

OPEN SPACE POLICY

Policy Number:	4.1.3
Approved by	Council
Date Approved:	December 2024
Date of Next Review:	December 2026
Applicable to:	Whole organisation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Natural Environment and Parks Open Space Planning Officer Coordinator Parks Services
Related Policies:	Heritage Policy Playgrounds Policy Public Toilets Policy Fair Access Policy
Related Documents:	Open Space Plan 2014-2024 Sustainability Strategy 2020-2024 Wellington Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-25
Statutory Reference:	Nil

OVERVIEW

To establish policy for the management of open space under Council jurisdiction.

THE POLICY

Council will develop and maintain Public Open Space under Council jurisdiction according to the following Guiding Principles.

Guiding Principles Diversity, quality and design

- Open space should be designed to build on local character and provide a diverse range of attractive settings and opportunities for recreation and leisure.
- Site plans (Concept or Masterplans) should be prepared before undertaking major development works involving broad community consultation with the community including women or more targeted here, Council Project Steering Groups should include diverse representation including women.
- Design, layout, and facilities should be of high quality and provide for safe and enjoyable use.
- Design standards should be in line with those stated in the Wellington Open Space Plan 2014-2024 and in accordance with objectives stated in the Sustainability Strategy 2020-2024.
- Urban Forest management including tree planting for shade, amenity and biodiversity enhancement should have a high priority in all council and private sector developments.

Access and equity

- All developed open space should provide good access to facilities, settings and activities for the whole community including people with limited mobility and other disabilities, and parking where compatible with established site values and uses as per the Open Space Plan assessment and Gender Impact Assessment.

- The location and opportunities available at major sites and the benefits of open space use should be widely promoted.
- Informal, social and emerging physical activity opportunities should be encouraged and supported to occur in suitable Open Space Areas.

Management and maintenance

- Maintenance should meet community and conservation objectives, within budget constraints and in accordance with agreed priorities.
- The community should be involved in the planning, development and care of open space.
- Ensure adequate provision of lighting/ cleaning of Council managed public facilities to ensure that open space areas and supporting infrastructure are welcoming, safe and inclusive.

Sustainability/Conservation

- Significant natural and cultural sites should be identified and actively managed including protection from damage by inappropriate management or recreation activities.
- Local indigenous species should be prioritised in planting projects, except where exotic tree and plant species are an important element in urban or cultural landscapes.
- As part of a broader approach to climate adaptation the enhancement of urban biodiversity through the addition of green infrastructure is considered a high value activity.
- New landscapes should be designed with sustainability principles at the core of decision making.
- Enhancement of biodiversity values (especially in urban areas) is critical to achieving stated objectives of the Council Plan.
- Integrated Water Management (IWM) principles should be incorporated into all new developments if at all possible.

Council has developed guidelines (e.g. Open Space Plan 2014-2024) to give effect to its policy position on open space. These guidelines are available to staff via the Intranet. The responsibility to ensure that the implementation and maintenance of the guidelines accords with Council's policy position is vested in the Manager Natural Environment and Parks. Any matter specifically requiring a Council determination shall be reported by the General Manager Built & Natural Environment.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	No changes applicable at this review
1.1	December 2023	Date of Next Review updated to December 2025 Minor formatting changes Related Policies table updated: Addition of Fair Access Policy Updated related documents and added link to: Wellington Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 Adjusted paragraphs for clarity in sections in Guiding Principles
1.2	December 2024	Date of Next Review updated to December 2026