

2 Public open space zones

Introduction

Five broad zones are used to facilitate the management of activities on public open space. These zones are as follows:

Conservation

This zone applies to public open space with natural, ecological, landscape, cultural and historic heritage values. These areas play an important role in increasing the populations of threatened and endangered species in Auckland. They also include some of Auckland's most heavily used beaches and coastlines that are used for informal recreation. To protect these values, recreation activities and development in the zone are limited in scale and intensity. Buildings and improvements provided for relate to conservation and land management, recreation, education, park management and visitor information.

Informal recreation

This zone applies to public open space that provides for a variety of informal recreation opportunities. Buildings and structures are generally limited to those that support these activities and include playground equipment, skate parks, informal hard courts, toilets and changing facilities, barbeque and picnic facilities and small scale boating facilities.

Sports and active recreation

This zone applies to public open space that provides for a range of indoor and outdoor organised sporting and active recreation activities. This includes public open space adjacent to the CMA and lakes and rivers that is used for clusters of marine related recreation activities. It applies to open space in which sports fields, hard-court areas, greens, recreational facilities including swimming pools, boat ramps, jetties and associated buildings and structures predominate.

Civic spaces

This zone applies to public open spaces in the form of squares and plazas in centres and other urban areas. Civic and community spaces are becoming increasingly important as Auckland's centres intensify and access to high-amenity open space is needed for residents. These spaces provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction and community gatherings and events.

Community

This zone applies to public open spaces in town centres and other urban areas that are used or proposed to be used primarily to accommodate community buildings and activities such as: libraries, arts and cultural centres, marae, community houses, halls and pre-school education facilities. These spaces are typically dominated by buildings and structures and associated parking areas.

The [ADM](#) provides supplementary, non-statutory guidance on options to achieve high standards of parks and open space design.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

2.1 Conservation zone

Zone description

This zone applies to public open spaces with natural, ecological and biological, landscape, and cultural and historic heritage values. Examples include volcanic cones, bush reserves, headlands, natural wetlands and parts of the coastline. The zone is also applied to cemeteries that are no longer operational to recognise their cultural heritage values.

This type of public open space helps to preserve and define Auckland's character and provides a connection to our heritage. These areas play a special role in educating residents and visitors about Auckland's heritage and environment and protect Auckland's notable coastlines, islands and ranges. The zone includes some of Auckland's most heavily visited areas of native bush, volcanic cones and popular beaches, foreshore and coastline areas. These are generally special and often sensitive areas and it is therefore appropriate to limit the scale and intensity of activities and development, including access in particular circumstances, to ensure there are minimal adverse effects and as little modification to the environment as possible. The zone is characterised by minimal buildings and structures, largely undeveloped areas and open expanses of land. Generally, the natural elements and unmodified nature of these areas gives them a sense of wilderness and isolation.

The public open spaces that adjoin the coast or lakes, rivers and streams, help protect these often unique landscapes and ecosystems. The integrated management of the coastal environment (in particular the coastal edge) and margins of waterways is of utmost importance to Mana Whenua. Access to these areas needs to be carefully managed to avoid damaging or desecrating scheduled sites and places of significance to Mana Whenua.

Objectives

1. Public open spaces with natural, ecological, landscape, and heritage values are protected and enhanced and available to the public to use and enjoy.
2. Recreational activities and associated buildings and structures complement and protect the values and qualities of the public open space.

Policies

1. Enable appropriate activities that conserve, protect and enhance the natural, ecological, landscape, and heritage values of the public open space.
2. Protect and enhance the tangible and intangible values of scheduled sites or places of significance to Mana Whenua within the public open space.
3. Restrict recreational activities and associated buildings and structures to those that enable enjoyment of the values of the public open space and which have minimal impact on its values and qualities such as passive recreation and unsealed walking tracks and trails, picnic and rest areas, and planting and soft landscaping.
4. Limit buildings and structures to those where there is a demonstrated need to enhance the ability for people to appropriately use and enjoy the public open space including for education purposes, public safety and the management of the public open space.
5. Require the location, scale, and design of new buildings and structures and additions to complement the context, character and values of the public open space, ensuring that there is minimal disturbance to existing landform and vegetation.
6. Provide adequate vehicle access and parking to meet the needs of users while ensuring they are designed and located to have minimal impact on the integrity and values of the public open space. This may be achieved by:
 - a. locating and designing access and parking so that there is minimal disturbance to existing landform and vegetation

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

- b. locating parking areas in proximity to public streets and/or internal roads to avoid intrusion into the public open space and encourage shared parking
 - c. using unformed and unsealed areas for parking, particularly for peak periods during summer months
 - d. using smaller, conveniently located parking areas in preference to large expanses of parking
 - e. locating parking areas so that the character of the public open space and adjoining properties are not adversely affected by noise or visual effects.
7. Require buildings, structures and parking areas to be landscaped and planted in a manner which is safe and visually softens development.
8. Enable appropriate activities (including ecological, restoration and customary use) which support and re-establish the relationship of Mana Whenua and their culture and traditions to their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga.
9. Enable interpretative signs, structures and platforms at appropriate sites to enhance the identification and understanding of the natural and heritage value of the public open spaces.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

2.2 Informal Recreation zone

Zone description

This zone applies to public open spaces that range in size from small local parks to large regional parks which are used for a variety of outdoor informal recreation activities and community uses, such as walking, running, cycling, relaxing and socialising, picnics, playing and enjoying the environment. Grazing may be used for land management purposes. These areas also form an important part of Auckland's walkway and cycleway network.

These public open spaces may contain sites with natural and/or historic heritage values and they contribute to the general amenity of the area where they are located.

Some of these public open spaces adjoin the coast, harbours, lakes, rivers and streams and play a key role in providing people with access to and along these areas. The integrated management of the coastal environment, and in particular the coastal edge and margins of lakes and rivers is of utmost importance to Mana Whenua. Access to these areas needs to be carefully managed to avoid damaging or desecrating areas, scheduled sites or places of significance to Mana Whenua. These spaces provide a range of small-scale and informal land-based facilities that support water recreation as well as children's play areas and toilet and changing facilities.

Generally these public open spaces are characterised by few buildings and structures. Limiting development will help maintain the open space character and amenity value, and enable opportunities for a range of informal recreation activities to occur. Buildings and structures are limited to those that support the enjoyment of the public open space for informal recreation activities such as barbeques and picnic facilities, playgrounds, skateparks, informal hard courts, shelters, toilet and changing facilities, and small-scale community buildings such as boat ramps and sailing clubs. Larger public open spaces in this category such as Auckland's regional parks, may include visitor information facilities and limited retail such as cafes.

Objectives

1. Informal recreation and small-scale community uses are catered for through a network of quality public open spaces.
2. The open and spacious appearance of public open space is protected to maintain the amenity values, character and any historic and natural values of the public open space and surrounding area.
3. Small-scale, informal marine recreational facilities are provided on public open spaces while protecting public access to the coast and the natural values of the public open space.

Policies

1. Provide for a variety of informal recreation activities in the zone including small-scale community uses and accessory activities.
2. Enhance the natural character of public open spaces by retaining significant exotic vegetation and native trees (where appropriate and practical) and undertaking weed removal, new planting and landscaping.
3. Require the development of public open space, including new buildings and structures located near scheduled sites or places of significance to Mana Whenua to demonstrate through design, Mātauranga Māori, tikanga, and Mana Whenua values and the relationship of Mana Whenua to ancestral lands, water, coastal sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga.
4. Minimise buildings and structures to those where there is a demonstrated need to enhance the ability for people to use and enjoy the public open space for informal recreation.
5. Require the location, scale and design of buildings and structures to complement the open and spacious character and function of the public open space, enable opportunities for passive surveillance, enhance amenity values, protect any natural or historic heritage values and be compatible with development in the surrounding area.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

6. Use, where appropriate, the street network and internal roads for parking associated with the use of the public open space.
7. Provide adequate vehicle access and parking to meet the needs of users in a way that maintains the character of the public open space and encourages cycling and the use of public transport.
8. Require the location and design of parking areas to:
 - a. be convenient for users of the public open space
 - b. have a safe and efficient internal circulation pattern with slow traffic speeds
 - c. avoid adverse noise or visual effects on users of the public open space and adjoining properties
 - d. avoid large areas of sealed parking unrelieved by landscaping or planting.
9. Manage the intensity of activities to minimise adverse effects such as noise, glare and traffic on the amenity of the surrounding area.
10. Limit activities and their associated facilities on public open space adjoining the sea or waterways to those that have a functional relationship with the sea or adjacent waterways and where they meet an identified need.
11. Avoid activities and development in locations on public open space adjoining the sea or waterways where there could be adverse effects on:
 - a. public access
 - b. the visual amenity of the coastal environment
 - c. areas of high natural or heritage value
 - d. views of the coast or lakes or rivers
 - e. Mana Whenua cultural heritage.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

2.3 Sport and Active Recreation zone

Zone description

This zone applies to public open spaces used for indoor and outdoor organised sports, active recreation and community activities and includes facilities such as sports fields, buildings and structures associated with marine related activities such as ramps, jetties, slipways, hardstand areas, hard-court areas and greens. These spaces often include the provision of buildings and structures such as grandstands, sport and community clubrooms and toilets and changing facilities associated with these uses. Commercial activities accessory to the primary function of the public open space may be undertaken in appropriate locations. These activities generally provide economic benefit as well as informal benefits such as passive surveillance.

Most of these public open spaces are available for informal recreation activities such as walking, jogging and informal games when not used for sport and active recreation.

Given the more intensive use of these public open spaces, they can from time to time attract large numbers of people and consequently generate high levels of traffic, noise, glare and other adverse effects that need to be managed.

Objectives

1. Indoor and outdoor sport and active recreation opportunities are provided for through a network of quality public open spaces that meet the community's needs.
2. The use of public open space for sport and active recreation is maximised.
3. The amenity values of the public open space and surrounding areas, including the CMA are maintained.
4. Larger scale or clusters of land-based marine recreation facilities are recognised and provided for.

Policies

1. Provide for indoor and outdoor organised sports, active recreation and community activities, and associated buildings and structures.
2. Enable the provision of buildings and structures where there is a demonstrated need to enhance the ability to use and enjoy the public open space for sports and active recreation, including accessory building and structures such as storage sheds and scoreboards.
3. Require the location, scale and design of new buildings and structures and additions to complement the character of the public open space, retain a level of spaciousness, enable opportunities for informal surveillance, and maintain a reasonable level of amenity for users of the public open space.
4. Enable accessory activities that enhance the use and enjoyment of public open space and that relate to the primary activities on the site.
5. Maximise the use of buildings and facilities (such as through multi-functional use and adaptable designs) to increase the capacity of the public open space, and avoid permanent single purpose buildings with restricted use.
6. Limit activities and their associated facilities on public open space adjoining the sea or water body to those that have a functional relationship with the sea or adjacent water body and where they meet an identified need.
7. Require activities and development in locations on public open space adjoining the sea or a water body to:
 - a. maintain public access, unless access is to be excluded for safety and security reasons
 - b. be sympathetic to the visual amenity of the coastal environment
 - c. avoid areas of high natural or heritage value

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

- d. retain significant views of the sea or lakes or rivers from the public open space
 - e. have regard to Mana Whenua cultural heritage values.
8. Manage adverse effects such as noise, glare, traffic and visual effects on the surrounding area, through appropriate locations, design, use and operation of sport and recreation facilities, buildings and structures such as lighting poles.
9. Provide adequate vehicle access and parking to meet the needs of users and encourage shared parking, use of public transport and drop zones, while recognising that spill over car parking to adjacent roads is likely to occur during high periods of use and for special events.
10. Require development of public open space for new or existing indoor and outdoor organised sport, active recreation and community activities to:
- a. have good access to major traffic routes and public transport
 - b. avoid adverse effects on Mana Whenua cultural heritage
 - c. reflect Mana Whenua values through the integration of Mātauranga and tikanga.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

2.4 Civic Spaces zone

Zone description

This zone applies to public open spaces such as squares and plazas in town centres and other urban areas. Civic spaces are becoming increasingly important as Auckland grows and becomes more compact and access to high amenity public open spaces is needed for residents, workers and visitors. Civic spaces contribute to the character of town centres and urban areas and provide opportunities for informal recreation, social interaction and community gatherings and events. They also support local character and sense of identity and should acknowledge and reflect various ethnicities and the identities of Mana Whenua.

Buildings and structures that are located within or surrounding civic spaces should enhance and form an integral part of these spaces, providing an active edge and enabling visibility into and pedestrian access through the space.

Objective

1. Quality urban public open spaces are available for residents, visitors and workers to enjoy informal recreation, social interaction and civic and community events.

Policies

1. Provide quality civic spaces in centres and urban areas to support informal recreation and social interaction, and to enable events and community and civic activities to take place.
2. Maintain important identified view shafts to and from civic spaces to the coast, natural features and landmarks.
3. Encourage the design, location and orientation of buildings and structures within and adjacent to civic public open spaces to enhance the amenity and use of the public open space and avoid over-shadowing, glare and adverse noise and wind conditions.
4. Require the design of civic spaces to:
 - a. provide opportunities and flexibility for a range of activities including informal recreation, public events and civic functions
 - b. facilitate the convenient movement of pedestrians through the creation of direct, and safe pedestrian routes
 - c. achieve safe spaces and avoid opportunities for crime by maximising passive surveillance of the public open space and avoiding potential areas of entrapment
 - d. create a sense of local identity acknowledging Mātauranga Māori, tikanga and Mana Whenua values and reflecting Auckland's various ethnicities, for example through the use of materials, landscaping, signage and artworks.
5. Locate and design civic spaces to enhance the level of street connectivity and promote and encourage physical activity and the ability to walk to local destinations.
6. Require the design of buildings and structures within civic public open spaces to integrate with adjoining properties and streets.
7. Manage the effects of activities and development to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment and on the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.
8. Enable public works that enhance the environmental qualities of civic and community public open spaces, including the installation of public artworks, interpretive signs, and ecological restoration to occur in the zone.

The Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan (notified 30 September 2013)

2.5 Community zone

Zone description

This zone applies to public open spaces that are used or proposed to be used primarily to accommodate community buildings and activities such as: libraries, arts and cultural centres, recreation centres that are not associated with the sport and active recreation zone, marae, community houses, halls and pre-school education facilities. Community spaces provide the opportunity for community, recreational, and cultural buildings and facilities to be established on public land. Not all community buildings and activities have been included in this zone as many are suitably catered for in other zones, (e.g. libraries in business zones and leisure centres in the Sport and Active Recreation zone). Generally public open space in this zone is situated in town centres and business areas, in close proximity to public transport routes, has good road frontage, and close proximity to other community facilities.

Objective

1. Public open spaces provide for existing and future community buildings and activities.

Policies

1. Provide public open spaces in town centres and urban areas to support community activities, informal recreation and social interaction, and to enable events to take place.
2. Encourage the design of buildings and structures within community public open spaces to integrate with adjoining properties and streets.
3. Manage the effects of activities and development to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on the environment and on the amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.
4. Require the location and design of parking to:
 - a. be convenient for users of the public open space
 - b. have a safe and efficient internal circulation pattern
 - c. maintain the character of the public open space
 - d. avoid noise or adverse visual effects on adjoining properties
 - e. avoid large areas of sealed car parking unrelieved by landscaping or planting.

