



# Strategy and Policy Committee

24 June 2009

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Report no: S&P2009/3/1

## **Proposal to Adopt Draft Reserve Management Plan Jubilee Park and Percy Scenic Reserve**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to report back on the consultation process and to request that Council accept proposed changes to the Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Draft Reserve Management Plan in order to produce a plan for the Minister of Conservation's final approval.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes that the Reserves Act 1977 requires Reserve Management Plans for sites with Reserves Act Status;
- (ii) notes the requests and suggestions made during the public consultation and thanks contributors for participating in the reserves management planning process; and
- (iii) recommends to Council that it requests that the Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Draft Management Plan be altered, according to the proposed changes, and forwarded to the Minister of Conservation for approval.

## Background

2. The Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Draft Management Plan (Management Plan) was prepared for Council by Parks and Open Spaces Management Consultancy Ltd (PAOS). The draft plan has been circulated as Appendix 1. PAOS summarised the submissions and, in conjunction with officers, propose changes to the draft plan in order to improve the document. The proposed changes and submissions have been circulated as Appendix 2 and 3. At this time there is no need to arrange a hearing because the requirements of submitters can generally be incorporated into the plan.
3. At its meeting on 12 March 2009, Council's Strategy and Policy Committee approved the Draft Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Management Plan and agreed to release it for public consultation purposes.

## Discussion

4. Once finalised, a Management Plan provides the community with certainty about the function and management of reserves and offers Council improved efficiency in managing the reserve by not requiring public notification or ministerial consent to some routine matters.
5. A Management Plan enables Council to determine community preferences for the development and management of reserves. It can be used to establish the desired mix of uses and values for sites and typically sets in play policy to guide day to day management and asset planning. The Management Plan for Jubilee Park and Percy Scenic Reserve is required to reflect the values for Scenic Reserves, set out in Section 19(1)(b) of the Reserves Act. Scenic B reserves are reserves with flora (indigenous or exotic) that have or will become of significant interest of beauty. Management objectives are to preserve the natural environment and beauty as far as possible, allow the public freedom of entry, develop parts for amenities and facilities and manage and protect historic, archaeological, geological, biological or other scientific features (Section 19(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)). The policies in this Management Plan reflect these management objectives.
6. The Management Plan for Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park is a new document. While the general policy section is based on other existing Hutt City Reserve Management Plans, the Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park sections (sections 9 and 10) are not based on earlier Management Plans. The Management Plan considers the current management and operation of the sites and anticipates developments on the sites.

7. The Long Term Council Community Plan 2009 to 2019 does not anticipate funding for changes to service levels or development at Percy Scenic Reserve or Jubilee Park apart from works programmed next year required as a result of the Dowse Interchange project on Highway 2. As more detailed plans are developed, using the Management Plan as a guide, these will be fed into the Community Plan process.
8. Submitters and peer reviewers emphasised the need for Percy Scenic Reserve to provide a high quality visitor experience with educational components. They also address the need to bring “back room” plant collections in front of the general public and to make proper provision for expanding in-ground plant collections. Submitters expressed concern about staff resources at Percy Scenic Reserve.
9. The Management Plan anticipates the inclusion of the area commonly referred to as “Ratanui”, subject to the provisions of the licence between Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency. The management, development and presentation of Ratanui and other areas of Percy Scenic Reserve would be coordinated although various areas could have their own identities.
10. In the case of Percy Scenic Reserve, there were various views about the extent of the land that should be managed under the Reserve Management Plan for Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park. The concept of the management area extending beyond the three properties known as Percy Scenic Reserve was not questioned. Appendix 4 contains a plan illustrating the proposed area to be managed as Percy Scenic Reserve. At an operational level, management will be split between two Asset Managers in the Parks and Gardens Division of Council. One will be responsible for the area downhill from the vehicle access track off Stanhope Grove. The other will be responsible for the, larger, area of bush beyond the access track and also all of the bush tracks in the area covered by the reserve management plan.
11. One submitter was interested in Percy Scenic Reserve, and nearby public land being managed under a theme of sustainability. The main focus of Scenic Reserves is the management of biodiversity. Hutt City Council recognises biodiversity as a primary focus of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy. On site interpretation and education would include biodiversity at several sites. This goes some way towards satisfying that submitter’s proposal for a cluster of sites orientated towards sustainability education. The site, for example, will not concentrate on education about other aspects of sustainability such as waste, transport, energy and urban form because these are not directly related to the purpose of Scenic Reserves.

12. Fewer submissions were received on Jubilee Park. Those that mentioned Jubilee Park were supportive of the provision made for the park in the Draft Plan.

### Options

13. Council could continue with the status quo (operating without a Reserve Management Plan) for some time yet. Eventually, the Department of Conservation is likely to request that Council produce one. Note that the Reserves Act requires a reserve administering body in this case Council) to prepare a management plan for reserves under its control, management or administration.

### Consultation

14. The Reserves Act 1977 requires that Council give public notice of its intention to prepare a Reserve Management Plan. This occurred in April 2008, by way of a public notice in the Hutt News. The first round of submissions generated 11 submissions.
15. The second (and main) round of public consultation ran from 17 March to 22 May. This also generated 13 written submissions. These have been circulated as Appendix 3.
16. Key interest groups and organisations were invited to participate in the consultation process. Individuals with a known interest in Percy Scenic Reserve were invited to participate in the consultation process.
17. In addition to the consultation required by the Reserves Act 1977, officers coordinated a "Think Tank" of four external specialists who identified a number of issues and opportunities for the site.
18. The Draft Reserve Management Plan was "Peer Reviewed" by three experts in the parks and recreation industry. Their advice is included in the Proposed Changes from Submissions, circulated as Appendix 2.
19. Officers propose the following time line:
 

8 July 09	Present submissions and proposed changes to the management plan to Strategy and Policy Committee.
Late July	Present final version of the Management Plan and submissions to Minister of Conservation for approval.
Late 2009	Final version of Management Plan goes "live".

### **Legal Considerations**

20. Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 requires Council to submit a Management Plan for the properties with Reserves Act status to the Minister of Conservation for his approval. Once adopted, the Reserve Management Plan is under continuous review. Sec 41 (4) and the Reserves Act Guide notes in general a minimum interval of ten years between reviews.
21. The Reserve Management Planning process revealed that reserve classification work is required in order to bring the true Percy Scenic Reserve properties up to date. Classification work associated with the Land Review project will protect other properties, for example 22A Akatea Road.
22. All properties associated with this Draft Reserve Management Plan sit within the General Recreation Activity Area of the District Plan.

### **Financial Considerations**

23. Upgrade and development proposals associated with the Draft Reserve Management Plan have not been funded. These items will be incorporated into future LTCCP and asset management planning. Most projects will be subject to approval from elected members through the LTCCP process. Some small and gradual improvements will be funded through existing operational budgets.

### **Other Considerations**

24. Several tasks need to be completed once the Management Plan has been finalised. These may include an Action Plan to prioritise tasks and obtain funding; a Vegetation Plan and Visitor Services Plan. It may be appropriate for volunteers to participate in some of these tasks.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Public Reserve Management Plan 2009 (separately circulated as pages A1-A90).
- Appendix 2: Proposed changes from Submissions from 17 March to 22 May 2009 (separately circulated as pages A91-A128).
- Appendix 3: Submissions (separately circulated as pages A129-A193).

Appendix 4: Plan of proposed areas to be covered by the Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park Management Plan (separately circulated as page A194-A195).

<b>Supporting Information</b>
<p><b>Strategic Fit/Strategic Outcome</b></p> <p>Reserve Management Planning for Percy Scenic Reserve and Jubilee Park contributes towards Community Outcome 3. Entrepreneurial and Innovative Culture, Community Outcome 4. Healthy Environment, Community Outcome 5. Lifestyle plus Community Outcome 7. Sense of Place. It may also have significance in the Open Spaces work being done for the Wellington Regional Strategy.</p>
<p><b>LTCCP/Annual Plan Reference</b></p> <p>No budget provision has been made for capital expenditure or altered operational expenditure in the LTCCP or Annual Plan at this time.</p>
<p><b>Treaty of Waitangi Consideration</b></p> <p>The Wellington Tenth Trust and the Rununga were invited to participate in the initial round of consultation. They did not submit. If these groups wish to contribute material to the plan, it can be appended to the finalised plan and can be property adopted when the plan is next reviewed.</p>
<p><b>Decision Making</b></p> <p>A significant decision is not required.</p>
<p><b>Consistency with Existing Policy</b></p> <p>Adopting Reserve Management Plans contributes to key result area "Planning and Development" in Hutt City Council – Reserves Strategic Directions, October 2003, page 6. Track upgrades and new track development will comply with Making Tracks, 2009.</p>

**Author:** Kelly Crandle  
Reserves Planner, Parks and Gardens Division

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**Reviewed by:** Bruce Hodgins, Parks and Gardens Division

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**Approved by:** Marty Grenfell  
General Manager, Community Services Group

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