

Report 03.344
Date 19 June 2003
File PK/03/02/02

Committee Landcare
Author Victoria Owen, Advisor, Planning and Policy

Submissions on the Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan

1. Purpose

To seek the Committee's approval to make changes to the Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan, following the public submissions received, so that a final draft can be prepared for the next Landcare Committee meeting on 26 August 2003.

2. Background

Public submissions on the Draft Regional Parks Network Management Plan closed on 16 May 2003. At the last Committee meeting on 10 June 2003, officers informed Councillors that they were in the process of assessing the submissions and would report to Councillors at the meeting of 15 July 2003, where Councillors will also hear those who wish to speak to their submissions.

3. Summary of submissions received

A copy of all submissions and notes from the public meetings has been made available to all Councillors.

In summary, we received a total of 412 submissions comprising:

- 247 pro-forma pro motorised sport at Queen Elizabeth Park
- 118 pro-forma anti motorised sport at Queen Elizabeth Park
- 47 other submissions.

We also held three public meetings that were attended by 54 people.

4. Process

The proposed process for addressing submissions is set out in report 03.388 on this order paper.

5. Key issues raised in submission and suggested responses

Below is a table setting out the major issues raised by submitters and our recommended approach to dealing with those matters.

Issue	Comments	Recommended response
<p>Issue – Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static, not forward looking. • Doesn't address future of network, acquisition of new areas or parks, linkages, requests for a South Coast Park, Wellington Park, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original instructions/decisions was that land acquisition issues were not to be addressed through review of management plans. • The LTCCP process sets the Council's priorities for new parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes to vision. • Include paragraph stating that Network Plan relates to the management of existing parks (and parks that come into our management during the life of the plan). The LTCCP is the appropriate place to consider the acquisition of new parks.
<p>Issue – Land ownership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about land tenure/ retention within regional parks and legal protection (or lack of). • Concern about whether/how other landowners will implement these policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not have ownership of all lands (and again the LTCCP sets the priorities for acquiring new land for parks). However, we generally have control and management of lands (or are in the process of obtaining it). • GW will implement the policies contained in the plan for the areas it controls and manages. The only areas we do not control and manage are the Waitangirua farm where our only legal rights relate to management of the gazetted walkways and some areas managed by the Department of Conservation. • Landowners have all been consulted on the plan. If they choose not to comply then we can force them. It should be noted that in the past Landcorp, Department of Conservation and other land owners have agreed to abide by the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change. • Addressed in additional paragraph noted above.
<p>Issue – Landscape section</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too weak – needs strengthening to protect the landscape (as Objective B does). • The regional park should protect a diverse range of landscapes rather than contribute to this. • Doesn't indicate the scale of development that might be appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submissions highlight a discrepancy between Objectives A and B – B refers to protection (where possible) while A talks about a 'contribution'. These need to be made consistent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest reconciling and strengthening policies as suggested in the submissions.
<p>Issue – Open Space Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion that the plan needs greater recognition of and/or a policy about the open space values of parks, the value of "getting away from it all", peace and tranquillity values, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These matters relate to amenity values (as defined by RMA – qualities of an area that contribute to people's appreciation of it). While they are addressed implicitly we agree that it may be clearer to include a specific policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest an additional policy on protecting amenity values)

Issue	Comments	Recommended response
<p>Issue – Motorised recreation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 247 submissions in favour of allowing motorised recreation in Queen Elizabeth Park. At least 118 submissions asking the Council to make motorised recreation in Queen Elizabeth Park a prohibited activity under policy 35. Range of other views requesting managed access to other parks, others supportive if activity is isolated. Some against motorised at all in any parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current plan does not prohibit activities in specific parks. This is a park specific issue and should be addressed in the park specific plans unless Council wishes to prohibit motorised sport in all parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to plan. Consider the park specific issue in park specific plans.
<p>Issue – Objectives and Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of quantifiable vision, objectives and targets – nothing to measure Greater Wellington progress against. Too important to leave in annual plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position to date has been that specific targets are set out in the LTCCP and annual plan, while management plans guide use and development of the parks. Performance standards are inextricably linked to resourcing. The management plan should not make de facto resourcing decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No substantive amendment to plan. Add a paragraph clarifying process as set out.
<p>Issue – Relationship to park plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that the network plan may overly constrain park plans (some submissions say the plan is overly restrictive, others say its too loose). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers consider that the network plan doesn't constrain park plans unnecessarily – where specific issues are highlighted we can amend plan (e.g. coastal erosion). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No overall change to plan but we could remove specific examples where these have been highlighted as posing problems.
<p>Issue – Opposing views on use versus protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflicting views – some submitters request greater protection of environmental, landscape and heritage values, others suggest plan protects these too much. Suggestion that the plan may contradict the Reserves Act, which provides for the protection of value (environment, heritage, etc.) only to the extent compatible with the purpose of the reserve – e.g. recreation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional parks provide areas of open space and natural values accessible from urban areas. They lie between local authority reserves and national conservation areas. The natural values of these areas are important in terms of their overall purpose. The environmental and heritage values are protected for recreational purposes as well as for their own intrinsic value: members of the public indicate that they visit these areas because of these values. In managing regional parks, the Council must adhere to a range of Council policies and legislative requirements which require us to protect environmental and heritage values regardless of the legislative status of the land (e.g. Regional Policy Statement, Historic Places Act). Officers consider that the plan provides for both protection and use as appropriate. Access and use is generally provided for, whilst protecting key values. We do not consider that the plan contradicts the Reserves Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No overall change to the plan.

Issue	Comments	Recommended response
<p>Issue – Network Utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request from Telecom that its activities be provided for as “restricted activities”. Request from Transpower that its activities be provided for as “allowed activities”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to make provision for these activities but would like to retain some oversight. Any new structure built would require an agreement (or licence or lease) which would include conditions relating to maintenance, etc. Existing structures and associated activities will be provided for by existing agreements put in place at the time of the development. These agreements will address the nature of works allowed and the level of communication required with the Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a specific policy statement about network utilities stating that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - new structures and activities be ‘restricted’, so that an agreement can be negotiated to cover any new structure and provide for ongoing maintenance subject to any necessary controls by Council. - existing structures and associated activities are covered by existing agreements and/or could be made “allowed”.
<p>Issue – prohibited activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question as to whether some activities should be prohibited in general? e.g. mining and residential development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan was intended to cover only activities generally accepted in parks, and not to specifically prohibit general activities. Other activities are managed through other policies and legislation such as the RMA and District Plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to plan.
<p>Issue – commercial activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several submissions opposed commercial use (other than that ‘necessary’ for they enjoyment and use of the parks) and exclusive use in particular. There were concerns about the effect of commercial activities in restricting public use of the parks. Suggestion that the plan goes too far in accommodating commercial activities (e.g. title of section 2, Part B has an incorrect emphasis on commercial use). The plan should provide limits on commercial uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Reserves Act includes constraints on commercial activities. Any lease or licence for a trade must be necessary to enable the public to obtain the benefit and enjoyment of the reserve or for the convenience of persons using the reserve. The LGA is less specific but states that the Council may lease land for a shop where park users may purchase articles they require and the management plan may provide for facilities and amenities necessary for the public using the regional park. Commercial activities are provided for within parks only where they are compatible with the other values (recreation, environment, and heritage). The plan (and Concessions policy) also provide for exclusive use in limited circumstances only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change heading and wording to lessen emphasis on sustaining commercial activities.
<p>Issue – Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggestion that free public access be made an objective in it’s own right. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be possible to include an overarching objective if considered necessary. There is currently a policy (15) in the Use section relating to public access. The submitter suggested that the issue is fundamental to the parks and should be included as an objective in its own right. If including an objective we need to consider how this relates to policies on use and occupation, and ensure there is the ability to restrict access for management purposes, etc. (as per policy 15). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change recommended – we consider this matter is covered by policy 15.

Issue	Comments	Recommended response
<p>Issue – Community involvement and consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion that plan needs to give greater recognition to community involvement and two-way nature of consultation. • Some requested that Council consider establishing consultative committees for each park and an overall body for all parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section can be reviewed to reflect the relationship of the Council to the community more accurately. • We engage the community in parks in a range of ways: currently focusing on the development of Friends Groups rather than Consultative/ Management Committees. We can also pull together focus groups as required to consider any specific issues. • The Landcare Committee is the appropriate Governance body for parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-work section on community partnerships to reflect comments. • Could include a policy about Greater Wellington supporting the establishment of Friends Groups where the community wish to develop them.
<p>Issue – no introduced plants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some submitters requested that no introduced plants be used (or only where no native can be found). • Others felt we were being too “purist” already. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We consider that the current policy provides a good balance, allowing for exotic plants only where they fulfil a particular function and pose a low threat to natives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change.
<p>Issue – Commemorations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed views – majority who responded favoured trees, less support for structures and plaques (though possible in designated areas). • Different views on scattering ashes though many suggested that Tangata Whenua custom be recognised. • General opposition to memorials for people unless they particularly contributed to the parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest a policy that reflects the general tenor of submissions. • The park specific plans should provide more detail on whether and where designated areas should be provided, and the type of commemorations allowed. • Applications to be assessed on a case by case basis, according to the management plan. • We suggest that it is not appropriate for ashes or body parts to be buried or spread within the parks. These matters are dealt with by local bodies and subject to legislative and regulatory controls. • We wish to seek specific feedback on this issue from Tangata Whenua prior to presenting a revised plan to Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest drafting a general policy that provides for limited commemorations – focusing on planting of native trees with limited provision for plaques and structures where they are in keeping with the management and development objectives of a particular area. These could be designated areas or included within existing developments.
<p>Issue – Naming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority suggested that names relate to local history or heritage, relevant features, or relevant Maori names. Majority opposed naming after people (particularly politicians, celebrities or people unrelated to parks). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers generally supportive of the suggestions. • An issue arises in relation to any potential sponsorship and/or donations or bequests -- should the donor have any rights to naming (or commemorations?). • We need to consider whether we will establish criteria, hierarchy, or decision making process for naming features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a policy on naming based on the feedback – naming should reflect local history and heritage or relevant feature and/or Maori names should be considered. • Feedback required from the Committee about sponsorships and process issues.
<p>Issue – Specific Proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee needs to consider how it wishes to address specific proposals in the network and park specific management plans e.g. proposals to establish a Lord of the Rings theme park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date we have referred many major proposals to the process for reviewing the management plans for consideration. This is because previous plans could not allow activities unless specifically provided for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to plan

Issue	Comments	Recommended response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our new plans are intended to move towards a more effects based approach to planning and rather than prescribe what can happen, they will provide for some activities, prohibit others, and allow anything else to be considered on its merits. • Generally proposals should be considered in park specific plans. We suggest that large-scale proposals that are known to the Council (e.g. Motorised sport at Queen Elizabeth Park or windfarms at Belmont Regional Park) be considered in the park specific plans. • Within the park plans we can designate areas for development or protection – to provide a context within which proposals can then be considered. Other proposals will have to be addressed on a case by case basis as restricted activities. • However, we have received requests that don't specify a particular park but more a general idea that could happen in any or a range of parks. In addition we have a range of activities that we have deferred making decisions on until management plans are reviewed. We now need to clarify where these decisions will be made. • Suggest that major proposals relating to specific parks be dealt with in that park specific plan. • Minor proposals relating to a specific park should be considered on a case by case basis as restricted activities. • Suggest that major proposals not relating to any specific park would still need to be considered in park specific plans and/or on a case by case basis by way of a notified application process. 	
<p>Wording changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many specific wording changes were requested by submitters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest that staff consider specific changes and report back to Committee with these when presenting the revised plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to be proposed in revised draft.

6. Communication

Once the Plan is finalised, submitters and the public will be provided with copies of the plan. There will be further communication opportunities at that time.

7. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *receive the report.*
2. *note the contents of the report.*
3. *instruct officers to redraft the Regional Parks Network Management Plan in line with the table in this report as agreed.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Report approved by:

Victoria Owen
Advisor, Planning and Policy

Murray Waititi
Manager, Parks and Forests

Rob Forlong
Divisional Manager, Landcare