities within a spectrum of play types, including adventurous, nature, indigenous and water play and planning for accessibility, wind and shelter and supporting tamariki to play throughout the city. The review should also look at providing a wide range of informal play infrastructure for rangatahi, such as a plan for skate, basketball, ki-o-rahi, parkour, and rock climbing. The review will consider whether a separate plan for enabling rangatahi to be more active is needed.			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
P10 As part of developing parking management plans and transport behaviour initiatives for the city, consider the provision of parking and transport options for open spaces and recreational places.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
P11 Work with Wellington NZ and event organisers to investigate future needs and demands for outdoor events spaces and event infrastructure requirements, considering current capacity and the impact of events on community sport and recreation. Consider how we can accommodate small, medium, and large events in our open spaces.		✓		✓				✓
P12 Investigate community garden models and how the Council can improve, approve, and support processes around enabling community gardening and removing barriers for community garden groups.		✓		✓				✓
P13 Plan for the effect of increased storm-weather events and rising sea levels by: researching and monitoring the current and predicted long-term impact of climate change on Wellington's open space and recreational facility network; and ensuring the open space and recreation network is considered essential infrastructure to support resilience in the events of flooding/disasters as part of future local and regional adaptation strategies.		✓		✓				✓
P14 Identify areas of road reserve that could be reclassified as reserves to deliver open space and recreation outcomes. Assess these areas against the road-stopping and encroachment policy and carry out road-stopping. Reclassification could apply where roading purposes are not required.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
P15 Work with Wellington Water and Greater Wellington Regional council to investigate how our open space network can contribute to improved integrated catchment management, considering the feasibility across our open space network to implement integrated catchment management improvements.	✓	✓				✓		
P16 Investigate alternative mechanisms for financing open space and green infrastructure improvements. Look at options discussed in the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Report on "The Vital Importance of Urban Green Spaces."	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Development, Management and Promotion Actions

Wellington City Council undertakes a wide variety of activities to develop, manage and promote the open space and recreation network. The Council designs and develops parks and recreation facilities, upgrades existing facilities, promotes activities, manages weeds and pests as well as regular day-to-day maintenance of our open spaces and running of recreation facilities

	Delivery timeframes			Focuses guiding the action				
	Next 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Integrated	Inclusive	Regenerating & Resilient	Reindigenising	Diverse
D1 Implement the Community Facilities Plan 2023, which will guide strategic decision-making about the investment required to provide a well-distributed, good quality network of recreation facilities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D2 Invest in increasing energy efficiency within recreation facilities – and move away from the use of gas.	✓	✓	✓			✓		
D3 Run varied programmes, activities, and activations across our open space and recreation network, including a focus on reducing barriers to participation, encouraging sedentary communities to be active, and incorporating culturally varied activities, such as Māori games and play.	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
D4 Revamp information and promotions about our open spaces, recreation facilities and programmes to communicate information to a wide range of people to help them find out what's available, understand their choices and plan what to do and how to get there. Council will provide more information about sheltered and exposed sites in different weather conditions. Communication should be as widely available as possible through significantly improved online information, written formats, hard copy brochures and maps, and translations into te Reo and other languages.		✓			✓			✓
D5 Develop a wind focused play area – Tāwhirimātea – to celebrate Wellington's climate and encourage people to go out and experience the elements.		✓					✓	✓
D6 Raise the level of service on our track network through increased investment in track development, renewal, and maintenance. The increase is needed to support increased user numbers associated with city growth and housing density change, proposed accessibility improvements, pest and weed control access, and to respond to the damage ensuing from increased storm-weather events.	✓				✓	✓		✓
D7 Upgrade our changing facilities across Wellington, to be inclusive and gender neutral.	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
D8 Provide playing and training facilities for sport as part of a co-ordinated regional network, informed by the Nuku Ora's study of regional provision for sports fields and indoor courts.		✓						✓
D9 Investigate opportunities for formal and accessible street activities through temporary traffic restrictions and community group partnerships, which enable temporary neighbourhood play with minimal traffic disruption.	✓			✓				✓
D10 Ensure asset and activity management plans take a long-term view of asset renewal, considering future impacts of climate change and meeting our commitments to a low carbon footprint.	✓	✓	✓			✓		

	Delivery timeframes			Focuses guiding the action				
	Next 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Integrated	Inclusive	Regenerating & Resilient	Reindigenising	Diverse
D11 Continue to expand the Leisure Card programme offerings.	✓	✓	✓		✓			
D12 Reduce the environmental impact of our park maintenance and development operations by assessing the short and long-term impacts of current practices and planning for how to reduce the overall impacts over time (e.g. replanting steep areas to reduce mowing and reviewing the use of weed-control chemicals).	✓	✓				✓		
D13 Deliver accessible improvement to our open spaces and recreation network informed by the Accessible Wellington City Action Plan and Recreation Aotearoa's accessible guidelines on tracks, pools, and play. (Both of these projects are currently in development).	✓	✓			✓			
D14 Implement the Cultural Heritage Action Plan to share the layered stories of Wellington's diverse communities across our open space and recreation network (This plan is currently in development).	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
D15 Update the Wellington Design Manual to incorporate urban realm design guidance that is inclusive of skate and play and is informed by the Skateable City Report (this report is currently in development).	✓			✓	✓			✓

## Key regional and community organisation partnership actions

We recognise that collaboration is essential to achieve the outcomes for Wellington's open space and recreation network. The following actions are key ways we will partner with regional and community organisations.

	Delivery timeframes			Focuses guiding the action				
	Next 2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	Integrated	Inclusive	Regenerating & Resilient	Reindigenising	Diverse
C1 Work with regional partners to promote Wellington as a recreational destination, highlighting our destination spaces and places as quintessential Wellington experiences, not to be missed by visitors.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C2 Partner with mana whenua and environmental groups, including catchment groups, to protect and regenerate our natural environment in ways aligned with direction set by <i>Tūpiki Ora</i> , Our Natural Capital (currently under review).	✓	✓	✓			✓		
C3 Partner with regional and local organisations to find new and innovative ways of getting people in our communities active.	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
C4 Partner with Nuku Ora to deliver Living Well, the regional active recreation strategy, and to support the organisational capability of play, sport, and recreation community groups.	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
C5 Partner with key transport stakeholders (including Greater Wellington Regional Council) to ensure there are public transport options for people to get to main recreation hubs, including community and destination parks.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
C6 Partner with community groups and organisations to help achieve climate change goals through our open space and recreation network initiatives, such as tree planting partnerships to capture carbon and behaviour change initiatives that reduce carbon output.	✓	✓	✓			✓		
C7 Partner with government organisations, and landowners such as Ministry of Education, Kāinga Ora, schools and universities to share, co-locate and combine resources for developing and managing recreation facilities and open spaces including sports fields, courts, pools and play areas.	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
C8 Work with developers and Council's consenting teams to enable well-distributed, multifunctional, connected and integrated spaces that respond to Wellington's current and future needs by ensuring open space values are protected and enhanced in and around development sites in existing urban areas; and by ensuring adequate open space provision and development is provided in future urban areas and is consistent with the Open Space Categories and Provision Targets.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C9 Continue to work with other cities on our global biophilic city and tree-city-of-the-world commitments, working collectively to pursue the vision of nature-full cities.	✓	✓	✓			✓		

# Kuputaka Glossary

This glossary defines some terms that are used with specific meaning in this document or are often used in the open space and recreation sector.

## **Accessibility**

Being able to access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.<sup>47</sup>

## **Activation**

The creation of an event or interaction which enables participants or audiences to engage directly with what is being offered e.g. a streetside dance demonstration where passers-by are invited to join in.

## **Active recreation**

Leisure pursuits that involve physical activity, such as running, walking your dog, dancing, gardening, playing games or participating in organised sport.

## **Active transport**

Travelling around the city by using our own physical action, including walking, cycling, scooting and e-bikes.

## **Biophilia**

Refers to the innate human connection to nature and other forms of life. It is the idea that humans have an instinctual affinity for other living things and the natural world, and that this connection is essential to our mental and physical well-being.

## **Community gardens and orchards**

A small-scale, low-investment and non-commercial communal gardening venture, where the primary purpose is growing vegetables or fruit as a recreational, social and/or therapeutic activity. Community gardens may have an explicit gardening philosophy (e.g. organic growing) and may be treated as one garden or allow participants to manage their own individual plots. Community gardens and orchards on reserve land must comply with the Reserves Act.

## **Deprivation**

In this strategy deprivation refers to the results of the New Zealand Index of Deprivation (NZDep), which measures socio-economic deprivation by geographic area, based on census information. Factors measured include income, home ownership, employment,

qualifications, family structure, housing, access to transport and communications.

## **Ecosystem services**

Ecosystem services refer to the benefits that humans derive from ecosystems, such as clean water, air, and soil, as well as food, fibre, and medicine. They also include cultural services, such as recreation and spiritual value. These services are essential to our wellbeing and survival, and it is important to protect and maintain them for future generations.

## **Greening**

Increasing the amount and diversity of trees and other plants in our public open spaces to improve amenity and ecosystem services.

## **Green infrastructure**

Refers to a network of natural and semi-natural areas, such as parks, wetlands, and green roofs, that provide ecosystem services. It helps to manage stormwater, reduce urban heat islands, improve air quality, and enhance biodiversity, among other things.

## **High Intensification Areas**

High intensification areas is defined as areas zoned high density or with height limits of 14m and above as displayed in the notified district plan.

## **Liveable streets**

Streets designed to prioritise the safety and comfort of people on foot and bicycles, and public transit users. Liveable streets create a pleasant and sustainable urban environment that encourages active transportation and community interaction.

## **Neighbourhood park**

A multi-use recreation park, often associated with local neighbourhood use. Ideally includes flat areas and provides a mix of passive and active, informal and formal recreational experiences from relaxing, picnicking and playing to impromptu ball games and organised sports.

## **Open space**

See 'public open space' below.

47 Based on Outcome 5, Accessibility, of the New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026.

### **Outer Green Belt**

A corridor of reserve land managed by the Wellington City Council that runs from the north city boundary to the south coast, defining the western edge of the city's urban area. The land is mainly classified as scenic reserve and is managed under the Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2019.

### **Passive recreation**

Activities in our public open spaces and recreation facilities that are focused on relaxation and enrichment, such as experiencing nature, watching people, enjoying social contact, learning about places through interpretation, or watching outdoor sports or performance.

### **Parklets**

A parklet is a sidewalk extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. Usually parklets are installed on parking lanes and use parking spaces. Parklets typically extend out from the sidewalk at the level of the sidewalk to the width of the adjacent parking space.

### **Play**

An experience or activity undertaken for enjoyment or entertainment. While play is a guaranteed right of children<sup>48</sup>, playful activity can be enjoyed by people of any age.

### **Play Street**

Play Street events temporarily restrict vehicle traffic on quiet local streets, so that children and parents can be active, socially connect, and play in their neighbourhood. They are small, resident-led, local events, held on quiet neighbourhood streets during daylight hours. [See NZTA Play Street Guidelines for more information.](#)

### **Public open space**

Outdoor space that is accessible to the public and set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation, amenity and public gatherings. It is mainly publicly owned land, whether the Council or Crown-owned, but may include private land where public access is permitted. It includes parks, reserves, coastal foreshores, civic squares and some streetscape area not required for vehicle transport purposes.

### **Recreation**

The broad range of passive and active leisure activities people do in our public open spaces and recreation facilities, for enjoyment, relaxation, health, wellbeing and social/community connection. It includes casual activities such as sitting in a park or picnicking with friends, to regular self-guided fitness routines or highly organised competitive sports.

### **Recreation facilities**

The buildings, structures and purpose-built outdoor areas provided and managed to accommodate or support recreational activities, such as swimming pools, recreation centres, public toilets and changing rooms, playgrounds, sports fields, basketball or tennis courts, and trails.

### **Recreation programmes and services**

Planned activities, assistance and events that support people to recreate, including informing people about recreational opportunities, facilitating participation, and administering booking systems for use of facilities and organising regular learning opportunities such as swimming lessons. Often involves helping people to overcome barriers to participation and promoting the benefits of active recreation.

### **Recreational open space**

Open space that primarily achieve recreation or social outcomes. They include [open space categories](#); Neighborhood Parks, Urban Parks and Destination Parks.

### **Sport**

An activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or a team competes against another or others for entertainment.<sup>49</sup>

### **Universal design**

Design of the environment, information, programmes, and services to work for everyone – by making sure everything is accessible, understood by and used to the greatest extent possible with little or no adaptation.<sup>50</sup>

### **Volunteering**

In this strategy, volunteering refers to giving time freely to organise recreational activities, carry out projects or care for the environment in parks and recreational facilities, usually associated with a community group.

### **Wellington Town Belt**

The arc of open space set aside around the original town of Wellington. The land is classified and managed under the Wellington Town Belt Act 2016.

48 Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989

49 Oxford Dictionary

50 Based on definitions in The New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026.

## Te reo Māori glossary

### **Mahinga kai**

Gardening, cultivation or a food-gathering place. It includes things such as species, natural habitats, materials and practices used for harvesting food, and places where food or resources are, or were, gathered.

### **Mana Whenua**

Tribal authorities of the land.

### **Mauri**

Vital life force energy; essential source of all vitality, quality of life.

### **Mātauranga**

Traditional knowledge systems and practices.

### **Rangatahi**

Young people.

### **Rohe**

Tribal boundary, district, region, territory, area, border (of land).

### **Rongoā**

Traditional healing knowledge, systems and practices.

### **Tamariki**

Children.

### **Tākaro**

Sport, game, recreational activity.

### **Te Ao Māori**

Māori world view.

### **Te Taiao**

Natural world, environment.

### **Te Whai Oranga**

The pursuit of wellness.  
(This is the name of this strategy).

### **Whaitua**

A designated space or catchment.

### **Whānau**

Extended family or family group.



# Tohutoro

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