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DRAFT SIGNAL HILL RECREATION RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN

JANUARY 2024

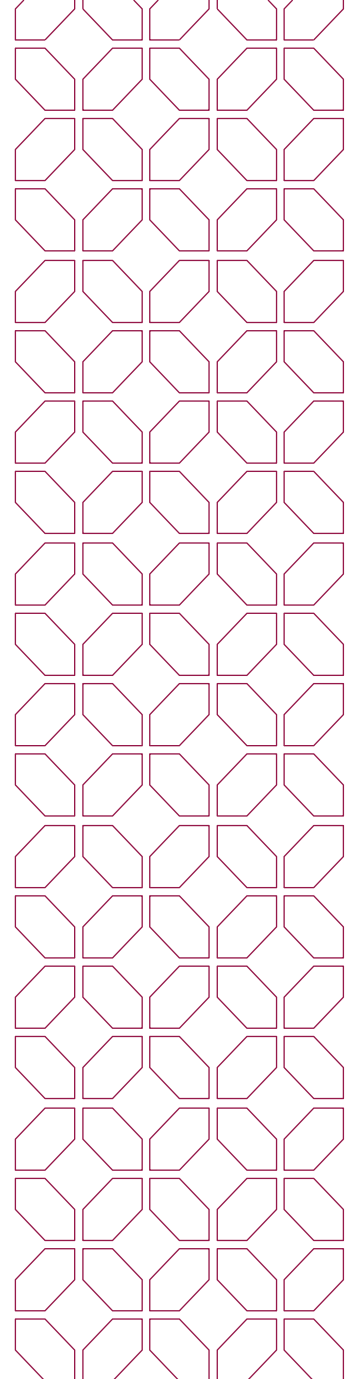


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Ōtepoti



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Signal Hill Recreation Reserve Management Plan (Plan) has been created to ensure the management of the Signal Hill Recreation Reserve (the Reserve) complies with the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 (the Act). It is the intention of the Plan that the development of the Reserve maintains and seeks to improve the recreation opportunities while still retaining the values of the Reserve.

The Signal Hill Recreation Reserve Management Plan 2003 (2003 Plan) was adopted in December 2003. The Act requires the administering authority to keep reserve management plans under continuous review. The 2003 Plan has not been reviewed since its adoption. The 2003 Plan emphasises management rather than development of the Reserve. The sentiment at the time was to allow the revegetation of the Reserve with natives and exotics tree species in a manner that would support and enhance the primary purpose of the Reserve. The 2003 Plan also supported the development of mountain bike tracks within the Reserve. In contrast this Plan focuses on specific actions to support the management and development of the Reserve. This Plan also acknowledges the landscape and biodiversity values of the Reserve.

The Reserve is recognised as a key recreation and landscape resource within the city and is of significance to Mana Whenua. Its scenic quality, biodiversity values, central location and well-formed tracks means that it is a very popular reserve. In recent years the Reserve has seen a significant increase in community use. This rise in numbers has increased the risk of conflict between reserve users.

The ongoing management of the Reserve is particularly relevant given its value and the increased interest in and use of the Reserve. The Signal Hill Recreation Reserve Management Plan -2023 draws on feedback from owners/occupiers of neighbouring properties, user groups, interested individuals, community groups and organisations, local and national authorities, and internal stakeholder engagement.

Figure 1: Reserve's location relative to the Octagon



1.1 Location

The Reserve makes up a large portion of the southern flank of Signal Hill and is a key landscape feature viewed from within and across the city. Signal Hill along with Flagstaff and Mount Cargill provide the Dunedin's north-western scenic backdrop. At its highest point Signal Hill is approximately 400 metres above sea level.

The Reserve is near the centre of Dunedin City with a drive time of approximately 10 minutes from the Octagon to the entry off Butts Road at the base of the hill. The Reserve is in close proximity to the Otago University and Polytechnic precinct.

At the top of the Reserve where a small area was gifted to the Council in 1926, the City's Centennial Memorial (the Memorial) was constructed in 1940. The Memorial has a lookout that provides a superb panoramic view of Dunedin city, the Otago Harbour, the Otago Peninsula, and the hills beyond the city. The Memorial is accessed by Signal Hill Road and is approximately a 15 minute drive from the Octagon. The Reserve serves the communities of Opoho, North Dunedin and Ravensbourne, which all border the Reserve. The Reserve provides a playground called Monowai Road Playground for the Ravensbourne community. The playground is currently quite isolated from the other activities supported within the Reserve.

1.2 Purpose of a Reserve Management Plan

Reserve Management Plans are required by section 41 of the Act to provide for and ensure use, enjoyment, maintenance, protection, and preservation of the Reserve for the purpose for which it is classified.

Section 17 (2) (b) states that *'where scenic, historic, archaeological, biological, geological, or other scientific features or indigenous flora or fauna or wildlife are present on the Reserve those features or that flora or fauna or wildlife shall be managed and protected to the extent compatible with the principal or primary purpose of the Reserve:*

Provided that nothing in this subsection shall authorise the doing of anything with respect to fauna that would contravene any provision of the Wildlife Act 1953 or any regulations or Proclamation or notification under that Act, or the doing of anything with respect to archaeological features in any reserve that would contravene any provision of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.'

Reserve management planning is a process for determining the management direction that the community and the Council would like to apply to reserves. Reserve management plans outline Council's general intentions for use, development and maintenance of its reserves. The aim of the Act is to ensure that the Reserve development meets the purpose of the Reserve and through the public's involvement ensures their needs are considered while managing the resource in a sustainable manner.

The update of this management plan implements the following action within the Parks and Recreation Strategy 2017 – 2027:

"Review current Reserve Management Plans, including Coastal Reserves, and existing open space policies."

This Plan is an update of the 2003 Plan. It is intended to identify the unique characteristics of the Reserve and provide a clear vision for its ongoing management and development. When adopted, this Plan will replace the 2003 Plan. Site specific reserve management plans are subject to ongoing review and regular comprehensive reconsideration.

The policies of the *Dunedin City Council Reserve Management Plan – General Policies* (General Policies) are an integral part of this management plan. The General Policies set out general policies applying to the day-to-day administration of all reserves in Dunedin and provides a consistent policy management approach for reserves. This Plan does not replicate the policies in the General Policies as they are under separate review. Where any issue is addressed by both the General Policies and this Plan then the policies within the Signal Hill Reserve Management Plan take precedence.

The Plan has been drafted for the benefit of the various stakeholders in the Reserve. It will provide clarity to:

- The users of the Reserve regarding the Council's management intent for the Reserve.
- Community groups who actively participate in volunteer activities within the Reserve.
- Council's strategic and operations staff tasked with carrying out the Reserve's ongoing maintenance and development.
- Councillors who are ultimately responsible for the allocation of resources for this Reserve.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESERVE

2.1 Legal Description

The Reserve is made up of 12 parcels of land administered by the Council, as shown in Figure 2. The entire Reserve has been classified as a Recreation Reserve under Section 17 of the Act for *‘the purpose of providing areas for 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 activities.’*

All but four parcels of land have been gazetted as a recreation reserve, the four not gazetted have been vested as a recreation reserve, please refer to the table in figure 2 for more detail. The accessway to the Reserve from Butts Road is done via an easement over Logan Park High School (Sec 1 SO 414323, 7.3846ha). The land unit containing the Council water reservoir, Signal Hill Water Storage Tank (Lot 1 DP 11801, 1.1506ha) is not subject to this Plan.

Figure 2: Aerial map showing land parcels and table of property details



Parcel	Land Description	Area	Record of Title	Status	Gazette
1	Section 2 SO Plan 414323	10.8010ha	528618	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 2010 pg 2637
2	Section 71 Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin Survey District	24.4980ha	part 321448	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 1984 pg 2365
3	Part Section 2 Section 30 Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin SD	8.9666ha	part OT4B/56	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 1985 pg 5631
4	Section 1 Section 30 Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin SD	13.5949ha	part OT4B/56	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 1985 pg 5631
5	Lot 1 DP 21874	4.1544ha	2158	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	DCC Freehold - vested on subdivision DP 21874
6	part Section 66 Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin Survey District	3.8266ha	229527	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 2006 pg 3387
7	Closed Street Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin SD	.3111m ²	229527	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 2006 pg 3387
8	Section 54 Block IX North Harbour & Blueskin SD	24.1521ha	part OT4B/56	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 1985 pg 5631
9	Lot 5 DP 379005	3.5405ha	320826	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	Vested in DCC pursuant to S. 239(1)(a) RMA as Recreation Reserve
10	Lot 1 DP 379005	.7915m ²	part 321448	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	NZ Gazette 1985 pg 5631
11	Lot 4 DP 379005	1.5027ha	317169	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	Vested in DCC pursuant to S. 239(1)(a) RMA as Recreation Reserve
12	Lot 2 DP 380593	.1178m ²	322731	Recreation Reserve (RA 1977)	Vested in DCC on Deposit of DP 380593 as Recreation Reserve

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Mana Whenua

The landscape now known as Ōtepoti Dunedin is part of the wider ancestral landscape under the mana and rakatirataka of Kāi Tahu whānui. The original inhabitants of the area were Kāti Hāwea and Te Rapuwai, who settled Te Wai Pounamu from Polynesia. Over time, further groups migrated and settled here, including the Waitaha people who are known to have arrived on the waka Uruao. A well-known tribal ancestor of Waitaha was Rākaihautū, who carved out the lakes and rivers of Te Wai Pounamu with his kō Tuwhakaroria, a supernatural digging implement.

Further migration and settlement by groups from the North Island occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Kāti Māmoe from the Hastings area, and Kāi Tahu from the East Cape of the North Island. Through conquest and intermarriage, these different whakapapa lines are referenced by the phrase ‘Kāi Tahu whānui’ encompassing the broader ancestral connections underpinned by this history of migration and settlement.

Te Pahure o Te Rangipokiha and Te Pahuri o Te Rangipokiha are the Māori names that are recorded for Signal Hill. Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou holds the status of mana whenua over the area now known as Signal Hill. The coastal takiwā of Ōtākou centres on Ōtākou on the Otago Peninsula, and extends from Pūrehurehu to Te Mata-au. The takiwā of Ōtākou stretches inland encompassing the land and mountains to the west coast under shared authority with rūnaka to the north and south.

Signal Hill is located within the ancestral landscape surrounding the Otago Harbour. Ōtākou is the original name of the eastern channel that runs from the harbour entrance along the eastern edge almost as far as Harwood where it abruptly stops. However, the harbour waterway that spans the area from Te Rae o Tupa (the northern tip of Pukekura) and extending up to Ōtepoti at the head of the harbour, although an ocean harbour, it was commonly referred to as an awa by their tūpuna due to its riverlike characteristics, albeit an ebb and flow behaviour.

Ōtākou is now more widely recognised in the Otago area as the name for the entire harbour and the settlement at the lower end of the Otago Peninsula. Otago eventually became the name for that entire southern region that is a modified version of Ōtākou. The origins of the meaning are still somewhat dubious although as Beattie had recorded, the word ‘kou’ in Ōtākou means an end point, or the ‘abrupt end’ referred to above.

The earliest activity on the Otago Peninsula has been supported by reliable archaeological evidence centred on the 13th and 14th Century. These were samples of charcoal, bone and shell unearthing many moa butchery sites.

The landscape surrounding Signal Hill was once the site of a significant podocarp forest that stretched inland to the north and west of Otago Harbour. Species like kahikatea, pōkaka and tōtara were common in the wider area. Records indicate a wide range of uses of these species, including food, technology, and medicinal applications. Furthermore, these forests provided significant habitats and ecosystems for many indigenous bird species, another important food source for mana whenua.



3.2 History of the Reserve

The original inhabitants of Ōtepoti Dunedin were the Kāti Hāwea and Te Rapuwai. They settled Te Wai Pounamu from Polynesia. Over time further groups migrated and settled here including the Waitaha people who arrived on the waka Uruao.

In the 17th and 18th centuries there was migration and settlement from the North Island including Kāti Māmoe and Kai Tahu.

Te Rūnanga o Ōtākou holds the status of mana whenua over the area known as Signal Hill.

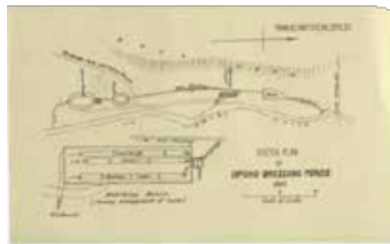
1867

The North Dunedin Volunteer Rifle Company establishes the Pelichet Bay Rifle Range on the lower slopes of Signal Hill. The firing mounds are located along Butts Road. The range quickly becomes Dunedin's main shooting venue. At its most popular, it provides facilities for 40 marksmen to shoot 20 targets simultaneously.



1868

The Otago Acclimatisation Society successfully hatches brown trout ova and transfers them to ponds alongside Opoho Creek on land now owned by the SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals).



1878

A railway embankment is established across Pelichet Bay. The bay is renamed Lake Logan and is used for swimming, boating, rowing and model yacht racing.



1880

Logan Point Quarry is established to take advantage of a headland of phonolite basalt rock, forming a backdrop to Lake Logan. The rock was used in the construction of the railway causeway to Port Chalmers and harbour reclamation.

Blackhead Quarries Ltd - The History of a Quarry in a City presented by Tony Hunter - May 2013 at Otago Southland Branch IOQNZ meeting in Dunedin - Institute of Quarrying (ioqnz.co.nz)



Lake Logan silts up and is reclaimed for the 1925 -26 New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition. .

1925 – 1926

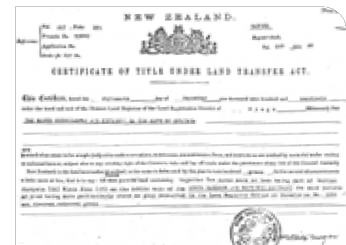
Dunedin hosts the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition. Upon the closing of the exhibition and the removal of buildings from the site. The reclaimed land is named Logan Park and is developed as sports fields for the city.

Postcard of NZ and South Seas International Exhibition site (Alexander Turnbull Library, 1-2-002372-F) New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition opens | NZHistory, New Zealand history online



1926

Council's ownership of land at Signal Hill begins with the donation of 10 acres by Mr J R Smith for recreation purposes.



1934/35

Signal Hill Road is constructed.

1940

Dunedin Amenities Society leads the New Zealand Centennial Commemorative Lookout Development (Centennial Memorial). Land around the hilltop is cleared and planted and foundation stone for the memorial laid on 20 February.



1941

Governor General Sir Cyril Newall opened the Centennial Memorial on the 3 April.

Between 1947 – 1952

Pelichet Bay Rifle Range closes due to the danger of ricocheting bullets hitting people driving on Signal Hill Road and visiting the Centennial Memorial. It re-opened again after a change in army regulations declared it to be safe.

1955

The Centennial Memorial is completed at a cost of £5,731. At this time, the memorial was surrounded by kanuka and native bush as well as gorse and broom. Native and exotic plants were planted to improve the lookout surroundings, but they largely failed to survive.

Burns Scenic Reserve changes from DCC management to Crown administration and managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). The Reserve consists of 97 acres of thick bush-covered land next to Signal Hill Recreation Reserve.

1971

The Council agrees to plant native species around the Centennial Memorial. Pelichet Bay Rifle Range closes.

1972

The area surrounding the Centennial Memorial and Burns Scenic Reserve is cleared as a firebreak. The development of walking tracks provides pedestrian links between Logan Park, the Town Belt, Centennial Memorial, Burns Scenic Reserve and Ravensbourne. The DCC also envisaged picnic facilities and seating for reserve users.

1974

Logan Park High School is established on the site of the Pelichet Bay Rifle Range. The District Scheme has an objective to 'gradually improve the slopes of Signal Hill by public acquisition and major landscaping so that the whole northeast slope to the city and Ravensbourne will match the quality and character of the western hills and Peninsula backdrop to the hill's. It also recognises the importance of Signal Hill as a scenic rural backdrop to the city and the need to 'seek the enhancement of this function'.

1977

Preservation of the bush by the eradication of encroaching noxious plants and wild goats is DCC's main objective. Management regimes are trialled for weed control, including sheep grazing.

1980

In the 1980s, the DCC intends to create a farm park environment by protecting significant stands of native vegetation with grazing beneath and create public access to the area by way of tracks and picnic areas. Making a scenic drive from the memorial to Ravensbourne via Wanaka Street is proposed.

1984

Signal Hill Reserve is formally gazetted as a recreation reserve. The priorities were to maintain as much native vegetation as possible within the valleys and rain-shadows and eradicate gorse and other noxious plants to reduce fire risk and improve visual quality. It was proposed to develop the Reserve as an arboretum, called Operation Backdrop.

1988

Telecom New Zealand lays a fibre optic cable across the Reserve, forming the Telecom Track.

1990

DCC and DOC work together to consider areas for mountain biking, which is increasing in popularity. Signal Hill Reserve's potential for mountain biking is suggested, although people were already using the 4WD tracks in the Reserve for mountain biking.

1993

Council adopts the Recreation Strategy.

1996

Mountain Bike Otago Inc (MBO) is formed from the Dunedin Mountain Bike Club.

Council approves the Tracks Policy and Strategy which identifies Signal Hill Reserve as a designated area for mountain biking and walking. A proposal is submitted to the Council to develop parts of the Reserve as an arboretum. The arboretum is expected to include trees from around the world, including NZ natives. The group responsible for the arboretum proposal forms a trust to operate in partnership with the Council to develop and manage the arboretum.

2000

Members of MBO and the Otago University Mountain Bike Club start restoring and extending the Reserve's existing track network. The tracks were intended to be developed for a variety of fitness and skill levels and for recreational riding and competition..

2003

Signal Hill Recreation Reserve Management Plan (2003) is adopted. The plan identifies that most of the mountain bike tracks in the Reserve at the time are suitable for more experienced cyclists. Mountain biking and walking are included and identified as key activities. The Council also supports a proposal to develop an arboretum. The 2003 Reserve Management Plan allows for revegetation of the Reserve with native and exotic tree species.

2006

Council does a land swap with the adjacent Palmers Quarry. Fires extensively damage forest plantations on the western slopes of Signal Hill.

2010

Council acquires land from Logan Park High School no longer required for education purposes. The Oceania Mountain Biking Championships are held at the Reserve. MBO starts building the Big Easy track.



Photo credit Mountain Biking Otago

2011

While constructing the track, MBO discovers the Opoho Fish Ponds which formed part of the Otago Acclimatisation Society's Trout Hatchery. MBO, in association with Heritage New Zealand and the Otago Fish and Game Council, restore and safeguard the ponds. The Big Easy Track passes between the two ponds. The National Mountain Biking Championship is held at the Reserve.



Photo credit Mountain Biking Otago

2015

The Big Easy is gravelled and completed.



Photo credit Mountain Biking Otago

A large scrub fire burns through 24 hectares of the western face of Signal Hill, damaging trees and tracks within the Reserve.



Photo credit Otago Daily Times

2017

Parks and Recreation Strategy 2017-2027 became operative.

2018

MBO with the support of Council begin work to establish an access off the Logan Park High School driveway and a carpark at the rear of the school.



Photo credit Mountain Biking Otago

2021

In response to the increased use on the Big Easy, MBO construct the Easy Down a grade 3 downhill track.

3.3 District Plan

The Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) requires the Council to prepare a district plan under Section 73. The purpose of district plans is to assist the Council in carrying out its functions as described in Section 31 of the RMA. The District Plan must also reflect the functions and purpose of the RMA, promoting sustainable management.

The zoning and rules for the Reserve under Dunedin City's Second Generation District Plan (2GP) are operative.

The Reserve has the following zonings, schedules, and mapped areas:

Zone: Hill Slopes Rural Zone

Landscape Overlay Zone

Name: Flagstaff – Mt Cargill

Type: Significant Natural Landscape (SNL)

Scheduled Items

Name: Burns Park and Burns Park North (C060)

Type: Areas of Significant Biodiversity Value

Mapped Areas

- High Class Soils
- Stadium Noise
- Esplanade Strip – Opoho Stream

4.0 SITE ANALYSIS

The Reserve is approximately 96.2572ha and is made up of 12 land parcels. The Reserve abuts the Town Belt to the west and Burns Reserve, a Department of Conservation Scenic Reserve to the east, as shown in Figure 3 below. The Reserve is located north of Logan Park a sports precinct and Logan Park High School. The Reserve's location relative to the city centre, the university and polytechnic; its topography; the areas of established native vegetation; Opoho Creek; and the Memorial make it a popular reserve.

4.1 Access

The main vehicle access point is either the end of Signal Hill Road providing access to the Memorial at the top of the Reserve or the accessway constructed in 2018 from an extension to the Logan Park High School vehicle access off Butts Road. This access with the carpark, although proving popular, is causing concern due to an increased risk of collision between students at Logan Park High School and vehicles using the access. It is considered that access and traffic movement around the school and into the Reserve need to be reviewed particularly with Logan Park adjacent the school introducing further complexities.

There are two formal carpark areas within the Reserve, one at the top alongside the Memorial and one at the bottom behind Logan Park High School.

There are two roads that become paper roads at the boundary of the Reserve providing non-vehicular entry into the Reserve, Rimu Street and Blacks Road. Rimu Street is a single lane unmarked road that terminates at the Reserve.

The unformed portion of Blacks Road through the Reserve to the water reservoir has an unsuitable grade to form a road but does provide a walkway for pedestrians from Opoho. Opoho Road, Monowai Street and Manuka Street terminate adjacent to the Reserve. These roads become paper roads prior to terminating at the Reserve and may provide the opportunity for additional non-vehicular entry-points/connections into the Reserve. The steepness of the bush covered southern hills precludes the construction of a road from Monowai Street into the Reserve.

There are tracks suitable for walking that provide access from the suburb of Opoho into the Reserve, via Opoho Reserve. There is also a track from the suburb of Ravensbourne at the end of Rimu Street into the Reserve.

The development of a reserve master plan would provide the opportunity to look at the possibility of better connections between Monowai Playground with the rest of the Reserve. This will provide the Ravensbourne Community with another way to access the Reserve.

There are more than 20 mountain biking tracks within the Reserve, the Big Easy offers a gentle gradient for cyclists and pedestrians up the hill with the Easy Down offering a Grade 3 ride down the hill. The 4WD Track, the Zigzag Track and the Telecom Track, created by Telecom's installation of a buried fibre optic cable, offers a steep climb to the top more suited to walkers/runners and electric mountain bikes. The Water Pipe Track provides access across the Reserve from the Ravensbourne Track to the water reservoir, following a buried water supply pipeline. Water Tank Road is an access track off Signal Hill Road used for the maintenance of the water reservoir.

Figure 3: Signal Hill Recreation Reserve relative to other local reserves.



A large amount of feedback was received through the engagement process to provide additional bike and pedestrian tracks to enhance recreational opportunities within the Reserve. It is proposed that these ideas be developed as appropriate and shown within a reserve master plan.

Access and Tracks

Butts Road driveway



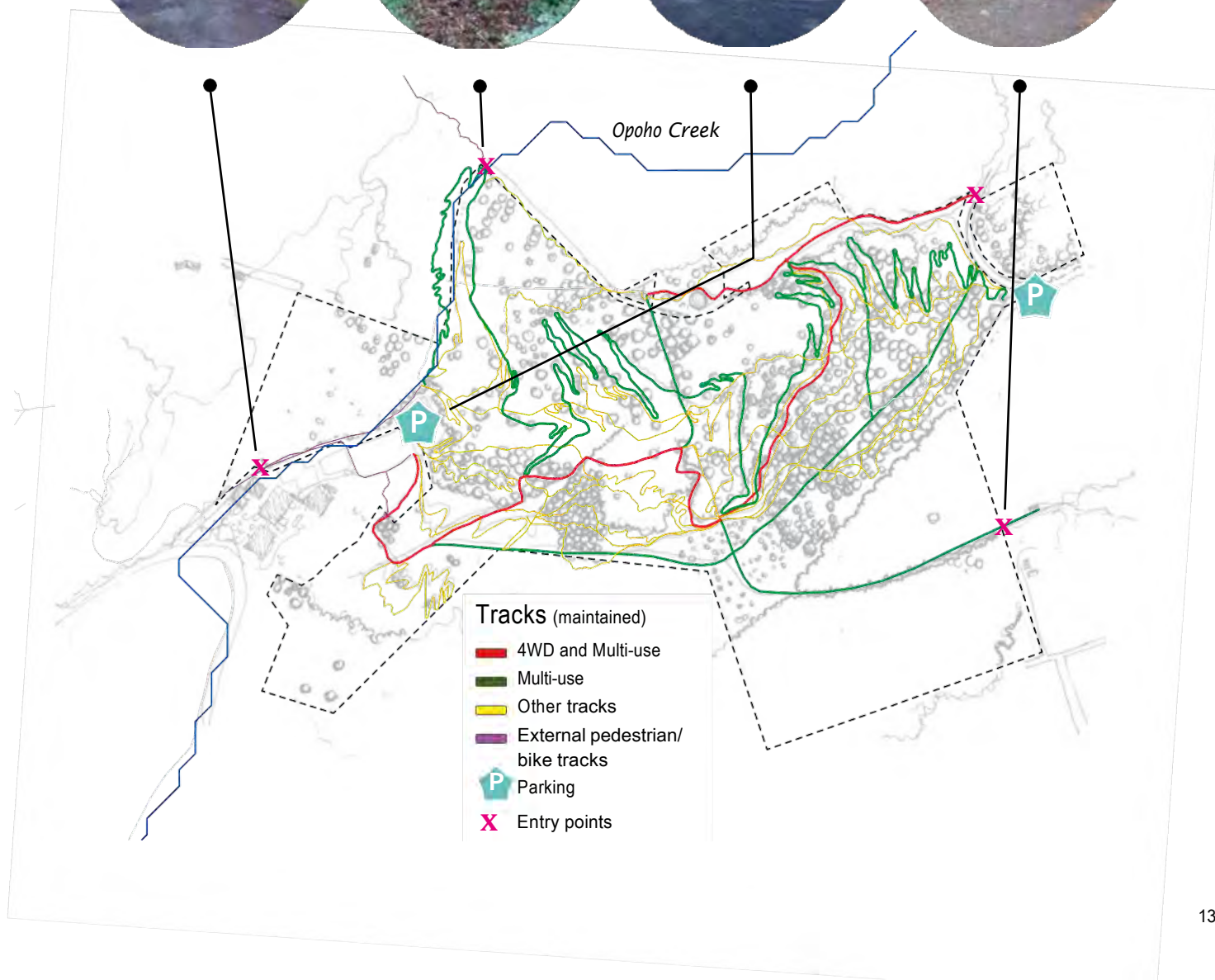
Blacks Road Track



Butts Road car park



Rimu Street entrance





Looking towards the summit.

4.2 Landscape

An assessment of the landscape character of Signal Hill was completed by a Dunedin City Council landscape architect in July 1999 prior to drafting 2003 Plan. This assessment identified the significance that Flagstaff, Swampy Summit, Mt Cargill and Signal Hill have in “..forming a topographical and wilderness amphitheatre that gives much of the enclosed character to the visual experience of the city”. The assessment also identifies that “the south facing slopes roll from the plateau of Signal Hill lookout down to Logan Park in the southwest and Ravensbourne to the south east”, with the “slopes being punctuated with valleys and undulations covered in thick vegetation and the dark colours which add to the contrast with the urban forms of the city beyond”.

A more recent and broader landscape assessment of the area was done as part of the update to the District Plan. The Dunedin Second Generation District Plan (2GP) has identified most of the Reserve as being a Significant Natural Landscape (SNL). The Flagstaff – Mt Cargill Significant Natural Landscape (Flagstaff – Mt Cargill SNL) area covers the hills to the north of urban Dunedin including Flagstaff (Whānau-paki), Swampy Summit (Whawha-raupō), and the lower slopes of Mount Cargill (Kapuketaumahaka) to Signal Hill. The geology of the Flagstaff – Mt Cargill SNL is identified as being largely volcanic with the hills reaching elevations of 739 metres. The Flagstaff – Mt Cargill SNL area is also the catchment for several waterways, the Opoho Creek travels through the Reserve. The land cover and usage of the Flagstaff – Mt Cargill SNL area is a mixture of remnant indigenous vegetation, agriculture, forestry, residential development, and exotic scrub. The peaks within the Flagstaff – Mt Cargill SNL area are a cultural identity marker for Mana Whenua and are also identified within the plan as wāhi tūpuna. The 2GP identifies the following landscape values as being important to protect:

Biophysical values

Including the extent and integrity of the natural landscape including wildlife and the podocarp broadleaf forests.

Sensory values

Including the volcanic landscape, the legibility of the natural landform and associated visual coherence of the landscape reflecting the topography; low impact of built elements, earthworks and exotic tree planting; the extent and quality of views across the landscape from public roads and tracks; naturalness attributes of the rural landscape providing a backdrop to the city; high rural amenity value; ridges and peaks connected by a network of popular walks and mountain bike tracks incorporating scenic, recreation and nature reserves; expansive and panoramic views over the city and beyond.

Associative values

Including cultural identity; traditional trails; distinctive landmarks providing a natural approach; historic buildings and structures and shelter and amenity plantings present; historic landscape qualities.

The current vegetation within the Reserve appears to be mainly a mix of regenerating podocarp broadleaf forest, pine, eucalyptus, and gorse / broom scrubland. The regenerating podocarp broadleaf forest have a greater biophysical value than pine, eucalyptus, gorse, and broom species. The regular form of pine blocks and the insidious spread of wilding pine detracts from the naturalness values associated with the broadleaf forest.

The recreational use of the Reserve can be both beneficial and have the potential to cause conflicts. The opportunity to have people within the Reserve can help support predator management and other volunteer projects, e.g. weed management and revegetation. It can also cause conflict in terms of tracks within areas of low scrub being more prominent and detracting from naturalness values. People within the Reserve also can increase the risk of fires in areas prone to fire. Tracks beneath the tree canopy have a lesser impact on the landscape values and broadleaf forests are also less flammable than arid scrubland. These factors therefore support the restoration of broadleaf forest across the Reserve.

Future development of the Reserve should show design which effectively minimises any adverse effect on existing landscape character and enhances or maintains the values that contribute to the enjoyment of the Reserve.

4.3 View Shafts

The topography of the site provides many opportunities for users to have views out over the city and harbour. These view shafts can be framed by surrounding vegetation and the topography of the landform.

Currently in the Reserve there is one formally identified view shaft located at the Memorial on the crest of the hill. There are less formally planned view shafts within the Reserve that are threatened by the current lack of future planning within the Reserve and the spread of wilding pines. These view shafts occur on the plateaus and occasionally along the directional line of some tracks, framed by vegetation. Protecting and identifying these view shafts will add to the Reserve's character and landscape value. They will promote visual connectivity between the different areas of the Reserve and the Reserve's context within the surrounding landscape both urban and rural. The plateaus within the Reserve provide view shafts over the harbour and city, any planting around these areas need to be done carefully to ensure that these view shafts are retained. The plateau areas are halfway up the hill providing a good midpoint location as both a destination and a place to take a break from ascending the hill.

Identifying and maintaining these view shafts is a priority in the ongoing management of the Reserve. To protect these view shafts, the implementation of a Maintenance and Management Plan should be considered. The Maintenance and Management Plan would identify the location of these view shafts and the need to maintain the vegetation growth that mainly threaten these views. These view shafts may also be formally identified within a Reserve Master Plan to ensure no future planting or development will impede upon these opportunities for views within the Reserve.

4.4 Recreation

The Reserve provides many opportunities for recreational activities. The recreational activities occurring within the Reserve include play, mountain biking, running, walking, orienteering and dog walking. The Reserve hosts many sporting events, predominantly for mountain biking. There is also the potential of linking the tracks within the Reserve into other networks for trail running, ultra marathons or multisport events. The area at the centre of the Reserve receives the most amount of use as this is the location of the mountain bike tracks.

The Memorial offers passive recreation opportunities, allowing visitors to relax and enjoy 180° panoramic view of the city, surrounding hills, peninsula, coastline, and harbour. Further opportunities for passive recreation within the Reserve could be provided via introducing interpretative boards for storytelling, shelters, and furniture for picnics/barbeques. The Reserve provides an opportunity very close to the city for residents to enjoy and explore the native bush and its bird and insect life.

The Reserve also provides an opportunity for people to volunteer in the establishment and management of habitats, through revegetation projects, predator control and the removal of invasive weed species. These opportunities educate and enable the community to engage and develop ownership over the Reserve.

The Reserve provides the Ravensbourne community with a small playground and open space for informal recreational opportunities. This play space would provide a great opportunity for natural play elements given the location adjacent bush and the topography of the site.

Subject to the Council's usual decision making processes, there may be potential to provide further recreational opportunities within the Reserve by acquiring vacant land that is contiguous with the Reserve as it becomes available. The location of the Reserve near the city, Forsyth Barr Stadium, Logan Park, the Otago University and Polytechnic makes it and any land in its vicinity ideal for the development of any additional recreation facilities.

View shafts in the Reserve

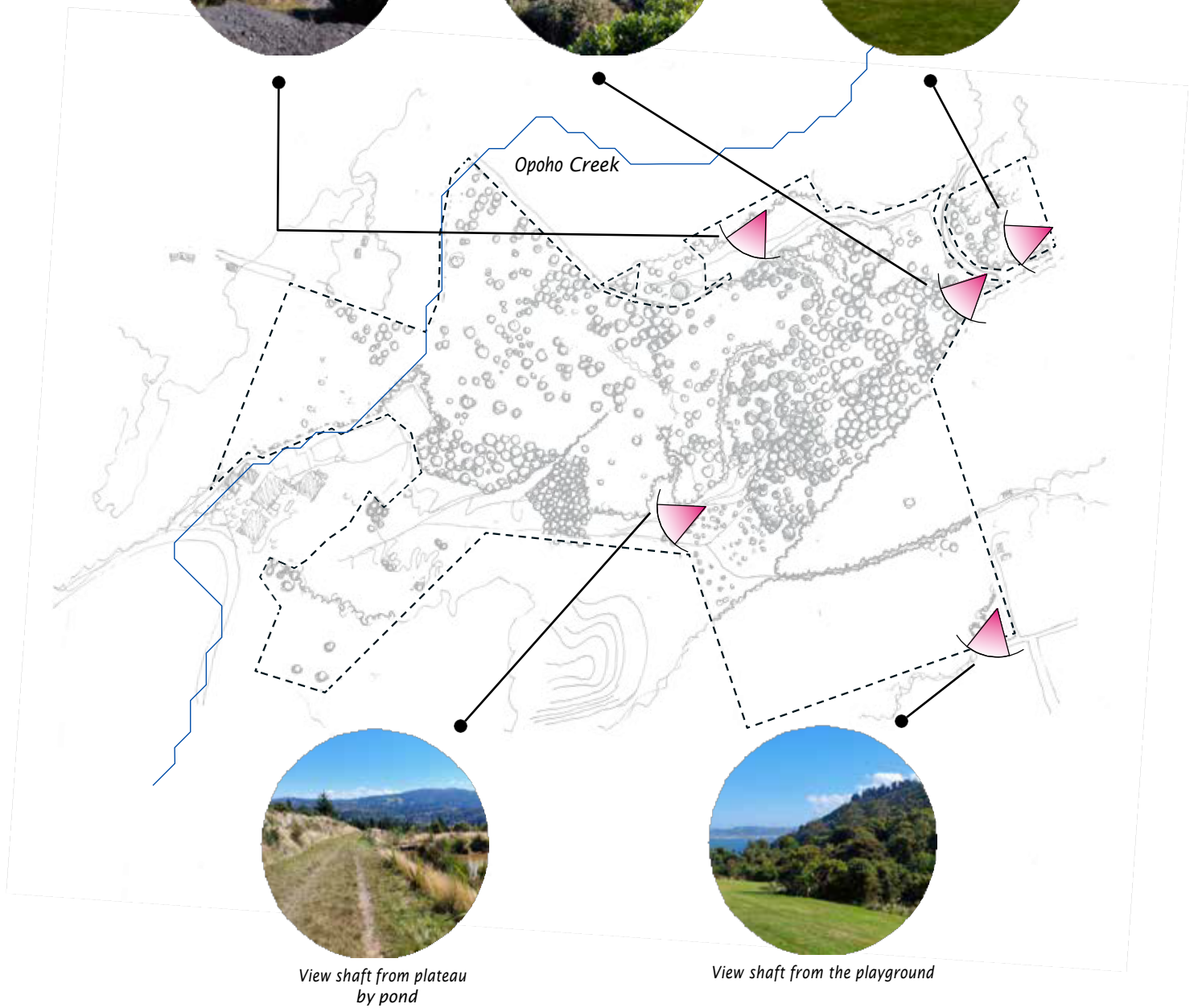
View shaft from water tank plateau



View shaft from the Memorial



View shaft from car park above the Memorial



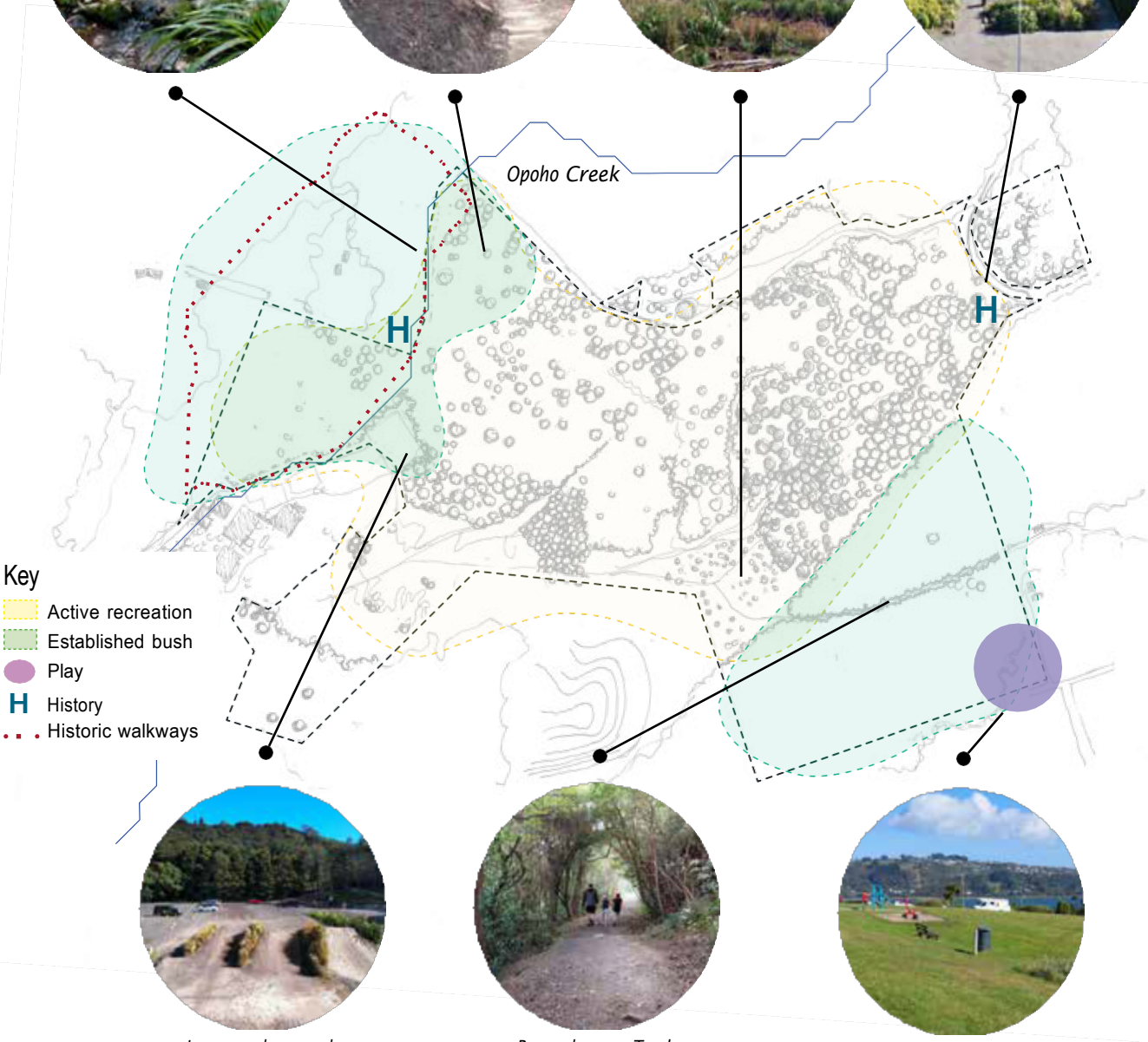
Recreational opportunities in the Reserve

Opoho Creek

Mountain bike tracks

View from plateau with riders on the Nationals Track

Centennial Memorial



Jumps and car park

Ravensbourne Track

Monowai playground



Ravensbourne Track

4.5 Vegetation

In July 1999, Landcare Research completed a vegetation survey of the Reserve. The survey identified a vegetation management programme for the Reserve focusing on the management of pest plants and animals, allowing gradual reversion of the Reserve to predominantly native bush. The report identified the five broad vegetation types as grassland, gorse and broom scrub, manuka and kanuka shrubland and forest, broadleaved forest and pine forest.

Given the length of time since the Landcare Research vegetation survey it is recommended that an ecological assessment of the Reserve be completed to provide a baseline and support future biodiversity work.

4.6 Site Services

Fibre optic cables were laid across the Reserve in 1988 by Telecom New Zealand. The line of the cable has created a wide, steep, and largely straight track across the Reserve from west to east. The approximate location is shown in Figure 4 below. Similarly, the Council operates two water supply pipes across the Reserve one heads west of the reservoir and is an inlet pipe from Opoho, the second pipe heads south as an outlet pipe to Ravensbourne, forming the Ravensbourne Track. Obviously, the location of both these services will affect any digging and planting activities. There is also the possibility that at any time either service may require excavation. In accordance with the General Policies, liaison with Council's 3 Waters Department and Chorus will be required to locate either service, should works be programmed along either line.

4.7 Neighbours

Our engagement with neighbouring properties identified the following concerns:

- Fires within the Reserve,
- Weed management,
- Public movement over private property, and
- Predator management.

Figure 4: Site Services



5.0 OPPORTUNITIES

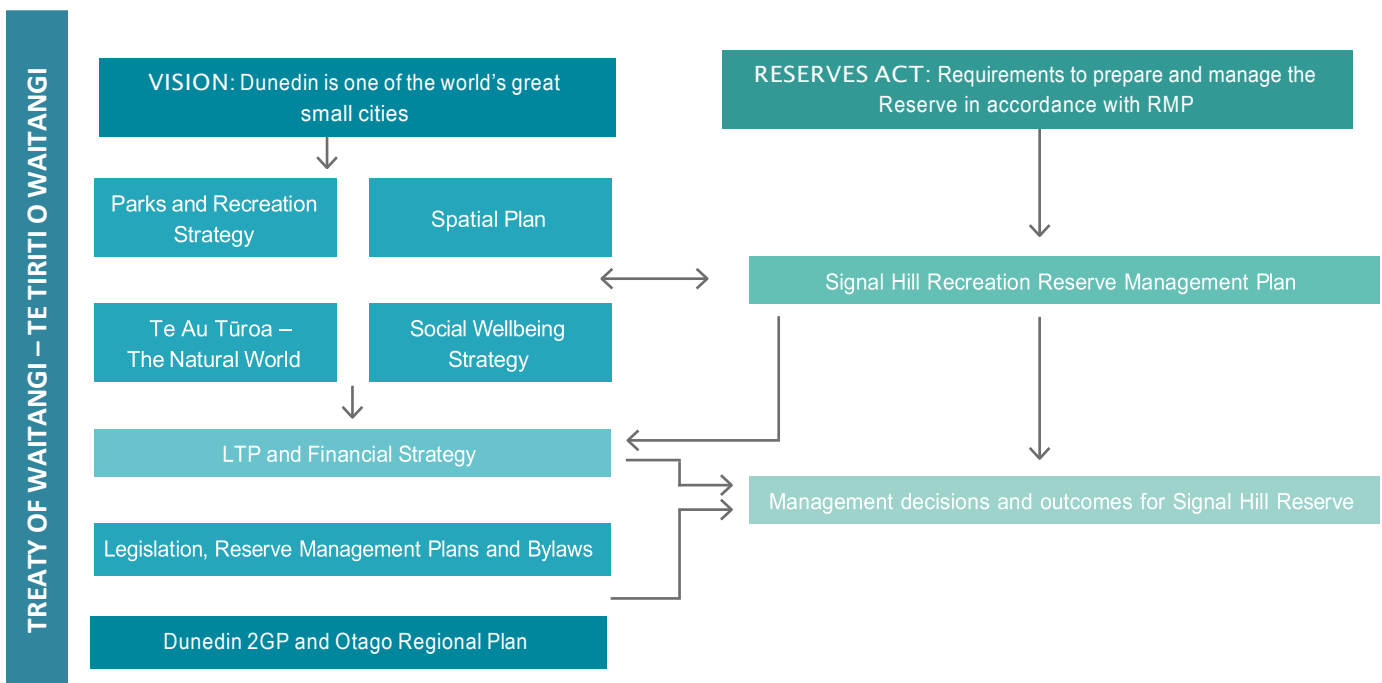
- 5.1 Identify, preserve, enhance and manage the landscape, biodiversity and cultural values of the Reserve in a way that visitors can both enjoy and be made aware of these values.
- 5.2 Limit the spread of mountain bike tracks beyond the current location to enable and support other recreation activities within the Reserve.
- 5.3 Identify and mitigate safety risks throughout the Reserve.
- 5.4 Support City Sanctuary and other predator control organisations with predator control within the Reserve to enable habitat restoration.
- 5.5 Emphasise the delivery of increased management and maintenance across the various areas of the Reserve; for example, tidying and trimming of vegetation around the Memorial, control of gorse and barberry, staged removal of the pine trees and eucalyptus, management of tracks for all weather conditions.
- 5.6 Identify areas suitable for furniture to encourage visitors to stop within the Reserve and enjoy the views, the surrounding landscape values, and the birdlife.
- 5.7 Improve access into the Reserve by introducing signage at all entry points with maps showing tracks, features, and egress points.
- 5.8 Consider opportunities to provide linkages and connections through the Reserve to adjacent suburbs and the wider transport network, e.g., walkways, cycleways, and public transport.
- 5.9 Provide opportunities to link and connect the Reserve to adjacent reserves and facilities.
- 5.10 Consider alternatives for transporting visitors to the top of the Reserve to reduce the level of traffic movement on Signal Hill Road.
- 5.11 Consider how the Reserve can support adjacent reserves, in particular Logan Park.
- 5.12 Provide additional toilet and drink fountain facilities within the Reserve.
- 5.13 Look for opportunities to meet the needs of Dunedin's disability community providing for and enabling them to enjoy and participate in recreational activities within the Reserve.
- 5.14 Ensure all facilities, e.g., toilets, parking, seating, tracks, and drinking fountains etc, where possible are accessible to all users.
- 5.15 Target opportunities for accessible tourism where appropriate.
- 5.16 Consider how to reduce the risk of a fire occurring in the Reserve and plan how to manage a fire in the event of one.
- 5.17 Provide opportunities to link Monowai Playground better with the Reserve and incorporate the topography and native bush into the play elements.

6.0 STRATEGIC METHODOLOGY

The management strategy for the Reserve outlines a set of strategic outcomes, management objectives and policies which are informed by the conclusions of the site analysis, the vision, identified opportunities, and the wider Dunedin City Council strategic framework.

This section of the Plan works by co-ordinating the ongoing management and development of the Reserve to achieve the vision for the Reserve and to contribute towards the delivery of Dunedin's wider strategic framework and the overall vision to be one of the world's great small cities. The diagram in Figure 5 below demonstrates how the Plan integrates into the wider strategic framework to deliver the strategically aligned management decisions and outcomes for the Reserve.

Figure 5: Signal Hill Recreation Reserve Management Plan's Relationship with Wider Strategic Framework



7.0 MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

7.1 Introduction

The aim of the Plan is that it should reflect the “recreation” classification of the Reserve under the Act. It will provide a framework for any future proposals for development/enhancement, or any other form of action which may have an impact on the Reserve.

The objectives of the Plan have been oriented towards actions and providing the basis for developing specific policies on matters that Council may need to address. The management objectives operate as a filter to assess the suitability of all activities within the Reserve, and to identify the controls required to maximise benefits and to minimise impacts. The degree to which the activities affect the objectives (or the management activities which enact the objectives) will define the management policies.

The policies enable the objectives to be achieved. Over time, as certain specific objectives are attained or require change, relevant policies will also be amended. The policies in the Plan guide all current and future aspects of the Reserve and provide a framework for continuity of management. Note that all general management policies for reserves are described in a separate document entitled *Reserve Management Plan – General Policies* (General Policies), which should be read in conjunction with this Plan. The General Policies fully apply to the management of the Reserve unless they are specifically over-ridden by the policies of this Plan. The reader should refer to the General Policies as if it were a physical part of this Plan but note that those policies are under constant review to ensure continual relevance.

7.2 Objective 1 – Reserve Management Partnerships

Encourage community involvement in the management and maintenance of Signal Hill Recreation Reserve (Reserve).

7.2.1 Policies

- 7.2.1.1 Form a Signal Hill Recreation Reserve User Group to provide a point of contact for the Council.

- 7.2.1.2 The membership of the Signal Hill Reserve User Group will be made up of one representative from each of the key user groups these have been identified as Mountain Bike Otago Inc (MBO), Dunedin Orienteering, Athletics Otago and a representative walking group that use the Reserve. It will also include a Mana Whenua representative (as our Treaty Partners), and a representative from each of the adjacent schools, Opoho Primary School and Logan Park High School. An additional two members may be co-opted to the group as required.

A DCC staff member will chair this committee. The committee will meet at least four times per year or as required.

- 7.2.1.3 The active participation of the Signal Hill Reserve User Group in the ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring of the Reserve will be encouraged.

- 7.2.1.4 Community volunteer groups will be encouraged to participate in maintenance activities within the Reserve through liaison with the Signal Hill Reserve User Group. Volunteer groups will be required to have an approved Council volunteer agreement in place before working on the Reserve.

7.3 Objective 2 – Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Values

To enhance and protect the landscape values of the Reserve, with consideration of its visual prominence from Dunedin City, and the views gained from the Reserve.

7.3.1 Policies

- 7.3.1.1 The Reserve would benefit from the development of a Reserve Master Plan. This plan will consider locations of view shafts and significant visual aspects of the Reserve worthy of protection. The Centennial Memorial Lookout is considered to provide a significant view shaft and therefore vegetation trimming, and clearing will be permitted where necessary to preserve significant viewing areas.

7.4 Objective 3 – Strengthen and Support Biodiversity Opportunities

Support and strengthen biodiversity opportunities by encouraging the restoration of habitats for indigenous flora and fauna by removing invasive pest species, protecting, and enhancing existing indigenous vegetation within the Reserve.

7.4.1 Policies

- 7.4.1.1 The Reserve would benefit from the preparation of a **Habitat Restoration Plan** to support the restoration of habitats for indigenous flora and fauna by removing invasive pest species, protecting, and enhancing existing indigenous vegetation within the Reserve. The **Habitat Restoration Plan** may include the following documentation:
- An **Ecological Assessment** of the Reserve will inform the process of habitat restoration within the Reserve. This assessment would identify the fauna and flora that currently exist within the Reserve and what native species we should be encouraging and supporting in the Reserve.
 - A **Predator Management Plan** for the Reserve that identifies predator species and how they will be efficiently and effectively managed or eradicated.
 - A **Revegetation/Landscape Plan** to identify which native plant species to use within the Reserve and the locations for revegetation planting. This plan may also include a schedule suggesting what order areas could be planted.
 - A **Maintenance and Management Plan** prepared to show the staged management for the removal of existing exotic tree species (e.g., pine and eucalyptus) and noxious weeds (e.g., gorse, broom and Darwin's barberry). The inclusion of a maintenance schedule would help protect view shafts, improve health and safety for reserve users and support habitat restoration.
- 7.4.1.2 To permit the removal of vegetation where required and agreed by DCC staff for the better use and management of the Reserve.
- 7.4.1.3 Investigate opportunities to recognise Signal Hill Recreation Reserve as an extension to the Dunedin Town Belt.
- 7.4.1.4 Investigate with Department of Conservation (DOC) the opportunity of having Burns Reserve vested in Council administration given its immediate location with Signal Hill Recreation Reserve.

7.5 Objective 4 – Protection of Cultural, Historic and Mana Whenua Values

To enhance, protect and manage the social, cultural, historic and mana whenua values of Signal Hill Recreation Reserve.

7.5.1 Policies

- 7.5.1.1 To investigate the development of a mechanism to manage the identification and avoidance of archaeological sites and features in the Reserve during earthworks activity such as track formation and maintenance, vegetation removal and planting.
- 7.5.1.2 Consult with Iwi about appropriate ways of recognising the mana whenua status and cultural heritage in the management of the Reserve, which may include indigenous plantings, interpretation, artwork and appropriate Māori names.
- 7.5.1.3 Consider the development of an **Interpretation/Storytelling Plan** that investigates opportunities and identifies historic features and values associated with the Reserve in liaison with Council's heritage staff, local iwi and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. A plan would look to manage, enhance, and celebrate the social, cultural and mana whenua history of the Reserve in a manner that engages and informs the visitor.

7.6 Objective 5 – Enabling and Supporting Appropriate Recreational Activities

The design and management of Signal Hill Recreation Reserve encourages and provides for appropriate recreational opportunities and associated facilities for residents and visitors to Dunedin.

7.6.1 Policies

- 7.6.1.1 To manage the Signal Hill Recreation Reserve as a multi-purpose recreational resource, focusing primarily on play, walking, running, mountain-biking, orienteering, sightseeing and appreciation of the Reserve's natural values.
- 7.6.1.2 Consider developing a **Reserve Master Plan** that assesses where best to locate and encourage recreational activities, facilities, and infrastructure within the Reserve and how it connects and relates to other recreational areas within the city. The following shall be considered as part of the **Reserve Master Plan**:
- The location of drinking fountains, toilet facilities, shelters, and picnic/barbeque areas within the Reserve.
 - Identify the location of pedestrian only tracks within the Reserve.

- Identify existing tracks with linkages to external networks.
 - Identify the location for a potential multiuse track from Opoho into the Reserve.
 - Identify suitable locations for any future recreational structure, building, and facility.
 - Identify the location for a possible interpretative/storytelling track or area.
- 7.6.1.3 The space identified as Monowai Playground will continue to be developed as a play area in accordance with the Dunedin City Council's Play Space Plan 2021.
- 7.6.1.4 To ensure any new parking areas and assets (e.g., toilets, seating, drinking fountains etc) are accessible and useable to all.
- 7.6.1.5 Consideration will be given to the accessibility of any new tracks developed. Tracks that are accessible to all users will be prioritised.
- 7.6.1.6 To identify the downhill mountain bike tracks only for mountain bikers.
- 7.6.1.7 To identify the following tracks for multiuse:
- Emerson's Big Easy,
 - 4WD Track – Zigzag Track – Center Road – Middle Road,
 - Contour Track,
 - Telecom Track,
 - Water Tank Track,
 - Water Tank Road and
 - Ravensbourne Track.
- 7.6.1.8 To grade and manage all tracks to the grading standards identified within the National Track Standards. Dunedin's track types, grades and descriptions align with the New Zealand Handbook SNZ HB 8630:2004 – "Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures", the MBIE New Zealand Cycle Trail Design Guide 2019 (5th Edition), and Recreation Aotearoa's New Zealand Mountain Bike Trail Design and Construction Guidelines.
- 7.6.1.9 Any new track development or track enhancement within the Reserve, which relies on access across private land at any point, shall proceed only once formal agreement with the private landowner has been reached.
- 7.6.1.10 To seek a formal legal agreement with the Royal New Zealand Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Incorporated (SPCA) where the Big Easy crosses the SPCA's property for both the track and any structures.
- 7.6.1.11 To agree with MBO the maximum number of mountain bike tracks to be established within the Reserve. If no agreement can be reached DCC has the final decision.

- 7.6.1.12 When tracks are no longer maintained to National Track Standards, they shall be disestablished or reutilised to form a new track. Any metal, rock, concrete shall be removed, topography reformed and be re-established in indigenous vegetation.
- 7.6.1.13 Ensure there is a range of tracks including some at grades 1 to 3 for people of all abilities.

7.7 Objective 6 – Identify and Manage Future Built Development

To manage the location, design and construction of buildings or structures and earthworks within the Reserve to reduce their impact on the recreation, cultural, ecological and landscape values of the Reserve.

7.7.1 Policies

- 7.7.1.1 Any buildings and structures shall be only located in the approved area identified within the Reserve Master Plan or an alternate location approved by Council.
- 7.7.1.2 Any structures or buildings on the Reserve not owned by Council must be on land leased to an appropriate public agency, such as a trust or association.
- 7.7.1.3 Any development within the Reserve must locate the services identified in Section 4.6 (Fibre optic cables and 3 Waters infrastructure).
- 7.7.1.4 Any building located on the Reserve must be removeable.
- 7.7.1.5 To consider and assess commercial operations (and associated structures) that maintains the values of the Reserve and maybe of benefit to the use of the Reserve on a case-by-case basis.
- 7.7.1.6 Council must approve the design and construction process of any structures or buildings.

7.8 Objective 7 – Manage Access and Linkages

To provide multiple pedestrian and cycle entry points into the Reserve that link back into the city's transportation network (this includes both cycle ways, bus routes, roading and walkways) to better spread the load over the network but continue to restrict vehicle access into the Reserve.

7.8.1 Policies

- 7.8.1.1 Seek to make the access into the reserve from Butts Road safe for pedestrians and cyclists. This may include looking at the provision of a separate footpath with crossings and/or the formation of the accessway to a single lane road with laybys.

- 7.8.1.2 Support Transport in improving the width and condition of Signal Hill Road, either by ensuring vehicles can travel in both directions or providing frequent laybys, so it is safe for all users of the road to access the Centennial Memorial at the top.
- 7.8.1.3 Support Transport in providing a separate path adjacent to Signal Hill Road for walkers, runners, and cyclists.
- 7.8.1.4 Investigate forming a multiuse track from Opoho to the Butts Road Carpark to provide access to the school, the mountain bike tracks and across the Reserve to Ravensbourne.
- 7.8.1.5 Investigate linkages between the Reserve and the Dunedin Cycle Trail Network.
- 7.8.1.6 To formalise entry points for pedestrian and cyclists into the Reserve displaying signage.
- 7.8.1.7 To ensure entry points are near or an extension of existing city cycle, pedestrian, vehicle and bus networks.
- 7.8.1.8 Ensure the 4WD tracks within the Reserve, identified as the 4WD Track, Centre-Middle Road and Water Tank Road are well maintained for all weather/conditions to enable emergency vehicles to have access within and across the Reserve.
- 7.8.1.9 Vehicle access by the general public will be limited to formed legal roads and carparks within the Reserve.
- 7.8.1.10 Vehicle access beyond the carpark within the Reserve will be permitted only for emergency vehicles, service vehicle and those vehicles authorised by Dunedin City Council (this would include those vehicles associated with reserve development and management and those required for management of events recognised and approved by the Dunedin City Council).
- 7.8.1.11 Vehicle access for those vehicles authorised access will generally be limited to formed vehicle routes within the Reserve to reduce their impacts on tracks and vegetation, excepting the need for emergency vehicles to have freedom of movement.

7.9 Objective 8 – Health and Safety

Ensure users can partake in recreation activities where risks to health and safety are managed.

7.9.1 Policies

- 7.9.1.1 Smoking and vaping will be discouraged within the Reserve by the display of signage.
- 7.9.1.2 Ensure there is clear directional guidance, e.g., signage, maps etc within the Reserve particularly in relation to egress points.

- 7.9.1.3 Develop clear and concise signage to promote safety by identifying who can use the track, the grade of the track and potential points of conflict and risk within the Reserve.
- 7.9.1.4 Where tracks cross private land ensure there is signage to identify when the user is on private land and that they enter at their own risk.
- 7.9.1.5 Maintain pedestrian tracks to all weather conditions and improve the grade or introduce steps as necessary on steep areas of track.
- 7.9.1.6 Identify in the Reserve Master Plan the locations for emergency helicopters to land within the Reserve.

7.10 Objective 9 – Fire Risk Management

To minimise the risk of fire events within the Reserve occurring and ensure that an effective fire response is in place in the event of a fire.

7.10.1 Policies

- 7.10.1.1 Develop a Fire Risk Management Plan in consultation with Fire Emergency New Zealand (FENZ).
- 7.10.1.2 Lighting of fires or private barbeques within the Reserve are prohibited.
- 7.10.1.3 In times of unacceptable high fire risk, the Council in consultation with FENZ may close public access to the Reserve.
- 7.10.1.4 Fire breaks will be maintained as and when required.
- 7.10.1.5 The Council will liaise with neighbours to seek to minimise fire risk and will communicate with them if one should occur.
- 7.10.1.6 Signage will be provided to educate the public about the risk of fire and the steps to follow upon seeing a fire within the Reserve.

7.11 Objective 10 – Commercial Activities

Commercial activities will be considered where they facilitate the use and enjoyment of Signal Hill Recreation Reserve and do not compromise the landscape, biodiversity, heritage, cultural and mana whenua values of the Reserve.

7.11.1 Policies

- 7.11.1.1 Commercial activities (including corporate sponsored sporting events) will be managed in accordance with the Act and the 'Commercial Use – Concessions Policy' within the *Reserve Management Plan – General Policies*.
- 7.11.1.2 To ensure the values of the Reserve are not compromised and users' enjoyment not impacted Council reserves the right to limit or restrict numbers or forms/types of commercial activities permitted in the Reserve.

7.12 Objective 11 – Additions, Occupation Agreements and Encroachments

Council may consider opportunities as they arise to increase the size of the Reserve where the acquisition of the land would enhance and contribute to the recreation, landscape, biodiversity, heritage, cultural and mana whenua values of the Reserve. Council will ensure legal boundaries of the Reserve are protected and use the legal status of the land to control inappropriate activities.

7.12.1 Policies

- 7.12.1.1 Council may consider opportunities as they arise to increase the size of the Reserve where acquisition of the land would enhance and contribute to the recreation, landscape, biodiversity, heritage, cultural and mana whenua values of the Reserve.
- 7.12.1.2 The intention would be to have the additional land become land held under the Reserves Act 1977 as recreation reserve.
- 7.12.1.3 Council would be interested in the reclassification of any crown land held adjacent to the Reserve as an addition to the Reserve.
- 7.12.1.4 There may be an interest in land held for education purposes that provides access to Logan Park High School being reclassified for roading purposes to enable the formation of a legal road into the Reserve.
- 7.12.1.5 In relation to on-site services mentioned in Section 4.6 Council will seek to formalise easements with service owner at the owner's cost including survey.
- 7.12.1.6 Council may consider stopping the legal roads within the Reserve (top of Signal Hill Road, and a section of Blacks Road which partly circuits the water reservoir) and incorporating the land within the Reserve to enable closure of the Reserve to vehicles at specific times to reduce antisocial behaviour and improve management control.
- 7.12.1.7 Council will ensure legal boundaries of the Reserve are protected and use the legal status of the land to control unauthorised encroachments and inappropriate activities. Council will provide a reasonable timeframe for the encroachment to be removed at the landowner's own cost.

- 7.12.1.8 Occupation of the reserve and commercial use of the reserve must be formalised through occupation or use agreements.

Council will formalise existing occupation and uses of the Reserve, where these are appropriate, by the granting of occupation agreements.

Leases, licences or occupation agreements permitted must be in accordance with the relevant section of the Reserves Act 1977

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