

**Community & Services Committee  
6 April 2017**

**Report for Agenda Item 2**

**Department: Property & Infrastructure**

**Parks and Open Space Strategy 2017**

**Purpose**

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

**Recommendation**

- 2 That the Community & Services Committee:
  1. **Note** the contents of this report and in particular;
  2. **Recommend to Council** that the Parks and Open Space Strategy 2017 be adopted.

Prepared by:



Jeannie Galavazi  
Senior Parks and Reserves  
Planner

16/03/2017

Reviewed and Authorised by:



Stephen Quin  
Parks and Reserves Planning  
Manager

22/03/2017

**Background**

- 3 The previous Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) Parks Strategy was developed in 2002. At the time it was envisaged this would be a 10 year strategy.
- 4 Since then, the District has experienced rapid residential growth and a huge increase in visitor numbers. New subdivisions in greenfield developments are being created, and intensification of part of the existing urban area is planned.
- 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 The development of a new Parks and Open Space Strategy was taken to several Council and stakeholder workshops in 2016, and the draft was approved by Council for public notification in November 2016.

### **Comment**

- 7 The Parks and Open Space Strategy 2017 (the Strategy) (included as Attachment A to this report) has been developed to provide direction on:
  - The function, distribution, location and configuration of open space sought by the council
  - Development and use of existing open space
  - Spending of Development Contributions
  - Ecological and biodiversity enhancement
- 8 The Strategy sets out a vision, objectives and several key methods for achieving the above including development of park types, minimum walking distance to open space from residential areas, 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.

### **Key changes from 2002 Strategy**

- 9 The main aim of the Strategy is to provide a diverse range of experiences and improve the quality of existing reserves. The previous 2002 strategy focussed on a quantitative approach. This methodology does not make appropriate provision for intensification in existing urban areas where residential population will increase but the amount of reserve land will not.
- 10 For open space to be 'accessible' a Local Park should generally be within a 600m walk (5 to 10 minutes easy walking). This is a change from 800m (from a reserve) in the previous strategy to better align with national best practice and to reflect the steep topography of much of the District.
- 11 The provision guidelines in the draft Strategy specify what park types are required by developers, minimum sizes, and how many household units these should serve. This is stronger guidance than the 2002 Strategy and developers are required to engage with Council early when planning for reserves within developments.
- 12 QLDC will no longer acquire small areas of open space (pocket parks) that primarily serve amenity purposes for a development or are too steep or narrow to develop, unless they have an important linkage or conservation function as part of the wider open space network. Stormwater reserves will not be accepted to offset reserve contributions if they have no recreation value and do not meet the criteria in the provision guidelines.
- 13 The names of some of the park types have changed to reflect the uses and to align with Council's levels of service park categories.
- 14 The name has been amended to the Parks and Open Space Strategy to better reflect the wider values of parks and reserves.

## Key Changes from Submissions/Feedback

15 Individual submissions and a copy of the online submission summary reports are contained as Attachments B, C and D to this report. Many of the submissions related to a particular issue or a specific park. Common themes did arise such as lack of horseriding facilities and provision for sportsfields in Wanaka. Notably, there were no submissions from developers on the provision guidelines. The key themes from the feedback were:

- Better protection of and more provision of open space, particularly in Wanaka
- Council to acquire Sticky Forest
- Wanaka needs more single trail mountain bike trails
- Horseriding should be provided for through bridleways and safe riding areas
- More high quality playgrounds like McBride Park (Lake Hayes Estate) and Jack Tewa Park (Jacks Point) that cater for all ages
- Install drinking fountains
- More safe areas for children to learn to ride bikes
- Promote smokefree, alcohol free, breastfeeding friendly parks
- Better walking and cycle connections between parks and open spaces
- More public local artwork
- Increased maintenance of specified parks
- Council to lead and continue to support ecological enhancement
- Improve accessibility for all users including limited mobility
- Better signage and interpretation
- Improved provision for horseriding, disc golf, mountain biking
- Protect and enhance native revegetation and wetlands
- Create natural parks for foraging and exploring so people can connect to nature
- Trees in town should be better protected and maintained
- Provide more facilities, especially rubbish bins in Queenstown

16 Much of the above feedback was incorporated into the draft Strategy, prior to notification.

17 The key changes made to the Strategy as notified are as follows:

- Strengthening of wording around cycle and walking connections.
- Design of reserves to consider water fountains, fencing and shading where appropriate
- Additions to the Action Plan:
  - Investigate provision of horseriding trails
  - Review QLDC smokefree policy for parks and reserves
  - Investigate development of sports fields in conjunction with the Otago Regional Sports Trust.
  - Work with partners to protect public access to Sticky Forest (the Plantation) in Wanaka
  - Collaborate with DoC and other partners on pest management.

## Options

18 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:

19 Option 1 Adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy with recommended changes.

Advantages:

20 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.

Disadvantages:

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

22 Option 2 Hold a public hearing to hear submissions then adopt following the hearing.

Advantages:

23 Submitters and the public will have an opportunity to be heard in front of a panel.

Disadvantages:

24 Many of the submissions related to a specific park or activity such as dog walking, rather than District wide strategy. The appropriate place for hearing submissions on specific issues is when Reserve Management Plans and Bylaws are being prepared and reviewed. The submissions received have been incorporated into the strategy where relevant and/or individual submissions have been directly followed up by parks staff where appropriate.

25 Option 1 Adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy without changes.

Advantages:

26 None

Disadvantages:

27 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.

Option 1 Do not adopt the Parks and Open Space Strategy

Advantages:

28 None

Disadvantages:

29 Parks and Open Space 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, the quality of parks and reserves will not be improved and the future needs of the community will not be met.

30 This report recommends Option 1 for addressing the matter because it will ensure Council can plan for a quality parks and open space network and can respond to growth.

### ***Significance and Engagement***

31 This matter is of medium significance, as determined by reference to the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy due to the extent to which the draft Strategy will impact on the environment, culture and people of the District.

### ***Risk***

32 This matter relates to the strategic risk SR1 Current and future development needs of the community (including environmental protection), as documented in the Council's risk register. The risk is classed as moderate. This matter relates to this risk because the draft Strategy provides policy and guidance for providing the future open space needs of the community.

33 The recommended option considered above mitigates the risk by providing a current and relevant strategy that provides clear guidance for how open space needs will be met.

### **Financial Implications**

34 There will be no immediate impacts of the decision on the 2016/17 Annual Plan. The Strategy will give direction to the 2018 - 2028 Long Term Plan and future Annual Plans, particularly in respect of acquisitions and Development Contributions.

### **Council Policies, Strategies and Bylaws**

35 The following Council policies, strategies and bylaws were considered:

- The 10-Year Plan 2015 - 2025
- Proposed and Operative District Plan
- Subdivision Guidelines
- Subdivision and Development Infrastructure Code of Practice

36 The recommended option is consistent with the principles set out in the named policies.

37 This matter is not included in the 10-Year Plan/Annual Plan but will inform future plans as outlined in paragraph 33.

## **Local Government Act 2002 Purpose Provisions**

38 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 by providing a strategy to ensure that 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;
- Can be implemented through current funding under the 10-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.

## **Consultation: Community Views and Preferences**

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 has conducted a preliminary online survey of residents, undertaken stakeholder consultation to get initial feedback on the draft Strategy and it was fully notified to the public. 29 submissions were received.

## **Attachments**

- A Parks and Open Space Strategy 2017
- B Summary of early feedback
- C Summary of notification feedback
- D Full copies of submissions