

6. PORT HILLS RECREATION STRATEGY

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The purpose of this report is to discuss the development of a Port Hills Recreation Strategy, invite Board members to participate in a Focus Group, and to present a recreation survey for the Port Hills as a first stage in the strategy development.

OVERVIEW OF PORT HILLS RECREATION STRATEGY AND SURVEY

The Parks and Waterways Unit Planning and Investigations team and the Port Hills Rangers are currently preparing a Port Hills Recreation Strategy. The primary purpose of this work is the preparation of an Asset Management Plan and Long-term Financial Strategy to direct capital development and to target levels of service on the Port Hills.

A comprehensive recreation survey of Port Hills users has been the first stage towards understanding user needs. The aim of the survey was to assist in the identification of the recreational values of the Port Hills, and the built and natural resources which support those activities. Surveyors interviewed users at key locations across the hills, and 397 people completed questionnaires. Some of the key findings from the recreation survey are summarised in "Key Findings" below.

The next step in the consultation process involves both recreation users and non-users. A full asset and financial analysis of the facilities on the hills is being compiled, and staff are involved in engaging a wide group of communities through as many as 15 Focus Groups. Later in the year a draft Port Hills Recreation Strategy will be developed and distributed for review, and then made available for submissions.

The recreation user survey has recently been completed (June 2002) and copies are being presented to the Hagley/Ferrymead, Spreydon/Heathcote, and Riccarton/Wigram Community Boards. In late 2002 the Parks and Waterways Unit will seek formal feedback from the Community Boards on their priorities for the management of the Port Hills as one of Christchurch's most significant recreation resources.

SOME KEY FINDINGS FROM THE PORT HILLS RECREATION SURVEY

- The primary recreation activities carried out on the Port Hills are walking (40%), mountain biking (17%), sight-seeing (9.8%) and running (9.5%). Dog walking, exercising, rock climbing, picnicking, road cycling and driving are other significant activities.
- The most important features of the Port Hills are exercise and views (first equal) followed by accessibility and peacefulness.
- The most popular entry and exit sites on the Port Hills are the Sign of the Takahe, Rapaki Track, Sign of the Kiwi, Taylors Mistake and Victoria Park. The highest use area of the Port Hills is the corridor between Elizabeth Park and the Sign of the Kiwi (including the Bowenvale Track). Use drops, but is still relatively high for Rapaki Rock, Taylors Mistake to Breeze Bay, the top of Kennedys and Worsleys Tracks, and Castle Rock and the northern half of the Bridle Path.
- Respondents were asked if they felt their main activity in this area was better, worse or the same as the first time they visited, and why they felt things had changed. The majority thought things were better or the same, with only 4% feeling things were worse.
- Respondents were asked if there were any recreational or commercial activities they would not like to see on the Port Hills. While 14% could not name an activity, 16% stated 'any commercial activities' as being undesirable, while another 12% did not want any 'residential housing.'

SUSTAINABILITY CRITERIA FOR PORT HILLS RECREATION STRATEGY

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓-x	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use	✓	Recreation on the Port Hills promotes well being. It does not deplete resources, and most activities are gentle on the earth - "take only photographs, leave only footprints".
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	✓✓	Outdoor recreation activities on the Port Hills do not produce any harmful emissions or waste.
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓✓	Ecological heritage sites on the Port Hills are protected and promoted, and creation of other green links is underway with a comprehensive planting programme. The acquisition and development of "green links" for walking may also contribute to "green links" for ecosystems. Recreation on the Port Hills is sustainable - it has a positive interaction with the Hills' outstanding natural features and landscapes.
N4	People needs met fairly and efficiently	✓✓	Recreation on the Port Hills is available to all, from walking, biking, running, sightseeing to climbing, picnicking and driving.
The People Step			
P1	Basic needs met	✓	A fundamental need for people to recreate is met, whether this is more active (e.g. rockclimbing) or passive (sight-seeing).
P2	Full potential developed	✓✓	Peoples' full potential may be met from the wide variety of physical activities they can do on the Port Hills. There are a range of opportunities to improve both physical and mental health.
P3	Social capital enhanced	✓✓	There are a wide group of volunteers that help build and maintain hill tracks, and a significant group is the Summit Road Society that plays an important role in this area. There is potential to further develop skills and sense of pride in maintaining areas of the Port Hills for current and future enjoyment. Recreation on the Port Hills also creates places for people to come together informally and engage with one another outside of work and home, creates inclusive communities and could encourage and support diversity.
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓✓	The volunteer work and opportunities for social contact both at work and in recreation on the Port Hills is high. There is the opportunity to engage with tangata whenua about their important values and to protect these values. Protecting and enhancing heritage values is important in the context of managing recreation resources on the Port Hills.
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓	Volunteer involvement on the Port Hills is growing, and the interest in having a say about the Hills' future is also developing. The concept of a 'regional park' in the future has been raised and community engagement will be a key component of this.
The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources	✓✓	Wide benefits to be gained as the early results of the strategy work are revealing. Makes best use of Council finances by directing levels of service.
E2	Job rich local economy	✓	Future potential for eco-tourism and the possible development of future facilities.

E3	Financial sustainability	✓	Already there are some companies involved in revegetation of the Port Hills (this activity also enhances recreation experience). There are further opportunities for sponsorship.
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Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Port Hills Recreation Survey report be received.
 2. That the Community Board nominate members who may wish to participate in a Focus Group with Port Hills residents to develop the Port Hills Recreation Strategy.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the recommendations be adopted.