

Urumanu Reserve

Draft Development Plan

Report



Christchurch City Council

Dated : 11th July 2017

Urumau Reserve Development Plan

Context

Urumau Reserve occupies 25.78 hectares of the lower end of a significant spur on the eastern side of Lyttelton township. It lies within the area of mana whenua Ngāti Wheke and forms a diverse planted backdrop to the town. The reserve is contained by Sumner Road on the eastern boundary, Gilmour Terrace and Foster Terrace to the west and Lyttelton Port Company land to the north. A poled walking route from the reserve extends across Lyttelton Port Company land and Department of Conservation land, to link up with the Crater Rim track and the network of Port Hills tracks across Department of Conservation and Council reserves.

A mixed pine and macrocarpa plantation on the ridge and eastern slopes was established over 120 years ago to provide ground stabilisation and rock fall mitigation. Over time it has also provided a vegetative buffer between the Lyttelton township and coal stockpiles alongside Gollans Bay. A disused quarry site accessed from Sumner Road operated as a Transfer Station for a number of years and is now closed. Contaminated fill has been identified in the quarry, which will have an impact on the future management of this site. The future use and management of the quarry site is still to be determined, but it will still remain within Urumau Reserve.

Positioned at the tip of the spur and Urumau Reserve is the Lyttelton Timeball Station site where the original tower is soon to be rebuilt.

Pedestrian access to the Reserve is achieved via steps at the end of Foster Terrace and Reserve Terrace to a track that crosses the eastern slope and links to a track across the Lyttelton Port Company land. Emergency and maintenance vehicle access to this track is via an easement at the end of Gilmour Terrace, although pedestrian access to the reserve is not encouraged at this point; access is marked with a locked gate and sign. A network of existing and new mountain bike tracks have been developed within the macrocarpa and pine plantation.

Urumau Reserve is gazetted as a Recreational Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and is administered by elected community representatives who form the Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee. Under the Act, Urumau Reserve is to be managed "for the purpose of providing areas for the recreation and sporting activities and the physical welfare and enjoyment of the public, and for the protection of the natural environment and beauty of the countryside, with emphasis on the retention of open spaces and on outdoor recreational activities, including recreational tracks in the countryside." The 2007 Development Plan for Urumau Reserve is due to be updated and the Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee has been working with Council staff to develop a plan for community consultation and Banks Peninsula Community Board approval. .

Background

The 2007 Draft Development Plan outlined the Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee's broad aims to:

1. Improve recreational and educational opportunities
2. Increase public access and use of the reserve
3. Enhance the town's natural landscape and birdlife
4. Control weeds on the reserve.

The Reserve Management Committee and Council staff have proceeded to carry out these aims with the following developments:

1. New steps have been provided at Foster and Reserve Terraces. Signs have been located at the Foster Terrace entrance and along some sections of the track network.
2. The Reserve Management Committee has an on-going weed control and native plant revegetation plan using volunteers. This plan is based on the areas identified for planting in the 2007 Development Plan.
3. New mountain bike tracks have been constructed within the plantation area under the guidance of Council staff and local volunteers from the Lyttelton Mountain Bike club.
4. Some information and directional signage has been installed. An information sign is placed at the Foster Terrace steps and directional signage has been installed at track intersections, as shown on the draft plan.
5. A pest management strategy is under development to control plant and animal pests within the reserve and in partnership with adjacent landowners and the community.

The Lyttelton Port Company has developed a shared track on their property which links Urumau Reserve to a poled route also across its land which eventually connects to the Crater Rim track.

Three Polhill's Bay shooting ranges have been identified at Urumau and on the Lyttelton Port Company land; 2 are located on Urumau Reserve and a third is shown on the Lyttelton Port Company land. The rifle range runs parallel to the Lyttelton Sumner Road. The butts that were in Buckleys Bay Scenic Reserve were washed away in the Wahine Storm; the identified three mounds are in reasonable condition. The mounds have been built on the side of the hill with rock retaining walls to form a level area from which to shoot. A 1.2m wide access track extends to the furthest mound. These ranges date back to 1866 and were used by the Lyttelton Volunteer Artillery. Any future work around these will require an Archaeological Authority.

Although a complete Avifauna Assessment of this specific reserve has not been carried out, findings from the Cavendish Bluffs assessment indicate that the following species are likely to be seen at Urumau: Kereru, NZ Falcon, NZ Kingfisher and Shining Cuckoo. Introduced finches are likely to be present in the pine plantation.

The Indigenous Ecosystems of the Lyttelton Harbour basin identifies Urumau Reserve as part of the Kowhai, Korokio, jewelled gecko, dry, rocky ecosystem. This ecosystem is characterised by having a rocky environment with an altitudinal sequence of shallow soils derived from the underlying rocks with Evans steppeland soils on lower, steep dry sites. Cashmere soils on lower elevation gently sloping shoulders. Stewart steppeland soils on higher more humid slopes. The natural vegetation of these sites are drought-tolerant trees and shrubs such as ngaio, kowhai, kanuka, golden ake ake, five-finger, cabbage trees, small leaved coprosmas, vines, short tussocks and small herbs. On the higher humid and shady sites a greater range of forest species such as mountain totara and black pine can survive.

Purpose of the Consultation Plan

To present a proposal for public feedback that will result in a plan that most effectively achieves a balance in meeting the aims and objectives for the overall use and management of Urumau Reserve, as agreed by the community and approved by the Community Board. The Development

Plan will provide guidance to the Reserve Management Committee and Council staff for the implementation of the aims and objectives of the community approved plan.

Draft Development Plan

1. Plan A illustrates the relationship of Urumau Reserve to adjoining public open space and path networks around Lyttleton
2. Plan B shows existing and potential access points into the Reserve, a network and hierarchy of paths, existing and future signage, and a variety of vegetation cover.

Draft Proposals

1. Tangata whenua values
 - Conversations with Ngāti Wheke representatives indicate that they support the current developments in the Reserve but emphasise their concern that if the track system is over-developed this could lead to soil erosion and eventual siltation of the harbour.
 - Ngāti Wheke is very supportive of native revegetation projects that will increase the biodiversity of the reserve and encourage more birdlife.
2. Path Network
 - When developing a future path network consideration should be given to the fragile nature of volcanic and loess soils covering the site. As much as possible, paths need to zig-zag across the steep slopes and follow contours. Construction of water-tables to channel water away from paths and tracks should be adopted. Planting of appropriate native plants alongside tracks will help mitigate against soil erosion.
 - After heavy rain events tracks should be closed to mountain bike use.
 - Shared tracks – these would provide both walking and mountain bike access to particular areas within the Reserve. These shared tracks would have a width of between 1.5m- 2.5m where feasible. They would need to be well graded and with a good surface and drainage. The Urumau track provides reasonably graded access around the ridge for walkers and mountain bikers.
 - Walking only tracks - to be identified for walking only unless they are to be used by mountain bikes for uphill use only.
 - Mountain bike tracks – these to be designated and graded for mountain biking with appropriate signage to identify the grade and use. Tracks to be identified with hazard signs to warn pedestrians of mountain bike use.
3. Signage
 - Signage plan to be developed to identify tracks and their uses. Standard CCC signs to be placed at all entrances to the Reserve to identify tracks and relevant Reserve bylaws. Head to Head walkway signage to be installed.
 - Interpretation signs to be located at appropriate places of interest, for example the Polhill's Bay Rifle Range.



An example of one of the Polhill's Bay Rifle Range mounds

4. Access

- New access at 18 Gilmore Terrace for mountain bike use only.



Potential location of track access from 18 Gilmore Terrace

- New access at 12 Foster Terrace for shared use.
- New access at 24 Foster Terrace for pedestrian access only.
- New access from the Timeball Station site for shared access.



Potential location of track access from Timeball Station site into Reserve

5. Pine and macrocarpa plantation

- A forest management plan should be developed for the plantation to consider the health and viability of existing trees and how these should be managed in the future. For example, they could be incrementally felled and left on site, as they become old and unstable.
- The pine plantation is currently mentioned in 'A Weed Survey of Urumau (Jensen & Shanks, 2008) - also included in this report is a list of indigenous plants that are regenerating within the plantation.
- Allow for native plant regeneration to occur so that the whole area becomes a native forest; encourage this through passive regeneration of native species.

6. Native Planting

- Native plants for areas identified on the previous 2007 Development Plan are currently being collected, propagated and planted by the Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee using seeds sourced from within the Lyttelton Harbour Basin of the Port Hills Ecological District (Wilson, 1992).
- Christchurch City Council botanist has recommended that the range for seed collection could be extended within the Port Hills Ecological District to stay within the Lyttelton Harbour Basin, but beyond the areas where it is currently collected. This would help to broaden the plants gene pool.
- The Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee plans and carries out native planting using a targeted and systematic approach.
- The open grassed area on the western face of the reserve has been marked by the committee as an area of passive management so that over time natural regeneration will occur, in the meantime maintaining open space within the reserve.

- Further guidance on plant selection can be found in the Indigenous ecosystems of the Lyttelton Harbour Basin, a guide, prepared by the Governors Bay Landcare Group.
- 7. Plant and animal pest control and management
 - The Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee supported by the Christchurch City Council, coordinate and carry out work with community volunteers and school groups, to protect native flora and fauna and support endemic species regeneration by targeted control and eradication of plant and animal pests.
- 8. Lyttelton Port Company land
 - A management plan has been recently developed for the 17 hectares of land adjacent to the northern boundary of Urumau Reserve (Jensen, 2016).
 - The Port Company allows pedestrian and mountain bike access across its land and is amenable to creation of a shared track to allow access to walking and mountain biking tracks.
 - The amended shared track across its land was financed by a logging company; future maintenance of this track needs to be determined, potentially assisted by Council rangers.
 - Native planting on the Lyttelton Port Company land has been helped by the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust, which along with Lyttelton Port Company staff will continue with its maintenance.
- 9. Fire Hazard and Protection
 - To help reduce fire risk, low flammability native plant species have been planted along the property boundaries of Foster and Gilmour Terrace.
 - Grass and plant pest control is essential for good fire protection.
- 10. Rock fall Hazard and Protection
 - Rock fall hazard areas are to be identified and appropriate hazard signage installed.
- 11. Timeball Station
 - The reconstruction of the Timeball tower is to commence soon.
Future pedestrian access from this site into the reserve is welcomed by Heritage New Zealand; the route for a safe and suitable path will require further investigation but is considered feasible.

Other matters for consideration

12. On-going maintenance of all tracks: how much time and resources are required to carry out appropriate maintenance of all tracks?
13. Are 'dogs under effective control' still to be allowed into the Reserve or is there a need for a specific 'dog park'?
14. Is a comprehensive Forest Management Plan required?
15. Options for review: For example should the Development Plan be reviewed on a regular basis i.e. informally by the Reserve Management Committee every 5 years or formally every 10 years?

Summary

The Christchurch City Council is working with the Lyttelton Reserves Management Committee to consult with the community on and for the Banks Peninsula Community Board to approve the proposed Urumau Reserve Development Plan.

The community will be asked to comment on the development plan proposal for the recreation reserve. The plan includes considerations for track placement and signage, access to the reserve, and vegetation cover and management.

Key features of the proposal:

The proposal shows a hierarchy of existing and proposed tracks where red solid and broken lines indicate walking tracks and blue solid and broken lines are for mountain bike use. The broken yellow line indicates a shared track for both walking and mountain biking. The track extends into the Lyttelton Port Company land, providing access to adjacent Department of Conservation reserves and walkways.

Additional access points are proposed at 12 and 24 Foster Terrace and also at 18 Gilmour Terrace which would provide opportunities to further separate walking use from mountain bike use. Appropriate barriers and signage would be required at these points.

Vegetation cover is shown in four distinct areas: 1) fire buffer, using low flammability native plants, 2) areas to be revegetated using Port Hills Ecological District, Lyttelton Harbour Basin zone, sourced plants, 3) existing pine and macrocarpa established forest with understorey establishment of bird distributed native seedlings 4) an area of open grassland managed through passive regeneration which currently provides an area where views out to the township and beyond can be experienced.

References

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Governors Bay Landcare Group. September 1998. Indigenous Ecosystems of the Lyttelton Harbour Basin, a guide to native plants, their ecology and planting.

Jensen, C. 2016. Management Plan. For the Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust and Lyttelton Port of Christchurch. September 2016. 22pp.

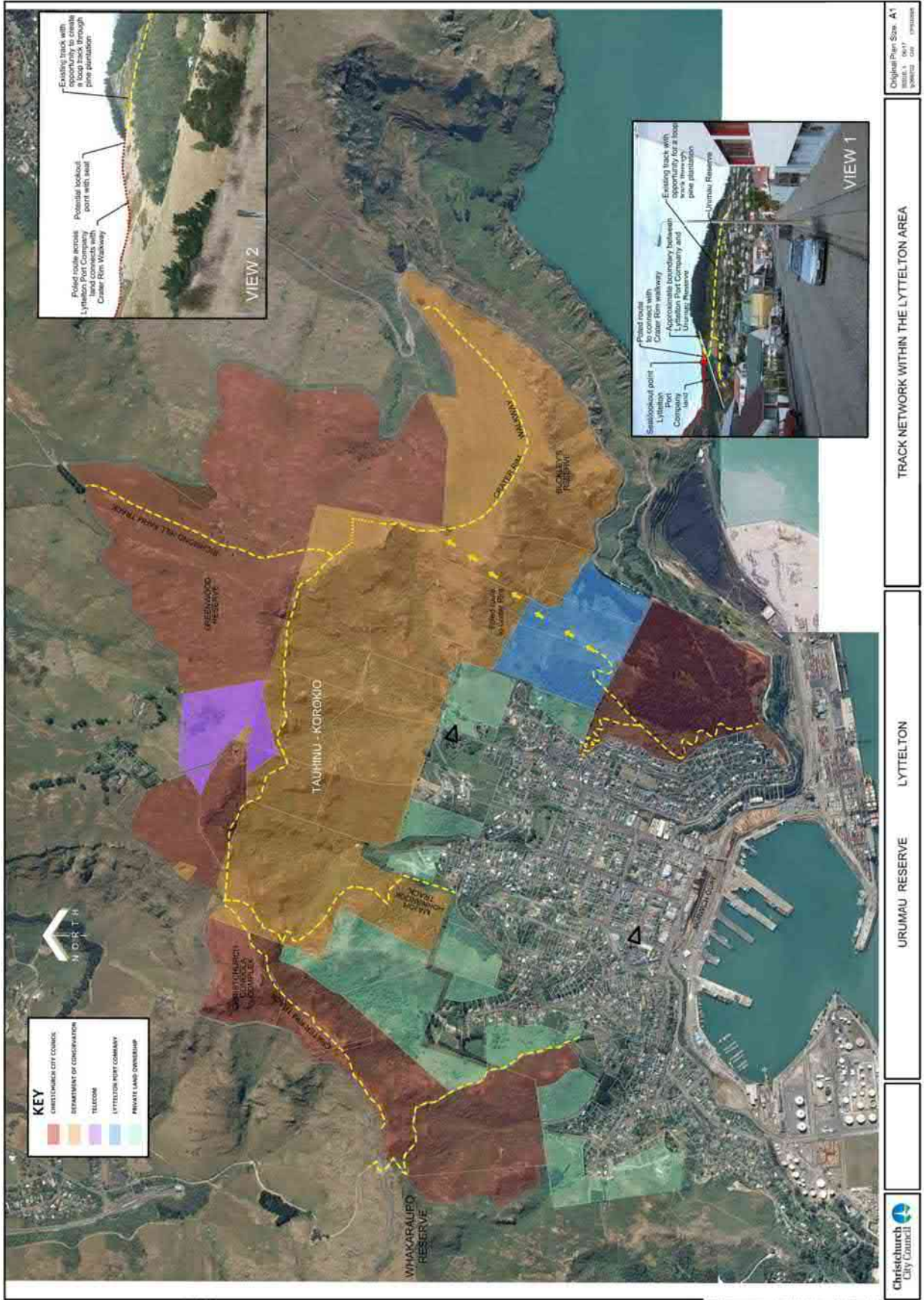
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Reserves Act 1977 Section 17(1)

Wilson, H.D. 1992. Banks Ecological Region: Port Hills, Herbert and Akaroa Ecological Districts. Protected Natural Areas Programme Survey Report No. 21. Department of Conservation, Canterbury. 342 pp.

Plan A Adjoining public land a track network



Plan B Draft Development Plan

