

22 December 2017

Whakatane District Council
Draft District Reserve Management Plan
Private Bag 1002
WHAKATANE 3158

Submission to Whakatane District Council Draft District Reserve Management Plan

Health begins where we live, learn, work and play. Many of the crucial underlying factors that affect the health of people and communities are directly influenced by the decisions and activities of councils. The Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) is required under legislation to improve, promote, and protect the health of people and communities; to promote the inclusion and participation in society and independence of people with disabilities; and to reduce health disparities by improving health outcomes for Maori and other population groups.

For these reasons, the BOPDHB is committed to working collaboratively with councils and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the District Reserve Management Plan (Plan). This submission has been prepared by Toi Te Ora Public Health (Toi Te Ora) which is the public health unit of the BOPDHB.

Open Space and Health and Wellbeing

'Healthy Open Spaces: A summary of the Impact of Open Spaces on Health and Wellbeing' is an information paper produced in 2010 by Regional Public Health¹, a unit of the Hutt Valley District Health Board. The definition of open spaces contained in this report includes green spaces such as regional and local parks and reserves, sports fields and other recreation areas.

Toi Te Ora has used this paper as a primary information source in the preparation of this submission. Two useful aspects of the report include a summary of the connections between open spaces and health and wellbeing, and a list of features of healthy open spaces.

The connections between open spaces and health and wellbeing include:

- open spaces increase people's contact with nature and spaces of cultural significance (cultural or spiritual wellbeing/*te taha wairua*)
- open spaces promote social interaction and cohesion (social wellbeing/*te taha whanau*)
- open spaces promote physical activity (physical wellbeing/*te taha tinana*)
- open spaces reduce stress and promote relaxation (mental wellbeing/*te taha hinengaro*).

Healthy open spaces are those that:

- are of high quality, readily accessible, culturally appropriate, and well connected to streets and amenities
- are developed in partnership with the community



- provide variety of functions including opportunities for physical activity, access to the natural environment, and play for children
- respect and provide for a diverse range of cultures, ages, abilities and socio-economic status
- conserve and promote cultural heritage
- build on natural features to inspire a deep connection to place
- provide diverse habitats for appropriate species to enhance biodiversity
- create safe and healthy places for connecting with others, recreation and mental relaxation.

BOPDHB recommend that the vision for the Plan highlight the link between reserve and open space land and good health.

Section 1: Introduction

BOPDHB recommend that the Eastern Bay - Beyond Today Development Plan (EB-BT) be included as a guidance document for this Plan and listed in *Table 1. Key Documents, Regional Context*. EB-BT is based on the four principles of resilience, liveability, connectivity, and collaboration, whilst covering the four themes of economy, people and culture, environment and infrastructure. This Plan is particularly relevant to the opportunities outlined in EB-BT's *Caring for Our Communities and Environment* priority.

Section 2: Whakatane District Reserve and Open Space Categories

It is noted that the categories are summarised in relation to type of use, size and management focus. However premier district reserves are noted for their high amenity value. Other categories are likely to also provide amenity too and some are likely to be considered significant by those who use or visually benefit from a reserve. It is suggested that consideration be given to the level of amenity each reserve provides in table 2 by including an amenity category.

It is also noted that road reserves are not covered by the policies in this plan. However BOPDHB would like to see rest areas included. To do so would ensure these areas meet the needs of the community and visitors. For example; to assess whether there is a need for sanitary services to be provided for the protection of health such as; toilets, drinking-water, waste collection or seating.

Section 3: Administration and Planning Policies

Provision of reserves

BOPDHB particularly support *objective (ii)* and *policy (ii)* in relation to the provision of reserves in regards to facilities and services on reserves that meet evolving community needs.

BOPDHB would like to see all reserves (including rest areas categorized as road reserve, but excluding laybys) providing access to safe drinking-water by providing as a 'usual' facility the provision of drinking-water fountains.

Environmental sustainability

BOPDHB support the *Objective* and *Policies* in this section but recommend that the word 'endeavor' be changed to 'ensure' in the *Objective*. Using stronger language shows Council's commitment to sustainable practices. A recent community survey² undertaken by Toi Te Ora showed that people are concerned about the loss of native species in terms of the impact that it has on their health and wellbeing. There is also emerging evidence that development approaches that support connection with native species, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are beneficial for health and wellbeing³. Therefore it is recommended that consideration always be given toward looking at how the development of reserves can support local ecosystems and biodiversity such as with native plantings supporting native birds and other native species.

Council are commended on the approach to waste management and minimisation practices, and the promotion of pedestrian and cycle route use on reserves. When

considering environmentally sustainable options, it is important to ensure these do not increase the risk to health. For example users of reserves should be alerted and access appropriately managed if recycled water is used for irrigation.

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)

BOPDHB encourage and support the use of CPTED principals to all reserve and open spaces.

Smokefree Outdoor Public Spaces

BOPDHB supports Council's approach to smokefree outdoor public spaces. This approach with de-normalise smoking in public places, encourage positive role modelling for children, and reduce youth uptake of smoking. BOPDHB encourages Council to ensure the smokefree policy has been implemented appropriately, such as through clear signage in all smokefree spaces.

Surveying and monitoring

BOPDHB acknowledges that this section will go some way towards ensuring the reserves are meeting the needs of the community. BOPDHB recommend that this high level plan include assessments of the quality, suitability, and level of facilities provided not only at an individual reserve level but also at district, local and neighbourhood levels. This will ensure a whole of community approach is taken to reduce unintentional gaps and ensure equity of service provision.

Section 4: Protection of Physical Character Policies

See comments above in relation to *Environmental sustainability* under *Section 3*.

Protection of esplanade areas

BOPDHB support the objective to provide reserves and strips that provide access to the coastal edge, rivers and lake margins through the subdivision process. It is important that all individuals in the community have access to these public areas to enable everyone an opportunity to benefit from these environmental features.

Pest animals

BOPDHB supports the Plan linking with regional pest and biodiversity plans and recommends that reserves should also limit pests and vectors of public health significance. For example, the design of artificial ponds, and land contouring to prevent pooling of water can prevent mosquitoes and other insects from breeding and causing a nuisance.

Stormwater Disposal and Water Runoff

BOPDHB support actions that reduce stormwater contamination and protect water quality. It is recommended that the objective in this section include the reduction of stormwater contamination as described in the policies for this area.

Section 5: Public Reserve Use Policies

General public use of reserves

Please note the comments earlier in this submission about facilities meeting the needs of the community.

BOPDHB recommends that natural or artificial sun shade be used when equipment is provided in reserves.

Exclusive use – commercial and community events and festivals etc.

Events which include the provision of food, water, communal living or ablution facilities have the potential to cause and spread disease, especially those catering for large numbers of people. Control measures are needed to reduce the risk of disease for event participants as well the wider community BOPDHB supports the objectives and policies for commercial and community events and festivals, and suggests that this plan (or reference to a bylaw or other mechanism) requires event organisers to adopt the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management's Safety Planning Guidelines for Events. This

guide was developed as best practice in conjunction with the New Zealand Police, St John Ambulance, New Zealand Fire Service, Local Government and Public Health.

Section 6: Access to Reserves Policies

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies in this section and recommends that universal design principles are applied to all reserves. This will ensure accessibility to the range of park facilities and amenities for people with disabilities.

Pedestrians

BOPDHB support the development of a dedicated walkway network that links the reserves and coastal areas. Toi Te Ora offers to assist with the development of this work.

Cyclists and Walkers

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies in this section. BOPDHB encourages the installation of active transport infrastructure such as bike racks on reserves to increase accessibility to users.

Section 7: Structures and installations on reserves policies

Services and utilities

BOPDHB support the objective that ensures essential public health services will be provided on reserves and the policy to manage reserves located on closed landfill or other contaminated sites.

Public convenience and changing facilities

BOPDHB recommends all public conveniences are supplied with soap and hand drying facilities. Good hand hygiene facilities are essential to prevent the spread of disease.

Playgrounds

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies to ensure playground environments and equipment are safe all of the time, and that the number of playgrounds is sufficient to enable easy access. Providing good public transport as well as safe and attractive cycling and walking infrastructure will also increase accessibility. As well as the amenities listed in *Policies (vi)* Council is encouraged to install water foundations, sourced from council supply, to encourage healthy beverage choices and waste minimization practices and to plant fruit trees near playgrounds to increase access to healthy food.

Section 8: Auxiliary Activities on Reserves Policies

Overnight parking of self contained vehicles

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies under this section.

Community food gardens

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies in relation to community food gardens and commend Council on acknowledging the value of community food gardens as an opportunity for localised food development, skill development, social interaction and sustainable land use. BOPDHB recommend that Council also add in the policy section, *maintain a contact database for all community gardens and notify representatives when there are planned works that may affect the community garden operation.*

BOPDHB encourages Council to ensure the smokefree policy has been implemented appropriately at all community gardens, and supported through clear signage.

Refuse and Waste Disposal

The Council intends to discourage the disposal of inappropriate waste in reserve areas. BOPDHB supports this and suggests Council outlines how this will be achieved.

Liquor in club facilities on reserves

BOPDHB support the objectives and policies under this section and recommends the following be added to the policies section; *licenced areas for sports clubs will be confined to the clubrooms to minimise the normalisation of alcohol and sports.*

Overall, the BOPDHB is in support of the Plan as in general it will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The DHB's recommendations for changes are intended to further enhance the health and wellbeing benefits and help mitigate or reduce any potential negative impacts.

We do not wish to speak in support of this submission at a public hearing.

Yours sincerely



SALLY WEBB

Board Chair

Address for service

Toi Te Ora Public Health

PO Box 2120

TAURANGA 3140

enquiries@toiteora.govt.nz

References:

1. Regional Public Health (2010). *Healthy Open Spaces: A summary of the Impact of Open Spaces on Health and Wellbeing*. <http://www.rph.org.nz/content/d893f45e-9d35-4906-bde7-c4912036c97e.cmr>.
2. Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service (2016). *Issues of Health and Wellbeing Population Survey 2016*. <http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/vdb/document/1765>.
3. Medical Officer of Health Report (June 2017). *Health for All – an essential transition in our thinking*. <https://www.ttophs.govt.nz/vdb/document/1821>.