

Community & Services Committee
19 August 2021

Report for Agenda Item 3 | Rīpoata moto e Rāraki take 3

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara Adoption of Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

- 1 The purpose of this report is for the Community & Services Committee to consider that the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, including the Parks and Open Spaces Provisions Plan and Action Plan, be adopted by Council.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

That the Community & Services Committee:

1. **Note** the contents of this report and in particular;
2. Recommend to Council the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021, and the Future Parks and Reserves Provisions Plan 2021 be adopted.

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5/08/2021

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11/08/2021

CONTEXT | HOROPAKI

- 2 The Queenstown Lakes District is fortunate to have access to large areas of open space, lakes and mountains. There are a variety of open space and reserve areas that play a vital role in making this area a great place to work and play. This lifestyle is part of the cultural identity for many of the people that choose to live here or to visit. River corridors, lakes and their foreshores, cycleways and local parks provide residents with many opportunities to see and enjoy a range of open space, as well as opportunities for Kāi Tahu cultural connection. Growth continues to generate high levels of subdivision and development (including high density developments) which places increasing pressure on the use of the land, while more people want access to open space areas. Development and protection of the open space network and improvements to the quality of open space remains increasingly important. There are challenges in acquiring, maintaining or improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space. The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 provides a strategic plan for the protection and enhancement of the Queenstown Lakes District public open space network, and how this will meet the district's growth.
- 3 The Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2017 (2017 Strategy) was comprehensively reviewed in 2016 and adopted in early 2017. The 2017 Strategy set out a vision, objectives and several key methods for managing the QLDC open space network including development of park types, minimum walking distance from open space to residential areas (600m), design guidance for the configuration of reserves, the types of facilities to be found on the different park types and provision guidelines for greenfield developments.
- 4 The 2017 Strategy sought to address the rapid residential growth and a huge increase in visitor numbers experienced in the past decade. New subdivisions in rural areas, and intensification of existing urban areas created a need to shift from the quantitative approach taken in the former 2002 Parks Strategy. Key changes made in 2017 Strategy were:
 - Stronger provision guidelines;
 - Stormwater reserves not accepted to offset reserve contributions if they have no recreation value and do not meet the criteria in the provision guidelines;
 - Park types names updated to reflect the uses and to align with Council's levels of service park categories;
 - Stronger wording in the provision guidelines in the 2017 Strategy specified what park types are required by developers, minimum sizes, and how many household units these should typically serve; and
 - For open space to be 'accessible' a Local Park should be within a 600m walk (5 to 10 minutes easy walking).
- 5 A relevant strategy is required to ensure the existing open space network and new reserves meet the needs of the community, can provide for growth and will continue to be protected and enhanced.
- 6 Since the 2017 Strategy was adopted the Queenstown Lakes District has continued to experience unprecedented residential growth (the district is the fastest growing in New

Zealand with 5.7% annual growth on average over the past five years) and a huge increase in visitor numbers. The impacts of the COVID-19 saw a decline in growth pressure in the short-term with a particular impact on visitor numbers, however revised population projections released by Council in August 2020 show that by 2031, both the number of residents and visitors will be back on par with expectations of previous models. Residential growth has since increased since pre-COVID 19 levels. New subdivisions in greenfield areas are still being created, and intensification of existing areas is increasing. Town houses and apartment buildings are becoming more popular. The value of land has increased and subsequently the average section sizes have decreased. Sections of 300m² are now common. In addition to meeting local sport and recreation needs, Queenstown and Wānaka open space areas are also significant venues for hosting regional and national events. These events attract more visitors to the area.

- 7 Competing usage demands, future growth and visitor projections and uneven distribution of open space (relative to some areas) creates a need for more pro-active management now and into the future.
- 8 The 2017 Strategy was generally working well. However, several key issues still made it challenging to ensure sufficient quality Local, Community and Sportsground Parks were being provided, particularly in new and high growth areas. The primary reasons for the review were:
 - To address the cumulative impact of small subdivisions that, when combined, result in a large population. Small subdivisions were often not required to vest reserve land, this results in low levels of provision and reserve types particularly in new residential areas.
 - To introduce the concept of 'reserve capacity' for existing residential areas to ensure in-fill developments contribute enough land or cash to add to the open space network. (e.g. remove reliance on the policy that meant developers did not have to provide additional reserve land if there was an existing reserve within 600m).
 - To address increasing density of developments.
 - Introduce priority areas for investment and land acquisition (high growth areas or existing areas with inadequate provision). For example Ladies Mile or the Southern Corridor.
 - To ensure the revised strategy could be used to inform the 2020 review of the Development Contributions Policy.
 - Identification of the need to provide land for a new Premier Sportsground in the Wakatipu to provide for growth. (This is not required in Wanaka due to the recent rezoning of the 20ha disestablished Ballantyne Road oxidation ponds as Open Space and Recreation Zone in the District Plan).
- 9 The development of a Draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 (2021 Strategy) was taken to several Community Services Committee workshops in 2020 and was publically notified for feedback in March 2021.

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021

- 10 The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 (2021 Strategy) remains largely the same as the 2017 Strategy, with updates to address the specific challenges described above. The 2021 Strategy (**Attachment A**) provides more detail and clarity around how much public open space should be provided in existing urban areas and new subdivisions, and what type of land and improvements will be accepted. This plan informs the QLDC Financial and Development Contributions Policy how Reserve Land and Reserve Improvement Contributions should be applied in the future. During the review it was identified that provisions guidelines should be a separate document, so that can be reviewed in line with each Long Term Plan and Development Contributions Policy update.
- 11 The 2021 Strategy Vision and Objectives remain largely the same from the 2017 Strategy with some changes to incorporate QLDC's Climate Action Plan and iwi feedback:

The Vision

To provide a rich and diverse network of open spaces that are valued by the community and are protected and enhanced for future generations

The Objectives

- Our parks and reserves are diverse, multipurpose and provide for communities, mana whenua and visitors
 - Open Spaces are well designed, accessible and valued
 - We are able to plan for and accommodate growth
 - Open Spaces are treasured and protected
 - Open Spaces contribute to enhanced biodiversity, improved water quality and reduced Green House Gas emissions
- 12 The 2021 Strategy describes the range of park types that provide a diverse recreation and open space experience. Mana Whenua aspirations have also been incorporated.
- 13 An Action Plan is included with the 2021 Strategy that sets out how the strategy will be implemented.

Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan 2021

- 14 A new Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan (**Attachment B**) has been prepared to sit alongside the 2021 Strategy. It describes how and when new parks and reserves will be provided through new development. This was formerly part of the 2017 Strategy. It sets direction on:
- Expected Levels of Service for provision of reserve land for each resident.
 - Which areas require new reserves to accommodate growth, and which areas have sufficient reserves.

- Priority areas in the District for acquisition and investment, particularly in high growth and high-density areas
- When developers should provide reserve land and when Council should acquire land
- Expanded Provisions Guidelines with stronger and clearer wording that removes ambiguity in what reserves council will accept, to ensure new reserves are high quality and can provide for a range of recreation infrastructure and activities to meet the community's needs now and into the future.
- Recommendations for a stronger and more specific DC Policy, especially around what reserves are fit for purpose and what reserve improvements will be accepted, and requiring a cash contribution from all developments for Sportsground Parks (Premier)
- Stronger Stormwater/Recreation Reserve dual purpose guidance

QLDC Financial and Development Contributions Policy

- 15 A key tool for acquiring new reserve land in new subdivisions is the QLDC Financial and Development Contributions Policy (DC Policy). This was being reviewed in 2020, for adoption within the QLDC Long Term Plan 2021-2031. The DC Policy is informed by the Strategy so it's crucial the two documents are aligned.
- 16 Some key changes were required to DC Policy as some of the wording was creating confusion and resulting in poor quality open space provision and low levels of service in some new residential developments. Under the former DC Policy residential developments were required to provide 27.5m² of reserve land or the cash equivalent for each dwelling unit. The policy gave consideration as to whether this was required if a development was 600m off (or away from) an (a) existing reserve. This resulted in developers claiming reserves that were not fit for purpose (e.g. a pocket park or stormwater reserve) or established reserves that served existing communities for large new residential developments.
- 17 The key changes to the 2021 DC Policy were:
- A direct link through from the 2021 Strategy, the Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan to the DC Policy;
 - Inclusion of an updated/higher land valuation that also distinguishes between land value in large and small towns, resulting in higher reserve land payments;
 - Change from 27.5m² land for local and community parks to 17.5m² land
 - Every residential development in the Wakatipu pays a reserve land contribution cash equivalent (5m²) to fund a future Premier Sportsground Park;
 - Higher incentive for developers to vest land in high growth residential areas; and
 - Removal of the 'reserve land within 600m' criteria and consequently the ability for developers to avoid paying Reserve Land Contributions or to provide land, e.g. piggy backing on reserves in neighbouring developments.

Public feedback on the Draft 2021 Strategy and Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan 2021

- 18 The Draft 2021 Strategy and the Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan 2021 were notified for public feedback on 15 March and closed on 15 April 2021. This aligned with the DC Policy 2021 public notification.
- 19 12 submissions were received, nine from the general public, two from developers and one from Southern District Health Board. Individual submissions and a copy of the online submission summary reports are contained as **Attachment C** to this report.
- 20 Key themes emerged from the feedback as follows:

Provision of land

- More open space and reserves should be provided by developers to meet existing community needs and future residential growth.
- Ladies Mile needs more reserve land and large areas of it to provide for growth, on both sides of the state highway.
- Outdoor exercise equipment could be provided on reserves.
- Developers should give more back to community and earn trust, delivering what is promised.
- Open Spaces should be good quality and well designed.
- Commercial areas should vest 20% open space
- Developers need to deliver efficient use of land therefore stormwater reserves that can have a dual purpose function (stormwater and recreation) should be explicitly provided for
- Small subdivisions that cannot provide 3000m² for a local park should be able to provide pocket parks

Environmental

- QLDC should prioritise biodiversity goals on reserves, increase plantings especially for carbon sequestration.
- Protection of biodiversity, wild spaces and wildlife corridors is important.
- No use of 1080 or Glyphosate
- There should be a stronger focus on biodiversity goals
- Protect and provide wild spaces, native corridors, and communal food growing areas and fruit trees.
- Increase nature reserves

Partnerships

- QLDC could increase support for partners and community organisations
- QLDC should lead biodiversity programmes, and not just rely on community groups

- Work with Department of Conservation (DOC) on urban DOC reserve land.
- Where non-QLDC land (eg Fish and Game reserve in Wanaka) provides an open space benefit QLDC should provide funding.

General

- Parks and open spaces are important to the health and well-being of the public. Accessibility for all, opportunities to increase food security and smoke free parks and open spaces should be considered on reserves.

Key changes from submissions/feedback

- 21 Much of the feedback was highlighting issues that the reviewed 2021 Strategy seeks to address, particularly around requiring more land to provide for growth and the provision of quality reserve land.
- 22 The 2021 Strategy is a high level strategic document. The Action Plan contains specific actions to implement the Strategy vision and objectives. Proposed changes to the Action Plan to incorporate the feedback were appropriate have been made – these are shown in **Attachment D**.

Proposed additions to the Action Plan:

- Design of reserves to consider exercise equipment.
 - Review QLDC smoke free and vape free policy for parks and reserves.
 - Collaborate with DOC on ongoing public access to Mt Iron in Wanaka.
 - Collaborate with partners to improve biodiversity and carbon sequestration objectives.
- 23 There are no recommended changes to the wording around stormwater reserves that provide a dual function. The provision guidelines in the Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan does make it possible for reserves that have a demonstrated dual function, that does not impact the high quality recreation outcome, to be eligible for reserve land credits, subject to a developer's agreement. The guidance needs to be very clear as stormwater reserves are generally not accepted as this typically compromises the provision of quality recreation reserves.
- 24 The submissions received have been incorporated into the Action Plan where relevant and/or individual submissions have been directly followed up by parks staff where appropriate.
- 25 This report identifies and assesses the following reasonably practicable options for assessing the matter as required by section 77 of the Local Government Act 2002:
- 26 Option 1 Adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 with recommended changes
- Advantages:
- 27 Once adopted the District will have a relevant Strategy that will ensure the existing open space network and new reserves meet the needs of the community, can provide for growth and will continue to be protected and enhanced.

28 The 2021 Strategy, the Future Parks and Reserves Provisions Plan and the DC Policy will all be aligned, resulting in improved open space outcomes and investment priorities.

Disadvantages:

29 Some people may not be supportive of the proposed changes.

30 Option 2 Adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy without changes

Advantages:

31 None

Disadvantages:

32 The public and submitters will not feel like their input has been considered or valued. Council will not be responding to the needs to the community and the Strategy will not be as relevant to residents and ratepayers.

33 Option 3 Status Quo - Do not adopt the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 with recommended changes

Advantages:

34 None

Disadvantages:

35 Parks and Open Spaces provision will not keep up with growth, there will be less guidance on how Council should develop and enhance the existing parks and open spaces network, ambiguity and loop holes will remain around whether developers should vest land, the quality of parks and reserves will not be improved, the future needs of the community will not be met.

36 The 2021 Strategy will not be aligned with the DC Policy and other council strategies that plan for future growth.

37 This report recommends Option 1 for addressing the matter because this will ensure a relevant, effective Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that will enable the improved protection and management of QLDC's open space network that will be aligned with relevant council plans and strategies.

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

> SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

38 This matter is of [medium] significance, as determined by reference to the [Council's Significance and Engagement Policy](#) because Parks and Open Spaces are a matter of high community interest for residents and visitors who use QLDC open space.

- 39 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the residents/ratepayers of the Queenstown Lakes District community, property developers and visitors to the area.
- 40 The Council notified the draft 2021 Strategy for one month. 12 submissions were received. The changes to the Financial and Development Contributions Policy were also publically notified and a hearing of submissions was held.

> MĀORI CONSULTATION | IWI RŪNANGA

- 41 The Council has undertaken consultation on the Draft 2021 Strategy with Aukaha and Te Ao Marama. Aukaha provided detailed comments on the Draft 2021 Strategy, these have all been incorporated.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

- 42 This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK 00009 Ineffective management of community assets and RISK00056 Ineffective provision for the future planning and development needs of the district within the [QLDC Risk Register](#). This risk has been assessed as having a low inherent risk rating.
- 43 The approval of the recommended option will support the Council by allowing us to retain the risk at its current level. This shall be achieved by the continuation and update of a Council Strategy that will allow Council to effectively provide for the future planning and development of the districts parks and open space network.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

- 44 There are no operational and capital expenditure requirements or other budget or cost implications resulting from the draft Parks and Open Spaces Strategy. It gives guidance on how future Development Contributions will be decided and Annual Plan budgets may be spent.

COUNCIL EFFECTS AND VIEWS | NGĀ WHAKAAWEAWE ME NGĀ TIROHANGA A TE KAUNIHERA

- 45 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:
- Vision Beyond 2050: <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/vision-beyond-2050/>
 - QLDC Reserve Management Plans
 - QLDC Draft Community Facilities Strategy
 - QLDC Climate Action Plan
 - QLDC Asset Management Plan
 - QLDC Disability Policy
- 46 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policy/policies.

47 This matter is not required to be included in the Ten Year Plan/Annual Plan. The Ten Year Plan provides for year-on-year operational expenditure relating to implementation of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021. Changes to the Development Contributions Policy relating to the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy have been included in the Ten Year Plan.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2002 PURPOSE PROVISIONS | TE WHAKATURETURE 2002 O TE KĀWANATAKA Ā-KĀIKA

48 The recommended option:

- Section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002 states the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. This option will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and effective planning in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses by providing a clear and relevant strategy for the future provision and management of the District’s Parks and Open Space network. As such, the recommendation in this report is appropriate and within the ambit of Section 10 of the Act.
- Can be implemented through current funding under the Ten Year Plan and Annual Plan;
- Is consistent with the Council's plans and policies; and
- Would not alter significantly the intended level of service provision for any significant activity undertaken by or on behalf of the Council, or transfer the ownership or control of a strategic asset to or from the Council.

ATTACHMENTS | NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA

A	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021
B	Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan 2021
C	Public Submissions
D	Proposed Changes to Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 Action Plan