

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

Within any community, open space holds important landscape, recreational, social, ecological, amenity, and cultural or heritage values. As Wellington grows and changes, it is important to make sure open space across the city is well planned for and managed. Preparation of a management plan for suburban reserves¹ means the values of these reserves can be managed in a way that reflects their particular role in the open space network. Suburban reserves have a unique set of functions and values that, while part of the citywide open space network, have an important neighbourhood role.

The purpose of the Suburban Reserves Management Plan (SRMP) is to provide Wellington City Council with a clear framework for day-to-day management and decision-making for Council administered reserves and open spaces in the suburban areas between Khandallah/Broadmeadows and Miramar (including Makara) for the next 10 years. The suburban reserves north of Khandallah/Broadmeadows are currently included in the Northern Reserves Management Plan. Objectives and policies give guidance for the development, management, protection, operation, and public use of these reserves.

The management plan meets the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977.

Specifically, this plan will:

- make sure parks and reserves are managed and maintained in a consistent manner by providing common objectives and policies
- give appropriate protection and management for important natural, recreation, historical, and cultural values on Council owned reserve land and open space
- identify gaps in provision
- identify opportunities for improving quality and maximising potential values and use
- provide a framework to achieve ecological connectivity and track connections in and between each reserve
- provide prioritised strategic management initiatives
- satisfy statutory requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 and subsequent amendments
- complete the suite of Wellington City Council Reserve Management Plans. All Council owned land managed as reserve is now covered by a reserve management plan (apart from the central city).

1.2 WHAT AREAS DOES THE SUBURBAN RESERVES MANAGEMENT PLAN COVER?

The SRMP includes 170 reserves and protected open spaces administered by the Wellington City Council (the Council) within the following clusters of suburbs² (management sectors).

Sector 1

Broadmeadows, Khandallah, Ngaio, Crofton Downs, Kaiwharawhara, Ngauranga Gorge

¹ Suburban parks and reserves north of Khandallah/Broadmeadows are managed under the Northern Reserves Management Plan (2008). The NRMP was prepared to complement the Northern Growth Strategy and take into account urban expansion and greenfield development and the associated need for open space planning and management.

² There may also be activities and services provided on non-Council land, for instance schools or land owned by the Crown, mana whenua and so on.

Sector 2

Trelissick Park

Sector 3

Wilton, Wadestown, Northland, Thorndon, Kelburn

Sector 4

Karori, Makara, Makara Beach

Sector 5

Highbury, Aro Valley, Brooklyn, Vogeltown, Mornington, Kingston

Sector 6

Mt Cook, Newtown, Mt Victoria, Roseneath, Hataitai, Berhampore, Oriental Bay, Evans Bay

Sector 7

Melrose, Kilbirnie, Rongotai, Lyall Bay, Houghton Bay, Southgate, Island Bay, Owhiro Bay

Sector 8

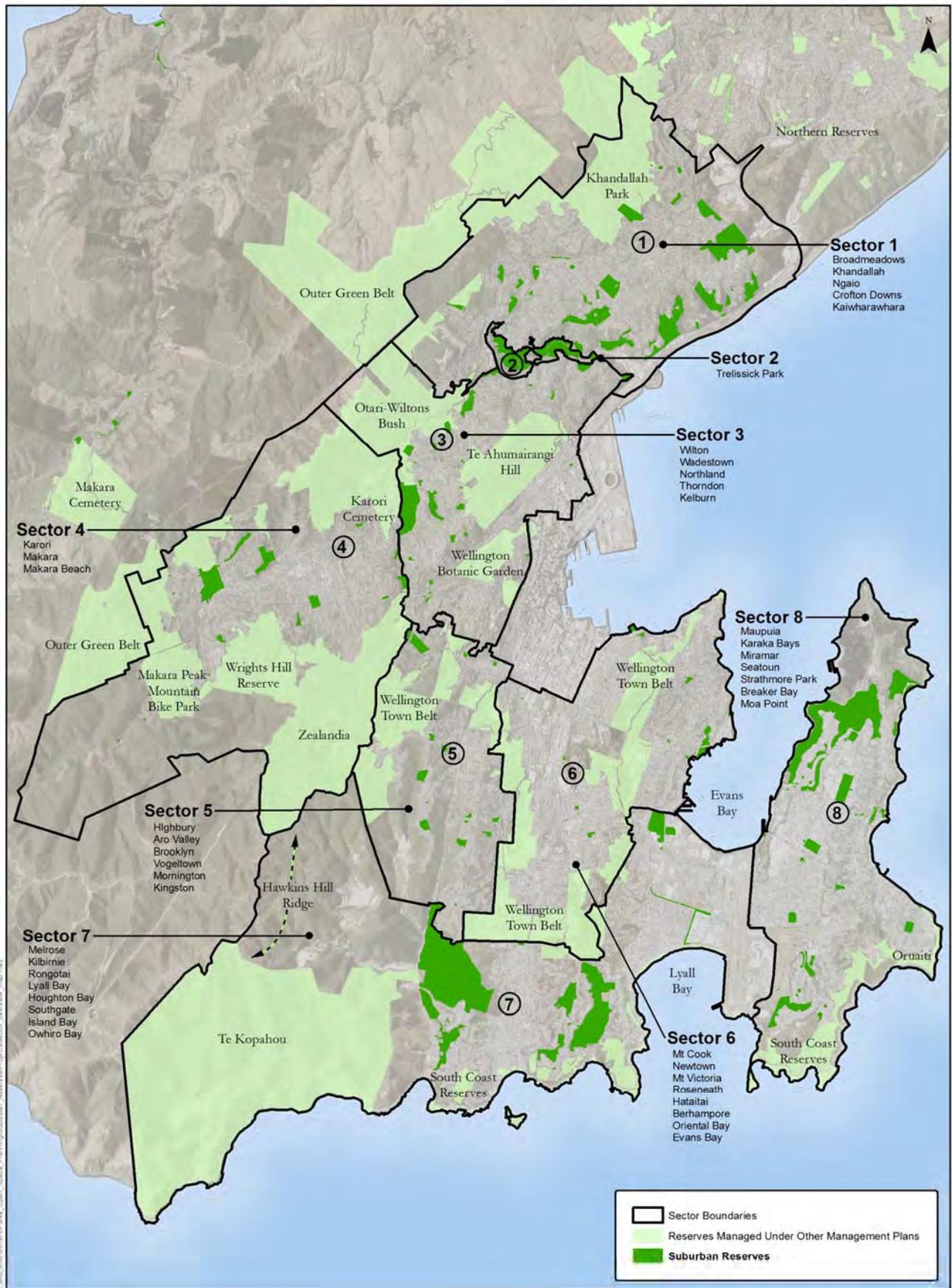
Maupuia, Karaka Bays, Miramar, Seatoun, Strathmore Park, Breaker Bay, Moa Point

Some parks and reserves in the sectors are covered by other management plans and policies including:

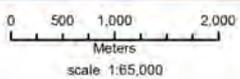
- South Coast Management Plan 2002
- Oruaiti Reserve Management Plan 2011
- Wellington Town Belt Management Plan 2013
- Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2004
- Wellington Central City Framework 2010
- The Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan 2014
- Cemeteries Management Plan 2003.

The following map identifies the suburban reserves in each sector³ in the context of the wider reserve network.

³ Suburb boundaries were used to define sectors.



Sector Map
Suburban Reserves of Wellington



Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Purpose of the plan
- 1.2 What areas does the SRMP cover?
- 1.3 Structure of the plan
- 1.4 The suburban reserves network overview
- 1.5 The planning context – key guiding policies and plans
- 1.6 Reserve Classification and Reserve Categories

Chapter 2: General objectives and policies

- 2.1 Landscape
- 2.2 Recreation
- 2.3 Ecology and indigenous biodiversity
- 2.4 Culture and history
- 2.5 Community groups and partnerships

Chapter 3: Management sector objectives, policies and network plans

Chapter 4: Rules for use and development

Chapter 5: Implementation plan

1.4 THE SUBURBAN RESERVES NETWORK OVERVIEW

Suburban reserves contribute to a diverse city environment with a wide range of interrelated benefits including amenity value, recreation and social opportunities, contribution to the health and wellbeing of residents, and both direct and indirect economic benefits. They also enable our indigenous biodiversity⁴ to live within and move through the city.

Wellington's built environment is generally very green, as steep topography has left parts of private property and large parts of the road reserve network undeveloped and covered in vegetation. This complements public open space both visually and in ecological terms. Many of the significant landscape features that characterise Wellington City are largely undeveloped (often but not always held as public reserve) such as the ridgelines and hilltops, the coast, harbour escarpments, and steep gullies.

The suburban reserves sit within this citywide open space framework and play a critical role in determining the character, quality, and function of the suburban environment. They contribute to local residents' quality of life and can enhance the visitor experience. They contribute to neighbourhood identity and can provide community focal points.

Suburban reserves are particularly important in building resilient communities. As well as the obvious benefits of space for formal sports and recreation, play, and leisure activities, local parks can also provide opportunities for informal interaction with neighbours and people in the community. Open space can also play a critical role in post-disaster resilience.

Parks and open spaces can play a role in sustainable management of storm-water and improving environmental quality.

⁴ Indigenous biodiversity refers to the plants and animals that occur or occurred naturally in Wellington. Refer to Our Natural Capital – Wellington's Biodiversity and Action Plan for more information.

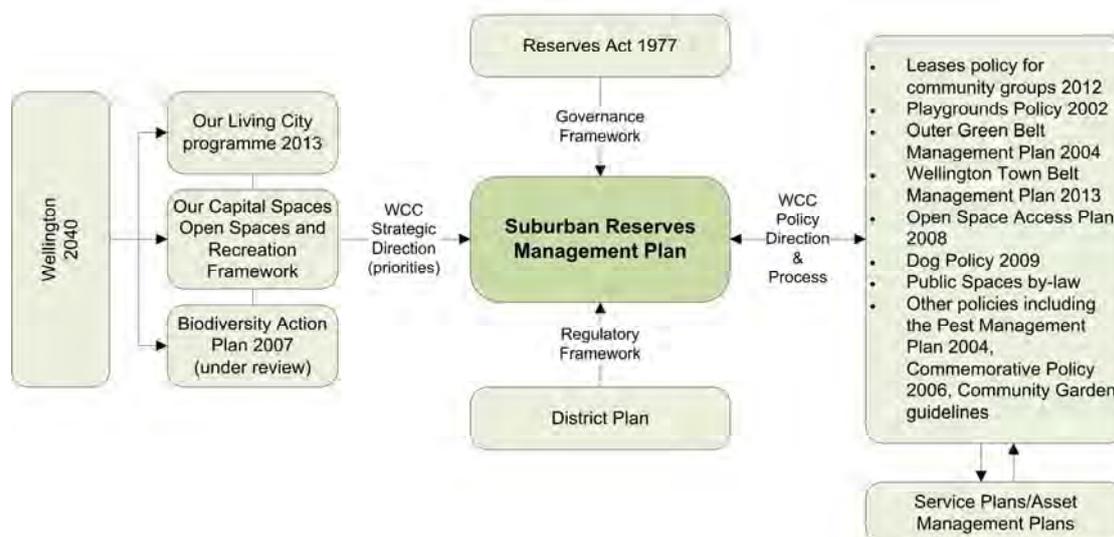
There is limited opportunity to provide more suburban reserves in established suburbs. The potential values, functions, and use of existing open space need to be carefully considered to get the most from the parks that we have, and ensure those values are suitably protected. Retaining flexibility of use and providing for multiple values needs to be a key attribute of all reserves.

As the city develops and changes, the role of public open space needs to adapt. For example, public open space provides an increasingly important role in the quality of life, and health and wellbeing, of residents, and as private open space in backyards decreases with urban intensification. In addition, an ageing population will require more accessible spaces and shorter walking opportunities.

1.5 THE PLANNING CONTEXT – KEY GUIDING POLICIES AND PLANS

This plan has been produced to give effect to and complement other Council plans and policies.

Suburban Reserves Strategic Framework



1.5.1 STRATEGIC COUNCIL DIRECTION GUIDING THE PLAN

Wellington Towards 2040: Smart Capital (2011)

Wellington City Council's vision for Wellington is focussed on the future development of the city over the next 30 years. It builds on Wellington's current strengths, acknowledges the challenges the city faces now and over the medium to long-term, understands the changing role of cities, and is informed by Wellington's communities. The vision is supported by four community outcomes based on the city's competitive advantage. These are: eco-city; connected city; people-centred city; and dynamic central city. These goals are central to the Council's Long-term Plan 2012–2022. The suburban reserves, alongside all of the other reserves in Wellington, play a significant part in realising these community outcomes and the vision in general.

Our Capital Spaces – An Open Space and Recreation Framework for Wellington (2013–2023)

This plan provides the strategic context for the development of this management plan. In particular, the management plan will be consistent with the four outcomes of Our Capital Spaces:

- getting everyone active and healthy
- protecting our birds, nature, streams, and landscapes
- contributing to Wellington’s outstanding quality of life
- doing it together.

The management plan will focus on the following priorities and key actions:

OUTCOME 1 – <i>Getting everyone active and healthy</i>	
Priorities	Actions
1.5 Open Spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities are close to where people live and work	1.5.1 Review the provision of open spaces in suburban areas based on guidelines of 600 metres or a 10-minute walk to one or more neighbourhood park, play space, or other outdoor recreation opportunity such as a track link.
1.7 Develop and enhance well-located park spaces as local destinations that provide a range of activities and experiences	1.7.1 In consultation with communities, develop, review and implement suburban reserve network plans to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify priority parks for investment • ensure that frequently used spaces provide high-quality amenities and activities for local communities (eg shelter, toilets, and eating areas) • identify spaces for alternative uses (eg for kick-about spaces, community gardens etc) • ensure a wide range of recreational opportunities on our beaches and waterfront.
1.9 Complete the track network with a priority on connecting communities and open spaces, and providing short walking and cycling routes and transport connections	1.9.3 Review local track networks as part of the Suburban Reserves Management Plan with a focus on tracks accessible to all ages and abilities.

Our Natural Capital – Wellington’s Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014)

Our Natural Capital creates a shared vision for Wellington City’s biodiversity that allows it to thrive. The main aim of the strategy is to protect and restore our indigenous biodiversity.

The outcomes of the plan are listed below.

- As a result of our protection, there has been no further loss of species indigenous to Wellington and no further reduction in size of ecologically significant areas with the potential for future restoration. There has been an increase in population size of threatened and/or locally significant species.
- All known original ecosystems within Wellington are well-represented and self-sustaining, within which a range of indigenous biodiversity thrives. These areas

provide source populations that are able to disperse to surrounding areas, assisting in the ecological restoration of the city's wider habitats.

- Wellingtonians are connected to nature. They are knowledgeable and passionate about Wellington's biodiversity and want to live in a city of abundant nature that is in close proximity to them. They have become kaitiaki of the natural environment and take action to support its protection and restoration.
- We are leaders in managing indigenous biodiversity in an urban context. We actively seek and share knowledge, support research, and use the information we gain to continually improve our management of our natural resources.

1.5.2 OTHER KEY GUIDING POLICIES AND PLANS

Other Council policies and plans that give guidance in managing the reserves and/or in developing the policies in this plan are listed below.

Open Space Access Plan (2008)

This plan sets out the Council's strategic vision for tracks in the city's parks, reserves, and open spaces. The plan's vision is to strengthen and improve the open space access network by:

- providing outstanding opportunities for recreation and tourism within the open spaces of Wellington
- ensuring tracks provide for a range of user interests, skills, abilities, and fitness levels within each area
- achieving a quality primary network accessing major destination points in Wellington and adjoining districts, and linking with an equitable distribution of secondary and local track networks and recreational facilities.

This management plan will review and identify improvements to local track networks consistent with the Open Space Access Plan.

Playground Policy (2002)

This policy defines how the Council will provide playgrounds to the community in an equitable manner, recognising the needs of communities and taking into account constraints of topography and funding. The objective of the Playgrounds Policy is:

The provision of a range of safe, enjoyable, and stimulating playgrounds across the city in a way that best meets the needs of children, caregivers, communities and the city for access, safety, amenity and maintenance.

The suburban reserves play a key role in playground provision. Gaps and overlaps in formal playground provision are identified in this management plan.

Dog Policy (2009)

The Dog Control Act 1996 requires the Council to develop a policy on dog control. The objectives of the Council's Dog Policy are as follows:

- To ensure that the owners of dogs comply with their obligations under the Act, that dogs are well cared for and Wellingtonians are able to enjoy dog ownership.
- To prevent any potential danger caused by dogs to the public, wildlife and natural habitats.

- To minimise the risk of distress and nuisance caused by dogs to the public, wildlife and natural habitats.
- To actively promote the responsible ownership of dogs.
- To provide for the reasonable exercise and recreational needs of dogs and their owners.

The suburban reserves provide places for dogs and their owners to exercise and enjoy nature. This plan does not propose new off-leash dog exercise areas, or the removal of existing areas, but guides management of the various uses of all of the reserves covered by the plan, including dog exercise.

Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups (2012)

The Council provides leases of land and/or buildings at a subsidised rental to a wide range of community and recreation groups. As Council owned land and buildings are a limited resource, the Council needs to allocate this resource in a way that maximises the use of its assets and responds to changing demands.

The Leases Policy for Community and Recreation Groups sets out the Council's role in leasing land and/or buildings to groups, and provides guidance on:

- granting leases of land and/or buildings to community and recreation groups
- managing leases relating to the groups
- the standard to which land and/or buildings will be maintained to ensure appropriate asset management.

Section 5 of the policy notes that management plans such as this one and Council strategies will be used by officers to decide what activity or structure can be permitted on an area of land. Where there is no management plan, the proposed activity will be tested against the purpose for which the land is held and/or classified.

Other Reserve Management Plans

Nine management plans cover all of the reserves across the city. Together, the reserves form a network of open spaces and recreation opportunities. The different management plans are intended to cluster the reserves into common types or areas. As appropriate, the different plans provide for management specific to those areas and/or consistently across the entire network.

For example, reserves included in the Outer Green Belt Management Plan are unique in that they provide a western edge to the urban environment and a buffer of mainly open lands between the city's urban areas and the rural areas of Makara and Ohariu valleys. As such, they have an important landscape, ecological, and recreation role in conjunction with the reserves in the adjacent suburbs covered by this management plan.

The Wellington Town Belt (covered by the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan) provides a buffer between the central city and inner suburbs and has important landscape, ecological, cultural, and recreational roles in conjunction with parks and reserves covered under this management plan.

The plans in addition to this plan are:

- South Coast Management Plan 2002
- Oruaiti Reserve Management Plan 2011
- Wellington Town Belt Management Plan 2013
- Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2004
- Botanic Gardens of Wellington Management Plan 2014
- Northern Reserves Management Plan 2008
- Glover Park Management Plan 2005

- Cemeteries Management Plan 2003.

All other inner city parks are included in the Wellington Central City Framework 2010.

1.5.3 REGULATORY AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – THE RESERVES ACT 1977 AND THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ACT 1991

The Reserves Act

The SRMP has been prepared under the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977 (“the Act”). Management plans outline the Council’s intentions for the use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation of its parks and reserves. The aim of this legislation is to ensure that reserve management and development is based on sound principles, and that there are adequate controls for the purpose of the reserve.

Section 41 of the Act sets out the purpose and procedure for preparing a management plan. It also requires that management plans are kept under continuous review to adapt to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge.

The SRMP is an omnibus plan (covering more than one reserve) that applies to 170 reserves shown on the maps and schedules for each Sector (Chapter 3).

Council approval of activities in reserves under the Reserves Act takes the form of Land Owner Approval. These “land owner” powers can take the form of permits, leases, licences, and easements and may require public notification. Rules for use and development are outlined in Chapter 4.

The Resource Management Act - Wellington City District Plan

The Wellington City District Plan (District Plan) is the Council’s principal regulatory document setting out objectives, policies, methods, and rules for managing the city environment, land uses and associated activities. It is prepared in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991.

The parks and reserves covered by the SRMP are zoned as one of the following:

- Open Space A (Recreational Facilities)
- Open Space B (Natural Environment)
- Conservation Site

The District Plan has rules for Open Space A and B land and Conservation Sites. The rules allow the Council to exercise control over the type of building and activity that occurs, and this control is exercised by way of the resource consent process.

Council approval of activities in reserves (zoned as listed above) under the Resource Management Act takes the form of a Resource Consent.

Depending on the nature and scale of a development (for instance, a building, major track development and so on) it is likely that approval for any given activity will need to be given by the Council (as land owner) AND through Resource Consent (as regulatory authority). In all instances, land owner approval should be sought first.

Building consent may also be required and applicants should also check the Wellington Consolidated Bylaw 2008.

1.6 RESERVE CLASSIFICATION AND RESERVES CATEGORIES

Throughout the SRMP there is reference to “reserve classification” and “reserve category”. These are two ways in which the primary purpose of the reserve is identified. Reserve categories provide a finer level of detail than reserve classification as provided for under the Reserves Act. The Reserves Act classification is a legal requirement and has legal implications, while the reserve categories are used as a reserve planning and management tool.

Reserve Classification (Reserves Act)

Classification of reserves under the Reserves Act 1977 (Reserves Act) identifies the primary purpose of a reserve and also helps direct the management, use, and development of the reserve. It provides a layer of legislative protection under the Reserves Act and binds the Council and limits (to a greater or lesser extent) how the land can be used. It is a mandatory process under section 16 of the Act.

The Reserves Act outlines a process and methodology for the declaration and classification of land as a reserve. Section 14 provides the Council with the statutory authority to pass a resolution to declare any land owned by the Council as a reserve, subject to the necessary public notification procedures under section 119 of the Reserves Act.

All of the parks and reserves included in this plan have had their reserve status reviewed. This involved identifying the primary use or purpose of each reserve and matching this use to one of seven classifications. These classifications are defined in the Reserves Act as scenic⁵, recreation, historic, scientific, nature, local purpose, and government purpose. Government purpose and nature reserves are outside the scope of the management role of the Council and scientific reserve is rarely used by local authorities so those classifications are not relevant in this particular process.

Re-classification can occur from time to time, subject to the process as outlined in the Reserves Act.

Reserve Categories (Wellington City Council – best practice)

To understand the current and potential values of the suburban reserves network and manage the parks most effectively, each reserve has been categorised⁶. The category relates to a primary purpose⁷. While many parks are (and should be) multi-purpose, allocating each a primary purpose allows us to think more clearly about the range of parks we have across the suburban areas. The park categories across the Wellington suburban reserves network are:

- Neighbourhood (community, local, and amenity)
- Sport and Recreation (community and local)
- Cultural Heritage
- Natural
- Recreation and/or Ecological Linkages.

The categories are used throughout the plan to consider both network values and values of the individual parks. Maps are included to provide a picture of the quantity, size, and distribution of the suburban reserves in general terms and more specifically across the different categories of reserve. It is important to remember this is only part of the citywide picture, given this plan does not cover all the reserves.

⁵ The Reserves Act has 2 types of scenic reserve as prescribed in section 19(1)(a) – more commonly referred to as Scenic A Reserve section 19(1)(b) – more commonly referred to as Scenic B Reserve.

See Appendix Three.

⁶ Wellington City Council Parks Categories are based on best practice guidance provided by the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA Parks Categories and Levels of Service Guideline 2011)

⁷ Refer to Appendix One for the full Wellington City Council Parks Category definitions.

Broadly speaking, within the suburban reserves network there are fewer reserves in the “natural” category, as most of those reserves are large land areas contained within the Outer Green Belt, Wellington Town Belt and coastal areas. Where reserves are “natural”, the attributes of indigenous biodiversity and connectivity are of high importance.

The abundance of the “ecological and/or recreation links” is significant as it is part of what makes Wellington a unique city to look at and live in. The link reserves provide many – often small, often spread out parcels of land with vegetation cover that has a cumulative value. The “link” reserves are often undervalued when considered as individual sites but their role in complementing the large green spaces (such as the Town Belt) and contribution to the quality and character of the suburban reserves is significant.

Across the suburban reserves network, the highest representation is in the neighbourhood (local) category. This reflects the changing nature of planning regimes and open space provision, and historical patterns of settlement and suburban development. While there is a high representation of this category of park overall, which is a positive attribute for a suburban reserves network, they are not equally distributed across the city.

This combination of different types (“categories”) of open space is unique to Wellington and should be managed to protect the identified character and quality of the Wellington landscape and open space network and enhanced whenever possible through identifying park improvements and filling gaps in provision.

Our Capital Spaces and the Playgrounds Policy both prescribe provision guidelines in relation to access to outdoor recreation opportunities and formal play areas. Provision mapping and overlaps between general provision and formal play provision has been used to inform this plan. Analysis of the maps was used to determine how well the network meets guidelines and where there might be opportunities to address gaps and overlaps. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2 (Recreation) and in each chapter focussed on a different sector but, in general, Wellington residents in the suburban areas are well-serviced in terms of access to outdoor recreation opportunities.

A Quality Assessment for Sport and Recreation and Neighbourhood parks helps to inform this plan but has a focus on operational and maintenance type information (alongside the Play Areas Accessibility Review) rather than network planning.

Other Council land not managed as reserve contributes to the suburban reserves network. Specifically, road reserve land makes a significant and unique contribution to the environment and the way Wellington looks. Due to our topography, the legal road width is seldom used in its entirety with wide areas either side of the formed road surface often left with vegetation cover that contributes to landscape coherence, amenity and sometimes even informal recreation and play opportunities in the suburban environment. Water supply and drainage land can often also double as open space and recreation assets.

The following provides a general guide to the relationship between Reserve Category and potential Reserve Classification and Zone of a reserve. Note that the processes to classify a reserve and/or carry out a zone change are each subject to separate statutory process.

Reserve Category (WCC)	Reserve Classification (Reserves Act)	District Plan zone (Resource Management Act)
Neighbourhood (community) Neighbourhood (local) Sport and Recreation (community) Sport and Recreation (local)	Recreation Reserve	Open Space A
Neighbourhood (amenity)	Recreation Reserve or Local Purpose Reserve	Open Space A or Open Space B
Cultural Heritage	Historic Reserve	Open Space A or Open Space B or Conservation Site
Natural	Scenic Reserve	Open Space B or Conservation Site
Recreation and/or Ecological Linkages	Recreation Reserve or Scenic Reserve	Open Space A or Open Space B or Conservation Site

2 GENERAL OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

2.1 LANDSCAPE

While built infrastructure and formal recreation is an important part of the reserves network, the landscape value of parks is associated with the protection and provision of the unbuilt or natural landscape and the contribution this makes to the character, quality, and liveability of the city. The significance and prominence of the natural landscape, often held as public reserve land, is a unique and valued part of the character of Wellington.

The Wellington landscape can be considered at a series of different scales.

At a broad city scale the parks and open spaces contribute to the essential character of the wider city environment – Wellington looks and feels like a “green” city with the natural landform, the hills, the coast, the gullies and vegetation cover readily visible. The value of this natural landscape is far-reaching, contributing to economic prosperity, environmental health, and the health and wellbeing of residents.

At the community scale the landscape provides community identity, contributing to the attractiveness of the area and providing the setting for day-to-day experiences. We have taken a sector approach in the development of this plan to better consider community open space networks.

At a reserve scale there is a contribution to the open space and amenity values of the local neighbourhood. Most of the suburban reserves are “local” and discrete. The larger reserves can be “local” as well as part of a wider pattern of landscape coherence and connectedness. Individual reserves vary in character and quality.