



Report 07.18
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Committee Landcare
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Belmont Regional Park Management Plan review update

1. Purpose

To request the Committee consider submissions on the Belmont Regional Park management plan review and seek approval to begin writing the draft plan.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The review of the Belmont Regional Park management plan recommenced in October 2006 with an initial consultation phase calling for public comment from stakeholders, Iwi and the wider community. This phase concluded on 1 December 2006.

4. Progress to date

Phase one of the review – ‘pre-consultation’ – is complete. The purpose of Phase one was to identify the key issues involved and the viewpoints of various stakeholders. This has involved:

- undertaking initial discussions with relevant statutory agencies and Iwi
- notifying our intention to review and calling for public submissions (104 submissions received)
- developing a newsletter to inform the community about the review
- press releases advertising the review of the management plan, the process being undertaken and how the public can be involved
- placing newsletters, plans and submission forms at the park, and at Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) offices and on the GWRC website

- holding a public meeting
- summarising submissions for discussion at the Belmont management plan review workshop to be held later this month (date TBC)

4.1 Submissions

Landcare Committee members received a copy of all written submissions on Monday 5 February 2007. Additional copies are available on request; please contact Fiona Shaw on 381 7784.

4.2 Public meeting

A public meeting was held on 8 November 2006. A copy of all suggestions and ideas gathered at the public meeting is attached to this report for the Committee's consideration (see **Attachment 1**).

5. Key issues

Key issues arising from feedback and submissions have been summarised (see **Attachment 2**)

6. Councillor's workshop

The Belmont management plan review workshop will be held in March to discuss these issues and set the direction.

7. Key issues for discussion

A trend has emerged during the review of all the Regional Parks management plans; there is the desire from the community that there is no or little change to the park networks. Ongoing issues of access, track use, user rights and management regimes continue to emerge but overall there is a general satisfaction with how the park is at present. Belmont Regional Park appears to be no different at this stage.

Values such as open spaces, accessibility from the CBD, variety of terrains, views, peace and freedom were continually expressed in the "what do you like about the Park" section of the submission.

Other topics discussed include the future management regimes for the park with the inclusion of the Waitangirua Farm now within the Belmont Regional Park, land tenure and its reservation status, improvement to the farm management practices on Waitangirua Farm, future protection of area's currently under conservation covenant and commercial use of the park, including any proposed wind farm activities.

7.1 Future management of Waitangirua Farm

The management regime for Waitangirua Farm will continue to be debated during the submission process, particularly as the management planning process moves into the second phase of submissions.

With the acquisition of and its subsequent return into public ownership, there will be considerable interest in the future use of the farm particularly uses other than farming.

As part of Greater Wellington's purchase agreement with the Crown, Waitangirua Farm is to be held under the Reserves Act 1977, (section 14a) where it will be set aside for a particular reserve type which is determined through a statutory process which includes a Council resolution on the preferred reserve type which is subject to a community consultation process. To avoid confusion and being heavily bureaucratic, the two consultation processes will be run together.

The community will be kept informed of this through notices in newspapers, Belmont Regional Park management plan review newsletters and at public meetings held in both Lower Hutt and in Porirua.

A report will be prepared outlining the implications of each reserve type for council's consideration following the Belmont Regional Park management plan review council workshop in March.

7.2 Potential wind farm development

This issue has featured in the submission process, arising out of the consultation that began during the Regional Parks Network Plan and the initial review of the Belmont Regional Parks management plan.

From a total of 103 submissions 48 (47%) submissions were opposed to the construction of the wind farm in Belmont Regional Park, nine (9%) supported the wind farm proposal and 43 (44%) did not mention any wind farm activity.

Summary of submissions from key stakeholders on this issue includes:

- Porirua City Council suggests that: (See **Submission 34**)

The "Sense of Place" that Belmont Regional Park provides to the community to be protected from activities which significantly impacts on this, including wind farms, to be subject to full public consultation.

Greater Wellington aligns with the Porirua City Councils "Rural Zone" provisions of the District Plan which is being reviewed at present, or a suspension of the management plan process until such time as a strategic alignment can be achieved.

The Porirua City Council is concerned at the visual impacts of indiscriminate use of rural public land for energy generation which sets an undesirable precedence for the Porirua community.

A full region wide framework for wind farms be developed to understand the implications and impacts of wind energy generation in the Wellington Region.

- Hutt City Council (See **Submission 39**)

Does not address this issue directly but suggests that the preservation and enhancement of the parks core character and values from developments which would destroy these values should not be permitted.

- Department of Conservation

Have made no formal submission in this round of consultation.

- Iwi

Have made no mention of wind farm activity and have not formally submitted on the Belmont Regional Park management plan review

- Friends of Belmont (See **Submission 78**)

Have made no direct mention of this issue.

The issue of wind farm development in the Regional Parks is significant and it is anticipated that this will dominate the future consultation with the community, particularly once the draft has been developed. The Belmont Regional Park management plan review workshop will provide a forum to discuss this more fully.

8. Review of the current plan

The current management plan, covers many of the current issues facing the park. As with the previous park management plan, many of the policies, aims and objectives remain pertinent today. These will need to be adjusted to include the management of Waitangirua Farm.

Therefore the majority of policies will need only minor amendments. However, the formatting of the plan will be updated to reflect the Council's new direction for management planning under the Regional Park Network Management Plan framework.

9. Proposed structure of the plan

The Network plan sets the framework for all park specific management plans. The Belmont management plan will therefore be consistent with the structure, objectives and policies of the Network Plan.

As with other park specific plans, the Belmont management plan will include more detailed maps, management actions (methods) and expected results. This will assist in ensuring that the objectives, policies and methods are aligned and that management actions contribute to park objectives. It will also enable the plans to be effectively monitored.

10. Where to from here?

We will begin drafting a plan incorporating feedback and discussion gathered to date. Once the plan has been prepared, a report detailing changes to the current plan, particularly highlighting those changes which are significantly different from the existing plan, will be put to Council for approval before the draft plan is released for a second phase of consultation.

11. Communication

Communication with stakeholders is ongoing. Once we have received guidance from the Committee, we will incorporate that information into our consultation with stakeholders.

12. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.
3. ***Considers*** the submissions received.
4. ***Instructs*** officers to prepare a draft Belmont Regional Park Management Plan.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

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**Attachment 1: Belmont Regional Park Management Plan review – public meeting 8
November 2006.**

**Attachment 2: Belmont Regional Park Management Plan review – summary of
submissions.**