

5 Tracks and access

5.1 Existing conditions

The track system in the northern area has developed mainly to serve individual reserves rather than to link the reserve network together. There are currently no major walkways such as the City to Sea (Botanic Garden to Island Bay) in the north, apart from the Skyline Walkway that ends at Old Coach Road. The Wellington section of the Te Araroa Walkway which passes through Ohariu Valley and Spicer Forest to Porirua recently opened.

The existing open space access network is described in the following sections:

5.1.1 Tawa to Takapu and Grenada North

Most are short tracks in reserves such as Larsen Crescent, Wilf Mexted Reserve, Woodburn Drive Reserve and Willowbank Park. While they provide very different user experiences, they cater only for less active forms of recreational use.

There are no formal links from Tawa to the Outer Green Belt. Redwood Bush and Tawa Bush Reserves on the edge of the urban fringe have very limited track systems although there is an extensive network of informal tracks through these reserves and private land up to the ridgeline.

The motorway, Porirua Stream and railway line put constraints on east-west links. Neither are there good north south links from Linden Avenue to Willowbank Park.

On the western slopes of the Horokiwi ridge are a series of valley systems with grazing on ridges and spurs, and some regenerating bush in valleys. The only major track runs from Caribbean Drive Reserve up to Horokiwi Road.

5.1.2 Churton Park, Stebbings and Glenside

Reserves in Churton Park were specifically planned as part of the subdivision development process. There are a number of short local tracks of a high standard but no track network or links outside the Churton Park community particularly to the west and the Ohariu ridge. This land is in private ownership with no public access. There is no existing track system in the Glenside community.

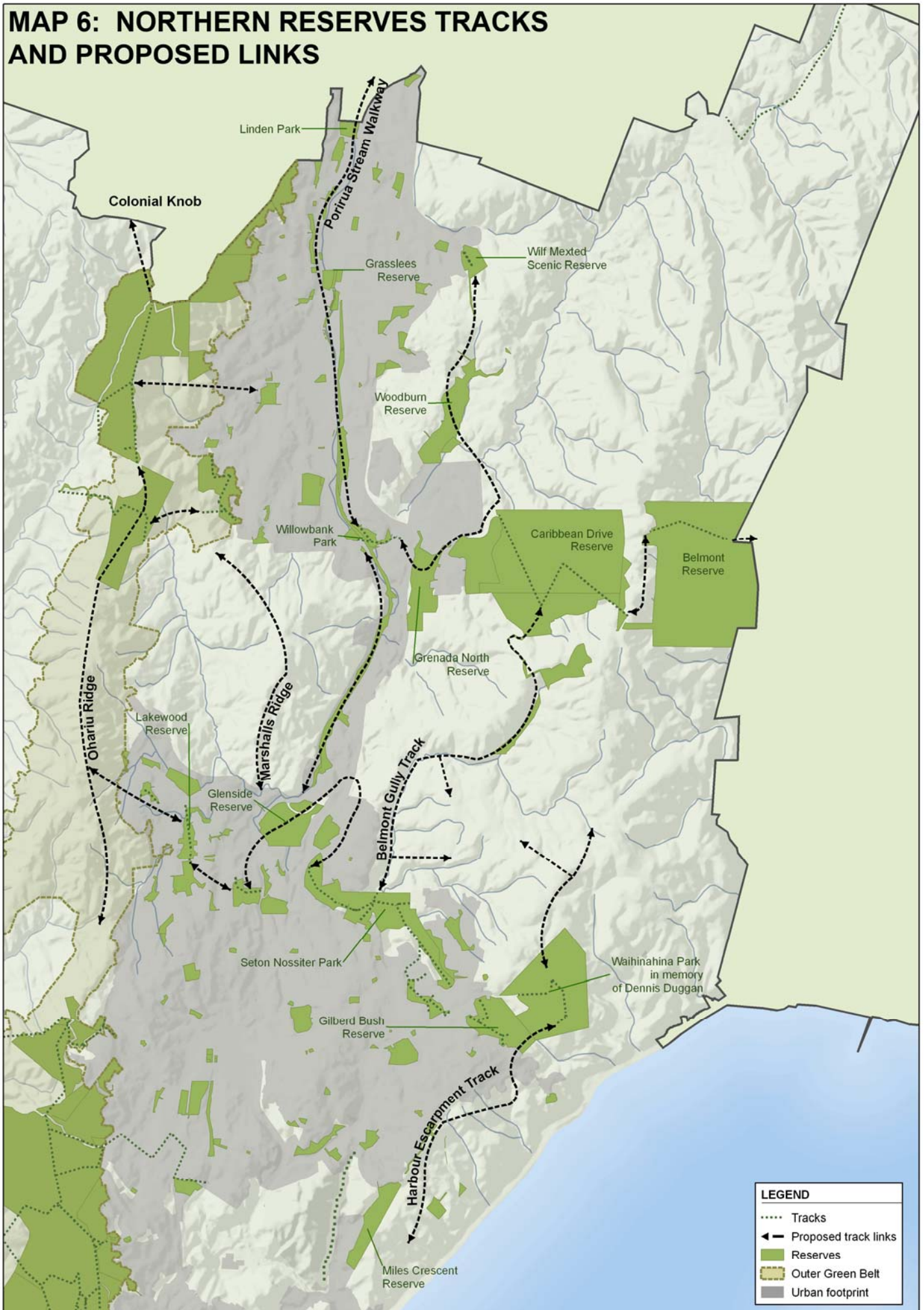
5.1.3 Grenada Village to Newlands

The track system in Newlands is centred in Seton Nossiter Park. There are only a few tracks in other reserves and parks in Newlands, and no links to neighbouring communities.

5.1.4 Johnsonville

There are no tracks in Johnsonville outside the Outer Green Belt area. However, Old Coach Road does start in Johnsonville and moves into the Outer Green Belt management area.

MAP 6: NORTHERN RESERVES TRACKS AND PROPOSED LINKS



5.2 Issues and opportunities

The northern part of Wellington has not had the benefit of access to more extensive outdoor spaces and opportunities. The central part of the City is well served by the Town Belt and there is reasonable access to Wellington's Outer Green Belt and the South Coast. Access to Belmont Regional Park is well developed from the Hutt Valley's western suburbs. For the northern area of the city there are significant opportunities but access is poorly defined or non-existent apart from the link to the Skyline Walkway. There is also a need to connect communities as identified in the NGMF.

5.2.1 Open Space Access Plan (2004)

In 2004 the Council approved the Open Space Access Plan. The proposed initiatives in the plan relevant to the north are:

The Northern Network – Tawa, Glenside, Churton Park, Newlands and Grenada

The northern suburbs have few tracks. A track network would provide local and regional benefits with links to Belmont Regional Park.

The Harbour Escarpment Walk

Although Ngauranga Gorge forms a deep division between Khandallah and Newlands, there is potential to link existing park and reserve areas and create the harbour equivalent of the Skyline Walkway. The Harbour Escarpment Walk would be an exposed but exciting track starting at Waihinahina Park (the ex-Horokiwi landfill) in Newlands, running through to Ngauranga and along the coastal escarpment to Kaiwharawhara. This track could then cross over to the harbour and connect with the Harbour Quays development and the waterfront.

5.2.2 Access to the Outer Green Belt

Spicer Forest and the Outer Green Belt

A major opportunity exists for Tawa, Churton Park and Porirua residents to enjoy greater use of Spicer Forest, the Outer Green Belt, and Colonial Knob. Access from Upper Stebbings Valley (site for future residential development) is also potentially an important link.

There are four possible links:

- Churton Park from the reservoir in the lower Stebbings subdivision, over private land to Council property at 944 Ohariu Valley Road and onto Spicer Forest
- from Redwood Bush through private land to Council land at 944 Ohariu Valley Road and onto Spicer Forest. This land will eventually be part of the upper Stebbings subdivision
- the third link at the northern end of Tawa could join Tawa Reserves with northern Spicer Forest and onto Colonial Knob in Porirua.
- The fourth link is from Glenside up through Marshall's Ridge to the Council property at 944 Ohariu Valley Road.

5.2.3 Access to Belmont Regional Park

Access to Belmont Regional Park from the western side is currently limited. The main access is from Horokiwi. The current link from Caribbean Drive to Horokiwi could be extended into Belmont Regional Park with a future linkage down into the northern end of Lincolnshire Farm and down Belmont Stream into Seton Nossiter Park.

5.2.4 North – south links

There are opportunities for track networks to link north to south following the Porirua Stream. This would provide a framework joining suburbs as well as key reserve areas within suburbs. In addition they would provide flat accessible access for users. Key opportunities are:

Porirua Stream Walkway and cycleway – Tawa

This 3.5 km track would link Willowbank Park and Linden Park following the stream and railway corridors as well as linking key reserves such as Grasslees. It could eventually link with the Porirua track and cycleway to the north which will eventually extend to Titahi Bay and the proposed streamside walkway to the south from Tawa to Glenside.

Middleton Road – Glenside to Willowbank

This 5km link would start in Glenside Reserve and follow Middleton Road northwards to Willowbank Park. This is seen as an infrastructural link that will need to be developed in conjunction with road improvements.

5.2.5 Cross valley links

There are several opportunities to develop cross valley links joining up with the major north-south links such as the Porirua Stream walkway

Horokiwi to Porirua Stream link

A cross valley link could be developed from Horokiwi down through Caribbean Avenue Reserve to Willowbank Park where it joins the proposed Porirua Stream track and cycleway. In the longer term a northern link from Caribbean Drive Reserve via Woodburn Reserve and on to Wilf Mexted Reserve could be achieved.

Seton Nossiter to Glenside Reserve

From Seton Nossiter a cross valley link could be developed via Mark Avenue Extension across the Churton Park motorway overbridge and through Glenside Reserve to the Porirua Stream. From here there are a couple of potential links through Churton Park reserves and on to the Outer Green Belt

5.2.6 Types of use

The current focus on short bush walks and tracks within reserve areas caters primarily for walkers. Two other key user groups in the north are mountain bikers and horse riders.

Mountain bikers

The current Off Road Mountain Bike Policy is under review. The policy has as one of its major principles that all tracks are open to mountain bikes unless declared closed. Currently in the north, the areas closed are:

Redwood Bush Reserve, Seton Nossiter Park (excluding the section between Bushlands Grove and Mark Avenue) and Wilf Mexted Reserve.

Given the current provision of tracks and closure of several reserves there are not many opportunities for mountain bikers in the north from beginner level through to advanced. Opportunities exist to ensure that any new tracks developed are dual use for walkers and bikers. Key track developments that will provide opportunities for bikers include:

- Porirua Stream walkway and cycleway
- The Harbour Escarpment
- links into Horokiwi and Belmont Regional Park
- links into the Outer Green Belt and the skyline track and Spicer Forest. This area could provide a major mountain biking facility in future for both Wellington and Porirua residents.

Horse riding

Horse riding in the north is restricted to pony club and riding venues such as Newlands/Paparangi Horse Riding Society at Glenside Reserve and Woodburn Reserve, which was identified as an area for horse riding at the time it was taken as a reserve contribution following subdivision of the surrounding land. The current by laws do not allow horses in reserve areas (Reserves and Swimming Pools bylaws 16.4.1 (g)). However some management plans including the Outer Green Belt Management Plan do permit the Council to declare areas open to horses. Areas open to horses are identified in the Open Space Access Plan.

5.3 Objectives

- Develop a quality primary network accessing major destination points in the northern area, and linking with an equitable distribution of secondary and local track networks and recreational facilities.
- Ensure that the network provides for a range of user interest, skill, abilities and fitness levels.

5.4 Policies

5.4.1 The access network¹¹

- A wide range of skill and fitness levels, abilities and interests will be catered for by the access network.
- Tracks will be shared use (ie pedestrian and cycle) wherever this is appropriate. Tracks are open for biking unless otherwise stated.
- The access network will be integrated with the wider city and regional access networks, and the transport needs of pedestrians and cyclists (including public transport).
- Tracks will cater for demonstrated recreation demand where possible and appropriate.
- All tracks will be physically sustainable and have minimal environmental impact, as far as possible.
- Pest control, emergency services, and general management purposes will be catered for by the access network, where appropriate.
- Tracks will be signed and maintained to defined standards, with significant hazards identified and/or mitigated.
- Designated tracks will be available for horses and declared open for horse-riding.
- All tracks are closed to motorised vehicles except by special permission on a case-by-case basis.
- Some tracks within the network will be accessible to those with limited mobility, push chairs and wheel chairs.

Note - track development priorities are identified in Section 8, Management Sectors.

¹¹ From the principles of the WCC Open Space Access Plan, 2004