



HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE TOWN BELT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REVIEW

You can help protect the Wellington Town Belt by commenting on:

- the draft Town Belt Management Plan
- some proposed legislative changes to strengthen its governance.

**WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK BY 5PM
ON MONDAY 10 DECEMBER 2012.**

**Absolutely
POSITIVELY**
ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

The Town Belt between Newtown and Kelburn



HELP US PROTECT, MANAGE AND ENHANCE THE TOWN BELT

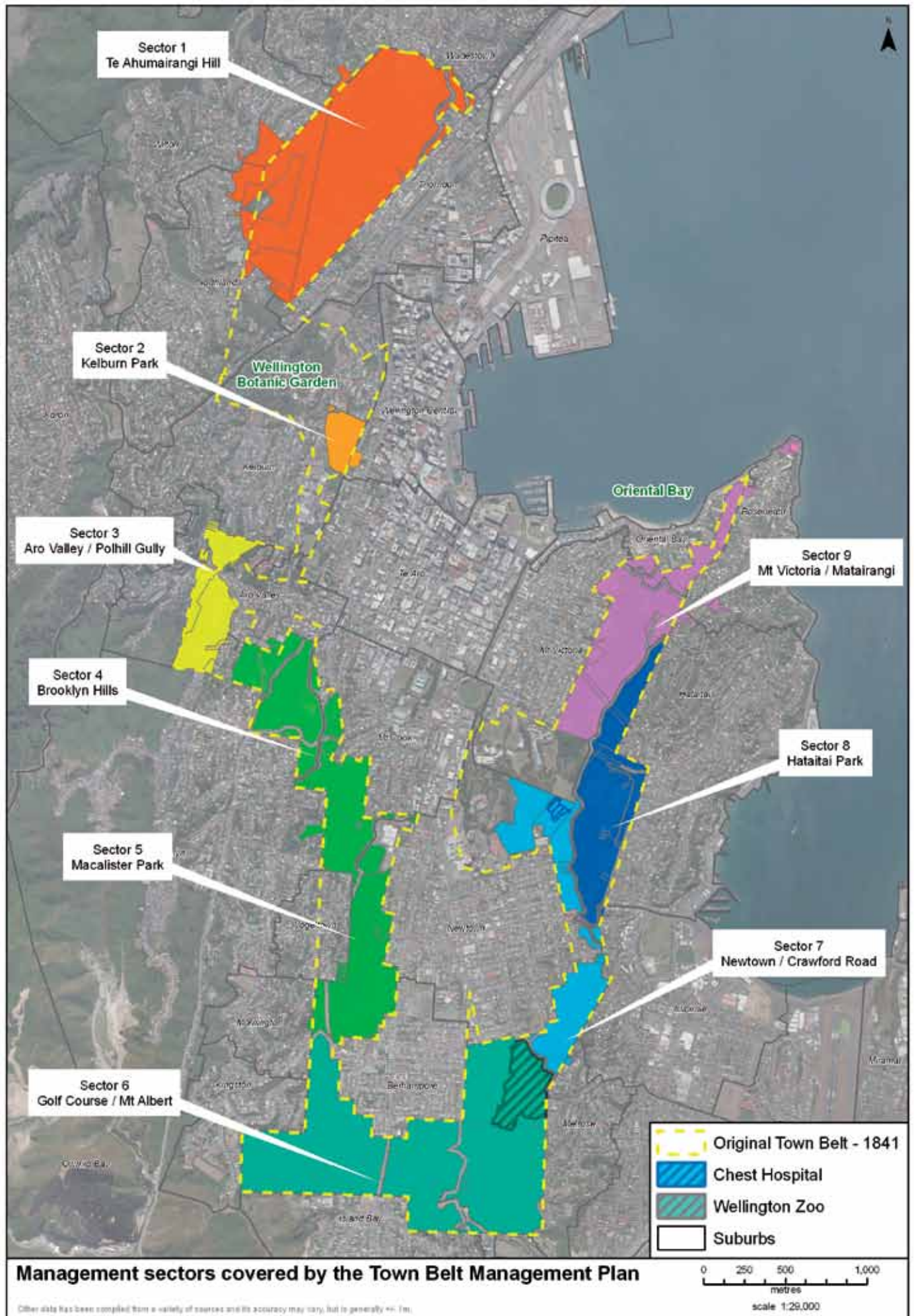
We're reviewing how the Town Belt is managed. Late last year the Council approved nine guiding principles to reflect community values and aspirations for the Town Belt. The second stage of this work comprises two projects:

- 1 A review of the Town Belt Management Plan and the Town Belt Reinstatement Policy.** We are seeking your thoughts on the draft plan that will replace these two documents. This plan will provide direction and policies to assist in the operational management of the Town Belt for the next 10 years.
- 2 Legislative changes** to strengthen the protection of the Town Belt and modernise the governance arrangements under the Town Belt Deed, including enabling land to be added to and, in some limited cases, removed from the Town Belt. We are seeking comment on the objectives of legislative change before we start drafting a local Parliamentary Bill.

This booklet is a summary of what's proposed. A full copy of the draft plan is available from:

- [Wellington.govt.nz](https://www.wellington.govt.nz)
- Council libraries
- the Council Service Centre at 101 Wakefield Street
- or phone 499 4444.

The drafting instructions are printed in the summary document and also available online at [Wellington.govt.nz](https://www.wellington.govt.nz)





Mountain biking



Wakefield Park artificial sportsfields



The horseshoe-shaped Town Belt seen from Te Ahumairangi Hill lookout above Thorndon

WHAT IS THE TOWN BELT?

The Wellington Town Belt is a significant area of open space that provides a scenic backdrop to the inner city and offers recreational opportunities to residents and visitors.

Today it comprises nearly 400 hectares stretching in a horseshoe shape from Mt Victoria/Matairangi in the north-east, to Berhampore at its southern end, then north-west to Te Ahumairangi Hill between Wadestown and Thorndon (see map on page 3).

For over 170 years, the Town Belt has been a reserve for the public to enjoy.

When the plans for Wellington were originally developed in 1839, the New Zealand Company – a private land-settlement company – identified a belt of land that was “not to be built upon”. This belt of land was designed to provide green and open spaces to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens.

In 1841, the Town Belt became a Crown reserve. Governor Hobson declared that “all persons are warned not to clear, fence, cultivate or build in or upon any portion of the belt of reserved land surrounding the town”. This is what we call Original Town Belt.

The Crown (latterly through the Superintendent of the Province of Wellington) held the Town Belt from 1841 to 1873. During that time one third of the Original Town Belt (approximately 195ha) was alienated and developed for community and social welfare purposes.

Wellington City Council became trustee of the Town Belt in 1873, when the then Superintendent (acting under the Wellington City Reserves Act 1871) vested a portion of the Original Town Belt to “the Mayor, Councillors and citizens of Wellington” by executing the Town Belt Deed. The Deed stated that the Town Belt was:

“to be forever hereafter used and appropriated as a public recreation ground for the inhabitants of the City of Wellington in such manner as in and by such rules and regulations to be from time to time made in that behalf by the [Council] shall be prescribed and directed.”

Te Ahumairangi Hill in 2012: Seven years after storm-damaged pines were removed, native species are regenerating.



REVIEW OF THE TOWN BELT MANAGEMENT PLAN (1995) AND TOWN BELT REINSTATEMENT POLICY (1998)

It is best practice to review management plans and policies at least every 10 years to ensure they remain up to date with changing circumstances and increased knowledge. It is important to recognise what the 1995 management plan and 1998 reinstatement policy have achieved:

- 1 No further loss of Town Belt land. Two areas of Original Town Belt have been acquired by the Council for Town Belt purposes (the former Telecom land at Te Ahumairangi Hill and the former Chest Hospital land near Newtown)¹. Encroachments on the Town Belt have been more effectively identified and monitored.
- 2 Some surplus buildings have been removed from the Town Belt and the land has been returned to open space.
- 3 Increased recreational use of the Town Belt has been possible while protecting the land from any further development.

Improvements to visitor and sporting facilities include:

- Mt Victoria lookout
- Te Ahumairangi Hill (Tinakori Hill) landscape plan and lookout
- Central Park redevelopment
- Newtown Park grandstand upgrade and function room development
- Rugby League Park redevelopment, including the Te Whaea artificial sportsfield
- National Hockey Stadium parking
- Development of two artificial sportsfields at Wakefield Park
- New skate park at Island Bay.

Improved access and events for recreational enjoyment include:

- City to Sea walkway
 - Mt Victoria track upgrades and mountain bike circuit
 - International mountain bike championships
 - World running championships.
- 4 The native bush on the Town Belt has flourished, largely as a result of Council efforts, weed and possum-control programmes and the great work of volunteer groups involved in revegetation and restoration projects.
 - 5 Vegetation cover on the Town Belt has been gradually changing from pine trees to native forest. Over 26 hectares of exotic trees (mainly ageing pines) have been removed and areas have been replanted with natives or are regenerating naturally.

Places where exotic trees have been replaced include:

- Te Ahumairangi Hill
- Telford Terrace above Oriental Bay
- Finnimore Terrace in Vogeltown
- Owen Street in Newtown.

¹ Legislative change is proposed to protect these areas under the Town Belt Deed – see Theme A.

DRAFT TOWN BELT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012

The draft plan was developed by:

- using research results from a survey of 1000 Wellington residents about their knowledge and use of the Town Belt, what they value and their opinions on management of recreation and vegetation
- developing guiding principles – which involved community workshops and consultation on draft principles
- reviewing the Town Belt Management Plan (1995) and Town Belt Reinstatement Policy (1998) and associated assessments of suitable land for reinstatement to Town Belt
- aligning it with Council strategies and policies.

Town Belt guiding principles

Last year the Council approved these guiding principles that reflect what the community values about the Town Belt.

- 1 The Wellington Town Belt will be protected and enhanced by the Council for future generations.
- 2 The Town Belt will continue to be governed in trust by the Council under the 1873 Deed and subsequent legislation on behalf of the citizens of Wellington.
- 3 The Council will work in partnership with mana whenua to manage the Town Belt.
- 4 The Town Belt's landscape character will be protected and enhanced.
- 5 The Town Belt will support healthy populations of indigenous biodiversity.
- 6 The Town Belt is for all to enjoy.
- 7 The Town Belt will be used for a wide range of recreation activities.
- 8 The Council will encourage and support community participation in the management of the Town Belt.
- 9 Management of the Town Belt will acknowledge historical and cultural links to the land.

What the plan identifies

The draft plan provides a clear framework for Wellington City Council to manage the Town Belt for the next 10 years.

The objectives and policies in this plan explain the intended methods for the protection, management, development, operation and public use of the Town Belt.

The draft plan covers:

- 389.68 hectares held in trust under the Town Belt Deed, and
- 85.44 hectares of Wellington City Council reserve and open space land managed as Town Belt.

The plan does not cover the Wellington Botanic Garden, Wellington Zoo or Wellington Showgrounds (except the artificial sportsfield behind Te Whaea). In addition, it has specific policies to manage the former Chest Hospital on Alexandra Road.

Structure of plan

The plan is structured around eight key themes:

- 1 Town Belt legislative and policy framework
- 2 Partnership and community participation
- 3 Landscape
- 4 Ecology and biodiversity
- 5 Recreation
- 6 Culture and history
- 7 Management sectors
- 8 Rules for use and development

There are detailed maps in the draft plan that show vegetation cover, recreation facilities including tracks, sportsfields and playgrounds, as well as proposed additions and management changes.

What does the plan propose?

The plan proposes some overall changes in approach. In particular:

- Revised criteria for assessing land for addition to and management as Town Belt. Additional land should add to the continuity and horseshoe shape of open space, comprising the first line of hills and undeveloped skylines encircling the central city. The result is the exclusion of such land as Tawatawa Reserve and the parks and reserves of the Waimapihi Stream catchment, such as George Denton Park and Waimapihi Reserve, from coverage under the plan.
- A partnership approach with mana whenua to manage the Town Belt and working with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust for the return of Original Town Belt land held by the Crown.
- A new approach to assessing uses and development based on a system of rules.
- Limiting the development of sporting facilities to existing sport and recreation parks, and encouraging clubs to work together to use existing facilities more intensively. The draft plan also recognises the changing nature of sport and that some development will be needed.

In addition, the plan proposes to continue to:

- gradually replace pine trees with native vegetation to enhance the ecological value of the Town Belt
- increase informal use for walking, biking and other activities such as community gardening.



Land acquired by the Council for Town Belt purposes but not protected under the Deed:
 Top: Chest Hospital (2002) and Vice Regal Park (1981 and 1990) behind Wellington Hospital in Newtown. Above: Western Slopes Reserve, Northland.

Theme A – Town Belt land additions

The Crown held the Town Belt from 1841 to 1871. During that time, one third of the Original Town Belt (approximately 195ha) was alienated and developed for community and social welfare purposes. Today the Council holds 389.68 hectares in trust under the Town Belt Deed. In addition it proposes to manage 85.44 hectares of Wellington City Council-owned reserve and open space land under this draft plan.

Regaining the original 1841 boundary of the Town Belt is unrealistic, considering the way the city has developed. However, the Council's proposed priorities will focus on protecting the remaining size of the Town Belt, and strengthening its continuity and open space values through land additions and boundary adjustments.

- The Council proposes to protect an additional 85.44 hectares of Wellington City Council-owned reserve and open space land under the Town Belt Deed. This will require a legislative change of the type being proposed.
- If the Crown proposes to take Town Belt land for a public work then the Council will pursue its replacement with Crown land of equal or greater landscape, ecological, and or recreational value for Town Belt purposes.
- The Council will work in partnership with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, the Crown and relevant Crown agencies on the reinstatement of parts of the Original Town Belt that are owned by the Crown and remain suitable for Town Belt purposes.



Top: Mayor, Celia Wade-Brown, Councillors and Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust members at the opening of Te Ahumairangi Hill lookout.

Above: Pou whenua indicate sites of significance to Māori, including Mt Victoria/Matairangi.

Theme B – partnership with mana whenua

Wellington City Council's relationship with mana whenua² is managed through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira Incorporated. The Town Belt holds great cultural significance for Māori. One of the guiding principles adopted by the Council in 2011 is:

The Council will work in partnership with mana whenua to manage the Town Belt.

The plan identifies the ways this partnership will occur, including working together on the return of Original Town Belt (see above), preparing the cultural history section for this plan, ensuring mana whenua regularly advise on activities and developments on Town Belt and that the Council recognises the significance of the Town Belt to mana whenua.

² Mana whenua means customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area.



Top: Arbor Day planting at the former Chest Hospital in Newtown

Above: Leased area on the Town Belt – Wellington Scottish Athletic Club, Prince of Wales Park

Theme C – community partnership

The Council values community input and acknowledges the work of individuals and groups to protect, enhance and use the Town Belt. The Council will support and encourage community participation.

There are currently 13 groups working on the Town Belt, including the Friends of Central Park, Coolidge Street Group and Bell Street Reserve Restoration Group. In addition, there are advocacy groups such as Friends of the Town Belt and 39 sporting and community organisations leasing areas of the Town Belt.

The plan proposes to:

- provide opportunities for more individuals, groups, and businesses to be involved in activities on the Town Belt such as habitat restoration and recreation development, including building tracks and running events
- support the continued leasing of Town Belt land by sporting and recreation organisations while encouraging the greater use and sharing of existing facilities
- support the work of adjacent property owners to beautify the Town Belt when this work is consistent with the policies in the management plan.



Undeveloped skyline along the Mt Victoria ridge

Theme D – landscape management

The Council will protect and enhance the unique landscape character of the Town Belt (acknowledging that vegetation change will occur over time), in particular:

- the continuous horseshoe shape
- the vegetated slopes interspersed with areas of open ground
- the changing patchwork of exotic and native vegetation
- undeveloped skylines such as Te Ahumairangi and Mt Victoria/ Te Ranga a Hiwi
- the contrast between the patchwork of native and exotic vegetation and the densely developed central business district.

Use of the Town Belt is increasing, whether for informal activities such as walking and mountain biking or for organised sport. The plan recognises this and the pressure for change and development it brings. The plan proposes:

- restricting new developments on the skylines or highly visible areas, and the removal of buildings when they are no longer required
- continued removal of exotic forest and its gradual replacement with natives. Some areas of exotic forest will be retained and enhanced. These are shown in the sector plans.



Community revegetation project at Te Ahumairangi Hill

Theme E – ecology/biodiversity

The Town Belt has the size and location to act as a major hub for indigenous biodiversity and improve the city's ecological resilience and connectivity. The native vegetation on the Town Belt has the following characteristics:

- plant communities are young and simple in structure and composition
- broadleaf and podocarp species and associated seed sources are absent from the Town Belt
- there is a well developed naturalised flora with some major weed infestations.

The plan proposes:

- 1 restoring indigenous habitats on the Town Belt to:
 - a ensure ecological connectivity of the Town Belt and adjacent reserve land
 - b enhance the species diversity of the Town Belt
 - c replace exotic trees removed as part of a hazardous tree removal programme.
- 2 priorities for restoration in each sector
- 3 prioritising plant and animal pest management based on:
 - a areas representative of the biodiversity of the central city
 - b areas important for ecological connectivity
 - c areas of hazardous tree removal
 - d areas of high amenity and recreation value.



Top: Athletics at Newtown Park. Left: Moturua Stream walkway at Central Park. Right: Junior football game at Wakefield Park.

Theme F – recreation

The Town Belt has always been an important area of open space with room for both informal activities and organised sport. As use rises and pressure increases for the development of new facilities, a balance is needed between the developed spaces and the 'natural' areas. A recent survey of Wellingtonians noted their preference for no more sports facilities, to retain the informal parkland character of the Town Belt. They did, however, accept some development of existing sports and recreation parks such as Newtown Park, Hataitai Park and Macalister Park.

The plan proposes:

- maximising the use of existing facilities including co-location of sporting clubs and organisations
- that sporting activities have a long and important presence on the Town Belt and some development will be needed as sports evolve and grow
- limiting development to existing sport and recreation parks and leased areas. More detail around the type and location of development is identified in the sector plans. Development within these areas will be subject to an assessment of the impacts and reasons why it needs to be on the Town Belt
- increasing the track network to provide more accessible routes and circuits for bikers and walkers
- support for community gardens and orchards subject to fulfilling a range of criteria.



Central Park in the 1920s (Alexander Turnbull Library 1/2-046193-G)

Theme G – culture and history

The Town Belt has a rich and diverse history and the Council recognises that the historical link of mana whenua to the land has not been well acknowledged in the past. The Council intends to take significant European and Māori historical and cultural values into account when making decisions about the Town Belt.

The plan proposes:

- to explore options for heritage recognition and protection under the Open Space C zoning during the review of the open space chapters in the District Plan
- an inventory of historic sites and features on the Town Belt be compiled and legal protection sought where appropriate, via the Historic Places Act and the District Plan
- where appropriate, Māori place names will be used on signs and maps, in conjunction with European place names
- to research and record a comprehensive Māori and European history of the Town Belt land.



Top: Community gardens at Tanera Park

Above: National mountain-biking event at Mt Victoria

Theme H – rules for use and development

We have developed a new section with three broad categories of activities:

- 1 allowed activities** that are generally allowed or anticipated in the Town Belt such as walking, running, organised sport and dog walking
- 2 managed activities** that are not specifically allowed or prohibited and require a case-by-case assessment such as leasing buildings or land, community gardens, commercial activities and events
- 3 prohibited activities** such as trail bikes, hunting, new encroachments and open fires.

CHANGES PROPOSED IN EACH MANAGEMENT SECTOR

The Town Belt is divided into nine geographic sectors. See the map on page 3. The plan describes the features of each geographic area and existing uses. The proposed additions to the Town Belt are identified as well as some of the boundary adjustments. Potential management of landscape, ecology and biodiversity, cultural and historic values and recreation facilities are proposed.



Te Ahumairangi Hill provides a green backdrop to the CBD.

Sector 1 – Te Ahumairangi Hill

Te Ahumairangi³ is a prominent ridge rising to 300 metres between the suburbs of Northland and Wadestown, providing a backdrop to the CBD and Thorndon. It is mainly used for informal recreation and offers an extensive network of tracks, including the Northern Walkway, which are close to the city and suburbs.

Te Ahumairangi Hill has undergone major changes in vegetation structure as a result of the storms of February and August 2004, which caused severe damage to the existing conifer forest. Over 10 hectares of conifer forest was damaged and subsequently removed.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- retaining the unbuilt 'natural' character of the hill and restoring podocarp-broadleaf forest following the removal of exotic trees
- retaining the open ridgeline and dog exercise area
- retaining and enhancing the deciduous woodland below Wadestown Road
- adding 38.27 hectares to the Town Belt through the Town Belt legislation
- defining road boundaries of Upper Weld Street and removing the land from the Town Belt
- assessing increased use of the hill by mountain bikers.

³ Te Ahumairangi Hill was previously known as Tinakori Hill. The name change was approved as part of the Port Nicholson Block (Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika) Claims Settlement Act 2009.



Kelburn Park and Victoria University. Note – the cabbage trees, grass embankment and sportsfield shed are on unformed legal road.

Sector 2 – Kelburn Park

Kelburn Park is isolated from the rest of the Town Belt, with a scale and character more like a suburban park. However, the woodland in the park is an unexpected natural area close to the city, with walking links between Kelburn, Victoria University and the CBD. The park is mainly used for formal sport and recreation.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- retaining and enhancing the village green character of the sportsfield and adjacent croquet club
- opening up the park onto Salamanca Road and improving the visual connection with Victoria University
- gradually removing weed species from the woodland and restoring it to podocarp-broadleaf forest
- reviewing the boundary between the Town Belt and Salamanca Road to assess if part of the road can be stopped and incorporated into the Town Belt (parts of the tennis courts and croquet lawn are currently on unformed legal road).

The Crown-owned land at Clifton Terrace – the former Correspondence School site – is not a high priority for adding to the Town Belt, based on the proposed Town Belt land addition criteria.



Views of sector 3 around Aro Street show (top) the Aro Valley and Highbury and (above) the northern part of the sector.

Sector 3 – Aro Valley/Polhill Gully

At the head of the Aro Valley, this sector is made up of two wedges of Town Belt land on each side of Aro Street. It is steep and densely vegetated and used for informal recreation. There are some tracks that link to the Outer Green Belt and Brooklyn.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- restoring the area to podocarp-broadleaf forest and managing it consistently with George Denton Park and the Waimapihi Stream catchment
- adding part of Polhill Gully Reserve to the Town Belt because it adds to the horseshoe-shape. The balance of Polhill Gully Reserve and the other parks and reserves within the Waimapihi Stream catchment will be added to the Outer Green Belt
- protecting and maintaining the natural unbuilt character of this sector.

The Crown-owned land at Abel Smith Street – part of Te Aro School – is not a high priority for addition to the Town Belt, based on the proposed Town Belt land additions criteria.



Central Park (including the Renouf Tennis Centre) and Nairn Street Park

Sector 4 – Brooklyn Hills

The sector extends around the city-facing slopes below Brooklyn, from Mortimer Terrace to Hutchison Road, and is intersected by Brooklyn Road, Ohiro Road and Bidwell Street. Three adjacent undeveloped areas are also included, which the Council intends to add to and manage as part of the Town Belt.

The area is made up of a complex series of gullies and spurs that have been levelled in several places to form sports grounds. The hills are a secondary but important backdrop to the city. This area is used for both organised sport and informal recreation (including Central Park and the Renouf Tennis Centre) and has multiple entry points from suburban streets.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- maintaining Tanera Park, Nairn Street Park and Prince of Wales Park as sites for outdoor sport and recreation
- extending the existing native forest to form a consistent vegetation cover based around the moister gullies and south-facing slopes
- adding Council land at Coolidge Street and Epuni Street to the Town Belt and removing three small areas off Brooklyn Road/Washington Avenue, Nairn Street and Connaught Terrace
- ensuring the proposed water reservoir above Prince of Wales Park is buried and remedial planting mitigates its impact on the Town Belt.



Macalister Park, Berhampore

Sector 5 – Macalister Park

The sector defines the western edge of Newtown, extending from Hutchison Road to Britomart Street. It comprises:

- 1 a low ridge extending south from the Brooklyn Hills. Large conifers have been removed from much of the ridgeline and replaced with native vegetation
- 2 playing fields to the east (Rugby League Park and the Te Whaea artificial sportsfield) and south of the ridge (Macalister Park)
- 3 at the southern end, steeply sloping land down to Berhampore. It is densely vegetated in a mixture of exotic and native scrub, with a stand of pines at the west end.

This area is mainly used for organised sport. The Te Whaea artificial sportsfield is again covered by the Town Belt Deed now that it is no longer leased as part of the winter show buildings complex.

A playground near Hanson Street is easily accessible from western Newtown and another play area at Farnham Street provides for the Berhampore and Vogeltown communities.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- retaining the open space character of Macalister Park and gradually improving planting to provide more shade and shelter
- gradually removing large conifer trees alongside Finnimore Terrace and replacing them with natives
- retaining and managing the eucalyptus trees below Finnimore Terrace
- investigating possible options through this area for the Island Bay to CBD cycle and walkway
- regularising the existing and legal road alignments at Liardet Street. The current road through Macalister Park is on Town Belt land.



Martin Luckie Park, Mt Albert Park, National Hockey Stadium and Newtown Park

Sector 6 – Golf Course/Mt Albert

The sector forms the southern end of the Town Belt. It extends from the slopes of Kingston across the valley (where it is bisected by Adelaide Road) to Mt Albert and then follows the ridge north to Manchester Street in Melrose.

Much of the area is developed into sports grounds with an extensive area (37.1ha) managed as the Berhampore Golf Course, an 18-hole public course. Most of the undeveloped land is on the steeper slopes of Kingston and the Mt Albert ridge. It has a variety of vegetation including exotic scrub, planted and naturally occurring native vegetation, stands of pines of various ages and some eucalypts.

The extensive conifer and exotic tree planting that occurs on other areas of the Town Belt does not extend into this sector.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- maintaining and developing Wakefield Park, Martin Luckie Park, Mt Albert Park, Newtown Park and Melrose Park as facilities for outdoor sport and recreation
- working with the Mornington Golf Club to assess the scope, scale and facilities provided at the Berhampore Golf Course and the development and management opportunities available
- facilitating and working with Wellington Hockey Association on a possible upgrade and extension of the National Hockey Stadium
- regularising the existing and legal road alignments at Volga Street and Mt Albert Road.
- establishing a coastal forest cover on the higher ground on the eastern and western ridges
- establishing vegetation links across the valley to develop ecological and landscape corridors
- retaining the parkland character and ultimately replacing the historic pines around Newtown Park.

The plan does not propose to expand the Town Belt to include the Tawatawa Reserve and several areas in Houghton Bay as recommended in the 1995 plan.



Town Belt to the east of Newtown showing the Chest Hospital in the foreground and Constable Street (top)

Sector 7 – Newtown/Crawford Road

The sector defines the eastern edge of Newtown occupying a lower part of the Mt Victoria/Mt Albert ridge between Manchester Street and Mt Alfred.

Most of this sector occupies the west-facing slopes above Newtown. The tall vegetation on the ridgetop is an important backdrop seen from the eastern suburbs. The sector has varied character from south to north with forested areas, open parkland and recreational development.

This area is mainly used for informal recreation. There is a network of tracks, including the Southern Walkway.

There is a play area at Vice Regal Park and two dog exercise areas – at the corner of Owen and Manchester streets and at Vice Regal Park.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- adding 12.13 hectares to the Town Belt including the former Chest Hospital and Vice Regal land
- managing the former Chest Hospital with specific policies that recognise its historic character and the need to have a long-term sustainable use. The Council is currently working towards leasing the facilities to the SPCA
- the Council working with Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust and the Crown for the return of part of the Wellington College and Wellington East Girls' College land to the Town Belt. This is a high priority for the Council.
- limiting development of club facilities off Alexandra Road to their existing lease footprints to retain the parkland character of this Town Belt sector
- protecting the visual quality of Alexandra Road, as an important scenic route through the Town Belt.

Sector 8 – Hataitai Park

The sector occupies the east face of the Mt Victoria ridge. Its entire western boundary is formed by Alexandra Road. Ruahine Street and Hapua Road form much of the eastern boundary.

The east-facing slope of Mt Victoria has two distinct parts:

- The area between Mt Victoria summit and the Mt Victoria tunnel features undeveloped slopes containing regenerating native vegetation, with scattered clusters of pine trees on the skyline.
- South of the tunnel, the lower ground is occupied by a major sports and recreation park (Hataitai Park) that is mainly screened from surrounding suburbs by the surrounding hills and vegetation. It includes facilities for softball, netball, tennis, football, rugby, badminton, gymnastics, darts and cycling.

The sector is a highly visible 'green space' between State Highway One (Ruahine Street) and Alexandra Road (the main road to the Mt Victoria lookout).

A network of tracks, including part of the Southern Walkway, connect with adjacent areas of the Town Belt and local streets. There is a bike skills area at the southern end as well as a dog exercise area.

In July/August 2011, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) sought public feedback on *The Inner City Transport Network: Improvements for a Successful Capital City*. The proposal includes widening Ruahine Street and Wellington Road. In places, particularly near the badminton hall, the encroachment into the Town Belt could exceed the existing designation boundary. The Council wants to see any widening minimised.

If a second Mt Victoria tunnel and widening of Ruahine Street goes ahead, NZTA will need to acquire part of the Town Belt, which is held in trust by the Council. During that process, the Council will need to make decisions in its role as trustee under the Town Belt Deed 1873.

The Council will continue working with NZTA to identify options for reducing or mitigating the impacts of State Highway One on the Town Belt and in particular, Hataitai Park.

In addition, the main proposals in the plan for this sector include:

- restoring the northern wedge above Hapua Street to native coastal forest and gradually removing the mature conifers on the eastern side of Alexandra Road
- perpetuating and diversifying the mixed forest in and around Hataitai Park as both a visual backdrop and a recreational environment
- establishing an advisory group of sporting organisations to develop a long-term master plan for Hataitai Park, which will:
 - retain the landscape character of the hub while allowing flexibility for sporting development



The recreation hub at Hataitai Park. Note: the badminton hall at the top of the picture and velodrome at bottom right.

- plan for the changed Ruahine Street frontage to reflect its amenity value and prominent location in association with the NZTA
- identify changes to access and parking as a result of the state highway development
- rationalise and/or sharing of sporting infrastructure and buildings wherever possible. In particular, an assessment of the future of the velodrome
- work with Wellington Badminton and NZTA to look for suitable alternative locations for the badminton hall if its removal is required.

HAVE YOUR SAY

See the last page for details on:

- how to have your say
- what happens next

Sector 9 – Mt Victoria/Matairangi

The sector lies at the north end of the long ridge (Te Ranga A Hiwi), which forms the eastern arm of the Town Belt. The area extends from Mt Alfred north to the slopes of Oriental Bay.

There are three distinct areas:

- 1** The ridge top is a long narrow strip of open ground with scattered groups of trees that slope southwards for one kilometre from the Mt Victoria summit to Mt Alfred with generally easy gradients. Alexandra Road runs along the ridge.
- 2** The city slopes above the suburb of Mt Victoria are generally sunny, dry and exposed to the north-westerly wind. These are generally steep slopes dominated by pine and macrocarpa with areas of eucalypt and pohutukawa plantings.
- 3** The Oriental Bay slopes are in the middle with housing both above and below, dropping down to sea level at the north end of Oriental Parade. There is a mix of vegetation types.

Mt Victoria is the most intensively used forest area on the Town Belt according to recent market research, with 95 percent of residents having visited and 68 percent visiting at least once every six months.

The lookout area provides extensive views and information on the city and Town Belt. The forest provides shelter, shade and a variety of environments able to withstand heavy recreational use. This is a popular area for mountain biking.

Main proposals in the plan include:

- developing vegetation guidelines for Mt Victoria based on the following intentions:
 - continue establishing native forest on the steep slopes north of Palliser Road
 - continue the theme of coastal shrub vegetation on the summit ridge between the Mt Victoria lookout and Centennial Memorial
 - improve views from Mt Victoria lookout with vegetation management and selective removal of mature pine trees
 - identify areas where conifer/eucalypt forest should be retained indefinitely
 - maintain the commemorative planting area in Charles Plimmer Park
 - ensure succession planting of taller tree species
 - aim to strengthen visual continuity of vegetation along the ridge.
- adding 15.60 hectares to the Town Belt
- developing more dedicated mountain bike tracks to help reduce potential conflict with other users
- build a new track between Mt Victoria lookout and Centennial Memorial.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The Council is proposing to change the Town Belt's legal framework. The aim is to strengthen the protection of the Town Belt and modernise its governance arrangements under the Town Belt Deed. This will enable land to be added to and, in some limited cases, removed from⁴ the Town Belt.

The Council is proposing to prepare a local Parliamentary Bill and seek to have it enacted as a new 'Wellington Town Belt Act'. The first stage of this proposal is to adopt terms of reference or 'drafting instructions' for what the local Parliamentary Bill will look like and aim to achieve.

The Council is seeking comment on the drafting instructions it has developed before it adopts a final version. The drafting instructions are printed in the summary document and also available online at Wellington.govt.nz

Local Bills are promoted by local authorities and deal with matters confined to a particular area, in this case Wellington. At this stage it is proposed that Wellington Central MP Grant Robertson will be the local MP in charge of the Bill and introduce it to Parliament.

The Bill will then need to proceed through the normal process for a Parliamentary Bill, which normally includes consideration by a select committee.

The next stages are:

- 1 Following this consultation, the Council will adopt a final version of the drafting instructions.
- 2 A draft Bill will be prepared and approved by the Council for consultation.

3 There will be consultation on the draft Bill.

4 The Council approves the final version of the Bill and seeks to have it enacted.

Why is the Bill being proposed?

The Council is the trustee of the Town Belt under the charitable trust that was established by the Town Belt Deed. The Town Belt Deed is the most important document giving the Council legal authority to hold and manage the Town Belt, as well as providing the primary powers to make rules and regulations to govern its use. Parts of the Town Belt Deed, which was written in 1873, are however difficult to interpret. Adding to this complexity is the range of other statutes which apply to the Town Belt, some of them very old. These statutes include the Reserves Act 1977, under which the Town Belt is deemed to be a recreation reserve.

The primary purposes of the proposed Bill are to resolve the existing legal complexities; improve and modernise the governance arrangements for the Town Belt; and, in conjunction with the Town Belt Management Plan, provide the public with a single and easily understood reference point for how the Town Belt will be protected and managed in the future.

The view south from Mt Victoria lookout, which is on Original Town Belt land. The Byrd Memorial is in the foreground.

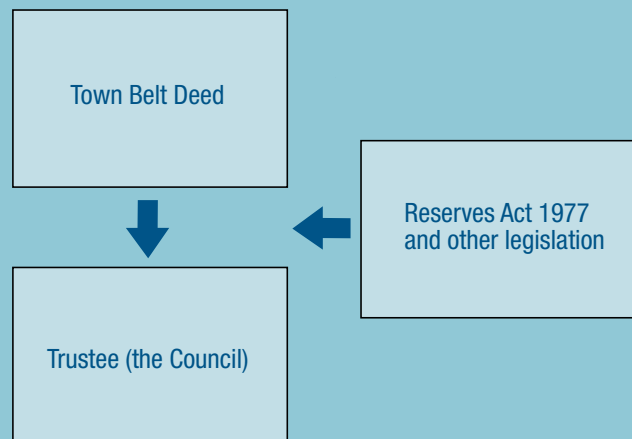


⁴ These areas are identified in the draft Town Belt Management Plan

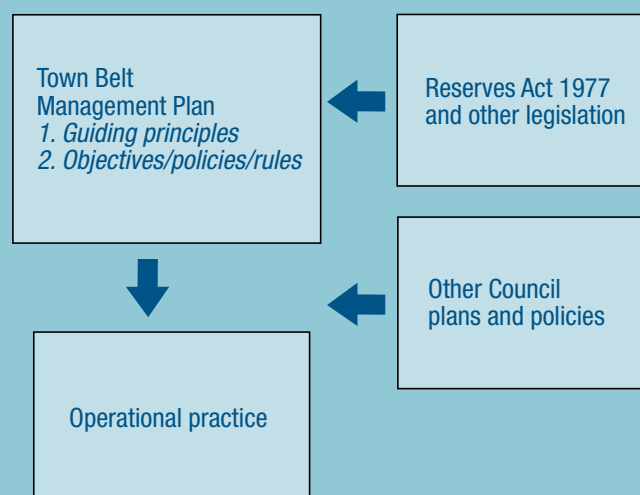
What is the current governance framework for the Town Belt?

Current governance framework:

GOVERNANCE



MANAGEMENT

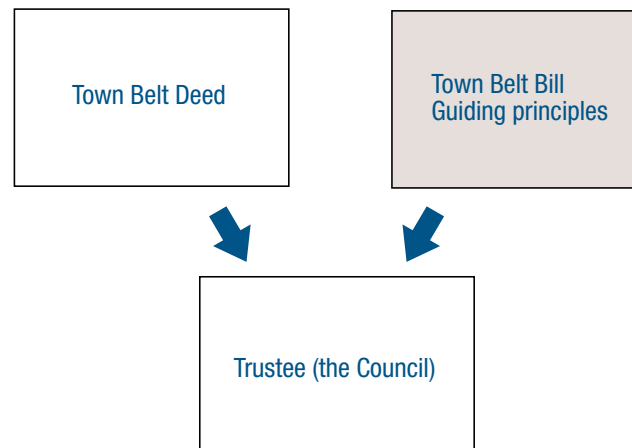


Council staff have reviewed the current governance framework and identified improvements that will require legislative change through the proposed Bill. A purpose of the proposed Bill is to rationalise, clarify and consolidate the basis on which the Town Belt is administered by the Council, while also maintaining and reflecting the intention of the Town Belt Deed.

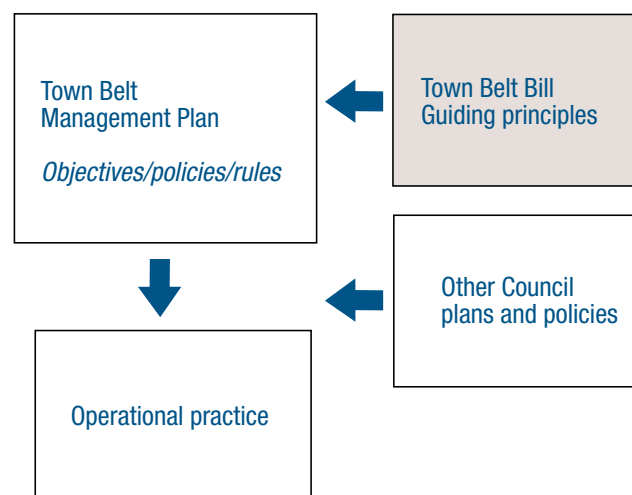
What will the governance framework be under the proposed Bill?

Proposed governance framework:

GOVERNANCE



MANAGEMENT



Governance involves setting the strategic direction for matters involving the Town Belt and ensuring there are funds for implementation. Management means carrying out the governance decisions.

What will not change?

- The Council will continue to hold the Town Belt in trust in accordance with the Town Belt Deed.
- The Town Belt will continue to be managed in accordance with a management plan.

What will change?

- The proposed Bill will replace provisions of the Reserves Act 1977, meaning the Town Belt will no longer be a recreation reserve under that Act. Other existing local statutes will also be repealed. This will include the Wellington City Reserves Act 1871; Wellington City Reserves Act 1872; and Wellington (City) Town Belt Reserves Act 1908.
- Future management plans will be prepared under a process contained within the proposed Bill.

What are the key things that the Bill will do?

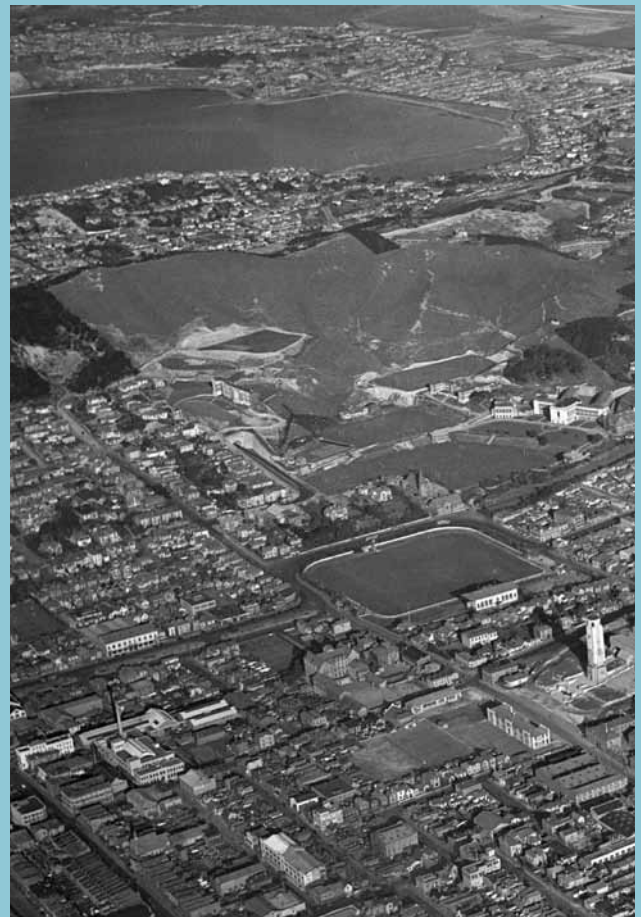
- In conjunction with the Town Belt Deed, establish a legal framework for the Council's trusteeship and management of the Town Belt that is self-contained (ie does not rely on the Reserves Act 1977) and easily understood.
- Be consistent with the Town Belt guiding principles adopted by the Council in December 2011.
- Recognise the history and significance of the Original Town Belt.
- Provide the Council with relatively flexible powers to manage the Town Belt, provided that it does so in a way that is consistent with both the charitable purpose of the Town Belt Deed and the management plan in force at the time.

What will the Bill contain?

Once finalised, the drafting instructions being consulted on will form the basis for the preparation of the proposed Bill. They set out the broad objectives and content of the proposed Bill. The topics covered include:

- **Preamble:** This section will introduce the legislation and put it in context. It is proposed that the preamble summarise the history of the Original Town Belt as well as acknowledging its significance to mana whenua and Wellingtonians.
- **Defining the land:** This section will define exactly what land will be covered by the Town Belt Deed and the legislation. It will also identify the Zoo and Chest Hospital as 'special areas' that are subject to a different management regime. The legislation will also enable boundary adjustments to be made so that land records match the 'as-built' location of the existing roads that surround and go through the Town Belt. Aside from such boundary adjustments, it is intended that the Council will have no power to voluntarily sell, exchange or use as security any part of the Town Belt. Removing any land from the Town Belt would require a compulsory acquisition or subsequent legislation.

- **Adding new land:** This section will enable the Council to add appropriate new land (including parts of the Original Town Belt that may be recovered in the future) into the Town Belt covered by the Town Belt Deed and the legislation.
- **Legal status:** This section will clarify the legal status of the Town Belt; take the Town Belt out of the Reserves Act 1977; and define which parts of the Town Belt Deed are still relevant and apply to the Town Belt.
- **Principles:** This section will set out statutory principles based on the Town Belt Deed and Town Belt guiding principles adopted by the Council in December 2011. The Council will be required to take all of these principles into account when making certain decisions about the Town Belt.
- **The Council's powers:** This section will clarify what powers the Council has to manage the Town Belt, including in relation to existing infrastructure, leasing, licensing, constructing buildings and granting easements. It is intended that the Council will have broader powers in relation to the Zoo and Chest Hospital special areas.



Wellington East Girls' College and Wellington College land are seen beyond the Basin Reserve in this 1934 photograph. (Evening Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, F- 122291-1/2 detail)

This area was taken from the Original Town Belt in 1872 for education and hospital purposes. The draft Management Plan proposes that the Council will initiate discussions over the future ownership, status and use of Original Town Belt land, including the college land and Alexander Park. Acquiring and returning the college land is a high priority for Council. The proposed legislation would have a process to add land to the Town Belt Deed.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does the Council want to enact local legislation for the Town Belt?

At the moment the Council's obligations and powers as trustee of the Town Belt come from a range of sources, including the Town Belt Deed, the Reserves Act 1977 and a number of quite old statutes. The relationship between these sources can be complex and hard to understand, in some cases leading to controversy and dispute. New local legislation will simplify the basis upon which the Council holds and manages the Town Belt and this is intended to be for the benefit of all Town Belt users, the general public and the Council.

What will local legislation for the Town Belt achieve?

Once enacted, local legislation will, in conjunction with the current management plan, become a 'one-stop-shop' for understanding how the Council must manage the Town Belt, what its powers are and what can and cannot be done on the Town Belt. People will no longer need to refer to, or try to resolve the differences between the Town Belt Deed and the range of old statutes which currently apply to the Town Belt.

What is the intended management framework for the Town Belt under the drafting instructions?

The Town Belt will remain a charitable trust under the Town Belt Deed with the same purpose – to be forever used as a public recreation ground for the inhabitants of the City of Wellington. The Council will then be given relatively broad powers to manage the Town Belt, provided that:

- certain limits (for example around leasing) are complied with
- statutory principles are taken into account, and
- the current management plan is complied with. It is intended that there will always be a management plan for the Town Belt, which will be reviewed at least once every 10 years.

Why do the drafting instructions say that the Town Belt will no longer be a recreation reserve?

The Town Belt is currently a recreation reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and that statute applies to the extent that it is not in conflict with the Town Belt Deed. The relationship between the Reserves Act 1977, the Town Belt Deed and other statutes which apply to the Town Belt is complex.

Any protections provided by the Reserves Act 1977 are however unnecessary because the Town Belt is already a charitable trust for the purpose of a recreation ground. The aim of simplifying how the Town Belt is managed will require taking it outside the Reserves Act 1977 regime so that the only relevant documents become:

- those parts of the Town Belt Deed affirmed by the local legislation
- the local legislation, and
- the current management plan.

Doing this will also protect the Town Belt from any uncertainties which arise from the future amendment or repeal of the Reserves Act 1977. It is also intended that any old local statutes, which are made redundant by or would be in conflict with new local legislation, will be repealed.

Do the drafting instructions make it easier to add or remove land from Town Belt?

They will make it easier to add land to Town Belt. Some land will be added at the time the Bill is enacted. The Bill will include a process to add further land as it is acquired or becomes available for addition to the Town Belt. The Bill will contain a schedule for land to be removed from the Town Belt (identified in the draft Town Belt Management Plan). Any removal after this time will require further legislative change.

Do the drafting instructions intend to make it easier for the Council to lease or allow commercial uses of the Town Belt?

No. Currently the Council's powers to manage the Town Belt how it sees fit are arguably very broad. Local legislation is intended to define what powers the Council does have and make them transparent. In particular, it is intended that the Council must comply with the current management plan; and that the management plan will be adopted following public consultation. What types of leases or commercial activities the Council is prepared to consider on the Town Belt can therefore be controlled through the management plan.

Do the drafting instructions intend to allow easements for private access over the Town Belt to be granted?

No. It is intended that the Council will have no power to grant easements over the Town Belt for private interests. Easements for public purposes – such as stormwater pipes – could be granted. Public infrastructure which is already on the Town Belt (such as water reservoirs) will be deemed to be lawful and the Council will be able to register easements for existing infrastructure to protect the ability to keep using it in the future. The granting of easements will not allow land to be 'privatised' or taken out of the Town Belt. If Town Belt land is required for future infrastructure (for example by the Crown for a road), then it will need to be compulsorily acquired.

What are the proposed Zoo and Chest Hospital special areas?

The Town Belt land which comprises the Zoo is managed very differently from the rest of the Town Belt. It is intended that local legislation will recognise this and allow the Council greater and more flexible powers in relation to the Zoo. Such powers will not extend to taking the Zoo land out of the Town Belt. Similarly the Chest Hospital is a large historic structure that may require significant investment from future tenants to upgrade and maintain it. It is also likely that some future uses of the Chest Hospital may not be consistent with using the land as a 'recreation ground'. It is intended that local legislation will also accommodate these special features of the Chest Hospital.

A FULL COPY OF THE DRAFT TOWN BELT MANAGEMENT PLAN IS AVAILABLE AT

- **WELLINGTON.GOV.T.NZ,**
- **COUNCIL LIBRARIES,**
- **THE COUNCIL SERVICE
CENTRE AT 101
WAKEFIELD STREET**
- **OR PHONE 499 4444.**

**DRAFTING INSTRUCTIONS
ARE ALSO AVAILABLE
ONLINE AT
WELLINGTON.GOV.T.NZ**

HAVE YOUR SAY

You can comment on the draft plan and proposed legislative changes by completing the submission form or writing down your comments and sending them to us by:

- Going online: Wellington.govt.nz
- Email: townbelt@wcc.govt.nz
- Post: FREEPOST, Parks and Gardens (REPL01),
Wellington City Council, PO Box 2199, Wellington 6140
- Fax: 801 3155

Comments are due Monday 10 December 2012. You may also make an oral submission to Councillors. To do this please let us know and provide your contact details.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 1 Public meetings will be held where Council staff will outline the draft Town Belt Management Plan and the proposed Town Belt legislation. Call 499 4444 for information about a meeting near you.
- 2 Comments on the draft plan and proposed legislative changes are due by 10 December 2012.
- 3 Submissions will be analysed. Oral submissions will be held in late February 2013. Amendments could be made based on submissions.
- 4 The final Town Belt Management Plan will go to the Council for approval in April/May 2013.
- 5 If the Council agrees that legislative change is needed it will approve the drafting instructions. The draft legislation will be prepared and consulted on.
- 6 Once the Council agrees to the legislation, the local Member of Parliament will sponsor this as a local Bill through the Parliamentary process. There will be an opportunity for public comment at the select committee stage.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please visit our website Wellington.govt.nz for more information on the recreation activities on the Town Belt and what environmental projects are under way, including details on environmental community groups. The website and libraries also have copies of Council strategies and policies mentioned in the draft plan.

Wellington.govt.nz