
Horowhenua District Open Space Strategy

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Introduction

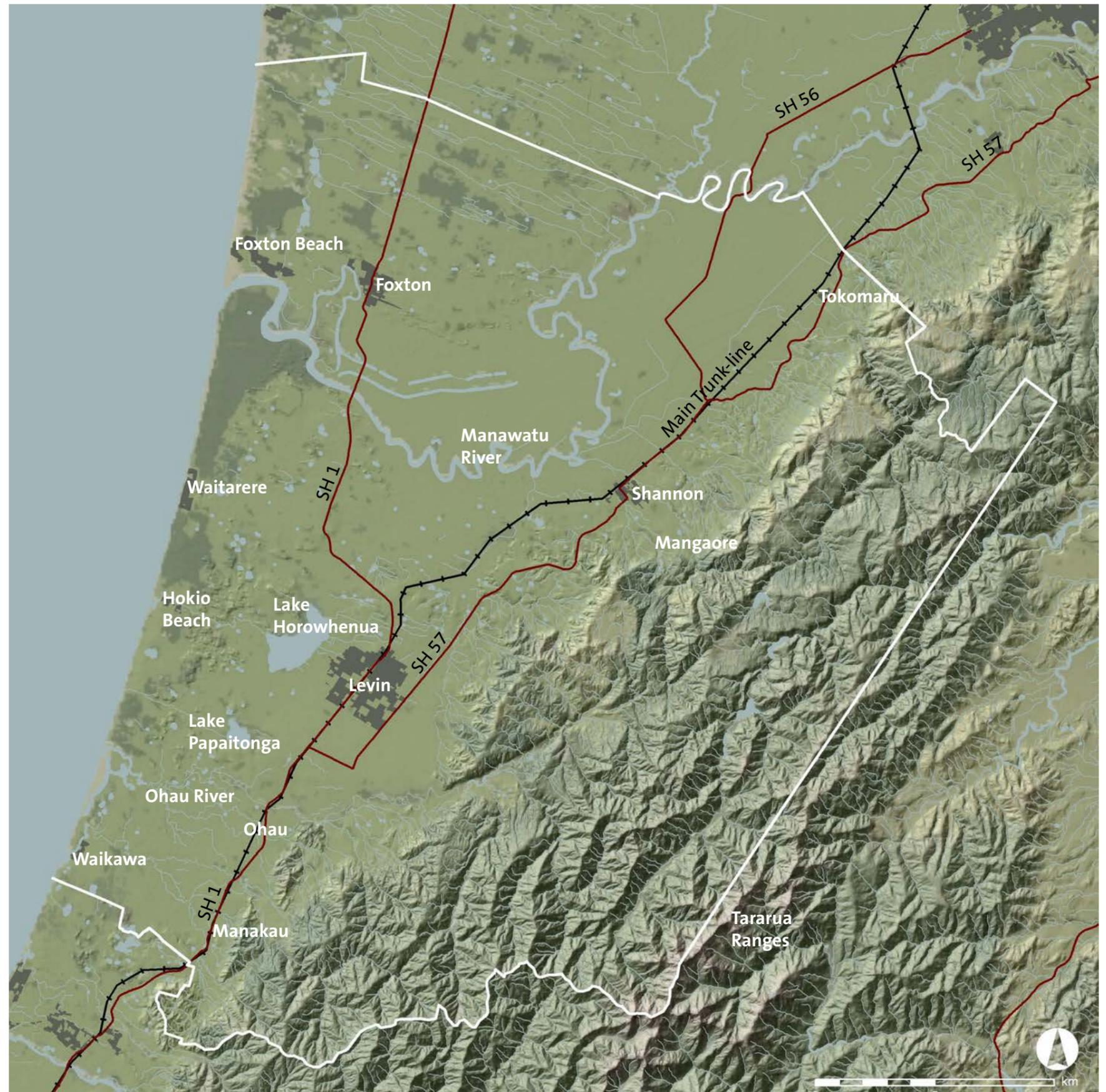


The Horowhenua District

The Horowhenua District is bestowed with a diversity of natural features and open spaces, giving local residents and visitors the option of enjoying the ranges, the plains and the coast, and many natural and cultural features in between. The urban areas of the district are distributed along the coast and along main transport networks, such as State Highway 1, State Highway 57 and the main trunk-line rail corridor. Each settlement has unique characteristics and open space requirements.

There are a number of significant freshwater bodies in the district which contribute to the open space. There are a number of coastal dune lakes which provide opportunity for ecology and recreation to coexist side by side, with Lake Horowhenua and Lake Papaitonga the two largest lakes. Similarly, the rivers and streams which stretch from the Tararua Ranges to the coast have important open space values, with the Manawatu and Ohau Rivers the largest rivers.

Defining the west and east boundaries of the district is the coast (to the west) and the Tararua Ranges (to the east). These distinctive areas of open space reinforce the characteristics of the district's open spaces and recreational opportunities.



Horowhenua District (boundary shown as a white line)

Acknowledgement:

The Horowhenua District Council formally acknowledge the financial assistance that has been provided by the Department of Conservation (Te Papa Atawhai) through the Biodiversity Advice Fund. This funding has helped with the preparation of this Strategy and in particular those matters specifically relating to the coastal dune lakes and wetlands.

What is Open Space?

Open spaces are generally the outdoor places around us that have:

- ecological values and provide habitats for local plants and animals;
- recreational values that we appreciate and enjoy including formal and informal sport, and active and passive activities;
- landscape values including patterns of landform, scenic beauty and sense of place;
- natural heritage values inherent in places with cultural or historic significance.

Generally Council-owned parks and reserves provide for passive and active recreation for the Horowhenua's community and visitors. The Conservation Estate managed by the Department of Conservation is accessible to the public and represented at a number of levels within the Horowhenua District. The Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council (Horizons Regional Council) does not currently have any regional parks within the Horowhenua District, but is a key organisation to work alongside with, to understand the broader regional context.

While this Horowhenua District Council (HDC) strategy is a stock-take of the different types of Council reserves and parks. It also recognises the wider regional context beyond the boundaries of the district and that collaboration on projects with agencies such as Department of Conservation (DoC), Horizons Regional Council, neighbouring district councils, schools, landowners and local iwi, will be necessary to achieve an effective open space network over the district.

What is open space in this context:

This strategy defines open space as:

Areas of land or water that the public has a level of free physical or visual access to

It is important to note that the definition of open space in the strategy is very broad and ranges from areas that facilitate certain activities such as sports and recreation reserves, to areas that facilitate passive enjoyment of open space such as river corridors, beaches and the Tararua Ranges, some of which may only be visually accessible.

It should be noted that the open space classification in this strategy does not include agricultural land, which is prevalent across the District.

While it is recognised that the value of open space is not determined by ownership, this strategy has a predominant focus on open space that is either under the control of the Horowhenua District Council or where it has the ability to partner, champion or influence outcomes.

This Strategy includes components where the ecological values are a key element of the open space (e.g. coastal dune lakes and wetlands). The majority of these ecologically significant areas are held in private ownership.



Muaupoko Park, Levin

What does this strategy do?

The purpose of this strategy:

Open space is integral to the District’s performance and to its social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. There are several purposes for this Open Space Strategy. The Long Term Plan (2012 – 2022) identified separate visions for economic, social, cultural, and environmental wellbeing.

A key linkage to all four wellbeings is the reliance on a quality Open Space network that can provide:

- adequate amenities for residents recognising changing demands and community expectations;
- opportunities for a balanced, healthy, stress free lifestyle with an abundance of outside recreational features;
- preservation and enjoyment of the district’s natural features;
- an increase in visitor numbers and spending; and
- maintain and enhance ecological values.

The Council currently lacks an overall vision for the future of open space within the Horowhenua District and this has made it difficult for Council to strategically acquire land or esplanade strips and reserves to add and improve the Open Space network. Acquisition opportunities present themselves through reserve and development contributions in new subdivisions, historic financial contributions to offset adverse environmental effects from developments, occasionally land gifted to the Council, or when key land parcels are on the market for purchase.

This Open Space Strategy will provide strategic direction to open space asset planning that the Council can manage through the Long Term Plan (LTP) and annual plan process, and through the development and update of Reserve Management Plans under the Reserves Act.

In addition the Council has embarked on a rolling-review of the District Plan. A key resource management topic to be traversed in the district plan review is the way in which parks and reserves are appropriately protected, developed, maintained and enhanced. This Open Space Strategy will identify key issues and potential options for the efficient and effective management of open space.

The Council also committed to the preparation of a Coastal Dune Lakes and Wetlands Strategy which was being prepared at the same time as the Open Space Strategy. During the preparation of these two Strategies, it was determined there were a number of overlapping issues, therefore, the Coastal Dune Lakes and Wetland Strategy has been incorporated into this Open Space Strategy.

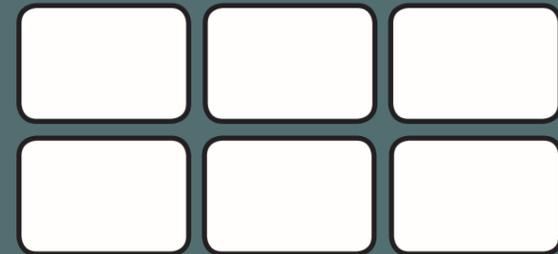
A glossary for the terms used in this document is provided in an appendix at the end of the document.

What does this strategy do?

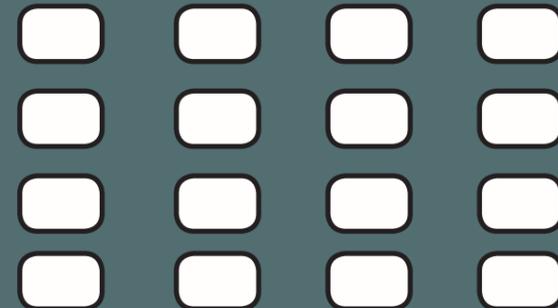
Provides broad overarching principles that relate to open space across the entire Horowhenua District



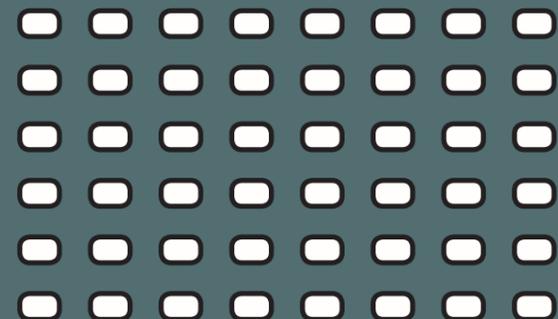
Provides 6 broad District wide strategies



Provides 16 local strategies, action plans and ecological network plans



Provides multiple actions that relate to Council owned reserves



What this strategy does not do

Open space is a broad subject and encompasses a number of different value sets. This Open Space Strategy is not a recreation, landscape, biodiversity, cultural or heritage strategy. Instead, this strategy is aimed at bringing together information the Council already holds on those value sets along with Council GIS property information, and community aspirations as outlined in existing Council survey and strategies.

The Strategy itself does not introduce rules or financial commitments on Council. The Strategy provides the vision, which is then implemented by Council adopting such communities in other Council documents such as Reserve Management Plans and the District Plan.

What else needs to be done

This strategy is based on reviewing existing documentation, GIS (geographic information systems) mapping, site observations and workshops with Council staff, Councillors and key stakeholders / partners during the first half of 2011.

The next stage for this strategy is to confirm the aspirations and principles with the Horowhenua communities and Council’s partners. Following this, the action plan can be implemented with the help of the communities and partners.

Further study into the recreational needs of the Horowhenua District should be considered and reviewed against this Open Space Strategy.

A stormwater management / hydrology plan should be progressed and integrated into this Open Space Strategy

Master plans, concept plans and development and landscape plans should be developed for individual open spaces to provide a robust and cohesive approach to implementation.

The future review of Reserve management plans shall have regard to this Open Space Strategy.

Any subdivision or structure plan for future growth area should refer to this Strategy and demonstrate how it aligns with the Principles and Community Aspirations .

Where does this strategy fit



The process

This Open Space Strategy has been produced by Horowhenua District Council and Boffa Miskell Ltd. The process of its preparation has consisted of extensive research and analysis of existing Council documentation, GIS data and included site visits, workshop and briefings with representatives from DoC, Horizons Regional Council and elected councillors and officers of Horowhenua District Council.

Limited consultation with landowners of identified dune lakes and wetlands has been undertaken during the preparation of this Strategy. This document outlines guiding principles for effective open space

development and management and demonstrates their application at a district level and across the 11 settlements within the Horowhenua. This document identifies a list of actions which will be subject to consultation with the communities of interest through related implementation tools prior to implementation.

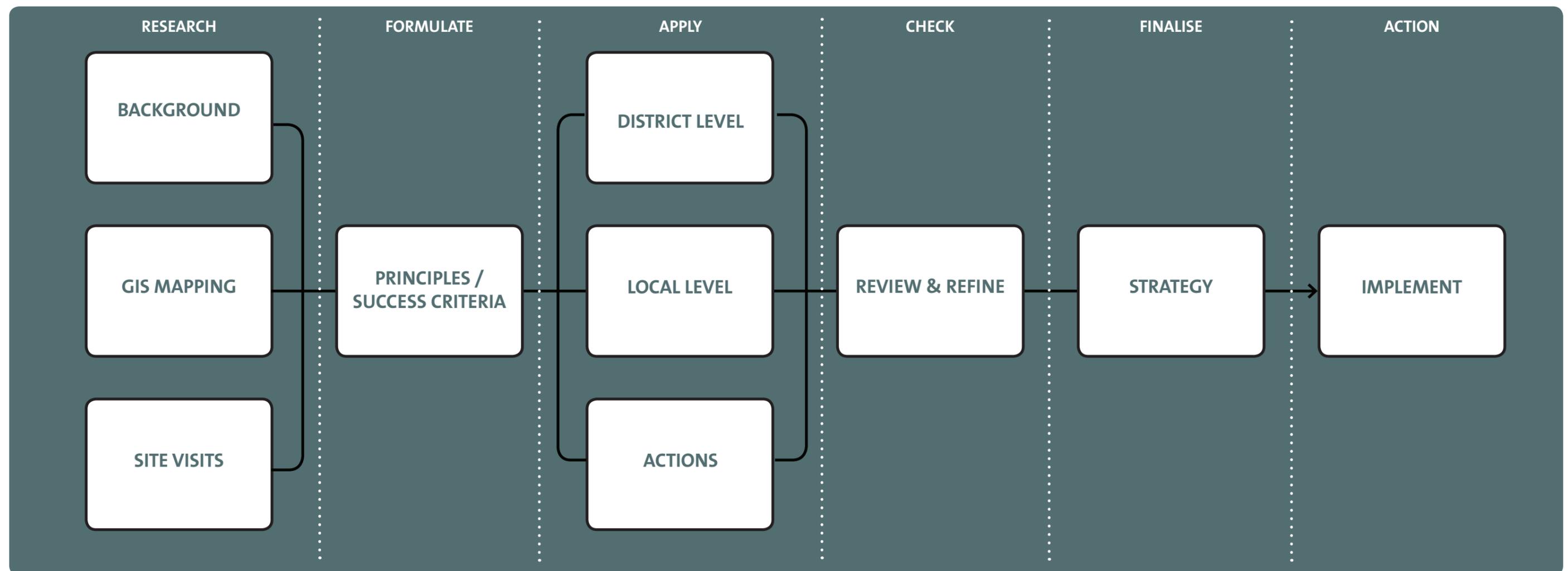


Diagram illustrating the process of the Open Space Strategy

