

Chapter 41**OPEN SPACE ENVIRONMENTS****41.1 SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The following resource management issues have been identified as significant throughout Napier's open space environments.

41.1.1 Development pressure from a variety of commercial and non-commercial land uses

The Open Space Environment has very high levels of amenity and can attract large numbers of people. As an example, waterfront locations are highly sought after for commercial developments and many of the City's open space areas are on the waterfront. The effects of commercial operations in the open space environments can have significant effects on natural character and values including adverse effects on flora, fauna and their habitats. Strict control is necessary to ensure the effects of commercial activities and other land uses that threaten the efficient use and development of open space areas are adequately managed. This may even involve the prohibition of such land uses within very sensitive areas of land.

Sports have entered a new era in commercialism, and competition between codes is also prevalent. This places pressure on clubs to draw the public to their club ground and commercial activities have become an integral part of that drawcard. The Council wishes to ensure that the open space of sports parks is retained and that the maximum area of land remains available for recreational activities. .

41.1.2 The availability and maintenance of access to and along the coast, estuary and rivers

New Zealanders enjoy having ready access to and along water bodies and is regarded as a right. Access must be considered in terms of natural character and values and be carefully planned to avoid putting ecosystems at risk from additional human pressure. Esplanade reserves will be taken for access purposes from subdivisions adjacent to the coast and adjacent to the major watercourses within the City, to ensure maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along the coastal marine area, rivers and other identified waterbodies.

41.1.3 The availability and use of open space zones for recreational activities

Because of the nature of the open space environment, they are used for recreational purposes. It is appropriate that in some of these zones, buildings and structures associated with recreational activities are provided for. However, this does not apply to the more sensitive environments, including the Estuary, River Conservation and Foreshore Reserve zones. Some clubs associated with recreation require to be in a particular place such as water related clubs in the Boat Harbour Zone.

The effects of these land uses must be managed by limiting the type and scale of development associated with them. Clubs often seek to increase their revenue by hiring out their facilities for social functions. Often these clubrooms are sited close to residential activities and the adverse effects must be considered in each individual case.

41.1.4 The preservation of natural character of the Open Space Environments

Although some of the open space environments are human-modified such as the Sports Parks and the Marine Parade Recreation Zone, others have a distinct and relatively unmodified natural character.

The Ahuriri Estuary and its riparian margins are highly valued due to their natural character, cultural and ecological values. The estuary has special significance to iwi and the Council recognises its responsibility to iwi under section 6 (e) of the Act. Due to increasing pressure from some recreational activities and adjoining land uses, the values of the estuary are facing threats. Thus careful management is required to maintain the estuary's cultural and ecological values together with its natural character. The same issue applies to the Foreshore Reserve Zone. In all areas in the Open Space Environment where there is significant indigenous vegetation and/or significant habitats of indigenous fauna, it is important that the Council maintains and enhances its role in protecting these natural resources as required by Section 6(c) of the Act.

41.1.5 The protection of outstanding natural features and landscapes throughout the City

In a study¹ commissioned by the Council, many areas identified as having significant or notable landscape value featured land vested as reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. The Act clearly states that the protection of outstanding landscapes and natural features from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance (Section 6(b)). The values associated with significant landscapes and natural features within Napier City include amenity, historical, cultural and rarity associations. Careful management, including the strict control and possibly in some cases prohibition of subdivision, land use and/or development, is necessary to ensure such valued areas within the open space environment are maintained, enhanced and protected for current and future generations.

41.1.6 The maintenance and enhancement of amenity values

The Council wishes to maintain and enhance the level of amenity values that exist in the open space environment as part of its function under section 7 of the Act. The amenity may consist of the open space area, the landscape features, and the acoustic environment. The Council will set standards that protect the existing level of amenity. The zone provisions are relative to the nature of use of the environment.

41.1.7 The need to avoid, remedy, or mitigate the effects of natural hazards

The Council has duties under the Resource Management Act 1991 to identify and manage the effects of natural hazards. The open space environment (in particular the Boat Harbour, Estuary, Foreshore Reserve and River Conservation zones) face coastal hazards as their principal threat. At the time of writing this Plan, the Council (along with Hawke's Bay Regional Council) was undertaking a beach renourishment programme in order to mitigate the adverse effects of erosion along the Westshore and Bay View coastlines. This coastal hazard extends from the mouth of the inner harbour at Ahuriri, to the Esk River mouth at Bay View.

¹ Environmental Management Services Limited (Sept 2000) "Napier City Landscape Assessment Study".

41.1.8 The maintenance of a range of open space areas for current and future generations

Napier City's open space zones are used for a variety of activities and leisure pursuits. A variety of open space areas are provided throughout the City to meet the wide range of demands from the community. While many public open spaces serve a number of purposes, careful management remains necessary to ensure inappropriate subdivision, use and development of such land does not occur. The careful management of open spaces within Napier City will ensure the maintenance and enhancement of this important physical resource for current and future generations.

41.1.9 The effects of land uses in the open space environment and on adjacent land uses

The use of some open space zones can be significant in terms of the effects on adjacent land uses. This is more likely to occur where clubrooms and sports events are provided for. In many instances, open space environments are located close to residential environments and the effects of land uses should be considered in each individual case.

The Council has also included provisions to mitigate the adverse effects of signs. Advertising at sports parks is an accepted practice but can potentially impact upon the amenity of the area and can be intrusive to adjacent properties. This is particularly an issue where a sports park adjoins residential sites.

41.1.10 The recognition and protection of areas with valuable ecosystems

Section 7(d) of the Act requires that all persons exercising functions and powers under it, in relation to managing the use, development, and protection of natural and physical resources shall have particular regard to the intrinsic values of ecosystems. The Ahuriri Estuary is a valuable ecosystem and the Council seeks to maintain this area in its natural state and avoid remedy or mitigate the effects of any activities on the ecological values.

OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND METHODS

The following objectives, policies and methods apply to all open space environment zones throughout the City.

Objective 41.2

To ensure that public access to and along the coastal, estuarine and river areas is maintained and enhanced while protecting the natural character and environment of the coast, estuary or river.

This objective relates to Issues 41.1.1; 41.1.2; 41.1.4; 41.1.5; and 41.1.6.

Policies

To achieve this objective, the Council will:

- 41.2.1 Continue to maintain and enhance public access in the Open Space Environment where appropriate.
- 41.2.2 Recognise the potential impact of public access on the ecology of the coast, estuary and rivers.
- 41.2.3 Support the policies of the Hawke's Bay Regional Coastal Plan and the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.
- 41.2.4 Encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the existing walkway system within the Estuary Zone.
- 41.2.5 Provide access for public works.
- 41.2.6 Discourage public use of vehicular access adjacent to the Estuary and River Conservation zones.
- 41.2.7 In areas that have public access to the inner harbour, ensure that if there is the potential for conflict with existing industrial land uses, that public access is not formalised
- 41.2.8 Require any development in the Marine Parade Recreation Zone to provide access to the foreshore reserve.

Principal Reasons for Adopting Objective and Policies

New Zealanders enjoy their access rights to the water resources and the Council intends to maintain and improve this access where appropriate. This is consistent with the Act which identifies the maintenance and enhancement of public access to and along coastal, estuarine and river margins as a matter of national importance (Section 6(c)). Napier City has a significant coastline that is highly accessible in terms of its proximity to the built environment. This proximity can make it vulnerable to inappropriate land uses. In the case of the Ahuriri Estuary there is a conflict which arises when accessibility is improved. The ecological values of rivers, the coast and the Estuary in particular, are at greater risk with increasing numbers of users. The Council has therefore drawn a distinction between maintaining pedestrian access and providing further road access in these sensitive environmental zones.

The Council is aware of the significant recreational use of the coastal area but it must also be mindful of the safety of the public and for this reason access will not be formalised within the marine industrial area of the Inner Harbour or the Port Industrial Zone.

Methods

- (1) District Plan Rules.
- (2) Physical works such as walkways.
- (3) Liaison with other authorities to educate the public.
- (4) Marine Parade Strategic Development Plan.

Reasons for Methods

There are some very well utilised walkways within the City and further facilities would help to improve public access in chosen areas where the effects on natural values could be managed. In addition, at the time of writing this Plan, the Council was making progress towards the establishment of a 21 kilometre long cycleway that stretches from the Esk River in the north to the Awatoto industrial area in the south. Such works would greatly improve public access to and along Napier's coastline. In time, a comprehensive cycleway network could be developed that utilises existing roads, walkways and access to the Estuary and major rivers.

Rules in the Plan are necessary to set environmental bottom lines and to protect the health and safety of the public. Esplanade reserves will be required to maintain and enhance public access to and along rivers and the coast where it does not already exist. The education of the public on the sensitivity of some areas of open space is a desirable means of achieving an acceptable environmental outcome.

Objective 41.3

To enable the use and development of land for the recreational needs of the community, while ensuring any adverse effects on the environment are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

This objective relates to Issues 41.1.2; 41.1.3; 41.1.6; 41.1.8; and 41.1.9.

Policies

To achieve this objective, the Council will:

- 41.3.1 Recognise and provide for, where appropriate, the need of some recreational activities to have a waterfront location and/or access to the waterfront.
- 41.3.2 Encourage the maintenance, enhancement and expansion of the existing walkway system and encourage public access linkages between the different open space zones and in particular between highly significant landscape features.
- 41.3.3 Provide for commercial and non-commercial land uses in the Marine Parade Recreation Zone that complement the foreshore location.
- 41.3.4 Ensure that with any new greenfield subdivision, there are reserves that are readily accessible to the residents.
- 41.3.5 Identify a range of reserves and maintain their character, purpose and function.
- 41.3.6 Manage the adverse effects of recreational activities occurring in the open space environment.
- 41.3.7 Ensure that areas of open space that contribute to the social well being of the community, are retained.
- 41.3.8 Control and encourage the maintenance and enhancement of Napier's foreshore areas.
- 41.3.9 Recognise the Park Island Sports Ground as a centre for club sports, and the commercial and administrative activities required to support them.

Principal Reasons for Adopting Objective and Policies

The Open Space environment provides for a range of recreational activities from passive land uses (ie picnicking) through to active activities such as kayaking and club and team sports. Napier City has a high ratio of open space to population and the Council intends that this level of amenity be maintained. The Council will identify reserve needs in new subdivisions/land development and utilise financial contributions for appropriate provision and development of reserves.

Once established, the Council will ensure that open space zones are used and maintained for the purpose that they were intended. The Master Plan for Park Island is an example of the forward planning that the Council undertakes for the ongoing upgrade of the open space environments within the City. The Council recognises that water-related recreational clubs have a legitimate need to locate in, on or near the waterfront and as such are provided for in the appropriate water front zones. Napier's foreshore areas are a valuable recreational asset that needs to be maintained and enhanced for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Methods

- (1) District Plan Rules.
- (2) Reserve Management Plans.
- (3) Essential Services Plan.
- (4) Marine Parade Strategic Development Plan.
- (5) Park Island Master Plan

Reasons for Methods

The Essential Services Plan is a means of identifying and planning for the level of amenity that is desired in the City through the provision of open space areas. The Reserves Management Plans guide land use on reserves and are a valuable tool to work alongside the rules that are set down in the this Plan. Rules set an environmental bottom line that is needed to safeguard the level of amenity that is present in the current open space areas of the City.

Master Plans are akin to Structure Plans and set out the long term goals for the use of a particular area of land. A Master Plan has been prepared for the Park Island Sports Ground to guide development over the next 20+ year period. Master Plans like Structure Plans indicate the infrastructure and activities that are to be provided for within the life of the plan. The Master Plan provides a measure of flexibility in the precise location and scale of the infrastructure and activities to be built with the Park Island Sports Ground.

Objective 41.4

To preserve, provide for, maintain and enhance, the character, amenity, cultural, heritage and natural values and ecosystems, associated with open space environments.

This objective relates to Issues 41.1.4; 41.1.5; 41.1.6; and 41.1.8.

Policies

To achieve this objective, the Council will:

- 41.4.1 Ensure the natural character of the coastal environment, estuary, rivers and their margins are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- 41.4.2 Manage land uses and subdivision to ensure any adverse effects on outstanding natural features and significant landscapes within Napier City, as identified in the Napier City Landscape Assessment Study are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- 41.4.3 Encourage the protection of outstanding natural features and significant landscapes within Napier City, as identified in the Napier City Landscape Assessment Study.

- 41.4.4 Ensure that areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna and ecosystems are protected.
- 41.4.5 Ensure that the quality of the Open Space Environment is maintained and enhanced.
- 41.4.6 Control and encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the Ahuriri Estuary in its natural state.
- 41.4.7 Establish a level of land use and development that is acceptable within the different open space zones, including the different amenity levels.
- 41.4.8 Ensure appropriate landscaping is provided to mitigate the visual effects of buildings, structures and vehicle parking areas.
- 41.4.9 Ensure that any landscaping is complementary to the existing natural vegetation and landforms in the open space zones.
- 41.4.10 Control vehicle access, parking and traffic generation in open space zones.
- 41.4.11 Control noise, traffic and the visual effects of buildings and structures, including signs, in open space zones.
- 41.4.12 Encourage the protection of cultural and heritage values associated with the open space environment.

Principal Reasons for Adopting Objective and Policies

The Act identifies the protection of the coastal, estuarine, and river areas together with any outstanding natural features and landscapes from the inappropriate subdivision, use and development as a matter of national importance. Within Napier City, there are many open space areas that possess these qualities or are within these locations. The Council is mindful of ensuring these areas are carefully managed.

There is a high level of amenity associated with the open space zones within the City and it is the Council's intention that this level of amenity is maintained. Generally, any development that is not provided for in the Reserve Management Plan, is not considered as an appropriate activity under this Plan. Where development is provided for, it should occur at a scale that fits with the open character of the zone. The Estuary is an open space zone where the natural values are of national significance and thus should remain in a natural state above the Pandora Road bridge. Below this point, the Estuary differs as it is the base for the Hawke's Bay fishing fleet. There is no other alternative location for this fleet and the Council will ensure that this industry remains able to operate at a level that is consistent with present standards.

Methods

- (1) District Plan Rules.
- (2) Reserve Management Plan.
- (3) Education and Provision of Information.
- (4) Marine Parade Strategic Development Plan.

Reasons for Methods

The rules in the district plan set environmental bottom lines and provide the most certainty for plan users as to the appropriate forms of land uses and development.. The rules provide thresholds for land uses, above which levels the effects of the land use on the environment require greater remediation or mitigation.

The Reserves Management Plan is a long term document that deals with amenity issues, and the most appropriate land uses that fit with the Reserve status.

Improved public awareness of the value that many open space areas within the City provide will contribute to their improved management and use. Education of groups, land users and potential developers through the supply of information such as brochures, pamphlets etc can assist in enhancing public awareness.

Objective 41.5

To recognise the contribution of open space environments in providing some of the City's infrastructural and economic needs.

This objective relates to Issues 41.1.2; 41.1.5 and 41.1.7.

Policies

To achieve this objective, the Council will:

- 41.5.1 Recognise the important role of the Estuary as a stormwater receiver.
- 41.5.2 Combine open space amenity with the drainage functions of the City.
- 41.5.3 Ensure that linear drainage reserves will be unobstructed by development.
- 41.5.4 Ensure that the land uses within the Boat Harbour Zone do not result in adverse effects on access and/or operational procedures for the West Quay And Iron Pot working wharves.

Principal Reasons for Adopting Objective and Policies

The Estuary is an important stormwater receiver and the land adjacent to the estuary is identified as one of the ponding areas of the City for major storm events. The Council recognises the effect of stormwater on the ecological values of the estuary and has designated a drain to the South of the City that will divert much of the stormwater from the new developing residential areas of the City direct to the sea.

The City has a history of combining its open space with its infrastructure needs. Instead of designing drainage systems to meet only their utility function many have included wider berms for recreational and amenity needs of the public. It is important when combining these functions that the utility needs of the area are recognised and provided for, while minimising any adverse effect on amenity values, and other open space environment values.

Methods

- (1) District Plan Rules.
- (2) Essential Services Plan and Reserve Management Plan.

Reasons for Methods

The Essential Services Plan is able to identify opportunities where utility functions can act as open space areas for the City. This has the added benefit of mitigating any adverse effect of utilities on the amenity values of the area in which they are being located.

The Plan rules ensure that the utility functions will not be hampered by any land uses that may seek to locate on the additional land provided for the open space.

41.6 ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS

- (1) The protection of outstanding natural areas and significant landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- (2) The preservation of natural character of the coastal environment, estuarine areas, rivers and their margins from inappropriate subdivision, use and development.
- (3) Preservation of areas of open space land for water, related recreational clubs.
- (4) A high level of pedestrian access to the coast, estuary, rivers and their margins.
- (5) Control over the adverse effects of recreational land uses in the open space environment.
- (6) Protection and enhancement of cultural, heritage and amenity values associated with the open space environment.
- (7) Adequate provision of the types of open space that provides for the recreational needs of the community.
- (8) Provision of a variety of types of open space to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- (9) Integrated and accessible open space areas throughout the City.
- (10) The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of natural hazards.
- (11) Control over the effects of commercial land uses in open space areas.

41.7 ZONE DESCRIPTIONS

1. Introduction

The open space zones are diverse and include areas of the City that have high natural values, as well as some areas that are highly modified which provide for the recreational needs of the City. In some instances, the function of the open space area is further maximised by using it both as a recreational resource and as an area for the provision of utility services.

2. Boat Harbour Zone

The Boat Harbour zone is included in the open space environment, as it is an important recreational resource. Its location at Ahuriri means it is very accessible to the public for fishing and other water related activities. It is also the location of three important water related clubs and this is appropriate as there is no real alternative location for them. It is the base for the Hawke's Bay commercial fishing fleet, the importance of which is well recognised in this Plan.

3. Estuary Zone

The Ahuriri Estuary is a natural environment of national importance.² Its proximity to the

² For further information on the Ahuriri Estuary refer to the Ahuriri Estuary Management Plan, Department of Conservation.

City makes it an important recreational resource. The area below the Embankment Bridge is the main focus for recreational activity including water related sports and the much used walkway system. Above the bridge, accessibility is less apparent and there are important wildlife habitats, including the Southern Marsh and the Napier City Council Wildlife Refuge. The Estuary zone follows the base of the Poraiti hills north to Bay View.

4. Foreshore Reserve Zone

The Foreshore Reserve zone extends almost the full length of the City's coastline from the Esk River in the north to the Tutaekuri River in the south. The Foreshore Reserve does not have high natural coastal values as it has been largely modified. Access to this foreshore is a principal issue in this zone.

5. Marine Parade Recreation Zone

This zone is one of the most visible in the City and recognises the role that the recreational land uses on the Marine Parade Recreation Zone contribute to domestic tourism. Unlike the Foreshore Reserve Zone that it abuts, the Marine Parade Recreation Zone does provide for a limited range of commercial activities. The zone seeks to ensure that the scale of development in this foreshore area is maintained and that the open character is retained.

6. Reserve Zone

The Reserve Zone applies to areas of land scattered throughout the City and include the larger open space areas and passive recreation areas such as Anderson Park, the Botanical Gardens and the many linear reserves that separate the suburbs and are also drainage reserves. Other areas include land set aside for protection of hillsides, trees or historic preservation purposes. Most of these reserves do not cater for permanent facilities apart from those needed for the upkeep of the area or play equipment.

7. River Conservation Zone

The management of rivers is the joint responsibility of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council and Napier City Council. Napier City Council has responsibility for hazard control and the control of activities on the surface of the water. Management of the river bed is the responsibility of the Hawke's Bay Regional Council.

The River Conservation Zone covers the course of the Esk and Tutaekuri rivers and is intended to restrict uses that could have a negative impact on river control or which could be at risk from the river in times of flood.

8. Sports Park Zone

As the name implies, this zone recognises the recreational function that sports parks provide for. Included in the Sports Park Zone are such sporting facilities as Park Island, McLean Park, Nelson Park, Tareha Park, and Taradale Park. The necessary building facilities associated with these venues are provided for in this Plan and careful consideration has been given to their potential effects on adjacent residential land uses. In order to meet growth needs and changes arising in the sporting needs of the community, a Master Plan has been drafted for the Park Island Sports Grounds. This will meet those changing needs for the next 20+ years and also provide more efficient use of the existing resources.