THE POINT

MANAGEMENT PLAN

MAY 1998
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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................... 1

2 FORMAT ........................................................................ 1

3 DESCRIPTION ............................................................. 3

4 USES AND VALUES ....................................................... 3

5 ISSUES .................................................................. 5

6 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES .......................................... 6
   6.1 Objectives .............................................................. 6
   6.2 Policies ................................................................ 6
   6.3 Implementation ..................................................... 11
1 INTRODUCTION

This is a management plan for The Point reserve in Ngaruawahia (Figure 1). The plan also refers to the nearby Octagon area. It has been written by Council following public consultation, including meetings with the Ngaruawahia Community Board and members of the public, the receipt of written submissions on the draft plan and a public hearing. This plan was approved by the Council’s Resource Management Policy Committee on 11 May 1998 (RMP98/29/2/1).

The plan describes how the area is to be developed. The plan does not commit the Council or the Community Board to undertaking any particular works. Instead it will enable the Council and the Community Board to determine what works should be undertaken when funding becomes available.

2 FORMAT

Sections 3 to 5 provide broad descriptive information about the reserve as follows:

Section 3 - physical, legal and historical aspects of the reserve.

Section 4 - uses and values of the reserve.

Section 5 - management issues that need to be addressed.

Section 6 addresses the issues raised in Section 5 by presenting:

Objectives (6.1) - what is to be achieved.

Policies (6.2) - how the objectives are to be achieved.

Implementation (6.3) - Council’s approach to implementing the plan, including the indicative costs for various development proposals.
Figure 1  Location of The Point Reserve and The Octagon in Ngaruawahia
3 DESCRIPTION

The Point is a significant reserve in terms of landscape values and historic values. The main landscape features of the locality are the Waikato and Waipa Rivers, which meet at The Point, and the bush-clad Hakarimata Ranges. The open space nature of the reserve enables the outstanding natural beauty to be appreciated and it provides easy access to the river for recreational purposes.

It is an important historic site, being of significance to tangata whenua and being the original site of the Ngaruawahia township. The band rotunda, gun turret, cenotaph and historic wharf remnants on the Waipa River bank are reminders of history which add significance to The Point.

The open space nature of The Point, its outstanding landscape and historic values and the ease of river access make it an excellent venue for recreation. It nevertheless remains something of a “hidden treasure” which is appreciated by local residents but which is largely unknown by the travelling public even though it is adjacent to State Highway 1.

The Point is made up of several separate land titles (Figure 2). The open space area includes legal road, former house lots, which have been gazetted as recreation reserve, and two lots, which remain in private ownership.

It is predominantly a flat, grassed area with large specimen (plane) trees. In addition to the historic features described above, amenities include a squash club building, a rowing club building (now disused), a storage building, a campervan discharge facility, skateboard ramps and a basketball half-court. The town water supply intake is located on the Waikato River bank.

4 USES AND VALUES

The open space nature of the area, river views and river access make The Point a highly valued site for informal recreation. The northern-most point where the rivers meet is a popular location, with people frequently visiting the site to enjoy the scenery. Vehicle access to this area is a notable feature of reserve use. The beach area between the squash club and the rail bridge is popular for swimming.

The Point is also an important venue for various events including dog shows, fairs, circuses, touch rugby, the annual regatta, fire brigade practices and competitions and ANZAC Day parades.

Development and promotion of the site could see an increase in the level of use.

Note: Under Council bylaws, organisers of formal events must obtain written consent from Council prior to holding their event on any reserve including The Point.
Figure 2  Legal status of The Point and The Octagon
5 ISSUES

1. Landscape values including the open space nature of the reserve, the large trees and river views are highly regarded and careful management is needed to retain these values in the long term.

2. The area is popular for informal recreation and is occasionally used as a venue for events but various existing amenities need upgrading and some new amenities are needed to fully enhance the values of the area.

3. Land status varies considerably with some land being privately owned, some land being legal road, and some land being recreation reserve, and this may hinder proper development of the area.

4. The locality has significant historical values but information has not been collated or presented.
6 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

6.1 Objectives

1 To retain the landscape qualities of the reserve.
2 To provide for a wide range of recreational activities.
3 To secure the appropriate public ownership and management of the entire open area.
4 To retain, and promote an understanding of, the historical values of the area.

6.2 Policies

P1 To maintain and enhance the landscape qualities of the reserve particularly its open space nature and river views including:

- establishing low growing and low maintenance plants along river margins to maintain landscape values and bank stability;
- retaining most of the area in grass but having a limited number of low maintenance gardens;
- monitoring the health of the specimen trees and undertaking arboricultural work as required. These trees shall be carefully managed and, if necessary, progressively replaced to ensure such trees are always a feature of the reserve.
- placing the power lines underground;
- using trees and shrubs to screen existing buildings, taking into account public safety and graffiti control issues;
- developing a sealed parking area from which the river confluence can be viewed;
- developing the area immediately adjacent to the band rotunda as a pedestrian area;
- not allowing new buildings, with the possible exception of a new toilet block and a power supply building.

Explanation

This policy sets the broad direction for development. The intention is to retain the important values of the area while enhancing certain features. The concept plan (Figure 3) shows how the reserve is to be developed. The concept plan indicates the general location
of planting and amenities; Council shall determine the exact location of such developments in conjunction with the Ngaruawahia Community Board.

Gardens, in conjunction with traffic speed control structures, are to be used to create attractive entranceways to the reserve. Consideration may be given at a later date to further enhancing the entranceways such as through erecting a gateway or archway. Gardens will not be placed around the cenotaph because open space is needed for the ANZAC Day parades.

Options for removing or reducing the size of the power supply building associated with the town’s water supply pumps shall be investigated. Removing the building would involve relocating the electrical works within the building to a more discrete site on the reserve. These matters shall be discussed with the power supply company, which occupies part of the building. Removing or reducing the size of the building would improve the landscape values of the area.

P2 To upgrade the roads in a manner which retains the park-like qualities of the area including:

- installing mountable kerbs to strengthen the road edge and to improve its appearance;
- retaining the existing carriage-way width;
- installing traffic speed control structures;
- establishing 30 km per hour speed restrictions on all roads;
- sealing the road and parking area adjacent to the band rotunda;
- some low maintenance gardens adjacent to the roads;
- installing a footpath on the Lower Waikato Esplanade under the bridges;
- to promote The Point by way of signposts.

Explanation

Much of the use of the area involves motor vehicles. The intention is to allow this to continue but ensure that vehicles do not detract from the park-like qualities of the area. The intention is to create a low speed environment within a park-like setting. Vehicles will normally be limited to sealed areas and certain grassed parking areas. Parking on the large grassed areas shall be permitted during major events. Signposts shall be used to promote The Point, in accordance with Transit New Zealand and District Plan rules.
Figure 3  Concept plan for The Point
To provide a range of amenities including:

- a toilet on the existing power box building site or in the vicinity of the large trees; the option for including the toilet and the power supply facilities within one building shall be considered;

- children’s play equipment in accordance with an overall plan for play equipment throughout Ngaruawahia;

- drinking fountains;

- tables, seats and shade trees (various locations);

- skateboard facilities;

- a basketball half-court;

- an unfenced dog free run area as defined in the Dog Control Bylaw 1997;

- a camper van discharge facility (existing);

- feature lighting around the trees and band rotunda;

- limited club facilities (the existing buildings); further possible uses for the existing rowing club building will be investigated;

- access to the rivers including a path to the Waikato River near railway bridge and steps at the confluence of the rivers;

- a fire hydrant (relocated to near the amenity buildings);

- consideration may be given to reconstructing the historic wharf on the Waipa River.

Explanation

A number of amenities may be provided to enhance the area. Seats, tables and shade trees will be located in the most popular areas in a manner which ensures they do not detract from the landscape values or unduly restrict vehicle parking during major events.

There is a need to develop playgrounds within Ngaruawahia but the best locations have yet to be determined. The needs of the entire town will be reviewed. The development of a playground at either The Octagon or The Point shall then be undertaken in accordance with an overall playground plan for the town.

Consideration was given to developing a jetty or diving board near the railway bridge to reduce the number of people jumping from the bridge. However this will not proceed because of liability and cost issues.
P4 To prohibit the use of the skateboard ramps during specified times.

Explanation
Noise from the skateboard ramps can disrupt other reserve users. For instance the noise can disrupt dog show events by distracting or frightening the animals. Council may prohibit the use of the ramps if requested to do so by the organisers of an event, which has received Council approval. Any such prohibitions shall be for a short period during a formal event and shall be advertised by erecting appropriate signs.

P5 To consider purchasing the privately owned land within the confines of the reserve.

Explanation
Two private properties currently lie within the confines of the reserve. They are in grass and the boundaries are not marked which means that the properties appear to part of the reserve. Council will consider purchasing the properties through negotiations with the landowners and through the Annual Plan process so that their inclusion in the reserve can be formalised.

P6 To formally close the roads on The Point and gazette these areas as reserve lands where this is advantageous for the area’s management: in terms of development and funding issues.

Explanation
Much of The Point is legally gazetted as road reserve rather than recreation reserve. This has implications for funding and land use activities. For instance subsidy money is currently available for road maintenance works on legal roads. Council will continue to monitor the situation and will alter the legal status of the land if this is advantageous to the community.

P7 To maintain the historic features of the reserve and to display historic information about the locality including:

- upgrading the band rotunda and cenotaph and the monument at The Octagon;
- displaying information about the gun turret, possibly through erecting a display within the turret;
- displaying historic information about the locality.
Explanation

Significant historic values are associated with The Point and the surrounding locality. These values should be recognised by maintaining and enhancing the band rotunda, cenotaph and gun turret at The Point and the monument at The Octagon, and displaying information about the area. The base of the band rotunda is to be replaced.

The history of the area will be researched and displayed as funds permit, and in consultation with the community and tangata whenua.

6.3 Implementation

Council will seek to implement this management plan through working with local community groups to develop and maintain the area. Funding from external sources will be sought for capital development works.

The policies list developments that may occur but they do not commit Council to undertake any specific works. Council will allocate funds as it considers appropriate through the Annual Plan process, which involves public submissions, and in consultation with the Ngaruawahia Community Board. Funding from external sources for specific projects may influence the order in which works are undertaken.

Table 1   Indicative costs for various capital development options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Option</th>
<th>Indicative Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>land purchase</td>
<td>to be negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>band rotunda base renewal</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road seal extension</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>road kerbing</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toilet</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gardens</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feature lighting</td>
<td>$20 - 50,000 depending on extent and type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>history research and display</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turret enhancements</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children's playground</td>
<td>$25,000 if playground plan for Ngaruawahia recommends development in this area.</td>
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</tbody>
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