



# Capital Spaces

**ABSOLUTELY  
POSITIVELY  
WELLINGTON**

Tumeke Pōneke  
Wellington City Council

OPEN SPACE STRATEGY FOR WELLINGTON  
TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA

NOVEMBER 1998

# Foreword



Smell the spicy scents of the bush in Trelissick Park; hear tui calling and water splashing in Karori Sanctuary; feel the rush of air cycling down Hawkins Hill; taste the tang of salt at Makara Beach and see the hills encircling Wellington! Enjoy!

Our Open Space Strategy draws together many ideas. Some have been implicit in past Wellington City Council actions, some new initiatives have been suggested through consultation, on Our City ~ Our Future, on the Annual Plan, or specifically for this strategy. What is unique is concentrating them in one cohesive vision for Wellington's open spaces.

The implementation plan will be confirmed or amended through the Annual Plan process. It is critical that concerned Wellingtonians actively and vocally support Council's implementation. However, much can also be achieved by other landowners as well as Council. Suburban gardens and rural blocks can have significant open space values.

Above all the strategy recognises both the tangible and intangible benefits we enjoy from open spaces. Human recreation is balanced with care for other species. I anticipate that the annual Open Space Forum will provide valuable feedback on the progress of this strategy, and constant updates regarding threats, opportunities and the state of particular projects.

Wellington has excellent and varied open spaces. Lets work together to enhance them!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Celia Wade-Brown' in a cursive style, followed by a long horizontal flourish.

**Celia Wade-Brown**

Co-Chair, Cityscape Committee

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**NOVEMBER 1998**

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*Whakataka te hau ki te uru*

*Whakataka te hau ki te tonga*

*Kia makinakina ki uta*

*Kia mataratara ki tai*

*Hi ake ana te atakura*

*He tio, He huka, He hau hu*

## *TIHEI MAURIORA*

It is believed that the first name of Wellington harbour and its surrounds was Te Whekenui (the large octopus) named by early Maori because the land's resemblance to the tentacles of a large octopus. Later it became Te Whanganui-a-Tara, the great harbour of Tara, named after Tara, an ambitious early explorer who was the first to settle the harbour permanently.

Early Maori inhabitants worked and lived in the Wellington area, utilising the forests, land and sea for food gathering, cultivation and recreation. These early residents regarded their role as that of *kaitiaki* (stewards, guardians or caretakers) of the region. This role of *kaitiaki* continues to be exercised in modern times by the iwi who are mana whenua.

Wellington City Council recognises the importance of the mana whenua relationship and has formal Memoranda of Understanding with Wellington Tenth Trust and Ngati Toa Rangatira. These documents of agreement provide a forum where resource management and policy issues of mutual concern can be discussed and resolved. Nowhere is this more important than in the development of open space policy where Maori interests are to maintain and restore the mauri or life essence of the whenua (land), water and air.

# Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	6
2. INTRODUCTION .....	8
Why do we need an <i>Open Space Strategy</i> ? .....	8
How was the <i>Open Space Strategy</i> developed? .....	8
What do these words mean? .....	8
What is in <i>Our City ~ Our Future</i> ? .....	10
What is in the <i>Wellington City Council Strategic Plan</i> ? .....	11
What about other Council strategies? .....	12
Is this strategy linked to the District Plan? .....	13
What about asset management plans? .....	13
Where does the annual plan fit? .....	13
What is Council working to achieve? .....	15
4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES .....	16
Enhancing natural succession .....	16
Better networks and corridors .....	17
Protecting threatened species .....	18
Reducing fire hazard .....	20
Protecting the coast and streams .....	21
Managing the City’s urban form .....	23
Increasing density.....	24
Responding to opportunities .....	25
Promoting recreation .....	26
Balancing recreation and the environment .....	26
5. OPEN SPACE CONCEPT.....	27
What is Council’s open space concept? .....	27
Will I have to sell my land? .....	27
What sorts of open spaces has Wellington got now? .....	27
The city .....	28
The bays .....	30
Suburban open spaces .....	32
Inner green belts .....	34
Outer green belt .....	36
Rural hinterland .....	38
Wild coast .....	42

6. COUNCIL'S OPEN SPACES .....	45
How much open space does Council have? .....	45
What do residents think? .....	47
How much is this open space worth? .....	47
How much does it cost to maintain? .....	49
Do we get any income from open space? .....	49
What are the benefits of open space? .....	50
How can Council protect open spaces? .....	51
What is the best mechanism? .....	52
What about the Reserves Act 1977? .....	53
7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN .....	55
Where does Lambton Harbour fit? .....	55
What do we spend now on implementation? .....	55
Operational projects .....	55
How much is already committed? .....	56
Open space protection .....	57
Five year implementation plan .....	57
What have we missed? .....	61
8. MONITORING PLAN .....	62
9. REFERENCES .....	69
APPENDIX 1: MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION.....	71

# Executive Summary

Wellington is shaped by memorable open spaces, including the Harbour, the Town Belt, Mount Kaukau, Wrights Hill, Polhill, the South Coast. We see them almost every day, we drive past them, we walk and play on them, they form an integral part of what we know as Wellington. This strategy is about planning what open spaces we want for Wellington in the future.

## Open Space Concept

Open spaces are generally the outdoor places around us that have:

- *ecological values* such as plants and animals and the habitats they live in;
- *recreational values* that we appreciate and enjoy including formal and informal sport, and active and passive activities;
- *landscape values* including patterns of landform, scenic beauty and sense of place;
- *natural heritage values* inherent in places with cultural or historic significance.

When we look around we find that different parts of Wellington have different values. Consequently we want different open spaces to reflect the different open space values. Wellington City Council's open space concept divides the district into seven different areas and identifies what sorts of open space would be appropriate in each area.

## Guiding Principles

The concept is based on some fundamental principles about open spaces which describe how we might create the open spaces that we are aiming for.

The great majority of the native forest that once covered Wellington was destroyed when the land was cleared last century. However areas of marginal land around Wellington are reverting to a semi-natural low forest dominated by mahoe. Further succession is typically hampered by possum browsing but with active intervention including possum control and the planting of later successional species such as rimu, miro, matai, rata, tawa, kohekohe and hinau, we can assist the continued succession of these forests and restore some of the diversity of the original Wellington forests.

At the same time by planting strips of native species, which have a low flammability, we can provide green breaks which reduce the fire hazard in areas of steep scrub around Wellington.

Generally networks of open space have more value than isolated areas. The larger a natural area, the greater its chance of survival. Similarly recreational networks are more accessible and provide a much wider range of opportunities than isolated recreational areas. The open space concept is based around a series of networks. Although in some instances there may appear to be a conflict between promoting recreational use of open spaces and protecting natural areas, Council believes that through good design and management both objectives are achievable.

Open space is an integral part of managing the shape of Wellington. On a large scale it contains the urban environment accentuating the identity of Wellington. On a smaller scale it interweaves the natural and the built environments creating a more liveable city. Council uses open space to shape the urban form of the city.

### **Council's Role**

Council manages a 2,800 hectares of open space in Wellington. This includes:

- 2,500 hectares of bush (native, exotic and mixed);
- 200 hectares of general purpose grass areas;
- 100 hectares of sports turf;
- 98.5 kilometres of maintained tracks;
- 104 children's play areas;
- 3,600 m<sup>2</sup> of annual bedding;
- 7 hectares of gardens and shrub areas;

Council is also involved in education about open space values and partnerships with private landowners. The District Plan protects specified areas of open space and conservation sites under the Resource Management Act.

### **Implementation Plan**

The implementation plan sets out how Council plans to implement the open space concept over the next five years. Like most organisations Council has limited funds so the implementation plan has to work within a budget and needs to focus on the highest priorities. If the implementation plan can be successfully completed, the foundation of the open space concept for Wellington will have been laid.

# Introduction

## Why do we need an Open Space Strategy?

Wellington City Council's *Strategic Plan* establishes a vision for the city. It sets long-term outcomes for Council in 15 key policy areas, one of which is open space. In each of these areas a specific strategy is being developed to plan how Council can achieve these outcomes.

The *Open Space Strategy* aims to identify:

- What is Council's vision for Wellington's open spaces in the future?
- What sort of open spaces does Wellington have now?
- What is the best way to move from the present to the future?

## How was the Open Space Strategy developed?

The Open Space Strategy has been drawn from a wide range of sources. These include:

- an *Open Space Assessment of Wellington City* carried out in 1997;
- existing statutory and consultative documents (see references);
- *Wellington City Council's Strategic Plan*; and
- *Our City ~ Our Future*: a major community consultation on residents' vision for the future of Wellington.

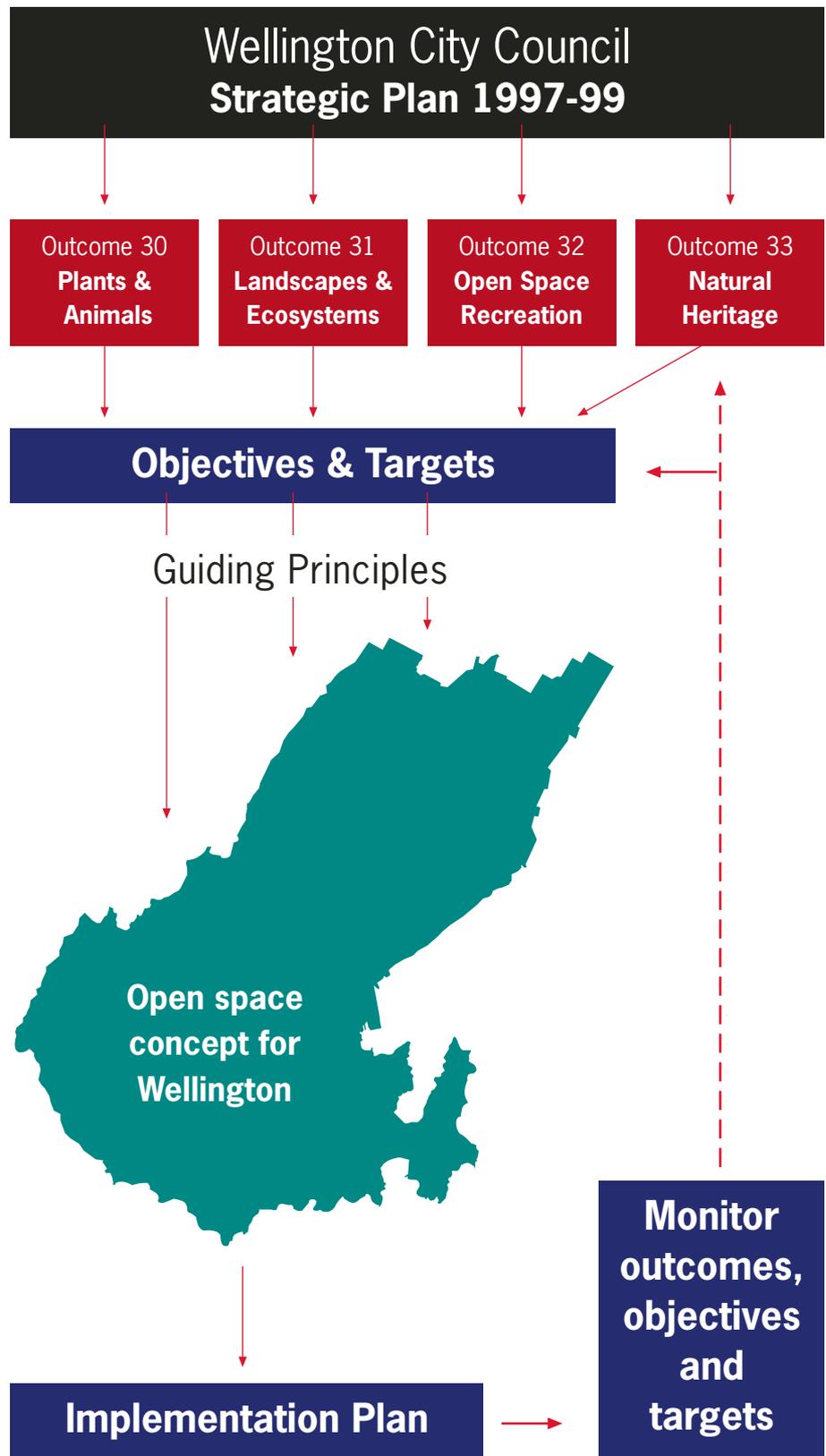
The strategy was shaped over nine months through a series of workshops for Councillors and Council officers, and public consultation. The public consultation included over seventy written submissions and an Open Space Strategy Hui at the Wellington Botanic Garden.

## What do these words mean?

In this document the following technical words mean:

- ***Open Spaces*** are generally the outdoor places in the city which have ecological, recreational, landscape or heritage values. Open spaces include both privately and publicly owned land.
- ***Outcomes*** are big-picture ideas about how we would like Wellington to be.
- ***Objectives*** are what the Council aims to do in order to achieve the outcomes.
- ***Guiding Principles*** tell us how we can achieve our objectives.
- ***Targets*** are milestones which tell us when we have reached our objectives.
- The ***Open Space Concept*** is what we would like Wellington's open spaces to look like in the future.

Figure 1: Diagram showing the relationship between Council’s strategic outcomes and the different parts of the Open Space Strategy.



## What is in *Our City ~ Our Future*?

*Our City ~ Our Future* is a strategy for the future of Wellington which was developed in 1996-97 by a wide range of Wellington residents, organisations and groups. It was guided by a group of community representatives, and resulted from over 70 public meetings and workshops, and more than 1,000 individual 'visions for the future' submitted by the public.

The strategy sets a series of goals in eight theme areas. The relevant goals for open space are included in the natural and built environment sections, and the recreation and leisure section of *Our City ~ Our Future*. These are:

### **Natural environment**

For our city's sustainable future we will:

- protect and restore ecosystems so that they are rich in plant, bird, lizard, insect and fish life, and assist them to approach that of Wellington's original natural environment; and
- encourage people to experience the natural environment, (while living in this vibrant capital city), through easy access to urban parks, gardens and open spaces.

*Goals:*

1. Restored and well managed natural ecosystems in the city area.
2. Open and green spaces are enhanced.

### **Built environment**

For our city's cosmopolitan, beautiful and vibrant future environment we will:

- interweave and complement the built and natural environments; and
- improve the health of people and ecosystems.

*Goal:*

1. Conservation of heritage areas, buildings and features.

### **Recreation and leisure**

For our city's future superb recreation and leisure opportunities we will:

- provide varied and affordable recreation and leisure opportunities for all; and
- use and enhance sustainable recreation and leisure environments.

*Goal:*

1. An abundant and diverse range of affordable, quality recreation and leisure activities and opportunities.

## What is in the Wellington City Council Strategic Plan?

The strategic vision in Council's *Strategic Plan* is derived in part from *Our City ~ Our Future* and includes:

*“Wellingtonians respect their natural environment from the harbour to beyond the hills and there are abundant examples of restored natural heritage. The waters are sparkling and clear, the air is fresh and clean. Wellington’s unique character and beauty are enhanced in its built environment.”*

The *Strategic Plan* sets *priority focus areas*. These are areas that Council will focus its attention and resources on. There are seven priority focus areas for 1998 and 1999, and seven different areas for 2000 to 2002 including:

### 1998-99: Priority Focus Area

*Biodiversity:* To protect and enhance the range of native habitats for plants and animals in the City's open spaces.

### 2000-02: Priority Focus Area

*Green Open Spaces:* To promote the greening of the urban environment.

Council will use these priority objectives to make decisions on policy options and project funding, and to prioritise its asset management programmes.

The *Strategic Plan* also identifies four long term *outcomes* for open spaces in Wellington.

#### **Outcome 30: Plants and animals**

The City environment hosts and protects a representative range of indigenous plants and animals in their natural communities and habitats.

#### **Outcome 31: Landscape and ecosystems**

The City's natural landscape and ecosystems are recognised and, where appropriate, protected and restored.

#### **Outcome 32: Open space recreation**

A wide range of recreational opportunities in the City's open spaces are accessible to all.

#### **Outcome 33: Natural heritage**

The features of the City's natural environment that possess historical, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance are acknowledged, recognised and, where appropriate, protected.

The *Strategic Plan* contains other relevant outcomes, particularly:

#### **Outcome 1: Built - natural relationship**

The built and natural environments are woven together at all levels.

## What about other Council strategies?

The *Open Space Strategy* is linked to other Wellington City Council strategies:

### *Recreation Strategy*

The recreation strategy also includes the use of open space for recreation and leisure activities, however where the recreation strategy is concerned with the *activities* which take place on open space, the open space strategy is more concerned with open space as a *setting* for recreation.

### *Arts Strategy*

The arts strategy addresses the ways in which the arts might use open spaces, both as a *site* for artworks and a *venue* for performing arts.

### *Urban Design Strategy*

Both the urban design and the open space strategies are concerned with public spaces in the City. They approach public spaces from different ends of a spectrum. Whereas the urban design strategy starts from the *built* environment, particularly the central city, the open space strategy focuses on the *natural* environment, which is often situated ‘around the edges’ of the built environment. Having said this there is significant overlap between the two strategies and most successful public spaces have both built and natural elements.

### *Emergency Management Strategy*

The emergency management strategy is concerned with avoiding or mitigating the adverse effects of natural and technological hazards on people, property and the environment. One of the principle natural hazards in Wellington is *fire hazard*. To a large extent fire hazard in Wellington is associated with open space areas due to the flammable vegetation cover (gorse or scrub) and steep topography. Fire hazard can be mitigated by revegetation which is one of the key elements of the open space strategy.

### *Transport Strategy*

The transport strategy is concerned with achieving an integrated transport system including provision for pedestrians and cyclists. The open space strategy addresses the provision of routes for pedestrians and cyclists across open space.

### *Waste and Pollution Strategy*

The waste and pollution strategy is under development and will provide an integrated approach to all waste management. In particular it is concerned to reduce sewage and stormwater pollution of the harbour, coast and streams, and to increase the amenity of natural streams. The strategy will address both point-source and non-point-source pollution. The *Open Space Strategy* and associated Esplanade Areas Policy are concerned with the protection and potential revegetation of stream margins.

## Is this strategy linked to the District Plan?

The Council is required to prepare a district plan under the Resource Management Act 1991. The purpose of the plan is “to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources”.<sup>1</sup> The plan seeks to manage land use activities on the basis of their effects on the environment. The district plan is prepared and amended under a statutory process which allows all affected parties to make submissions on those parts of the plan which affect them.

The open space strategy is a statement of Council’s vision for the open spaces of Wellington in the future. It does not bind landowners but gives an indication of Council’s plans. Council has a number of different roles with regard to open spaces including as a landowner, an advocate and as a regulatory authority under the Resource Management Act.

The *Proposed Wellington City District Plan: Te Kaupapa Whenua and Capital Spaces* are broadly consistent. Where the strategy proposes new initiatives that could appropriately be addressed through the district plan, Council will consider amending the plan. New initiatives are identified in the Implementation Plan.

## What about asset management plans?

The Local Government Amendment Act 1996 requires all Councils to prepare asset management plans by July 1998. Asset management plans describe the current condition of the asset, the desired level of service and a lifecycle management plan to maintain that level of service. Council has prepared asset management plans for all of its major assets including roads, water supply systems, stormwater and sewage systems and parks, gardens and sportsfields.

The *Wellington City Council Strategic Plan* together with the relevant strategy and policies describe the objectives that Council is seeking from an asset. The asset management plans take this strategic direction, together with legislative requirements, industry standards and customer expectations, and establishes a level of service and a life-cycle maintenance plan that will deliver the desired objectives.

## Where does the annual plan fit?

The Local Government Act 1974 requires Council to produce an annual plan in consultation with residents. The annual plan covers all of the work Council is planning to undertake that year together with approved budgets. Except in special circumstances Council is not able to undertake work that is not included in the annual plan.

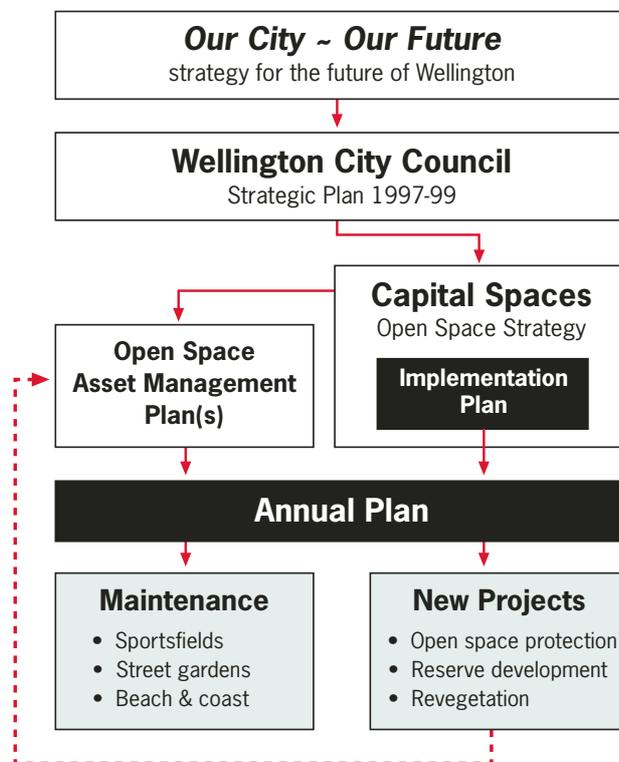
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<sup>1</sup> Section 5(1),  
Resource Management Act 1991

The implementation plan in this strategy feeds those projects into the annual planning process which allocates resources to the highest priorities for Council to achieve its strategic outcomes and objectives. Each year funds for projects identified in Council's strategies and asset management plans are approved through the annual plan.

Figure 2:

Diagram showing the relationship between Our City ~ Our Future and various Council documents and projects.



## What is Council working to achieve?

Council has established objectives in its *Strategic Plan* under each of the four open space outcomes. The objectives relate to what Council can do to achieve the outcomes. This recognises that a number of factors other than the Council also affect the outcomes.

OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVES
<b>Outcome 30: Plants and animals</b> The City environment hosts and protects a representative range of indigenous plants and animals in their natural communities and habitats.	<b>Priority objective for the next five years</b> 1. To protect and enhance the range of native habitats for plants and animals in the City's open spaces.
<b>Outcome 31: Landscape and ecosystems</b> The City's natural landscape and ecosystems are recognised and, where appropriate, protected and restored.	2. To protect and enhance the natural processes which sustain the City's natural landscapes and ecosystems. 3. To contribute to the City's structure and identity by defining and containing urban areas with open spaces 4. To protect and emphasise prominent landforms and natural features.
<b>Outcome 32: Open space recreation</b> A wide range of recreational opportunities in the City's open spaces are accessible to all.	5. To provide a wide range of opportunities for people to use and enjoy the City's open spaces.
<b>Outcome 33: Natural heritage</b> The features of the City's natural environment that possess historical, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance are acknowledged, recognised and, where appropriate, protected.	6. To protect and enhance the cultural and historic values of open space. 7. To increase community awareness, use and involvement in providing and managing open space values.

# Guiding Principles

Ten guiding principles will guide Council in achieving the four open space outcomes in the *Strategic Plan*. These principles represent our current understanding of the physical and social factors which affect Wellington's open spaces.

## ENHANCING NATURAL SUCCESSION

Only a few remnants of the original vegetation patterns in Wellington survived the massive land clearances of the nineteenth century. Currently, large areas of marginal land surrounding the city are undergoing a natural succession from pasture to gorse and scrub and finally to native forest, as external factors make farming less viable.



Natural succession on the hills behind Wilton between 1950 and 1998



Without active management most of these areas will revert to degraded secondary growth native forests which are unlikely to approach the diversity of the original forests. For various reasons, not least the extinction of numerous local bird species, the original state of the forests is not reachable. Human intervention is required in order to establish many native plant species, apart from those which naturally occur on disturbed or bare sites. Further succession to a more diverse forest is hampered by possum browse and plant pests and the establishment of many species will require more intensive efforts to eliminate plant and animal pests.

While many of the smaller bird species that act as seed dispersers for the early mahoe-dominated low forest are still present, there are neither the seed sources nor the disperser bird species for the later successional species such as rimu, rewarewa, miro, rata, kohekohe, hinau, matai, tawa or titoki. There is a near total absence of these later species regenerating under mahoe forest little more than a kilometre from the mature forest remnant at Otari.

There are few remnants of the original podocarp-broadleaf forest which once covered most of Wellington. These remnants are particularly important as models and as seed sources for forest restoration.

***Principle:***

*Areas of open space around Wellington will naturally revert from pasture to gorse and scrub and then to secondary growth native forest without human intervention. Council believes that in areas where forest restoration is an objective, human intervention will be required to approach the diversity of the original forests. Council will seek to control plant and animal pests and to reintroduce later successional species such as rimu, miro, matai, rata, tawa, kohekohe and hinau.*

## BETTER NETWORKS AND CORRIDORS

Networks and corridors are fundamental concepts for open space in Wellington. Ecological research has indicated that the long-term viability of natural areas is greater the larger the natural area is.

In part this is due to the greater genetic diversity available where there are more plants and animals, which enhances the chances of survival for any particular species. In part this is due to the greater capacity for large areas to buffer or absorb adverse effects from surrounding areas without destroying the natural processes which underlie the natural area and enable it to survive.

The viability of existing natural areas can be greatly enhanced by linking adjacent areas with 'ecological corridors'. In effect the protection or creation of a relatively small area of 'ecological corridor' may significantly increase the total area protected, and the size of the plant and animal populations. This may have a large effect on the viability of the natural area.

Recreational networks are similarly important. Isolated tracks or recreational facilities offer a single recreational opportunity. Networks of tracks and other recreational facilities create a range of recreational opportunities which is effectively greater than the sum of the parts. People have the choice of mixing and matching their recreational activities.



**Bush track in Hataitai Park, Mt Victoria**

For example two separate walking tracks provide two recreational opportunities. If the two tracks are linked, they provide three recreational opportunities, as people can choose to walk either of the individual tracks, or they can walk a longer combined track. The more complex the recreational network, the more choice and opportunities it offers for users.

Recreational networks also make recreational opportunities more accessible. For example a network of walking tracks provides more access points and allows users to choose what length and difficulty of track they want to experience. The more accessible recreational opportunities are, the more likely it is that they will be used.

***Principle:***

*Council will seek to create ecological corridors and recreational networks that maximise the value of the open space, and promote the viability of natural areas and the flexible use and accessibility of recreational areas.*

## PROTECTING THREATENED SPECIES

New Zealand's native flora and fauna evolved in an environment free of mammals apart from native bats. Since the introduction of browsing animals, mustelids such as stoats, rodents, cats and dogs, the native flora and fauna have been significantly affected with many species becoming extinct, either nationally or on a local level. At the same time a large proportion of indigenous ecosystems have been destroyed through land clearances.

Reversal of this trend depends on providing suitable habitat free of possums and other predators. To date this has been achieved most successfully on offshore islands where predator populations can effectively be eradicated. One or two 'mainland islands' have been created using isolated patches of bush where re-infestation of possums and other predators is relatively low and can be kept under control by trapping and poisoning programmes.

The proposal to create a 'mainland island' at the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in the middle of Wellington is a bold and exciting opportunity. It is dependent on the construction of a predator-proof fence around the Karori Reservoir which would allow the eradication of possums and other predators within the fence. If successful the proposal would reintroduce endangered species of native birds into the heart of Wellington City.

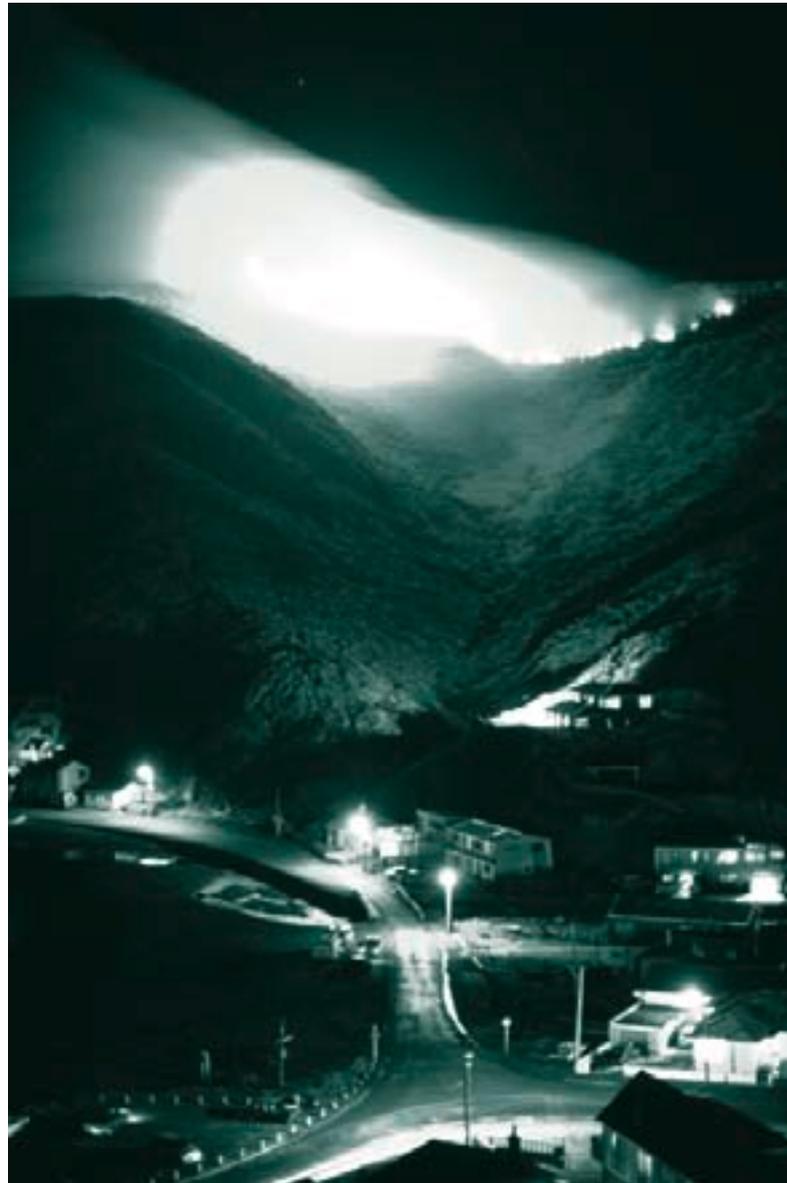
A similar principle lies behind the proposal to establish a marine reserve on the South Coast. The principal predators of fish and other marine life are humans. The establishment of a marine reserve effectively creates a 'paper fence' which protects the marine life within the reserve boundaries but allows continued public access and enjoyment.

**Principle:**

*The re-introduction of threatened native plant, bird, lizard, insect and fish species into Wellington requires the provision of adequate habitat and the control of predators. Council will support the reintroduction of native species and in particular the creation of the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary and the establishment of a marine reserve on the South Coast.*

## REDUCING FIRE HAZARD

Large areas of open space in and around the city have relatively high fire hazard. This is due to the flammability of the existing vegetation cover (primarily gorse), and to the steep hill slopes which can significantly accelerate a fire's rate of spread.



Fire above Owhiro Bay

Fire hazard can be controlled through ongoing human intervention using firebreaks, vegetation clearance and weed spraying. Alternatively, a cost-effective long-term reduction of fire hazard can be achieved by promoting the natural succession of fire resistant native species. These species will out compete gorse over a 15-30 year timeframe and in doing so replace the current highly flammable vegetation cover with a secondary growth native forest of low flammability. The canopy of native vegetation produces a layer of litter and humus on the ground which is more moist and fire resistant than the layer under gorse or exotic tree plantations.

This process can be hastened by planting 'green breaks' in high risk areas. 'Green breaks' are formed by clearing strips of land and planting these with fire resistant native species, kickstarting the regeneration of native bush along these breaks. Once established, the strips of low flammability native bush act in a similar way to conventional fire breaks and are less visually intrusive.

***Principle:***

*Council will seek a cost-effective long-term reduction of fire hazard in the open spaces around Wellington by promoting the natural succession of fire resistant native species, together with the use of 'green breaks' in high risk areas.*

## PROTECTING THE COAST AND STREAMS

Public access to and along the coast and rivers, and the protection of their natural character and recreational values, have historically been highly valued by New Zealand society. The provision of what is popularly known



as “the Queen’s Chain”, dating from Queen Victoria’s royal instructions to Governor Hobson in 1840, has been enshrined in some of New Zealand’s earliest legislation, and the principles have been carried through to a number of present day statutes including the Resource Management Act 1991, the Reserves Act 1977, and the Local Government Act 1974.

“The Queen’s Chain” is actually composed of three different types of protected area:

- I. Unformed “paper” or “legal” roads often run along the coastline or the banks of rivers and lakes, and are usually one chain wide (20.12 metres). Some of these were intended for the future development of public roads, but for others the intention was simply to retain the foreshore or riparian area as public land. There may be informal pedestrian or vehicle access along paper roads.
- II. Marginal strips are reserved from the sale or disposition of Crown Land under the Conservation Act 1987. These strips are usually 20 metres wide and are noted on the title of the land at the time of sale by the Crown in order to protect conservation values and to provide for public access and recreation. Recent amendments to the Conservation Act have allowed the width of marginal strips to be varied where appropriate.
- III. Esplanade reserves and strips are created when land is subdivided under the Resource Management Act 1991 in order to protect conservation values, and to enable public access and recreation. While 20 metres is the standard width for both reserves and strips, the width may be varied depending on the situation.

An esplanade reserve is land that vests with the Council as Local Purpose Reserve (for esplanade purposes) under the Reserves Act 1977. An esplanade strip is a statutory covenant registered against the title of the land, which may allow public access or protect natural values depending on the site and the particular agreement.

In Wellington City District a large part of the coastline is held as legal road, including the unformed ‘paper road’ from Ohau Point to Owhiro Bay, and the largely formed road from Owhiro Bay to Oriental Parade. The coastline north of Makara is largely unprotected. Most of the streams around Wellington are also unprotected although parts of the Belmont and the upper Kaiwharawhara streams are included within existing parks.

Riparian planting can improve the water quality of streams by filtering surface and sub-surface runoff, and controlling erosion. It can also promote native aquatic plant and animal communities by reducing the intensity of light and the temperature of streams, and providing an increased range of habitats. Council’s Waste and Pollution Strategy addresses the reduction of sewage and stormwater pollution of the coast and streams.

***Principle:***

*Council will seek to protect and enhance public access to and along the coastline and significant streams, and to promote the revegetation of riparian areas with appropriate native species. This will contribute to improving water quality and to enhancing native aquatic habitats.*

## MANAGING THE CITY'S URBAN FORM

Open space is part of managing the City's urban form in two key ways. The first is at a relatively large scale by containing the urban environment, the second is at a smaller scale by interweaving the built and the natural environment.

Both the central city and outlying suburbs have a natural tendency towards containment because of Wellington's topography. This containment helps to make the city more accessible and accentuates the identity of Wellington. Containment should be exploited where appropriate to strengthen the city experience, intensifying the inner city and restricting the sprawl of the suburbs. Containing the built environment helps to balance the natural environment which surrounds it, and enhances the features which make Wellington unique.

Containment also promotes the most efficient use of the City's infrastructure and resources by concentrating development as opposed to allowing urban sprawl.

At a smaller scale, private gardens in some of the older suburbs such as Wilton appear to have significant areas of bush when viewed on satellite imagery.<sup>1</sup> This interweaving of the natural and the built environment not only provides significant habitats for plants and animals, but also helps to make the city a more liveable place.

<sup>1</sup> Page 57, Assessment of Open Space in Wellington City, Boffa Miskell Limited, 1998.

### ***Principle:***

*Council believes that open space is a key part of managing the city's urban form by containing the built environment and interweaving the natural with the built environment.*



Aerial view of the Wellington peninsula showing the Town Belt and the hills along the proposed Outer Green Belt

## INCREASING DENSITY

Once no New Zealand house was complete without a quarter acre section. Today there is a trend towards higher density residential living (see following table) and smaller gardens. This is the result of a number of factors including:

- increases in the popularity of inner city apartments;
- economic incentives to cross lease or subdivide larger sections;
- new planning and building regulations allowing higher density developments; and
- lifestyle changes.

Figure 3: Changes in population density from 1986 to 1996 in Wellington suburbs<sup>2</sup>

<b>WELLINGTON SUBURBS</b>	1986 People per km <sup>2</sup>	1991 People per km <sup>2</sup>	1996 People per km <sup>2</sup>	1986 - 1996 Difference	% Change Population Density
Wadestown/Wilton	1421	1388	1390	-30	-2.13%
Seatoun	1602	1521	1588	-13	-0.84%
Tawa	1618	1630	1613	-5	-0.29%
Lyall Bay/Melrose	1325	1314	1352	27	2.01%
Newlands/Grenada	276	290	305	30	10.81%
Karori	1104	1123	1160	56	5.11%
Ngaio/Khandallah	1034	1059	1103	69	6.71%
Roseneath/Hataitai	2878	2851	2980	102	3.55%
Brooklyn	1751	1756	1869	117	6.69%
Berhampore/Newtown	2641	2509	2759	118	4.47%
Northland/Kelburn	2464	2468	2585	121	4.91%
Island/Owhiro Bay	1329	1360	1460	131	9.82%
Churton/Johnsonville	1254	1320	1405	151	12.06%
Miramar/Strathmore	1996	2047	2163	166	8.33%
Oriental Bay/ Mt Victoria	3721	3700	3940	219	5.90%
Kilbirnie	2806	2855	3054	248	8.83%
Te Aro/Mt Cook	3394	3266	3703	310	9.12%
Inner City	1381	1278	1753	372	26.92%

This has a number of implications for public open space. In particular there are likely to be greater and more varied demands for public open space for activities which formerly would have occurred in private open spaces. For example neighbourhood reserves are likely to have a higher level of use by young families as private gardens become smaller. Similarly, the proportion of the city's vegetation cover that is on public open space is likely to increase over time as private gardens reduce in size, adding to the ecological significance of the public spaces.

<sup>2</sup> Supermap: Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Department of Statistics.

**Principle:**

*Council believes that the increasing density of population and dwellings in Wellington is likely to lead to smaller residential sections and increasing demand for public open spaces.*

## RESPONDING TO OPPORTUNITIES

When dealing with open space Council is often negotiating with landowners and external agencies. Council can only achieve its open space outcomes with the cooperation of these parties. In consequence it is not possible to establish a strict timetable for the implementation of many open space initiatives. They are by their nature ‘opportunity driven’, as and when parties are prepared to deal with Council.

**Principle:**

*Council’s open space objectives need to be sufficiently general and flexible to allow Council to respond to opportunities as they arise and to negotiate good value for money.*



Troup Picnic Site, Otari/Wilton Bush

## PROMOTING RECREATION

Wellingtonians value the recreation opportunities available in the city's open spaces. Recreational use of open spaces is encouraged by making them more accessible and usable.

All citizens should be able to access recreation opportunities in the City's open spaces. This requires that the opportunities are provided in a range of levels which cater for a range of abilities and interests. Physical disability, economic and/or social disadvantage should not be barriers to the enjoyment of open spaces.

The City's open space network should provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, both organised and informal, that enable people to have access to their preferred recreational activity. Effective management through the application of sound planning and investment decisions will ensure that appropriate and desirable recreation opportunities are increased and enhanced.

In general an even distribution of recreational opportunities across the City is desirable to ensure equal opportunities across the community. The distribution should also take into account the need for the type of opportunity and the level of investment required. A hierarchy of facilities based around recreation hubs is proposed to meet these criteria.

***Principle:***

*Council will seek to provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities in open spaces that cater for a range of abilities and interests. In general it is preferable to distribute these opportunities evenly through the City, except where the nature or cost of the opportunity prevents this or suitable locations are not available.*

## BALANCING RECREATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

There is a potential conflict between recreational usage and the conservation of the natural environment. Council is committed to providing a wide range of opportunities for people to use and enjoy the City's open spaces.

The *Recreation Strategy* has identified that there should be a balance between the recreational usage and the conservation of the natural environment. Potential conflicts can be resolved through good design and appropriate management.

***Principle:***

*Council is aiming for an optimal balance that enables widespread recreational use of open spaces while protecting the natural environment of Wellington.*

# Open Space Concept

## What is Council's open space concept?

The *open space concept* sets out what we want Wellington's open spaces to look like in the future. Generally it is not practical to identify specific pieces of land, so the concept is more concerned to identify what sorts of open space we want to see in different *areas*. Different parts of Wellington have different open space values and we want different open spaces to reflect these values. Each of the areas has a different mix of the four open space values.

## Will I have to sell my land?

Council does not intend forcing anybody to sell their land. The concept is for all of the district and covers both private and public land. However, this does not mean that Council intends to acquire or manage all land in the district. The concept identifies what sorts of open space would be appropriate in different areas.

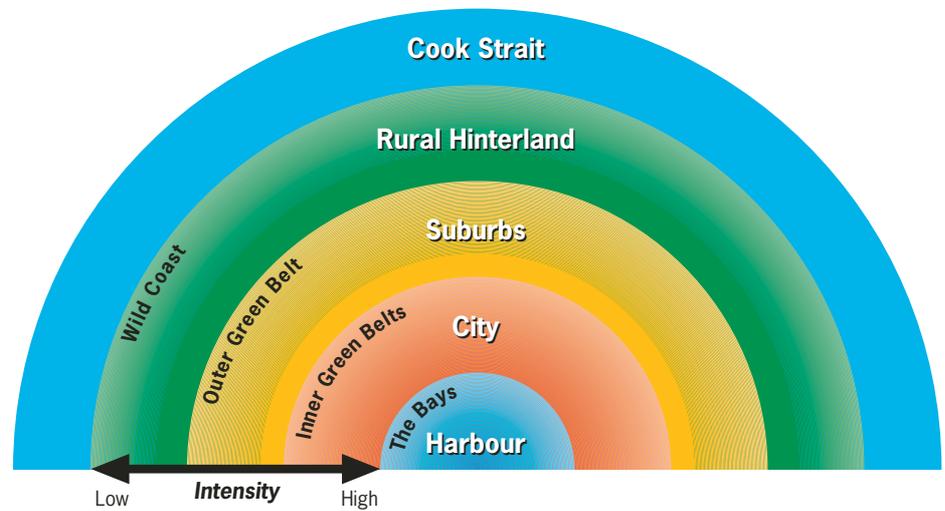
The concept is not intended to specifically identify individual bits of land; rather it is intended to show the general area where certain types of open space might be appropriate. Council wants to achieve its open space vision through partnerships or willing seller-willing buyer scenarios.

If you think that your land might be affected and would like to discuss this please don't hesitate to contact Council. Don't forget that Council is not going to force you to do anything.

## What sorts of open spaces has Wellington got now?

The first step taken towards developing an open space concept was to identify what sorts of open space Wellington has now. In an open space assessment carried out in 1997 each of the four values, (ecological, recreation, landscape and natural heritage) were assessed throughout the district. When the maps for each of the values were overlaid it quickly became apparent that the district could be divided into seven areas, each of which had a different combination of the four values. The sorts of open spaces that Council would like to see in the future reflect these values.

The areas and their key open space features are identified on the map on pages 40-41. A conceptual diagram showing the relationship between the areas is shown on page 28. Each area is discussed in more detail in the following sections.



Conceptual diagram showing the relationship between different areas of Wellington.

## THE CITY

A vibrant inner city where the streets, parks, squares and waterfront form a network of safe, functional and stimulating spaces for people and events; and the design, features and planting give a unique sense of Wellington.

### Description

This area encompasses the open spaces contained in the area between Lambton Harbour and the motorway from the ferry terminus to Willis Street, Webb and Buckle Streets and Kent Terrace and including Oriental Parade to Point Jerningham. This includes public spaces such as city parks, plazas, streets, and the waterfront.

### Open space values

#### *Ecological*

The area has low ecological values including small grass areas, street trees and the harbour edge.

#### *Recreation*

The city is a prime recreation hub for leisure, entertainment and shopping. The city's open spaces are places for people, providing a network throughout the city and allowing people to move around and to meet, socialise, watch, shop, sit, walk and generally participate in city life. With a steady trend towards inner city residential living, often in apartments with little or no private outdoor space, the city's open spaces also serve as local neighbourhoods.

#### *Landscape*

The character of the public spaces contributes greatly to the sense of a Wellington identity. Particular features which should be noted are:

- Civic Square and the Bridge to the Sea;
- Lambton Harbour;

- Parliament grounds;
- City parks (eg. Midland Park, Aro Park, Cobblestone Park)
- Golden Mile (Lambton Quay, Willis Street, Manners Street and Courteney Place);
- Oriental Parade; and
- Kent and Cambridge Terraces.

#### *Heritage*

The city is rich in cultural meaning with icons ranging from the Pipitea Marae to the Beehive and the copper nikau palms in Civic Square. Monuments and historical objects give a rich setting for city life, eg. Bolton and Mount Street cemeteries. The city has a pre-European heritage underlying the built environment. Although many of these sites are no longer physically evident, they need recognition and protection.

#### **Threats and issues**

- Apart from the roading network there has been little consistent planning of inner city open space and most of the parks and squares appear to be left over from the provision of space for buildings.
- There are notable gaps in the distribution of city parks in key areas of high pedestrian numbers and increased residential living including the central area of the golden mile, the Courteney and Cuba character areas and the Te Aro flats.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Assessment of Open Space in Wellington City*, Boffa Miskell Limited, February 1998.



The lagoon on the waterfront at night

- The high cost of land and density of development constrains opportunities for developing new open spaces.
- The waterfront contains the greatest area of remaining open space available in the central city. There is consistent public support for maintaining and developing its green character and public access to the water's edge.<sup>4</sup>

### **Opportunities**

- Develop the waterfront as a major open space with frequent connections to the city, significant green areas and continuous public access along the water's edge.
- Provide additional inner city parks in areas identified as lacking in open space.
- Promote the interweaving of small green spaces, and roof and balcony gardens, into the city centre.
- Implement a planting programme to provide sheltered microclimates for pedestrians and visitors in the city centre, in accordance with planting guidelines to strengthen the identity of the central city and character precincts.
- Provide information signage interpreting the natural and historic features in the city centre.
- Upgrade Oriental Bay beach to enhance recreational use and attractiveness

## **THE BAYS**

An accessible urban coastline which is rich in recreational opportunities and cultural meaning, and emphasizes the natural character and beauty of the coast through the protection of prominent landforms and indigenous vegetation.

### **Description**

Open spaces including the shoreline, headlands, coastal cliffs and escarpments from Petone to the ferry terminus and from Point Jerningham to Owhiro Bay.

### **Open space values**

#### *Ecological*

Remnant primary forests on the Wellington Fault escarpment and ecologically sensitive shoreline have high ecological value.

#### *Recreation*

The shoreline is an extremely popular destination for numerous types of leisure including water-based activities, fishing, swimming, picnics, cycling, walking, driving and enjoying the scenery.

#### *Landscape*

The steep escarpments and prominent headlands are significant landscape features around Wellington Harbour. The vegetation and landforms contribute to the coast's natural character and form a distinctive characteristic of Wellington.

<sup>4</sup> *Our City ~ Our Future: Resident Survey Results*, Wellington City Council, August 1997.



Esplanade road and coastal escarpment behind Island Bay

### *Heritage*

The coastline is significant for iwi and has waahi tapu sites extending from the South Coast and through the harbour. Significant European heritage items include fishing wharves and military installations.

### **Threats and issues**

- Recreational activity is focused along the shore platform with limited width for competing uses. Safety is an issue along the narrow road which is a popular route for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The remaining natural shoreline is narrow, limiting the potential for recreational uses and for enhancing remnants of ecologically sensitive vegetation.
- The escarpments and headlands may come under pressure for development as new building techniques make building on steep land more feasible. Mount Crawford and Point Halswell may pass out of public ownership.
- The Miramar Peninsula is isolated from other natural habitats by the densely developed Rongotai area. Mature native vegetation is unlikely to be re-established on the peninsula without human assistance.

## Opportunities

- Enhance the esplanade road as a scenic and recreational route including a cycle route and walkway
- Protect and where possible restore the remnants of native vegetation along the shoreline and inland of the marine drive as described in the enhancement and restoration guidelines.<sup>6</sup>
- Upgrade parking, boat ramps and fishing wharves to promote recreational usage and limit environmental impacts.
- Promote and facilitate the protection of prominent open spaces at Point Halswell, Mount Crawford, Fort Dorset and Palmer Head.
- Work with landowners to promote the protection of native vegetation on the Wellington Fault escarpment, and the cliffs behind Greta Point, Seatoun and from Lyall Bay to Island Bay.
- Consult with iwi about appropriate management of Maori sites and possible interpretation of their significance.
- Support and promote the establishment of a marine reserve on the South Coast.

## SUBURBAN OPEN SPACES

Accessible open spaces close to people's homes which provide a flexible range of recreational opportunities and which provide green spaces that contribute to the identity of the suburb.

### Description

These are small scale green areas in the suburbs including neighbourhood parks, school grounds, playgrounds, sportsfields and private gardens.

### Open space values

#### *Ecological*

The suburban open spaces have limited ecological values due to their isolated nature and intensive use. They can provide locally significant green areas and vegetation.

#### *Recreation*

These open spaces are often intensively used for both formal and informal activities and are significant for local users where accessibility is an issue. They have high recreation value.

#### *Landscape*

There is limited landscape value in these open spaces, although some areas may be locally significant.

#### *Heritage*

These spaces have varying heritage values which may be important to local communities.

<sup>6</sup> Wellington Coast from Owhiro Bay to Oriental Bay Enhancement and Restoration Guidelines, Wellington City Council, February 1997.

### Threats and issues

These open spaces will become increasingly significant as the density of settlement in Wellington increases, leading to a higher intensity of use and greater potential conflicts. Changes in demographics and recreation patterns over time will also affect the ways these spaces are used. A useful response to these trends requires a flexible and consultative approach.

The topography of Wellington does not lend itself to an even distribution of open spaces in suburbs. The steep hillsides and containment of the suburban areas tends to limit the availability of suitable areas for neighbourhood parks, playgrounds and sportsfields. The *Recreation Strategy* proposes establishing a hierarchy of community and neighbourhood facilities so that recreation opportunities are available to people in or close to their communities. The strategy recommends consolidating facilities in four developing recreation 'hubs' in:

- City
- Kilbirnie
- Karori
- Johnsonville

These hubs will provide clusters of high standard facilities such as a swimming pool, sportsfields, recreation centre, and play equipment catering for a range of age groups.



Macalister Park

The city currently has an adequate number of sportsfields to cater for demand. Increasing demand can be absorbed by increasing the utilisation of existing parks. At some stage the existing parks will reach their capacity and new sportsfields will be required to meet demand. Acquiring suitable areas of flat land is potentially difficult and expensive and requires long-term planning. The levels of usage need to be monitored as part of the sportsfield asset management plan with appropriate long-term planning.

### **Opportunities**

- Secure public open spaces through reserve contributions and land purchase to cater for recreational demands in new subdivisions and areas of increased density.
- Maintain flexibility in the provision of suburban open spaces to retain the ability to respond to changing recreation demand and patterns.
- Upgrade sportsfields with improved drainage and surfaces to improve level of utilisation.
- Upgrade playgrounds to meet New Zealand Safety Standards and provide safe play environments for children.
- Develop a hierarchy of playgrounds with more extensive facilities associated with the recreation hubs. Rationalise existing under-utilised playgrounds.
- Promote planting in private gardens through environmental education to create habitats for plants and animals and to provide green networks.

## **INNER GREEN BELTS**

A series of green belts or corridors, rich in ecological, recreational and heritage values, which weave green open space through the city, containing and identifying the suburbs and connecting other open spaces.

### **Description**

There are four proposed inner green belts:

- *Town Belt* and extensions flanking Island Bay;
- *Ngaio Gorge Green Belt* linking the coast and the Outer Green Belt;
- *Ngauranga Gorge Green Belt* linking the coast and Outer Green Belt; and
- Proposed *Marshall Ridge/ Belmont Gully Green Belt* between Johnsonville and Tawa.

### **Open space values**

#### *Ecological*

These areas exemplify Outcome 1 in the *Strategic Plan* by weaving natural corridors through the city. The corridors have high potential ecological values. There is extensive regeneration of native species occurring and significant exotic vegetation. The remnant of primary forest in the Botanic Garden has high ecological values, while the breeding programmes for endangered species at the Zoo have significant conservation values.

*Recreation*

The Town Belt and associated facilities have high recreation values and are extensively used for formal and informal recreational activities. The Botanic Garden is a major recreational and educational 'hub' for the city. The other belts also have high potential for recreational use.

*Landscape*

All of the inner green belts have high landscape values. The Town Belt creates a picturesque green backdrop to the city and is inextricably bound



View from Mt Victoria

up with Wellington's sense of identity. The Ngaio Gorge and Belmont Gully are green corridors which emphasise the natural landforms and weave through the city. The regenerating native vegetation in the Ngauranga Gorge hints at a striking gateway to the harbour in the future.

#### *Heritage*

All of the inner green belts are high in both European and Maori heritage values.

#### **Threats and issues**

- There are significant tenure gaps with alienated Town Belt lands. Returning this land to the Town Belt or ensuring its protection is a high priority.
- There are large areas of mature pine forest on the Town Belt. Council has a significant liability if the trees become over-mature, when wind throws could threaten neighbouring properties.
- The trend to in-fill housing and higher population densities is likely to create more pressure for development on remaining open spaces, as well as greater demands for outdoor recreation. These conflicting pressures suggest that greater control will be needed in these areas than in some of the outlying areas.
- With ongoing subdivision occurring within the Johnsonville-Tawa valley, the key elements of the proposed green belt need to be protected before opportunities and linkages are lost.
- Industrial, quarry and motorway land uses in the Ngauranga Gorge may conflict with open space values.

#### **Opportunities**

- Negotiate the return of the alienated Town Belt lands.
- Implement the Town Belt Management Plan and revegetation programme focusing on removing areas of mature pine forest adjacent to neighbouring properties.
- Implement the Botanic Garden Management Plan to develop and promote the gardens as a recreational and educational attraction for Wellington.
- Redevelop the Zoo into a series of natural habitat enclosures to promote endangered species breeding programmes and public education.
- Facilitate protection of the Belmont Gully Green Belt linking the Outer Town Belt and Belmont Regional Park.
- Plan and implement a revegetation programme for Ngauranga Gorge to create a future gateway to Wellington.

## **OUTER GREEN BELT**

A continuous green belt following the ridges west of the city from the South Coast to Colonial Knob, in which indigenous vegetation is restored and an informal recreation network is widely accessible.

## Description

A continuous spine of open space following the ridgelines which flank the west of the metropolitan area from the South Coast, including the Hawkins Hill-Polhill ridge, Wrights Hill, Makara Peak, Johnston Hill-Mt Kaukau ridge, and the hills west of Tawa running north towards Yoxon and Colonial Knob.

## Open space values

### *Ecological*

A few remnants of primary native forest including Otari/Wilton Bush and Khandallah Park have high ecological values. Large areas of regenerating scrub are ecologically significant and have the potential to succeed to native forest, so forming an extensive ecological corridor.

### *Recreation*

The accessibility of these ridges from many parts of the city and the range of environments from open hilltops to forested walks, provides opportunities for numerous informal recreational activities including walking, running, mountain biking, scenic enjoyment, picnicing and horse riding.

### *Landscape*

These ridges form a series of visually prominent skylines which provide a backdrop to and contain the urban part of the city. Many of the high points are geologically significant as remnants of the former Wellington peneplain.



Mt Kaukau

### *Heritage*

There are a number of features of heritage value including the gun emplacements at Wrights Hill, the dams at Karori reservoir and the Old Coach Road.

### **Threats and issues**

- Significant areas of the Outer Green Belt are owned by the Council but there are large gaps particularly in the north. Alternative means of maintaining open space values on privately owned land need to be considered.
- There is enormous potential for a natural corridor of restored native forest along the Outer Green Belt, which would provide an ecological spine for the city. Although there are two primary forest remnants which could act as seed sources, the natural spread of successional species from these sites would be relatively slow given the large distances involved. Revegetation programmes would be needed to speed this process up.
- In planning for the Outer Green Belt provision should also be made for maintaining some areas of grazed land in order to provide a variety of recreational environments, to preserve views, and to enable continued pastoral use. The management of specific areas would need to be worked out in consultation with the landowners.
- Community support for the degree to which the city is contained within the Outer Green Belt should continue to be reviewed.

### **Opportunities**

- Support the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust in constructing a predator-proof fence around the Karori Reservoir, eradicating all possums and other predators within the fence, and re-introducing endangered plants, birds, lizards, insects and fish species.
- Facilitate the protection of the key ridges along the western edge of the city from the South Coast to Colonial Knob, including public access along a continuous recreation route, areas of open grazed land and an ecological corridor.
- Prepare and implement a revegetation plan for areas of high fire hazard along the Outer Green Belt.
- Implement *Otari Native Botanic Garden Management Plan* to promote the gardens as a recreational and educational attraction for Wellington, and a nationally significant native plant collection.

## **RURAL HINTERLAND**

A scenic rural environment where rural land uses are interwoven with a network of restored natural ecosystems and informal recreational access.

### **Description**

The rural hinterland includes:

- all land west of the Outer Green Belt to the Wild Coast; and
- the rural land between Johnsonville/Tawa and the northern boundary of the city.



Karori Golf Club

## Open space values

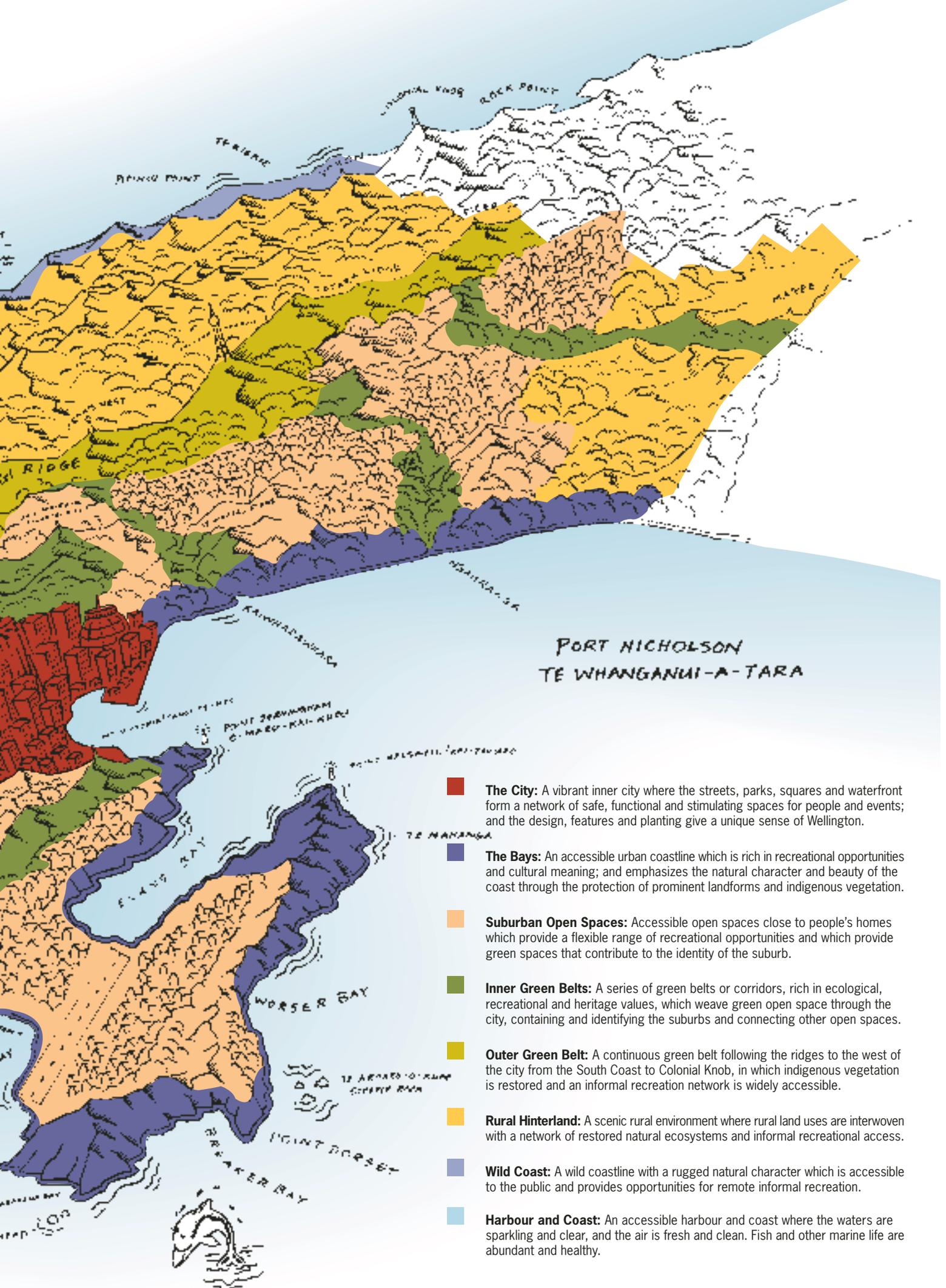
### *Ecological*

There are a few remnants of primary native forest including those located at Quartz Hill and Warrens Bush which have high ecological value. Elsewhere significant areas of marginal land are reverting to scrub with potential to develop into native forest. To the east this area borders on the Belmont Regional Park which has significant areas of remnant and regenerating native vegetation.

### *Recreation*

The Ohariu/Makara Valley roads provide a scenic route through farmland for driving and cycling and Makara Beach is a popular destination with access to the Wild Coast. The typically steep ridges and hills have potential for challenging outdoor recreation but are little used as yet. The rural landscape allows more expansive recreation including horse riding and golf. Potential links to the Belmont Regional Park would offer significant recreational opportunities.





PORT NICHOLSON  
TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA

- The City:** A vibrant inner city where the streets, parks, squares and waterfront form a network of safe, functional and stimulating spaces for people and events; and the design, features and planting give a unique sense of Wellington.
- The Bays:** An accessible urban coastline which is rich in recreational opportunities and cultural meaning; and emphasizes the natural character and beauty of the coast through the protection of prominent landforms and indigenous vegetation.
- Suburban Open Spaces:** Accessible open spaces close to people's homes which provide a flexible range of recreational opportunities and which provide green spaces that contribute to the identity of the suburb.
- Inner Green Belts:** A series of green belts or corridors, rich in ecological, recreational and heritage values, which weave green open space through the city, containing and identifying the suburbs and connecting other open spaces.
- Outer Green Belt:** A continuous green belt following the ridges to the west of the city from the South Coast to Colonial Knob, in which indigenous vegetation is restored and an informal recreation network is widely accessible.
- Rural Hinterland:** A scenic rural environment where rural land uses are interwoven with a network of restored natural ecosystems and informal recreational access.
- Wild Coast:** A wild coastline with a rugged natural character which is accessible to the public and provides opportunities for remote informal recreation.
- Harbour and Coast:** An accessible harbour and coast where the waters are sparkling and clear, and the air is fresh and clean. Fish and other marine life are abundant and healthy.

### *Landscape*

This area is characterised by extensive rural scenery, largely pastoral with some forestry. The Horokiwi-Magee ridge in the north and the Quartz Hill-Outlook Hill ridge are part of a visually prominent series of skyline ridges which are geologically significant as remnants of the former Wellington peneplain. The Takarau Gorge has high landscape value as a narrow winding scenic road.

### *Heritage*

Significant heritage features in this area include Maori tracks, gold mining relics, early farming sites, World War II fortifications, and the Makara and Ohariu cemeteries.

### **Threats and issues**

- Changing land uses (forestry, wind farms, lifestyle blocks) may alter the landscape character. This change may conflict with public expectations.
- Most of this area is privately owned and consultation with landowners will be a key factor in allowing public access and promoting the revegetation of marginal areas.
- Public access from Horokiwi Road into Belmont Regional Park is currently limited to a single block of Council land near Magee.

### **Opportunities**

- Promote the protection of the Quartz Hill and Warrens Bush native forest remnants and consult with land owners to protect the adjacent regenerating vegetation.
- Manage the Makara and Ohariu Valley roads as a scenic route for cycling and driving, with Makara Beach developed and managed as a visitor destination.
- Negotiate with landowners for public access to walking and mountain biking routes from the Outer Green Belt to the Wild Coast, and from Horokiwi Road into Belmont Regional Park.
- Promote the establishment of a 'Wild West Park', as proposed in *Our City ~ Our Future*, in partnership with other agencies and landowners.
- Consult with landowners to promote the protection of riparian land for regeneration of native vegetation as ecological and recreational links across the rural hinterland.

## **WILD COAST**

A wild coastline with a rugged natural character which is accessible to the public and provides opportunities for remote informal recreation.

### **Description**

The shoreline, coastal platform and land to the top of the coastal cliffs and escarpments from Owhiro Bay to Rock Point north of Makara.

## Open space values

### *Ecological*

Part of the Cook Strait Ecological District, this is a rugged environment exposed to extreme coastal conditions. Little remains of the original vegetation but the native plant communities and the Sinclair Head seal colony have ecological value. There is significant potential for native regeneration.

### *Recreation*

The remote wild nature of the coast offers challenging recreational opportunities for remote experiences. The more accessible parts of the coast attract walking, running, four wheel drive, mountain biking and sea-based activities. There is a two day tramp from Owhiro Bay to Makara.

### *Landscape*

This area is a regionally significant landscape, seen mainly from Cook Strait from the ferry and from planes arriving in Wellington.

### *Heritage*

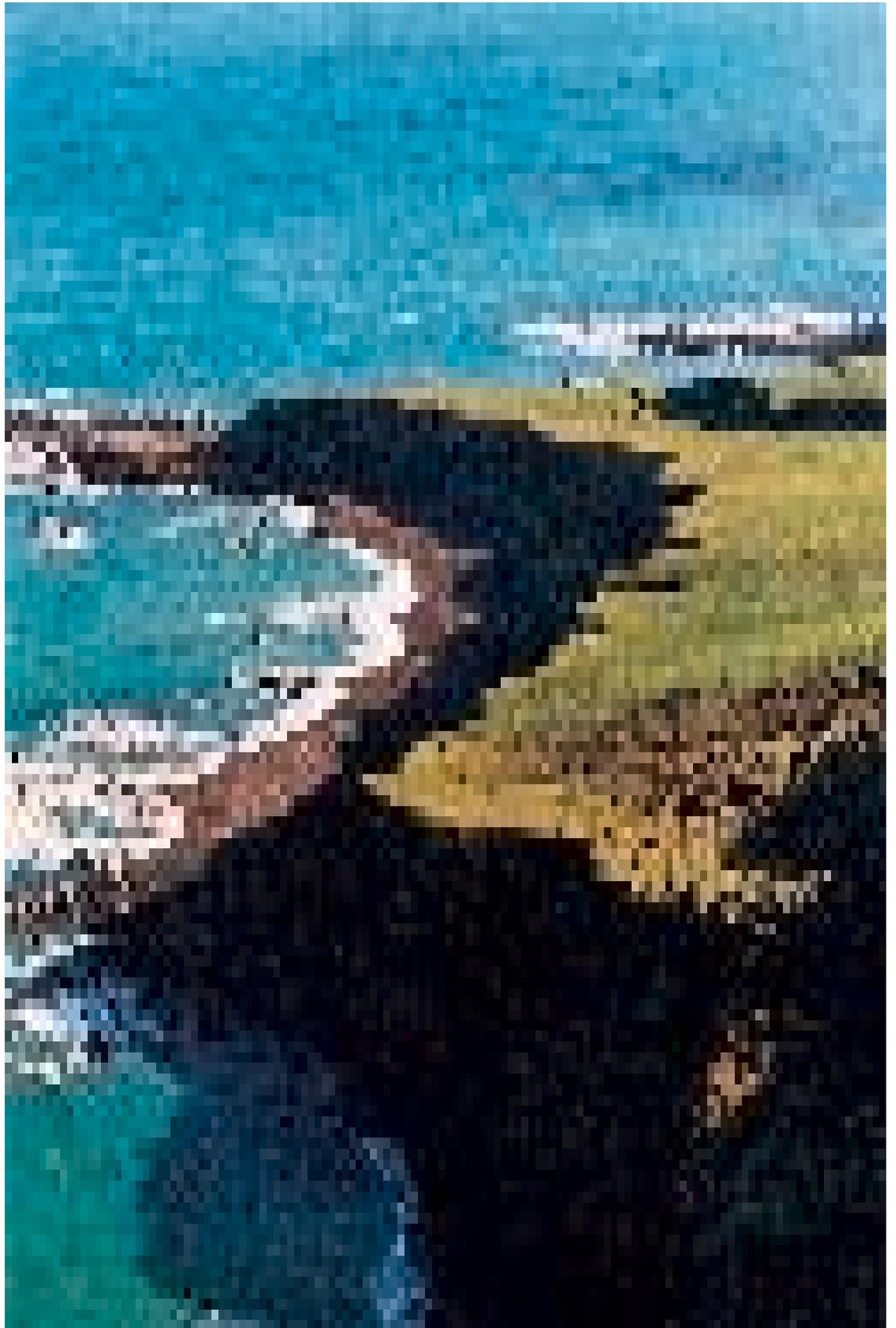
The coastline is significant to iwi in both cultural and landscape heritage. There are sites of waahi tapu including urupa and pa sites. The traditional food sources of kaimoana also make this area important. Shipwrecks are scattered around the coast.

## Threats and issues

- For most of the length of the coastline public access is protected by legal road or esplanade reserve, apart from 20 kilometres of coastline north of Makara where private land extends down to the shore.
- Isolation from seed sources will impede native succession. This is likely to depend on the development of natural corridors from adjacent areas, particularly the Outer Green Belt.
- Much of the escarpment is privately owned and consultation with landowners is likely to be a key factor for public access and the regeneration of native vegetation.

## Opportunities

- Closure of Owhiro Bay Quarry.
- Monitor the regeneration of native vegetation and consult with landowners about managing the process initiated in *Healing the South Coast*.
- Upgrade the walking track around to Red Rocks and Sinclair Head.
- Develop a 'Coastal Trail' from Owhiro Bay to Rock Point north of Makara as part of the walkway proposed to run the length of New Zealand.
- Negotiate with landowners to obtain public access north of Makara to Rock Point.



South coast, Wellington

# Council's open spaces

## How much open space does Council have?

The Wellington City Council currently manages approximately 2,800 hectares of land as open space. This includes forest remnants and regenerating bush, coastal areas and formally maintained recreation areas.

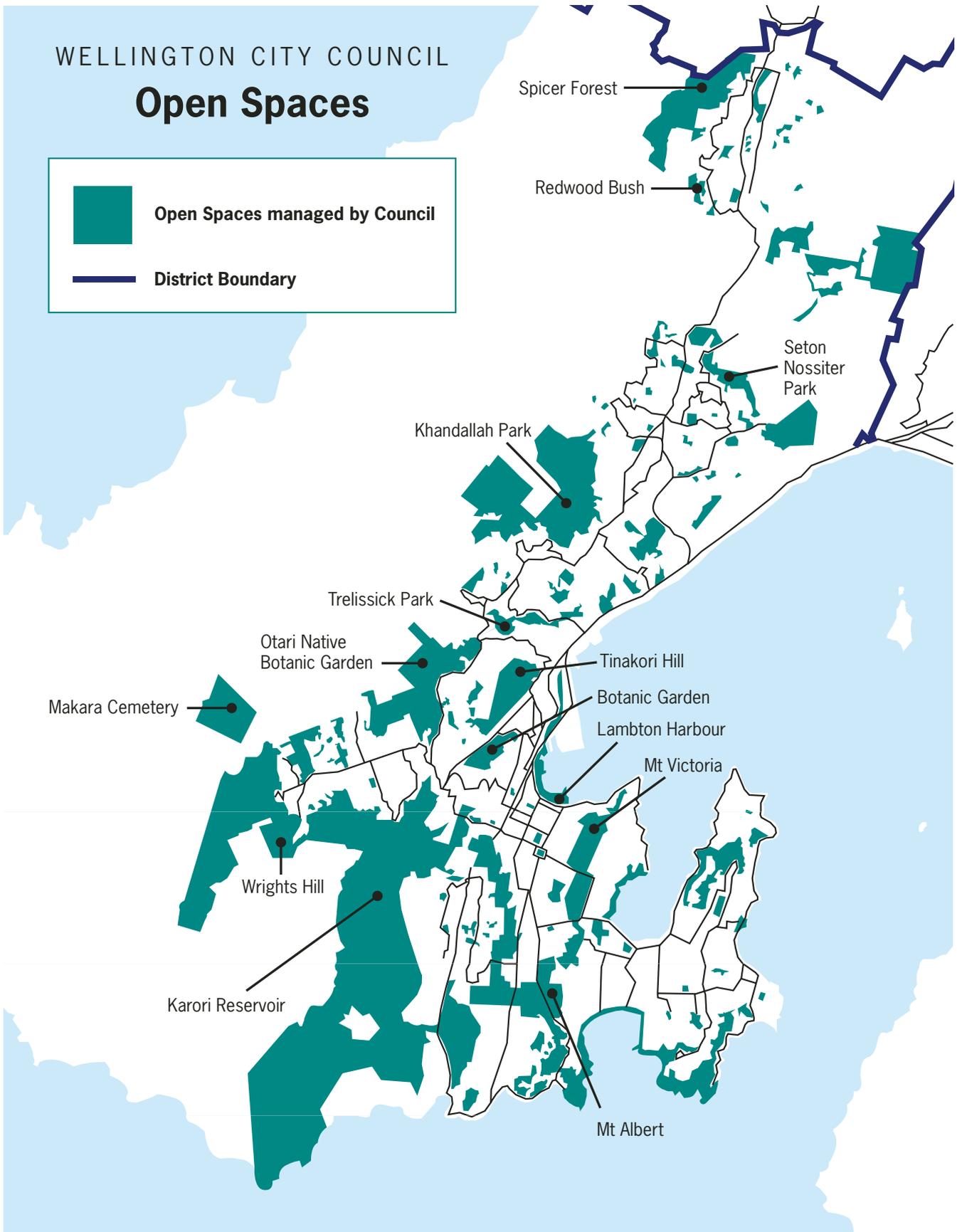
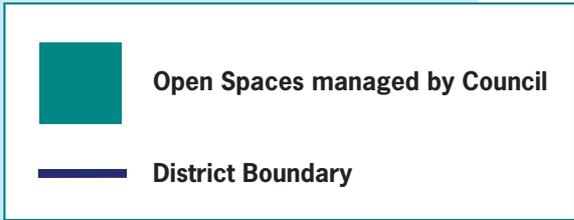
This includes:

- 2,500 hectares of bush (native, exotic and mixed);
- 200 hectares of general purpose grass areas;
- 100 hectares of sports turf;
- 98.5 kilometres of maintained tracks;
- 104 children's play areas;
- 3,600 square metres of annual bedding;
- 7 hectares of gardens and shrub areas;
- 4,000 street trees; and
- 2,660 pieces of park furniture.

Council maintains:

- 50 grass cricket blocks;
- 28 artificial cricket wickets;
- 70 junior wickets;
- 5 limestone softball diamonds;
- 13 grass softball diamonds;
- 4 community softball parks;
- 36 touch rugby fields;
- 2 grass athletic tracks;
- 28 rugby fields;
- 36 soccer fields;
- 18 junior soccer fields;
- 6 summer soccer fields;
- 6 rugby league fields;
- 1 gridiron field;
- 4 grass hockey fields;
- 2 artificial hockey surfaces (sand and wet);
- 14 hard surface netball/tennis courts;
- 1 concrete/wooden cycling velodrome;
- 1 athletic stadium with all weather track;
- 18 hole golf course; and
- 9 croquet lawns (2 clubs).

# WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL Open Spaces



## What do residents think?

Most Wellingtonians use the open spaces currently provided in Wellington and have a high level of satisfaction with them. The following table records the results of a 1997 residents survey<sup>7</sup>. Of the 33 Council services that were surveyed, the highest usage was reported for beaches and the Wellington Botanic Garden.

Activity	% of population using service	% who are satisfied
Beach cleanliness	95	76
Botanic Gardens	94	100
Town Belt	75	97
Other parks, reserves & open spaces	74	96
Children's play areas	48	90
Cemeteries	42	85

In another survey<sup>8</sup> 87 percent of residents indicated that they felt the overall standard of parks, street trees, flower beds and other green areas in the central city was high.

When asked what they want Wellington to look like in the future<sup>9</sup>:

- 92 percent of residents said there should be continuous *recreational and scenic routes* for walkers, joggers and cyclists from Oriental Bay to Owhiro Bay, and from Karori to Makara and Johnsonville;
- 91 percent of residents said there should be a range of *protected marine areas*, including a marine reserve on the southern coast;
- 82 percent said the city should be surrounded by a *green outer town belt* which stretches from the south coast to Porirua.

While residents are clearly satisfied with the existing open spaces provided in Wellington, they also have a strong vision of how they would like Wellington's open spaces to be extended in the future.

## How much is this open space worth?

Wellington City Council owns approximately 2,800 hectares of land as open space. A value for this asset is shown below. However, the figure cannot be taken at face value. One of the considerations taken into account in a valuation is the restrictions on alternative uses of the land. If you cannot use the land for any other purpose it is considered to be less valuable. Most open spaces are protected by the Reserves Act 1977 and/or district plan rules, so it is generally valued at a lower rate which may be as low as 25 percent of the value of similar unencumbered land. In other words the values quoted below are not replacement values.

Approximately 70 percent of the land managed by Council as open space is gazetted under the Reserves Act 1977. This Act provides a high degree of certainty regarding protection and appropriate use of open space and

<sup>7</sup> Annual Report 1997: Residents Satisfaction Survey, Wellington City Council.

<sup>8</sup> Interim Strategic Plan Monitoring Report: Residents Survey, Wellington City Council, July 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Our City ~ Our Future: Resident Survey Results, Wellington City Council, August 1997.



Children playing at the Wahine Memorial, Seatoun

provides for significant community consultation. More than 95 percent of the land managed by Council as open space is zoned Open Space A or B in the *Proposed District Plan*, which restricts the potential land uses.

For political and legal reasons the capital value of this asset is unrealisable. Although the figure is useful to give some idea of the extent of the city's investment, it would not be possible to gain access to this capital for other purposes.

The improvements value refers only to buildings on open spaces. Items such as playground equipment and park furniture are considered to be chattels or '*plant and equipment*' and are not included in the improvements value.

Open Spaces (excluding Lambton Harbour)	1996 Government Valuations (\$000s)
Land	\$134,808
Improvements	\$63,954
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$198,762</b>

## How much does it cost to maintain?

The *Contract* cost is the actual cost of delivering the service. Most of these works are competitively tendered and contracted. The second column *Asset Rental* is the rent that Council charges itself for using the facility (this also includes charges for insurance and rates, however these are a small proportion of the cost). In effect the asset rental is not a real cost, but it is a way of accounting for the cost of capital. The *Other Asset Costs* are the costs of managing the asset and include costs such as depreciation, corporate overheads and the preparation of asset management plans.

Outputs	1998-99 Annual Plan (\$000s)		
	Contract	Asset Rental	Other Asset Costs
Beach and Coast	\$115	\$328	\$209
Parks, gardens & open spaces	\$2,440	\$4,657	\$2,688
Botanic Gardens	\$1,363	\$1,140	\$693
Street Gardens	\$547	\$866	\$280
Sportsfields	\$1,134	\$7,145	\$1,106
Pavilions	n/a	\$235	\$76
Public Boat Ramps & Wharves	n/a	\$20	\$95
Cemeteries & Crematoriums	\$623	\$68	\$133
Basin Reserve	\$230	\$479	\$157
Zoo	\$2,092	\$679	\$301
Open Space Policy	\$127	n/a	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$8,671</b>	<b>\$15,617</b>	<b>\$5,738</b>

## Do we get any income from open space?

Source	1998-99 Budget Revenue (\$000s)
Sportsfields charges (including golf course)	\$350
Botanic Gardens (for events and hire of facilities)	\$70
Zoo charges	\$1,047
Burial and crematorium charges	\$360
Leases to community groups	\$298
Charges for easements, licences and rights of way including utilities (estimated net revenue for 1997)	\$10
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,135</b>



Sound Shell, Wellington Botanic Garden

## What are the benefits of open spaces?

There are four broad areas of value which correspond with the four open space outcomes identified in Council's *Strategic Plan*. These are:

- *Ecological values* which include vegetation, wildlife and ecological processes;
- *Recreation values* which include the enjoyment and appreciation of open spaces in active and passive ways;
- *Landscape values* which include patterns of land form and use, visual appreciation and sense of place; and
- *Natural heritage values* which include sites with cultural and historic significance.

The open spaces that we are interested in have generally at least one of these values, and often more than one. In general it is difficult to quantify these values in dollar terms.

There are other environmental benefits which green open spaces have that are not always widely appreciated. These benefits are largely associated with trees which:

- improve air quality by storing carbon. Carbon dioxide is the most abundant of the greenhouse gases;
- improve energy conservation by ameliorating environmental extremes;
- improve water quality in streams and harbour;
- reduce stormwater runoff and flooding; and
- reduce wind (particularly in the City).

It is possible to calculate a dollar value for these benefits, based on the cost of dealing with these environmental problems by other means.

## How can Council protect open spaces?

There are five broad roles that Council can adopt in order to achieve its open space objectives. These are described below:

### *Education*

Educating landowners and the public to be aware of and to understand open space values is a fundamental part of a long-term strategy. Once landowners have an understanding of the open space values of their land and how their management can affect these values, they can choose to protect these values voluntarily.

In the long term the open space strategy can only work if the community understands and supports its objectives, and values the resulting open spaces.

### *Partnerships*

Partnerships can be legal agreements which include owning an interest in land, such as public access easements or conservation covenants, or exchanging development rights for the conservation of open space values. Partnerships may also involve offering landowners incentives such as rates relief, or assistance to voluntarily protect an area or manage it in a particular way.

Entering into partnerships allows Council to meet open space outcomes and to involve landowners in the provision of open space in 'win-win' situations.

### *Statutory Planning*

The *District Plan* is prepared under the Resource Management Act 1991 and is concerned with managing the overall natural and physical resources in a sustainable way. The *District Plan* specifies Open Space Areas for recreational uses (Open Space A) and for protecting natural and amenity values (Open Space B). Significant areas of conservation value are identified as Conservation Sites. The *District Plan* also lists buildings, areas, trees and sites of significant heritage value.

The associated policies and rules set out what activities are appropriate in these areas or sites, what criteria Council will use to assess applications for resource consents and what conditions may be imposed on activities. The *District Plan* also contains design guides which seek to encourage better use of the land and resources through good design which responds both to the environment and to the needs of people who live in it.

### *Funding*

Council can fund other agencies / organisations to achieve open space objectives. For example the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust protects privately owned land with open space covenants. This can be helpful by bringing a third party into difficult situations, and in giving this party ongoing responsibility for management and monitoring.

### *Purchase & Provision of Open Space Land*

Council owns and manages significant areas of open space land to achieve strategy outcomes and to meet community needs.

## What is the best mechanism?

A more detailed explanation of various mechanisms is given in Appendix 1. There is no single 'best' mechanism, making the right choice depends on the situation. It is useful to see the mechanisms as part of a continuum. At one end Council reserves offer the highest level of protection and control for significant open spaces, at the other end education and incentives offer much less certainty but allow landowners to make their own decisions. In general more protection and control equates to a higher cost.

mechanisms	level of cost & protection	
Designations & heritage orders	 High	
Council reserves		
Council freehold open space		
Conservation & open space covenants		
Easements & rights of way		
District plan policies and rules		
Incentives		
Voluntary management agreements		
Education & advocacy		Low

Council will ask a number of questions when choosing the right mechanism for a particular situation (typically identified through the implementation plan), including:

- what is the most cost-effective mechanism for achieving Council's objectives in this situation;
- what is the significance of this open space, in general the higher the open space values the stronger the level of protection required;
- if other landowners are involved, what are their desires and aspirations;
- what is the level of threat to the open space values, in general the higher the level of threat the higher the level of protection required;

- does Council intend to undertake any improvements in the area, in general it is more practical to undertake improvements on Council-owned land where the permission of other landowners is not required and the question of ownership of the improvements is not an issue; and
- what expectations do the public have.

## What about the Reserves Act 1977?

The main emphasis of the Reserves Act 1977 is the protection of reserve land and its availability for public use and enjoyment. The Act requires that land be classified in one of seven categories according to the primary values to be protected: nature, scientific, scenic, historic, recreation, government purpose or local purpose. Each category has principles and broad management requirements which reflect the specific protected values. Most of Council's reserves are held for recreation or scenic purposes.

The Act provides procedures for preparing management plans, revoking reserve status, exchanging reserve land for other land and dealing with applications for easements, leases, licences and concessions. It sets out Council's obligations as an administering body, and the right of the public to be consulted and to have their comments heard.

The Reserves Act 1977 provides a high level of statutory protection for open space land. The benefits of the Act are:

- a recognised protective status which formalises Council's intentions;
- strong democratic processes which provide for community input;
- offences provisions which allow Council to enforce protection if required; and
- a legal status that runs with the land title giving a high degree of certainty.

The disadvantages are:

- additional cost (although minor in relation to the cost of the land);
- less flexibility if Council changes its intentions for the land; and
- additional time required for management decisions.

Council will use the Reserves Act 1977 where it has a clear, long term intention to protect the land for open space purposes. In these cases the Act provides statutory protection for the land and sets in place strong democratic processes whereby the community can be involved in making decisions about the future of the open space.

Where Council is unsure about its long-term intentions, or wishes to retain the flexibility to respond to a situation in a different way, the Reserves Act 1977 may not be the most appropriate mechanism to use.



Wind turbine on Polhill

# Implementation Plan

## Where does Lambton Harbour fit?

Council has developed a concept plan for Lambton Harbour in consultation with the community. This has been adopted by Council and sets out the public spaces and the commercial sites within the development. It establishes a hierarchy of major public spaces and the conceptual basis for their development. The waterfront will be a key open space for Wellington.

Council is treating Lambton Harbour as a separate project, partly because of the size of the project and partly because of the overlap with the *Urban Design Strategy*. While the waterfront is significant for the *Open Space Strategy*, the project is also central to the *Urban Design Strategy*. Although it is to be a separate project Council acknowledges that it is a key open space in the city.

The proposed upgrade of Oriental Bay beach would provide a high quality recreational beach on the waterfront close to the centre of Wellington. The project is complementary to Lambton Harbour and is also being treated as a separate project.

## What do we spend now on implementation?

In the 1998-99 Annual Plan Council has allocated \$5,576,000 towards new initiatives for open space (excluding trust funding, open space maintenance contracts, policy projects and asset planning studies). Using this as a baseline for an implementation plan enables us to start with a financial budget that we know is practical and achievable.

All of the projects in the implementation plan are costed in 1998-99 dollars with no adjustment for inflation. Assuming that the core services and service levels provided by Council remain constant, Council will allocate a similar proportion of its annual budget to open space projects each year. All figures are exclusive of Goods and Services Tax.

### OPERATIONAL PROJECTS

Included in the \$5,576,000 of new initiatives identified in the 1998-99 Annual Plan are \$1,341,000 of operational open space projects. These projects such as implementing management plans, deferred maintenance on reserves, revegetation, and pest and weed control programmes, are in addition to the open space maintenance contracts. Council proposes to increase spending on operational projects in order to increase the quality of existing open spaces. The highest priority operational projects are pest and weed control and revegetation. One-off operational projects are included in the five year implementation plan.

Pest and weed control is a prerequisite of protecting native habitats for plants and animals. Revegetation is a key component of enhancing the

range of native habitats for plants and animals. It is also part of a long-term strategy to reduce fire hazard around Wellington by promoting the succession of fire resistant native species, and managing the potential hazard presented by over-mature pine trees adjacent to houses and facilities around the Town Belt. The revegetation project includes ground preparation, vegetation clearance and maintenance associated with new plantings.

Council has made a commitment to make an operational grant of \$100,000 for five years to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust if required. The grant will not be required if the Trust makes a sufficient operating surplus during this period.

The “Greening Wellington” grants and education initiative is aimed at providing a contestable funding source for appropriate community projects involving open space. These might involve funding grants for work on open spaces or grants for community education relevant to open spaces.

Proposed Operational Projects from 1999-2004	\$000s per annum
Pest and weed control programmes	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	\$800
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary operational grant (committed)	\$100
‘Greening Wellington’ grants and education	\$150
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,650</b>

## How much is already committed?

Council has already signalled the commitment of some money for a number of years. For example Council has decided to upgrade existing playgrounds to meet the recognised New Zealand / Australian safety standards. The coastal and sportsfield upgrades, while listed as capital items, are required to maintain the existing level of service or to meet Council asset standards. The relevant asset management plans will specify what these standards are and the necessary work required to meet the standards.

The implementation of park management plans refers to additional work that has been identified in management plans. Specific details about which parks work will be carried out on are included in each year of the five year implementation plan. The park asset replacement line is for the replacement of existing parks assets where required through damage such as vandalism or deterioration over time as identified in the asset management plan.

Committed Initiatives	Number of years	\$(000)
Playgrounds upgrades	5	\$225
Coastal works (as specified in asset management plans)	5	\$150
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in asset management plans)	5	\$200
Implementation of park management plans <sup>1</sup>	5	\$100
Park asset replacement	5	\$100
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$775</b>

<sup>1</sup> Reducing to \$85,000 in Year 5

## OPEN SPACE PROTECTION

One of the guiding principles for the open space strategy is that Council needs to be able to respond to open space protection opportunities when they arise, since they usually depend on the agreement of landowners. In order to achieve this kind of responsiveness amounts allocated to land purchase for any one year will be estimated and may in fact need to be carried forward from one year to the next year if eligible projects are underway.

This would mitigate the effect of one or two large projects coming to fruition in a single year with a disruptive effect on Council's financial position. The intent is to have a five year programme which depicts the expenditure needed to complete Council's highest priority projects (see following table).

Council also wants to reduce the emphasis on land purchase as the primary method of protection. The budget would be available for the most appropriate mechanism for protection for the particular situation whether this is purchase or covenant or an alternative mechanism.

The following table sets out a list of prioritised open space projects to be funded as opportunities arise. Individual projects will need to be approved by Council. The total estimated cost of the projects spread over five years is the basis for the budget calculation for open space protection in the implementation plan.

Priority	Open Space Protection Projects	Cost (\$000s)
1	Ecological and recreational corridor through <b>Outer Green Belt</b>	\$5,000
2	Miscellaneous property purchases	\$2,000
3	Establish an <b>Inner Green Belt</b> separating Tawa and Johnsonville	\$500
Total		\$7,500

## FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Year 1: 1999-2000

Initiative	Outcomes	Cost (\$000s)
CAPEX		
Open Space Protection	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$1,500
Playgrounds upgrade to meet New Zealand Safety Standards	32	\$225
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in AMP)	32	\$200
Coastal works (as specified in AMP)	31, 32	\$150
Implementation of park management plans (Trellissick Park, Wright Hill, Izzard Park)	1, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Park asset replacement	31, 32, 33	\$100
Development of more accessible tracks and walks around the City	32, 33	\$160

Botanic Garden / Anderson Park entrance	31, 32, 33	\$200
Enhancement and restoration of ecosystems on Wellington Coast (as per Oriental to Owhiro Bay Guidelines)	30, 31, 32	\$250
Replacement of Newtown Park Track	32	\$700
Staged development of a hierarchy of playgrounds associated with the recreation hubs	32	\$300
OPEX		
Promotion and support for a marine reserve on the South Coast	30, 31, 32, 33	\$40
Grant to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Pest and weed control programmes	30, 31	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	1, 30, 31	\$800
'Greening Wellington' grants and education programme	1, 30, 31, 33	\$150
<b>1999-2000 Total</b>		<b>\$5,575</b>

#### Year 2: 2001-02

Initiative	Outcomes	Cost (\$000s)
CAPEX		
Open Space Protection	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$1,500
Playgrounds upgrade to meet New Zealand Safety Standards	32	\$225
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in AMP)	32	\$200
Coastal works (as specified in AMP)	31, 32	\$150
Implementation of park management plans (Trellissick Park, Wright Hill, Seton Nossiter Park)	1, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Park asset replacement	31, 32, 33	\$100
Development of more accessible tracks and walks around the City	32, 33	\$160
Implement the Botanic Garden Management Plan	30, 31, 32, 33	\$250
Provision of new burial area for Makara Cemetery	33	\$200
Purchase and development of a new inner city park	31, 32, 33	\$1,020
OPEX		
Promotion and support for a marine reserve on the South Coast	30, 31, 32, 33	\$20
Grant to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Pest and weed control programmes	30, 31	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	1, 30, 31	\$800
'Greening Wellington' grants and education programme	1, 30, 31, 33	\$150
<b>2001 - 2002 Total</b>		<b>\$5,575</b>

### Year 3: 2000-01

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Cost (\$000s)</b>
<b>CAPEX</b>		
Open Space Protection	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$1,500
Playgrounds upgrade to meet New Zealand Safety Standards	32	\$225
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in AMP)	32	\$200
Coastal works (as specified in AMP)	31, 32	\$150
Implementation of park management plans (Trellissick Park, Seton Nossiter Park)	1, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Park asset replacement	31, 32, 33	\$100
Development of more accessible tracks and walks around the City	32, 33	\$160
Development of a new inner city park	31, 32, 33	\$390
Staged redevelopment of the Zoo into a series of natural habitat enclosures	30, 32, 33	\$350
New surface at the Wellington Hockey Stadium	32	\$750
<b>OPEX</b>		
Grant to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Pest and weed control programmes	30, 31	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	1, 30, 31	\$800
'Greening Wellington' grants and education programme	1, 30, 31, 33	\$150
<b>2000 - 2001 Total</b>		<b>\$5,575</b>

### Year 4: 2002-03

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Cost (\$000s)</b>
<b>CAPEX</b>		
Open Space Protection	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$1,500
Playgrounds upgrade to meet New Zealand Safety Standards	32	\$225
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in AMP)	32	\$200
Coastal works (as specified in AMP)	31, 32	\$150
Implementation of park management plans (Trellissick Park, Seton Nossiter Park)	1, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Park asset replacement	31, 32, 33	\$100
Development of more accessible tracks and walks around the City	32, 33	\$160
Upgrade boat launching ramps and fishing wharves as per management plan	32, 33	\$270
Staged development of a hierarchy of playgrounds associated with the recreation hubs	32	\$300
Enhance the entrances to Wellington	31	\$250
Implement the Botanic Garden Management Plan	30, 31, 32, 33	\$170

Staged improvements to Otari Native Botanic Garden	30, 31, 32, 33	\$150
Staged redevelopment of the Zoo into a series of natural habitat enclosures	30, 32, 33	\$350
OPEX		
Grant to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Pest and weed control programmes	30, 31	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	1, 30, 31	\$800
'Greening Wellington' grants and education programme	1, 30, 31, 33	\$150
<b>2002 - 2003 Total</b>		<b>\$5,575</b>
Year 5: 2003-04		
<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Cost (\$000s)</b>
CAPEX		
Open Space Protection	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$1,500
Playgrounds upgrade to meet New Zealand Safety Standards	32	\$225
Sportsfields upgrades (as specified in AMP)	32	\$200
Coastal works (as specified in AMP)	31, 32	\$150
Implementation of park management plans (Trellissick Park, Seton Nossiter)	1, 31, 32, 33	\$85
Park asset replacement	31, 32, 33	\$100
Development of more accessible tracks and walks around the City	32, 33	\$160
Enhance the entrances to Wellington	31	\$250
Improvements to Otari Native Botanic Garden	30, 31, 32, 33	\$150
Enhancement and restoration of ecosystems on Wellington Coast (as per Oriental to Owhiro Bay Guidelines)	30, 31, 32	\$250
Staged development of a hierarchy of playgrounds associated with the recreation hubs	32	\$300
Upgrade boat launching ramps and fishing wharves as per management plan	32, 33	\$100
Provide public access to coastline north of Makara	32	\$105
Staged redevelopment of the Zoo into a series of natural habitat enclosures	30, 32, 33	\$350
OPEX		
Grant to the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary Trust	1, 30, 31, 32, 33	\$100
Pest and weed control programmes	30, 31	\$600
Revegetation programmes for Town Belt and other areas	1, 30, 31	\$800
'Greening Wellington' grants and education programme	1, 30, 31, 33	\$150
<b>2003 - 2004 Total</b>		<b>\$5,575</b>

## What have we missed?

Some projects are difficult to foresee. Depending on where the city grows and where different age groups in the population move, there are likely to be increasing demands for open space in some parts of the city. Rather than trying to second guess where this might happen, Council proposes to use the monies received as reserve contributions under the district plan for acquiring or developing additional neighbourhood or recreational reserves outside the implementation plan as required.

In order to use these funds appropriately Council will accumulate reserves contributions. Eligible projects would be approved during the annual planning process and specifically funded against these contributions. A similar process will also be used for the proceeds from the disposal of reserve land where a condition of disposal required by the Minister of Conservation is that the proceeds may only be used for the purchase and development of other reserves.

In theory reserve contributions will come from areas with increased density or development which should reflect an increasing demand for open space. Using these funds to meet the costs of acquiring or developing additional reserves to meet this demand is the intended use of these monies.



Kakabeak, Otari Native Botanic Garden

# Monitoring Plan

## OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Information is presented in a matrix structured according to the five relevant Strategic Plan outcome statements.

A number of the rows in the table are shaded. For these targets, further work will be required either to establish an appropriate methodology to provide a baseline or to quantify the target.

Matrix Heading	Description
Objective	The Open Space Strategy objectives are presented under this heading.
Target	This column details the provisional targets to advance the objectives. Where practicable, each target contains a quantifiable change in the indicator relative to a baseline value.
Control	<p>This column has been introduced following a recommendation from Audit New Zealand. It recognises that in using outcome performance measures, the Council will be monitoring aspects of the City over which it does not have sole influence. In consequence, Audit New Zealand have recommended the following distinction for outcome performance measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• control - where the Council has more than 50% control over the achievement of the target</li> <li>• strong influence - where the Council has between 20 and 50% influence over the achievement of the target</li> <li>• influence - where the Council has less than 20% influence over the achievement of the target</li> </ul> <p>Such an approach is useful, where, the Council wants to state its level of responsibility for a measure or target.</p>
Comment	This column provides an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of the proposed target and the value that it can add to monitoring progress against the Strategy outcomes. It highlights where additional work will be required and speculates on the nature of that work. Where it is available, information is provided to establish a baseline for the target and to substantiate that it is a meaningful approach.
Link	This column highlights where the target has been used or suggested in other Council reports such as the 1998/98 Annual Plan, the 1998 Strategic Plan monitoring report and the <i>Our City ~ Our Future</i> Strategy.
Source	This column identifies the source for the quantification of the target. This will include the Resident Satisfaction Survey for many of the targets; however, others will relate to the use of consultant reports. For a number of targets further work will be required to determine an appropriate methodology in order to quantify the target.

Outcomes	Number of indicators
1. Built-natural relationship	4
30. Plants and animals	4
31. Landscape and ecosystems	5
32. Open space recreation	6
33. Natural heritage	2

**Outcome 1:** *The built and natural environment are woven together at all levels*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
<b>To promote the greening of the urban environment. (Priority Focus Area 2000/02)</b>	<b>Increase the mean suburb ratio of green space to urban space in City from 1.23:1 to 1.3:1 by 2005.</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<p>This indicator will require further quantification to confirm the baseline value and target.</p> <p>A preliminary estimate of city wide green space to urban space from Valuation New Zealand identifies 4,560 hectares of urban land and 5,623 hectares of green space. This provides a ratio of 1.23:1 of greenspace to urban space.</p> <p>A higher ratio indicates increased 'green' areas within the City. Council can only control green areas on Council land and in consequence will be required to work in partnership with private green space owners if the ratio is to significantly improve.</p>	Strategic Plan Indicator	Geographic Information System (when implemented) Asset Information Wellington City Council
	<b>Increase the number of specimen street trees in the Central Business District and the City by a minimum of 150 per year from a baseline of ??? in 1998.</b>	<b>Control</b>	<p>The number of large specimen trees managed by the Council's Parks Business Unit is estimated to be 600. This excludes trees and shrubs along the road reserve. It is estimated that there are approximately 8,000 trees and shrubs along the road reserve.</p> <p>The indicator provides a good proxy for the perception by residents that the City is considered to be green.</p>	Strategic Plan Indicator	Parks Business Unit Wellington City Council
	<b>95% resident satisfaction with the gardens in the streets of central Wellington.</b>	<b>Control</b>	<p>This indicator and target is well established, annually quantified through the Resident Satisfaction Survey and provides a composite measure of residents views on the street gardens. The level of maintenance will provide a strong link to the level of satisfaction.</p>	1998/99 Annual Plan Performance Measure	1998 Wellington City Council Resident Satisfaction Survey
<b>To acknowledge and promote the cultural landscape in the design of the public environment.</b>	<b>Increase by 5% (from a 1998 baseline) the number of cultural features revealed in public environment and open space projects by the year 2005</b>	<b>Control</b>	<p>This indicator will require further quantification to confirm the baseline value and target.</p> <p>On an annual basis, the actual change in the number of cultural features may not be significant. This will reflect the number and nature of projects that are progressed during the year. However, over a 5 year period there should be a discernible trend if the objective is to be effectively advanced.</p>	No links	Urban Design and 'Green' functions, Commissioning

**Outcome 30:** *The City environment hosts and protects a representative range of indigenous plants and animals in their natural communities and habitats.*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
To protect and enhance the range of native habitats for plants and animals in the City's open spaces.	Improve health of native habitats in Wellington (based on Otari Native Botanic Garden, Karori Reservoir, Khandallah Park and Trellissick Park).	Strongly influence	<p>The four reserves stated provide defined areas that Council has influence over, and which it is seeking to enhance biodiversity in accordance with the Strategic Plan outcome.</p> <p>A Landcare species assessment (based on four indicator species) concluded that health of these native habitats had improved since 1993. The indicator is also an Annual Plan performance measure and in consequence will be measured towards the end of the 1998/9 year.</p>	1998/99 Annual Plan Performance Measure	Ecological assessment by consultants (such as Landcare) based on tree crown conditions (foliage density, amount of die back, browse, use of the trunk, flowering and fruiting) of marked trees. Trees species include kohekohe, fivefinger, fuchsia and titoki.
	Improved health in key indicator or threatened species sensitive to ecological change.	Influence	<p>The use of indicator species as a measure of habitat wellbeing is wide spread in ecosystem assessment however, work is required to determine which indicator species within Wellington would be suitable to measure any changes. Further, it may be necessary to determine which indicators would reflect factors of concern. The monitoring of threatened or rare species is also a recognised approach. It will also require confirmation of the species of interest.</p> <p>Once identified, appropriate methodologies are required to assess the changes in health of the species and to determine the importance of the relative changes and whether Council can respond with an appropriate management technique.</p>	No links	Ecological assessment by consultants (such as Landcare)
	Increase by 50% (compared to a 1998 baseline) the number of plants, trees and shrubs planted annually as part of revegetation programmes by 2004.	Control	<p>The indicator provides some indication of the extent of Council's revegetation programmes, but does not measure survival rates for plants or area revegetated.</p> <p>Approximately 60,000 trees and shrubs were used for revegetation of the city green spaces in 1997/98. Finally, 15,000 trees and shrubs were planted by groups such as the Forest and Bird. All plants were native and ecosourced.</p>	Strategic Plan Indicator	Parks Business Unit Wellington City Council

**Outcome 31:** *The City's natural landscape and ecosystems are recognised and, where appropriate, protected and restored.*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
To protect and enhance the natural processes which sustain the City's natural landscapes and ecosystems.	Ensure the rate of establishment of Council's revegetation programme on key sites around City occurs at a faster rate than the natural succession of vegetation elsewhere in the City.	Influence	This indicator will require quantification to confirm the baseline value and target. Work is also required to identify key sites within the City where appropriate monitoring can take place. Information will be used to compare the rate of natural succession with the Council's revegetation programme. However, it should be noted that vegetation establishment could be affected by many factors external to the Council's control such as climate, drainage, soils, topography, the effect of pests and human introduced predators.	No links	To be determined
	Reduce the number and extent of pests in parks and reserves compared to 1997.	Influence	The indicator will require further work to determine the specific pests to be monitored. Current monitoring is completed by the Council and the Regional Council.  In summary, rabbit numbers are considered to be negligible to low (relative to the rest of New Zealand), although there may be occasional isolated patches of high rabbit density. Possum monitoring at Otari Botanic Gardens and Karori Reserve show possum densities lower than the regional average. However, new infestations of Old Man's Beard rose from 354 in 1994/95 to 482 in 1995/96.	Strategic Plan indicator	Wellington Regional Council
To contribute to the City's structure and identity by defining and containing urban areas with open spaces.	Minimise the rate of urban encroachment in specific suburbs where the character is strongly defined by the existing open spaces	Strongly influence	The indicator identifies the key role that the open spaces play in shaping the City's form and development. It is accepted that no development is not a practical option and that development in certain suburbs or areas adjacent to key transport nodes will be desirable.  This indicator aims to record the changes to the amount of open space in those areas where its loss could be significant in altering the characteristics of the suburb. Suburbs where these effects will be potentially significant will require identification and the rate of greenfield subdivision will be monitored.	No links	Geographic Information System (when implemented) Asset Information Wellington City Council

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**Outcome 31 (continued):** *The City's natural landscape and ecosystems are recognised and, where appropriate, protected and restored.*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
To protect and emphasise prominent landforms and natural features.	50% of residents agree that the landforms and natural features of Wellington are adequately protected.	Control	This indicator will require quantification to confirm the baseline value and target. Furthermore, such an indicator quantified as part of the resident satisfaction survey may require further clarification. In particular, examples of landforms and natural features should be provided to residents to enable them to make a more informed judgement.	No link	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	Significant ridgelines and hilltops are identified and protected in the District Plan by the year 2005.	Strongly influence	This indicator will require further work to confirm its appropriateness.	Our City ~ Our Future Strategy	Wellington City District Plan: Te Kaupapa Whenua

**Outcome 32:** *A wide range of recreational opportunities in the City’s open spaces are accessible to all.*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
To provide a wide range of opportunities for people to use and enjoy the City’s open spaces.	95% resident satisfaction with the parks, reserves and open spaces provided by the Wellington City Council.	Control	The 1997/98 results for the RSS determined that 98% of residents rated the parks, reserves and open spaces provided by the Wellington City Council as very good, good or satisfactory.	1998/99 Annual Plan Performance Measure	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	70% of residents have used the parks, reserves and open spaces provided by Wellington City Council in the last 12 months.	Influence	There is no baseline for this figure currently, the target may have to be adjusted in subsequent years.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	90% resident satisfaction with the sportsfields provided by the Wellington City Council.	Control	The 1997/98 results for the RSS determined that 89% of residents rated the parks, reserves and open spaces provided by the Wellington City Council as very good, good or satisfactory	1998/99 Annual Plan Performance Measure	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	35% of residents have used the sportsfields provided by the Wellington City Council in the last 12 months.	Strongly Influence	The 1997/98 results for the RSS determined that 36% of residents had used the sports fields provided by the Wellington City Council in the last 12 months.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	90% of residents agree that they have easy access to open and green spaces.	Influence	There is no baseline for this figure currently, the target may have to be adjusted in subsequent years.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	90% of residents believe that they have easy access to and around the harbour and coast.	Influence	There is no baseline for this figure currently, the target may have to be adjusted in subsequent years.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey

**Outcome 33:** *The features of the City’s natural environment that possess historical, spiritual, social, traditional or other special cultural significance are acknowledged, recognised and, where appropriate, protected.*

Objectives	Targets	Control	Comments	Links	Data Source
To increase community awareness, use and involvement in providing and managing open space values.	15% of residents have planted native species in their gardens in the last 12 months.	Influence	This indicator will require quantification to confirm the baseline value and target. It also excludes those residents who do not have a garden; however, it does provide an indication of the level of activity undertaken by residents to support the implementation of the Strategy. The indicator could be quantified through the use of a question in the RSS.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	5% of residents have taken action to support the Open Space Strategy in the last 12 months	Influence	This indicator will require quantification to confirm the baseline value and target. Work will also have to be taken to provide specific examples of actions that residents can take to support the strategy - such as involvement in planting of trees and shrubs (an estimated 15,000 in 1997/98), site clearance, litter collections and the development of tracks and pathways. The indicator could be quantified through the use of a question in the RSS.	No links	WCC Residents Satisfaction Survey
	65% of attendees at an annual ‘Open Space Forum’ are satisfied with progress the Council is making towards its open space objectives	Influence	This measure will require Council to make a clear statement of how it is progressing towards its open space objectives, increasing awareness of the attendees, and giving them an opportunity to express their opinion of how Council is managing open space values. While Council can influence the attendees opinions, it cannot control them.	No links	Written questionnaire from ‘Open Space Forum’ to be arranged annually by the ‘Green’ function, Commissioning
To protect and enhance the cultural and historic values of open space.	75% of the Council’s land managed as open space is protected under the Reserves Act 1977 by the year 2005.	Control	At 15 May 1997, 69.1% of the 2,543 hectares managed by the Lands Commissioning Unit of WCC had protected status under the Reserves Act, Town Belt Deed and miscellaneous local government provisions	1998/99 Annual Plan performance measure	Asset information Wellington City Council

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**Note:**

All publications (unless otherwise noted) were published in Wellington, New Zealand.

# Appendix 1: Mechanisms for implementation

A list of mechanisms for achieving open space objectives follows:

1. Negotiation
2. Education
3. Studies
4. Special projects
5. Incentives
6. Sponsorship
7. Statutory planning
8. Easements and rights-of-way
9. Covenants
10. Trusts
11. Purchasing (or transferring) development rights
12. Land swap or exchange
13. Reserve contributions
14. Land purchase

## **1. Negotiation**

Negotiation can be very effective in achieving the aims of a long-term and widespread open space strategy. The results of negotiations may involve other mechanisms such as: land purchase, land swaps, boundary adjustments in order to secure sites with open space values, covenants and easements, getting development rights transferred or offering landowners incentives to voluntarily protect an area or manage it in a particular way. Negotiations need to be done by officers with appropriate negotiation skills who can foster a partnership approach.

Careful negotiation can often achieve a cost-effective 'win-win' result without having to resort to land purchase or lengthy and costly legal proceedings.

## **2. Education**

Helping landowners to be aware of and understand open space values can be a powerful and persuasive tool in protecting areas. The importance of this approach should not be under-estimated, and education and awareness generally should be included as an underlying part of all mechanisms.

This relies on goodwill rather than permanent legal protection but can be an extremely low cost and effective mechanism as part of a long-term strategy. The key to success is often dependent on personal contact and relationships and effective 'selling' of the strategy (which might otherwise seem vague and obscure to some landowners). Gaining their confidence is important and maintaining close and regular contact helps build this. If land is sold, then early contact with new landowners is essential to maintain

the goodwill and relationship already established with the previous owner. This approach has been very successful in Britain with conservation and open space agencies and with territorial authorities.

Landowner awareness and persuasion to voluntarily protect areas of open space can be an effective short-term measure even if the ultimate aim is to achieve a more secure form of protection. Sometimes it may be the only way to achieve at least some sort of 'protection' on private land. When landowners have an understanding of why an area is important and how it should be managed to protect intrinsic values, it can be the catalyst to ensure that such areas are not degraded by inappropriate land use activities.

At a broader scale, education and awareness of open space qualities and values of particular areas identified in the strategy can be achieved in a multitude of ways including: brochures and reports, articles in newspapers and magazines, local group meetings, etc. It is important that the community understands the objectives of the open space strategy and their role in achieving results through active involvement.

### **3. Studies**

The preparation of the open space strategy does not remove the need for specific studies to investigate a project or an issue or particular blocks of land. These should provide a sufficient level of information and/or recommendation to enable Council to decide the level of commitment that can or should be made.

The studies are not necessarily complex nor expensive. Rapid surveys, assessments or investigations will frequently provide sufficient additional information to explore the project, determine what action(s) should be taken and the anticipated costs. In some instances, after a specific study has been carried out, the recommendation may be that a particular project should not proceed or block of land be purchased, covenanted etc.

A written brief is the key to ensure that specific studies are focused and that they inform Councillors adequately so that they can make decisions, regardless of whether the work is to be completed by Council staff or outside consultants. Many studies end up being costly, too complex or failing to deliver information in a useful form because of an inadequate brief.

### **4. Special projects**

Special projects would tend to focus on a particular block of land where a whole range of initiatives and/or investigations are required. Protection of open space values in a given area may not be straightforward and an innovative approach maybe required. Handling such a situation as a 'special project' can effectively focus attention and input from a range of disciplines. It can also be used effectively in the media and to acquire funding from outside agencies and/or individuals.

The National Trust in Britain and many similar land protection/open space organisations in the United States use the ‘special project’ status very successfully. Operation Neptune launched by the National Trust in Britain in the early 1980s to purchase stretches of threatened scenic coastline has been spectacularly successful, with many hundreds of kilometres of coastline now permanently protected. A similar project started a decade or more earlier by the Trust was a dismal failure. However, a clear focus, a target, and the catchy Operation Neptune by-line successfully captured public and media attention and achieved results.

Initiatives such as *Our City ~ Our Future* provide good opportunities to initiate and promote special projects and for these to be subsequently picked up and promoted by the media.

To be successful special projects have to be soundly based and well thought through, with attention given to the briefing, desired outcomes, resources and personnel involved. Special projects have to be carefully orchestrated; they will not ‘just happen’.

## **5. Incentives**

In some ways incentives are a similar tool to education and awareness. Often, a lot can be achieved for relatively little cost. Land will not be legally protected but its open space values can be maintained or improved, perhaps as an interim measure, until permanent protection can be arranged as part of the overall strategy.

Incentives may take the form of financial encouragement or a grant to a landowner to protect and/or manage a block of land in a certain way. Alternatively, incentives can take the form of public recognition, or an award, for a landowner who agrees to voluntarily comply with a desired land management activity to help the strategy to be realised. There may be costs involved for such things as fencing, weed control, track maintenance, tree planting and the like, with no guarantee of long term protection or even protection of an area beyond the current landowner. Costs will, of course, vary according to circumstances.

Incentives rely on the goodwill and commitment of the landowner and achieves a very low level of ‘protection’. However, offering some form of incentive may be the only way of achieving an outcome on private land.

## **6. Sponsorship**

Sponsorship of open space projects can provide ‘win-win’ situations. Effectively a sponsor provides financial or other resources to assist with a project in return for positive marketing, access to the resource and other benefits. Sponsorship is more appropriate for some projects than others. Facilities like the zoo already make use of sponsorship on a small scale and there is potential for larger projects.

Sponsorship has the disadvantage of appearing to commercialise projects. In general the sponsor wants their name prominently associated with the project and this can detract attention from Council or other providers. Some potential sponsors may have negative associations, such as tobacco and alcohol companies, that Council would prefer not to be associated with.

On the positive side sponsors can add significant resources and support to projects that would otherwise not be possible. Marketing is an advantage for both the sponsor and the project in most cases, so the sponsors' marketing efforts effectively raise the profile of the project.

## **7. Statutory planning**

There are several statutory planning levels through which the open space concept can be recognised and provided for:

### *District planning*

Of particular value to the *Open Space Strategy* is the *Wellington City Proposed District Plan* which is currently in the process of hearings, decisions and appeals before it can be made operative. The plan is conveniently administered by the same body as the open space strategy and has corresponding boundaries.

Once the *Open Space Strategy* has been substantially completed changes to the district plan may be sought (assuming it is operative by that time) to accommodate the strategy intent in the plan's policies and objectives, zonings and rules. The advantage of this is that where development that may potentially affect the open space strategy occurs, and where that development requires reference to the district plan for a consent, the potential effects can be evaluated under the statutory regime of the Resource Management Act 1991 and a decision about the development made accordingly.

A disadvantage is that there may be some activities which the plan allows to occur within an area that do not require reference to the plan for a consent. For example, farming in the Rural Area may allow various activities to occur which could affect the open space concept, but which are quite lawfully being carried out under the plan.

The district plan mechanism requires the plan to reflect the strategy. If the strategy is seen to disadvantage landowners (eg restrict activities), then changing the plan to reflect the strategy will be opposed by some. Such opposition may necessitate lengthy and potentially costly hearings, and possibly an Environment Court case before a decision is made and/or compensation can be paid for any loss of value. However, once the decisions have been made, and assuming the strategy is in place, the planning mechanism will tend to look after itself and will not require large costs in ongoing policy development.

### *Regional planning*

Other statutory planning regulations are administered at the regional level, by the Wellington Regional Council in this case. There is some advantage in the regional overview that these planning regulations can have in terms of a consistent approach across the region to resource management. The Wellington Regional Council also manages a range of regional parks which the city open space concept can potentially link to.

The regional policy statement is intended to provide the regional overview on policy to manage regional resource management issues. The strategy needs to be recognised in the *Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region*.

In respect of the Wellington City Open Space Strategy the Regional Council has a significant role in the management of the coastal areas of the District. Where there is an interface between the land and the sea the Regional Council has statutory responsibilities and it administers a *Proposed Coastal Plan*<sup>10</sup> that covers this area.

There are also a range of other regional plans prepared under the regime of the Resource Management Act 1991 that will have varying degrees of applicability to the *Open Space Strategy*. These other regional plans deal with landscape, soil, freshwater, air and discharges. The regional plans operate less geographically than a district plan and as a general rule tend to describe environmental qualities (e.g. x amount of water in a river), rather than activities permitted within an area. However, some regional plans will have considerable relevance to the *Open Space Strategy* and should be consistent.

The advantage of consistency between the various statutory planning documents as they apply to the *Open Space Strategy* (or any activity) should not be underestimated. Not only is it sensible to have all the documents consistent for good resource management administration, but if there are any contentious matters related to the strategy and there are inconsistencies then these will be targeted in hearings or the court. The strategy is less likely to be overlooked or undermined, if it is represented consistently in more than one set of statutory documentation.

The regional plan has similar advantages to that of the district plans but most important is that there should be a consistent approach between the district and regional levels of plans. The regional level is likely to be less costly to implement and administer than the district level, but correspondingly less effective.

### *Central planning*

The Department of Conservation has some role in the pursuit of the strategy, in that activities within coastal marine areas (generally the tidal area) require Minister of Conservation approval. Aspects of the strategy that involve the tidal areas of the coast will require consideration in respect of the *New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement*. This has an advantage for the strategy in that the statement as it stands tends to reflect the objectives of the strategy so little action may be required to gain the general level of protection for coastal activity management contained in the statement.

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<sup>10</sup> Parts of this are now operative but other parts are still subject to appeal.

## **8. Easements and rights-of-way**

An easement is a voluntary restriction on property rights under legal agreement. Easements are often used when utilities, such as pipelines or transmission lines are required to cross private land. Access easements or rights-of-way to allow pedestrians and/or vehicles across land are also frequently used. An easement can be specifically targeted to a particular area of land of virtually any size or shape. Easements are cost effective with few liabilities. Compensation is often paid to the landowner as part of the easement agreement.

## **9. Covenants**

Covenants can be a very cost-effective means of securing protection. A covenant is a legal agreement involving voluntary restriction(s) on property rights. A covenant is lodged on the land title and therefore survives sale. Any subsequent owners purchase the land with the covenant in place. The Reserves Act 1977 has provision for conservation covenants and the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust Act 1977, for open space covenants. There is also provision under sections 49 and 66 (A) of the Property Law Act 1952.

Covenants can be targeted to achieve specific outcomes and there are few liabilities assumed apart than for the desired area. Covenants can also be tailored to particular requirements, either in perpetuity or perhaps for the tenure of the current owner. For example, contributions may be made to the landowner towards the cost of fencing or noxious plant and animal control. Conversely, a landowner may require restrictions to public access at certain times of the year (eg during lambing) or may periodically require the site as a venue for a particular activity. These and various other requirements can be included in a covenant document.

Covenants, however, cannot guarantee such things as public access at all times. For example, a landowner may be willing to protect a particular area or feature but may not want public access or may allow restricted access only. Such terms and requirements would be embodied in the covenant document.

As land ownership remains with the owner, there is less control than with land purchase. However, covenants have some distinct advantages in that the day-to-day management of the land remains with the owner but the desired outcome is achieved (eg protection of a block of remnant forest). Covenants require a willing landowner and are more likely to succeed and be cost-effective when they are initiated by the landowner rather than by the Council. When the Council initiates a covenant it places the landowner in a strong negotiating position and the issue of compensation for actual or perceived loss of value is often a factor.

Based on precedent, the cost of securing a covenant has been estimated as 10 percent of the land value. However, this is likely to vary depending on circumstances such as who initiated it, compensation, the amount of fencing or other works required, whether there is a 'clean' title, and whether survey is required. There are many variables. Covenants in and around urban areas are likely to be more complex and more expensive to achieve than those, for example, on farmland in 'rural' areas.

The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, for example, works primarily in rural rather than urban or peri-urban areas and has calculated that the average cost of securing an open space covenant is less than 5 percent of the land value. The National Trust, however, rarely initiates a covenant. Almost invariably the landowner approaches the Trust, a factor which undoubtedly has a major bearing on the relatively low cost of achieving these covenants. An open space covenant can only be revoked with the unanimous decision of the full board of directors of the National Trust and the landowner. A conservation covenant can be revoked with the agreement of two people, the landowner and Council.

Education about and the creation of an awareness of covenants needs to be an integral part of implementing the open space strategy. This could occur both in a general way and also be targeted at landowners or groups of landowners in particular areas, with the message coming from an independent body, rather than a government department or territorial authority.

The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust has six open space covenants either registered or under action within the Wellington City boundaries. These covenants protect small native forest remnants totalling 4.8 hectares.

Covenants are an important mechanism to secure protection of open space and, to date, have not been fully utilised in Wellington City. All forms of covenanting need to be investigated and, given that the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust is based in Wellington, Council should try and establish a sound working relationship with it and discuss initiatives that could be used to mutual benefit.

Conservation covenants are similar to open space covenants except that the covenant is between the landowner and the Council. Under both types of covenants the full cost of survey, and generally 50 percent of the cost of fencing is provided to the landowner by the respective agencies. Occasionally the Department of Conservation will assist with the cost of fencing if the area being protected has exceptional conservation value.

## **10. Trusts**

Trusts arise when one person (the settlor) gifts property to another (the trustee) to be held subject to conditions (the deed) which govern its use, and the purposes for which income and principal can be used. In most cases the Council would not transfer the open space land to a trust, but would give the trust the right to manage the land together with a funding agreement.

Trusts which manage open space have a long history. The National Trust in the United Kingdom and the Queen Elizabeth II Trust in New Zealand govern large areas of open space for the benefit of the general public. The Wellington City Council has recently established the Basin Reserve Trust to manage this historically significant sportsground.

The principal advantages of trusts relate to their ability to attract community support, expertise and funding that would not be directly available to Council. Trusts are also perceived as being more independent with less political interference than Council.

The disadvantages of trusts relate to the additional establishment and administration costs where Council is the ‘settlor’ of the trust, and the loss of direct control over the asset which is gifted to the trust. Where Council establishes a trust it can influence its direction, by carefully specifying the purposes of the trust in the ‘deed’, and by retaining the right to appoint ‘trustees’. Where Council appoints ‘trustees’ it is generally expected to reimburse them for their involvement.

### **11. Purchasing (or transferring) development rights**

This mechanism depends upon having formalised rules for property development such as plot ratios and bonuses which can be granted for objectives which the Council is wanting to encourage. For instance, a developer might be permitted to build higher than the usual permitted height in return for setting back the building and developing a public forecourt space or, alternatively, for preserving a heritage building facade.

Such rules existed previously in the central city area but have now been dispensed with. Instead, Council relies upon negotiation through the resource consent process and the application of design guidelines for controlled activities to achieve its objectives, the idea being that this is a more qualitative and responsive approach rather than the quantitative ‘rules’ approach. Therefore, this mechanism is unlikely to be workable unless Council re-introduces development rights.

Council is now looking at the potential for leverage in development negotiations with regard to non-traffic uses of the road reserves that it owns in the central city. At Umbrella Park, some open space and pedestrian access was negotiated by allowing the building to extend over the Council’s road reserve. Council is also looking at negotiating market returns for activities on road reserve, such as sidewalk cafes.

### **12. Land exchanges**

With careful negotiation, parcels of Council land can be swapped for privately owned blocks with high open space value to help realise the strategy. Alternatively, parcels of Council land, even isolated reserve land that contributes relatively little to the city’s open space network, could be sold to a private landowner and the funds used to buy strategic pieces of land with high open space values.

Such initiatives cannot, however, be considered in isolation. Blocks of land perceived as currently having little or no value as open space need to be assessed in a broad context to determine where they fit into a long-term strategy. Councils all around the country are grappling with whether to dispose of unwanted or unused reserves or areas of open space acquired under different circumstances years previously. Subsequent developments in the area, changes in population structure, strategic direction or changes in the emphasis of open space provision may mean that some areas are surplus or do not fulfil current open space objectives. Conversely, the strategic importance of an area purchased for reserve may not be realised for decades.

Disposal or exchange can open up tremendous strategic opportunities and effectively meet both Council and landowners' objectives. However, provision of open space should be a determinant of development and not simply allowed to be those areas left over after development has occurred. Wellington's open space strategy will provide the framework for looking at disposal and exchange opportunities.

Conversely, reserve land is sometimes difficult to dispose of because of its location or its contour or, perhaps, because it is not contiguous with other areas. If Council initiates a land swap or some other form of exchange with a landowner who holds a strategically located piece of open space, completion of the exchange also requires a willingness on the part of the landowner. This can place a landowner in a strong negotiating position. Often it is an opportunity based situation where skilful negotiation is the key to success.

As with land purchase, land exchange results in full ownership and control for development and management but may bring with it some liabilities in terms of management.

Channelling funds realised from reserve disposal towards acquisition of a strategic piece of open space can be an effective means of maximising resources and achieving open space goals provided it is done after careful assessment as part of a comprehensive open space strategy.

### **13. Reserve contributions**

There is provision under the Resource Management Act 1991, and transitionally under the Local Government Act, for reserve contributions to be taken by Council where new residential subdivisions occur. The *Proposed Wellington City District Plan* sets the regime for the acquisition of reserve contributions<sup>11</sup>. The contribution is able to be given as either a monetary contribution, or as land for reserve purposes respectively. The theoretical basis on which reserve contributions are made is to provide for reserve land for the benefit of the people of the district in which the subdivision is to occur. However, reserve contributions have only been effective where there is a strategy for acquisition and the *Open Space Strategy* will provide direction for future reserve contribution assessments.

If managed well, reserve contributions provide the advantage of allowing key areas identified in the concept for open space to be set aside as part of subdivision at no direct cost. If the subdivision contains no key areas within the open space concept, then a monetary contribution can be taken which can be assigned to a fund for the achievement of the strategy in another form.

The subdivision itself will often result in the loss of open space through development. In some instances this may be in conflict with the strategy and therefore may be perceived as a disadvantage. However, the ability of landowners to develop land must also be recognised. The key is to ensure that subdivision and the resultant reserve contribution is the best outcome that can be achieved for the open space strategy.

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<sup>11</sup> The proposed Plan is not yet fully operative. It is anticipated that some changes to the provisions of the Plan will be likely to occur before it is made operative.

## **14. Land purchase**

Outright purchase of a block of land, gaining freehold title and possibly gazetting the area as a reserve provides the highest degree of control. It also generally involves the greatest cost. Purchase allows the Council full control over the development and management of an area. Council can also determine the type and level of public access according to management objectives.

In addition to the relatively high cost involved, another disadvantage of outright purchase is the need for a willing seller. When Council initiates a purchase it puts an owner in a strong negotiating position and it may not be possible for the parties to agree on a purchase price. However, having a long term open space strategy in place puts the Council in a position where most land purchases could become opportunity based, with the Council opting for purchase when a particular block of land that would further the objectives of the strategy comes up for sale, rather than the Council being the initiator of the transaction.

There will be some sites, such as ecologically important forest remnants, where early purchase is warranted in order to halt irreversible deterioration. Whilst skilled negotiation in these situations is essential, education and awareness should not be under-estimated. Making an owner aware of the intrinsic values of such key sites should be an integral part of the Council's negotiation strategy.

Land purchase brings with it ongoing management costs and responsibilities. Council may also have to purchase some liabilities. For example, only part of a particular block of land may be needed to effect the open space strategy but the Council may have to purchase a much larger area in order to secure it. Subdivision and on-selling of the land not required may be necessary, and is often a complex operation.

Based on precedent, land purchase should be costed on the basis of 110% of the market value, ie the cost of land plus legal and administrative costs.