

Te Aroturukitanga o te Mahere ā-Wae
ki Tāmaki Makaurau

Auckland Unitary Plan Section 35 Monitoring

B2.7 Open space and recreation facilities

Summary Report
March 2024



Overview

This report considers how effective and efficient the objectives, policies, rules and other methods of the AUP have been in meeting the outcomes intended by the Regional Policy Statement – Chapter B2.7 Open space and recreation facilities. The report covers the period since the AUP became operative in November 2016 to 2022. This monitoring work contributes to our knowledge base and will help to inform future plan changes. It is recommended that this summary report is read in conjunction with its companion technical topic report.

Auckland has a large number of open spaces that cover a wide variety of environments. Open spaces and recreation facilities may be privately or publicly owned and operated. Auckland's streets, including shared spaces and street berms, are also an important component of the open space network. The coastal marine area is also a significant public open space and recreational resource. Collectively these open spaces perform a wide range of functions including:

- providing opportunities for active and passive recreational activities, locally or Auckland-wide;
- enabling public access to the coastline, islands and beaches;
- maintaining and enhancing the amenity values and the quality of the environment around them;
- protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural heritage, landscapes and ecological values; and
- providing locations for social facilities used for sports, recreation and leisure and community activities.

With growth, new open spaces and social facilities will be required and the existing open space and social facilities will need to be expanded and upgraded to meet the needs of new residents and the increased level of use.

The policy direction in B2.7 Open space and recreation facilities is therefore to:

- ensure the needs of people and communities are met through the provision of a range of quality open space and recreation facilities
- maintain and enhance public access to and along Auckland coastline, coastal marine area, lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands
- avoid, remedy or mitigate reverse sensitivity effects between open spaces and recreational facilities and neighbouring land uses.

The indicators selected for this monitoring report respond to each of the three key RPS open space and recreation facilities objectives. There is also a close relationship between the indicators and the related policies which “flow” from the objectives.

Two of the three B2.7 objectives have indicators outlined in Chapter B11 – Indicators. Other indicators have been added as part of this monitoring report. These are discussed below.

The indicators used to monitor B2.7 range from quantitative measures, such as changes in the amount of open space, to qualitative measures of residents’ perceptions of their city/local area as a great place to live (Quality of Life Survey 2020).

The measures used include case studies involving selected plan changes. These identify both issues and trends that the AUP needs to address.

Objective B2.7.1 (1)

Recreational needs of people and communities are met through the provision of a range of quality open spaces and recreational facilities.

INDICATOR 1: Changes in the amount of open space (ha)

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses the increase (or decrease) in open space across the region in terms of area (ha). This informs the council whether there have been any changes in the quantity of open space. With a growing population and a greater area of urban development, it is anticipated there would be an increase in open space.

Findings

Between 2016 – 2022, Plan Changes 4, 13, 18, 36 and 60 resulted in the rezoning of an additional 630.3ha of land as open space. Approximately 11.6ha of land was rezoned from open space to another zone. In most case this was either to correct an error or to enable the disposal of land.

Table 1: Increases/Decreases in Open Space as a result of council or Private Initiated Open Space Plan Changes from 2018 – 2022.

Source: Auckland Council, Plans and Places Department.

Plan Change	Operative Date	Open Space/ Major Rec Facility Additions (ha)	Open Space/ Major Rec Facility - Losses (ha)
PC1 – Panuku land disposal	26 April 2018	nil	0.5727
PC2 – Aotea Square	26 April 2018	nil	0.0334
PC4 – Admin (contains an open space component)	Operative in part 26 Oct 2018		
Fully operative 14 Feb 2020	155.6637	nil	
PC5 – Whenuapai	Not operative	n/a	n/a
PC13 – Open Space	13 Sept 2019	234.0172 #1	1.2623
PC18 – Tamaki Open Space Rezoning	13 March 2020	0.8915	0.3646
PC30 – Pukekohe Park (Private)	12 Feb 2021	nil	5.80000
Clarks Beach	47.0		
PC32 – Avondale Jockey Club (Private)	9 Oct 2020	nil	0.1870
PC36 – Open Space (2019)	11 June 2021	101.0045	2.1938
PC57 – Royal Auckland and Grange Golf Club (Private)	10 Dec 2021	82.9473 #3	nil
PC60 – Open Space (2020) and Other Rezoning Matters #2	(yet to be made operative)		
Decision notified 9 Sept 2022	55.7987 #4	1.2857	
Totals		630.3229 #5	11.6995

#1 – includes 194.1572ha of new regional park

#2 – part of PC60 is required to be part of a variation notified on 18 Aug 2022
(as required under the Enabling Housing Supply Act 2021)

#3 – privately owned land

#4 – includes 40.8 ha rezoning of Whangaparora Golf Course to open space

#5 – excludes PC77 – the rezoning of the Pakuranga Golf Club (38.8999ha)

What do the indicator findings say?

- The amount of land zoned as open space in the AUP has increased by 630.3 ha during the period 2017 – 2022.
- There has been a loss of land zoned open space of 11.6 ha over the same period
- Therefore there has been a net gain in land zoned open space of 618.7ha.
- There is increasing local board and community opposition to the rezoning and disposal of open space.
- The suite of IPI plan changes (in particular PC78) as a result of the directives of the NPS:UD will result in wide scale and significant changes to the zonings across Auckland's urban zoned land and a significant increase in plan-enabled housing capacity in particular.
- The key documents to determine whether disposals are appropriate (Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy 2013 and Open Space Provision Policy 2016) are outdated and need to be urgently reviewed to take into account recently prepared strategies and plans such as the Urban Nghere (Forest Strategy), the Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan, the NPS:UD and the resulting IPI Plan Change which will enable significant intensification of development across the urban parts of the region.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

- Generally the objectives and policies relating to the provision of open space have been met, with additional open space being acquired across the region.
- However, in some areas undergoing significant intensification there is already a shortage of open space.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- The guiding open space policy documents for open space acquisition and disposal have become outdated (and are currently being reviewed).
- Securing additional open space in areas of intensification is costly.

INDICATOR 2: Gaps in the provision of open space (including spatial distribution, and “range” or type)

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses whether there have been any changes in the spatial distribution and types of open space provided.

Findings

Seven “open space” plan changes have been notified since the Auckland Unitary Plan became operative in part in 2016. These are Plan Changes 1, 2, 4, 13, 18, 36 and 60.

Gains of land zoned open space are typically associated with recently vested or acquired land, correcting errors (where an open space zoning is applied), and rezoning land parcels to facilitate redevelopment (where new parks are created).

While there have been “gains” across the region, there are clusters of new open spaces in those parts of Auckland where greenfield subdivision has occurred. This includes Pukekohe and Flat Bush in the south, Hobsonville, Henderson, Massey/Red Hills, Swanson, Glen Eden and New Lynn in the west and Millwater, Milldale, Silverdale and Long Bay in the north.

The spatial distribution of land zoned as open space between November 2016 and 2022 is shown in Figure 1.

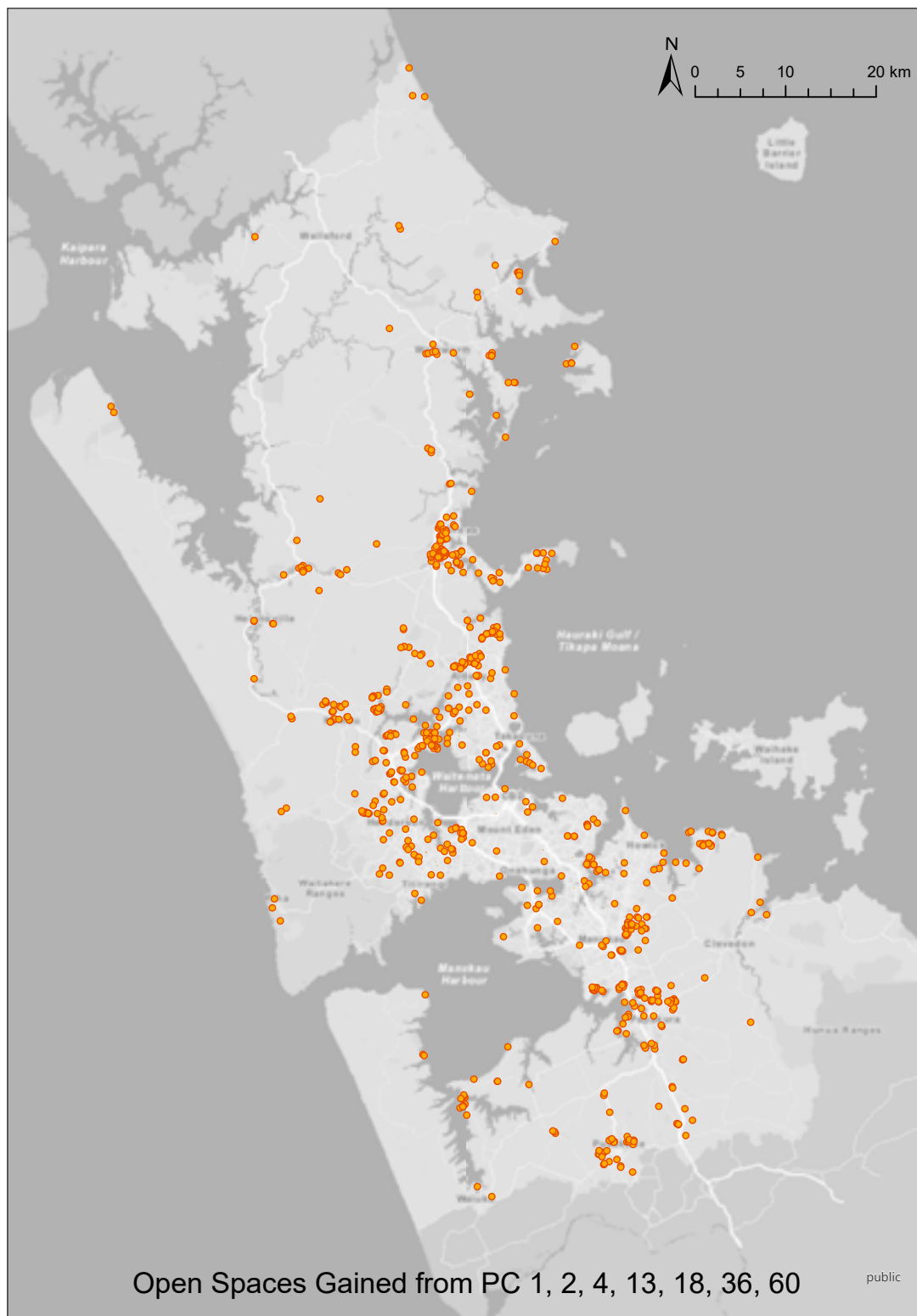


Figure 1: Open Spaces gained from Plan Changes 1, 2, 4, 13, 18, 36 and 60.

Losses of land zoned open space are typically associated with correcting open zone errors, rezoning land that has been approved for disposal by Auckland Council and rezoning land to facilitate redevelopment by either Eke Panuku or Kāinga Ora.

Losses have occurred across the region with a dominance in the south, east and west.

The spatial distribution of land rezoned from open space to another non-open space zone since November 2016 is shown in Figure 2.

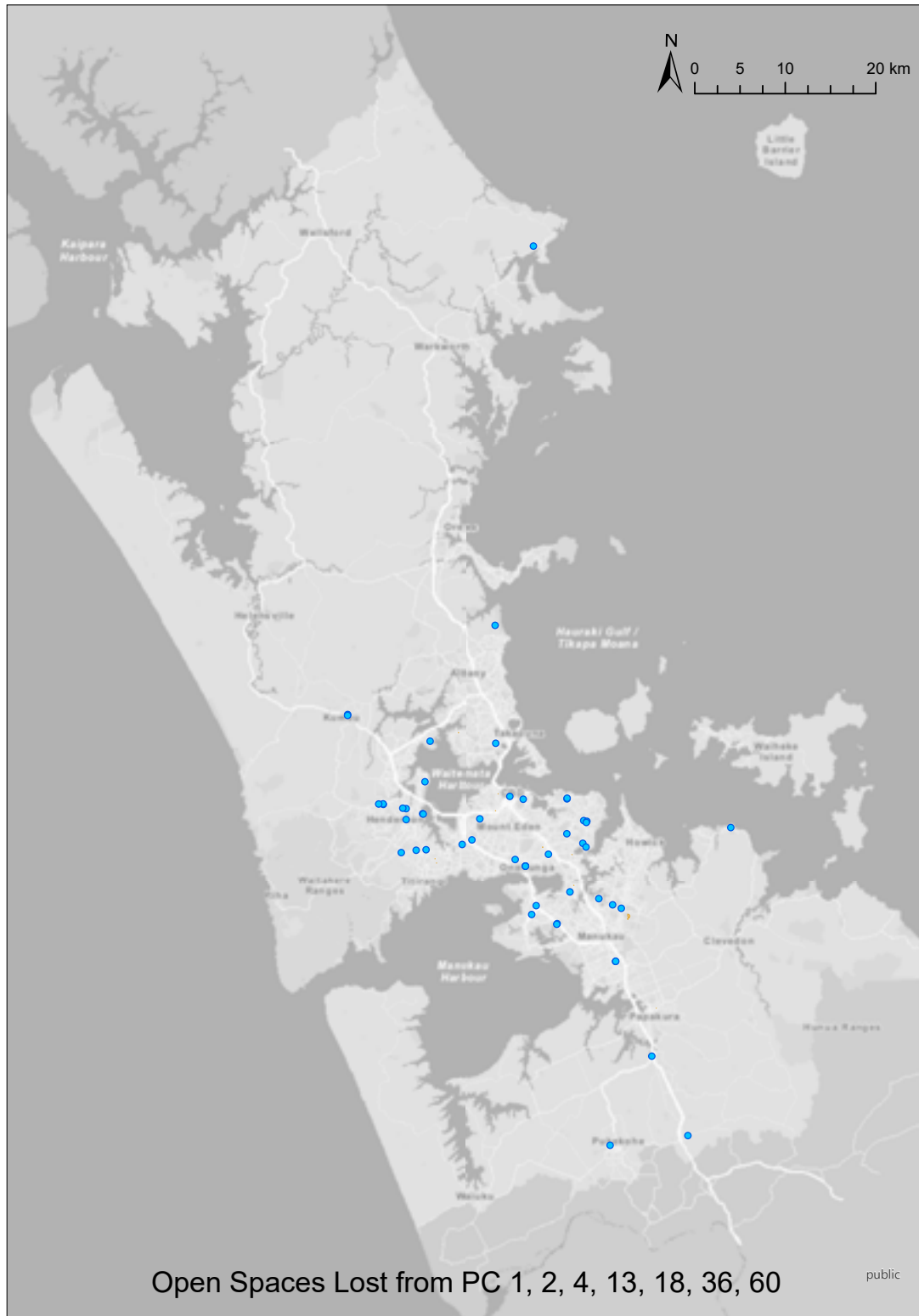


Figure 2: Open Spaces lost from Plan Changes 1, 2, 4, 13, 18, 36 and 60.

What do the indicator findings say?

- It is the role of Open Space Network Plans, along with the Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy (2013) and Open Space Provision Policy 2016 to identify any gaps in the network and to ensure a high quality network is achieved.
- Gains of land zoned open space are typically associated with recently vested or acquired land in greenfield areas in particular, correcting errors (where an open space zoning is applied), and rezoning land parcels to facilitate redevelopment (where new parks are created).
- Losses of land zoned open space are typically associated with correcting open space zone errors, rezoning land that has been approved for disposal by Auckland Council and rezoning land to facilitate redevelopment by either Eke Panuku or Kāinga Ora.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

- Recreational needs in new greenfield areas are being met through the provision of additional open space and recreation facilities.
- The disposal of small pocket parks in established urban areas has been identified as a significant issue, particularly to local communities who value such spaces. Currently, Auckland Council generally does not purchase or acquire new pocket parks.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

Maintaining and increasing open space and recreation facilities in established urban areas that are undergoing significant intensification is costly given land values in brownfield areas.

INDICATOR 3: Planning constraints to the establishment of new recreation facilities

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses planning impediments or constraints to the establishment of new recreation facilities in the AUP. These include activities that are not provided for in activity tables or supported in the AUP's objectives and policies. The need for a resource consent per se is not considered a "planning impediment".

Findings

It is not the role of the AUP to determine the type or even the location of new recreation facilities. There are a number of plans and strategies that do that including the Community Facilities Network Plan (2015). The role of the AUP is to give effect to the RMA and to implement the Auckland Plan. In terms of both existing and new recreation facilities, the AUP can facilitate the provision of recreation facilities by ensuring appropriate zones (open space, Major Recreation Facility or other) are in place. For example, the Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation zone and Open Space – Community zone are much more enabling of development and provide for different types of recreation than the Open Space – Conservation zone does.

The Community Facilities Network Plan recognises that community facilities are an important part of realising the vision for Auckland to become the world's most liveable city. They contribute to building strong, healthy and vibrant communities by providing spaces where Aucklanders can connect, socialise, learn and participate in a wide range of social, cultural, art and recreational activities. These activities foster improved lifestyles and a sense of belonging and pride among residents. The Community Facilities Network Plan (the network plan) provides a road map for how Auckland Council will invest in community facilities over the next 20 years. The plan addresses the provision of:

- arts and culture facilities
- community centres
- libraries
- pools and leisure facilities
- venues for hire (community or rural halls).

The Auckland Council “Issues register” contains perceived AUP issues that are identified by policy planners, resource consent planners, other specialists, as well as the public. The majority of issues raised in the register for the open space and recreation topic relate to zoning and mapping with 10 of the 18 issues recorded. This was followed by noise and vibration with six of the 18 issues (Figure 3).



Parnell Baths. Source: Auckland Council.

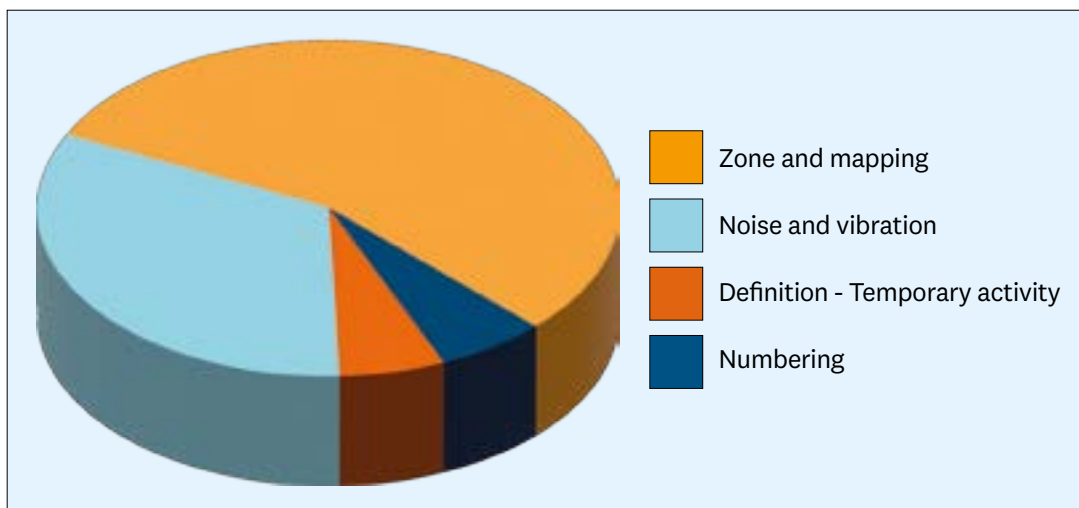


Figure 3: AUP Issues Register – Open Space and Recreation Issues.

Source: Auckland Council, Plans and Places Department.

Case study: Project Waiwharariki Anzac Square (Takapuna town square)

Waiwharariki Anzac Square (Takapuna town square) is part of the urban regeneration of Takapuna, led by Eke Panuku on behalf of Auckland Council. The goal is to revitalise the town centre, improve public spaces, create better connections to the beach and support more options for urban living and public transport, to bring about a great future for Takapuna. Future development surrounding the town square will include a mix of shops, businesses, and homes.

Artist Impression of the Redeveloped Waiwharariki Anzac Square (Takapuna town square)



Project Waiwharariki Anzac Square (Takapuna).

Source: Eke Panuku.

The Takapuna city centre is zoned Metropolitan Centre under the AUP. Under the AUP's activity table for Metropolitan Centres (and all other centres) neither informal recreation nor public open spaces are provided for. Some public spaces in metropolitan centres are zoned as Open Space – Civic Space, while others have a Business zoning. Open spaces are an important component of metropolitan and other centres.

In terms of the development – unlike the City Centre zone where public amenities (includes landscaping and planting, seating, etc) are a permitted activity, there is no equivalent in the metropolitan centre zone and other centre zones.

Relying on the generic term “buildings” would mean new buildings are a restricted discretionary activity. However seating and other works etc. may not fall within the definition of a building.

In terms of the actual use of the square, an activity such as “informal recreation” is also missing from all the business zones. Activities not provided for are a non-complying activity.

Therefore, there are “missing” components related to the provision and use of public squares in the business zones (where they do not have an open space zoning) – in particular public amenities should be a permitted activity throughout as should informal recreation or a similar activity.

What do the indicator findings say?

- The majority of issues raised in the AUP Issues Register for the open space and recreation topic relate to zoning and mapping with 10 of the 18 issues recorded.
- Inappropriate open space zonings are a barrier to new recreational facilities (on both public and private land).
- Under the AUP currently, all centre zones do not provide for informal recreation (as an activity) nor the recreational facilities associated with open space (as a development). Consequently, the status of any new town or public square (where it is not on open space zoned land) is not clear and is therefore likely a non-complying activity (as an activity not provided for).

Have the objectives and policies been met?

Inappropriate zonings and inefficient processes are adding to the cost and time required to gain consents for new recreation facilities. This situation could be addressed when the new National Planning Standards – Open Space zones are incorporated into the AUP.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

There are unnecessary costs associated with establishing new town or public squares in town centres and associated recreation facilities (in terms of consenting costs and time delays).

INDICATOR 4: Changes in the quality of open space and recreation facilities (increases/decreases)

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses changes in the quality of open space – either increases or decreases.

Findings

Reasons for positive change

For the Auckland region, the reasons given for positive change in the 2020 Quality of Life Survey included the following matters relating to open space and recreation facilities:

- Good maintenance of public amenities (parks and public spaces) – 11 per cent
- Area looks clean, tidy, well kept (incl. beautification programmes) – 10 per cent
- Good recreation facilities/lots of things to do – six per cent
- Pedestrian and cycling initiatives – six per cent
- Feels safe – six per cent.

Figure 4 below shows a comparison between Auckland and other New Zealand cities.

Themes mentioned by those who say their area is better as a place to live	Why better as a place to live (%)	
	8 City Total (n=1300) %	Auckland (n=475) %
Good/improved/new amenities such as shops, malls, movie theatres, libraries, doctors, hospital, etc.	26	26
Building developments/renovations – commercial and residential	21	19
Good sense of community/community spirit	13	15
Good roads/roads being upgraded	11	12
Good maintenance of public amenities (incl. parks and public spaces)	9	11
Area looks clean, tidy, wellkept (incl. beautification programmes)	9	10
Good recreational facilities/lots of things to do	9	6
CBD coming back to life	8	2 [^]
New projects/developments	8	8
Pesestrian and cycling initiatives	7	6
Less traffic/traffic issues being addressed	6	5
Good public transport	6	8
Investment in infrastructure	6	6
Growth – economy, business	6	3
Everything is close by – shops, services, outdoor areas	6	9
Nicer people around	6	8
Positive impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns	6	6
Satisfaction with government/local government	5	3
Feel safe	5	6

Figure 4: Quality of Life Survey findings. Reasons for Positive Change Base: Those who say their city/local area has got better as a place to live (excluding not answered).

[^] Significantly higher than 8 city total [^] Significantly lower than 8 city total

Source: Quality of Life Survey Q10. And for what reasons do you say has changed as a place to live?

Reasons for negative change

For the Auckland region, the reasons for negative change in the 2020 Quality of Life Survey included the following matters relating to open space and recreation facilities:

- Lack of amenities such as shops, malls, movie theatres, libraries, doctors, hospitals, sports facilities, event venues – nine per cent
- Area looks rundown, dirty, untidy, rubbish littering the streets – 12 per cent
- Issues with roading developments (incl. cycleways/bike lanes/narrowing/bus bays) – six per cent
- Lack of maintenance by the council (incl. parks and public spaces) – eight per cent
- Do not feel safe – five per cent.

Figure 5 below shows a comparison between Auckland and other New Zealand cities.

Themes mentioned by those who say their area is better as a worse to live	Why worse as a place to live (%)	
	8 City Total (n=1300) %	Auckland (n=475) %
More traffic/traffic congestion	27	28
Homelessness/lack of suitable, affordable housing	15	10 ^v
Dissatisfaction with government/local government	15	8 ^v
More housing developments/high density housing/multi-storey housing	14	22
Lack of amenities such as shops, malls, movie theatres, libraries, doctors, hospital, sports facilities, event venues	13	9
Crime/crime rate has increased	12	17
Parking issues	10	10
Poor roading/roading maintenance	10	9
Infrastructure failing to keep up with demand	10	9
Area looks rundown, dirty, untidy, rubbish littering the streets	10	12
High cost of living	9	5
More undesirable elements (incl. gangs/youths loitering)	8	10
Issues with roading developments (incl. cycleways/bikelanes/narrowing/bus bays)	8	6
Increase in population	8	9
Lack of maintenance by the council (incl. parks and public spaces)	7	8
Negative impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns	7	6
Lacklustre CBD/central shopping area	6	2
Do not feel safe	5	5
Noisy	5	9
Poor public transport	5	4
Continual roadworks	5	5

Figure 5: Quality of Life Survey findings: those who say their city/local area has got worse as a place to live (excluding not answered).

[^] Significantly higher than 8 city total ^v Significantly lower than 8 city total

Source: Quality of Life Survey Q10. And for what reasons do you say has changed as a place to live?

What do the indicator findings say?

- There is no specific measure of the quality of open space and recreation facilities. The majority (81 per cent) of Auckland residents perceive Auckland as a great place to live.
- In 2020, 20 per cent felt that the city had improved over the last year while 23 per cent felt there had been a decline over the previous 12 months.
- Reasons for positive change included good maintenance of public amenities (parks and public spaces), good recreation facilities/lots of things to do.
- Reasons for negative change included lack of amenities including sports facilities, lack of maintenance by council (including parks and public spaces).

Have the objectives and policies been met?

Indirect measures of the quality of open space and recreation facilities indicate there has been a slight decrease in 2020 in Auckland residents' perception of the city/their local area being a great place to live.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

Indirect measures of the quality of open space and recreation facilities indicate that the outcomes sought are not being achieved in the view of 23 per cent of residents surveyed.

Objective B2.7.1 (2)

Public access to and along Auckland's coastline, coastal marine area, lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands is maintained and enhanced.

INDICATOR 1: Increase in amount of esplanade reserves/strips

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator is a measure of the amount of esplanade reserve in hectares that has been added to the region's open space inventory during the monitoring period.

Note: Esplanade reserves are strips of land adjoining a water margin, for example the coast, streams and rivers three metres or more in width. They are usually created when land is subdivided and are generally 20 metres wide (Walking Access Commission). Approval can be sought to provide an esplanade reserve of less than 20m in width. An analysis of the resource consent tracking system has not been undertaken but this would provide information on the extent to which reductions from the 20m widths are occurring. This would be a useful piece of additional monitoring work prior to the next AUP review.

Findings

The Open Space related plan changes 1, 2, 4, 13, 18, 36 and 60 have provided the data on additions (in hectares) to esplanade reserves. Between 2016 and 2022, approximately 127.8 ha of esplanade reserve was rezoned to an open space zone. The vast majority of these esplanade reserves were vested in Auckland Council upon the subdivision of the adjacent land. Information on esplanade strips is more difficult to find and has not been reported on.

Esplanade Reserve Additions 2016 – 2022

Plan Change	Operative Date	Esplanade Reserve Additions (ha)#1
PC1 – Panuku land disposal	26 April 2018	nil
PC2 – Aotea Square	26 April 2018	nil
PC4 – Admin (contains an open space component)	Operative in part 26 Oct 2018	
Fully operative 14 Feb 2020	62.0428	
PC5 – Whenuapai	Not operative	n/a
PC13 – Open Space	13 Sept 2019	17.6172
PC18 – Tamaki Open Space Rezoning	13 March 2020	nil
PC30 – Pukekohe Park (Private)	12 Feb 2021	nil
PC32 – Avondale Jockey Club (Private)	9 Oct 2020	nil
PC36 – Open Space (2019)	11 June 2021	39.0396
PC57 – Royal Auckland and Grange Golf Club (Private)	10 Dec 2021	nil (private land)
PC60 – Open Space (2020) and Other Rezoning Matters #2	Operative in part 14 April 2023	9.1465
Totals		127.8461 hectares

#1 – esplanade reserves include those adjacent to the coast and streams/rivers

#2 – operative in part due to a need under NPS:UD for a variation

Source: Auckland Council, Plans and Places.

What do the indicator findings say?

The area of esplanade reserves zoned open space increased by 127.8 ha between 2017 and 2022.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

Although new esplanade reserves have been vested, access to and along the coast along existing esplanade reserves in some areas has been lost, albeit generally on a temporary basis.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- Esplanade reserves are typically “acquired” as part of the subdivision process.
- Over time, the costs involved may mean that maintaining existing access to and along the coast in some areas is no longer economically viable, particularly as a result of natural hazards and kauri dieback.

INDICATOR 2: Planning constraints to the establishment of new recreational facilities providing access to the coast (e.g. boat ramps, jetties, wharves, etc.)

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses any gaps in the AUP that are constraints to the establishment of new recreational facilities that provide access to the coastal marine area.

Findings

Case study: Okahu Marine Precinct (Orakei Marina)

Orakei Marina comprises 172 marina berths and associated facilities for berth holders, including car parking (Figure 6). The Marina was developed in 2004/2005 after it obtained various land use, coastal and discharge permits authorising its construction and operation. The marina comprises two rock breakwaters and five floating piers from which the berths are accessible. Under the AUP the marina is zoned 'Marina' and the hardstand area is zoned Open Space – Sport and Active Recreation Zone. In addition to the two zones, the Okahu Marine Precinct applies to both the landward and marine components.



Figure 6: Orakei Marina. Source: Auckland Council.

The Okahu Marine Precinct provides a good example of how to manage recreational facilities that have both a marine and land-based component in an integrated manner.

This case study demonstrates the need for zone description, objectives and policies to be reflected in the associated standards, in this case in the activity table. The next AUP review should consider integration across all zones with the AUP as a starting point. During the preparation of the AUP, this was challenging as multiple zones and precincts were being worked on at the same time.

What do the indicator findings say?

- Zone description, objectives and policies need to be reflected in the associated standards.
- The Okahu Marine Precinct provides a good example of how to manage in an integrated manner, recreational facilities, including access to the coast, that have both a marine and land-based component.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

Management of recreational facilities, such as the Okahu Marine Precinct (Orakei marina), that have both a marine and a land-based component has been undertaken in an integrated manner in the AUP. This approach will need to be continued when the AUP is next reviewed using the National Planning Standards.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- The next AUP review will should consider integration across all zones and precincts.
- During the preparation of the 2016 AUP (Operative in Part), this was challenging as multiple zones and precincts were being worked on at the same time. Adequate integration has been achieved at a reasonable cost but this can be improved in the future.

INDICATOR 3: Location of restricted access and reasons why public access was restricted

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses examples of locations where public access to esplanade reserves has been restricted and the reasons why.

Findings

Case study: Waitakere Ranges – Kauri Dieback

Kauri trees are under threat from kauri dieback disease (*Phytophthora agathidicida*) throughout New Zealand and including the Auckland Region (Figure 7). The fungus-like organism is spread by just a small amount of mud or soil, and infects the tree through its roots. People are major carriers of the disease, as are larger animals like dogs, pigs and goats.



Figure 7: Kauri tree showing signs of Kauri die-back. Source: Auckland Council.

To protect healthy and at-risk kauri, Auckland Council and DOC have closed a number of forested areas and tracks around the region.

Case study 2: Lotus Walk (between Browns Bay and Torbay) & Crows Nest Rise Walk (between Murrays Bay and Mairangi Bay) – Natural hazards

In May 2017, severe weather battered the Auckland region and damaged dozens of local walkways and coastal paths, including Lotus Walk (at the northern most point of Browns Bay beach) and Crow's Nest Rise Walk (on the clifftop between Murrays Bay and Mairangi Bay) (Figure 8).

The Lotus Walk suffered a major slip which resulted in the walkway being closed for almost 2 years. Works to reinstate the walkway included cliff stabilisation using mesh, soil nails and a capping beam built into the new pathway. The project also renewed the old, non-compliant balustrade with a new compliant balustrade. The walkway subsequently reopened in 2019 and provides the community with links between Browns Bay and Torbay and views out over Browns Bay beach.



Figure 8: Crow's Nest Walk, Murrays Bay. Source: East Coast Bays Local Board.

The implications of this case study for the AUP are that natural hazards (e.g. land slips) have resulted in the temporary “loss” of access to and along the coast. At present the relevant AUP policies only refer to health, safety or security reasons or to protect significant natural or physical resources as reasons why access to and along the coast and the margins of rivers and stream may be restricted (albeit temporarily on some occasions). When the AUP is next reviewed, the relevant open space and coastal policies need to be amended to refer to natural hazards (e.g. slips) as another reason for restrictions on access to and along the coast.

What do the indicator findings say?

- Both kauri dieback and natural hazards (e.g. land slips) have resulted in the temporary “loss” of access to and along the coast.
- Future climate change trends indicate that loss of access is only going to increase/get worse. Both the east and west coasts of Auckland are highly susceptible to natural hazards, as shown with recent weather events in 2023.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

Although new esplanade reserves have been achieved, access to and along the coast along existing esplanade reserves has been lost as a result of natural hazards, albeit on a temporary basis.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- Climate change will be a major challenge in maintaining and improving access to and along the coast, the margins of rivers and stream.
- Over time, the costs involved may mean that existing access to and along the coast in particular areas is no longer economically viable.

Objective B2.7.1 (3)

Reverse sensitivity effects between open spaces and recreational facilities and neighbouring land uses are avoided, remedied or mitigated.

INDICATOR 1: The effects of new development/recreation facilities on the amenity values of open space

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses the effects of new development and recreation facilities on the values associated with open space.

Findings

The AUP's open space zones contain both standards and assessment criteria. The standards, which vary according to open space zone, include:

- Activity table (which specifies the status of an activity by zone and whether it is permitted or a consent is required)
- Building height
- Height in relation to boundary
- Yards
- Screening
- Gross floor area threshold
- Maximum site coverage
- Maximum impervious area
- Non-security floodlighting
- Mai mai (shelter used for duck-hunting).

The assessment criteria include an assessment of both the effects on the open space resource and the surrounding neighbourhood.



Source: Auckland Design Manual.

The Auckland Design Manual (ADM) contains guidelines on creating quality open spaces and recreation facilities. In some cases, the ADM goes beyond what the AUP can address, which currently under the RMA, is limited to the effects of activities/development on the environment. The ADM was developed after the AUP was prepared and provides the basis for revised assessment criteria in the next review of the AUP.

The next review of the AUP therefore needs to take into account the ADM design guidance and factor that into the open space zones assessment criteria (where appropriate). This will enable closer alignment between the AUP and the ADM and enable a fuller assessment of the effects of new development and recreation facilities on the values associated with open space. There will also be a new legislative framework with the review of the RMA and the national planning standards to consider.

What do the indicator findings say?

The ADM was prepared after the AUP became operative in part in 2016. There is useful design guidance in the ADM for open spaces and recreation facilities which could be incorporated into the AUP's assessment criteria in the next review, where appropriate.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

- The AUP does have methods (typically standards) in place to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects between the use of open spaces and recreational facilities and neighbouring land uses.
- These have endeavoured to strike a reasonable balance between the use and enjoyment of open spaces and recreational facilities and avoidance of adverse effects on open space and neighbouring land uses, particularly residential.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

The AUP standards do not necessarily result in good or poor design which is a qualitative matter. They do attempt to manage adverse effects. The ADM contains guidelines on creating quality open spaces and recreation facilities. Where appropriate these design guidelines could be factored into the AUP's assessment criteria to provide a more rigorous assessment of design quality and assist in achieving better design outcomes at a reasonable cost.

INDICATOR 2: Number of complaints involving open space and recreation facilities

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses noise complaints associated with open space and recreation activities.

Findings

Auckland Council receives around 60,000 noise complaints per year. While these complaints are recorded and followed up, there is no overall monitoring of all complaints to determine the major categories of complaint and the numbers and percentages that fall into these categories. Trends over time are therefore not apparent.

The vast majority of noise complaints involve residential-related excessive noise.

In terms of open space and recreation facilities and reverse sensitivity issues, a few parks are the subject of complaint from time to time. The majority of these involve after-hours vehicle access where stereo-equipped cars congregate playing loud music.

In the absence of a detailed breakdown of the 60,000 noise complaints, this monitoring report relies on the resident surveys undertaken for the Quality of Life Survey for the eight largest cities in New Zealand.

Noise is one of the biggest issues in the Quality of Life Survey 2020 of the eight largest New Zealand cities with 44 per cent of residents rating it a problem.

Residents in Auckland perceive noise as a bigger issue than residents in New Zealand's other largest cities with 48 per cent viewing it as a problem, compared to an average of 44 per cent across the eight cities. Christchurch (38 per cent) and Dunedin (34 per cent) were below the national average and significantly less than Auckland.

Rating of issues as problem in city/local area (summary) – 8 city total (%)

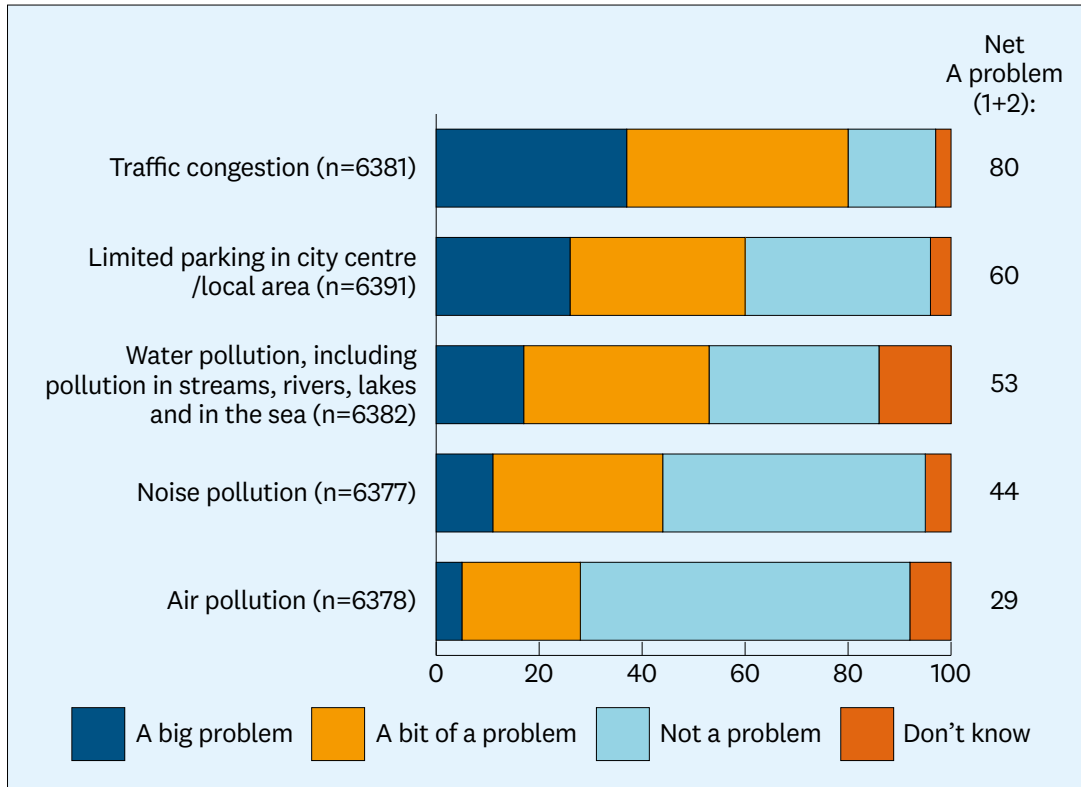


Figure 9: Quality of Life Survey findings. Base: All Respondents (excluding not answered).

Source: Q11. To what extent has each of the following been a problem in over the past 12 months?
 (1 – A big problem, 2 – A bit of a problem, 3 – Not a problem, 4 – Don't know)

What do the indicator findings say?

- Currently there is no overall annual monitoring of noise complaints to determine the major categories of complaint and the numbers and percentages that fall into these categories and the trends from year to year.
- Noise is one of the biggest issues in the Quality of Life Survey 2020 of the eight largest New Zealand cities.
- Residents in Auckland perceive noise as a bigger issue than residents in New Zealand's other largest cities.
- Noise as an issue is likely to worsen over time with greater intensification resulting in greater numbers of people living closer together and utilising open spaces and recreation facilities.
- Noise from recreation activities is one of the sources of noise complaints.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

- The AUP does have methods (typically standards) in place to avoid, remedy or mitigate adverse effects between the use of open spaces and recreational facilities and neighbouring land uses. This includes noise standards.
- Enforcement of noise standards is an issue.
- From the available data, the number of specific complaints and any trends involving open space and recreation facilities are unable to be determined.

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- Greater intensification is likely to result in an increase in reverse sensitivity effects, in particular noise.
- Costs include constraints on the use of open space and recreation facilities.
- There is a fine balance between enabling activities to occur and people using and enjoying open space and recreation facilities and ensuring adverse effects on neighbouring land uses are avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

INDICATOR 3: Reverse sensitivity issues between open space and recreation facilities and adjacent land uses

What can the indicator tell us?

This indicator assesses reverse sensitivity issues between open space and associated recreation facilities and adjacent land uses, which are typically residential.

Note: Reverse sensitivity is the vulnerability of an established land use (such as a sports stadium) to complaint from a newly establishing, more sensitive land use (for example, new houses and other noise-sensitive activities).

Findings

Case study: Eden Park – Amenity values of neighbouring land uses

Eden Park has been identified as one of the city’s “Major Recreation Facilities” in the AUP. During the preparation of the AUP between 2013 – 2016, there was considerable debate on what standards should apply to the park, given its status as one of the nation’s premier stadiums.

Eden Park has a long planning history, including a long history of reverse sensitivity effects from some of the nearby residents and currently a number of resource consents apply to this facility. Through mediation, the hearing and subsequent post-hearing expert conferencing, the council, the Eden Park Neighbours Association, and Auckland Cricket were supportive of precinct provisions which essentially retained the status quo allowed through the suite of existing resource consents. The Eden Park Trust Board sought to enable further activities beyond these limits, and in particular sought an increased frequency of night-time events and concerts.



Subsequent to the IHP process, the Eden Park Trust Board applied for consent to hold concerts at Eden Park. In January 2021, resource consent was granted to hold concerts at the park after a panel of independent commissioners granted consent for up to six concerts a year. The concerts can take place on weekdays, Saturdays, Sundays preceding a public holiday and public holidays, subject to restrictions on frequency, duration, and timing.

The decision to grant approval now means Eden Park (and/or individual promoters and event organisers) does not have to apply for a separate resource consent for individual concerts, which had proved to be cost-prohibiting and time-consuming. It allows shows to be booked, scheduled, and confirmed years in advance and provides certainty for event organisers.

Case study: Ellerslie Racecourse

During the Auckland Unitary Plan process in 2013 - 16, land surplus to requirements at Ellerslie Racecourse was zoned Terrace Housing and Apartment Building (adjacent to Mitchelson Street) and Mixed Housing Suburban (adjacent to Peach Parade) zones.

Ellerslie Racecourse was the first of several “Major Recreation facilities” to seek rezoning of surplus land to an alternative residential or business zoning. This trend has continued since the AUP became operative in part in 2016 (as evidenced by Pukekohe Park where a portion was rezoned via a private plan change). The Auckland Racing Club (Ellerslie racecourse) illustrates the need for flexibility in the zoning of the region’s major recreation facilities. The plan change process provides that flexibility along with an appropriate mechanism to assess the effects of any rezoning on both the facility itself and on the surrounding neighbourhood.

In any rezoning proposal, particular consideration needs to be given to: Objective (2) “Adverse effects generated by the operation, development, redevelopment and intensification of major recreation facilities are avoided, remedied or mitigated as far as is practical”.

There is the possibility that in rezoning land and enabling noise sensitive activities, such as residential activities, to be closer to the activities associated with the major recreation facility, the potential for reverse sensitivity effects will increase over time.

This case study further illustrates the changing nature of the region’s major recreation facilities and the need for a planning framework (objectives, policies and standards) that recognises that changes will occur over time. These changes will need to be the subject of a plan change, however.

What do the indicator findings say?

- Eden Park has a long planning history, including a long history of reverse sensitivity complaints from some of the nearby residents. The 2021 decision to grant resource consent to hold up to six concerts at the park a year demonstrates that it is possible to avoid or mitigate adverse effects through detailed conditions of consent that included restrictions on noise and lighting, a requirement for traffic plans, and the expansion of a Community Liaison Group to ensure ongoing discussion and monitoring.
- The disposal of portions of land zoned Major Recreation Facility Zone has occurred over the past five years. This has enabled the respective land owners to rationalise their land holdings, freeing up capital to support the long term viability of such facilities. A plan change is the appropriate mechanism for this to occur.
- Both the Counties Racing Club and Ellerslie racecourse examples illustrate the need for flexibility for the zoning of the region's major recreation facilities.
- There is, however, the possibility that in rezoning land and enabling noise sensitive activities such as residential activities to be closer to the activities associated with the major recreation facility, the potential for reverse sensitivity effects will increase over time.

Have the objectives and policies been met?

- The plan change process is the appropriate mechanism for any rezoning of the region's Major Recreation Facilities. This enables an assessment of the effects of any rezoning and ensures the achievement of objective (2) "Adverse effects generated by the operation, development, redevelopment and intensification of major recreation facilities are avoided, remedied or mitigated as far as is practical".

Have the outcomes been achieved at a reasonable cost?

- Greater intensification is likely to result in an increase in reverse sensitivity effects, in particular noise.
- Costs include constraints on the use of open space and recreation facilities.
- There is a fine balance between enabling activities to occur and people using and enjoying open space and recreation facilities and ensuring reverse sensitivity effects on neighbouring land uses are avoided, remedied or mitigated.
- The plan change process is a cost effective means of rationalising Major Recreation Facilities land holdings.

Summary of main findings

Where is the plan performing well?

- Auckland has added an additional 630.3ha of open space zoned land since the AUP became operative in part in late 2016 (the open space plan changes occurred between 2018 – mid 2022). The majority of this has been in greenfield areas on the edge of the city. There has been a loss of 11.7ha of open space zoned land as a result of Auckland Council’s land rationalisation and disposal process over the same period. The key documents guiding the disposal process (Parks and Open Space Acquisition Policy 2013 and Open Space Provision Policy 2016) are out of date and urgently require updating to take into account recent strategies and plans – Urban Ngahere (Forest) Strategy 2019, Auckland Climate Plan 2020 and the substantial increases in intensification across the region enabled through the IPI Plan Change.
- It is not the role of the AUP to determine the type or even the location of new recreation facilities. There are a number of plans and strategies that do that. The role of the AUP is to give effect to the RMA and to implement the Auckland Plan. In terms of both existing and new recreation facilities, the AUP can facilitate the provision of recreation facilities by ensuring appropriate zones (Open Space, Major Recreation Facility or other) are in place.
- The majority of issues raised in the AUP Issues Register for the open space and recreation topic relate to zoning and mapping, accounting for 10 of the 18 issues recorded.
- The area of esplanade reserve has increased by 127.8ha over the period 2018 – mid-2022.
- When the AUP is next reviewed and the National Planning Standards are implemented, precincts that manage recreational facilities that have both a marine and land-based component in an integrated manner need to be retained (albeit in a modified form to meet the requirements of the National Planning Standards).
- The plan change process is the appropriate mechanism for any rezoning of the region’s Major Recreation Facilities. This enables an assessment of the effects of any rezoning including the potential for reserve sensitivity effects.

Where is the plan underperforming?

- Both kauri dieback and coastal erosion have resulted in the temporary loss of access to and along the coast. Climate change is predicted to increase rainfall intensity and reduce soil moisture, both of which may lead to greater land instability. Therefore, the number of instances when public access is restricted temporarily or permanently lost are likely to increase.
- Indirect measures of the quality of open space and recreation facilities indicate that Auckland residents perceive there has been a slight decline over the preceding 12 months (from 2019 to 2020).
- The Auckland Design Manual (ADM) was prepared after the AUP became operative in part in 2016. There is useful design guidance in the ADM for open spaces and recreation facilities which could be incorporated into the AUP's assessment criteria in the next review, where appropriate. This will assist in achieving better design outcomes for open space and recreation facilities.
- Noise is the most significant reverse sensitivity issue associated with open space and recreation facilities and adjacent land uses. Currently there is no analysis undertaken of the almost 60,000 noise complaints received annually to determine trends. The Quality of Life Survey 2020 indicates that residents perceive noise as an issue, particularly in Auckland. Increasing intensification is going to result in greater numbers of people living closer together and increased use of open space and recreation facilities. The potential for reverse sensitivity effects is therefore going to increase.



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