

# PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021





## INTRODUCTION

The Queenstown Lakes District is fortunate to have access to large areas of open space, lakes and mountains. These lakes and mountains are at the heart of mana whenua creation traditions and at the intersection of ancient trails that have connected the lives and practices of tūpuna through the generations. There are a variety of open space and reserve areas that play a vital role in making this area a great place to work and play. This lifestyle is part of the cultural identity for many of the people that choose to live here or to visit. River corridors, lakes and their foreshores, cycleways and local parks provide residents with many opportunities to see and enjoy a range of open space, as well as opportunities for Kāi Tahu cultural connection. The public can also access a wealth of Department of Conservation land and World Heritage National Parks on our doorstep.

Perhaps because of this great asset, more and more people are moving to the area and international and domestic visitor numbers are steadily increasing. Growth continues to generate high levels of subdivision and development which places increasing pressure on the use of the land, while more people want access to open space areas. Development and protection of the open space network and improvements to the quality of open space remains increasingly important.

There are challenges in acquiring, maintaining or improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of open space. This strategy seeks to address these issues, establish priorities and enable partnerships to deliver public open space opportunities through an agreed plan.

### Why does QLDC need a strategy?

The previous QLDC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was adopted in 2017. Since that time the Queenstown Lake District has continued to experience unprecedented residential growth (the district is the fastest growing in New Zealand with 5.7% annual growth on average over the past five years) and a huge increase in visitor numbers. The impacts of the COVID-19 has seen a decline in growth pressure in the short-term with a particular impact on visitor numbers, however revised population projections released by Council in August 2020 show that by 2031, both the number of residents and visitors will be back on par with expectations of previous models. New subdivisions in greenfield areas are being created, and intensification of existing areas is planned. Town houses and apartment buildings are becoming more popular. The value of land has increased and subsequently the average section sizes have decreased. Sections of 300m<sup>2</sup> are now common.

In addition to meeting local sport and recreation needs, Queenstown and Wānaka open space areas are also significant venues for hosting regional and national events. These events attract more visitors to the area.

Competing usage demands, future growth and visitor projections and uneven distribution of open space (relative to some areas) creates a need for more proactive management now and into the future.

Seven Kāi Tahu rūnaka represent mana whenua interests in the Queenstown Lakes District, and are the Council's Treaty partner. They are:

- Te Rūnanga o Moeraki
- Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki
- Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou
- Te Rūnanga o Hokonui
- Te Rūnanga o Awarua
- Te Rūnanga o Waihōpai
- Te Rūnanga o Ōraka-Aparima

The Rūnaka have identified that reconnection of fragmented areas of significant indigenous biodiversity is a key strategic outcome, and that Council reserves and open space could be central to this vision. They have also identified that Council reserve land, public open space and the margins of lakes and rivers are key places where Kāi Tahu values can be expressed through planting, landscaping, art, design and the provision of information. Approximately 45 landscapes in the district have been mapped as wāhi tūpuna, places of particular ancestral significance that remain of great importance today, including the major lakes and rivers and their margins. These are sites that offer particular opportunities and require protection. This strategy is an opportunity to enable the acknowledgement of cultural connections, values and practices in the landscape across the district, where they have been largely absent.

Where intensification is planned, the values of the existing open space must be recognised and enhanced where required, to ensure a high standard of living can be enjoyed by residents in these areas.

Many of our open spaces and reserves have high natural values and are home to a variety of ecosystems including tussock lands, wetlands, streams, riparian margins, native bush and lake foreshores. These natural areas provide habitat for our native biodiversity and protect ecosystem services that are essential for a healthy environment and are often home to taoka and mahika kai species. Planning for open space areas also requires consideration of the relationship with management systems and aims for healthy, resilient waterbodies. Natural reserves also serve to protect the region's iconic landscape. These values need to be protected, enhanced and celebrated to ensure future generations can learn about and enjoy them, and that Kāi Tahu cultural practices are able to be practised or restored. This is important as our region is increasingly impacted by human activities and climate change.

This updated Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (the Strategy) is required to provide guidelines around the protection and enhancement of the existing reserve network and the expansion of the network to meet the district's growth.

The Strategy's response to this population growth and the increasing visitor numbers is to ensure the value of existing open spaces is recognised, and that the network is enhanced and expanded to cater for growth and remain relevant, and reflects the Treaty partnership. The Strategy encourages consideration of both quality and quantity to provide an open space environment that continues to meet the communities' current needs as well as consider those of future generations. Quality is particularly important in new and high growth areas to ensure residents have access to a range of park types that can accommodate a wide variety of activities.

- Development and use of existing reserves
- Priorities for mana whenua in existing and future parks and reserves
- Guidance on active travel, recreational trail and pedestrian connections
- Protection of values in wāhi tūpuna where these overlap with parks and reserves
- Ecological and biodiversity enhancement

A separate **Parks and Reserves Future Provision Plan** has been prepared to sit alongside the strategy which sets direction on:

- Expected Levels of Service for provision of reserve land for each resident
- Which areas require new reserves to accommodate growth, and which areas have sufficient reserves.
- Priority areas in the District for acquisition and investment, particularly in high growth and high density areas
- When developers should provide reserve land and when Council should acquire land
- Recommendations for a stronger and more specific DC Policy, especially around what reserves are fit for purpose and what reserve improvements will be accepted, and requiring a cash contribution from all developments for Sportsground Parks (Premier)
- Stormwater/Recreation Reserve dual purpose guidance



## WHY IS OPEN SPACE SO IMPORTANT?

Open Space plays a vital role in making the Queenstown Lakes District a great place to live work and play and are places for people to meet, connect and get involved in the community. Parks and open spaces are also often host to many of the events and activities that bring visitors to the District and they are therefore critical to our economy. The outstanding landscapes, large open spaces and natural values are what draw many of the visitors to our region. It is critical to our economy in that our tourism sector relies so heavily on it.

For Kāi Tahu these landscapes speak to their histories, narratives and cultural identity. The district is criss-crossed with ancient trails (ara tawhito) and these corridors are treasured places that can support taoka species, biodiversity restoration and whānau hikoī.

### **Amenity Benefits**

- Improves local and regional liveability,
- Provides a focus/identity to locations
- Provides attractive, natural places to gather
- Provides residents who live in high density developments with outdoor amenity and gathering spaces

### **Economic Benefits**

- Adds value to properties and localities
- Provides an asset for tourism and events
- Supports the recreation, tourism and events industry
- Provides destinations for visitors and tourists
- Provides active transport routes and networks

### **Environmental**

- Protection of significant natural features and landscapes,
- Protection and enhancement of ecological values and biodiversity
- Enables awareness and understanding of nature,
- Enables restoration and enhancement of mahika kai and taoka species
- Enables participation in conservation
- Provides visual contrast to built environment
- Climate Change resilience/adaptation
- Protects ecosystem services

Enables restoration and cultural reconnection via biodiversity corridors

### **Cultural**

Helps to define urban and rural character and defines urban boundaries

Recognises/supports local identity

Reflects Kāi Tahu values in the natural environment and enables kaitiaki roles

Protection of cultural heritage

Enhancement of mahika kai species to restore cultural practices

Enables protection of Wāhi Tūpuna

Provides sense of place and identity

### **Health Benefits**

Physical and Psychological

Cultural wellbeing and identity, grounding in place

### **Education Benefits**

Creates opportunities to learn to socialise

Learn to be healthy

Learn about natural and cultural heritage

Enables Kāi Tahu to see cultural values reflected in places of importance; and educates other community members about Kāi Tahu values and associations with the landscapes

### **Sport and Recreation Benefits**

Places for active engagement and passive enjoyment

Enables mahika kai practices

### **Community**

Places to socialise,

Participate in community events/gatherings

Places that enable whanaukataka, manaakitaka, kaitiakitaka



## COUNCIL'S ROLE IN OPEN SPACE PROVISION

Through the Local Government Act Council has a number of roles relating to open space:

### **Provider/owner**

The provision, development and maintenance of parks and reserves is a core component of Council's business. Provider of premier and regional facilities.

### **Partnerships**

- Kāi Tahu Partnerships

Council must take account of Treaty of Waitangi principles by taking a partnership approach with Kāi Tahu towards decision-making and open-space provision, including recognising and providing for the mechanisms set out under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

- Council has the opportunity to participate in a number of partnerships of varying scales that provide access to and enhancement of open space and can further enhance the network.

E.g QTT, Aspiring Trails Trust, Upper Clutha Trails Trust, QTMBC, Te Kakano, WRT, KHCA.

### **Management**

Council manages or administers land that is in crown ownership. Council develops reserve management plans that outline the purpose, management and development requirements for parks and reserves. E.g QTT trail network.

### **Protection**

Council uses legislation such as the Reserves Act 1977, Local Government Act 2002 and the Resource Management Act 1991 to protect and preserve the open space network from inappropriate use and development.

### **Advocacy**

Through strategic documents, plans and information Council can advocate the importance of open space to the community.

### **Research and Planning**

Ongoing research and planning is required to ensure that the open space network meets community needs both now and for further generations and to ensure that council plans are responsive to people's changing needs and preferences. Planning also involves monitoring the regions growth and population characteristics and assessing this information and amending strategies and plans if necessary.

# STRATEGIC FIT

## How this plan fits with QLDC's other strategies and plans

### Vision Beyond 2050

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy responds directly to the statements articulated in 'Vision Beyond 2050'. In particular, thriving people, deafening dawn chorus, and opportunities for all.

The following secondary statements are most relevant to this Strategy:

- Our environments and services promote and support health, activity and wellbeing for all
- We are all kaitiaki of our protected and restored incredible environment, flora and fauna
- Our people and visitors respect the privilege of accessing our rivers, lakes and mountains
- We set the standard for combating biodiversity loss

The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy is also guided by the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the Maori values of kaitiakitaka and manaakitaka<sup>[1]</sup>.

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<sup>[1][1]</sup> Kāi Tahu dialect for kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality).



## Kai Tahu Values Framework

The Kāi Tahu Values Framework informs the the direction of this Strategy and will inform the Action Plan. The values and their application that are relevant to this Strategy are outlined in the table below:

Values	Description	Application
<i>Whanaukataka</i>	Family and Community Focussed	Ensuring consideration of the social implications of decisions to enable community and whanau connections and growth
<i>Manaakitaka</i>	Hospitality	Demonstrating behaviour that acknowledges others, through the expression of aroha, hospitality, generosity and mutual respect
<i>Rakatirataka</i>	Leadership	Ensuring the treaty partnership is recognised to enable mana whenua leadership in decision making processes
<i>Haere whakamua</i>	Future Focussed	Adopting a forward looking orientation with future generations in mind
<i>Tikaka</i>	Appropriate Action	Ensuring consideration of the appropriateness of decisions that will have a bearing on social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes.
<i>Kaitiakitaka</i>	Stewardship	Enabling the inherited responsibility of mana whenua to support and protect people, the environment, knowledge, culture, language and resources on behalf of future generations
<i>Mauri</i>	Life Force	Recognising the life force in all lands, waters and the natural environment that stems from time immemorial, requiring a high duty of care for kaitiaki (and others) to maintain an intact and healthy mauri, ensuring that what is gifted from the Atuais not neglected

## Spatial Plan – Grow Well |Whaiora

This Strategy is an integral part of QLDC’s future spatial plan, particularly the social infrastructure aspects. Based around the phrase ‘Grow Well’ or ‘Whaiora’ in Te Reo Maori, the Spatial Plan emphasises the importance of three key principles in everything we do, namely:

- Sustainability
- Resilience
- Wellbeing

The environmental, social, cultural and economic wellbeing of our community is central to the purpose of local government, both now and into the future<sup>[2]</sup>. Local authorities are required to take a sustainable approach to development which also focuses on the quality of the environment and the needs of future generations<sup>[3]</sup>. Achieving inter-generational equity is central to success.

One of the key outcomes of the Spatial Plan is particularly relevant to this Strategy and has been taken into account in the strategic actions:

- Well-designed neighbourhoods that provide for everyday needs

## Climate Action Plan

The QLDC Climate Action Plan traverses a broad range of topics and challenges in striving for the district to become zero waste and zero carbon. The fourth and fifth outcomes of the plan relate to the open spaces, seeking to ensure that ‘communities are climate-conscious and resilient’ and that ‘our economy and natural environment thrive together’. Actions that are aligned with this Strategy are:

- Ensure plans are in place to protect and enhance biodiversity in the district. Understand the impact of climate change on flora and fauna.

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<sup>[2]</sup> LGA s10(1)(b)

<sup>[3]</sup> LGA s14(1)(h)



- Establish a tree valuation framework to more accurately manage and budget for maintenance and investment in tree resources, including assets on the road reserve.

### **Ten Year Plan 2018 – 28 (Community Outcomes)**

Council's Ten Year Plan 2018-28 seeks to achieve a comprehensive range of community outcomes. The following are most relevant to the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2020:

- Communities have a good standard of living
- Efficient and effective infrastructure
- Environmental sustainability and low-impact living is highly valued
- World-class landscapes are protected
- Sustainable growth management

Community outcomes will be revised for the next Ten Year Plan (2021-31)

### **Community Wellbeing Strategy**

## **BROADER ALIGNMENT**

This strategic plan aligns with other statutory documents in addition to those detailed above, including the Operational and Proposed District Plans. It is also informed by non-statutory documents such as the QLDC Quality of Life Survey.

There is no legislative requirement to develop a Parks Strategy for open spaces. However the decision to produce a strategy is strongly influenced by national and regional statements, policies, plans and legislation.

## Plans and Policies

Proposed and Operative District Plans  
Subdivision guidelines  
Development Contributions Policy  
Regional Sports Facilities Strategy  
Community Facilities Strategy  
Otago and Southland Iwi Management Plans

## Implementation tools

Parks and Open Spaces Action Plan  
Parks and Reserves Future Provision Plan  
Reserve Management Plans  
Asset Management Plans  
Levels of Service in maintenance contracts  
Acquisition Plan  
Reserve Development Plans  
Master Plans (EG Queenstown Event Centre)

## WHAT IS OPEN SPACE AND HOW MUCH DO WE HAVE?

Open Space can serve a variety of purposes from recreation, amenity and preservation to providing and being part of views, protecting significant landscapes and sites, and providing a community focal point for the local area. There are also many different types of open space and the combination of these spaces makes up the open space network. Types include:

- Foreshore and esplanade reserves
- Pocket Parks
- Local Parks
- Streetscapes
- Stormwater reserves
- Community Parks
- Sportsground Parks
- Walking tracks
- Cycle ways and trails
- Golf courses
- Cemeteries
- Campgrounds
- Natural Parks – native bush areas, wetlands etc.
- Premier Parks – destination parks, public gardens, civic spaces (eg village greens, CBD lakefront reserves)

A quality open space network should provide the community with access to a range of recreational, cultural, social and environmental experiences while responding to the characteristics and geography of the local area. The District's rural and natural landscapes and mountains all contribute to the open space character of this area.

The District has over 2,500 hectares of Queenstown Lakes District Council administered public open space encompassing sports fields, Local and Community Parks, natural areas, public gardens, recreation and ecological linkages.

Approximately 400 hectares of this is urban parks, 1500 hectares natural or outdoor recreation areas with more coming on board all the time with greenfield developments (new subdivisions in rural areas).

QLDC provides and maintains over 200km of trails and tracks, including the Queenstown Trails and Upper Clutha Track Network. There is a significant network of mountain biking trails, jump parks, on QLDC land that host many local and international mountain biking events. There are over 45 playgrounds and several pump tracks and skate parks.

QLDC has 12 Cemeteries which a contribution to the open space network through providing areas of localised open space and amenity, as well as heritage sites. Cemeteries are unique in that they provide a relatively unchanging landscape that is protected from development and provide great opportunities to tell the history of the area. They can be a place for quiet respite and often have mature trees that support the biodiversity of the area. The location of cemeteries is a significant cultural issue, and new cemeteries should be planned in collaboration with Kāi Tahu.

There are over 20,000 QLDC maintained trees on reserves and in the streetscape including a number of protected/notable trees. Planting groups and trusts are enhancing and replanting many council reserves.

Large areas of Council owned open space is leased for golf courses. There are also a number of privately owned golf courses. Golf courses do have visual amenity value but have limited public accessibility (with the exception of Frankton Golf Course). For this reason they are not included in the Park Types.

The focus of this strategy is primarily on QLDC public owned land, however, it is recognised that DOC and privately owned open space also make a considerable contribution to the open space network (e.g. Ben Lomond Station or Deans Bank).

The strategy deals with the provision of land and the variety of experiences the parks offer, including what assets may be expected on different types of parks. However, it does not go into the detail of activities, assets or major facilities that occur on that land. These are considered in the QLDC Asset Management Plan, Tree Strategy and the recently prepared Community Facilities Strategy and Regional Sports Facility Strategy.

An analysis of the key park types and amount of land area for each resident/household is discussed in The Parks and Reserves Future Provision Plan. This analysis provides an indication of the amount and level of development of reserve land that is sufficient to provide for existing residents recreation and wellbeing, and ensures quality amenity in developments. This is particularly important when planning reserves in new developments.



## HOW WILL WE DO IT?

The following sections set out the Vision, Objectives, Methodologies and Actions for how we will achieve the goals of the Strategy.

### THE VISION

To provide a rich and diverse network of open spaces that are valued by the community and are protected and enhanced for future generations

### THE OBJECTIVES

The objectives are main goals of the strategy. These have been identified through public consultation and council workshops.

- Our parks and reserves are diverse, multipurpose and provide for communities, mana whenua and visitors
- Open Spaces are well designed, accessible and valued
- We are able to plan for and accommodate growth
- Open Spaces are treasured and protected
- Open Spaces contribute to enhanced biodiversity, improved water quality and reduced Green House Gas emissions

The Council provides a number of different open spaces that provide different experiences for the community and visitors who use the parks. The experiences are not mutually exclusive – a single area of open space may be able to provide for a number of experiences. The following section of the Strategy sets out some key experiences the open space network should deliver both within new subdivisions and developments (in areas formerly referred to as greenfield) and existing urban areas.

When acquiring new reserves the key focus is on ensuring these reserves are high quality and can provide a range of recreation activities and meet the community's needs. This land should be able to accommodate sport and recreation infrastructure such as play equipment, public toilets, BBQ's etc. This is in addition to reserves that have other primary functions such as connections, stormwater or setbacks. The focus of this Strategy is ensuring enough quality Local Parks, Community Parks and Sportsground Parks are provided, particularly in new and high growth areas.

Ensuring the open space network delivers these experiences is the primary focus of the Strategy.

# TYPES OF PARKS

## Types of parks/experiences

### Local Park

A Local Park is an area of open space that is easily accessible for the immediate community, within easy walking distance to residents in the area. It provides a basic informal recreation experience for nearby residents, including:

- Play opportunities
- Flat, kick-around space
- Areas for respite and relaxation

### Examples include:

- Murdoch Park, Arthurs Point
- Lismore Park, Wānaka
- Frye Crescent Reserve, Albert Town

### Community Park

A Community Park is an area of open space on flat or undulating land that provides a variety of informal recreation experiences for residents across a neighbourhood/suburb. They are often well known by the wider community, are primarily used for the community for informal recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities and can have other complementary values, such as landscape amenity and playgrounds.

A Community Park typically provides the following experiences:

- Multiple kick-around or play spaces
- Socialising areas, including picnic and BBQ facilities
- Perimeter or walking trail
- Small scale recreation infrastructure such as club rooms, public toilets

These parks have a high standard of provision and often have the most multi-use potential. Community Parks should be located in a central, prominent position within a suburb/neighbourhood and have good transport and cycling/walking access.

**Examples include:**

- McBride Park, Lake Hayes Estate
- Kingston School Reserve
- Peter Fraser Park, Lake Hāwea
- Jardine Park, Kelvin Heights

**Sportsground Parks**

Sportsground Parks are designed and used for organised sport with toilets, changing facilities, car parking and turf or playing surface formally maintained to an appropriate standard for the relevant sports code/s. These include sports fields, hard-court areas, club facilities as well as associated infrastructure such as car parking and changing rooms.

Sportsground Parks are further sub-categorised depending on their size and the catchment they serve.

**Sportgrounds Parks (Community)** can be multi-use and provide for more local community facilities, but may host district wide sporting events.

**Examples include:**

- Millbrook Cricket Ground, Arrowtown
- Glenorchy Domain
- Jack Tewa Park, Jacks Point
- Peter Fraser Park, Hāwea
- Kellys Flat, Wānaka

**Sportsground Parks (Premier)** will serve the district and the region for specific codes, will provide for a variety of codes and include a range of larger community facilities including gymnasiums and indoor pools. There are only two of these currently in the District.

- Queenstown Events Centre

- Wānaka Recreation Centre

### **Destination Parks/Premier Parks**

A Premier Park provides a unique experience and typically has a more extensive range of facilities that people will travel to and spend more time at. These parks are usually larger (with the exception of civic spaces) and meet the needs of both residents within the District and visitors to the area as they provide a unique experience or point of difference to other parks. People make a special trip just to get there, often driving, walking or cycling past one or more Local or Community Parks on the way.

The reserve may enjoy a particularly advantageous location (such as lake edge) or have recreational assets of a higher quality, contain heritage values, or be a civic space in the town centre. Civic spaces are for meeting, socialising, play and events located within the urban town centres and can comprise squares, plazas, greens, streets and shared spaces. Civic spaces provide unique opportunities to recognise the Treaty partnership through Kāi Tahu art, design and narratives.

These unique parks attract high use from visitors and they are to be designed with this in mind with a high level of service. Events are often held in these areas, such as festivals, markets, sporting events and prize-givings. They are places that help establish connections and linkages where people can move through, visit and congregate. A premier park would typically have:

- Networks of walking circuits and trails
- Destination and/ or multiple playspaces and specialised recreation facilities
- Distinct natural or heritage features
- Multiple places for gatherings and socialising such as BBQ and picnic facilities.

### **Examples include:**

- Dinosaur Park
- Queenstown Gardens
- Wānaka Station Park
- Marine Parade



### **Natural Reserves**

A reserve or open space that might only partly be developed but contains a natural feature/s such as native bush, a lake edge, river or mountain view. It is usually a large reserve or open space that provides for informal recreation. These areas may have high Kāi Tahu values as they are adjacent to lakes and rivers, or offer views towards significant mauka, may have ecological values and/or provide access to our unique landscapes. They offer diverse recreation opportunities such as biking, walking, water activities and providing connections with nature.

These reserves can include recreational facilities such as boat launching areas, campgrounds, but might also have ecological values, protecting waterways, and providing wildlife corridors.

Many of the partners and volunteer groups that work with QLDC use Natural Reserves. Many events are also held on Natural Reserves.

#### **Examples include:**

- Ben Lomond (Te Taumata a Hakitekura) Reserve
- Queenstown Hill (Te Tapunui)
- Arrow River (Haehaenui) Reserve
- Albert Town Lagoon
- Lake Hayes (Waiwhakaata) Reserve
- Matakauri Park
- Cardrona (Ōrau) Mouth Reserve

### **Connections**

Open space should be distributed to create a contiguous network where possible that establishes recreational trail networks, cycling and walking linkages.

Connections can provide for recreation linkages such as walkways or cycleways, and/or support ecological connectivity or establish greenbelts. They can include foreshore areas and esplanade strips. Connections or linkages can also make moving around our neighbourhoods easy, and can provide an alternative and sustainable mode of active transport.

The District has an impressive network of walking and cycling trails and this is very popular for both recreation and tourism.

When new developments are planned they should have quality connections within creating a walkable neighbourhood and should connect with existing trails and reserves where possible.

## **Pocket Parks**

Pocket Parks are areas of greenspace that are either very small (less than 0.3ha) and/or are often not fully accessible as the land is maybe steep or located in gullies. Historically QLDC has inherited a large number of Pocket Parks through subdivisions.

Pocket Parks may be appropriate in medium to high density areas, providing amenity, a place of respite or socialising spaces. They also provide visual relief in intensively developed areas. They provide an opportunity for high quality landscaping, gardens and specimen trees. Pocket Parks are also potentially important impermeable surfaces or planted areas that support stormwater management, land soakage opportunities etc to add to avoidance of direct discharges to waterbodies

Within new subdivisions, QLDC will generally not acquire small areas of open space as reserve that primarily serve an amenity purposes for a development or are too steep or narrow to develop for recreation purposes. Open spaces smaller than a Local Park (minimum 0.3ha) should typically be retained in common or private ownership unless they have an important linkage or conservation function as part of the wider open space network.

Developments are encouraged to take advantage of the amenity and associated economic benefits of providing a well-designed and valuable public open space network and avoid creating small areas of surplus, undevelopable land.

## **Stormwater Reserves**

Stormwater infrastructure can have values such as wetland areas that also provide for wildlife. These wetlands or discharge areas are designed to mitigate effects of development on water quality. It is important to encourage developers to discharge stormwater to land where possible to recognise the environmental benefits of this low impact design. Discharge of stormwater to land is consistent with Kāi Tahu aspirations for how stormwater should be managed, along with using these areas to enhance indigenous biodiversity. However for QLDC to accept stormwater reserves in lieu of reserve development contributions they must also have appropriate recreation value that meets the criteria in the Provision Guidelines.

Developers will be required to engage with the Parks and Reserves Department early (at the Plan Change stage) to ensure an appropriate mix of parks are provided. Existing reserves should be reviewed to identify areas that are deficient and investment should be directed to those areas for development.

# WHAT IS OPEN SPACE?

## Volunteers and partnerships

Queenstown Lakes District is fortunate to have a number of community groups, clubs and partners that work to provide recreation and ecological enhancement services on parks. These include community associations, sports clubs, biking clubs and environmental groups.

These volunteers put in many hours and make a huge contribution to the success of the District's open space network. Examples of work undertaken are:

- Track and trail construction
- Wilding conifer control
- Predator control
- Native planting
- Fundraising and installation of community facilities

QLDC works closely with other organisations such as Department of Conservation, Queenstown Trails Trust, Upper Clutha Tracks Trust, Aspiring Track Network Group and the Queenstown Mountain Bike Club to deliver shared services.

## Events

The open space network provides for many of the regional and national events that are regularly hosted in the District. This can range from large-scale events to smaller community events. Well managed events can have a very positive effect on the District, drawing the community together and bringing financial, social, cultural and environmental benefits. The use of reserves to support and enable events should be encouraged where appropriate. This strategy's objective that our open spaces are well designed, accessible, connected and valued seeks to achieve access to a diversity of high-quality open spaces that provide a variety of experiences.

Population increase, visitor growth and intensification in urban areas will mean our parks and open spaces will need to accommodate more use. While generally new parks will not be acquired in these areas (discussed in the next section), the capacity of existing parks will need to be improved either through upgrades or receiving a higher level of service.

## Design

The layout and configuration of a reserve and any infrastructure provided will ultimately determine the success of the reserve. Each activity, particularly sporting activities, will have specific requirements for the size, configuration, topography and orientation. Multifunctional open spaces are encouraged as they enable socialising and are an efficient use of land and facilities. Below are guidelines for how a reserve should be designed:

- Co-locate sports grounds with other recreation facilities such as a playground and walking circuits to make a multifunctional open space.
- Maximise street frontage and locate in central/ prominent locations within a development to maximise accessibility, both visual and physical, and to provide good passive surveillance from passers-by and neighbouring properties.
- Relatively flat well-drained terrain is desirable as it provides for a wide range of activities, however some variation in terrain can add interest and play opportunities.
- 2 to 3 hectares is considered appropriate for a multiuse reserve.
- Avoid overly elongated, narrow or irregular shapes with dead ends. Provide multiple entrance points and walking and cycling connections through the open space to link with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Consider appropriate infrastructure such as seating, water fountains and fencing.
- Apply the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles (CPTED) to maximise safety of spaces.

Design Guidelines could be prepared in future to ensure quality open space and facilities are delivered across the open space network, in a way that allows for consistency but also a sense of local identity.

## Accessibility

All residents within urban/built up areas should live within reasonable walking distance to a Local Park. Pathways to the reserves should be easy for parents with young children, people with limited mobility and the elderly. This is becoming increasingly important with the ageing population. For a reserve to be 'accessible' it should generally be within 600m (an easy 5 to 10 minute walk) of a property it serves and easily and safely accessible by foot.

An analysis of each area in the District shows existing open space provision and which areas have quality recreation reserves (Local or Community Parks) within a 600m/1500m radius. This analysis can be used to inform future planning that will further analyse provision, connectivity and quality of park types. These plans will assist Council to understand and provide for the specific needs of the different communities in the District.



## Awareness

The community also needs to be aware that the open space network exists. By providing information about the activities and facilities our parks offer, their history and their special features, the community and visitors can make the most out of our parks and open spaces. The community are able to learn about their parks through signage, website information and participating in community events and activities on parks. The community can become involved in the management of their parks by engaging in consultations on Reserve Management Plans and Development Plans or volunteering in club activities or restoration programmes.

## PLAN FOR AND ACCOMMODATE GROWTH

Through analysis of existing levels of reserve provision and growth projections, the Future Parks and Reserves Provision Plan identifies priority areas for acquisition and investment.

### How much do we have and how much we need to provide for current and future generations?

The previous 2017 Strategy set provision guidance for park types to set direction in greenfield developments for Local, Community and Sportsground Parks. This was primarily based on residential unit numbers of up to 2000 units and assumed Community and Sportsground Parks would be provided by developers in these areas. Generally this has not occurred as most developments in this district are much smaller, and typically if any recreation reserves were being provided these only met the local park size and function. Subsequently, a mix of reserve types is not always being achieved in new and growth areas and in areas comprising smaller cumulative developments there could be no recreation reserves. An over-reliance on existing reserves within 600m also has often not resulted in the appropriate level of service for new and existing residents in those areas.

As the district grows, there is an ongoing need for more land to satisfy open space and recreational needs. The total park provision also needs to recognise the very high numbers of visitors to the region, most of whom come to participate in some form of outdoor recreation, and the high resident population growth. Much of the existing reserve land is under pressure from this population growth. The steep topography of the region means that flat usable accessible land is in short supply, is under pressure and it is becoming more difficult and more expensive to acquire in appropriate locations for new parks as the urban areas become more intensively developed. Our existing parks and open spaces therefore need to accommodate more intense use.

A separate Parks and Reserves Future Provision Plan including a Provisions Guideline has been prepared that sets out how new future reserves will be acquired and developed.

## OPEN SPACES ARE TREASURED AND PROTECTED

Many of our reserves are areas of significant vegetation and biodiversity. These natural areas protect important ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from the natural environment, such as clean air, fresh water, climate moderation, carbon sequestration, fertile soil and flood control. For example, wetlands can improve water quality through filtration and can play a role in drought and flood mitigation through retention. These ecosystem services are important to environmental and human health and wellbeing, yet they are limited and often taken for granted. Human impacts such as pollution, introduced species and development is putting increasing pressure on the natural environment and reducing these ecosystem services.

Our open space network provides us with an opportunity to protect and enhance ecological values for existing and future generations. Protection, conservation and education about these areas will encourage people to treasure their parks and reserves and to connect with nature.

Ecological enhancement of our open spaces is largely led by a number of volunteer groups through planting programmes, growing native plants in nurseries and controlling wilding conifers. These groups and partners play a vital role in the protection of open spaces and these partnerships should be recognised and supported.

Identifying areas with high potential for biodiversity and ecological enhancement, consistent with mana whenua values and aspirations (e.g. biodiversity corridors, riparian management) and preparing Revegetation or Enhancement Plans would create a framework in which QLDC can protect and enhance these values. This could include a policy on weed control.

Many reserves also protect historic heritage features such as monuments, buildings, graves or memorial plantings. These features provide the opportunity for residents and visitors to learn about the unique history of the District.

### Classification and zoning of open space

There are a number of mechanisms available to protect the public open space network. Parks and open spaces are generally protected from inappropriate development by being in public ownership and through being vested and classified as a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. Reserve Management Plans are required for classified Recreation Reserves and must be prepared in consultation with the public.

## Encroachments

There are a large number of both historic and new encroachments onto public open space. Encroachments onto reserves can result in the community being prevented from accessing public open space. The preparation of an Encroachment Policy would set out how QLDC intends to deal with new and existing encroachments, including criteria for how to prioritise these..

## ACTION PLAN (what we will do, how we will do it)

An Action Plan is included as Appendix 1 which sets out the future actions that can be taken to achieve the Strategy Vision and Objectives.



# REVIEW AND MONITORING

Monitoring should be undertaken to ensure the Strategy is being successfully implemented. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Community feedback through the Annual Plan and Long Term Council Plan
- Targeted parks and open space questions in further QLDC customer satisfaction surveys
- Undertake a research programme on our parks to understand how people use and value them
- Identify and map ecological areas to allow for the effective management and protection of these sites
- Develop open space network plans across the District to analyse existing provision, connectivity and quality of park types.





# ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT ONE: Action Plan

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021 VISION:

To provide a rich and diverse network of parks and open spaces that are valued by the community and protected and enhanced for future generations.

Objectives	Our parks and reserves are: diverse, multipurpose and provide for communities, mana whenua and visitors	Open spaces are well designed, accessible, connected and valued	We can plan for and accommodate growth	Open Spaces are protected and treasured	Open spaces contribute to enhanced biodiversity, improved water quality, and reduced Green House Gas emissions
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We have the right mix of park types and experiences</li> <li>&gt; Good provision for Events</li> <li>&gt; Parks support community resilience</li> <li>&gt; Experiences support curiosity, confidence-building and human connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Quality design</li> <li>&gt; Well connected, to encourage active transport options</li> <li>&gt; Create attractive urban areas through quality parks and reserves</li> <li>&gt; Invest in appropriate areas and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Keep up with growth, especially in medium and high density residential zones.</li> <li>&gt; Developers to adhere to Provision Guidelines.</li> <li>&gt; Ensure the appropriate level of provision of park types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Create Community Awareness and education Opportunities</li> <li>&gt; Ensure Natural and Cultural Heritage Protection</li> <li>&gt; Recognise and celebrate the role of partners and volunteers</li> </ul>	>Enhance Ecological Values, Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity

## HOW WILL WE DO IT?

Actions within Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Create park types/experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Local Parks</li> <li>&gt; Community Parks</li> <li>&gt; Community Gardens</li> <li>&gt; Dog parks</li> <li>&gt; Premier Parks</li> <li>&gt; Sportsground Parks</li> <li>&gt; Connections</li> <li>&gt; Natural Reserves</li> <li>&gt; Review Development Contributions Policy to ensure it aligns with Park Types.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; All residents in residential zones to have Local or Community Park within 600m walking distance</li> <li>&gt; Agree on Types of Recreation Facilities to be provided on each park type</li> <li>&gt; Align Strategy with Levels of Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Develop Provision Guidelines to inform future Development Contributions Policies and investment in existing parks</li> <li>&gt; Require that developers engage with Parks staff early, at the Plan Change stage where relevant.</li> <li>&gt; Advocate for and require high quality open space outcomes by working with developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Support and undertake environmental initiatives with volunteer groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Investigate and implement low mow techniques</li> <li>&gt;Review the use of sprays in parks and open spaces</li> <li>&gt; Invest in a riparian planting plan and riparian planting</li> <li>&gt; Plant native trees and shrubs where appropriate</li> <li>&gt; Where possible, use reserves to create wildlife corridors</li> <li>&gt;Enable the use of certain parks to establish community nurseries</li> </ul>
Future Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Ensure developers adhere to Parks and Reserves Future Provisions Plan</li> <li>&gt; Input into future community and sports facility strategies to ensure future needs of the community are met.</li> <li>&gt; Identify which reserves are appropriate for events</li> <li>&gt; Investigate provision of horse-riding trails</li> <li>&gt;Develop District Wide Biking Strategy</li> <li>&gt;Develop maps which overlay reserves and Wāhi Tūpuna</li> <li>&gt;Work with Kāi Tahu on integrating values framework into future park provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Implement Parks and Reserves Future Provisions Plan</li> <li>&gt;Develop a Playspaces Strategy</li> <li>&gt;Improve Website Information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Develop a Park Acquisition Strategy</li> <li>&gt;Work with partners to protect public access to areas of high recreation value that are on private land.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Develop and review Reserve Management Plans</li> <li>&gt; Plan the enhancement opportunities for key reserves in growth intensification areas through Development Plans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Input into future QLDC Biodiversity Strategy</li> <li>&gt; Identify key biodiversity and ecological restoration areas</li> <li>&gt; Develop Revegetation and Enhancement Plans</li> <li>&gt; Collaborate with DOC and other partners on pest management</li> </ul>