

QLDC Council
5 August 2020

Report for Agenda Item 1 | Rīpoata mo te Rāraki take 1

Department: Community Services

Title | Taitara: Notice of Intent to Review the Reserve Management Plan (RMP) for the Ben Lomond Reserve and Queenstown Hill Reserve, Queenstown

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT | TE TAKE MŌ TE PŪRONGO

- 1 To recommend that a Notice of Intent is published advising the public that a Reserve Management Plan for the Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill recreation reserves is to be prepared in accordance with s41(5) of the Reserves Act 1977.

RECOMMENDATION | NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA

- 2 That the Community & Services Committee:
 1. **Note** the contents of this report and in particular;
 2. **Recommend to Council** that a Notice of Intent is published advising the public that a Reserve Management Plan for the Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill recreation reserves is to be prepared, in accordance with s41(5) of the Reserves Act 1977.

Prepared by:



Alex Jamieson
Parks and Reserves Planner,
Parks and Open Spaces

05/08/2020

Reviewed by:



Jeannie Galavazi
Senior Parks and Reserves
Planner, Parks and Open
Spaces

05/08/2021

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Thunes Cloete
General Manager,
Community Services

06/08/2021

CONTEXT | HORPOAKI

- 3 The Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves are recreation reserves, comprising a number of different parcels totalling 464.797 ha in area. The reserves are identified in **ATTACHMENT A**.
- 4 The current Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill Reserve Management Plan (RMP) was adopted by Council on 3 August 2005.
- 5 The existing RMP addresses both the Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves, therefore it is practical to keep these reserves within the same RMP document.
- 6 The Ben Lomond reserve is situated to the west and north-west of the Queenstown Town Centre, and is approximately 387.9611 ha. The Queenstown Hill reserves measure approximately 76.8359 ha in area, and is located directly north and north-east of the Queenstown Town Centre.
- 7 The Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves are expansive recreation reserves, both of which have high recreation, natural and scenic values. Both of these reserves are seen as the backdrop to Queenstown, and are two of the most high profile reserves in our District.
- 8 These reserves are bound by residential, commercial and mixed-use development on the boundaries adjoining Fernhill, Queenstown, and the Gorge Road industrial area.
- 9 The Ben Lomond reserve is extremely well used for informal recreation purposes such as hiking and mountain biking, along with various commercial and commercial recreation activities such as paragliding and the gondola.
- 10 Ben Lomond reserve also contains a number of key tourism operators, such as Skyline, Ziptrek, AJ Hackett Bungy and GForce Paragliding. The Queenstown Mountain Bike Club (QMTBC) also have a lease area within the Ben Lomond reserve.
- 11 The Queenstown Hill reserve is largely utilised for informal recreation, including walking and rock climbing. The popular Queenstown Hill Time Walk meanders through the reserve. At present, no commercial activities operate on Queenstown Hill.
- 12 Both Queenstown Hill and Ben Lomond are predominantly forested in Douglas Fir originally as plantation forest. However this has not been managed as a commercial forest and the wilding spread is significant and a significant seed source for adjacent high country. Wilding pines largely cover a large portion of reserve land.
- 13 Much of the land is zoned Open Space (Informal Recreation) in the Proposed District Plan, however a number of the land parcels near the Ben Lomond saddle have been zoned Open Space (Nature Conservation). Part of Ben Lomond is zoned Open Space (Informal Recreation – Ben Lomond Sub-Zone), however this zoning is currently under appeal. The majority of the reserve area is located within an Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL).

ANALYSIS AND ADVICE | TATĀRITANGA ME NGĀ TOHUTOHU

- 14 Both Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves are within walking distance from the Queenstown Town Centre, and are readily accessible from neighbouring suburbs by the extensive trail network. These make them a great asset to both the residents and visitors of Queenstown, both of which are expected to increase significantly over the next 30 years.
- 15 Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill are some of the District's most popular reserves with residents and visitors alike, so it is expected that the use of the reserves will also significantly increase.
- 16 The current RMP is outdated, and given the high profile nature of these reserves and the high level of public and commercial use, it is considered appropriate to prepare a review of the RMP.
- 17 Issues, such as forestry, landscape management, and the intensification of recreation and commercial activities on the Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves are escalating.
- 18 Through the District Plan review process, and the publically notified Skyline Gondola upgrade resource consent, it is apparent that the RMP needs to be updated to reflect the changes that have occurred since the existing plan was adopted, and to ensure the future management objectives for the reserves are relevant.
- 19 The Reserves Act process for developing Reserve Management Plans requires that the Council first declares its intention to prepare a management plan, and this must be notified and suggestions called for to inform the development of the draft plan.
- 20 Option 1 Notify the intent to prepare a review of the existing RMP.

Advantages:

- 21 A review of the existing Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill RMP will ensure the RMP is updated, provides clear management direction of the high profile reserves and remain relevant.
- 22 The public will be made aware of the Council's intent to prepare a review of the RMP and will have the opportunity to input into the draft.
- 23 Council will be acting in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977.
- 24 The draft RMP, when it is notified, will seek to be representative of the public's views.
- 25 Council will begin a review process which will result in a clear and consistent plan for managing the reserves and enabling their future development.

Disadvantages:

- 26 None.

27 Option 2 Do not notify the intent to prepare a RMP.

Advantages:

28 No Council time or resources required.

Disadvantages:

29 Council will not be acting in accordance with the Reserves Act 1977.

30 The plan for the development and management of the reserve network will be outdated and will not accurately represent the current issues and objectives.

31 Council will not meet the community's expectation that a review of the current RMP will be undertaken.

32 This report recommends Option 1 for addressing the matter.

CONSULTATION PROCESS | HĀTEPE MATAPAKI:

➤ SIGNIFICANCE AND ENGAGEMENT | TE WHAKAMAHI I KĀ WHAKAARO HIRAKA

33 This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy because it involves a potentially high level of community interest for users of the reserve.

34 The persons who are affected by or interested in this matter are the general public, nearby residents, and particularly users of the reserves – which include persons undertaking informal recreation, commercial operators and leaseholders.

35 The Council has undertaken consultation with Iwi as Treaty Partners, and key stakeholders of the Ben Lomond reserve, being Skyline, Ziptrek, Bungy, GForce, the Queenstown Mountain Bike Club (QMTBC) and the Wilding Conifer Group (WCG).

36 Further consultation will be undertaken once the Notice of Intent (NOI) has been approved by Council. This will involve engagement with wider stakeholders and interested parties.

RISK AND MITIGATIONS | NGĀ RARU TŪPONO ME NGĀ WHAKAMAURUTANGA

37 This matter relates to the Community & Wellbeing risk category. It is associated with RISK00009 within the QLDC Risk Register, which relates to 'ineffective management of community assets'. This risk has been identified as having a High inherent risk rating. However, in this matter, the risk is Low.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS | NGĀ RITENGA Ā-PŪTEA

38 Preparing the RMP is planned for within existing operational budgets.

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

39 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the Reserves Act 1977, which require Reserve Management Plans to be in place for recreation reserves.

40 Development within the Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves is not currently included in the Ten-Year Plan or Annual Plan. Implementation of development resulting from the RMP will be added into these Plans. However, there is funding for the Queenstown Hill Forestry Plan in year 2021 – 2022.

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

41 The recommended option:

- Will help meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses;
- 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	Location of Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill reserves
B	Current Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill Reserve Management Plan (RMP) 2005