

15 Recreation

15.1 Introduction

Development within the district and in Auckland and Hamilton is increasing demand for public access to the coast and the margins of water bodies, and for green open space for recreation. In addition to creating demand for recreational opportunities, development can also meet that demand by contributing to the provision of open space and recreational facilities.

Large open space reserves provide public access to sports fields, lakes, rivers and the coast at priority sites. A strategic network of such reserves is being developed, along with a network of walkways and cycle ways.

15.2 Issue – Lack of Recreational Space

Lack of public green space and recreational facilities can reduce opportunities for a community to provide for its health and wellbeing.

OBJECTIVES	POLICIES
<p>15.2.1 Public green open space and recreational facilities are available to meet the needs of the community.</p>	<p>15.2.2 Subdivision and development must contribute to the provision of public green open space and recreational facilities.</p> <p>15.2.3 Public access to and along the coast, rivers, lakes and wetlands should be provided.</p> <p>15.2.4 An integrated network of local, regional and national walkways or cycleways should be developed and should ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) convenient and practical public access to and along the route (b) safety and security for neighbours and walkway users (c) protection and restoration of conservation values (d) integration with the transport network, including cycleways where appropriate. <p>15.2.5 Future reserves in villages and rural areas serving local needs should link to existing social infrastructure, such as halls and schools, to help strengthen community coherence.</p> <p>15.2.6 Recreation and reserve use and development should be consistent with the nature and character of the local environment, including protection of landforms, and protection and restoration of indigenous vegetation, wildlife and linking of habitats.</p> <p>15.2.7 Recreation facilities should be appropriately located to avoid adverse effects on the environment, including reverse sensitivity effects.</p>

15.3 Reasons and Explanations

15.3.1 Open Space

Recreational activities and open space have an important role in enabling the community to provide for its social and cultural wellbeing and for its health and safety. This occurs through open space and associated recreational facilities providing the community with opportunities for undertaking a range of recreational and community activities.

15.3.2 Contributions

Subdivision and housing development results in increased population and hence increasing demands for reserves and recreational facilities. Therefore, financial contributions (cash or land) must be made by developers to help cover the cost of further land purchases and developing new

facilities. Where the Council requires the vesting of land with a value that exceeds the cash value of the reserve contribution, then compensation shall be paid in accordance with the land's value.

15.3.3 Access

A network of recreation reserves is required, including sports fields and large reserves for informal activities along the coast, lakes and rivers e.g. Wainui Reserve near Raglan. Public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes, rivers and wetlands is a matter of national importance. However, in some circumstances, access may need to be restricted in line with the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement policy 3.5.1. Esplanade reserves should be wide enough to ensure practical pedestrian access along their length.

The Council needs to cater not only for local demands but also regional and national needs because of its proximity to major population centres and because the district extends from coast to coast.

For instance, new accesses to west coast beaches and open space reserves adjacent to the Waikato River are desirable. The need for new open space reserves elsewhere in the district will be reviewed from time to time.

Public access to various lakes and rivers will be secured to provide for recreational use including hunting and fishing.

15.3.4 Walkways and Cycleways

Walking and cycling are increasingly popular leisure activities. Walkway development is dependent upon the Council acquiring land (and ensuring there is full public access to reserves such as esplanade reserves) or obtaining public access easements over private land. A network of walkways and cycleways, including both roadside and off-road routes (e.g. unformed roads and esplanade reserves), is planned in highly populated areas and where there are significant natural attractions such as native bush, lakes, rivers and the coast.

Route location will reflect population patterns, outdoor attractions and route availability. Major existing or proposed routes include the Te Araroa National Trust walkway, a southern Haka-rimata circuit developed in conjunction with the Department of Conservation, routes along the Waikato and Waipa rivers, and walkways and cycleways within the routes designated for the Huntly and Hamilton expressway bypasses developed in conjunction with the New Zealand Transport Agency. The Waikato River route in Tamahere and the Hamilton bypass route (on the western side of the expressway) will involve developing multiple links to local roads. A walkway network in Tamahere incorporating the above routes, local roads and off-road routes, including gullies, may be developed. The need to acquire private land to secure these routes will be assessed when consent applications are being considered. The Council may also approach landowners at other times to seek a negotiated agreement that secures public access.

15.3.5 Future Reserves

Periodically, the Council acquires reserve land in some rural areas in response to population growth. Ideally, these reserves will be adjacent to existing community focal points such as schools or halls to focus the local community's interest into one location and to promote optimum use of facilities.

15.3.6 Local Environment

Reserves can potentially be used for a wide variety of activities and have a wide variety of facilities

built on them. Reserve and recreation use and development should not unreasonably affect adjoining landowners. Some certainty is needed for both reserve users and nearby neighbours regarding how each reserve may be developed and used.

15.3.7 Recreation facilities

Major and special purpose recreation facilities may be developed on a private commercial basis. While these may provide significant social and economic benefits to the district, they can also adversely affect the environment, especially roads and traffic, infrastructure and amenity values in ways that are similar to industrial activities. Choice of location is a critical decision for these facilities.

15.4 Methods of Implementation

15.4.1 Regulatory Methods

- (a) Rules on acquisition of esplanade reserves or strips and walkways, and development setbacks from them.
- (b) Rules that control effects of activities.
- (c) Financial contributions in land or cash as a condition of consent.
- (d) Providing additional subdivision entitlements where the Council wishes to acquire land for a reserve or for public access to significant features or significant indigenous vegetation.

15.4.2 Deleted

15.4.3 Council Works and Services

- (a) Land acquisition and facility development as determined through reserve management plans and the annual plan process.
- (b) Service delivery activities of adjoining councils.

15.4.4 Information, Education and Advocacy

- (a) Ongoing association with groups such as Sport Waikato.
- (b) Produce brochures on district reserves and recreation facilities such as walkways.

15.5 Reasons for Methods

15.5.1 Regulatory Methods

Rules are required to define esplanade reserve and walkway requirements and to ensure that subdivision and development contributes to the provision of future reserves and recreation facilities.

15.5.2 Deleted

15.5.3 Council Works and Services

Land purchase and facility development is determined through the annual plan process. Consultation with the community, including adjoining landowners and iwi, shall take place prior to new facilities or walkways being developed.

15.5.4 Information, Education and Advocacy

The Council can promote recreational activity and healthy lifestyles through working with groups such as Sport Waikato and through ensuring the community is aware of the reserves and facilities available.

15.6 Anticipated Environmental Results

ISSUE	ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
<p>15.6.1 Lack of reserves and recreational space</p>	<p>(a) Provision for and maintenance of public reserves throughout the district, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major recreational facilities located in urban areas, and • reserves in villages and rural areas associated with community facilities such as halls and schools • reserves adjacent to major water bodies and the coast • recreation facilities in areas where the adverse effects on roads and traffic, network utilities, and local amenity and character are avoided or mitigated. <p>(b) Provision for and maintenance of convenient, safe, legal and practical public access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to and along major water bodies and the coast, and • to a network of recreation reserves, facilities and green open space. <p>(c) Establishment of a network of walkway routes and cycleways available for public use.</p>