

ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL

Mayor
Chairperson and Members
STRATEGY, POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

DELIBERATIONS AND ADOPTION OF THE OPEN SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE POLICY

Report prepared by: Stephanie Kelly, Senior Strategy Advisor

Report reviewed by: Name/title of Group Managerkaere, Group Manager Operations

Report approved by: Craig Tiriana, Acting Chief Executive

**1. TE PŪTAKE
PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to enable the Committee to deliberate on submissions received and make a recommendation to Council on the adoption of the Open Space Level of Service Policy.

**2. HE TŪTOHUNGA
RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. That the report 'Deliberations and Adoption of the Open Space Level of Service Policy' be received.**
- 2. That the Committee recommends to Council that the Draft Open Space Level of Service Policy (Attachment 2 - Tracked Changes Version) is adopted with the amendments recommended by staff and included in Attachment 1.**

**3. TE TĀHUHU
BACKGROUND**

The Open Space Level of Service Policy will inform Council's open space requirements for new development areas including Councils structure planning and locality planning processes. The Policy will also provide guidance to assess the suitability of the existing open space network against the standards outlined in the policy to ensure the open space network is fit for purpose. In addition, the Policy is intended to:

- Provide clarity on what we want to achieve from our Open Space network
- Provide certainty to Council, developers and the community on future provision
- Ensure an integrated approach with walking, cycling, stormwater etc.
- Provide the rationale for financial contributions.
- Provide the link between the purpose of the reserve and how we maintain it.
- Ensure alignment with Council's strategic direction including the Housing and Thriving Communities Strategy and Sport and Recreation Strategy.

The proposed Policy identifies the following objectives for the open space network:

- The open space network is accessible to all.
- The open space network is connected.
- The open space network is protected and enhanced.
- The open space network is something that we are proud of.
- The open space network delivers great outcomes in partnership with Te Arawa and our community.

At its meeting on 29 October 2020 the Council adopted the draft Open Space Level of Service Policy for public consultation pursuant to Section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002.

The submission period ran from 16 November to 14 December 2020. Submissions were sought through:

- Advertisement in the local media informing the public of the draft Policy, where to get more information, and inviting submissions.
- Through Council's online engagement portal Let's Talk – Kōrero Mai.
- A direct letter to key stakeholders.
- Notice of the consultation was circulated through Council's regular e-pānui.

A total of eight submissions were received with three submitters electing to speak to their submissions at the hearing held on Thursday 11 March 2021.

4. TE MATAPAKI ME NGĀ KŌWHIRINGA DISCUSSION AND OPTIONS

A summary of the key submission topics/issues and the staff recommendations in response to submissions is included as Attachment 1.

A tracked changes version of the Open Space Level of Service Policy incorporating staff recommendations is also included as Attachment 2.

5. TE TINO AROMATAWAI ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The decisions in this report are not considered significant in accordance with Council's Significance Policy.

6. NGĀ KŌRERO O TE HAPORI ME TE WHAKATAIRANGA COMMUNITY INPUT/ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLICITY

Full community consultation was undertaken on the draft Policy under section 82 of the Local Government Act 2002 between 16 November to 14 December 2020.

RDC-1116510

7. HE WHAIWHAKAARO CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 He Whaiwhakaarotanga Mahere Pūtea Financial/budget considerations

There are no costs associated with the recommendations of this report. Any wider financial considerations associated with implementation of the Policy will be considered through Council's Long Term Plan or Annual Plan processes or through alternative funding sources.

7.2 Kaupapa Here me ngā Hiraunga Whakariterite Policy and planning implications

The decisions in this report align with the Vision 2030 Goals of Outstanding Places to Play, a Resilient Community and Enhanced Environment.

The decisions in this report support the strategic outcomes identified in He Papakāinga, He Hāpori Taurikura – A Strategy for Homes and Thriving Communities and the Sport and Recreation Strategy.

7.3 Tūraru Risks

There are no major risks associated with the decisions or recommendations in this report.

7.4 Te Whaimana Authority

The Strategy, Policy and Finance Committee is delegated to make recommendations to Council on this matter.

8. NGĀ ĀPITI HANGA ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Summary of Submissions including staff recommendations in response to submissions
Attachment 2: Open Space Level of Service Policy – Tracked Changes Version (RDC-1116511)

ATTACHMENT 1: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS INCLUDING STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue/Topic	Submission No.	Summary of submission points	Staff comment	Staff recommendation
Support for Policy	5 6 8	<p>This is an important and essential policy needing careful consideration at a critical time in the development of the Rotorua community.</p> <p>Overall, we think that this Policy is a pragmatic approach to quality provision.</p> <p>Acknowledge that the Policy has informed the Eastside Community Wellness Plan to date. Support that the Policy provides equitable access for all.</p>	N/A	No amendments required.
Puketawhero Park development	1	Request for the development of a path and seating through Puketawhero Park.	<p>Outside of the scope of the draft Policy.</p> <p>The development of specific reserves should be considered through the development of reserve management plans or parks specific projects.</p>	No amendments required.
Accessibility standards	2	<p>Policy fails to recognise people with disabilities and those using mobility aids such as wheelchairs including provision for amenities that support this.</p> <p>500m is too far for a large number of people to walk. Request provision of a free hop on hop off service.</p>	<p>Clause 2.3 states that “the draft policy also seeks to ensure that as far as practicable, the open space network is developed in a way that everyone is able to access it regardless of their age, ability or location”. Provision of amenities to support the use of mobility aids should be considered through the development of individual reserve management plans.</p> <p>The base level of service for accessibility is that the majority (90%) of residents within the urban area are able to walk 10-15mins (or 500m) to a neighbourhood reserve or equivalent. Any increase in this level of service would not be achievable or practicable. The provision of a hop on hop off service is outside the scope of the draft Policy.</p>	No amendments required.
Exclusion of skateboards and Lime Scooters	2	Request the exclusion of lime scooters and skateboards from designated walking and mobility scooter paths.	<p>Outside the scope of the draft Policy.</p> <p>The NZ Land Transport (Road User) Rule 2004 provides that wheeled recreational devices are permitted on footpaths and shared paths. On</p>	No amendments required.

Issue/Topic	Submission No.	Summary of submission points	Staff comment	Staff recommendation
			footpaths wheeled recreational devices must give way to pedestrians and drivers of mobility devices.	
Provision of additional facilities	2	Request for additional facilities including seating, water fountains and shelters.	Outside of the scope of the draft Policy. Provision of additional facilities should be considered through the development of individual reserve management plans or specific projects.	No amendments required.
Condition of footpaths	2	Council footpaths do not comply with disability access standards.	Outside of the scope of the draft Policy. Comments have been referred to the Sustainable Transportation team to follow up.	No amendments required.
Open space network maps	2	Council should make available maps of the open space network which show off lead dog walking areas and facilities.	Outside of the scope of the draft Policy. Maps are already available on Councils website.	No amendments required.
Springfield Golf Course	3 5	Save the Springfield golf course. Opposed to the proposal for a sport and recreation precinct on the Springfield golf course.	While the draft Policy states that the provision of Sport and Recreation Parks will be “determined by supply and demand for winter sports fields” and proposes a number of methods for increasing supply to meet demand, it does not inform any specific decision making about the future use of the Springfield Golf Course specifically.	No amendments required.
Reserve in Kawaha Point/Fairy Springs	4	Request provision of a family friendly park in Kawaha Point/Fairy Springs located near suburban commercial areas and the provision of a café.	The application of the draft Policy to the existing open space network will identify where there may be gaps in provision. Requests for specific amenities including appropriate commercial activities should be considered through the development of reserve management plans.	No amendments required.
Policy implementation	6	Policy states that implementation is subject to Council’s LTP and Annual Plan processes. Implementation should be based on outcomes that are tangible and have timeframes.	An outcomes based implementation approach is not realistically achievable as it is dependent upon Council’s existing budget processes.	No amendments required.
Definition of open space	6	The definition in the draft Policy does not mention gifted land.	The definition of Open Space in the Policy is “all open space under the control of Council, set apart for public recreation purpose inclusive of recreation reserves”. This definition also applies to land gifted	Under the definition of Open Space include the words “land gifted for reserve purposes” .

Issue/Topic	Submission No.	Summary of submission points	Staff comment	Staff recommendation
			for recreation purposes however for clarity and completeness staff support the inclusion of 'gifted land' under the definition of Open Space.	
Acquisition, Divestment, Funding and Implementation	6	Clarification required around the use of financial contributions and how any shortfall will be funded for the acquisition of new reserves.	<p>Wherever possible Council will seek to acquire land in lieu of a financial contribution. Where this is not achievable and the financial contribution is not sufficient, the additional funding will be sought from the general rate subject to Council's LTP and Annual Plan processes.</p> <p>Targeted rates could be considered for proposals for new open space that is a higher level of service than provided for under the draft Policy.</p>	Under the Acquisition, Divestment, Funding and Implementation section of the Policy including the following wording: <i>"additional funding will be sought from the general rate subject to Council's LTP and Annual Plan processes where financial contributions are insufficient to acquire new reserve land as required. A targeted rate could be considered for specific developments where the proposed open space is an increased level of service"</i> .
Pocket Parks	6	There is limited amenities suggest for pocket parks. The value of these parks should not be underestimated particularly in high density areas.	The amenities listed for Pocket Parks in the provision metrics table are indicative only. The development of pocket parks including any amenities will be park specific and dependent on a number of factors including size, shape and contour of the park, the location and surrounding land use. It should be noted however the ability to provide amenities on Pocket Parks is generally limited due to the small size of these parks.	No amendments required.
Use of Open Space	6	Include a new policy statement that requires an evaluation to be undertaken to understand the potential uses of an open space.	The draft Policy includes a function level of service standard which aims to ensure a variety of open space and recreational experiences are provided from the open space network. The type of open space is indicative of the likely use or experience however specific uses of individual reserves is determined through community consultation during the reserve management planning process.	No amendments required.

Issue/Topic	Submission No.	Summary of submission points	Staff comment	Staff recommendation
Planting on reserves	6	Include a new Policy statement what where planting is required on an open space, that eco-sourced, native planting is the preferred species.	Outside of the scope of the Policy. Feedback will be considered in the development of Council's Tree Policy.	No amendments required.
Access to drinking water	7	Policy should include a requirement to provide water fountains to ensure access to safe drinking water.	Outside of the scope of the Policy. This should be considered through the development of reserve management plans or parks specific projects.	No amendments required.
Provision of reserves on the Eastside	8	The current provision of open spaces on the Eastside should remain in the future even if the use changes.	The application of the draft Policy to the existing open space network will identify where there may be gaps or an excess in provision. Any proposal to divest any reserves would require a significant community consultation process and would be undertaken in partnership with the Tatau Pounamu Collective.	No amendments required.
Development of Eastside open spaces	8	The development of and decisions about future activity on Eastside open spaces is undertaken in consultation with Tatau Pounamu, the surrounding community and Eastside Tamariki and Rangatahi.	The future development and activity of specific open spaces will be considered through reserve management planning processes which includes a full public consultation process.	No amendments required.

ATTACHMENT 2: DRAFT OPEN SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE POLICY - TRACK CHANGED VERSION**OPEN SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE POLICY (DRAFT)**

Date Adopted	Next Review	Officer Responsible
TBD	TBD	Manager Sport, Recreation and Environment

Purpose

To outline Council's approach to the provision and development of the open space network.

This will determine Council's open space requirements for new development areas and guide assessment of the suitability of the existing open space network against standards outlined in the Policy.

Scope

The Policy applies to all Council controlled open space, including lands gifted that are subject to the Ngāti Whakaue Gifted Reserves Protocol Agreement.

It is acknowledged that Council is one of a number of providers of open space in the district, and that there is a need to understand Council's role within the broader context of the network.

The Policy applies across the district however as 80% of the population are located within urban areas, the level of service standards are more applicable to these areas.

The Policy identifies opportunities to acknowledge mana whenua and represent the importance of Te Arawa to this place through the planning and development of the open space network. Te Arawa iwi are tangata whenua of the Rotorua district and Māori culture and heritage is a special characteristic and strength of this place.

Definitions

Open Space - Open space under the control of Council, set apart for public recreation purpose inclusive of recreation reserves, [land gifted for reserve purposes](#), freehold land, drainage reserves, esplanade strips and reserves, court, alley, lakeside reserves, cycle track and road reserves used for public recreation, excluding exclusive leased land.

Objectives

Council's strategic direction including Vision 2030, Spatial Plan, Sport and Recreation Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Sustainable Living Strategy provide the context for determining the following objectives that apply to the open space network:

- **The open space network is accessible to all.** The open space network is accessible for all regardless of age, ability, socio-economic status. Our community do not have to walk far to experience open spaces.
- **The open space network is connected.** Recreation, transport and ecological corridors are created. Communities are linked together.
- **The open space network is protected and enhanced.** The open space network plays a significant role in contributing to the environmental values of our district. We look after what we have and add value wherever possible. We educate our community and visitors to the area on the importance of our open spaces, culture and natural environment.
- **The open space network is something that we are proud of.** The open space network is highly valued by the community and is the outcome of good design and community involvement.
- **The open space network delivers great outcomes in partnership with Te Arawa and our community.** Te Arawa principles and partnership is a fundamental part of how we plan and deliver our open space network. Open spaces are reflective of our culture and history.

General Policies

1.1 Level of Service Standards

The level of service for the open space network is determined by the following:

- Quality standards - what our open spaces should look and feel like,
- Quantity standards - how much open space we should have,
- Accessibility standards - how far people should travel to get to open space, and
- Function standards - the range of experiences the open space network provides.

The standards are designed to ensure that the community have good access to the open space network and the variety of open space experiences that it provides while ensuring that the open space network is the outcome of good design and highly valued by the community.

1.2 Integrated Planning

Council takes an integrated approach to open space planning. This recognises that the open space network achieves multiple objectives of Council including recreation, conservation, amenity, transport, culture, sustainability, infrastructure, community development.

Bringing together considerations such as walking and cycling network plans, stormwater management, environmental objectives, cultural values and aspirations, growth planning and neighbourhood reinvigoration projects will achieve better outcomes for our community.

Level of Service Policies

2.1 Quality Standards

2.1.1 Purpose:

Quality standards define what we want our open spaces to look and feel like. They refer to the features and characteristics of open space that impact on its ability to meet community social and recreational needs. They influence the way that open spaces are valued and used.

While there is relatively good access to open space in many parts of the city and wider district, the quality is variable. In particular, low socio-economic areas tend to be associated with a lower quality of provision, which is often characterised by poor landscaping, utilitarian design, visible damage to plantings and park structures, and the presence of graffiti. The intention of the quality standards is to apply to all areas of the city and district..

2.1.2 Policy:

The planning, provision, development and management of the open space network will be guided by the following quality standards.

Consideration	Standards
Location of open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Central and prominent to surrounding residential area. - Have good connections to the surrounding area and other destinations. - Maximise street frontage to create good visual surveillance and safety. - Topography and proportion compatible with the intended purpose. - Located at the intersection of movement corridors, near transport routes and where a high level of use is anticipated. - Located to protect and enhance cultural, environmental and heritage values. - Located to maximise the value of adjacent existing open spaces, also a wider consideration for a proposed development or structure planning process (for example, streets could be located to provide good street frontage to an existing reserve or further open space could be provided to increase the size and function of an existing reserve).
Development of open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All open spaces have a clear purpose and function (primary and secondary). - Activities reflect needs of user groups and local communities. - Encourage sense of ownership over the space. - Apply universal design and flexibility to cater to changing demands. - Create visible activity nodes to encourage social interaction and safe environments. - Permeable fencing and avoidance of solid planting to encourage passive surveillance and improve safety of reserve users. - Understand cultural, heritage and natural values to create engaging and distinctive open spaces. - Contribution to environmental values including ecological corridors.
Maintenance of open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim to ensure maintenance standards reflect the purpose and function of the open space to maintain quality open spaces in the future.

The open space categories and provision metrics table provides further guidance on function, provision targets and indicative amenities for each type of open space.

2.1.3 Application:

The quality standards guide requirements for new areas of open space and are applied to the existing network to determine where improvements are required. For existing areas this could include the purchase of land to improve visibility and access into reserves. Divestment of land may be considered where there are limited options to improve quality or it is not practical from a cost/benefit point of view and an alternative area of land is available to better meet the quality standards.

It is recognised that some types of open space such as stormwater gully systems, while potentially providing open space values through amenity, ecological corridors and walking/cycling connections, the nature of the land may limit the extent to which the quality standards can be achieved.

Reserve Management Planning and Neighbourhood Reinvigoration processes will be used to help apply the quality standards, and engage with the community on their expectations with regard to their local reserves. Application of quality standards can be achieved through community design processes to encourage ownership and pride in the open space network and through partnerships with Tangata Whenua to reflect cultural values and activities.

A Best Practice Guide for Open Space will be developed to provide further guidance on expectations of these standards including illustrated examples to highlight good practice (and what not to do).

2.1.4 Application:

Implementation is subject to Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

2.2 Quantity Standards

2.2.1 Purpose:

Quantity standards determine how much open space is required. Through application of these standards, there is likely to be an increase in the quantity of open space available as an outcome of growth and other opportunities.

2.2.2 Policy:

The level of service is primarily driven by standards for the accessibility, quality and function of the open space network. In order to meet these standards, new open space may be required in both existing residential areas and new development areas. This will increase the amount of open space available to the community.

Council may also acquire (or receive) land for open space purposes through the following:

- Responding to strategic opportunities that achieve wider Council/community objectives.
- District Plan esplanade reserve provisions.

Acquisition can be through vesting of land, purchase of land or a works in lieu agreement with a developer or other organisation.

The requirement to provide on-site open space as part of a development may be considered in planning for areas of higher density. This will be considered through the District Plan review process.

Areas of medium to high density increase reliance on the open space network as this often fulfills the role of their own backyard, and provides amenity in a built-up environment. An evaluation will be

undertaken to determine the open space available, the quality of these spaces, and the function that they provide. Consideration will be given to community perceptions about their open space environment. Strengths and weaknesses will be identified and consideration will be given to a range of options available to address identified issues.

These options could include:

- improving the quality of open spaces (this is a critical component of attractive and liveable high density urban areas)
- improving the function of open spaces
- improving connections between open spaces (using streets, accessways, cycle ways etc)
- improving the amenity values of the open space network
- provision of additional areas of open space such as pocket parks
- enhancement of streetscape to provide amenity and recreational opportunities
- recognition of open spaces provided by schools, churches, marae and other organisations
- consideration of provision of on-site open space
- contribution of town centres and civic spaces

Council will measure the amount of open space using a population-based ratio, in other words the actual number of hectares of open space provided for every thousand people. This will only be used to identify how much open space is available based on actual provision, and how this changes over time. The ha/1000 ratio is a common way of comparing provision against other Councils. It will not be used to determine the quantity of open space required in the district as this is primarily driven by standards for the accessibility, quality and function of the open space network.

The open space categories and provision metrics table provides further guidance on function, provision targets and indicative amenities for each type of open space.

2.2.3 Application:

Implementation is subject to Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

2.3 Accessibility Standards

2.3.1 Purpose:

Accessibility standards primarily determine how far people should have to travel to get to the open space network, in other words, physical accessibility.

The policy also seeks to ensure that as far as practicable, the open space network is developed in a way that everyone is able to access it regardless of their age, ability or location.

2.3.2 Policy:

The aim is to ensure everyone has reasonable access to the open space network and the variety of experiences it provides. A no exclusions aspiration is in place so that accessibility is achieved regardless of age, ability or location. Accessibility to places that support cultural values and activities of importance to Tangata Whenua is a key consideration.

The base level of service for accessibility is that the majority (90%) of residents located in urban areas are able to walk 10-15 minutes (or 500 metres) to a neighbourhood park or the equivalent function of a neighbourhood park provided on a different type of reserve, for example a sports park. Urban areas are defined by the District Plan zones of Residential (1-5), Future Residential, City Centre (1-3) and Rural Village.

The role of other providers such as Schools and Marae can be considered as a way to achieve this standard although it needs to be recognised that this does not necessarily provide security of long-term access. In some situations it may be appropriate to enter into a community share partnership with the provider to provide and promote community access.

Walking distance will be measured as an actual distance, not as the crow flies to take into account the street network and physical barriers such as railways and main highways. Connectivity of the network is an important consideration as this provides easier access to areas of open space.

As the size and function of open spaces increases, the greater the distance that people will have to travel (walk, cycle, public transport or drive) to them.

If it is considered impractical to achieve accessibility standards because of the nature of the built environment or the cost/benefit involved in doing this (eg purchasing a number of residential properties), then the priority will be on increasing accessibility, visibility and quality of the nearest reserve(s).

The open space categories and provision metrics table provides further guidance on function, provision targets and indicative amenities for each type of open space.

2.3.3 Application:

Open Space Network Plans will be developed to map the 500 metre radius (ideally based on actual travel distance as opposed to as the crow flies) and identify gaps in provision. This will take into account future development areas.

Implementation is subject to Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

2.4 Function Standards

2.4.1 Purpose:

Function standards determine the diversity of experiences our community and visitors should expect from our open space network.

2.4.2 Policy:

The aim of the function standards is to ensure a variety of open space and recreational experiences are provided from the open space network, and provide a balance between small neighbourhood parks and larger premier parks.

The open space network will be categorised in accordance with Council's open space categories. Each space will have a clear primary (and secondary) purpose and function. This will guide the ongoing development and management approach to each reserve. It is recognised that some reserves have a higher level of service approach as they experience high levels of use at certain times of the year due to the purpose and function of the reserve (eg Lakeside Reserves).

The open space categories and provision metrics table provides further guidance on function, provision targets and indicative amenities for each type of open space.

2.4.3 Application:

Reserve Management Planning and Neighbourhood Reinvigoration processes will be used to help apply the function standards, and engage with the community on their expectations with regard to their local reserves. Implementation is subject to Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Landuse and Development

It is recognised that geographic areas of the district have different characteristics, communities, landuse, development patterns and levels of existing open space provision. Therefore, it is not practical to have one consistent standard across the district.

The table below provides guidance on considerations when applying the level of service standards to different areas across the district.

Landuse Type	Considerations and areas of focus
Rural	<p>It is often assumed that because the rural environment is characterised by open landscapes and views and the feeling of openness, that public open space is not needed, however open space is essential in contributing to the rural sense of place and community. This is especially so for sport and recreation parks and community parks that are often the centre or hub of rural settlements. It is important that these parks meet quality, accessibility and function standards.</p> <p>The rural environment is also popular for recreation uses, such as walking, horse-riding, farm-stays, photography, sightseeing and off-road vehicle use (4-wheel drive vehicles and mountain bikes). The Department of Conservation manages a significant amount of the remaining natural areas found in rural environments.</p>
Rural Residential	<p>Council is starting to see a growing number of rural residential subdivisions. As these areas are predominately located close to a small town or urban area, it is important that connections are provided to any commercial, community or recreational destinations nearby.</p> <p>The larger lots provided by rural residential subdivisions do not necessitate the need for a neighbourhood or community park as they have larger sections that provide for play and amenity. However, the protection of significant cultural, heritage or environment features and connections to walking and cycling networks are important considerations in rural residential developments. Where the subdivision is of a significant scale (eg over 100 lots), consideration may be given to provision of local neighbourhood or community parks.</p> <p>It is also important that the wider cumulative impact of rural residential developments on high use areas such as premier parks, lakeside reserves and outdoor adventure areas across the district is recognised.</p>
Urban – existing	<p>Focus is on optimising the open space network through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving linkages and connections (including with new developments). - Improving quality. - Identify clear purpose and function for all areas. - Achieve 500m accessibility for neighbourhood parks. - Partnership and integrated approach. <p>Focus on high deprivation areas recognising role that open space planning and development can play in strengthening communities. Use neighbourhood reinvigoration projects to start to achieve standards.</p> <p>It is also important that the wider cumulative impact of infill development on high use areas such as premier parks, lakeside reserves and outdoor adventure areas across the district is recognised.</p>

Landuse Type	Considerations and areas of focus
Urban – new	<p>Focus on local neighbourhood reserve provision and walking and cycling, protection of natural areas, dual role of stormwater reserves.</p> <p>Focus on integrating with stormwater, transport, schools and community facilities, and connecting into existing neighbourhoods.</p> <p>It is also important that the wider cumulative impact of new growth areas on high use areas such as premier parks, lakeside reserves and outdoor adventure areas across the district is recognised.</p>
Urban – medium to high density	<p>Focus is on a range of methods of provide open space network outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving quality of open spaces. - Improving function of open spaces. - Improving connections using streets and accessways. - Provision of additional open space. - Enhancement of streetscape. - Role of open space provided by other organisations. - Role of civic spaces. - Potential for provision of onsite communal open spaces. <p>It is also important that the wider cumulative impact of higher density living on high use areas such as premier parks, lakeside reserves and outdoor adventure areas across the district is recognised.</p>

Acquisition, Divestment, Funding and Implementation

This policy assists with identifying open space requirements and the investment needed to both respond to growth and ensure the existing network is achieving good outcomes.

The Ngāti Whakaue Gifted Reserves Protocol Agreement applies to decisions made under this policy. Under this agreement it is understood that if such reserves should not be used for their original purpose then they should be returned to Pukeroa Oruawhata Trust on behalf of Ngati Whakaue, unless there is agreement otherwise. Council will only consider disposal of open space land when it is clearly established that the land is surplus, and disposal would result in a clear benefit to the wider open space network and the open space needs of Rotorua residents. Any proposed disposal of land will follow relevant Council and legislative process including the Ngāti Whakaue Gifted Reserves Protocol Agreement, Reserves Act 1977 and Local Government Act 2002.

Council seeks to recover the costs of open space provision and development associated with growth. This primarily occurs through financial contribution charges in accordance with the Rotorua District Plan. Financial contributions are used to achieve positive effects on the environment as the result of growth. As more land is developed, the density of housing may increase and more pressure is placed on existing reserves. New reserves may also be required to provide for the higher demand for recreational space in the district and increased amenity.

[Additional funding will be sought from the general rate, subject to Councils' Long Term Plan and Annual Planning processes, where financial contributions are insufficient to acquire new reserve land as required. A targeted rate could be considered for specific developments where the proposed open space would result in an increased level of service.](#)

Council will consider the potential for vesting of land for reserves (and potential development of the land) subject to agreement on the land meeting the requirements of this policy. The type of land that could be vested in Council in lieu of financial contributions could include:

- A relatively flat area of land for a neighbourhood park, accessible to the user population and adequate to accommodate children's play equipment, tree plantings and open space.
- A linkage, or potential linkage, along or to significant natural features, or between other areas of public open space and community facilities (excludes linkages between roads).
- Land for the protection or enhancement of significant mature trees, significant areas of indigenous vegetation, indigenous wildlife habitat, margins of waterways, biodiversity, natural and cultural landscapes heritage places and buildings, or other significant natural features.
- Land for the protection or enhancement of historic or cultural features of significance to the population of the district.

In all respects, the Council will retain the right to decide on the appropriate level of money and/or land contribution in accordance with this Policy and the Rotorua District Plan financial contribution requirements.

In order to give effect to the Policy it is likely to be implemented in a variety of ways:

- Used by staff and developers to guide open space requirements for new developments.
- Used as a basis for the collection and use of financial contributions.
- Applied to the existing open space network to determine alignment.
- Development of an open space network plan (that also considers acquisition, rationalisation, divestment opportunities).
- Input into development of spatial plans and structure plans (eg Pukehangi).
- The above information to help inform Long Term Plan capital programmes.
- Development of appropriate performance measures.
- Open space assessment for large development proposals (eg Brent Block 179 lots).
- Set levels of service for incorporation into Asset Management Plans.

Implementation is subject to Council's Long Term Plan and Annual Plan processes.

Relevant Legislation, Bylaws and Policies

Policies

1.4 Property Disposal Policy

This policy provides a consistent approach when considering the disposal of Council-owned properties, provides a complete and robust process to clearly identify properties that may be considered for disposal and seeks to manage Council's risk and legal requirements in this regard.

5.2 Administration of Reserves Policy

This policy covers reserve management plans, easements and private access to reserves, and esplanade reserves.

5.7 Reserves Structures Policy

This policy covers the provision of playgrounds. The policy requires playgrounds that cater for pre-schoolers and children are to be located so that access and potential use within a catchment radius of approximately 500m is maximised. Exceptions to this will be when playgrounds are located within lakeside, rural and inner-city reserves that have high visitor numbers, but insignificant local residential users within 500m. Playgrounds that cater for young people are to be located within suburban or rural communities so that access and potential use within that suburb or community is maximised. Playgrounds are to be sited on reserves (or other land) according to the following principles:

- High visibility for safety and awareness and to deter vandalism.
- Safe and convenient access to roads, pathways, rights of way.
- Account to be taken of the presence of natural hazards and barriers to use.
- If possible, sufficient open space should be left around the playground for other activities, and to provide a buffer to residential housing.
- The area is to be well drained.
- To take advantage of the best features of the location.
- Following accepted methods of consultation with neighbouring residents and businesses.

If located on land that does not belong to Council, then a legal agreement protecting public rights to use the area must be executed

5.8 Sports Grounds and Facilities Policy

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent approach is undertaken with regard to the management, development and maintenance of sports grounds and associated facilities.

Rotorua District Plan

The District Plan identifies esplanade reserves required for access and ecological values with priority areas identified.

All designated reserves are scheduled in the District Plan.

The District Plan outlines requirements for reserve zoned land and financial contribution requirements for reserves.

Reserves Act 1977

Providing, for the preservation and management for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand possessing values including recreational use or potential, whether active or passive; or natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, biological, geological, scientific, educational, community, or other special features or value.

Open Space categories and provision metrics guideline

Type	Function	Examples	Indicative amenities	Provision metrics
Neighbourhood Parks	Provides basic informal recreation and social opportunities with a short walk of surrounding residential properties.	Scott Ave Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playgrounds - Landscaping - Seats - Small grassed play space - Pathway connections 	Ideal size of 3000m ² . Urban - Located within 500m or 10-15-minute walk of 90% of residences in urban areas. Rural and rural residential – No requirement.
Pocket Parks	Small scale parks usually provided in high density living areas and/or within commercial areas to provide amenity relief from the built environment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping - Seats 	Usually less than 1000m ² in size. Provided in high density living areas and commercial areas.
Community Parks	Provides a variety of informal recreation and social experiences from residents across a suburb. Activities include family gatherings, small community events and informal games of sport. Also provides a neighbourhood park function to surrounding residents.	Linton Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Playgrounds - Landscaping - Seats - Large grassed play space - Pathway connections - BBQ and picnic areas - Cycle stands - Carparking - Possible sportsfields 	Minimum size of 1ha. Urban – TBD after application of standards. Rural – Village green for small rural towns and villages. Rural residential – No requirement.
Sport and Recreation Parks	Network of reserves with primary purpose to provide for organised sport and recreation activities. Also used for events	Westbrook Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sportsfields - Clubrooms - Public toilets and changing rooms. - Cycle stands 	Provision and development determined by supply and demand for winter sports fields. Options for responding to under supply include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code reallocation - Artificial surfaces

Type	Function	Examples	Indicative amenities	Provision metrics
	and tournaments (sport and non-sport). Also provides a neighbourhood and community park function to surrounding residents.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carparking - Playgrounds - Pathway connections - Hard courts - Other play opportunities such as skateparks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New sportsfields - Irrigation and drainage improvements - Floodlights
Premier Parks (also called Destination Reserves)	Showcase the best that the city and district has to offer, providing a unique experience for the community and visitors to the area. Offer a range of experiences and typically provide for a large number of visitors. Also provides a neighbourhood and community park function to surrounding residents.	Government Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised facilities - High standards of landscaping and amenity. - Large events space. - Public artworks - Highly structured and developed spaces. - Walking and cycling connections. - Destination playgrounds. - Water access - Viewpoints - Distinctive natural, heritage or cultural features. - Public gardens - Signage/interpretation 	No quantity guidance. Tend to be outcome of historical provision or natural/cultural features. Existing areas identified as premier parks and focus on quality, function and accessibility improvements. Ensure maintenance level of service reflects primary purpose and function, and extent of use.
Lakeside Reserves	Many of Rotorua's lakes are destinations for locals and tourists particularly during summer months. For visitors to experience the lake	Hannahs Bay Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boat ramps and lake access points. - Picnic/BBQ areas - Carparking 	No quantity guidance. Tend to be outcome of historical provision. Existing areas identified as Lakeside Reserves and focus on quality, function and accessibility improvements. Ensure maintenance level of

Type	Function	Examples	Indicative amenities	Provision metrics
	<p>environment, these reserves focus on providing maximum enjoyment and access/interaction with the water.</p> <p>Also provides a neighbourhood and community park function to surrounding residents.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping and amenity. - Public toilets - Events space - Playgrounds/nature play - Walking/shared paths - Signage/interpretation 	service reflects primary purpose and function, and extent of use.
Cultural/Historic Reserves	<p>Many cultural/historic reserves are in Maori ownership. Accessibility and connectivity of these reserves is important.</p>		Reserve development should reflect tangata whenua aspirations for the reserve.	No quantity guidance. Tend to be outcome of historical provision or protection of significant sites as part of a development process or where creating a reserve enables a site to be protected.
Recreation and Ecological Linkages	<p>Provides contiguous networks of open space that establish recreational, walking and cycling and ecological connections, integrated with on-street connections and stormwater networks. Often provide access to the water (lakes, rivers, streams etc).</p>	Waitete Stream Esplanade Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walkways - Trails - Cycleways - Landscaping - Seating areas - Boardwalks - Native bush - Signage 	<p>No quantity guidance. Focus on connecting existing areas of open space. Establish district wide plan with network aspirations within and around urban areas (lakes, caldera, Green Corridor, Te Ara Ahi) and rural connections. Identify District Plan priority esplanade reserves and connections to/from these.</p> <p>Influence of topography – connections usually guided by gullies, streams, stormwater, escarpments requirements.</p> <p>Use of the road network (formed and unformed), waterways and rural areas to provide greater opportunities for community recreation activities and environmental benefit.</p> <p>Recognise limitations with applying some of the quality standards.</p>

Type	Function	Examples	Indicative amenities	Provision metrics
Outdoor Adventure	Large outdoor activity areas, mainly covered in forest. Used for range of activities including mountain biking, nature walking and associated commercial tourism activities.	Tokorangi and Whakarewarewa forests (The Redwoods).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cycle trails - Walking trails - Visitor centres - Specialised facilities - Outdoor adventure activities - High profile events - Signage/interpretation 	No quantity guidance. Significantly adds to the diversity of experiences available within the district. Popular with the local community and with visitors and tourism.

Note over time, these categories will be applied to other relevant planning processes for consistency such as reserve management plans, asset management plans and the Rotorua District Plan.