

Chairperson and Committee Members

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

01 SEPTEMBER 2011

Meeting Status: **Public**

Purpose of Report: For Decision

APPROVAL TO RELEASE THE DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

SIGNIFICANCE OF DECISION

- 1 This report introduces the Draft Kāpiti Coast District Council Open Space Strategy (Attachment 1) and seeks Committee approval for it to be released for public consultation.

BACKGROUND

- 2 The Draft Open Space Strategy is a direct result of the Long Term Community Plan process in which the community emphasised the importance of open space that:
 - o enhances biodiversity values, with ecological corridors and areas of important vegetation identified and protected;
 - o protects and further enhances the District's traditional character (both natural and man-made), specifically village, rural and beachside identity;
 - o protects heritage values, particularly places of historical significance to both Māori and Pakehā;
 - o improves access and connectivity values, particularly through existing public open spaces and better Cycleway/Walkway/Bridleway (CWB) linkages;
 - o provides new areas of open space for increased leisure and recreation opportunities; and
 - o improves the overall quality of open space, such as improved surfaces, facilities, more shade, toilets, plants and signage.
- 3 Outcomes from the Long Term Plan provide a clear indication that a sufficient mix of quality open space (particularly accessible public open space) is integral to community wellbeing. Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2002 it is the purpose of local government to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of its communities. As the owner or custodian of much of the District's accessible public open space¹, and the

¹ The Kāpiti Coast District Council owns the majority of public open space in the settled parts of the coastal plain.

manager of the District's shape and form, the Council sees adequate provision, development and maintenance of open space as a core component of its business.

CONSIDERATIONS

- 4 Both residents and visitors to the Kāpiti Coast benefit from the many opportunities to experience open space; be it the coastal reserve, river corridors, parks or sports fields, the pleasure of open space for solace, amenity, sport or more informal recreation is important to everyone of every age and ability. Despite this, there are challenges in acquiring, maintaining or improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space, balanced with the need to be sustainable and financially responsible, and within the context of a wider open space network with many other open space landowners.
- 5 The Draft Open Space Strategy translates community outcomes into a statement of Council's vision for the open space of the Kāpiti Coast into the future. The focus of the strategy is primarily on Council owned land, but also recognises the important contribution other public and private landowners make to the open space network. However, the Draft Strategy does not bind other landowners through regulation like the District Plan, rather, it gives an indication of the Council's intentions, policy directives, and willingness to form partnerships to develop shared values and ultimately a coherent open space network.
- 6 The Draft Open Space Strategy establishes the value of open space, guides other documents such as the District Plan, Asset Management Plans and Annual Plan, and incorporates the acquisition criteria of the Reserve Acquisition Strategy 2003.
- 7 The Reserve Acquisition Strategy is so relevant to the development of Council open space that this document has been incorporated into the Draft Open Space Strategy. This merger also provides an opportunity to update reserve acquisition criteria to ensure they are consistent with open space principles and objectives outlined in the Draft Strategy. This change will ultimately result in the Reserve Acquisition Strategy 2003 becoming obsolete as a stand alone document once the Open Spaces Strategy is formally adopted.
- 8 The Draft Strategy clearly defines Council's role in the development of the District's open space network: as an owner, partner, manager, protector, advocate and researcher/planner. The Draft Strategy also highlights the challenges and opportunities facing open space in the Kāpiti Coast District, establishes an open space vision for the future, analyses what public open space is owned by Council now and where Council needs to focus its attention in the future. A range of open space principles have been developed encompassing the values expressed by the community and gaps in current open space provision. These principles translate into objectives, policy statements and action plans. Some exciting policy proposals include developing a series of mountains to sea ecological corridors, having public open space within 400 metres of all urban residents and better connectivity between existing and future open spaces.

Financial Considerations

- 9 Advertising costs associated with public consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy can be met from existing budgets.
- 10 Once adopted, the Open Spaces Strategy will influence decision making when reviewing the Long Term Plan, District Plan and Asset Management Plans. The financial implications of the Open Strategy objectives and action plans will be considered at that time.

Legal Considerations

- 11 There are no legal considerations for the Committee to consider.

Delegation

- 12 The Committee has the authority to:

7.1 develop (within any wider existing strategic framework) policies and work programmes that support the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community

Consultation

- 13 Consultation will follow the guidelines outlined in section 83 of the Local Government Act 2002. A one month consultation period advertised in the local media and on Council's website and direct mail outs to all key stakeholders including: Tāngata Whenua, community boards, the Department of Conservation, Greater Wellington Regional Council, developers, environmental and recreational user groups.

Policy Implications

- 14 Once adopted, the Open Space Strategy will guide decision making relating to open space during future reviews of the Parks & Open Space Activity Asset Plan, Long Term Plan and District Plan.

Tāngata Whenua Considerations

- 15 The Open Space Strategy is of particular significance to Tāngata Whenua. Council's Iwi Liaison Officer has already facilitated Tāngata Whenua input into the Draft Open Spaces Strategy, but the public consultation period will provide further opportunity to directly consult with a wider audience from the three local iwi.

Publicity Considerations

- 16 In accordance with consultation guidelines specified in the Local Government Act 2002 consultation on the Draft Open Space Strategy will be publicly notified in local newspapers and on the Council's website.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 17 That the Environment and Community Development Committee approves the release of the Draft Open Space Strategy (Attachment 1) appended to Report SP-11-302 for public consultation subject to any amendments.

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ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Draft Open Space Strategy