C17 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ZONE

The provision and maintenance of public recreation areas and open spaces is a key issue for the City. Specifically the following two significant resource management issues have been identified.

ISSUE 1

RECREATION AREAS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES, INCLUDING THE FACILITIES PROVIDED ON THEM, REPRESENT A FINITE NATURAL AND PHYSICAL RESOURCE THAT IS INTEGRAL TO THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF PORIRUA CITY

Porirua City’s recreation areas and public open spaces are an important resource for the City and make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the City. The provision and management of recreation areas and public open spaces help ensure that space is freely available to meet the recreation and leisure needs of Porirua and to provide for community activities. As Porirua is a diverse community, the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces should provide for an equally diverse range of needs. Consequently the management of these spaces needs to be flexible enough to enable this to occur.

The City’s recreation areas and public open spaces are also valued for the degree to which they contribute to the overall amenity and character of the City. In this regard, the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces contribute to the ‘green structure’ of the City’s suburban areas. Those areas with a stronger green structure, ie more public open spaces, generally have higher amenity.

The continued protection, maintenance and use of recreation areas and public open spaces is therefore an important resource management issue. Any reduction in the actual or relative area, amenity and/or utility of these areas may adversely affect the quality of life and environmental quality of Porirua City.

It is noted that some of the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces are used for non-recreation and non-community activities.

Such activities are often complementary to the core functions of the Recreation Zone and Open Space Zones, in that they help to maintain the open space values of the area concerned. Such complementary activities include:

- Pastoral productive farming at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park; and,
- Primary production farming at Belmont Regional Park (Waitangirua Farm) and Whitireia Park.

In addition, the non-recreation and non-community activities include key network utilities and transport corridors. These uses form part of the existing environment, contribute to the well-being of the City and/or have regional or national significance. These include, but are not limited to:

- Radio communication facilities at Whitireia Park;
- High voltage electricity transmission lines traversing Battle Hill Farm Forest Park Belmont Regional Park; and,
The Transmission Gully Motorway designation running through Belmont Regional Park and Battle Hill Farm Forest Park.

With regard to these activities, it is noted that in addition to the reference in Policy C17.1.2, the importance of these activities are addressed in Section C7 – Transport and C14 – Network Utilities which apply across the entire City, including recreation areas and public open spaces.

**ISSUE 2**

**THE USE, MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION AREAS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES CAN ADVERSELY AFFECT THE RECREATION AREA, PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND ADJOINING AREAS.**

The activities, including maintenance work, which occur on the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces, have the potential to produce adverse environmental effects on other users of the space and on surrounding areas. The use of these areas may, in particular, adversely affect adjoining residential areas. Potential effects associated with the use of recreation areas and public open spaces include noise impacts, light spill, the presence of and effects from larger scale buildings and effects from earthworks and vegetation clearance.

**C17.1 Objective**

**THAT THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES AND RECREATION AREAS IN PORIRUA CITY PROVIDES FOR AND COMPLEMENTS THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTES TO THE CITY’S AMENITY AND CHARACTER.**

**Explanation**

This objective seeks to ensure that the use and development of the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas achieves two key outcomes.

The first is to provide for and complement current and future demands for recreation and community activities. This outcome is the core reason why the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas were set aside in the first instance.

The second key outcome sought from the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas is to contribute towards City amenity and character. Public open spaces and recreation areas achieve this through the provision of large public open spaces and by enabling larger areas of vegetation to be maintained or established. By enabling large areas of public open space and large areas of vegetation, the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces contribute to the green structure of the area of the City within which they are located and subsequently to the character and amenity of that part of the City.

It is noted that there are some activities within recreation areas and public open spaces, such as network utilities and transport corridors which do not directly relate to either of the two key outcomes described above. There are often operation, functional and route selection constraints which require these activities to be located recreation areas and public open spaces. Additionally, because of their isolation from residential activity, some recreation and public open spaces are suited to accommodating network utilities and transport corridors. In addition to Policy C17.1.2, these activities are provided for in
Section C7 – Transport and C14 – Network Utilities which apply across the entire city including recreation areas and public open spaces.

C17.1.1 Policy

To provide for a wide range of recreation and community activities by adopting a mix of zones.

Explanation

In order to enable the social and cultural wellbeing of the City, this policy recognises that the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas need to be provide for a wide range of recreation and community activities. Recreation and community activities range in their nature but, perhaps more importantly, also in their scale and intensity. It would not be sustainable to provide for all recreation and community activities on all public open spaces and recreation areas.

Therefore in order to ensure the full range of recreation and community activities needs can be met within the City it is appropriate to identify multiple District Plan zones.

Method of Implementation

Provision of a Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone.

Principal Reasons

Within the Porirua community there are a broad range of recreation and community activity needs. However not all of these needs can be met sustainably on all of the City’s recreation and public open spaces. It is therefore appropriate to provide for these needs through the inclusion of multiple zones with the Porirua City District Plan.

C17.1.2 Policy

To provide for a limited range of non-recreation and non-community activities on recreation areas and public open spaces.

Explanation

This policy recognises that it is appropriate to accommodate some non-recreation and non-community activities within the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas. Many of these activities are long established or have a complementary role to the core function of the recreation area or public open space. Examples of such activities include primary production and production forestry at Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, Belmont Regional Park and Whitireia Park, the Council nursery at Porirua Park, and the sale of food and beverages as an ancillary activity to the core recreation or community activity. These activities tend not to adversely affect the core open space values or recreation use of the recreation area or public open space within which they are located.

It is noted that there are also some non-complementary activities located within the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas, that are important to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the City and that are of regional or national significance. Existing network utilities on these sites are long established and have functional/location needs which require that they are
provided for in these zones. The importance of these activities are also addressed in Section C7 – Transport and C14 – Network Utilities which apply across the entire City including recreation areas and public open spaces.

**Method of Implementation**

The Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone activity rules and the definitions of community and recreation activities.

Assessment of resource consent applications and the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Assessment of Notice of Requirements for Designations for network utilities and transport infrastructure.

**Principal Reasons**

Non-recreation and community activities exist within the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas for a variety of legitimate reasons. It is therefore appropriate that these activities are provided for. However, in order to protect the City’s recreation and public open spaces and adjoining areas it is important that the range of non-recreation and non-community activity is limited.

**C17.1.3 Policy**

To protect public open spaces and recreation areas from inappropriate development pressures through the use of specific zoning.

**Explanation**

This policy recognises that, in nearly all cases, development activities, such as residential subdivisions or commercial developments, would be an inappropriate use of the City’s public open spaces or recreation areas.

**Method of Implementation**

The Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone activity rules.

**Principal Reasons**

In nearly all cases, development activities, such as residential subdivisions or commercial developments, are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the public open spaces and recreation areas.

These effects will arise from factors such as:

- the loss of space for recreation or community activities; and
- the reduction in the amenity of any remaining recreation or community activity space.

**C17.2 Objective**

THAT THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF RECREATION AREAS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES DOES NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE EFFECTS.
Explanation

This objective seeks to ensure that the use and development of the City’s public open spaces and recreation areas does not have significant adverse effects on:

- the recreation and public open space areas themselves; and,
- any surrounding areas including the coast and any waterbody.

In doing so the objective recognises that the use and development of recreation areas and public open spaces by one recreation and community group can adversely affect the use of the space by another group.

Further the objective also recognises that recreation and community activities also have the potential to adversely affect adjoining areas including the coast and waterbodies. Like all activity in Porirua City, it is important to avoid significant adverse effects on Pauatahanui Inlet and Porirua Harbour arising as a result of activity on the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces.

C17.2.1 Policy

To control the scale and intensity of activities permitted on different recreation areas and public open spaces by adopting a Public Open Space Zone and a Recreation Zone.

Explanation

This policy recognises that the scale and intensity of activities permitted on recreation areas and public open spaces has a large influence on the significance of any resulting adverse effects. Further the policy recognises that not all recreation areas and public open spaces are able to accommodate recreation and community activities of the same scale and intensity without creating significant adverse environmental effects.

By adopting both a Public Open Space Zone and a Recreation it is intended that recreation and community activities of different scales and intensities will be able to be provided for in a sustainable manner throughout the City.

Method of Implementation

Provision of both a Recreation Zone and a Public Open Space Zone.

The activity standards for the Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone.

Assessment of resource consent applications and the imposition of appropriate conditions.

Principal Reasons

Not all public recreation areas and open spaces are able to accommodate the same scale and intensity of recreation and community activity. For example smaller neighbourhood parks are unlikely to be able to accommodate large events without causing significant adverse effects on the surrounding residential area. Conversely, larger recreation areas in particular, which have specifically designed facilities are more likely to enable larger events without significant adverse effects.
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C17.2.2 Policy

To identify recreation areas and public open spaces which are capable of accommodating more intensive recreation or community activities and associated buildings, taking into account past patterns of use, the interface with surrounding land uses and classifications under the Reserves Act 1977.

Explanation

This policy recognises that the identification of those areas able to accommodate more intensive activities and facilities should be based on past patterns of use, the interface with surrounding areas and classifications under the Reserves Act 1977.

The classifications of public recreation and open space under the Reserves Act is of particular importance as these classifications are accompanied by restrictions on the types of activities able to occur on a recreation area or open space. Given this, it is important that the zoning given to a recreation area or open space under the Resource Management Act 1991 is generally consistent with the classification given to the same area under the Reserves Act.

Method of Implementation

Allocation of recreation areas and public open spaces to either the Recreation Zone or Public Open Space Zone through the planning maps.

Principal Reasons

The intensity of activities provided for on a recreation area or public open space will in part determine the significance of the adverse effects that are generated from the recreation area or open space. It is therefore important that only those areas likely to be able to accommodate more intensive recreation and community activities are zoned to provide for these activities.

Past patterns of use, the interface with surrounding land uses and classifications under the Reserves Act 1977 all provide useful indicators of those areas best able to accommodate more intensive activities without generating significant adverse environmental effects.

C17.2.3 Policy

To provide for and manage activities within the City's recreation areas and public open spaces in a manner that ensures that any adverse environmental effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

Explanation

This policy recognises that recreation areas and public open spaces have been established to provide for recreation and community activities. Provision for these activities is important to the social and cultural wellbeing of the community. Further, it is recognised that recreation areas and public open spaces often provide for a limited range of non-recreation and non-community activities.

Notwithstanding this, the policy also recognises that these activities can generate adverse effects; including on:
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- other users of recreation and public open space areas;
- other activities taking place within recreation and public open space areas;
- ecological values contained within recreation and open space areas; and,
- the environmental quality of adjoining areas, adjoining waterbodies and the coast.

It is therefore important that the activities on recreation areas and public open spaces are managed to ensure that such adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated, as appropriate.

With regard to bullet two above it is noted that the ecological sites contained within the City’s public recreation areas and open spaces are shown on the District Plan maps. In order to maintain their ecological value, the disturbance of vegetation within these sites is limited by the Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone permitted activity standards. In determining the significance of the effects of activities which do not comply with these permitted activity standards it is important that the Significant Ecological Site ranking and assessment of each site, contained within the Inventory of Ecological Sites in Porirua City – July 2001 is considered.

Method of Implementation

The Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone activity rules and activity standards.

Assessment of resource consent applications and the imposition of appropriate conditions.

The management framework, including Reserve Management Plans, under the Reserves Act 1997.

Principal Reasons

Activities on recreation areas and public open spaces may result in significant adverse environmental effects, if inappropriately managed.

C17.2.4 Policy

To ensure that the location, scale and treatment of all recreation and public open space facilities avoids, remedies or mitigates adverse environmental effects including those on the open space values of the site.

Explanation

This policy recognises that facilities such as buildings, car park areas and walkways are important to the function of recreation areas and public open spaces. However these facilities need to be appropriately located and treated and of an appropriate scale to ensure that they do not generate significant adverse environmental effects. The policy therefore seeks to ensure that location, scale and treatment of these facilities is appropriate to ensure that potential adverse effects are avoided, remedied, or mitigated.
Potential adverse effects may include effects on the quality of the recreation area and public open space itself such as the loss of open space and the destruction of vegetation. Likewise the construction and maintenance of facilities may also impact on adjoining land and waterbodies. Like all activity in Porirua City, it is important to avoid significant adverse effects on Pauatahanui Inlet and Porirua Harbour arising as a result of activity on the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces.

**Method of Implementation**

The Recreation Zone and Public Open Space Zone activity standards.

Assessment of resource consent applications and the imposition of appropriate conditions.

The management framework, including Reserve Management Plans, under the Reserves Act 1997.

**Principal Reasons**

Facilities can generate adverse effect on the recreation area and public open space within which they are located, and on surrounding areas. It is therefore important the location, scale and treatment of these facilities is carefully considered and appropriately provided for.

**C17.3 Environmental Outcomes Anticipated**

**C17.3.1** Sufficient recreation areas and public open spaces to meet the needs of the Porirua community.

**C17.3.2** A limited range of non-recreational and non-community activities which do not create inappropriate adverse effects on the recreation function and open space values of the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces.

**C17.3.3** Any environmental effects associated with the use of the City’s recreation areas and public open spaces are appropriately avoided, remedied and/or mitigated.