

7 OPEN SPACE ZONE

7.1 Background

Upper Hutt's open spaces are important to the quality of community life and add to the City's interest, diversity and character. They are used for both passive and active recreation activities, as well as having conservation and aesthetic values.

Within the urban area there are many neighbourhood parks and reserves which separate developed areas. Within the rural environment there are significant areas of open space including land administered by the Department of Conservation and the Wellington Regional Council.

The river corridors within the City provide valuable open space for a variety of uses, including those undertaken on the water surface. They include the surfaces of the Hutt, Akatarawa, Whakatikei, Pakuratahi and Mangaroa Rivers and adjoining riverbanks. In the case of the Hutt River, the Open Space Zone extends, at least, to the furthest point of the stopbanks where the construction of flood protection works is allowed. With the exception of some sites without stopbanks, the river area of this zone provides an indication of the river corridor.

The Te Marua Speedway is located to the north of the City. This area is used primarily for car racing and is an open space resource which differs in character from other open spaces within the City.

Upper Hutt's open spaces are under the control or management of a variety of public and private agencies. Most of the publicly owned land held for recreation purposes has reserve status under the Reserves Act 1977.

7.2 Resource Management Issues

7.2.1 *Protecting the environmental quality within and adjoining open spaces from the adverse effects of development and activities.*

Many of the City's open spaces are important because of their scenic, heritage, ecological, natural, or other significance. Open space areas also allow natural hazards to be mitigated by providing significant buffer space for management of the Hutt River in the case of floods.

The growth in active and passive recreation, and changing attitudes towards leisure time, have led to an increase of people pursuing recreational activities. Increasing use could compromise the quality of open space areas. The scale and design of buildings and developments can affect the amenity value and character of open spaces, including areas adjoining them.

7.2.2 *The need to provide adequate open space for the future residents of Upper Hutt.*

Continued growth and development in the City increases the demand for open spaces and recreation opportunities. Infill development in residential areas can cause a loss of private open space. Consequently there is an increased need for public open space within the built environment. This places greater demands on reserves. Increased use of open spaces can impact on surrounding properties, particularly in residential areas.

Land to be set aside for open spaces can be acquired by the Council through the reserve fund. This can provide for particular recreational requirements, and protect significant landscapes and indigenous vegetation.

7.2.3 *The effects of the operation of the Te Marua Speedway on nearby residents.*

The operation of the Te Marua Speedway has affected residents in the adjoining areas in the past. The hours and days of speedway operation are different to activities taking place in the surrounding environment, with noise from the Speedway affecting the residents. For a number of years the speedway operators and residents have met together to discuss these matters, and this has resulted in the development of mutually agreed noise standards and hours of operation.

7.3	Objectives
------------	-------------------

7.3.1 *The promotion of a range of open spaces, maintained and enhanced to meet the present and future recreation, conservation, visual amenity and hazard management needs of the City.*

Upper Hutt contains a range of open spaces important to the community. As the City develops, Council will seek to maintain these spaces in order to meet community needs and to protect important landscapes and ecological areas.

The purpose of the Open Space Zone is to recognise and protect open space, as well as to facilitate appropriate uses. The Zone provides for a wide range of recreational activities and facilities, and for the protection of the natural and built environment.

7.3.2 *The protection of the life supporting capacity of the environment and amenity values by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the adverse effects of activities in the City's open spaces.*

Activities within open spaces vary from passive pursuits, such as walking, to organised sport such as rugby and cricket, and recreational use of rivers. These activities can cause a variety of effects, especially if the activity is noise generating (e.g. motorised sport), and is attended by a number of participants. Open space activities may impact adversely on adjoining areas, including residential areas, through noise, car parks, traffic movements, buildings and structures.

7.3.3 *The continued use and development of the Te Marua Speedway site, while limiting its adverse effects on adjoining properties.*

The Te Marua Speedway has been in use since 1968. It is located near a residential area and other noise-sensitive land uses. Therefore, controls have been put in place so that the adverse effects from speedway activities are mitigated. To manage the speedway operation and development successfully, its operators and the residents who live nearby have been consulted over the design of the speedway and proposed operational standards, particularly in terms of hours and frequency of use and noise levels. These are reflected in the special standards for the area in Chapter 21.

7.4	Policies
------------	-----------------

7.4.1 *To acquire and protect land for open spaces in those parts of the City where a deficiency in the range or distribution of open spaces has been identified, or where there is a particular recreational need, or where an area has significant landscape, ecological values or character.*

The range and distribution of open spaces within the City is important for visual amenity and meeting the recreation needs of residents. Council may acquire land upon subdivision for open space.

7.4.2 *To recognise and protect the amenity values of open space areas.*

Open space and reserves provide amenity to the City. This may be in the form of visual amenity, access to facilities within these areas, landscaping, flora and fauna, and recreation opportunities.

7.4.3 *To enable a range of activities to be undertaken in open spaces that will not adversely affect the character and function of the open space.*

The Open Space Zone includes a range of areas with diverse character, function and purpose. Activities can impact upon habitats and buildings, cause noise and traffic and generally conflict with the features and amenities of open spaces. Activities will be managed to promote compatibility with the character and function of the open space.

Open spaces also provide the City with venues for public events, thereby enabling the community to provide for their social and cultural wellbeing. Activities with temporary effects which provide for community recreation such as organised fireworks displays are provided for whilst ensuring that the effects of such activities are managed and confined to a limited number and duration.

7.4.4 *To manage activities in open spaces to ensure that adjoining land uses receive adequate daylight and sunlight and maintain visual and aural amenity.*

The types of facilities and buildings in open spaces can affect the surrounding areas by overshadowing adjoining properties or by noise, traffic and lighting effects.

The policy seeks to promote activities in the Open Space Zone which do not adversely affect surrounding environments. Performance standards are therefore provided for noise, lighting and separation from adjoining boundaries.

7.4.5 *To allow a range of motor sports and other organised events to be undertaken on the Speedway site while mitigating their adverse effects on the environment.*

The site has development potential, and the Speedway operator has prepared a site management plan. The management plan has proposals for the track and facilities, car parking areas, noise abatement, and preservation of the Raupo Swamp and areas of bush. Site development and noise standards are necessary to mitigate the adverse effects on the

surrounding areas.

7.4.6 *To incorporate in the Plan appropriate noise controls and hours of operation that have been accepted by the surrounding residents.*

The Speedway operator has consulted with acoustic consultants, Council and residents about an acceptable noise standard for the operation of the Speedway. Noise standards have been established, as well as a maximum number of days per year for speedway activities.

The Speedway operator has agreed to undertake landscaping and earth mounding to reduce the impacts from noise as well as improving the aesthetics of the site. Landscaping would soften the site and assist in noise abatement. The Speedway operator plans to encourage families to use this area by developing a park like setting.

7.5	Methods
------------	----------------

7.5.1 District Plan provisions consisting of the following:

- Open space zoning to identify the open space environments within the City (including the Speedway Area).
- Rules to establish the environmental standards required to implement the policies.

7.5.2 Reserve Management Plans.

7.5.3 Management of open spaces by other organisations including the Wellington Regional Council, and the Te Marua Speedway operator.

7.5.4 The Annual and Strategic Plan process, and subdivision resource consents, for the acquisition of future reserves by the Council.

7.6 Anticipated environmental results and monitoring

The following results are expected to be achieved by the objectives, policies and methods of this Chapter. The means of monitoring whether this Plan achieves the necessary outcomes are also set out below.

Anticipated environmental results	Monitoring indicators	Data source
Minimising the adverse effects of activities on open spaces	Complaints received about adverse effects	Complaints register
	Resource consent conditions	Council records
	Changes in noise levels and other environmental effects	Noise surveys
Protection of amenity values within and adjoining open spaces	Change in land cover	Council records
	Change in density of built structures	Council records
	User views about open spaces	Community surveys
Sufficient provision and variety of open spaces	Numbers of resource consents by type	Resource consent information
	User views about open spaces	Community and land use surveys
	Change in open space	Strategic Plan process
The continued use and development of the Speedway	Change in land cover and use	Consultation with operator
	Change in density of built structures	Resource consent information
	User views about Speedway	Consultation
Compatible co-existence between speedway users and the surrounding residents	Complaints received about adverse effects	Complaints register
	Changes in noise levels and other environmental effects	Complaints