



OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

Open Spaces - Special Places



WHANGAREI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Message from His Worship the Mayor



His Worship the Mayor
Craig Brown

The council has under its jurisdiction a large number of open spaces that have been set-aside over the years for a variety of reasons. These spaces vary in use, size and importance.

To properly manage these and determine how they will be used and protected, and to adequately provide funding for their maintenance, a closer examination of the significance of this land is required. This analysis will form what is to be known as the council's Open Space Strategy – a document that will determine priorities for spending and use for years to come.

Message from the Community Enterprises Committee Chairperson

One can create beauty with bricks and mortar, but the timeless beauty of the natural environment is unsurpassable. The Whangarei District is blessed with abundant natural beauty and open spaces for public enjoyment, thanks to the generosity and vision of those who came before us.

Now we must look to the future and make wise and thoughtful provision for the generations to come. With public input, this Open Space Strategy will provide a solid building block for the management and provision of our district's open spaces.



Councilor
Cherry Hermon

FOREWORD

It is said that when Tahuu arrived in Tai Tokerau in the canoe Moekakaroa he was highly impressed. He called to his men and said “*Tena te koha o Tangaroa me Tane hoki*”, which means ‘Behold the gifts of Tangaroa and Tane’.

“From the very earliest days, the shores of Whangarei Harbour and its environs were rich in everything that made it desirable as a place to live . . . Tangaroa had filled the sea with fish and shellfish with a lavish hand; Tane’s forests were full of good timber, while feeding in the tree tops were fat kukupa and tui. It was indeed a land of plenty.”
(Florence Keene, “Tai Tokerau”, p.34)

Māori have continued to live in the Whangarei district, using the forests, land and sea for gathering food, cultivation and recreation.

The council recognizes that tangata whenua have a special partnership relationship under the principles of Tiriti o Waitangi. Iwi and hapu of the district have the unique role of kaitiaki and rangatira of the natural and physical taonga in their rohe.

It is acknowledged that there will be issues for tangata whenua, relating to waahi tapu, protection and restoration of the mauri of natural eco-systems of land, water and air, the harvesting of kai and cultural materials, as well as the future management of significant open spaces.

Tangata whenua will be invited to arrange hui to discuss the open space concepts and future management practices, for inclusion in the Open Space Strategy.



Taipari Munroe, speaking at a powhiri on Matakoho/Limestone Island to bless the former pa site.



Onerahi Jetty and Matakoho/Limestone Island in the Whangarei Harbour

The migrant light that flows like plums through your body, the sequence of episodes that filter like a gull swooping, the chromium twinkle of starlings, the insistent surge of spring, the call of the wind as it rises in this dusk, floating across from Maunu, a super-tropical volcano of puriri and taraire, feeding on the rich crystallines of young lavas strayed to the surface from beneath this micro continent, with silver bracelets of enchantment, eyes pouring from the gleam of two fish swimming into the abyss of a dream, the painted sky of raindrops feasting on their fall, with cloths of bamboo matting opening themselves to flights of cerulean blue, kahurangi, poroporo, and the wings of naked insect ripping over meanders in the Waimahanga, in the gap in cumulus over Maungatika, when that psychic moment arrives for the inhabitants of this place, on maps which define zones of space and materials, the alchemy of manuka and grasses, symbols of bridges, pa sites, fences, roads, tracks and the habitats of wandering kaka, the eloquent line of the Hatea River merging into saline grey Te Renga Paraoa, exploring the limits of this idea, its low angle making for the summit of an unnamed peak, as rosellas flash by the window and the moment calls, the elastic recoils.

Extract from Waimahanga One, FRACTALS OF ATTRACTION, by Piet Nieuwland, 1993

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“It may be said with some confidence of Whangarei that there is no other large town or city in New Zealand with such large areas of native bush so near to its busy streets. The forested western hills and Parahaki mountain comprise many hundred acres, most of which, by the generous gifts of private landowners, are administered by public bodies for the benefit of the people.”

(A. H. Reed, “The Story of a Kauri Park”, p. 9)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whangarei has many memorable open spaces in its city and district. Some, like the wildlife refuge of Te Renga Paraoa/Whangarei Harbour, are internationally renowned. Others, like the sandy beaches of the east coast, the marine reserve around the Poor Knights Islands, and the Abbey and Waipu caves, are of national significance. Like Parahaki and the Western Hills, they tower over us; like the harbours and flowing streams, they stretch before us. There are active spaces, like Kensington Park; quiet oases, like Cafler Park, and sites of beauty and colour in the busiest places.

The open spaces are an integral part of what we identify as Whangarei. This strategy is about planning for the open spaces of Whangarei, and how best to look after them in the future.

The Council's Role

The council's core open space functions are to protect valued open space and to provide adequate recreation opportunities to meet the needs of the community. In managing its open spaces, the council takes its direction from legal statutes, council documents, the strategic documents of other authorities, and the community.

The council manages 3,152 hectares of open space land. This includes forest remnants and regenerating bush, wetlands and mangrove estuaries, coastal areas and esplanade reserves, city parks and street gardens, cemeteries, former quarries and landfills, areas reserved for water supply, waste treatment and other public utilities, sportsfields, playgrounds and pine forests.

Open Space Concept

Open spaces can be described according to the four main values they have:

- *Conservation values* include plants and animals, wildlife habitats and ecological processes;
- *Landscape values* include landform and land use, visual appreciation and the sense of place;
- *Recreation values* include the opportunity for active and passive, formal or informal recreation activities;
- *Cultural values* include sites with cultural or historic significance; they also arise from the lifestyle patterns and preferences of the present culture.

The open space concept divides both the city and the district into seven different areas, according to the combinations of the four values inherent in each. The concept considers the open space appropriate to each area, as a reflection of these values.

Guiding Principles

The concept is based on some fundamental principles of open space, which outline how we might create the open spaces the strategy is aiming for.

Whangarei has a significant cultural heritage. Many sites from Māori and European history are contained and protected within the open spaces of the district, while others may still need protection. The stories about these places can be shared with interpretation signs and brochures.

Changes in population, visitor numbers and people's expectations of open spaces put pressure on the council to improve open space opportunities and to prioritise its resources. The council will act as facilitator in supporting the development of regional parks. It will also improve the quality and effective use of open space by promoting recreation hubs, destination parks and development that is inclusive of all the community and for multi-purpose use.

The council wishes to enhance open spaces in urban areas and to support local communities in rural areas, to create and enhance open spaces as a focus for community activities. Open spaces that benefit residents are also appreciated by visitors.

The council has a mandate to safeguard wildlife habitats and to maintain healthy ecosystems. The community also expects it will continue to have access to the esplanade areas of the coastal and riparian margins commonly known as the Queen's Chain.

The open space concept recommends forming networks within the city and around the district. Generally, networks of open space have more value than isolated pieces and the larger a natural area is, the greater its chance of survival. Networks also provide a wider range of recreation opportunities and better access.

The concept acknowledges the value of partners in the community. Partners and sponsors give value-added effect to the council's resources and are a real force for achieving the practical open space goals of the strategy throughout the district. Partnerships need to be supported with time and resources to be most effective.

The council will consider a number of ways of achieving the strategy and will focus to acquire and develop key assets over the five years of the strategy.

Implementation Plan

The council has limited funds so the implementation plan has to work within a budget. The implementation tables for acquisition, development and management of open space throughout the Whangarei city and district contain guidelines for future decision-making and a comprehensive list of future projects. The council will take its lead from the community and will focus on the highest priorities over the next five years. By then, the foundation of the open space concept for Whangarei will have been successfully established.

Monitoring the Process

The council will annually review its performance in open space matters by reporting on what it has achieved in the annual plan report. Targets outlined in the monitoring plan will measure how well the council has achieved its open space objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Why do we need an Open Space Strategy?

One of the council's core functions is to provide open space and adequate recreation opportunities. This Open Space Strategy intends to show how the council will provide, develop and maintain a network of high quality open spaces to meet the needs of the city and the district in the future.

This strategy will look at what open spaces we have now. It will also begin to put into words the community's future vision for open spaces in Whangarei city and the district. It will consider how best that vision can be achieved.

In the process of defining current and future demands for open space it will better select priorities and allocate our limited resources.

How can the community have a say?

It is important to know what open spaces people value and what they would like to see in their communities and district in the future. It will be very valuable for the council to know what their priorities are in the next five years and out to twenty years.

The final draft will be amended to take account of the community's ideas and preferences. The approved document will be reviewed annually through the council's annual report and at the annual open space forums.

What do the terms mean?

- The *Open Space Strategy* establishes a vision for how the open spaces in Whangarei city and the surrounding district are to be managed.
- *Outcomes* are the ideas behind the vision. They describe how we see Whangarei open spaces in the future.
- *Objectives* outline what the council intends to do to achieve the outcomes of its vision.
- *Guiding principles* explain how the council can achieve its objectives and how we might create the open spaces we envisage.
- *Tasks* are the projects we need to put into action.
- *Targets* are the way we measure or indicate how we are to achieve the objectives.

How has the Open Space Strategy been developed?

The open space strategy takes its direction from legal statutes, council documents and the strategic documents of other authorities, including Northland Regional Council and the Northland Conservancy of the Department of Conservation. It has also been assisted by recent studies of open space areas and features in the Whangarei district. These are referred to in the text and listed in the bibliography.

What legal responsibilities does the council have for open space?

The council's direction in development of the Open Space Strategy is guided by legislative requirements. There are no legal requirements to produce an open space strategy, but the council is legally constrained in its management of open space. Council has an obligation to promote consistency between policies and plan prepared under the Resource Management Act. For example, future development plans may require resource consents before they can proceed. While planning for future projects the council also needs to take cognizance of relevant policies and plans from the Northland Regional Council. Council also has an obligation to promote consistency between its policies and plans. For Whangarei District Council, the principle statutes that apply to existing and likely future open space are listed below and are discussed in more detail in Appendix 2:

Resource Management Act 1991

Local Government Act 1974

Reserves Act 1977

Queen Elizabeth II Act 1977

Conservation Act 1987

Historic Places Act 1993

Biosecurity Act 1993

Marine Reserves Act 1971

NZ Walkways Act 1990

Building Act 1991

Health And Safety in Employment Act 1992



Beach replenishment at One Tree Point

How does the Open Space Strategy link to other Council documents?

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan assists the council to look ahead over a fifteen-year period so it can plan for projects and costs with some certainty.

In its mission statement, the Whangarei District Council undertakes to “*provide services and facilities for the community in the most efficient, effective and transparent manner, enabling the district to prosper as a safe, healthy and attractive place*”.

Over the term of this plan (1997-2012) the council’s Parks Division goals are to:

- Enhance and landscape amenity areas;
- Meet the growing need for sportsfields across the district;
- Improve walkways, coastal access and reserves in general;
- Survey users to gather feedback for future projects;
- Further enhance the amenity values of the City Centre and Town Basin.

Proposed District Plan

The purpose of the district plan is “*to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources*”. (Section 5(1), RMA 1991) The plan, as required by the RMA 1991, 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 that allows all affected parties to make submissions on those parts of the plan that affect them. This strategy will support development of the reserve contribution policies and rules, for inclusion in the district plan. Where the open space strategy proposes new initiatives that could appropriately be addressed through the district plan, the council will consider amending the plan with variations, or plan changes.

The Proposed District Plan and Open Space Strategy are broadly consistent, and open space is predominantly managed within the objectives of the plan. The plan’s objectives, where they relate to open space provision, use and management, are in separate sections, relating to different issues. The relevant sections are:

- Section 4: **Tangata Whenua**
- Section 8: **The Coast**
- Section 9: **Riparian and Coastal Margins**
- Section 11: **Indigenous Vegetation and Habitat**
- Section 12: **Landscape**
- Section 13: **Amenity Values**
- Section 14: **Heritage Trees**
- Section 21: **Open Space**

This last section on open space underlines the council’s main responsibilities in managing open space:

- to provide for recreation;
- to protect the environment.

The open space objectives of the Proposed District Plan are carried forward to assist in monitoring of the Open Space Strategy. They are shown in full in Appendix 3.

Asset Management Plans

Asset Management Plans describe the current condition of the asset, the desired level of service and a life-cycle management plan to maintain that level of service. The council has prepared an initial Parks Asset Management Plan. Using the relevant objectives from its strategic plans, legislative requirements, industry standards and customer expectations it will establish a level of service and a life-cycle maintenance plan that will deliver the objectives.

In this way the plan will continue to be interactive with the Open Space Strategy, informing the strategy, while the strategy shapes the framework of the Asset Management Plan.

Reserve Management Plans

Reserve Management Plans set in place specific policies for the management of each park, or groups of parks. During the preparation of management plans affected parties, including iwi, neighbours, and users are invited to make submissions to the council. The approved plans are used to guide future funding allocations and management decisions.

Recent amendments to the Reserves Act 1977 have provided for multiple reserve plans to be prepared, where reserves share a common feature, such as location, function or category.

Annual Plans

The Local Government Act 1974 requires the council to produce an Annual Plan, in consultation with the public, to include work the council plans to undertake in that year, together with approved budgets. Each year funds for projects identified in the council's strategies, Asset Management Plans and Reserve Management Plans are approved through the Annual Plan. New and replacement (capital) projects and refurbishment (maintenance) projects feed into the annual plan process for funding, according to the council's highest priorities for achieving its strategies and objectives.

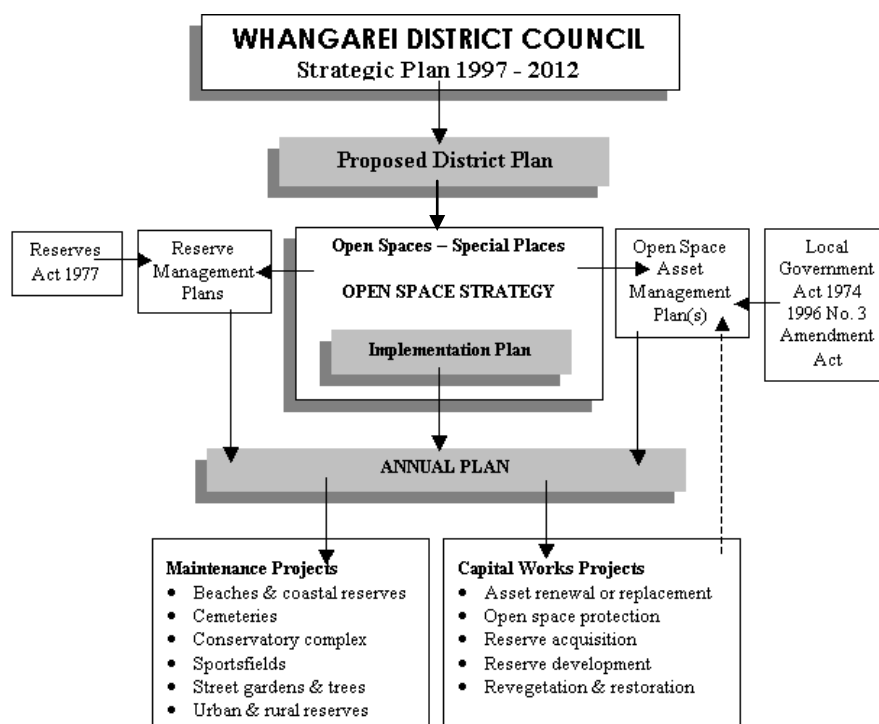


Diagram showing the relationship between the council documents and significant statutes.

SPECIAL PLACES IN OUR DISTRICT

How much open space does the council have now?

The Whangarei District Council currently manages 3,152 hectares of land as open space. This includes forest remnants and regenerating bush, wetlands and mangrove estuaries, coastal areas and esplanade reserves, city parks and street gardens, cemeteries, former quarries and landfills, areas reserved for water supply, waste treatment and other public utilities, sports fields, play grounds and pine forests.

The council's open space assets include:

- 72 hectares of sports turf
- 370ha pine forests
- 31 kilometres of maintained tracks
- 1.7 kilometres of boardwalks/footbridges
- 70,930m² of sealed or concrete drives and car parks
- 45,290m² of unsealed car parks and accessways
- 32 children's playgrounds
- 3 skateboard ramps/parks
- 3,600 annual bedding plants (replaced twice a year)
- 4,000 (approximately) street trees
- 9 BBQ's
- 110 pieces of park furniture
- 6 grass cricket blocks
- 8 artificial cricket wickets
- 20 junior wickets
- 4 grass softball diamonds
- 11 touch rugby fields
- 1 grass athletic track
- 26 rugby fields
- 27 soccer fields
- 2 junior soccer fields
- 6 summer soccer fields
- 6 rugby league fields
- 2 grass hockey fields
- 12 hard surface netball courts
- 1 BMX track
- 2 pools
- 8 ski lanes
- 17 boat ramps
- 9 wharves and jetties
- 3 cemeteries
- 1 crematorium
- 3 memorials

Recreation facilities on council land, which are maintained by others or in partnership with the council, include:

- 1 art museum
- 13 tennis courts (5 clubs)
- 7 lawn bowling greens (3 clubs)
- 7 community recreation centers
- 2½ artificial hockey surfaces (sand and water)
- 1 rugby stadium with grandstand
- 1 yacht/boating club

How much is this open space worth?

A figure for the value of the open space land which council owns cannot be taken at face value. A valuation takes into account the number of restrictions put on alternative uses of the land. Many of the open spaces are protected under the Reserves Act or by district plan rules, so they are generally valued at a lower rate, which may be as low as 50% of similar land that is not encumbered. The final figure is not replacement value.

Open Spaces	Book Value: 30 June 2000	Percentage Protected
Land legally reserved	18,254,304	80
Land not reserved	4,557,916	20
Total Land	22,812,220	100
Buildings (not including plant and equipment)	3,793,421	
Grand Total Assets	\$26,605,641	

How much does it cost to maintain?

The direct cost is the actual cost of delivering the service. Most of these works are competitively tendered. The other asset costs are the costs of managing the asset and include costs such as depreciation, corporate overheads, preparation of planning documents, including the Annual Plan, Asset Management Plan, and Strategic Plan, and the administration required for the implementation of the Asset Management System.

Outputs	2000 – 2001 Budget Expenditure	
	Direct Costs	Other Asset Costs
Art Museum	13,000	10,000
Cemeteries & Crematorium	202,000	77,000
Conservatory Complex	74,000	45,000
Gardens	233,000	61,000
Sportsfields	1,225,000	392,000
Trees	138,000	43,000
Urban Parks	232,000	61,000
Urban, Rural and Coastal Reserves	897,000	378,000
Totals	\$3,014,000	\$1,067,000

What income does the council get from open space?

Source	2000 – 2001 Budget Revenue
Art Museum	27,000
Cemeteries & Crematorium	221,000
Conservatory Complex	2,000
Forests	N/a
Sportsfields	60,000
Trees	4,000
Urban Parks	19,000
Urban, Rural and Coast Reserves	116,000
Total	\$449,000

What other open space areas are there in the district?

The council is not the only owner of open space in the district. The Crown owns nearly 22,000ha of open space land or land gazetted for a particular purposes in the Whangarei district. Analysis of the larger land holdings owned by the Crown shows that nearly 40%, (approximately 8,300ha) is set aside for state forests or forest parks. More than 14,000ha of Crown land is managed by the Department of Conservation (DoC). A large proportion of this land is for conservation purposes.

There are significant areas of open space in the district that have been covenanted to protect landscape or ecological values. The Queen Elizabeth II National Trust, and also the council and DoC, manage these covenants, although land management is the responsibility of the landowners. A comprehensive map of covenanted areas has not been completed.

Schools have large areas of open space that may be used by the public. The airport is a significant area of open space, which plays a role in creating an image of the city for travelers and visitors. The council manages the building and surrounding gardens.

Diagrams showing the different categories of open space, and the amounts district wide, are detailed in Appendix 4.

What are the other benefits of Open Space?

The value of open space is more than just a monetary one. In fact the primary values are difficult to quantify in dollar terms. The open space values can be described, as follows:

Conservation values

Conservation values include the ability of vegetation in open spaces to improve air quality by storing carbon, reduce extremes of weather, improve water quality in streams and harbours and reduce stormwater runoff and flooding.

Landscape values

Landscape values incorporate the opportunity for green oases in built-up areas, nature in the city and landscape features along traffic routes. They imply the use of open space and vegetation to act as a buffer between conflicting uses and visual degradation and against the impacts of storm and flood damage.

Recreation values

Recreation values include places to re-create, exercise, socialise and grow for solitude, peace and quiet. They include the opportunities for lifestyle improvements, including individual health and personal development, as well as for social cohesion in group events and activities, where there is not an exclusive or competitive element.

Cultural values

Cultural values include the aspirations of local communities to enhance the amenity of their locality and are associated with cultural values like civic pride and a sense of identity. Making opportunities for residents to become partners in open space management and to develop a sense of commitment to the open spaces is also of cultural value.

Appendix 5 summarises the recent studies on open space values.

What is the council working to achieve?

The Open Space Strategy is based on the council's two main responsibilities for open space management - protection of the environment and provision of recreation.

The council recognises the primary values of open space, which encompass the four long-term outcomes for open space in Whangarei City.

- **Conservation values** include plants and animals, wildlife habitats and ecological processes;
- **Landscape values** include landform and land use, visual appreciation and the sense of place;
- **Recreation values** include the opportunity for active and passive, formal or informal recreation activities;
- **Cultural values** include sites with cultural or historic significance; they also arise from the lifestyle patterns and preferences of the present culture.

The objectives of the council's Proposed District Plan and the goals of the Parks Division have been used to establish the open space objectives. The objectives relate to what the council can do to achieve its outcomes.

OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVES
<p>1 Conservation</p> <p>The open spaces of Whangarei host and protect a representative range of native plants and wildlife habitats, which are restored, where appropriate.</p>	<p>1.1 Protect and enhance the areas of significant native vegetation and wildlife habitats.</p>
<p>2 Landscape and ecosystems</p> <p>The open spaces of Whangarei contain landscape features and life supporting ecosystems, which are protected and restored, where appropriate.</p>	<p>2.1 Protect and enhance the natural features and processes of the city and district.</p> <p>2.2 The characteristic amenity values of each locality are maintained and enhanced in partnership with the community.</p>
<p>3 Open space recreation</p> <p>A wide range of recreation opportunities in the city and district of Whangarei are accessible to all.</p>	<p>3.1 Provide and maintain open space to meet the recreational needs of the community.</p> <p>3.2 Maintain and enhance public access.</p>
<p>4 Cultural heritage and lifestyle</p> <p>The open spaces features of the natural and cultural environment in Whangarei, which possess historic, spiritual, social, traditional or special cultural significance are acknowledged and protected, where appropriate.</p>	<p>4.1 Tangata whenua exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga over ancestral lands, waters, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga in the district.</p> <p>4.2 The character and quality of the district's natural and cultural features are maintained and enhanced.</p>

How are open spaces measured for quantity and quality?

There are no national standards for the provision of open space in New Zealand. However, the Auckland Regional Council developed a set of standards, as part of its Regional Open Space Strategy in 1993. These were the result of a comprehensive study of regional and local body open space throughout the Auckland region. The draft standards cover both the amount of open space to be provided and the quality standards that must be reached to achieve the desired benefits. These standards are detailed in Appendix 6 and are used to analyse the open space.

Further comparisons will be made by benchmarking with the equivalent-sized G9 local authorities to compare standards in open space provision. Annual surveys will also give residents and visitors the opportunity to rate their satisfaction with the quantity and quality of open spaces.

The council will also measure its performance in managing open space against a list of targets in the categories of the primary values of conservation, landscape, recreation and culture. (See Monitoring the Process, page 68)



Laurie Hall Park

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles have been developed from an understanding of the council's legal responsibilities and of the physical and social factors that affect the open spaces of Whangarei. They are intended to assist in guiding the council in achieving its vision and the open space goals of the Proposed District Plan. They are discussed here in the light of current requirements and trends.

1 A Heritage to be proud of

The open spaces of Whangarei contain many significant sites and features of the district's history and pre-history. Some of the sites have significance for Māori as waahi tapu, including battlefields and burial sites, the landing places of waka and waitapu. Many of the parks and reserves in the city and district contain heritage sites that are a record of early European settlement, including gardens, buildings, cemeteries and monuments.

It is proposed to improve the quantity and quality of brochures, signs and interpretation facilities for the council's significant open space sites, for the benefit of residents and visitors. In this way, the collective history of the community will be incorporated into our landscapes and future generations will be able to locate themselves within the history of Whangarei. Planting plans for these sites will take into consideration the need for protection and enhancement of the historic character of the site.

Principle 1:

The council will enhance the district as a place to live and visit by protecting our cultural heritage and sharing the stories of our past through quality interpretation.

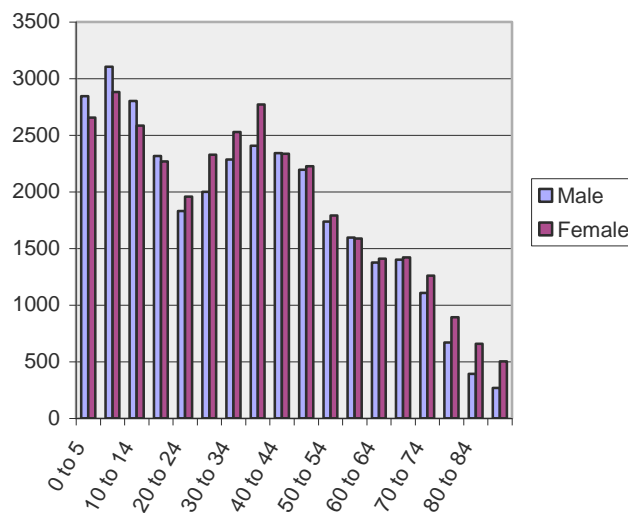


The Whangarei War Memorial in Rose Street

2 Responding to pressure and demand

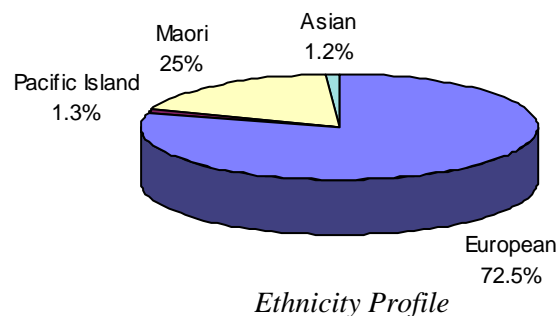
The Whangarei District Council Strategic Plan 1997–2012 predicts an 11% increase in the district’s total population over the 15 years of the plan. This equates to an approximate annual increase of 1,500 people. The predicted increase in population will also result in increased pressure on existing open space and an increased demand for additional open space.

Information from the Statistics New Zealand 1996 Census indicates that in the Whangarei district a large proportion of the population were children. The Urban Management Strategy prepared by Beca Carter Hollings and Ferner Ltd. in 1997 notes that the average age in the inner city is higher than in other areas. The Strategic Plan reports that the median age of Whangarei’s population has risen from 31.8 years in 1991 to 33 years in 1996, perhaps due to an increased recognition of the area as an attractive place to retire. The increasing age of the population implies there will be an increased demand for passive open space activities, including walkways. At the same time the growing population of children under 15 will require sport and outdoor activity space.



Statistics New Zealand 1996: Age and Gender Spread in the Whangarei District

In the 1996 census, approximately 25% said they were Māori. As well as 72.5% Europeans, the district also contains Pacific Islanders and Asians. The Urban Management Strategy noted that it is probable the proportion of Māori in the district will increase over time. It will be necessary to ensure that Māori are represented in the activities and decision making of open space, and that consideration is given to the specific cultural needs of each ethnic group.



The Whangarei District Council Strategic Plan 1997–2012 identified the urban:rural split in 1996 as approximately 65%:35%. The urban category included the population of Whangarei city; rural included those living within smaller rural townships and in the countryside. The Urban Management Strategy notes that the rate of increase in populations within urban areas has decreased over the ten-year period to 1996. The report suggests it is possible that growth in the traditional urban areas is slowing as the area fills up and people look to live in urban and coastal areas outside the city. A study of leisure patterns by the Hillary Commission in 1990 indicated that demand for open spaces and leisure facilities may be greater in urban areas. However, changes in the places people choose to live will also mean an increased demand for rural amenities and facilities.

Census information in 1996 showed Whangarei had an unemployment rate of 10.3% and that 23.2% of people over 15 received a government benefit. Changes in disposable income and time available for leisure pursuits will strongly influence the demand for open space facilities.

Principle 2:

The council will respond to the pressure on and demand for quality open space as the population changes and visitor numbers to the district increase by improving open space opportunities and prioritising its resources.

3 Effective organisation of recreation

Sport Northland, in a review of its activities in 1998, identified some key trends relating to active sport. They included:

- Increasing user pays;
- Decreasing volunteerism in sport;
- Increased demand for choice, quality and service;
- Increased health consciousness;
- Greater focus on self rather than community;
- Greater demand for new and different recreation opportunities for older people.

These trends will make an impact on how the council manages recreation facilities. This strategy introduces specific categories and strategies to improve open space opportunities for the community and to help focus the council's resources and funding. They include regional parks, destination parks and recreation hubs.

Regional parks

Regional parks are parks of regional significance, intended to meet the needs of the community for better access to open space and more comprehensive recreation opportunities. Regional councils normally provide and maintain regional parks, but the Northland Regional Council does not provide this function. Regional parks are most likely to be needed in areas of high use and amenity, where there is also the greatest pressure from development, such as along the eastern coastline. It is recommended that the council take the lead in looking for ways of achieving parks of regional significance in the Whangarei district and that the council assist as facilitator to acquire and manage these. It is proposed that a future regional park would be associated with an adjacent marine reserve. There is significant public interest in having a marine reserve like that at Leigh, where families can see fish and marine life at close range.

Destination parks

Destination parks are defined as primary open space destinations for residents and visitors in the Whangarei district. A prime example of this type of open space is the Town Basin. This location is already a significant open space, with high quality facilities and the capacity to accommodate a number of people and multiple activities.

This strategy proposes to promote the destination appeal and visitor attractions of an initial few additional parks, and to focus development resources on high standard facilities, including car parking, signage, interpretation and furniture, for maximum effect. To be selected as destination parks, sites would need to already have significant value, potential for multiple activities and to cater for significant numbers.

Recreation hubs

Recreation hubs are centres of recreation activity, where opportunities are maximised and facilities are used most efficiently. The best example of a recreation hub in Whangarei is Kensington Park, a popular and busy focus for sport and recreation.

A recent study by the Hillary Commission confirmed that many sports clubs and organisations, with aging or declining membership, are finding it difficult to fund and maintain their assets. It will be important for clubs to look for opportunities for sharing existing and proposed facilities. When future demands are made for additional facilities in the city and district it will also be important to maximise the use of existing open space areas. The development of recreation hubs, where groups can share buildings and facilities, such as car parks, will become more common.



Kensington Park is an existing recreation hub, nationally renown for its attractive environment and quality features.

Regional standards

An even distribution of some recreational opportunities across the community is desirable to ensure equality of opportunity. However, the provision of recreation facilities needs to take into account the level of investment required and the need to provide high standards. A hierarchy of facilities throughout the community will foster both equity and quality at least cost. This focus on provision of facilities to an improved or regional standard has been achieved for some sports, such as rugby, cricket and skateboarding, and may be a useful tool for others, such as athletics, soccer and disabled activities.

Inclusive use

The city's open space network will need to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, both formal and informal, that enable people to have access to their preferred recreational activity. Physical disability or social disadvantage should not be barriers to the enjoyment of open spaces. The council will continue to provide for all-abilities access, where possible.

Multi-purpose use

This strategy proposes to create multi-purpose recreation opportunities for passive use around major sports grounds, along linkages and within cemeteries, including play grounds, jogging and exercise circuits, seats, picnic areas and gardens, where appropriate. In this way, sports grounds can offer areas of shade and enjoyment for spectators as well as opportunities for informal recreation, while cemeteries can offer spaces for quiet contemplation. The value of open space areas can be reduced by a proliferation of buildings on reserves. By encouraging multi-purpose use of facilities it is hoped to reduce the number of buildings on council reserves.

Principle 3:

The council will provide a diverse range of multi-purpose open space recreational opportunities throughout the district, with facilities developed to cater for a range of abilities and interests and organised to maximise the community's resources.

4 Potential for tourism

It follows that if the council develops and maintains its open spaces to a high standard for the benefit of its residents its visitors will also enjoy those special places. Whangarei is a significant visitor destination for approximately 50,000 international tourists and an estimated 350,000 New Zealanders each year. Events, such as the Waipu Games, sporting fixtures and the proposed Endless Summer Festival have a positive impact on the economy.

Tourism is a booming industry in New Zealand. It contributes (from overseas and domestic tourists) over \$9 billion annually to a wide spectrum of the economy and supports 1 in 12 jobs. In Northland the annual income from tourism is \$497 million and visitor numbers are growing by 6.7% each year.

A recent study of tourism trends indicates people travel not just for the scenery but also for what they can experience, purchase and do. Eco-tourism is a fast growing industry, benefiting communities and economies. New Zealand has based its tourism industry on nature and beautiful scenery so it is a logical step to link tourism with conservation. Whangarei sits at the centre of impressive landscapes and exciting recreation opportunities.

Park users have confirmed they have high expectations of the environments they visit and exercise in. General trends indicate a demand for higher standards in services and facilities, including design and maintenance. It will be important for the council to continue to meet health and safety standards, in its structures and playgrounds, for example. The council will also focus on areas, like destination parks, where high quality standards can be attained.

Principle 4:

The council will ensure that the parks and open spaces in Whangarei significantly contribute to the character and image of the district for its residents and visitors and to the potential for tourism.



Entrance to the Town Basin

5 Fostering conservation

The introduction of the Resource Management Act in 1991 reinforced the mandate for territorial local authorities to safeguard wildlife habitats and the life-supporting capacity of ecosystems. The council's open space areas are one of the most effective tools for achieving these objectives. For example, open space areas can be reserved or covenanted to protect significant vegetation; reserve land can be used as a buffer against flooding or for peak flow detention; vegetated margins and wetlands can filter stormwater runoff and improve water quality in our streams and estuaries.

The remnants of the original vegetation patterns, and the habitats they represented, are now fragmented and isolated. But our reserved and covenanted areas can preserve islands of diversity and protect the source of seeds for extending, revegetating or buffering the habitats.

The council is undertaking major restoration projects, such as on Matakohe/Limestone Island, along the Waiarohia Stream and on dunes along the coast.

The proposals to create mainland islands at Whangarei Heads and around Pukenui Reserve are bold and exciting. These projects have the potential to protect and enhance native flora and fauna within easy access of the city. A similar principle lies behind the proposals to establish marine reserves around Matakohe/Limestone Island in Whangarei Harbour and on the eastern coastline, in association with the proposed Tutukaka Regional Park. The council, in conjunction with other authorities, will be supportive of these initiatives for marine reserves.

Natural succession of native vegetation is occurring in cutover and regenerating areas, like the pine forests around Parahaki and riparian margins when they are retired from grazing. To fulfill its legal responsibilities and reduce the fire risk from pampas and wattles, at minimal cost, the council will establish an annual programme to cull plant pests and control animal pests, such as goats and possums. In areas where forest restoration is an objective, human intervention may be necessary to reintroduce some of the climax species, such as rimu, kohekohe and kauri.

Conservation work has significant public support. Growing awareness of environmental issues has increased the demand for and willingness to be involved in protection and restoration of natural habitats. The council supports local initiatives and invites community participation in its conservation projects.

Conflict can arise between recreation use and the conservation of the natural environment. Some sites, like fragile dunes and areas such as the rare Brown Teal habitat, are vulnerable. The council will work for a balance between recreation and conservation issues, in the knowledge that good design and appropriate management can resolve potential conflicts.

The role of conservation is to protect the values and health of the environment, for the education, enjoyment and well being of present and future generations. People value open spaces being reserved and protected for the future, under the Reserves Act 1977. They may be disconcerted to know that 20% of Whangarei's open space is not protected under the act and is vulnerable to the changing objectives of future councils. The council will prepare a list of unclassified reserves and continue to vest these and open space areas under the Reserves Act 1977, where it has a clear, long-term intention to protect the land for open space purposes.

Principle 5:

The council will protect and enhance a representative sample of wildlife habitats to a high standard and provide incentives for private landowners to protect wildlife habitats. The council will seek to control plant and animal pests, and to restore and extend significant land and water habitats in the district and encourage private landowners to do the same.



Volunteers planting the steep banks of the Waiarohia Stream

6 Enhancing urban areas

Open space in built-up areas is a useful tool for managing the form and enhancing the quality of urban areas. In Whangarei, the hills, harbour and streams contain development and in some cases buffer conflicting activities. Containment concentrates development, strengthens the city experience and leaves the natural environment around it to enhance the built environment. The quality of urban life is improved by the proximity and amenity of the natural environment as it interweaves with the urban environment. The council will continue to improve its waterfront, streams and bush clad hills as natural amenities for the city.

Urban open space and gardens are powerful forces for expressing local character and identity. These create a sense of pride and of belonging in the community. Green spaces also contribute to images of a relaxed lifestyle and quality of life. The council will continue to extend the influence of the natural environment in the busy streets and communities of Whangarei by refurbishing and adding to existing street gardens, street trees, and green spaces in the built environment. The council will also consider opportunities for developing village greens, street gardens and open spaces in rural centres, as a local community focus.

Civic parks are valued as green and pleasant places in the town centre, while they also host civic events, meetings and festivals. The overview of the Whangarei 20/20 Project, 1998, stated that a “*lack of linkages . . . green spaces and other key public areas*” (P 5) had been noted as issues in the Central Area Report, 1996. Some of these issues are still to be resolved.

Open spaces can enrich community life by encouraging creative expression, including outdoor performances, murals, sculpture and art-in-the-park. Whangarei has a number of remarkable murals, and a collection of significant sculptures. It will be important to continue to support works of art in the city’s open spaces, in partnership with artists and sponsors in the community. In the future the city may also want to develop an outdoor performance area or amphitheatre.

Principle 6:

The council will provide and develop open space areas that contribute to the amenity of urban areas, to interweave the cultural and natural environments and to enhance the quality of urban life.



Hanging baskets in Cameron Street

7 Protecting and accessing the coast and streams

Public access to and along the coast and rivers, and the protection of their natural character and recreation values, have historically been very important to New Zealanders. The Queen’s Chain, which dates from Queen Victoria’s instructions to Governor Hobson in 1840, has been enshrined in legislation and carried through to present day statutes. The Queen’s Chain is comprised of three different types of protected areas: unformed roads, marginal strips and esplanade reserves or strips. The council will continue to take esplanade reserves or strips along the coast and rivers, where the Resource Management Act 1991 provides for them.

The development of holiday homes and the increasing trend for commuting to the city from rural and coastal properties has put considerable and mounting pressure on the coast. Much of this pressure is seasonal, i.e. in the summer when the demand for access to the coast intensifies. The Tauranga City Council, in *'Pathways to Leisure'*, reports that aquatic sports, including swimming and diving, are by far the most popular sports for New Zealanders. The coast is a highly valued environment with significant amenity value. The council will put a high priority on acquiring and developing land that embraces the coastal edge, to protect the sensitive coastal and wetland habitats. In particular, it seeks to provide open space areas adjacent to the coast for play and relaxation, shade and refreshment.

An important priority in the next five years will be the development and refurbishment of facilities to enhance access to the water. The council will annually assess its coastal structures, including wharves, jetties and ramps, for safety and compliance with the relevant standards. A list of further structures, accessways and ramps needed to provide a comprehensive district-wide service to boaties will be compiled. High use areas will be assessed to gauge the need for, including the most appropriate location of car parks, toilets and rubbish bins, as well as refurbishment requirements. Specially designed boardwalks will be used to define pedestrian access to protect fragile dune environments and coastal features. The council may also wish to support ferry linkages within the Whangarei Harbour, for commuting and recreation.

A recent study initiated by coastal residents highlighted the opportunity for a Whangarei coastal walkway. Although the council does not have the land or resources to achieve this coastal walkway project in its entirety, the council will encourage and facilitate the vision in the community, while constructing sections of the walkway, as possible.

Principle 7:

The council will seek to protect and enhance the coastline and significant stream margins. The council will also ensure the community has access to the harbour, the valued coastal fringe and the riparian corridors.



View of Whangarei Harbour from Mt. Aubrey

8 Effective Linkages

It is acknowledged that increasing the size of natural areas or connecting them with ecological corridors enhances their long-term viability. The value of linkages is highlighted as residents watch kukupa alighting on trees in the centre of the city, using a flight path through wooded areas.

Recreation networks through open space are similarly important, as they create a range of recreation opportunities, which is effectively greater than the sum of the parts. They also make open space more accessible to the community. The development of Whangarei's streams, from the town basin to the town belt, for example, will effectively link the suburbs with the city. A Whangarei Coastal Walkway has been proposed for the Whangarei district, which would link existing and future walkways in Bream Bay, Whangarei Harbour and along the eastern pacific coastline.

A major advantage of linkages in open space through the city will be the opportunity to create off-road and road to road walkways and cycle ways. The Life in New Zealand survey carried out by the Hillary Commission in 1990 and the Ministry of Health survey in 1996-97 on physical activity both highlight the need for the linking of reserves to create opportunities for walkways. The Ministry's study states "walking was by far the most popular form of physical activity, with more than 6 out of ten people reporting that they had been walking for either enjoyment or exercise in the last seven days". The "*Proposed Strategy for Bicycle Facilities in Whangarei*" states "there is room for improvement of the existing bicycle facilities". (p13) It also suggests "it may be necessary to provide . . . a separate bicycle path (away from the road) for primary school children". (p9)

A minimum width for shared walking and cycling paths is 2 metres; a desirable width is 2.5 metres. It is possible that shared paths could economically be added to selected parks and riparian corridors, as refurbishment and extensions occur. The addition of combined walking tracks and cycle ways in open space areas will offer recreation opportunities and assist in making recreation an integrated part of the transportation network.

Principle 8:

The council will seek to create recreation networks and ecological corridors that maximise the value and accessibility of open space and promote the viability of natural areas.



Volunteers plant the banks of the Waiarohia Stream

9 Promoting Partnerships

Tangata whenua are active and equal partners, under the Treaty of Waitangi, as recognized in the Reserve Management Act 1991 and the council's Proposed District Plan. Hui with iwi will establish how partnerships in the stewardship of open spaces will work.

The council has a number of established partnerships with other authorities, including the QEII Trust, and NRC. Partnerships have already been created in the community between the council and the Northland Forest and Bird Society, Landcare groups, residents associations, clubs, sponsors, trusts and a myriad of individuals.

Children, in particular, enjoy being involved in open space activities, and their enthusiastic contribution helps to augment their understanding of the world. It will be necessary to find ways of including children in the council processes.

Community participation and co-managed initiatives are integral to the concept of a sustainable open space network. Community involvement helps to convey the message that the responsibility for maintaining a biologically diverse and robust environment rests with the whole community, cuts across the divisive notion of public vs. private land and leads to enhanced community commitment to the outcomes.

The council will continue to promote community involvement and will consider the need for partnership agreements with valued and significant community groups. This relationship with the community will assist the council in achieving its own outcomes, but there is also an on-going cost to the council: volunteers and partners will continue to need support and resources, direction and encouragement to be most effective in their work.

Principle 9:

The council acknowledges the value that its partners add to its open spaces and will continue to seek and support partners in the community, to assist in implementing the open space strategy and to foster a sense of community commitment to the open spaces, for mutual benefit.



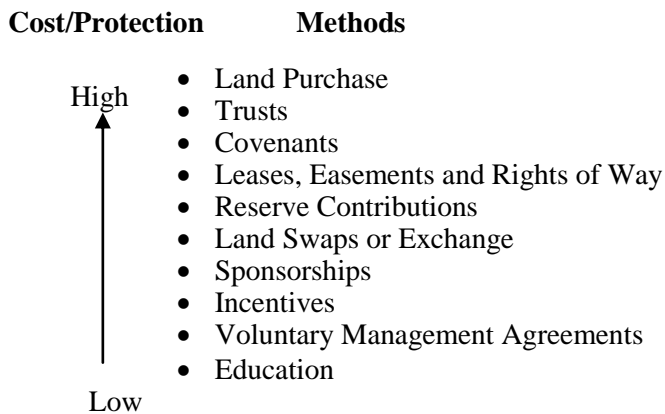
Children from Hukerenui School at Keatley Kauri Grove, July 2000

10 Realistic Goals

There are limits to the area over which the council’s resources can have a worthwhile effect. While the Open Space Strategy has a vision that could take more than twenty years to achieve, it is acknowledged that the council will need to make choices about where to begin. This strategy will develop guidelines for future decisions, so that the council can make choices and priorities about funding open space purchases, development and operations.

The council will consider allocating resources to a limited number of destination parks, including the proposed regional parks and recreation hubs. In the city, the council will consider priority projects from each area, to be developed and staged, if necessary, over the life of the strategy. In the district, the council will consider supporting projects that focus community efforts, and ensure that its resources are fairly spread through the district.

There are a number of methods that the council can use for protecting and acquiring open space, each requiring more or less cost and affording greater or lesser protection. These are discussed in more detail in Appendix 3. In ‘Capital Spaces’ the open space strategy for Wellington, the methods for protecting open space and achieving open space objectives are shown against a continuum for cost and protection, in descending order:



When choosing the right method for a particular situation, the council will need to consider cost-effectiveness in relation to the significance of the open space and the potential threat to open space values. It will also want to know what the expectations of the landowners and the public is. In general, if it wishes to undertake improvements on the site, land ownership is a significant advantage.

When dealing with open space matters, the council is often negotiating with landowners and external agencies. The council can only achieve its open space vision with the cooperation of these parties. Many of the opportunities will be opportunity driven, as and when the parties are ready. Therefore the implementation of many open space initiatives may not fit within a strict timetable. The council will need to be realistic and sufficiently flexible to respond to opportunities as they arise and to negotiate good value for money.

Principle 10:

The council will narrow its focus by acquiring and developing key assets, representative habitats and significant networks and developing these to a high standard as the district matures.

11 Summary

The following list summarises the 10 Guiding Principles:

1 Heritage to be proud of

Principle 1: The council will enhance the district as a place to live and visit by protecting our cultural heritage and sharing the stories of our past through quality interpretation.

2 Responding to pressure and demand

Principle 2: The council will respond to the pressure on and demand for quality open space as the population changes and visitor numbers to the district increase by improving open space opportunities and prioritising its resources.

3 Effective organisation of recreation

Principle 3: The council will provide a diverse range of multi-purpose open space recreational opportunities throughout the district, with facilities developed to cater for a range of abilities and interests and organised to maximise the community's resources.

4 Potential for tourism

Principle 4: The council will ensure that the parks and open spaces in Whangarei significantly contribute to the character and image of the district for its residents and visitors and to the potential for tourism.

5 Fostering conservation

Principle 5: The council will protect and enhance a representative sample of wildlife habitats to a high standard and provide incentives for private landowners to protect wildlife habitats. The council will seek to control plant and animal pests, and to improve and restore significant land and water habitats in the district.

6 Enhancing urban areas

Principle 6: The council will provide and develop open space areas that contribute to the areas amenity of urban development, to interweave the cultural and natural environments and to enhance the quality of urban life.

7 Protecting and accessing the coast and streams

Principle 7: The council will seek to protect and enhance the coastline and significant stream margins. The council will also ensure the community has access to the harbour, the valued coastal fringe and the riparian corridors.

8 Effective linkages

Principle 8: The council will seek to create recreation networks and ecological corridors that maximise the value and accessibility of open space and promote the viability of natural areas.

9 Promoting partnerships

Principle 9: The council acknowledges the value that partners add to its open spaces and will continue to seek and support partners in the community, to assist in implementing the open space strategy and to foster a sense of commitment to the open spaces, for mutual benefit.

10 Realistic goals

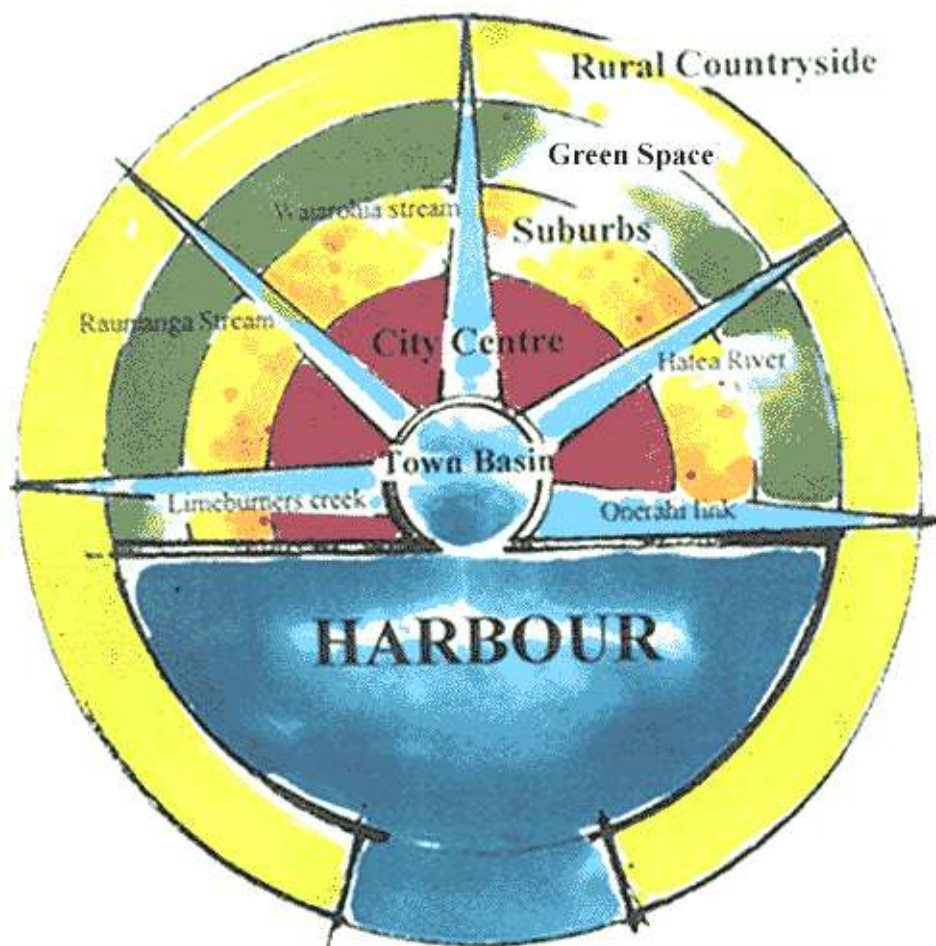
Principle 10: The council will narrow its focus by acquiring key assets, representative habitats and significant networks, and developing these to a high standard as the district matures.

OPEN SPACE CONCEPT

What do we want the open spaces to be like in the future?

The open space concept describes what we want the open spaces in Whangarei City and the district to be like in the future. Generally it is not practical to identify specific pieces of land, so the concept outlines what sorts of open space and improvements we want to see in different areas. The sorts of open spaces the council would like to see in the future reflect the four open space values outlined in the strategy: conservation, recreation, landscape and cultural.

Whangarei – the City



The city has been divided into seven areas, which reflect the open space characteristics of each. This is a conceptual diagram for the areas in Whangarei city, showing the relationship between them. The city areas depicted are the Whangarei Harbour, the Town Basin, the City Centre, the Stream Corridors (including Limeburners Creek, Raumanga Stream, Waiarohia Stream, Hatea River and the coastal corridor to Onerahi), the Suburbs, Green Space and the Rural Countryside. These areas all have open spaces with different combinations of open space values. They also have differing community requirements and varying levels of community participation in open space projects. Each area is discussed in more detail in the following sections.



WHANGAREI HARBOUR/TE RENGA PARAOA

Vision

A clean and sparkling body of water where kai moana can be safely collected; a place of refuge for animals, birds and people.

Description

The Whangarei Harbour is an extensive body of sheltered water, which contains a number of small islands. It includes areas that are extensively modified, such as the Whangarei Port and Marsden Point, and others that are in a predominantly natural state.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Whangarei Harbour is a wildlife refuge, of international importance, which contains saltmarsh, mangroves, wetlands, intertidal and subtidal habitats. The restoration of Matakohe/Limestone Island as a terrestrial refuge is underway.

Recreation

The harbour and its shoreline is a popular destination for aquatic activities, including swimming and fishing, sailing and boating, water skiing and kayaking.

Landscape

The landscape is expansive and spacious. Daily and seasonal changes in water levels and light conditions create continuous fascination. The islands are a feature, at the threshold between the inner and outer harbour.

Culture and Heritage

The harbour was an important source of food and transport for early communities. Sites from prehistoric Māori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected.

Threats and Issues

- The Whangarei Harbour is a large body of water, effectively separating communities that have common economic and social bonds.
- Abandoned islands, such as Matakohe/Limestone Island, have been left in a degraded state.
- Derelict structures litter the foreshore. Of particular concern are the jetties that are unsafe for the public to use.
- Boat access facilities to the harbour need upgrading and assessing.
- Runoff, erosion and siltation threaten the water quality of the harbour.
- The community is promoting a vision for marine reserves in the Whangarei Harbour.
- There are illegal structures, including boat sheds and baches, on coastal reserve land.
- A petition from the community has requested that privately owned land Lot 451, Beach Road, Onerahi, on the foreshore be acquired by council and retained as open space.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Promote a Whangarei Harbour ferry service for recreation and commuting use.
- Support community efforts to assist in protecting cultural sites and in restoring wildlife habitat, public access and understanding pm Matakohe/Limestone Island.
- Acquire other islands in the harbour as the opportunity arises subject to funding.
- Assess coastal structures in the harbour and implement a removal or maintenance programme, as appropriate.
- Assess the boat access facilities to ensure they meet the needs of the community.
- Continue to plant the riparian margins to assist with stormwater filtration, bank stability and siltation. Where possible control the land-based activities that contribute to a reduction in water quality.
- Support the establishment of marine reserves in the Whangarei Harbour.
- Provision will be made for assessment and legalisation of some unpermitted structures. In other instances, reserve areas will revert to their intended purpose, with sunset clauses for illegal structures.
- Investigate the opportunity to acquire Lot 451, Beach Road, Onerahi from the private landowner, for public open space.
- Ensure that areas are allocated for walking dogs. Encourage dog owners to pick up dog litter.



Children at Matakohe/Limestone Island



TOWN BASIN

Vision

The Town Basin is a primary focal point of Whangarei, where the fabric of the urban centre meets the waters of the harbour. A place where people meet, relax and enjoy the city's maritime culture, that is easy to reach and well connected to the centre of the city by promenades that favour pedestrians.

Description

The Town Basin lies in an area that has been the traditional place of waterside activities associated with the city's commerce. The site has been developed as a marina, riverside park and retail complex that is extensively used and highly regarded. The Town Basin is virtually surrounded by roads, with Riverside Drive to the east, Dent Street to the west, and the road bridges connecting the two roads crossing the Hatea River at the head of the basin.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Ecological values in the basin are not significant.

Recreation

A focus for all the harbour activities, with high quality facilities for walking and watching, meeting and eating, stopping and shopping, launching and hiring boats.

Landscape

The site is a contained and busy urban waterside space, defined to the east by an avenue of pohutukawa along Riverside Drive, with the flanks of Parahaki behind, and to the west by the buildings around the town basin development and the nearby Northland Regional Council building. A variety of moored pleasure boats, fishing vessels and international cruising yachts and a general maritime ambience are central to the environment of the Town Basin. The waterside park has a prevailing urban theme, with abundant paving, seating and street furniture, intermingled with many garden elements, such as lawn, planted beds of perennial shrubs and specimen trees.

Culture and heritage

The Hatea River is rich in Maori cultural significance. The replica Victorian buildings and the maritime activities are symbolic of an earlier time in history. The scale and detail in the area fit well with a modern pedestrian and leisure culture.

Threats and Issues

- The Town Basin is not visually or spatially linked to the city centre.
- The area has not planned for a ferry terminal.
- Pedestrian opportunities are limited.
- Hihiaua Reserve is bleak and wind swept, with limited attractions for visitor comfort, interest or enjoyment.
- Land uses in the area of Hihiaua Reserve are not all complimentary to the potential of the Town Basin.
- Access to the Elliott Reserve and pool complex is obscure.
- The Hatea River is rich in cultural and natural significance that has been largely forgotten.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Residents and visitors acknowledge the development of the Town Basin as a very attractive and successful presentation of the city's river frontage.
- The Inner City Development Sub-Committee is employing a multi-disciplinary approach to enhancing the Town Basin and linking it to the city centre. It will be a priority to link the Town Basin with the city centre, so that the advantages of the new development and access to it are enhanced, and so that the economic benefits enhance both areas.
- A ferry terminal, to be most convenient and useful to the city, should be located as close to it as possible.
- Continue to plan for and provide pedestrian connections in the area, especially along the river frontage, for multi-purpose use, including promenading, skateboarding, rollerblading and cycling, except where excluded under the bylaws.
- The proposal to install a sculpture in Hihiaua Reserve will add a very important destination feature. Continue to plan for spaces and features, within the constraints of the area's character, which enhance the area for residents and visitors to create a village concept.
- Continue to encourage mixed use of the council owned properties on the south side of Hihiaua and consider encouraging craft workshops, markets and people friendly pursuits.
- Upgrade the entrance to the Elliott Reserve and pool complex to bring the reserve out to the street and lift the profile of the pool complex.
- Provide information signage interpreting the natural and historic features of the river.



Town Basin palm trees



CITY CENTRE

Vision

A system of vibrant urban spaces and streets, where people can enjoy interacting and doing business; a place which is easy to navigate and where pedestrians are not disadvantaged; streets that bring an element of nature to the city; parks that offer a respite from the town.

Description

As the retail and civic hub of the district, the city centre is a very urban place, filled largely with buildings, roads and carparks. The centre is most intensely developed around the Cameron Street Mall, but stretches out to Forum North in the west and the Okara shopping centres in the east.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Ecological values in the city are small, in scale and opportunity.

Recreation

Arcades, Cameron Street Mall and Quality Street provide attractive, sheltered environments for pedestrians. Cafler and Laurie Hall Parks complement the busy streets with green and refreshing spaces.

Landscape

The city is a place of busy urban spaces and contemporary streetscapes, with Cameron Street Mall offering a benchmark for future inner city enhancement. There is a strong sense of connection with the surrounding bush-clad hills of the town belt. Urban parks, smaller gardens and floral displays in traffic islands and carparks bring amenity to these utility areas.

Culture and heritage

There is a sense of history pervading the city, highlighted by the bronze plaques in Cameron Street Mall. In summertime the holiday feeling is strong, as visitors stop by and people dress casually for the climate. There is a sense that the city is not far from the sea.

Threats and Issues

- The city centre is lacking a significant central public park with the capacity for public gatherings.
- There is a noticeable lack of green areas and trees in the city centre.
- The high cost of land and density of development constrains opportunities for new parks and public spaces.
- Pedestrian facilities need to be enhanced, especially where they connect to the town basin and the green open spaces of the parks and streams.
- The cost of providing colourful pots and hanging baskets is high.
- The Conservatory complex is under-utilised.

Strengths and Opportunities

- The development and treatment of the Cameron Street Mall has set a high standard for public space that will be a precedent and catalyst for further development of the city centre.
- Development of the city centre 20/20 vision is a multi-disciplinary approach that allows for the needs of pedestrians and vehicles, businesses and customers, residents and visitors to be considered comprehensively.
- Provide a central city park or enhance Laurie Hall Park as an open space community focus in the city.
- Provide additional inner city parks and enhance the existing reserves to promote the interweaving of green spaces into the city centre.
- Implement a planting programme to provide sheltered and attractive spaces for pedestrians in the city centre, in accordance with the 20/20 plan.
- Continue to support the design and installation of cultural and artistic features, such as murals and sculpture in the city centre.
- Seek partnerships with the business community in providing added colour and amenity to the city centre.
- Extend the hanging basket theme to relate to the subtropical and coastal character of the mall and town basin, and to coincide with other events, such as the Whangarei Garden Discovery, the local jazz festival, Christmas parades and the Endless Summer Festival.
- Continue to promote the Conservatory complex as an education facility and visitor destination.



Mural in the Conservatory Complex



STREAM CORRIDORS

Vision

The stream corridors flow through catchments of clean streams that support well-developed ecosystems in their waters and along their banks; streamside areas form the backbone of an off-road pedestrian and cycleway system; ecological corridors enable flora and fauna to move through the city and suburbs to colonise the stream margins; stream systems, including detention areas and overland flow paths, can carry flood loadings with minimal impact on their ecology and amenity.

Description

The primary streams have their origins in the steep, bush clad hills of the town belt and flow through the city on their path to the estuarine waters of the harbour. These corridors are the Hatea River, Waiarohia Stream, Raumanga Stream and Limeburners Creek. The coastal corridor links the city with Onerahi, along the harbour margins.

Open Space Values

Conservation

The corridors support indigenous flora, fish species and bird life; natural areas provide their habitat.

Recreation

The continuity of the streams makes them ideal linkages for wildlife and people. The link around the foreshore to Onerahi has the potential to be a multi-purpose promenade like Tamaki Drive in Auckland.

Landscape

The natural corridors within the city fabric act as a visual and physical link with the surrounding hills and the sea downstream. The upper catchments are fast-running and of relatively small size during normal flow. Downstream there are typically waterfalls and in the lowlands around the city the streams become sluggish, channels widen and tidal influences extend some distance upstream.

The presence of the streams is often not well emphasised in the urban area, since the channels are low-lying and there is little streamside vegetation of any stature to define the stream's course. Many of the stream banks have been extensively modified.

Culture and heritage

Since the land was cleared around them, the stream corridors have been areas impractical for development and too difficult for maintenance. There is a culture of neglect around them, and the line between stream and drain becomes indistinct.

Threats and Issues

- The council has implemented a policy of taking esplanade reserves along the city riparian margins, as the opportunity arises, but this process has not been followed up with restoration or development of the esplanade reserves.
- Many of the stream banks are degraded with weeds, rubbish and unsightly stormwater outfalls. Poor maintenance and lack of care in infrastructure design and construction give an uncared for appearance, which can encourage vandalism and dumping.
- Residents, like those along the Waiarohia Stream and the Otangarei Stream continue to show interest in helping to improve their environments.

- Stream banks lack trees to provide shade for pedestrians or stream fauna. Their potential as places of nature in the city or visual amenity has not been realised.
- Many stream banks have obstructions and lack of access facilities. Their potential for off-road and road-to-road walkways and cycleways has not been realised.
- Stormwater run off is rarely treated to improve water quality before it reaches the streams.
- Some weirs, fords and culverts restrict the passage of native fish.
- Streams in the city area regularly flood.
- The harbour edge connection with Onerahi is a busy commuter corridor to the city and an important gateway from the airport. The facilities and amenity of the route do not match its use or value. The road is a black spot for cycle accidents; the route lacks cohesion and visual amenity.

Strengths and Opportunities

- A local Landcare group has galvanised community support for restoration of the Waiarohia Stream. The Northland Regional Council and the Whangarei District Council's Waste Division are also contributing to flood control and enhancement of the stream. It will be a priority to work with and extend the influence of these groups, to enhance the stream corridors and the city environment.
- Continue to support restoration projects as funds allow.
- Plant to restore the stream margins for wildlife habitat, stormwater infiltration, bank stability, sediment control and visual amenity.
- Develop shared paths for pedestrians and cyclists, where possible.
- Develop engineering standards for structures and outfalls alongside streams that are practical and sensitive to the environment.
- Design fish passes for weirs and culverts as required.
- Continue to use esplanade reserves as a buffer against flood damage to private property and assets in flood prone areas.
- Develop a continuous promenade for multi-use public access along the coastal route to Onerahi.
- Implement a programme clearing weeds and planting specimen trees along the route from the airport to the city.
- Continue to prioritise the acquisition of esplanade links along the Hatea Stream, Raumanga Stream, and Limeburners Creek, and to restore and develop these as possible.



Kowhai in Cafler Park. More kowhai trees will be introduced into the stream corridors as they are restored.



SUBURBS

Vision

Accessible open spaces close to people's homes, which provide a varied range of recreation opportunities as well as green spaces that contribute to the identity and amenity of the suburb.

Description

They have significant influence on the character of Whangarei's suburban areas and are important to the quality of life there.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Ecology is highly modified. Stream corridors and bush areas are the primary source of ecological values.

Recreation

These are comprised of both busy recreation hubs and small-scale green areas, including neighbourhood parks, playgrounds, sportsfields, avenues of street trees and street gardens.

Landscape

The areas are intensively developed and inhabited. Parks and streetscapes are a local focus. Pocket parks, street tree planting and garden features provide a sense of space and can add to civic pride in the localities.

Culture and heritage

Local cemeteries are cultural and spiritual open spaces, with strong links to the past. In a landscape of individual gardens and personal style, the local parks and gardens add structure, local identity and character to each suburb. Where local people join together to restore open spaces there is a greater sense of community and belonging.

Threats and Issues

- The strategy recommends consolidating recreation facilities in clusters of high standard facilities, which are shared where possible.
- The strategy recommends that recreation facilities be set in landscaped environments, which provide passive and informal use and enhance the amenity of the suburb.
- A significant threat to open space can be the haphazard development of club and community buildings for exclusive use on reserves.
- Kamo will need additional sportsfields in the near future.
- The strategy recommends links between open spaces and recreation areas.
- New subdivision proposals may depict open space in leftover areas, at the back of houses, with access and the green amenity obscured from view.
- Reserve contribution has been in areas unsuitable for building or development, with steep slopes or wet areas.
- Open spaces in Otangarei have become degraded; restoration work has the potential to act as a focus for community unity.

- The New Zealand and Australian playground safety standards have recently been updated.
- A number of empty traffic islands and road berms are potential garden sites.
- Streets have gaps in their avenues of trees; several streets would benefit from street trees.
- Local historic sites and cemeteries could be the focus for stories that interpret the history of Whangarei.
- The maze at Tarewa Park has significant gaps.
- The open spaces around the airport need enhancement.
- The Church Street lookout at Onerahi has easily accessible views of the harbour, but looks uncared for.
- Carparks for recreation facilities have not been well maintained.

Strengths and Opportunities

- A proposed list of recreation hubs has been compiled for Whangarei city, including Kensington Park, Okara Park, Kamo Sports Park and Tikipunga Reserve.
- More specialised recreation hubs will be developed at William Fraser Reserve for aquatic activities, at Barge Park for town and country events, and in Elliott Reserve as a pool complex.
- Confirm guidelines for the location of community facilities on reserves and identify those parks or categories most suitable for the purpose.
- Confirm the requirements for new sportsfield development to add to Kamo Sports Park.
- Plan to link recreation areas with other open spaces, such as stream corridors, to expand the recreation opportunities and increase the access points.
- Design and develop open spaces to have a strong presence in the community and on the road frontage, with inviting entrances and playgrounds well supervised by neighbouring properties.
- Plant difficult steep and wet sites, to reduce costly on-going maintenance, or consider divestment.
- Continue to restore the Otangarei Stream.
- Plan to develop a central open space in Otangarei as a focus for the community.
- The council has established high standards in sun protection for children at playgrounds.
- Provide for annual engineering assessments of playground structures and undersurfaces to ensure compliance with current safety standards.
- Develop a programme for additional planting opportunities on traffic islands and road berms to enhance the visual amenity of suburban centres and the gateways to the city.
- Develop a programme for street tree replacement and planting throughout the suburbs.
- Develop interpretation material on stories connected with historic sites and cemeteries, as the opportunities arise.
- Enhance the maze at Tarewa Park with additional planting around the edges, or consider removal.
- Prepare a landscape plan for the airport to enhance the terminal area for visitors and to improve difficult, steep and wet sites.
- Develop a concept plan to enhance the Church Street lookout.
- Maintain carparks to a high standard and ensure they are located at nodes of recreation activity.



GREEN SPACE

Vision

A strong natural framework of hills and valleys clad with indigenous vegetation that contain the city and offer an easily accessible escape from the built up area. Fresh and green spaces where the air is clean, the water sparkling and the city noises subdued.

Description

Steep ranges of hills contain and define the city to the east and west. The Otaika Western Hills form a backdrop to the west, whilst Parahaki and the Mt Tiger Range beyond are the dominant hills to the east. Related steep lands, such as Hurupaki, Parakiore and Hikurangi volcanic cones, along with the hills of the Glenbervie forest, continue this theme of containment further north. The green belt incorporates the water catchment lake in the Whau Valley and a number of small streams, as well as Abbey Caves, A H Reed Memorial Kauri Reserve, and the Whangarei Quarry Gardens.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Extensive areas of indigenous forest, freshwater streams, lakes and riparian margins have high ecological value.

Recreation

The green space contains networks of tracks for walking and tramping, and mountain bike riders also use these areas. A public lookout is accessible by car or walking tracks on the summit of Parahaki. Another lookout and a swimming hole are at Whangarei Falls. Abbey Caves is open for caving and the two quarries west of town are being developed for visitors.

Landscape

The green space is a very strong containing framework, serving to define and focus the urban area. It is an integral part of the city's identity, bringing a sense of wilderness within close reach. Hillsides form a backdrop to most views and are widely visible. Lakes, wetlands, waterfalls and watercourses are localised features, also contained within the terrain. A prevailing cover of indigenous forest further strengthens the wilderness image of the green belt.

Culture and heritage

The green space contains former quarries with significant potential for development and enhancement. Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected.

Threats and Issues

- There is widespread evidence of historic Maori sites, including pa sites, waahi tapu, terraces and gardens.
- Parahaki and the Western Hills make a significant impact as a backdrop to the city, but access to them is not obvious or direct.
- DoC staff have indicated the potential for Pukenui Reserve to be developed as a mainland island in association with the council's neighbouring reserves.
- The Western Hills are being degraded by plant and animal pests.

- Limeburner's Creek boardwalks and large areas of water supply catchment have the potential for further recreation use.
- There is a lack of an outdoor performing space in Whangarei.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Historic Maori sites need protection; some may need interpretation.
- Develop Parahaki and the Western Hills Reserve as Destination Parks, which make the most of their proximity to town, with well-developed connections and access points.
- Continue to enhance the wildlife habitat and ecological value of the reserves around Pukenui Forest, in partnership with DoC.
- Prioritise pest control operations in the Western Hills area.
- Continue to work with the council's engineers to develop walking tracks and visitor facilities in the Whau Valley, Coronation Reserve and Limeburner's Creek.
- Plan to include an amphitheatre in the proposal for the Whangarei Quarry Gardens for outdoor performance and teaching space.



View of Parahaki Reserve from Kensington Park



RURAL COUNTRYSIDE

Vision

The rural hinterland to the city area provides countryside amenity to city folk, recreation opportunities for those in the countryside and contributes to the city's setting within the district.

Description

The belt of rural land that surrounds the city extends approximately to the margins of areas where small lifestyle holdings are prevalent. These also overlap with the larger areas in the district that are described in the following section.

Open Space values

Conservation

The stream corridors support freshwater fish species bird life; and natural areas, including numerous bush remnants, provide their habitat.

Recreation

Open spaces such as riparian margins, Barge Showgrounds and Maunu Reserve cemetery provide opportunities for recreation in a country setting, close to the city.

Landscape

The natural corridors within the city fabric act as a visual and physical link with the surrounding hills and the sea downstream. The upper catchments are fast-running and of relatively small size during normal flow. Downstream there are typically waterfalls and through the lowlands around the city, the streams become sluggish, channels widen and tidal influences extend some distance upstream.

Culture and heritage

The pastoral landscape contains stonewalls which are a feature of the district. Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected.

Threats and Issues

- There is widespread evidence of historic Maori sites, including pa sites, waahi tapu, terraces and gardens.
- Local iwi have confirmed that the archaeological landscape at Puwera (Portland) contains significant sites.
- Stonewalls, which are a unique feature of the countryside around Whangarei, are under pressure from changes to the countryside.
- Stands of native bush remnants are a prominent feature in the countryside.
- Subdivision of farms into smallholdings increases the population density and the demand for recreation opportunities.
- The strategy has highlighted Barge Showgrounds as a future recreation hub.
- Maunu Reserve cemetery is a well-maintained cemetery in a very attractive setting, which visitors can enjoy.
- The entranceways to Whangarei need improvements.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Historic Maori sites need protection; some may need interpretation.
- Work with iwi to establish future use and management criteria for Puwera.
- The council can lead by example, at Maunu Reserve cemetery and Barge Showgrounds, in restoring stonewalls or re-using the materials on site, as appropriate.
- The creation of reserves and covenants assists in protecting native bush remnants.
- Stream corridors have significant potential as future recreation areas in the peri-urban environment.
- Barge Showgrounds is ideally placed to bring town and country together for agricultural events. It has the potential to be a farm park, where animals can graze the turf without damaging sport grounds and city folk can feel closer to the country.
- Provide spaces for contemplation, including additional seating and walking tracks, for visitors to Maunu Reserve cemetery.
- Entranceways to the Whangarei district and city can be improved with attention to signs and planting in significant locations, which express the character of the area.



Maunu Reserve Cemetery in Spring

Whangarei – the District



This is a conceptual diagram for the seven areas within the Whangarei District. It shows the conceptual diagram for Whangarei City at the centre of the hub and depicts the open space characteristics of the different areas within the spokes of the wheel. The seven areas are Whangaruru, Ngunguru/Tutukaka, Whangarei Heads, Bream Bay, Maungakaramea, Maungatapere and Hukurangi.

The areas within the district have been identified as communities of interest, based around a significant number of common open space features, with shared identities and facilities, within the boundaries of local government wards.

Within each area the council will want to consider the requirements for open space protection and development. The council will also support priority community projects and plans for the development of civic amenities and open spaces for community focus, as funds allow, so it can ensure provision and enhancement reflect representative levels and fairness.



BREAM BAY

Description

An extensive and varied area, taking in coastal areas of varied character, between Bream Tail and Oakleigh, along with hill country and river flats to the District's southern boundary.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Bream Bay has extensive areas of wildlife refuge on the Waipu coast, predominantly in recognition of habitat values for bird life. The New Zealand dotterel roosts at Langs Beach. The habitats of significance include the intertidal and subtidal habitats, dunes estuaries and the rocky and sandy coastal margins. Coastal forest, areas of inland indigenous forest and the flora and fauna inhabiting the streams and small rivers have high ecological value. The Waipu Cave system is a significant and specialised habitat

Recreation

The recreation opportunities are numerous, and include walking, mountain biking, swimming, beach activities, diving, fishing, surfing, boating, playing golf, wildlife observation, caving, camping, active sports, horse training and horse racing at Ruakaka. Waipu is the recreational hub for this area, supplemented by facilities at Ruakaka. It is likely that a third recreational centre will develop in the Marsden Point area in response to predicted development in that part of the district.

Landscape

Bream Bay features an expansive ocean beach, typically backed by extensive dunes. This area has a strong sense of natural character and wilderness. It is also very open and exposed. Built development is largely separated and screened from the coastal area. Views to Whangarei Heads at the apex of the beach are a focus of views to the north.

Bream Tail is a significant coastal headland that defines the southern edge of the district and Bream Bay. Coastal landforms include a mix of sandy coves and rugged rocky shore. Limestone formations between Langs Beach and Waipu Cove are a distinctive local feature. Quite extensive areas of coastal vegetation, largely indigenous, have pohutukawa as the dominant species. Settlement is typically clustered and defined within coves, but with large-lot development along much of the balance of the coast. The coastal character is a mix of natural and modified.

The southern edge of Whangarei Harbour is typically very open and horizontal. A strong estuarine character is enhanced by the relative shelter and containment of this part of the coast, its extensive intertidal flats and the saltmarsh / mangrove vegetation associations found along the shoreline. It includes meandering estuarine rivers that extend inland. The outer reaches of the harbour relate to the Whangarei Heads, which form a backdrop to views to the north.

Inland terrain includes the hill country associated with the Brynderwyn range and southern parts of the Waipu hills a little further to the north. The latter have a strong imagery with their covering of indigenous forest, whilst the Brynderwyns, whose cover is dominated by a mix of pine plantation and pasture, provide a dramatic southern point of entry to the district to travellers on State Highway 1.

Culture and heritage

Much of the southern edge of the harbour area is relatively natural, with the part around One Tree Point and Marsden Point having a more modified character influenced by the settlement and industrial port developments. Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound. Maori have lived in this area for centuries and continue to play a part in its development and use. European settlement in the Waipu area dates back 150 years. The area is contained within the Bream Bay ward.

Threats and Issues

- The Waipu Caves need a management plan.
- The Waipu community seeks assistance in planning and implementing improvements to the township and open spaces.
- The Ruakaka community seeks support for additional street tree planting and development of a village green in the town.
- The Ruakaka/Marsden Point structure plan identified the need for a cemetery in the area.
- An assemblage of public and privately owned land along the coast adjacent to State Highway 1 has the potential to be enhanced for recreation, conservation and as a gateway to the district.
- A stretch of public and private land on the coast between Waipu Cove and Langs Beach has potential as a public coastal walkway.
- Grazing along the margins of esplanade reserves restricts the regrowth of native species.
- The riverbanks, particularly along the Ruakaka and Waipu Rivers, have potential as recreation and walking areas.
- A lack of vegetation on the dunes is promoting erosion at points of access to the coast.
- There is a lack of all-tide boat access to the harbour from One Tree Point/Marsden Bay and an all tide boat ramp is urgently needed.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Prepare a management plan for the Waipu Caves to confirm management and access issues.
- Plan to assist the residents of Waipu in assessing open space and planting opportunities in Waipu township.
- Develop a planting and path layout plan for future development in the Waihoihoi Reserve.
- Continue to plant street trees in Ruakaka in association with the residents.
- Plan for a cemetery in the Ruakaka/Marsden Point area.
- Develop a planting and layout plan for the future development of the Ruakaka Village Green.
- Facilitate the development of a Bream Bay Regional Park, in partnership with private landowners and the community, to enhance the conservation and recreation opportunities and create a gateway to the district.
- Plan to develop a coastal walkway, in partnership with residents, between Waipu Cove and Langs Beach.
- Continue to plant and restrict grazing along the esplanade reserves, to enhance the amenity and reduce erosion, where appropriate.
- Develop walkways along the stream banks, with a priority along the Ruakaka and Waipu Rivers, to enhance recreation opportunities.
- Continue to plant the dunes, and to define access across the dunes where required.
- Ensure an all tide boat ramp is included in the plans for the new marina development at One Tree Point.



MAUNGAKARAMEA

Description

Maungakaramea is an area of predominantly inland rural terrain, running from the edge of the city area to the southwest boundary of the district. It includes a small portion of the harbour edge around Portland.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Ecological values are likely to be relatively limited in relation to the size of the area. Habitats include saltmarsh and mangrove vegetation, stream and river corridors and pockets of indigenous forest and shrub land.

Recreation

Recreation opportunities include walking, mountain biking, boating and active sports. The recreational focus is on the Maungakaramea settlement.

Landscape

The landscape is characterised by broken hill country, including the parts of the prominent Tangihua Range that forms part of the western definition and backdrop to the area. The Tauraroa River, streams and their associated valleys are a theme of this area. The seascape of the upper part of the harbour associated with this area is generally similar to those of Bream Bay, although the scale is more contained by surrounding terrain.

Culture and heritage

The dominant land use is pastoral. Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound. The area is contained within the Bream Bay ward.

Threats and Issues

- Land at the Maungakaramea Domain is owned by the Crown and administered in partnership with the community.
- The community seeks to define and enhance the entrance to Maungakaramea.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Support the community in developing the recreation facilities at Maungakaramea Domain.
- Assist the community to define and enhance the entrance to Maungakaramea.



WHANGAREI HEADS

Description

Whangarei Heads includes the Whangarei Heads peninsula, extending from Onerahi and Waikaraka to Bream Head on the harbour coast and from Pataua North to Bream Head on the ocean coast.

Open Space Values

Conservation

Whangarei Heads contains areas of saltmarsh and mangrove habitat, with intertidal and subtidal values. The coastal forest and shrub land associations on prominent landforms, particularly around Mt. Aubrey, Mt. Manaia and Mt. Lion are significant. Other areas of indigenous vegetation tend to be isolated groves or larger tracts, such as around the Mount Tiger Road.

Recreation

Recreation opportunities include walking, mountain biking, swimming, beach activities, fishing, diving, surfing, boating, water skiing, playing golf, wildlife observation, caving, camping, active sports. Parua Bay is the future recreation hub of this area.

Landscape

The landscape contains a harbour coastline where steep landforms drop to the coastal edge. The indented estuarine coast contains extensive intertidal flats, including areas of saltmarsh and mangrove. Several small islands add to the diversity of the coast. The towering forms of Mounts Manaia, Aubrey and Lion dominate the southern reaches of Whangarei Heads. These are the breccia remains of a strata-volcano crater rim. Extensive indigenous vegetation upon these landforms and along the adjacent coastline brings a strong natural character to much of the Heads area.

The ocean coast contains diverse coastal landscape consisting of ocean beaches, rocky shore and indented estuaries. Ocean Beach and Parauwanui Beach (Pataua) are expansive ocean beaches with well-formed dune fields extending inland. This area is open and exposed. The rocky coast is very rugged and includes many small islets lying just offshore and/or prominent headland landforms, mainly clad with a narrow fringe of pohutukawa. Estuaries extend many kilometres inland and feature extensive intertidal flats, with related areas of saltmarsh and mangroves. The landscape typically has high landscape values and strong natural character.

Culture and heritage

Settlement is largely clustered within embayments along the waters edge, giving each bay a distinctive identity. The inland activities are pastoral. The powerful stories of the area from Māori mythology fit with the impressiveness of the landscape features. Sites from prehistoric Maori activities abound. The area is included in the Coastal ward.

Threats and Issues

- The community is actively developing a mainland island kiwi sanctuary at Whangarei Heads.
- The community is actively controlling pests and track construction at Reotahi Reserve.
- Parua Bay will need additional active sportsfields in the near future.
- Mt Aubrey and Tiller Park have valuable open spaces with easy contours, which have the potential for local recreation use and walking tracks.
- Informal walkways around the coast need further development.
- Pataua Landcare group is active in restoring the foreshore.
- Sand dunes at Ocean Beach are eroding noticeably.
- Boat access to the harbour and car parks is at a premium in summer.
- The remains of a former freezing works stand in the Reotahi Reserve.
- A significant kauri tree stands close to the boundary with private land in McLeod's Bay.
- The community would like to see a marine reserve in the area.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Continue to support the community in enhancing the bush and providing walking tracks.
- Plan to acquire sufficient land to develop sportsfields for the future, as the need arises.
- Design recreation areas for informal use at Mt. Aubrey and Tiller Park.
- Plan to extend and upgrade the walking tracks along the coast and within existing reserves, with formal access ways and the potential for disabled access, where possible.
- Continue to support the Pataua Landcare group in restoring the foreshore.
- Restore and protect the dunes at Ocean Beach.
- Assess boat access and car park facilities to ensure they meet the requirements of the community and summer visitors.
- Improve access to and interpret the site of the former freezing works in Reotahi Reserve, as part of the coastal walkway.
- Survey the location of the kauri tree in McLeod's Bay.
- Support and promote the establishment of a marine reserve.



Mt Aubrey, Whangarei Heads



NGUNGURU/TUTUKAKA

Description

This district extends from the Horahora River north to Mouresses Bay. It takes in related eastern hill country extending west as far as Glenbervie.

Open Space Values

Conservation

The areas of saltmarsh and mangrove habitat have intertidal and subtidal habitat values. Ecological values are significant in areas of coastal forest on exposed coast and more sheltered estuarine areas. Unique species on the coast between Tutukaka and Matapouri have direct links with the Poor Knights Islands. The Horahora River is particularly rich in the range and continuity of habitats offered.

Recreation

Recreation options are varied and impressive on this coast. They include walking, swimming, beach activities, diving, fishing, surfing, boating, sailing, kayaking, hunting, camping, organised sport. The area is a land base for boat trips to the Poor Knights Islands. Ngunguru is the recreational hub of this area. The Ngunguru Recreation Society administers the golf course, sportsfield and bowling club.

Landscape

This is predominantly a convoluted rocky coastline, characterised by sheer cliffs, small rocky coves, and islets. The cliff apex and coastal bank of most of this area is clad in an often-narrow belt of indigenous vegetation, with pohutukawa having a visually dominant presence. The extensive ocean beach and barrier spit at Ngunguru has very high landscape sensitivity. Similar formations exist at Whananaki, while more contained beaches are at Matapouri, Sandy Bay and Mouresses Bay. Estuarine rivers bring a range of more sheltered coastal conditions to the Horahora, Ngunguru, Matapouri and Whananaki inlets.

Inland, the area is typically composed of dissected hill country clad in pasture, quite extensive areas of indigenous forest or shrub land, and blocks of plantation forestry. The Glenbervie area includes a diverse range of landscape types from the gentle terrain and historic ambience with the stonewalls, mature exotic plantings and old homesteads of Glenbervie, to steep farmland, indigenous vegetation and exotic forestry. The volcanic cone at Glenbervie is a local feature.

Culture and heritage

Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected. Much of this coastal area has growing settlement, typically contained within embayments. The social and recreation focus of the area is centred on the sea and is seasonal. The area is contained within the Coastal ward.

Threats and Issues

- The coast is the preferred destination for recreation and is under pressure from subdivision.
- The community would like to see a marine reserve on the eastern coastline of the district.
- Boat access to the coast and car parks are at a premium in summer.
- The community is involved in the restoration of Whale Bay and Kitty Vane Reserve.
- The community is enthusiastic about restoring the pioneer cemetery and dunes at Whananaki South.
- The coastal access between Whangaumu and Ngunguru needs upgrading.
- The council has been restoring the Kukutawhao Island in partnership with DoC.
- Dunes are eroded by undefined access and loss of vegetation.
- The Ngunguru sandspit is a significant landscape feature with high ecological and cultural values.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Consider the acquisition and development of the Tutukaka Regional Park, in partnership with the community.
- Support and promote the establishment of a marine reserve on the eastern shoreline.
- Support and promote the development of walking and cycling tracks along the Pacific coast.
- Assess boat access and car park facilities to ensure they meet the requirements of the community and visitors.
- Continue to support the community in enhancing Whale Bay and Kitty Vane Reserve.
- Continue to support the community in restoring and upgrading walking tracks.
- Continue to support the community at Whananaki South in restoring the pioneer cemetery and the dunes.
- Plan to restore Kukutawhao Island in partnership with DoC.
- Upgrade the coastal access between Whangaumu and Ngunguru.
- Continue to develop accessways across the dunes and to work with the community in planting them.
- Consider the future protection needs and recreation opportunities of the Ngunguru spit.



WHANGARURU

Description

The Whangaruru area extends from Mimiwhangata to the district's northeastern boundary above Bland Bay. Like the Ngunguru/Tutukaka area, the Whangaruru area reaches some distance to the east to take in the upper parts of the eastern hill range before it connects with the Cape Brett hills.

Conservation

The district contains extensive areas of saltmarsh and mangrove habitat with intertidal and subtidal habitat values. Quite extensive areas of indigenous forest clad much of the inland hills. Some pockets of wetland remain. There is significant pressure on the coastline for subdivision and development.

Recreation

The main recreation activities are walking, swimming, beach activities, fishing, surfing, boating, sailing, hunting, camping, active sports. Oakura is the recreation hub of this area.

Landscape

The area contains an extensive estuarine harbour reaching inland, with a varied coastline. Large areas of saltmarsh and mangrove margin remain. Outside the harbour, this area is characterised by reef-lined rocky coast and the extensive beach at Bland Bay. Considerable areas of native vegetation clad relatively steep terrain that defines the landward parts of the coastal landscape. Much of the area is devoid of built modification and has high natural character values.

Open coastal parts of the area are similar to the Ngunguru area, with a convoluted, rocky coastline with small sheer cliffs, rocky coves, and islets. Once again pohutukawa dominates much of the coastal bank or cliff-top, frequently backed with indigenous coastal forest or shrub land. The inland hill country is rugged and predominantly covered with indigenous forest or shrub land, and blocks of plantation forestry.

Culture and heritage

Settlement along the coast is largely nestled between the foot of the coastal bank and the sea. This area includes several prominent pa sites that give an historic context to the landscape. Cultural sites from prehistoric Maori activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected. Whangaruru is contained within the Coastal ward.

Threats and Issues

- The community is involved in the restoration and development of Te Akau Reserve.
- There is a requirement for an all-tide boat access and carpark in the area.
- Council has approved a concept plan for the development of the Oakura Sportspark.
- Public access to the coast is threatened by subdivision.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Continue to support the community in the restoration of Te Akau Reserve.
- Assess opportunities for an all-tide boat access and carpark in the area.
- Continue to develop the Oakura Sportspark for active and passive recreation and conservation values.
- The council will acquire reserves along the coastline as a priority.



HIKURANGI

Description

Hikurangi is situated in an expansive area of lowland hills and the extensive flats associated with the Hikurangi swamps. It extends from the northern edge of the city to the northern boundary of the district near Hukerenui, and from the western edge of the eastern hills near Glenbervie and Puhipuhi to beyond Ruatangata in the west.

Open Space Values

Conservation

The ecological values of the former swamp are relatively limited. Riparian areas associated with the numerous rivers that drain to the Hikurangi swamp, remnant wetlands and oxbows within the former swampland have some ecological value. Forest remnants on Hikurangi Mountain are also valuable.

Recreation

Recreation activities include walking, mountain biking, playing golf, hang-gliding and active sports. Hikurangi is the recreation hub for this area.

Landscape

The Hikurangi landscape is predominantly pastoral, with terrain ranging from the extensive flats of the Hikurangi swamp through to moderate hill country. The area has been extensively modified for farming. A number of volcanic cones, the Waro limestone formations, areas of remnant wetland and pockets of indigenous forest remain. Stream corridors are an important landscape element within this area.

Culture and heritage

Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected. The settlement of Hikurangi has historic homes and a main street developed as a conventional strip. It is close enough to Whangarei to develop as a dormitory suburb. The district is contained within the Hikurangi ward.

Threats and Issues

- The township has a growing sense of pride and identity.
- There is a significant population of young people in the town.
- The sportsfield along the main highway needs further development.
- The community is enthusiastic about the restoration of Lake Waro.
- Streams in the area have the potential for enhancement.
- The area has had an interesting history, worthy of recording and sharing.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Continue to work with the community to enhance the town with hanging baskets and street trees.
- Assist the community to construct a skateboard facility on the landfill site next to Lake Waro.
- Plan to drain the sportsfields for more extensive use, as required.
- Plan to enhance the fields for visual amenity, better access and passive use, with trees, riparian planting and a bridge.
- Continue to plant the riparian edges and develop walking tracks along the esplanade reserves.
- Continue to support the community in restoring Lake Waro as a community focus for open space activities.
- Work with the community in further interpreting local history.



MAUNGATAPERE

Description

Maungatapere is a relatively narrow belt of countryside that reaches west from the city's edge and extends west to the district's western boundary near Twin Bridges in the Mangakahia River valley.

Open Space Values

Conservation

This district contains relatively few areas of indigenous habitat. However, indigenous vegetation on the northeast flanks of the Tangihua Range, and a number of other relatively small areas of native forest, may have some ecological values. The Mangakahia and Wairua Rivers, and associated stream systems have some riparian and freshwater habitat values.

Recreation

The main recreation activities are walking, hunting and active sports. Poroti is the recreation hub for this area. Sports facilities are located on Crown land.

Landscape

The Maungatapere district extends from the highly productive landscape around Maungatapere, with its volcanic cones, intensive orchards and stonewall enclosures, through to the more remote inland hill country and river terraces around Parakao. The Tangihua Ranges and others nearby are a dominant feature of this western part of the district, together with the Mangakahia River. This more distant part of the area has a remote and rather dramatic landscape character.

Culture and heritage

Sites from prehistoric Maori and historic European activities abound, but few are well known, acknowledged or protected. This area has a predominantly pastoral lifestyle and is in the Maungatapere ward.

Threats and Issues

- The local community recreation centres are the social and recreational focus points of the area.
- The riparian margins have potential for recreational use.
- The community would like to see improvements to the local village green at Maungatapere.
- Prepare a development plan for Ruddells Reserve and Twin Bridges Reserve.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Support the communities in upgrading and planting the community centre facilities and open spaces around them.
- Plan to develop the esplanade reserves as recreation areas and walking tracks.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPEN SPACE CONCEPT

Will you have to sell your land?

The open space concept is not intended to identify specific pieces of land; rather it is intended to indicate the general area where certain types of open space might be appropriate. The council does not intend to force anyone to sell their land; rather the council wishes to achieve its open space vision through partnerships or on the basis of willing seller-willing buyer. If you think your land might be affected, please don't hesitate to contact the council.

Is there any surplus Open Space?

It is intended to identify open space owned or managed by the council that has low value in relation to the open space values discussed in the strategy. It is expected that this land may include areas that have difficult or no public access, and no opportunity to improve this aspect in the future.

The council will prepare a list of potential surplus land for sale or land-swap, as appropriate. Land vested in the council as reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 will require public notification, with an opportunity for public submissions and the final approval of the Minister for the Environment, before it can be divested. It is likely to be a condition of divestment that proceeds from land in this category is used to acquire replacement reserves.

When considering the possibilities of surplus land in the cities it is useful to be aware that apparent low use of open space is not necessarily indicative of a lack of demand. In built-up areas open space is appreciated for the green vistas it offers and the lack of development within it. Demand for a local reserve may become obvious if council tried to sell it, because people value its potential to be there when they want it, and to be a permanent area of open space in their environment.

What new open spaces will Whangarei need in the future?

ACQUISITION PROCESS

The following table sets out proposed open space acquisition projects, to be funded or facilitated as opportunities arise. All projects will need to go through the Annual Plan process and be approved by the council.

Acquisition priorities can be confirmed by comparing the values and merits of difficult sites, according to the following factors:

- Potential for price escalation exists;
- Existing use and growth in demand;
- Strategic priority identified;
- Linkage or network opportunity;
- Consequences of delayed purchase;
- Additional funding sources available.

Methods for achieving open space objectives and acquiring resources are discussed in Appendix 7. The following table is a summary of this information:

Priority	Acquisition Projects	Methods
1.	Coastal Parks: Islands, regional parks, passive areas and lookouts.	Trust, purchase, sponsorship, reserve contributions, Crown land, endowment, covenants.
2.	Coastal Access: Esplanade reserves, boat access, carparks, pedestrian access, coastal walkways.	Management agreements, incentives, reserve contribution, easements, purchase.
3.	Recreation: Sportsfields.	Purchase, trust, and land exchange.
4.	Central City Green Space: Parks and a central gathering space in the city	Land exchange, reserves contributions, trust, purchase.
5.	Conservation Networks: Protect and enhance habitat, buffer or extend habitat.	Education, management agreements, incentives, sponsorship, land exchange, reserve contribution, covenants, trust, purchase.
6.	Recreation Networks: Improved access, passive use, walkways, cycleways.	Land exchange, reserve contribution, easement, and purchase.
7.	Riparian Corridors: Wildlife corridors, stormwater quality, walkways, cycleways, access, passive recreation.	Land exchange, reserve contributions, easements, covenant, and purchase.
8.	Community Spaces: Local parks, playgrounds, village green, community facilities, outdoor performance, passive recreations.	Land exchange, reserve contributions, trust, and purchase.

How can the council make the best use of the Open Spaces it has?

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The following tables set out proposed open space development projects to be funded as possible. All projects will need to go through the Annual Plan process and be approved by the council.

Destination Parks

Destination Parks are defined as primary open space destinations for residents and visitors within the Whangarei district. The Town Basin has already been developed with high quality facilities and the capacity to accommodate a number of people and multiple activities. The following is a list of proposed Destination Parks. It is recommended that the council select additional parks for development over the next five years of the strategy, in order of priority.

Priority	Destination Parks	Development Initiated
1.	Town Basin/Hihiaua Reserve	✓
2.	Whangarei Quarry Gardens	✓
3.	Laurie Hall Park	✓
4.	Parahaki Reserves	
5.	Proposed Tutukaka Regional Park	
6.	Maunu Cemetery	✓
7.	Matakohe/Limestone Island	✓
8.	Whangarei Heads	✓
9.	Western Hills, including Pukenui Forest, the Coronation Reserves and WDC water catchment area	
10.	Raumanga Falls Reserve	✓
11.	Whangarei Falls Reserve	✓
12.	Proposed Bream Bay Regional Park	
13.	Proposed Ngunguru Sandspit Regional Park	



The Town Basin Marina and Promenade

Recreation Hubs

Recreation Hubs are centres of recreation activity. Kensington Park and reserves in rural centres are already focus areas for sport and recreation. The following is a list of proposed Recreation Hubs. It is recommended that council select additional hubs for development over the next five years of the strategy, in order of priority.

Priority	Recreation Hubs	Development Initiated
1.	Kensington Park - acquisition and development	✓
2.	Okara Sports Park – development	✓
3.	Tikipunga Sports Park - development and enhancement	
4.	Kamo Sports Park - acquisition and development	
5.	Parua Bay Reserve - acquisition and development	
6.	William Fraser Memorial Park – development	✓
7.	Elliott Reserve – entrance and carpark	✓
8.	Oakura Reserve – improvements	✓
9.	Hikurangi Sports Park – improvements	
10.	Ruakaka Recreation Reserve – development and a possible joint project with Bream College.	✓
11.	Barge Park Showgrounds – facilities	✓
12.	Hukerenui Domain – upgrade	✓
13.	Mangakahia Recreation Reserve – upgrade	✓
14.	Maungakaramea Domain – development	✓
15.	Ngunguru Recreation Reserve	✓

Priority	Town Basin Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Plan to enhance the links between the Town Basin and City Centre.	
2.	Develop pedestrian and multi use promenades in the area, including skate paths, except where excluded under the bylaws.	
3.	Develop layout plan for Hihiaua Reserve, including a village green concept, with special consideration for elderly and disabled people.	
4.	Provide information signs interpreting the natural and cultural features of the area.	
5.	Re-design and upgrade the entrance to Elliott Reserve.	

Priority	City Centre Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Extend the hanging basket programme in partnership with local businesses.	
2.	Plant to provide for the needs of pedestrians and develop spaces and gardens to enhance the city experience, as part of the 20/20 Project.	
3.	Enhance and extend street gardens in the city and on traffic islands.	
4.	Plant street trees in the city, as part of the 20/20 Project.	
5.	Develop interpretation and promotional material for city features, including the Conservatory Complex.	
6.	Plan to enhance Laurie Hall Park, or develop another central city park for public gatherings and as a green oasis.	

Priority	Stream Corridors Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Restore and enhance the Waiarohia Stream, with walking and cycling tracks, where possible.	✓
2.	Develop a multi-purpose public path along the coast route to Onerahi.	✓
3.	Restore and enhance the Otangarei Stream.	✓
4.	Design and implement a planting plan for the route from the airport to the City.	
5.	Develop shared paths for pedestrians and cycleways along the stream corridors, where possible, including between Onerahi and the city.	
6.	Restore and enhance the Hatea River, with a walking/cycling track linking the city and Whangarei Falls.	
7.	Restore and enhance the Raumanga Stream.	
8.	Restore and enhance Limeburners Creek.	

Priority	Suburban Open Spaces Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Prepare a layout and planting plan for the central reserve in Otangarei.	✓
2.	Prepare a concept design for Kamo Village.	✓
3.	Plan to replace and add street trees to the suburbs.	
4.	Prepare a landscape plan for the reserve and maze at Tarewa Park.	
5.	Enhance and plant additional gardens in the streets and traffic islands.	
6.	Upgrade and extend walking tracks in the suburban parks.	
7.	Continue to provide shade structures and trees in local playgrounds.	
8.	Prepare a landscape plan for the airport.	
9.	Create a promenade around the foreshore of the Onerahi peninsula	
10.	Produce interpretation material for cemeteries and historic sites.	
11.	Develop a concept plan to enhance the foreshore reserve in front of the Okara Block.	
12.	Develop neighbourhood parks with local communities	✓

Priority	Green Space Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Extend and enhance the formed tracks in the green space.	
2.	Protect and enhance the reserves in and around Pukenui Forest, in partnership with DoC.	✓
3.	Plan to develop an outdoor performing space and amphitheatre at the Whangarei Quarry Gardens.	✓
4.	Develop a network of cycleways and walkways.	
5.	Connect the Northland Craft Quarry to the Whangarei Quarry Gardens with a walking track.	✓
6.	Assist the Northland Craft Trust to enhance public facilities.	✓

Priority	Rural Countryside Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Facilitate mountain bike facilities in the Glenbervie Forest and around the Rural Countryside, in partnership with landowners, users, sponsors and the community.	✓
2.	Plan to improve the entranceways to Whangarei district and city with signs and planting which express the character of the area.	✓
3.	Develop policies and plans to protect sites significant to Maori at Puwera.	✓

Whangarei – the District

Priority	Bream Bay Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Develop and implement a planting plan for Waipu Township.	✓
2.	Plan for a village green, reserve development and street tree planting in Ruakaka, in association with Ruakaka 2005.	✓
3.	Plant the sand dunes and construct access ways for pedestrians along the Bream Bay coastline.	✓
4.	Complete beach replenishment and restoration planting.	
5.	Develop and assist in implementing a skateboard facility and planting plan for Waihoihoi Reserve.	✓
6.	Develop a coastal walkway between Waipu Cove and Langs Beach.	✓
7.	Develop walkway along coastal esplanade from One Tree to Marsden Point	✓
8.	Develop a walkway along the Ruakaka and Waipu Rivers.	
9.	Plant to protect and restore the stream margins.	✓
10.	Prepare a management plan for Waipu Caves.	
11.	Facilitate an all-tide boat ramp in the area.	
12.	Plan to develop a cemetery in the Ruakaka/Marsden Bay area.	✓
13.	Consider the acquisition and development of the Bream Bay Regional Park, in partnership with the community.	✓

Priority	Maungakaramea Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Prepare a plan for a garden at Maungakaramea Hall	✓
2.	Assist in creating entranceway features at Maungakaramea Village	✓
3.	Assist to develop the recreation facilities at Maungakaramea Domain	✓
4..	Provide a small playground for children.	✓

Priority	Whangarei Heads Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Extend walking tracks around the coast, with cycleways, where practical, as part of the coastal walkway.	✓
2.	Assist the local Landcare group to restore and protect foreshore areas at Pataua North and South.	✓
3.	Continue to protect and restore the dunes at Ocean Beach.	
4.	Extend and upgrade walking tracks from the coast to significant open space features and within reserves.	✓
5.	Develop recreation areas for informal passive use and disables access at Tiller Park and Aubrey Reserve.	✓
6.	Upgrade and extend the walking tracks on Mt Aubrey.	✓
7.	Survey the location of the significant kauri in McLeod's Bay	✓

Priority	Ngunguru/Tutukaka Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Restore Whale Bay and upgrade the walking tracks.	✓
2.	Restore the pioneer cemetery and dunes at Whananaki South.	✓
5.	Upgrade coastal access between Whangaumu and Ngunguru.	
6.	Restore Kitty Vane Reserve.	✓
7.	Protect and restore the sand dunes along the coast.	✓
8.	Restore Kuketawhao Island.	✓
9.	Plan to develop car parks, boat access and visitor facilities where necessary.	
3.	Extend walking tracks around the coast with cycleways, where possible, as part of the coastal walkway/cycleway.	
4.	Develop interpretation material for Whale Bay.	✓
10.	Extend the walking and cycling tracks to create a coastal walkway along the Pacific coast.	
11.	Plan to protect the Ngunguru sandspit for its ecological and recreation values.	✓

Priority	Whangaruru Projects	Community Involvement
1.	Restore Te Akau Reserve.	✓
2.	Develop boat ramp and car park facilities.	
3.	Develop the Oakura Sportspark for active and passive recreation and to enhance conservation values.	✓

Priority	Hikurangi Projects	Community Involvement
1	Restore Lake Waro and develop interpretation material.	✓
2	Provide street trees and hanging baskets in the Hikurangi Township.	
3	Plan for and assist in developing a skateboard facility at the Hikurangi landfill site.	✓
4	Prepare and implement a landscape plan for Hikurangi Sportspark.	
5	Prepare and implement a landscape plan for the Hikurangi Domain.	
6	Restore the stream margins.	
7	Develop tracks in reserves and along streams.	
8	Develop interpretation material for the Hikurangi Township.	

Priority	Maungatapere	Community Involvement
1	Plant areas in association with the Mangakahia Recreation Reserve Board.	✓
2	Prepare a development plan for Ruddells Reserve and Twin Bridges Reserves.	✓
3	Plan to improve the Maungatapere Village Green, in association with the school and community.	✓
4	Plant stream margins and develop linked walkways.	



Polyanthus in Laurie Hall Park

What will the council still need to do to look after its Open Spaces?

MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

The following tables set out proposed open space management projects to be funded as possible.

Priority	Policies	In Progress
1.	Prepare variations and/or plan changes for the Proposed District Plan.	
2.	Report to confirm levels of reserve contribution.	
3.	Acquisition list and guidelines	✓
4.	Preparation of a Divestment Opportunities Study	✓
5.	Asset Management Standards.	✓
6.	Prepare management plans for significant reserves and networks.	✓
7.	Instigate regular newsletter for volunteers.	
8.	Prepare a Whangarei walkway booklet, including cycle trails.	
9.	Prepare heritage trail brochures, in association with local communities.	
10.	Prepare list of open spaces, which need to be classified reserves under the Reserves Act 1977.	

Priority	Operation Guidelines	In Progress
1.	Implement confirm asset database.	✓
2.	Safety assessment of coastal and park structures.	✓
3.	Rationalise and review existing maintenance contracts.	✓
4.	Assess district boat access facilities.	✓
5.	Prepare new maintenance contracts.	✓
6.	Guidelines for reserve land contributions.	
7.	Partnership agreements with sports clubs.	
8.	Identify sites of significance to iwi and develop management protocols.	
9.	Partnership agreements with volunteer groups.	
10.	Planting programme for difficult sites.	
11.	Develop engineering standards for park structures.	
12.	Closed cemetery management study.	
13.	Inventory of heritage sites, building and trees.	
14.	Coastal Reserve management study.	
15.	Programme for reserve vesting and classification.	
16.	Pest Management Strategy.	
17.	Signage design guidelines.	
18.	Fencing guidelines.	
19.	Guidelines for community facilities in parks.	
20.	Conservation plans, as applicable.	
21.	Conservation covenants management study	
22.	Street tree planting strategy	

Priority	Development Studies	In Progress
1	Coastal walkway study.	✓
2	Cemetery development plan.	✓
3	Stream and wetland restoration concept.	
4.	Update study of sports field use, demand and capacity.	
5.	Study of walkway/cycle way opportunities and priorities and priorities.	
6.	Street tree and civic amenity planting programme.	
7.	Study of disabled requirements for play and access.	
8.	Preparation of a parks signage and interpretation plan.	
9.	Reserve requirements for Ruakaka/Marsden Point.	

MONITORING THE PROCESS

How will people continue to be able to have a say about open space?

Surveys

The council will survey residents and park users to ask how satisfied they are with open space areas, including parks, street gardens and sportsfields. When these replies are collated, they will give the council satisfaction ratings, which will be included each year in the annual plan report of the previous financial year.

Annual Plan Process

While preparing a budget and confirming projects for each financial year, the council asks for submissions from the public about the funding issues or specific projects. Residents are invited, during April and May of each year, to make suggestions to the council, in writing or at annual plan hearings.

Open Space Forums

It is proposed to hold annual open space forums and Hui in the community to discuss how council is going in working towards its open space vision. Residents and tangata whenua will be invited to have a say about progress and to highlight any other issues that need attention. These issues can be incorporated into the open space strategy or included in any review of the strategy and its tasks.

How will we know how we are going?

The council will annually review its performance in open space matters, by reporting on what it has achieved, compared to previous years, in the annual plan report. It will also compare its performance in providing open space and open space facilities against other cities and districts of a similar size.

The following is a list of targets, some of which will be used to measure how council has achieved its open space objectives:

OUTCOME 1 - CONSERVATION		
Objectives	Targets	Data Source
1.1 Protect and enhance the areas of significant native vegetation and significant wildlife habitats of native fauna.	1.1.1 Increase the number of hectares of reserves per head of population compared to 2000.	Parks Division records.
	1.1.2 Increase by 5% the number of plants, trees and shrubs planted annually, as part of revegetation programmes.	Parks Division records.

OUTCOME 2 – LANDSCAPE AND ECOSYSTEMS		
Objectives	Targets	Data Source
2.1 Protect and enhance the natural features and processes of the city and district.	2.1.1 Reduce the number and extent of plant and animal pests in parks compared to 2000 (from a baseline to be established).	Northland Regional Council
	2.1.2 Reduce the number of illegal structures by removing or legalising two compared to 2000.	Northland Regional Council and Whangarei District Council records
2.2 The characteristic amenity values of each locality are maintained.	2.2.1 85% resident satisfaction with the parks and open spaces provided by the Whangarei District Council.	Survey
	2.2.2 90% resident satisfaction with the street gardens in Whangarei city.	Survey
	2.2.3 Increase the number of healthy specimen trees throughout the district by a minimum of 150 a year from 4,000 baseline in 2000.	Parks Division records

OUTCOME 3 – OPEN SPACE RECREATION		
Objectives	Targets	Data Source
3.1 Provide open space to meet the recreational needs of the community.	3.1.1 85% resident satisfaction with the sports fields provided by the Whangarei District Council.	Survey
	3.1.2 10% annual increase in the number of playgrounds which meet the current New Zealand Safety Standards (from a base line to be confirmed in 2000).	Survey
3.2 Maintain and enhance public areas	3.2.1 An additional 0.5 kilometers of walking tracks are formed to a standard (to be specified) each year.	Parks Division records
	3.2.2 Disabled access is extended annually by 100 metres (from a baseline to be confirmed in 2000).	Parks Division records
	3.2.3 An additional boat access facility is created or refurbished annually.	Parks Division records

OUTCOME 4 – CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LIFESTYLE		
Objectives	Targets	Data Source
4.1 Tangata whenua exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga over ancestral lands, waters, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga in the district.	4.1.1 80% of people attending hui express satisfaction with the outcome.	Parks Division records
4.2 The character and quality of the districts natural and cultural features are maintained and enhanced.	4.2.1 Additional 1% of reserves is protected annually under the Reserves Act 1977.	Parks Division records
	4.2.2 An additional two interpretation features are produced or installed annually.	Parks Division records
	4.2.3 Increased usage of volunteers as measured by comparing numbers assisting with community based projects against the baseline for 2001	Parks Division records



Pingao planted by the community helps hold sand dunes

APPENDICES

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2. RELEVANT LEGAL STATUTES

2.1 Resource Management Act (RMA) 1991

The RMA governs management of the environment and provides the mandate for the District Plan. It is also the statute that sets the parameters for reserve contributions to the council from subdivisions and development. The purpose of the RMA is to promote the sustainable management of natural and physical resources.

The RMA provides direction on matters of “national importance”, including:

- The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment . . . wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins;
- The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes;
- The protection of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna;
- The maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, lakes and rivers;
- The relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu and other Taonga.

The RMA also includes a list of “other matters” to which particular regard shall be paid, including:

- Kaitiakitanga;
- The efficient use and development of natural and physical resources;
- The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values;
- Intrinsic values of ecosystems;
- Recognition and protection of the heritage values of sites, buildings, places or areas;
- Maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the environment.

The purpose of esplanade reserves or strips is stated in the Act and summarized, as follows:

- To contribute to the protection of conservation values;
- To enable public access to or along any sea, river or lake;
- To enable public recreational use, where this is compatible with conservation values.

Esplanade reserves or strips are required on subdivision of land less than 4 ha, and are set at a width of 20 metres along the length of mean high water springs or the sea, riverbank or lake margin. Reserves are vested in the council, whereas esplanade strips remain in private ownership, and may allow public access or protect natural values, depending on the site and the agreement. Esplanade reserves are a fixed location on the ground; esplanade strips may move in relation to the mean high water springs, and any erosion or accretion that may occur. The RMA requires that, as with financial contributions from subdivision, the council has to have an over all strategy for the integrated provision of esplanade reserves.

The Act also requires that the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi be taken into account.

2.2 Reserves Act 1977

The Reserves Act sets out the process for classifying and protecting reserve land. The Act requires that land be classified in one of seven categories, according to the primary values to be protected: nature, scenic, scientific, historic, recreation, government purpose or local purpose. Most of the council’s classified reserves are recreation or scenic reserves.

The Reserves Act provides a high level of statutory protection for open spaces, including the ability to deal with offences and democratic processes where the public can be involved in making decisions about open space use and management, through management plans. Management plans are required for all reserves, except local purpose reserves. A recent review of the act has provided for multiple reserve plans to be created, where reserves of similar type or use can be combined in a single management plan.

The Reserves Act provides procedures for revoking reserve status, exchanging reserve land for other land and dealing with easements, leases, licences and concessions. The Minister of Conservation retains the authority to monitor and approve activities on classified reserves.

2.3 Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Act 1977

The QEII Act enables the creation of open space covenants over private land containing features of conservation value, including native bush. Covenants are independent of national or local government and do not provide for public access.

2.4 Conservation Act 1987

The Conservation Act is administered by the Department of Conservation and summarises its functions, including the development of a conservation management strategy. The act provides for marginal strips, which are similar to the esplanade reserve provisions in the RMA, as well as concessions and covenants.

2.5 Historic Places Act 1993

The Historic Places Act establishes the Historic Places Trust and promotes the identification, protection, preservation and conservation of the historic and cultural heritage of New Zealand. The provisions of this act are complementary to, and likely to overlap sites administered by the Conservation Act and the Reserves Act.

2.6 The Bio-security Act 1993

The Biosecurity Act provides for the preparation of regional and national pest (animal or plant) management strategies. Any government department, local authority, group or private citizen can establish a pest management strategy for land under their control.

The council operates under the Northland Regional Council (NRC) Pest Management Strategy, which stipulates legal requirements for managing plant pests, depending on the category. Plants within the strategy are not to be planted, propagated or sold.

The plant pest categories are as follows:

- **Service Delivery Plants**
The NRC is responsible for their eradication.
- **Unwanted Plants**
The NRC or property owner is responsible for their eradication.
- **Target Plants and Wide-Spread Plants**
The occupier or landowner is responsible for their eradication, eg. Gorse has to be cleared 10m from the boundary of clean properties (without gorse).
- **Roadside Weeds**
Including pampas, privets, gorse, broom and wild ginger have to be cleared by the local authority or government body.
- **Total Control**
NRC will assist where a community group is working to eradicate plant pests.

2.7 Marine Reserves Act 1971

The Marine Reserves Act is administered by the Department of Conservation and provides for marine reserves. The act prohibits commercial fishing, but can allow recreational fishing.

Marine reserves must be maintained so that:

- They shall be preserved as far as possible in their natural state;
- The marine life (in them) shall be protected and preserved;
- The natural habitat of marine life shall as far as possible be maintained;
- The public shall have freedom of access and entry to the reserves so they may enjoy in full measure the opportunity to study, observe and record marine life in its natural habitat.

2.8 NZ Walkways Act 1990

The NZ Walkways Act is administered by the Department of Conservation, with the aim of *“establishing walking tracks over public and private land so that the people of New Zealand shall have safe, unimpeded foot access to the countryside for the benefit of physical recreation as well as for the enjoyment of the outdoor environment and the natural and pastoral beauty and historical and cultural qualities of the areas they pass through”*. (Section 3) It also provides for every member of the public to pass or re-pass on foot over any walkway without charge at any time.

Walkways over private land can be achieved by purchase or easement agreement. Accommodation facilities can be established on them.

2.9 Health & Safety in Employment Act 1992

The main purpose of this act is to:

- Prevent harm to employees at work, others at work, and people affected by the work of others;
- Promote excellence in health and safety management within the workplace.

The prime responsibility for health and safety in the work place lies with the employer. In the case of the council's open spaces, it is the council's responsibility to ensure not only the safety of its employees but also to ensure that the visitors to its parks and reserves are not put at risk of harm.

The council is also principal to several contracts for both maintenance and capital works. In all cases the council must:

- Ensure that the contractor being hired is a safe operator;
- Ensure that the contractor has health and safety systems in place to protect their staff;
- Take all practical steps to ensure contractors are not harmed while carrying out the work they are contracted to do – this will involve informing the contractor of any known hazards in the area of the contract works.

There are six key areas that need to be addressed to ensure compliance under the act. These are:

- Active management commitment to health and safety;
- Hazard identification and control;
- Training and supervision;
- Emergency action plans;
- Accident recording, reporting and investigation;
- Employing contractors and sub-contractors.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN (as they relate to Open Space Issues)

3.1 Tangata Whenua

- Enabling tangata whenua to exercise rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga over ancestral lands, waters, sites, waahi tapu and other taonga in the district (S4.3.2).

3.2 The Coast

- Preservation and enhancement of the natural character of the coastal environment (S8.3.1).
- The preservation of the amenity, landscape, cultural, intrinsic and ecological values of the coastal environment (S8.3.2).
- Maintain and enhance public access to and along coastal areas (S8.3.3).

3.3 Riparian and Coastal Margins

- Preservation of the natural character of riparian margins and the coastal environment (S9.3.1).
- Protection of significant ecological areas, important cultural sites, riparian habitats and outstanding natural features and landscapes within the coastal environment and alongside rivers and streams (S9.3.2).
- Enhance public access, where appropriate, to and along the coast and rivers (S9.3.3).
- Recognise and protect riparian margins and the coastal environment as natural hazard buffers (S9.3.4).
- The relationship of tangata whenua with their sites and other taonga is enhanced (S9.3.5).

3.4 Indigenous Vegetation and Habitat

- Maintenance of the life supporting capacity of ecosystems and the biodiversity of the district (S11.3.1).
- Protection and enhancement of areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (S11.3.2).

3.5 Landscape

- The character and quality of the district's natural features and landscapes are maintained and enhanced (S12.3.1).
- The preservation of the natural character of the coastal environment (S12.3.2).

3.6 Amenity Values

- The characteristic amenity values of each locality are maintained and enhanced (S13.3.1).
- The amenity values of the coast and open space are maintained and enhanced (S13.3.4).

3.7 Heritage Trees

- The protection and enhancement of trees that make a significant contribution to heritage values (S14.3.1).

3.8 Open Space

- Provide open space for the recreational and other needs of the community. (S21.3.1).
- Create open space linkages to enhance biodiversity, ecosystem connectivity and recreational opportunities (S21.3.2).

4. OPEN SPACE CATEGORIES

Open space areas are divided into a number of categories based on their function and how they are used to provide a basis for analysis and assessing provision. The categories, together with their components, are set out in the table below:

Categories	Components
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sportsfields
Amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Neighbourhood Reserves ▪ Street Gardens ▪ Walkways/Linear Strips/Cycle ways ▪ Local Purpose Areas ▪ Community Halls, etc ▪ Cemeteries ▪ Stormwater/Drainage Reserves ▪ Coastal Access
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Waahi Tapu Sites ▪ Scenic Reserves ▪ DoC Estate ▪ Bush Covenants ▪ Water Catchments ▪ Regional Parks ▪ Bush Reserves
Riparian and Coastal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Esplanade Reserves ▪ Esplanade Strips ▪ Paper Roads/Access Ways
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial Forestry ▪ Aerodrome ▪ Land Reserved from Sale

Components Within Each Category

The following table provides a breakdown of the quantity of different types of open space. It should be noted that number relates to the number of land parcels. Therefore it does not reflect, for example, the number of active reserves used for sportsfields.

Landowner	Active		Amenity		Riparian		Conservation		Other		Total	
	No.	Area (ha.)	No.	Area (ha.)	No.	Area (ha.)	No.	Area (ha.)	No.	Area (ha.)	No.	Area (ha.)
WDC	84	100.35	519	881.92	279	537.65	79	637.60	53	91.98	1,014	2,249.50
WDC – DoC owned/managed	2	1.17	8	15.39	80	102.12	3	9.59	2	0.33	95	128.60
DoC/Crown	9	15.23	93	572.47	18	178.90	275	6,594.03	57	6,915.86	452	14,276.49
Other	1	0.00	206	51.18	905	9,943.52	15	493.06	123	4,020.14	1,250	14,507.89
Total	96	116.75	826	1,520.96	1,282	10,762.19	372	7,734.28	235	11,028.31	2,811	31,162.49

Summary of the Quantity of Open Space

5. SUMMARY OF STUDIES ON OPEN SPACE VALUES

5.1 Landscape (Amenity) Values

A landscape assessment for the District was undertaken by LA4 in 1995 as part of the background work for the District Plan. Ten landscape character areas were described and outstanding landscape units within each category identified. The aspects which contribute to Outstanding and Significant Landscapes were also defined. The ten landscape character categories used were:

Coastal Landscape Categories

- A. Exposed rocky coastline
- B. Rocky coast interspersed with beaches
- C. Expansive exposed beaches
- D. Barrier spits
- E. Estuarine inlets and harbours

Terrestrial Landscape Categories

- F. Bush-clad hill country
- G. Rolling to steep pasture with pockets of scrub/bush/forestry
- H. Heritage landscapes
- I. Farmed flats
- J. Plantation forests

The landscape units were assessed to determine their aesthetic value, heritage value, rarity, visual absorption capability and exposure/visibility. Each of these variables was then rated using a 1-7 scale and an overall rating for each unit based on the accumulation of ratings for all 5 variables was allocated. These were termed sensitivity ratings; landscape units with an overall sensitivity rating of '6' and '7' were classified as being Outstanding Landscapes. Units with a rating of '5' were deemed to be 'Significant'.

The study showed that the coastal units received consistently high ratings with the highest ratings achieved by the coastal units least modified by human activity. For inland units the highest ratings also tended to be achieved by those with the highest degree of naturalness, particularly areas of indigenous forest. Almost 20% of the district was rated with an 'outstanding' ranking, with a further 15% acknowledged as being 'significant'. Plans showing areas of Significant and Outstanding landscapes are in the Proposed District Plan.

5.2 Ecological Values (Flora/Fauna)

Boffa Miskell completed a study in 1995, *Whangarei District – Sites of Ecological Significance*. This comprehensive survey of ecosystems identified 319 sites of ecological significance. The sites were largely identified from a number of existing databases which are held by various government organisations, the databases used were:

Database	Database Manager
▪ Sites of special biological interest (SSBI)	DoC
▪ Coastal resources inventory (CRI)	DoC
▪ Areas of significant conservation value (ASCV)	DoC
▪ Freshwater fisheries database	NIWA
▪ Rare plants database	DoC and Landcare
▪ Amphibians and reptiles database	DoC – Science & research section

Databases used to assess ecological value

5.3 Cultural Heritage Values

The council has identified a number of Sites of Significance to Māori and heritage building sites on the planning maps for the Proposed District Plan. No attempt has been made to rank or grade the values associated with these sites and on the accompanying maps they are located as points rather than being represented by a polygon. A schedule of the Sites of Significance to Māori is included in the Appendix 4 of the proposed plan.

The council consults the schedule of archaeological sites from the New Zealand Archaeological Association, known as CINZAS. It also holds the Historic Places Trust register of historic places, historic areas, waahi tapu and waahi tapu areas.

6. AUCKLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL OPEN SPACE STANDARDS

The Auckland Regional Council developed a set of standards for open space provision, as part of a regional open space strategy in 1993, following a comprehensive study of open space in the Auckland region. These draft standards cover both the amount of open space to be provided and the quality standards that must be achieved to recognise the benefits sought.

6.1 Open Space Quality Standards

6.1.1 Active

- Adequate size to accommodate a variety of sporting codes;
- Space for ancillary facilities such as off-street parking, toilets/change rooms;
- Level, well drained areas, accessible for play at least 80% of season;
- Located in close proximity to arterial traffic routes and public transport routes.

6.1.2 Amenity

a) Neighbourhood Reserves

- Adequate spaces for a variety of passive recreation activities;
- Wide street frontage with views into and from the site for personal safety;
- Some level, well drained areas;
- Site lies to the sun (northerly aspect).

b) General Amenity

- Achieves optimum size dependant on use and meets specific community needs e.g. community hall, cycleway/walkway;
- Accessible;
- High standard of visual impact;
- Provides high standard of amenity – adequate shade, exposure to sun, views from site, well drained.

6.1.3 Conservation

- Has unique qualities;
- Importance in terms of cultural, ecological or landscape values;
- Size adequate to ensure sustainability of resource being protected;
- Located to optimise resource protection;
- Viability of site ensured;
- Iwi values protected.

6.1.4 Riparian and Coastal Margins

- Accessibility to water/coastline maximised;
- Protection of coastal ecosystem ensured.

6.2 Open Space Quantity Standards

6.2.1 Active

- Preferable to have a minimum of 3.5 – 4.0ha per site (provides for a group of around 3 fields);
- Provision of 2.0ha per 1,000 population.

6.2.2 Amenity

a) Neighbourhood Reserves

- Minimum site size of 0.2ha to 0.5ha;
- Should be easily accessible to population, located within 0.5km radius;
- Provision of 1.2ha per 1,000 population.

b) General Amenity

- Quantum determined by specific community needs, e.g. sufficient to meet stormwater drainage requirements or provide for community buildings.

6.2.3 Conservation

- Sufficient to maintain ecological resource;
- Size shall be sufficient to maintain ecological sustainability.

6.2.4 Riparian and Coastal Margins

- Sufficient to ensure sensitive coastal areas protected and opportunities for coastal access maximised.

7. METHODS FOR ACHIEVING OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES

7.1 Education

Education, to ensure the community gains understanding of the objectives of the open space strategy, can be achieved with brochures, interpretation and articles in local papers, meetings and events on site. Education can be an effective, long-term way of gaining support for open space objectives.

7.2 Management Agreements

Helping landowners to be aware of and understand open space values is a powerful and persuasive tool in protecting open space areas. This relies on goodwill rather than permanent legal protection, but can also apply in combination, such as when esplanade reserves are taken in rural areas. In this way it can be the catalyst to ensure that intrinsic values are not degraded by inappropriate land use. The key to success is often dependent on personal contact and a follow-up if the property changes hands.

7.3 Incentives

Incentives may take the form of financial encouragement, public recognition or an award for a landowner who agrees to voluntarily comply with a desired land management activity. There may be costs for fencing, weed control or track maintenance, but these will vary according to the circumstances. Incentives rely on goodwill and commitment, and achieve only a low level of protection.

7.4 Sponsorship

Effectively a sponsor provides financial or other resources to assist with a project, in return for positive marketing or other benefits. Sponsorship of open space projects can provide win-win outcomes. It has the disadvantage of appearing to commercialise projects, but can add significant support, especially if marketing for the sponsor helps to raise the profile of the project in an appropriate way.

7.5 Land Exchanges

With careful negotiation, parcels of land can be swapped to help realize the strategy. Alternatively, parcels of the council's land with low value could be sold to fund strategic land with high open space values. This method relies on both parties reaching agreement on land value. As with land purchase, land exchange results in full ownership and ability to control development.

7.6 Reserve Contributions

The District Plan will set the rules for reserve contributions in money or land. This method has been the primary source of open space land in the past and is directly linked under the RMA 1991 with the effects of growth. For example, a subdivision generating reserve contribution will itself result in the loss of open space in the community.

Reserve contributions can allow key areas or high value sites to be protected and made available for public use, at no direct cost. This occurs most notably with riparian and coastal esplanades, and also assists in providing neighbourhood parks and open spaces to meet the needs of the people in the area. Alternatively a monetary contribution can assist in funding the objectives of the strategy in another form.

7.7 Leases, Easements and Rights of Way

A lease may provide a temporary form of protection, if there are no other options. Easements or rights of way can be used to ensure pedestrian or vehicular access across private land. They are a cost-effective way of achieving access, with few liabilities, where access may not otherwise be available. They may involve a rental or other form of compensation to the landowner as part of the agreement.

7.8 Covenants

Covenants are a legal agreement involving voluntary restriction(s) on property rights. It is lodged with the land title and therefore survives selling. Any subsequent owners purchase the land with the covenant in place. Covenants are a cost effective way of ensuring the protection of natural areas when resources are constrained and where future public access is a low priority. The terms and requirements of the covenant are embodied in the document. These may not guarantee public access at all times, if at all. Management of the land is in the control of the landowner, who is responsible for pest control and ensuring fences are maintained against grazing stock.

Both the council and the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust manage conservation covenants. Both types of covenant generally require that the agency cover the full cost of survey and half the cost of fencing.

7.9 Trusts

Trusts arise when the settlor gifts property to the trustee, to be held subject to the deed which governs 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 that manage open space have a long and honorable history in the UK and New Zealand. The Whangarei District Council has recently established the Whangarei Quarry Gardens Trust to manage the former quarry and establish public open spaces there. The principal advantages of trust are their ability to attract community support; expertise and funding that would not be directly available to the council. Trusts are also perceived as being more independent than the council. However, when the council establishes a trust it can influence its direction, by carefully specifying the purposes of the trust and retaining the right to appoint trustees.

7.10 Land Purchase

Land purchase, gaining freehold title and possible Gazetting the area as a reserve, provides the highest degree of control over open space. It allows the council full control over the development and management of an area, as well as the ability to determine the type and level of public access according to management objectives.

This method relies on the need for a willing seller. It is preferable if land can be identified and designated ahead of purchase. With an open space strategy in place, the council can take up opportunities as they arise.

There are a number of alternative sources of funds for direct land purchase by the council. These include the Nature Heritage Fund, the New Zealand Native Forest Restoration Trust, Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Northland Fish and Game Council. These trusts usually require a considerable lead-time in order to access funds. The use of funds from these sources will often require that the land be held in trust.

Land purchase brings with it ongoing management costs and responsibilities. The formation of a community trust may assist with fund raising and labour. Some forms of commercial use or return may be appropriate.