
A summary of the Wellington Draft Play Spaces Policy

OCTOBER 2016



Why is the policy changing?

We are reviewing the Playgrounds Policy 2002 to make sure play spaces in Wellington City are well managed and planned for.

A revised Playgrounds Policy will help us deliver our vision of a child and youth-friendly city and allow us to be strategic when deciding the number, placement and quality of playgrounds in Wellington.

A network of well-located, designed, and maintained play opportunities is a key part of getting more children outside and active. This will have social, health (physical and mental) and environmental benefits for individuals and their communities.

The draft policy proposes a network of play spaces that will include formal playgrounds set within multi-purpose park space, skate facilities, outdoor informal court space, bike skills areas and a nature play trail.

The policy is based on 'five strategic priorities' that will try and broaden what the Council does and provides to get more people outside and playing. In addition to providing a well-planned and managed network of the usual formal playgrounds, court spaces and skate facilities we are looking at how to work better with schools and the community, how to promote informal play through the idea of 'the city as a play space' and how to promote play (and the value of play) more generally.

A revised policy will allow the Council to refocus on what is important when planning new playgrounds and renewals, and help identify key projects and initiatives.



Background information

The following informed the preparation of the Draft Wellington Play Spaces Policy:

- A review of play theory, the benefits of play and how to maximise the value of play space.
- Research into play policy best practice (internationally and in New Zealand) and Wellington’s demographics.
- Analysis of the role the Council has in play, and a national scan of play provision and policy.
- Engagement – including workshops and surveys – with individuals and organisations.

So far, Wellingtonians have told us the following:

- They care about play space as an important part of the open space network.
- Children aged 5-12 are the main users of playgrounds.
- The top five most enjoyed activities (from a list provided that included things like free play, trees and sliding on banks) are traditional playground equipment – swings, slides, flying fox, forts and structures, and climbing nets/frames.
- 74% of people think the number of playgrounds in Wellington is about right. They do not support the current policy that anticipates a reduction in the number of playgrounds in Wellington over time.
- 56% of people believe that, in general, the playgrounds are excellent or above average quality, with a further 40% believing they are average.
- The top five ideas for improvement (from a list provided) were more shade or shelter, different styles/designs of equipment, more toilets, a wider range of equipment and opportunities for free play/imaginative play.
- When asked how the community might be involved in improving playgrounds, the top response in the general survey was through providing feedback to the Council on playground plans, followed by participation in working bees to help maintain the playground environment.
- 41% of survey respondents go outside of Wellington City (eg to Porirua or Upper Hutt) to play every few months – just to go somewhere different or for another reason such as to visit family.
- 58% of survey respondents said their neighbourhood playground (ie the one closest to where they lived) was the one they visited most often.

- when asked which was most important to them, 21% of people said having a small basic playground near to where they lived, while 12% said having a large playground further away with more to offer – most people, however, believe both are equally important (66%).
- almost everyone (9%) visited playgrounds for 2 hours or less, with an almost even split between the “less than an hour” group and the “1-2 hours” group.
- 45% of people drive to the playground, while 41% walk and 10 percent bike/skateboard/scooter.
- 23 percent of respondents used skate/scooter areas, with Waitangi Park the most popular location – 90% of visitors are there for 1-2 hours or less.
- The current skate offering is well distributed but could be improved to broaden user groups, as different groups of skate/scooter riders have different needs.
- Most people (66%) say it is equally important to have a small basic playground close to where they live and have bigger ones further away with more to offer. 12% say the larger playgrounds are more important.
- They are interested in exploring ideas around nature play and they think it is important for children to play outside.
- They want more than just replacement of formal play equipment and safety surfaces when a playground is renewed.
- Older children and young adults use playgrounds but not in the same way as younger children. The primary concern for this age group is having space to legitimately hang out in or muck about in and play space can sometimes provide that.

The most frequently recorded general comments were:

- Need more variety for the playgrounds with different kinds of design/equipment
- Need more shade/shelter
- There is lots of choice.
- They are well maintained.

The draft policy includes a summary of the background information that informs the policies and action plan.

Play spaces policy and action plan

The draft policy outlines a vision and five strategic priorities.

We would like to hear what you think about these as the basis for planning and delivering a range of play spaces in Wellington.

Vision:

Wellington City's play spaces form a network of sometimes wild, always fun, diverse, safe and accessible places that foster growth and development of children and contribute towards building a healthy, active, connected city.

Strategic priorities:

1. Provide a network of play spaces across the city
2. Provide high-quality, fit-for-purpose play space
3. Community and school partnerships
4. Provide citywide incidental play space
5. Programming and advocacy for outdoor play

We would also like your feedback on the policies and actions that will make the vision and priorities happen.

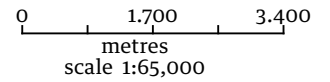
We used a series of maps to analyse the number and placement of the existing play spaces across the city.

This is what our proposed network of play spaces looks like. At a high level it illustrates the outcome of achieving an even distribution of play space opportunity across the city. The category of each play space is also shown.

More of the background information that informed the Draft Policy is detailed on pages 6-17 of the draft policy.

Map: Playground network

Future overview

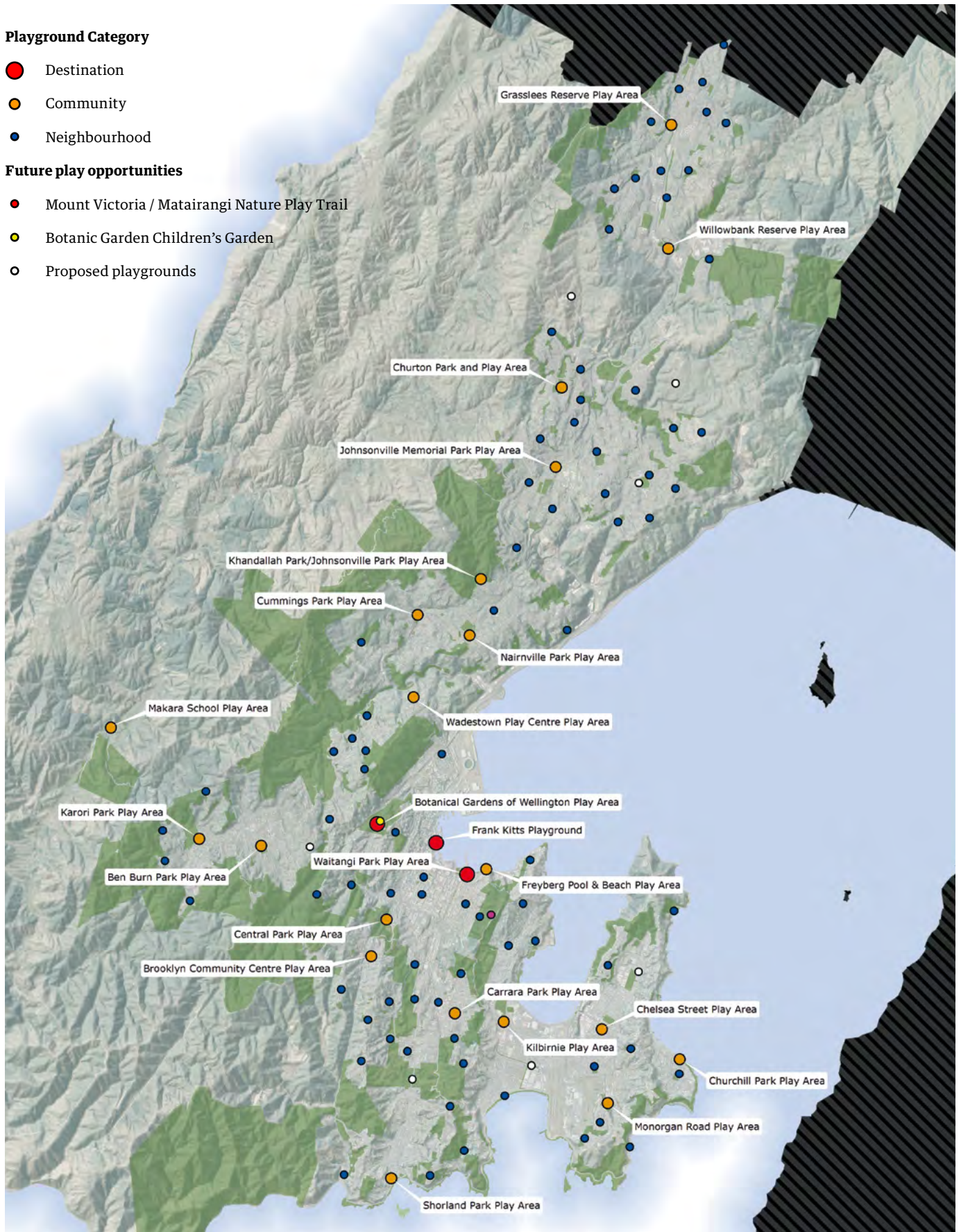


Playground Category

- Destination
- Community
- Neighbourhood

Future play opportunities

- Mount Victoria / Matairangi Nature Play Trail
- Botanic Garden Children's Garden
- Proposed playgrounds



So what is changing?

To address our five strategic priorities, the draft policy proposes the following:

- To increase the number of formal play spaces (playgrounds) to a maximum of 111 (from 107) evenly spread around the city. The current policy proposes reducing the number of playgrounds over time.
- That what each play space looks like and who it caters for will be guided by **play space principles and standards** and the **playground categories**.
- For there to be three categories of formal playground:

Destination

A premium playground that attracts residents, visitors and tourists, and services the city and region. Regionally unique and a celebration of place, centrally located, easy to get to and able to accommodate a longer stay with amenities such as toilets, parking, drinking water and structures for shade and shelter. Provides both formal and informal play opportunities for all ages, with spaces to gather and meet and natural landscape features to explore. May have art installations or other hard landscape features that offer opportunities for incidental play.

Community

Ideally located in community parks or near neighbourhood centres and mainly servicing the immediate neighbourhood and local community within approximately 800 metres walking distance. Enough activities to keep children and/or youth entertained for at least an hour with places to gather and meet. Unique or with a point of difference to other community playgrounds around the city and designed to encourage exploration of the natural environment as space and location permits.

Neighbourhood

A handy place for a quick play that services the local community (within approximately 600 metres walking distance) with a focus on play equipment for younger children. Likely to be a smaller space but wherever possible there will be provision for kick-about space and nature play.

- At the moment, play equipment and safety surfacing is replaced after about 25 years. The draft policy proposes that the wider park and user experience is improved at the same time. This could include improving accessibility, creation of more useable space through earthworks or retaining, amenity and/or shade planting and nature play. To do this, extra resources/funding will be needed for each site at the time of renewal and for maintenance of new planting.
- To keep a network of six formal skate facilities and consider minor improvements to each in partnership with the community. The Nairnville Park ramp will be removed.
- To provide a network of 23 outdoor courts (a mix of half and full-sized) for informal use around the city. There are currently 22 courts.
- To carry on working with schools and communities when play spaces need to be renewed or new ones are planned. This will be achieved through assessing opportunities for school partnerships, working with community groups and in community partnerships and getting input into play space planning and delivery.
- To focus on programming and advocacy to get more people playing outdoors more often and promoting the 'city as a play space'. A list of initiatives is proposed in the draft policy.

How to have your say...

We are keen to hear your thoughts on the Draft Wellington Play Spaces Policy.

The full statement of proposal (the Draft Wellington Play Spaces Policy), a summary of information and submission forms are available from our Service Centre at 101 Wakefield Street, from Wellington libraries, on our website wellington.govt.nz/haveyoursay or by phoning 04 499 4444.

You can have your say:

- By making a submission online at Wellington.govt.nz/haveyoursay
- By sending an email to: playspaces@wcc.govt.nz
- By filling in a submission form and sending it to us by post - Draft Wellington Play Spaces Policy, Freepost, Wellington City Council, P.O. Box 2199, Wellington.

Presenting your submission in person

If you'd like to present your submission in person, indicate this on the submission form and we'll contact you to arrange a time. **Oral submissions will be held in December 2016.**

Next steps

- Oral hearings are planned for December (to be confirmed by new Council).
- The policy will be finalised early next year by Committee/Council

More information

Email playspaces@wcc.govt.nz
Phone 04 499 4444

**Tell us what you think by 5pm
Friday 18 November 2016**

Privacy statement

All submissions (including name and all contact details) are provided to elected members and made available to the public at our office and on our website. Personal information will also be used for the administration of the consultation process. All information collected will be held by Wellington City Council, 101 Wakefield Street, Wellington, with submitters having the right to access and correct personal information.

