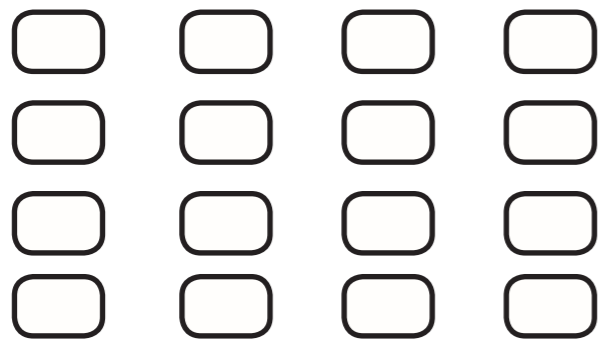


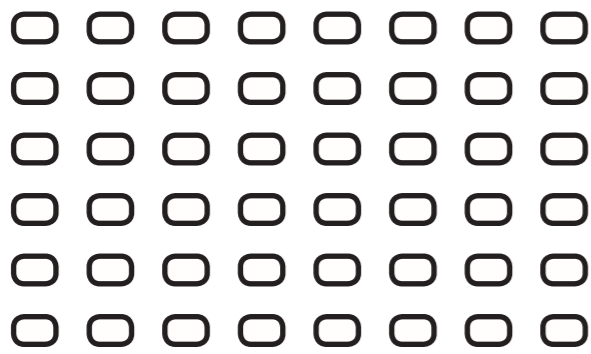
Applying the Principles Locally

Local strategies and actions

In addition to applying the principles at a district wide level, this strategy aims to describe how to apply them to individual settlement areas across the Horowhenua District.



There are 16 local strategies



With multiple actions that specifically relate to Council owned reserves

How to use the actions

The actions are guided by the principles and help explain how to deliver the strategy to meet community aspirations.

These actions can be prioritised and / or updated to fit Council wide programmes and objectives. They should also be reviewed with involvement from the various partners and communities. Any new / additional actions that relate to open space are considered outside of this strategy should be assessed against these principles.

The actions list includes actions that specifically relate to Council owned reserves. These should be prioritised / measured against the Council asset management plan, and considered against existing and future individual reserves management plans.

The actions should be reviewed on an annual basis and integrated into Council’s annual allocation of spend. This should consider developers contributions toward open space improvements.

What makes open space successful?

Using a Success Criteria

Understanding the successfulness of existing open space within each settlement helps inform how we can apply the principles and formulate the strategy.

For the purpose of this strategy, a criteria has been established to assess the successfulness of existing open spaces.

This criteria has utilised information established in Horowhenua District Council’s Asset Management Plan. However, note that assessments made in this process do not supersede the Council Asset Management Plan, but aims to provide a strategic recommendation on the qualitative value to each Council owned reserve within each of the settlements.

Existing Council owned reserves have been assessed based on four key categories to measure the successfulness of open space. These are:

- Accessibility
- Features
- Function
- Safety

For the purpose of this strategy, the assessment criteria is directed at assessing things that are intrinsic to the site, such as the location of the reserve in relation to the settlement.

It is also important to note that although this assessment considers the condition of various elements within the reserves, such as fences, gates, footpaths or vegetation, it does not rely on these to inform the overall value / grade of the particular open space.

The adjacent page illustrates some of the questions and observations made when using this criteria to assess Council owned reserves in the Horowhenua. A spreadsheet example of the success criteria can be found in Appendix, page 101.

The example shown on page 28 demonstrates how using this assessment technique across a settlement can provide a useful and legible snap shot of the successfulness of existing open space and in doing so provided a useful gap analysis of where on existing open space maybe under delivering.

This criteria can also be applied to potential or proposed open space in future growth areas / subdivisions.

Strategy Actions Evaluation Methodology

The eight guiding principles for the developing the Open Space Strategy have been used to evaluate each of the identified Strategy actions. While all actions would make a helpful contribution towards the Open Space of the District it is neither, practical or feasible to undertake all actions immediately or at the same time. To help provide a context for prioritising between actions, each action has been assigned a value of High, Medium or Low based on the degree to which the action would help deliver the Open Space Principles. Where there is strong or direct relationship between an action and the principle, this scored higher than those actions which failed to relate to a principle or only had an indirect connection.

A scoring system of 2, 1, 0 was used to evaluate the actions against each principle – 2 points where there was a strong or direct relationship, 1 point where there was some form of relationship direct or indirect, but not a strong relationship, and 0 points where there was no relationship or a very limited one between the action and the principle. It needs to be stressed that this scoring system is not a measurement of the projects' total value, but rather the project's open space value.

An action of High value would be one that scored highly across multiple principles (generally 9 points and above). A project or action with a very narrow focus would therefore have a Low value (generally 4 points or less). This does not mean that the project or action is not important or worth undertaking; instead it provides a basis to assist in deciding between multiple actions or projects. Actions or projects with a Low or Medium value may have potential to be expanded or tweaked to respond to opportunities to deliver on more of the Open Space Principles. For actions that refer to an assessment process (e.g. Assess recreational needs for Manakau Settlement) these have been scored in terms of what Open Space Principles the assessment would be looking to address.

Example:

ACTION		Establish a walkway along the edge of Manawatu River and improve river corridor to provide a continuous area of natural habitat between Foxton and Manawatu Estuary	
Open Space Principles	Value Questions	Value	
Create multi use/function facilities and open spaces	Does the facility provide for a range of different uses or purposes such as a variety of recreation opportunities, different active or passive open spaces, spaces which can provide an infrastructural function (stormwater retention) as well as an amenity or recreation function?	1	
Enhance and Strengthen partnerships	Does the action provide opportunities to enhance or strengthen partnerships between Council local groups, Government agencies, Iwi, schools or sports groups?	2	
Enhance peoples enjoyment of the Horowhenua landscape	Does the open space/action provide opportunities to enhance people's enjoyment of the Horowhenua landscape? Does it provide additional opportunities or open up opportunities for people to enjoy?	2	
Create continuous walkways/cycleways that are safe, legible and accessible	Does it create walkways/cycleways that link between open spaces, link open spaces to natural features, points of interest?	2	
Create and enhance activity focal points as well as protecting and enhancing local spaces	Does the open space create and enhance a focal point for activities? Does the action protect and/or enhance a local space?	2	
Enhance open space experiences by providing a variety of open spaces and routes for a range of abilities, functions and needs	Do the open spaces provide for a range of different abilities (young, old, mobile, disabled), functions (active or passive recreation, ecological, stormwater disposal) and needs (active, passive, amenity, conservation)? Are the routes suitable for a range of different abilities (young, old, mobile, disabled) and needs (recreation, leisure, access, amenity)?	1	
Utilise natural corridors for recreation and ecological benefits	Does the open space utilise natural corridors for recreation and ecological benefits?	2	
Provide for healthy and active lifestyles for all sectors of the community	Does the open space provide for a range of different sectors of the community (young, families, old, different ethnicities)?	1	

Using the criteria on settlements

Open Space within settlements

The criteria has been used on existing Open Spaces within each of the settlements. Together with the principles, this understanding of the successfulness of existing Open Space has informed each settlement's Open Space Strategy.

The following pages illustrate how the principles can be applied at a settlement level and provides a list of actions that help deliver the Open Space Strategy. The list includes actions that directly relate to existing council owned reserves within each of the settlements.

The settlements that have been included in this strategy are:

1. Foxton
2. Foxton Beach
3. Hokio Beach
4. Levin
5. Ohau
6. Mangaore
7. Manakau
8. Shannon
9. Tokomaru
10. Waikawa Beach
11. Waitarere

They have been arranged alphabetically from page 30.

Existing types of council owned reserves

For the purposes of taking stock of existing reserves, parks and other Open spaces owned and managed by Horowhenua District Council, this strategy categorises these into four different types:



Amenity space

Typically these are spaces that serve multiple use for local communities and visitors. Amenity spaces are usually found close to a commercial centre of a settlement and add to local sense of place.



Sports and Recreation parks

Typically these consist of large 'flat' green spaces for formal active sports and recreation. These are sometimes defined as domains, sports grounds or sports parks.



Neighbourhood parks

Typically these are small areas of land that serve as a local community park, playground and / or gathering space. These tend to be used by communities that live within a walkable distance of the park.



Natural habitats

Typically these are areas of land that have an ecological value and / or are connected to a natural feature such as a stream corridor, significant vegetation or a coastal landscape. Sometimes these spaces lack public access but remain valued through ecological benefit and visual access / importance.

Other types of open spaces within settlements

In addition to Council owned reserves, settlements also consist of other areas of land that could be considered to function or potentially function as important 'open space'.

This strategy includes consideration of these other types of open spaces within each of the settlement. These include DoC sites, school grounds, cemeteries, public carparks and privately managed outdoor recreation facilities such as golf courses, racecourses and API Showgrounds.

It is important to note that most of these types of open spaces generally fall outside of council control. However, this strategy seeks to instigate partnerships with private landowners / agencies to help deliver the strategy and actions.

Foxton - Existing Open Space

Key characteristics

Foxton is a small rural town in the west of the Horowhenua. The settlement straddles State Highway 1 and is adjacent to the Manawatu River (although most of the water from the river has been diverted through the Whirokino Cut at this point). Foxton was once a major port but eventually, following a number of groundings the port was closed down. The main flow of the river now no longer flows past Foxton as it has been diverted to take a more direct route. Flax production and harvesting which benefited from the peaty soils of the area, was a successful early industry around Foxton and was integral in its early economic growth. The town is now known for its murals, which depict many aspects of life in and around Foxton, and for its full size replica of a Dutch windmill known as De Molen.

Foxton is located about 6 km from the beach where there is a coastal settlement known as Foxton Beach. Foxton has one high school and three primary schools.

Successfulness of the existing open space

Foxton is well serviced in terms of the amount of open spaces it has. In general these Open Spaces function very well although in some places these Open Spaces are not well integrated with the town.

Easton Park is a playing field centrally located tucked in behind the central shopping area and surrounded by residential dwellings on the other sides. Unfortunately most of these dwellings have tall fences or hedges backing onto the park which creates a sense of seclusion. A second sports ground, Victoria Park, is located on the northern side of Foxton.

River Loop Playground is a linear park located on the edge of the Manawatu River loop/backwater. This park functions well and includes a children's playground, a number of interpretation panels and connections to the Foxton River loop walkway.

Flaxmill Reserve on the main street of Foxton serves as a well used space for picnicking and visitor information. De Molen windmill is located on Flaxmill Reserve.

The elevated Seaview Gardens is located at the south end of the main street in Foxton. With walkways up the landmark working water tower and views of the sea, Seaview Gardens is an important historic open space within the settlement and the district.



River Loop Playground, Foxton.



Easton Park, Foxton.



Flaxmill Reserve, Foxton.



Te Awahou, Foxton.



Foxton - Open Space Strategy

The Foxton Open Space Strategy and its actions seeks to illustrate the future vision for a well connected and celebrated open space network that reflects existing community aspirations and future growth and tourism opportunities for Foxton.

Key outcomes

- » The Open Space Strategy aligns with the Foxton Town Plan.
- » An open space and recreational needs assessment influences the future use of individual reserves within Foxton.
- » Target Reserve becomes a 'hub' for outdoor sports and recreation.
- » The River Loop walkway provides recreation opportunities for both the local community and visitors.
- » An upgraded cycleway between Foxton and Foxton Beach provides a cycle connection from Foxton to Foxton Beach and Shannon.
- » Access to the Manawatu River provides recreational opportunities for walkers, cyclists and boaties.
- » Revegetation of the river corridors provides for an enhanced ecological corridor for native species.
- » Safe, accessible and legible routes through existing and proposed open space (green-links) provide pedestrian shortcuts through the settlements.
- » Pedestrian footpaths / streetscapes are enhanced along key routes throughout the settlement. These routes focus on pedestrian needs to provide for and promote walking and cycling.
- » Key gateway, thresholds and focus points are enhanced to provide and help to reinforce Foxton's identity and character within the Horowhenua District.
- » Views towards the wider landscape are retained and celebrated to help orientation and to provide a sense of place.
- » Low impact stormwater management practices (such swales and rain gardens) are developed within open spaces, reserves and road berms to provide options for managing localised stormwater.



Walkways through a flax environment. Image of loop walkway on Waiheke Island, Auckland.



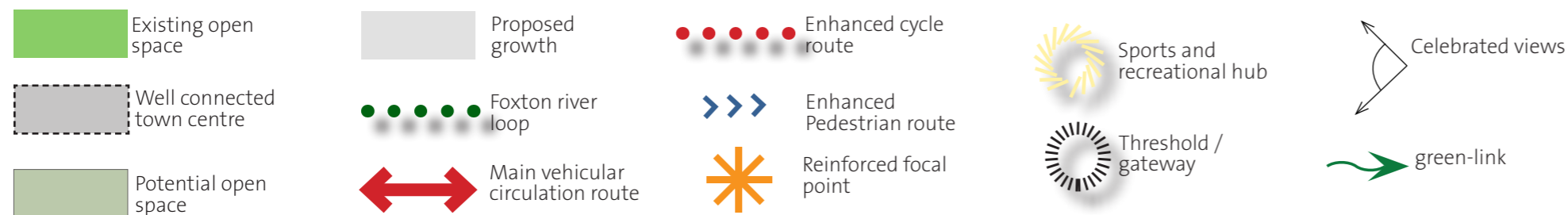
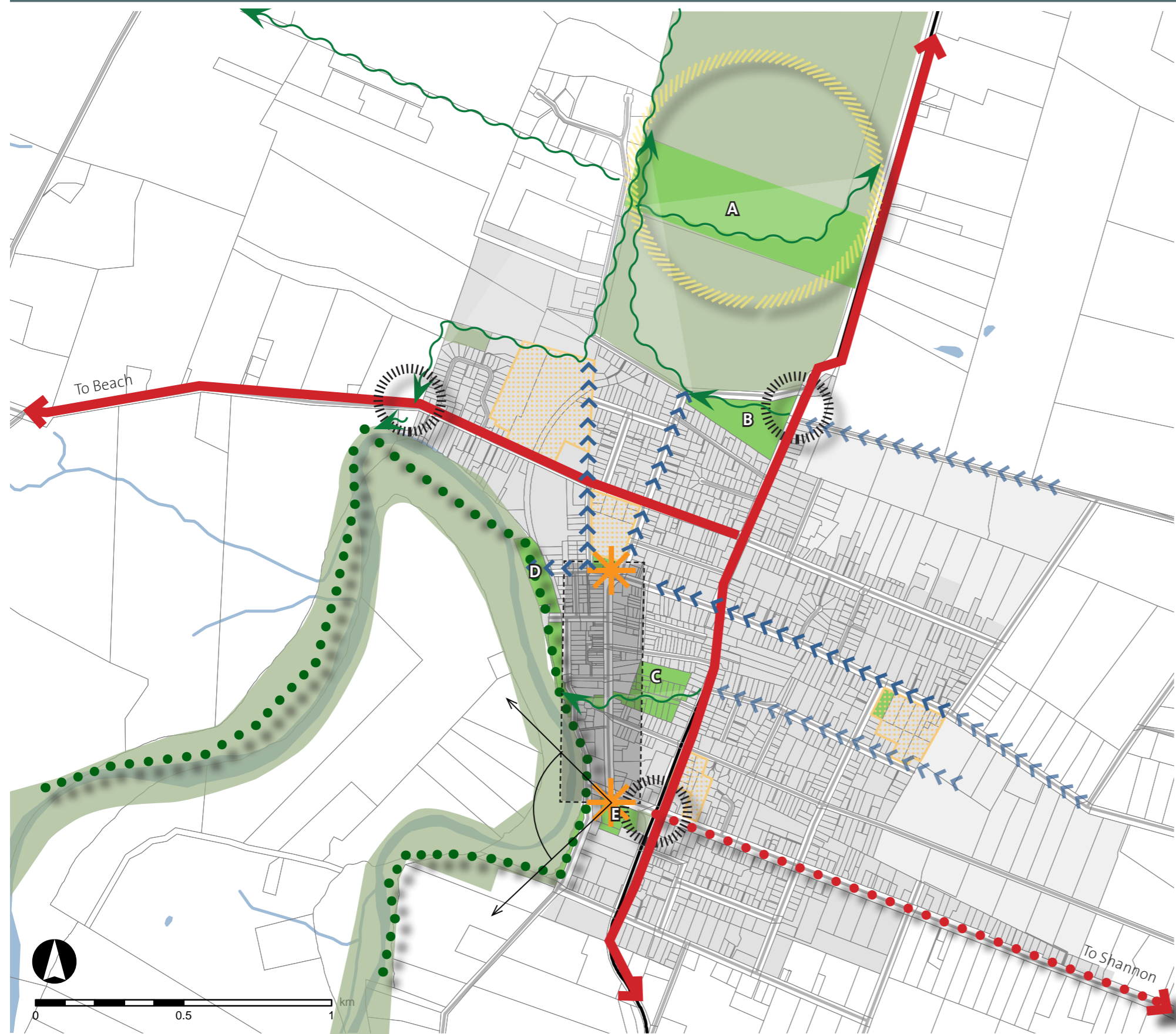
Image illustrating walking/cycleway boardwalk. Image source: <http://wellingtoncycleways.wordpress.com/2010/12/29/hawkes-bay-coastal-ride/>



Target Reserve could become a hub for sporting activities in a similar way to Levin Domain.



Target Reserve could provide a hub for outdoor sports and recreational activities such as walking, running, archery, Gun Clubs, pony treks, farm visits, orienteering, cross country, assault challenge courses, paint ball and golf. Image above of Manly Dam, Sydney.



STRATEGY ACTION	
ACTION	VALUE
Upgrade cycleway between Foxton and Foxton Beach that follows main vehicular circulation route.	H
Establish a walkway along the edge of Manawatu River and improve river corridor to provide a continuous area of natural habitat between Foxton and the Manawatu Estuary.	H
Create a sports and recreational hub at Target Reserve.	H
Protect and enhance views towards the Tararua Ranges and the coast from the settlement.	H
Implement Foxton River loop walkway.	H
Identify opportunities and develop low impact stormwater management practices (such as water retention basins, swales and rain gardens) within reserves and open spaces where they can help manage localised stormwater and add to the overall open space amenity value.	M
Investigate wider recreational, ecological and amenity open space opportunities to secure open space that serves the local community.	M
Encourage community involvement of river improvement/ revegetation and ecological or amenity improvements to river open soace areas.	M
Instigate opportunities for green-links that serve as pedestrian shortcuts within the settlement.	M
Enhance key gateways and thresholds into and out of Foxton.	L
Investigate developing cycle route to Shannon.	L

ACTIONS FOR COUNCIL RESERVES	
ACTION	VALUE
A. Establish vision, master plan and management plan for Target Reserve. Consider racecourse, golf course and Victoria Park as part of this process.	H
B. Assess recreational and open space value of Victoria Park.	H
C. Assess recreational value/function considering future use of Easton Park. Consider access through and into open space/public swimming pool.	H
D. Increase pedestrian connections to River Loop.	M
In reviewing and developing the management plans and concept plans for reserves identify areas where a reserve may be 'under-delivering' in terms of its open space contribution to the Strategy principles.	M
E. Review Seaview Gardens Management Plan and seek to implement actions in relation to the Town Centre Plan.	L

Foxton Beach - Existing Open Space

Key characteristics

Foxton Beach is a small coastal settlement located about 6km from Foxton at the mouth of the Manawatu River. The town is a popular holiday destination due mainly to its proximity to the beach, the bird sanctuary and the Manawatu Estuary which was given RAMSAR status in 2005.

Foxton Beach has one primary school but high school students must travel to Foxton for their education.

Successfulness of the existing open space

For the size of its population Foxton Beach has ample open space. The successfulness of the existing open space could be greatly enhanced by strong connections between open space areas.

In the centre of Foxton Beach township is Holben Reserve (Te Wharangi) which is a dominating feature of the settlement. This reserve is a multi-function open space and includes a children's play area, sports facilities and picnic areas. However access points into the reserve can be unclear and the reserve would benefit from having clearly identified routes through.

Flagstaff Reserve is a much smaller area of open space and is located adjacent to the main road. It contains a small children's play area and acts as a small neighbourhood park for much of the eastern side of Foxton Beach settlement.

A series of walkways surrounding the estuary provide significant recreation opportunities for Foxton Beach and communities across the district. As the estuary is an internationally significant habitat for migratory seabirds, these walkways draw visitors from further afield.

The beach itself also contributes significantly to the quantity of open space in Foxton Beach, however despite its proximity to the township, the two are poorly connected as a consequence of the sand dunes that are situated between the beach and the township. A large carpark, which is cut into the dunes, provides access to the beach and is adjacent to the surf-lifesaving club.

There are additional areas along the edges of the roads and streets in the settlement that could resemble openspace. These tend to be large grass berms or irregular areas at road junctions.



Flagstaff Reserve is located on the edge of the main road through Foxton Beach settlement.



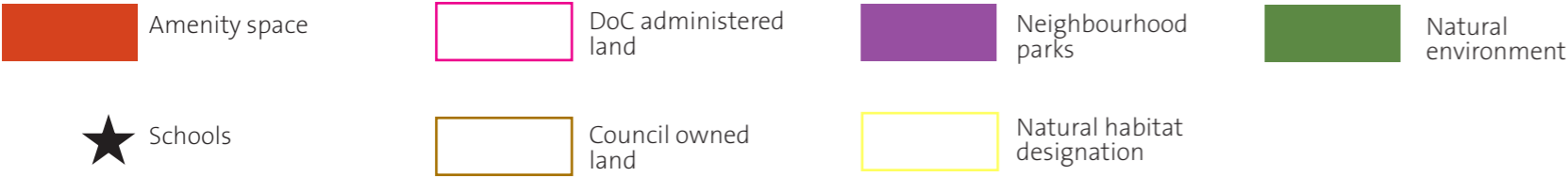
The Manawatu Estuary and RAMSAR site is located adjacent to the settlement at Foxton Beach.



Informal open space adjacent to Seabury Ave acting as a focal point / information stop. (Source: http://maps.google.co.nz/maps?rlz=1T4ADFA_enNZ492NZ493&q=75%20Seabury%20Gardens%20Ave%2C%20Foxton%20Beach&safe=vss&um=1&ie=UTF-8&hl=en&sa=N&tab=wl)



The carpark and surf-lifesaving club at Foxton Beach.



Foxton Beach - Open Space Strategy

The Foxton Beach Open Space Strategy and its actions seeks to illustrate a future vision for a well connected and celebrated open space network that reflects existing community aspirations and future growth/ tourism opportunities for Foxton Beach.

Key outcomes

- » Access to the beach is enhanced for pedestrians. The beach becomes open space by default.
- » An upgraded cycleway between Foxton and Foxton Beach, that is separate from the main vehicular carriageway provides safe cycle connection from Foxton Beach to Foxton.
- » Physical and visual access to the Manawatu Estuary is protected, enhanced and celebrated.
- » Safe, accessible and legible routes through existing and proposed open space (green-links) provides pedestrian shortcuts through the settlements.
- » Existing and proposed pedestrian footpaths / streetscapes will be enhanced along key routes throughout the settlement. These routes focus on pedestrian needs to provide for and promote walking and cycling.
- » Key gateway, thresholds and focus points are enhanced to provide and help toward reinforcing Foxton Beach's identity and character within the Horowhenua.
- » Views towards the wider landscape are retained and celebrated to help orientation and to provide a sense of place.
- » Formal access to mountain bike tracks are explored in partnership with landowners.
- » Low impact stormwater management practices (such swales and rain gardens) are developed within open spaces, reserves and road berms to provide options for managing localised stormwater.
- » An open space and recreational needs assessment influences the future use of individual reserves within Foxton Beach.

» Water retention basins are developed in Forbes Rd subdivision and Flagstaff Reserve. In addition to providing a practical solution for stormwater build up these have amenity, aesthetic, ecological and conservation benefits.

» Where possible hard surfaces are avoided to allow water to drain naturally into the ground.

» Enhance connections between existing open space areas to establish a well connected open space network.



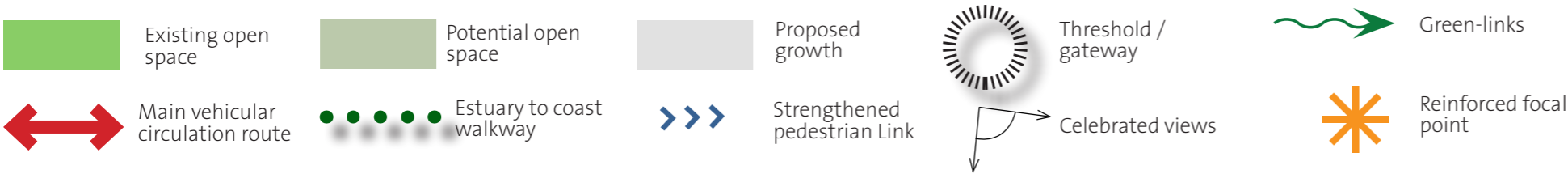
Example of green-link which serves as a pedestrian shortcut within the settlement.



Clearly defined routes across the dunes to help identify access to the beach whilst protecting the dune landscape.



Mountain bike opportunities. Image source: <http://www.bikeradar.com/news/article/300k-mountain-biking-plan-for-sherwood-pines-12491/>



STRATEGY ACTION	
ACTION	VALUE
Promote continuous local walking/cycling loops that include access to viewing the RAMSAR site and across the estuary.	H
Upgrade cycleway/walkways between Foxton and Foxton Beach along main vehicular circulation route.	H
Investigate benefits of multi-organisational management (Co-operative) for all the HDC and DoC Reserves, including the parabolic dune fields, lower river reserves and publically managed conservation or recreation land.	H
Develop swales along Whitebait Creak, Soo Subdivision and Short St.	H
Develop water retention basins where multi use opportuniyies for recreation and stormawater functions exist.	H
Instigate opportunities for green-links that serve as pedestrian shortcuts within the settlement.	M
Access points into coastal park environment to the north.	M
Investigate potential to establish and enhance connections to the dune lake environment to the north.	M
Seek to provide accessible mountain bike tracks/horse riding tracks.	L
Protect and enhance views towards the estuary from key view points within the settlement.	L

ACTIONS FOR COUNCIL RESERVES	
ACTION	VALUE
A. Enhance physical and visual connections between and through reserves and open space.	H
B. Improve pedestrian access to the beach and waterways, whilst protecting the natural environment.	H
C. Identify opportunities and develop low impact stormwater management practices (such as water retention basins, swales and rain gardens) within reserves and open spaces where they can help manage localised stormwater and add to the overall open space amenity value.	M
D. Investigate ways to soften car park area with appropriate planting and design works and increase multiuse and functionality of car parks.	L

Manawatu River Estuary – Koputara Lakes Ecological Network

This Network comprises the Manawatu River Estuary extending north through to Round Bush Scenic Reserve along Whitebait Creek. A number of coastal dune lakes and wetlands are within this Network, including Lake Omanu, Orouakaitawa Lagoon, Koputara Lake 3, Koputara Lake 2 and Koputara Lake 1. These large dune lakes and wetlands have a range of ecological values in terms of providing largely connected habitat for indigenous flora and fauna, including a number of nationally threatened species such as spotless crake and bittern. Round Bush Scenic Reserve is considered to be one of the only remaining examples of coastal swamp forest of this size in the District. Lake Omanu is owned by Fish and Game and is maintained for recreational shooting. Orouakaitawa Lagoon consists of a medium-sized wetland which includes a shallow lagoon, reedland, flaxland & mixed shrubland. Koputara Lake 3 comprises a large pond with extensive raupo and reedland and areas of ephemeral wetland. Koputara Lake 2 is a large, more modified coastal dune lake with identified water quality issues. Koputara Lake 1 comprises dense indigenous vegetation and provides good habitat for indigenous wildlife. All of these lakes have good hydrological connections with Whitebait Creek

Most of these lakes and wetlands have been fenced from stock access and there are a number of restoration initiatives underway to enhance these areas and the ecological connections between.

Whitebait Creek is a small tributary of the Manawatu River and passes through the urban area of Foxton Beach and into farmland further north. Whitebait Creek is the subject of a Horizons Regional Council-funded community restoration project to improve native fish populations along the waterbody and including the dune lakes to the north. This has resulted in some fencing and restoration initiatives in the area and public access agreements with landowners to facilitate access within this Network.

The Manawatu River Estuary is a RAMSAR wildlife site and is considered internationally important due to habitat for migratory bird species.

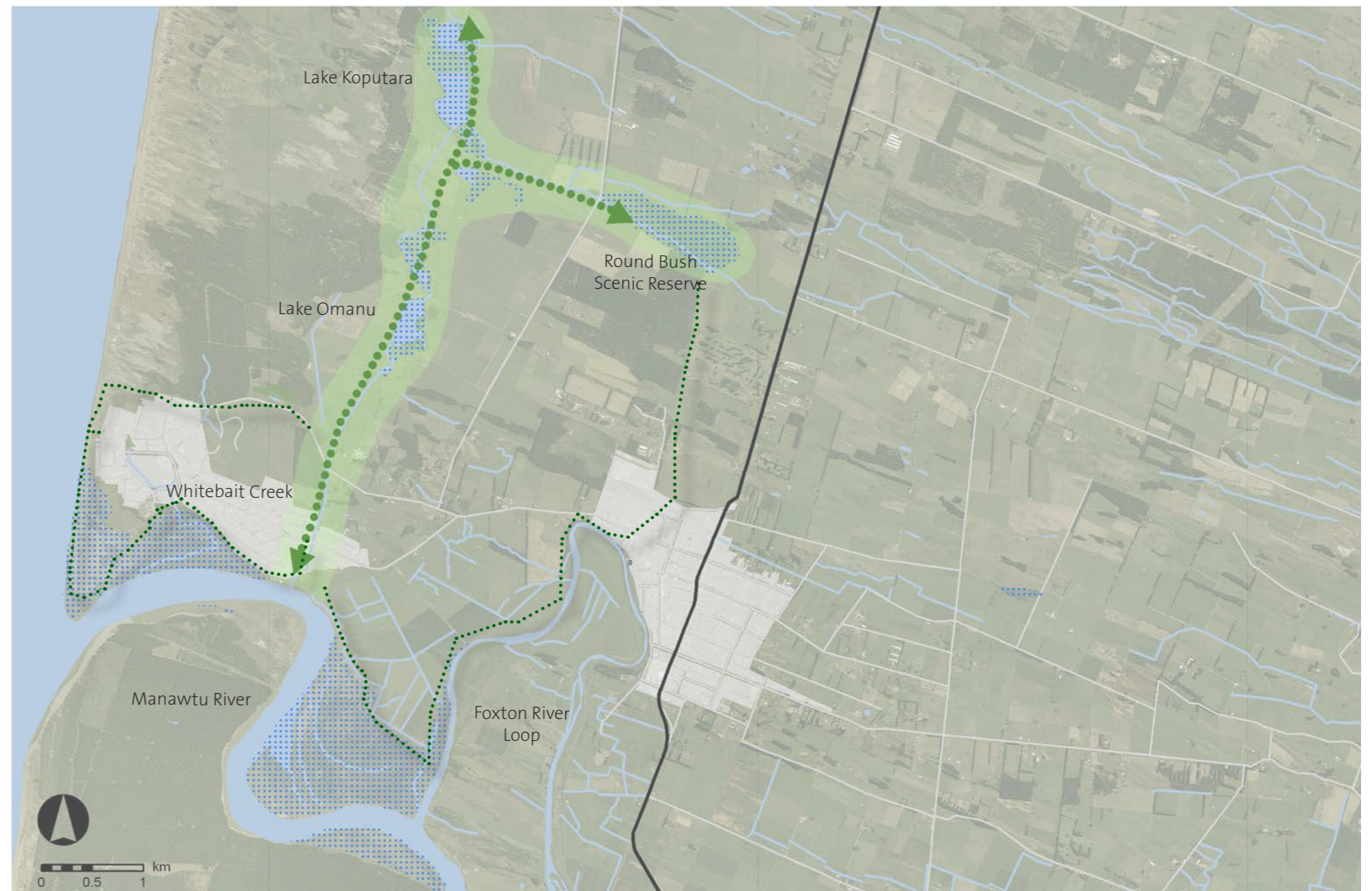


Koputara Lakes and wetlands

Manawatu River Estuary – Koputara Lakes Ecological Network

Ongoing and future threats within this Network include aquatic weeds, dairy conversion, drainage and waterbody maintenance, poaching and recreational shooting. Sambar deer are an ongoing issue in the wetland areas and potentially invasive exotic plants such as willow are also a problem.

The long-term outcome for this network is to manage water quality of the Koputara Lakes, including run-off and lake water levels, and to provide a continuous ecological and recreation connection by building on the existing riparian fencing and planting initiatives between the Koputara Lakes and the Manawatu Estuary, including Whitebait Creek and the Foxton Loop.



This plan shows the potential Koputara Lakes Ecological Network

Identified ecological network

Hokio Beach - Existing Open Space

Key characteristics

Hokio Beach is a small coastal settlement about 7km west of Levin and Lake Horowhenua. The settlement is defined by its coastal setting and has distinctive characteristics that appear quite different from Levin. The settlement consists of a number of holiday baches and residential accommodation.

On the approach to the settlement, the windy and narrow Hokio Beach Road consists of flax, wetlands and native wildlife such as pukeko on either side. The road takes you through the settlement towards the beach. Once on the beach, the expansive views north and south can be spectacular. Kapiti Island is a feature to the south, and you can see Mount Taranaki's snow-capped peak to the north on clear days. Driving or walking along the coast will take you past Waitarere Beach to Manawatu River mouth north, and to Waikawa Beach south.

Successfulness of the existing Open Space

At present Hokio Beach settlement consists of one area of land that is considered 'reserve' and managed accordingly. This area of local amenity space consists of a small playground, flat grass areas with council rubbish bins, signage, BBQs and seating.

Although relatively small and possibly not that adaptable, this open space scores highly using the success criteria. It is well connected to the settlement and coastal environment, it is highly visible from the street, has a good distinctive character with a natural and interesting backdrop. The open space also functions as a gateway to the beach from the settlement.

Hokio Beach settlement does not currently have a designated area for formal sports and recreation, however it has easy access to the beach, dunes and Hokio Stream corridor. These natural assets provide for a range of different experiences and recreation opportunities.



Estuary at Hokio Beach.



Hokio Reserve Playground , Hokio Beach.



Hokio Beach - Open Space Strategy

The Hokio Beach Open Space Strategy and its actions seeks to illustrate the future vision for a protected, enhanced and celebrated coastal landscape.

Key outcomes

- » Access to the beach is enhanced for pedestrians. The beach becomes open space by default.
- » A new publicly accessible walkway that follows Hokio Stream is created.
- » Physical and visual access to the coast is protected, enhanced and celebrated.
- » Safe, accessible and legible routes through existing and proposed open space (green-links) provide pedestrian shortcuts through the settlements.
- » Existing and proposed pedestrian footpaths / streetscapes are enhanced along key routes throughout the settlement. These routes focus on pedestrian needs to provide for and promote walking and cycling.
- » A key gateway is enhanced to provide and help toward reinforcing Hokio Beach's identity and character within the Horowhenua.
- » Low impact stormwater management practices (such swales and rain gardens) are developed within open spaces, reserves and road berms to provide options for managing localised stormwater.
- » An open space and recreational needs assessment influences the future use of individual reserves within Hokio Beach.



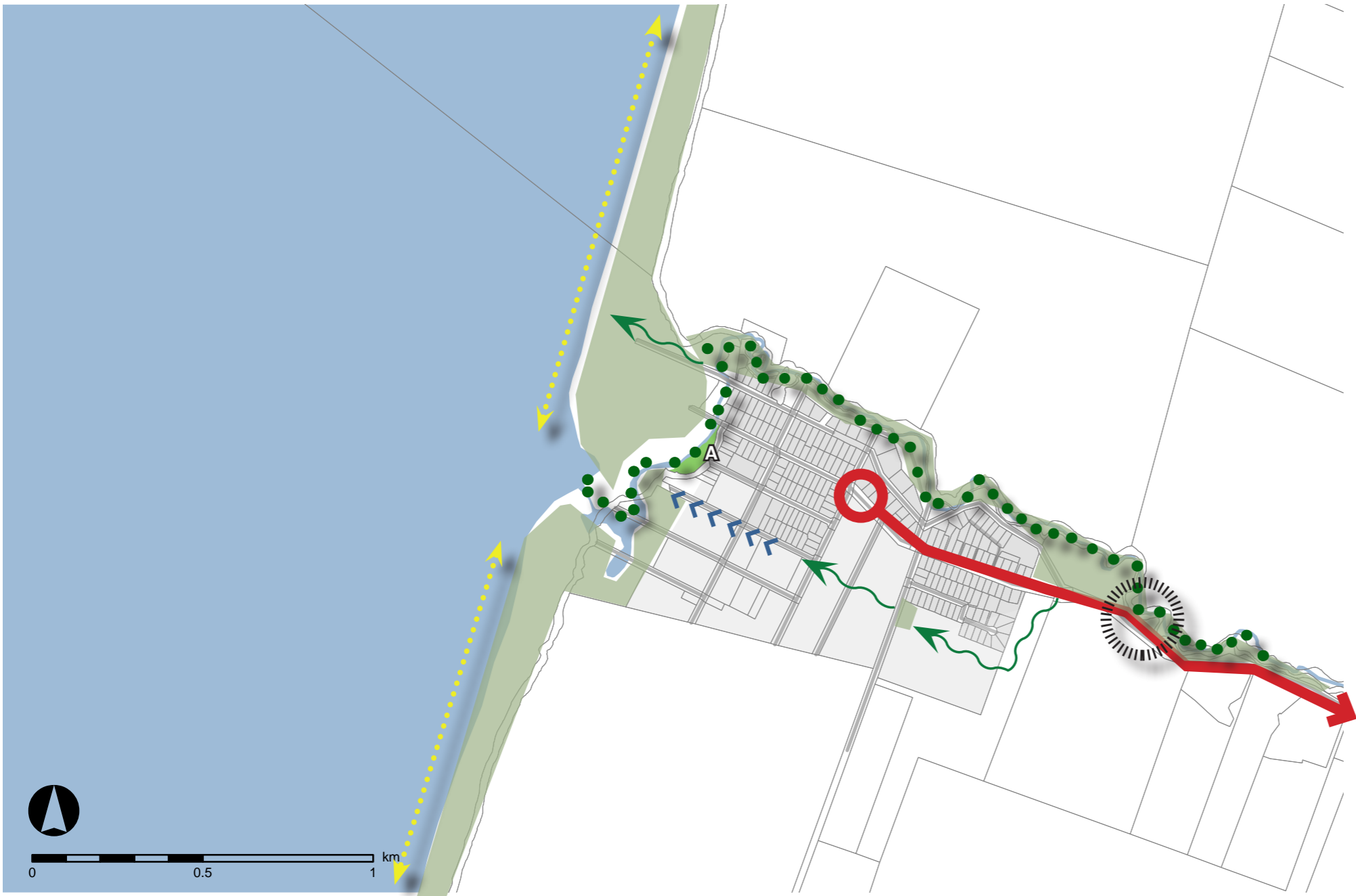
Example of a publicly accessible walkway along a stream. Image source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mojohealy/>



Example of an enhanced gateway that helps to reinforce the identity and character of the town.



Hokio Beach is a valuable area of open space.



STRATEGY ACTIONS	
ACTION	VALUE
Improve access to the beach from within the settlement, whilst protecting the dune landscape.	H
Identify opportunities and develop low impact stormwater management practices (such as water retention basins, swales and rain gardens) within reserves and open spaces where they can help manage localised stormwater and add to the overall open space amenity value.	M
Improve cycling opportunities along the main vehicular route (Hokio Beach Road).	M
Provide walking tracks along Hokio Stream that are well connected to beach and create loop walkways that can be easily accessed from the settlement.	M
Enhance and protect views towards the coast.	L
Develop pedestrian green-links which provide pedestrian short cuts between streets.	L
Enhance key gateways and threshold into and out of Hokio Beach settlement.	L

ACTION FOR COUNCIL RESERVES	
ACTION	VALUE
A. Work with local community to improve facilities and open spare recreational opportunities at Hokio Beach. Identify land for acquisition and development that would add value in terms of open space and recreation values.	M



Levin - Existing Open Space

Key characteristics

Levin is located in the centre of the Horowhenua District between Lake Horowhenua and the Tararua Ranges. State Highway 1 runs through Levin, as does the main railway trunk-line between Auckland and Wellington.

With a population of around 15000 inhabitants Levin is the largest settlement in the district and acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area. An estimated 20% of Levin's population is over the age of 65, which is considerably higher than the national average.

Successfulness of the existing Open Space

Levin has a range of open space types providing a broad variety of experiences and uses across the settlement. Smaller neighbourhood parks tend to be located in south east and north east quadrants, whilst large amenity, sports / recreational and natural environment open spaces are reasonably spread.

Maire Street Reserve is an example of an appropriately sized neighbourhood park that functions well and provides a variety of experiences including children's play, a paddling pool and informal passive recreation opportunities.

Iona Park, Argyle Avenue Reserve and Kennedy Park generally function extremely well as neighbourhood parks. Iona Park provides one of the few areas for walking dogs in Levin.

Other neighbourhood parks provide a good allocation of space for local communities, however some of these are poorly positioned within their surrounding context and consist of back fences facing onto the open spaces making these spaces appear neglected and unsafe.

The north-west corner of Levin is particularly poorly served in terms of its access to open space especially given that this is an area that is zoned for potential growth. The main area of open space in this corner are Western Park, Levin North School and Argyle Avenue Reserve.

Levin is well-served well for sports and recreation parks. As the largest settlement within the district these facilities also typically serve users outside of Levin. It is unclear if there is an over or under supply of sports facilities at this stage. This should be looked at in a recreational needs study across the district.

Donnelly Park is the prime sports facility in Levin. Its proximity to both Levin and Lake Horowhenua provides an opportunity for a sports and recreational hub that serves the district.

Playford Park has huge potential as a regional sports park, when looked at with Waiopahu College. There is potential for it to be utilised more as a green-link between local roads.

The natural environments of Prouse Bush Reserve, Kowhai Park and Waiopahu Scenic Reserve provide important ecological and recreational sites within and on the edges of the settlement.

Lake Horowhenua Domain / Muaupoko Park is a multi-functional open space boasting access to the lake and large areas of open ground for formal and informal activities. Although some of the structures could benefit from an upgrade, the open space generally works well as a local and regional destination / facility.

In addition to the identified council owned reserves, there are a number of other areas of land that could be considered open space within Levin. These include school grounds, cemeteries, the adventure park on Oxford Street, the showgrounds and the racecourse.

Edges of Oxford Street, Queen Street and the trunk-line also serve as areas of land where people enjoy passive activities. These could also be considered important parts of the open space network.



Muaupoko Park and Lake Horowhenua



Donnelly Park, Levin.



- Neighbourhood parks
- Amenity space
- Sports and recreation parks
- Natural environment
- School
- Council owned land
- Adventure playground

Levin - Open Space Strategy

The Levin Open Space Strategy and its actions seeks to demonstrate Levin's potential for a diverse, multi-functional and well connected open space network that meets the community aspirations for this large settlement within the Horowhenua.

Key outcomes

- » Levin's open space network is well connected and provides a range of different activities and experiences.
- » Accessible walkways loop around Lake Horowhenua.
- » Levin is reinforced as the hub for structured sports and recreation in the Horowhenua District.
- » Safe, accessible and legible routes through existing and proposed open space, school grounds and private open space (green-links) provide important pedestrian shortcuts through the settlement.
- » Existing and proposed pedestrian footpaths / streetscapes are enhanced along key routes throughout the settlement. These routes focus on pedestrian needs to provide for and promote walking and cycling.
- » Key gateways are enhanced to provide and help toward reinforcing Levin's identity and character within the Horowhenua.
- » Low impact stormwater management practices (such swales and rain gardens) are developed within open spaces, reserves and road berms to provide options for managing localised stormwater.
- » An open space and recreational needs assessment influences the future use of individual reserves within Levin.

STRATEGY ACTIONS	VALUE
Create an interpretation route along the Queen Street spine recognising this as an important connection and gateway to the settlement.	H
Emphasise Queen Street as a key spine/link between Lake and Ranges.	H
Promote Levin as the sports and recreational hub to the Horowhenua district.	H
Investigate improving connections between Levin Domain open spaces, schools and Lake Horowhenua.	H
Secure adequate open space to accommodate the needs for a large park for passive recreation and conservation reasons in Levin, and to provide an opportunity to re-establish Levin's rapidly diminishing ("MacArthur Street") Podocarp Forest. Assess these open spaces based on success criteria.	H
Investigate natural flow paths in the Levin urban area to allow for enhanced drainage into Lake Horowhenua.	M
Protect and secure adequate open space to accommodate future growth areas in Levin. Assess these open spaces based on success criteria.	M
Facilitate regional walking and cycling activities.	M
Identify opportunities and develop low impact stormwater management practices (such as water retention basins, swales and rain gardens) within reserves and open spaces where they can help manage localised stormwater and add to the overall open space amenity value.	M
Investigate wider recreational, ecological and amenity open space opportunities to secure open space that serves the local community.	M
Consider using the train station as a focal hub for open space cycling and walking opportunities.	L
Enhance key gateways and threshold into and out of Levin.	L

ACTIONS FOR COUNCIL OWNED RESERVES	
ACTION	VALUE
A. Develop concept plan considering potential green-links through Kennedy Drive, linking Kennedy Park to Roslyn Road, and multi use of the space.	H
B. Investigate opportunities to improve connections through Kowhai Park and to encourage active edges and visibility through the site.	H
C. Reinforce the central position of the Village Green within the Town Centre and its connection to the Queen Street Spine. Develop a community Concept Plan that demonstrates its potential for a multi-functional civic space in the heart of the town centre.	H
D. Review recreational opportunities at Western Park. Seek to connect reserve to Lake Horowhenua via a green-link.	H

E. Develop a landscape/planting plan for Muaupoko Park that develops it, and focuses on Iwi goals for enhancing/restoring the Lake.	H
F. Develop Concept Plan of Vincent Drive Reserve with local community for environmental and recreation facility improvements.	H
G. Investigate ways to connect parks and or neighbourhood reserves to adjacent drainage/stream corridors, and link to Lake Horowhenua.	H
H. Develop Playford Park in a manner that maintains the amenity of the wide open frontage onto Bartholomew Road and the strong visual connection to the Tararua Ranges. Work in partnership with community/sports groups and local schools to recognise the potential of this site as a multi-functional open space.	H
I. Develop Donnelly Park in a manner that recognises the role that this site has as a regional recreational hub and multi-purpose Open Space. Work in partnership with community groups and local schools to maximise the potential Open Space connections to Lake Horowhenua, nearby schools and other open spaces.	H
J. Review management plans for neighbourhood reserves and develop concept plans that integrate environmental, aesthetic, ecological and recreational opportunities.	H
K. Improve access and legibility of space in Levin Domain. Incorporate open spaces into any future town plan.	M
L. Review existing management plan of Public Gardens/ Remembrance Park. Assess interest in developing gardens of regional significance within Public Gardens. Seek to improve connections between Art Society, gardens and Queen Street spine.	M
M. Investigate ways to enhance connections between Donnelly Park and Lake Horowhenua.	M
N. In reviewing and developing the management plans and concept plans for reserves identify areas where a reserve may be 'under-delivering' in terms of its open space contribution to the Strategy principles.	M
O. Consider recreational needs for Weraroa Domain. Look to provide threshold/gateway at this location which enhances people's impression and driving experience of Levin.	L