

Summary of consultation on proposed Outer Green Belt reserve classifications 2026

Introduction

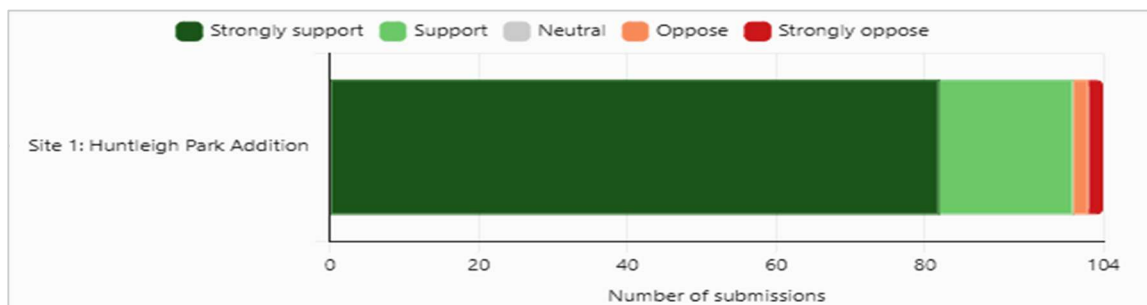
Public consultation was held from 27th July to 23rd August 2026 on proposed classifications under the Reserves Act 1977 of seven land parcels (sites) in the Council's Outer Green Belt reserves.

Feedback was received from 105 respondents: 101 through a survey and 4 through written submissions.

This document summarises the results of the consultation, which comprised two questions to gauge the level of support for the proposals and the opportunity to comment.

Question 1. Proposed Scenic Reserve (a) classification

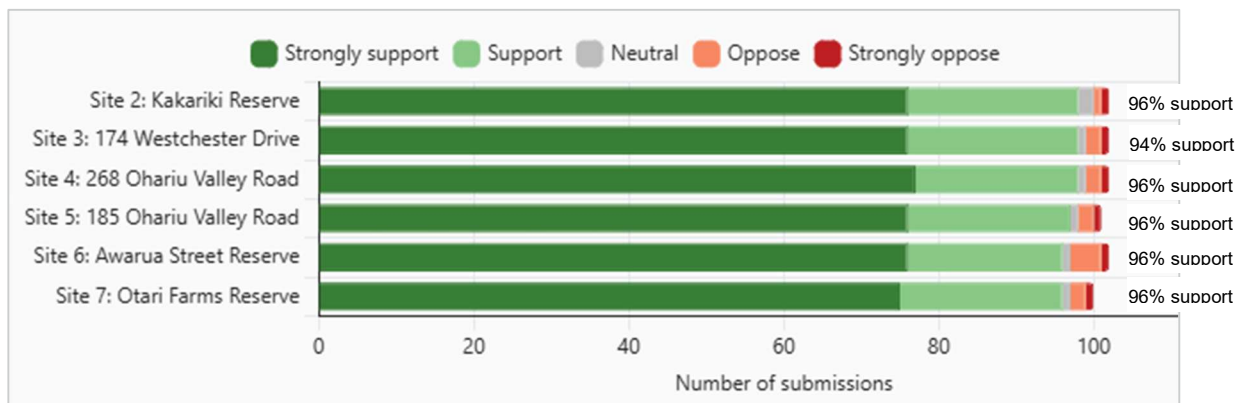
"We have proposed classifying just Site 1, Huntleigh Park addition, as Scenic Reserve (a). Do you support or oppose this proposed classification?"



As the graph shows, support was very high, with 96% of the 104 submitters in support, no submitters neutral, and 4% opposed.

Question 2: Proposed Scenic Reserve (b) classifications

"We have proposed classifying the remaining six sites as Scenic Reserve (b) Do you support or oppose these proposed classifications?"



As the graph shows, levels of support per site were consistently very high; between 94% and 96%.

Summary of written responses

Written comments were invited to both questions 1 and 2 and are summarised below.

Note re abbreviations. 'OGB' means 'Outer Green Belt';
'OGBMP' means 'Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2019'.

Comments in support of the proposed classifications	
Comments by theme	Officer response
Strong support for reserve classification and long-term protection The most common theme was support for classifying the land under the Reserves Act, protecting green spaces in perpetuity, and safeguarding the Outer Green Belt from future development. Submitters generally considered scenic reserve classification appropriate and desirable. <i>Submission no's:</i> 2, 11, 18, 20, 23, 26, 27, 29, 36, 37, 43, 47, 49, 50, 51, 57, 63, 64, 65, 67, 72, 76, 83, 86, 88, 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 101, 104, 105	Noted.
Biodiversity protection and native forest restoration Many submitters emphasised protecting native ecosystems, including Significant Natural Areas, restoring indigenous vegetation, improving biodiversity, and creating habitat for native birds and wildlife. Several highlighted the importance of ecological corridors and landscape-scale connectivity. <i>Submission no's:</i> 3, 20, 23, 27, 28, 29, 36, 37, 43, 44, 47, 57, 62, 65, 67, 72, 76, 83, 86, 94, 99, 100, 102, 104, 105	Under the Reserves Act 1977, both scenic reserve classifications provide for ecological associations and the natural environment to be preserved as far as possible. The Outer Green Belt Management Plan 2019 also provides for protecting and enhancing the OGB as a continuous ecological corridor, recognising its role in underpinning the city's biodiversity values. Noted.
Public access and recreation A large number of submissions recognised recreation as a key benefit. Walking, running, mountain biking, tramping, enjoying views, and access to nature close to urban areas were frequently mentioned. <i>Submission no's:</i> 5, 6, 19, 20, 25, 28, 53, 65, 82, 83, 96, 97, 98, 100, 103, 104	Under the Reserves Act 1977, both scenic reserve classifications provide for public access and the provision of amenities and facilities in open areas where necessary for public benefit and enjoyment of the reserve. Noted.
Outer Green Belt connectivity and Wellington's green identity Submitters valued the Outer Green Belt as a connected ecological and recreational corridor and important to Wellington's character as a green city. <i>Submission no's:</i> 20, 44, 62, 64, 65, 86, 94, 99, 105	Under the Reserves Act 1977, both scenic reserve classifications provide for the retention and preservation of natural or scenic values and the OGBMP describes the Outer Green Belt as "Wellington's wild green connector", in recognition of its importance as an ecological corridor and landscape backdrop to the city. Noted.
Public wellbeing, amenity, and benefits for future generations Submitters linked reserve protection with benefits for the physical and mental wellbeing of the community and future generations, including contact with nature, scenic amenity and contributing to Wellington's liveability. <i>Submission no's:</i> 20, 44, 50, 57, 64, 65, 76, 81, 83, 104	- The general purpose of the Reserves Act includes providing public areas (i.e. reserves, including scenic reserves) for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, including recreational use and landscape amenity. The OGBMP recognises these benefits through various provisions for recreational access, community partnership and environmental protection/enhancement. - Noted.

Opposition and/or suggested alternatives to proposed classifications	
Suggested Scenic Reserve (a) instead of Scenic Reserve (b) classification All of OGB: Several submitters thought that all seven sites should be classified Scenic Reserve (a), one suggesting that this should, ideally, apply to all Outer Green Belt land. Awarua Street Reserve: Some other submitters called for Site 6, Awarua Street Reserve, to be classified Scenic Reserve (a) instead of the proposed (b) because it already has sufficiently high ecological values to warrant this perpetual and more protective classification. Submitters mentioned the Significant Natural Area (SNA) covering this site, a nationally vulnerable ecosystem present, the proximity to Mt Kaukau/Tarikākā, its location in the headwaters of Korimako Stream, and concern about a reduced focus on preservation of indigenous flora and on exotic weed control under the (b) classification. <i>Submission no's: 23, 31, 44, 51, 62, 94, 105</i>	All of OGB. It is not appropriate for all the Outer Green Belt to be Scenic Reserve (a). While large areas do have sufficiently high scenic and natural values to warrant the stronger, perpetual protection of (a) there are large areas of former farmland where the Scenic Reserve (b) classification is more appropriate i.e. to manage areas that will become of such scenic interest or beauty to warrant protection and preservation. - No change. Awarua Street Reserve: The reason given for the proposed scenic reserve (b) classification was that Site 6 had been retired from grazing comparatively recently. While the whole site is within SNA WC068, it includes areas of reverting pasture and exotic weed growth, very different from most of the SNA's old, well-established indigenous forest cover. However, there are features which, in combination, indicate a higher overall existing level of scenic and natural value than initially assessed. These features include: the high visibility of the site high up on TariKākā/Mount Kaukau (a Site of Significance to Māori, and a Special Amenity Landscape in the district plan); the contribution the site's cliffs make to Tarikākā's scenic quality; the presence of a nationally vulnerable ecosystem (rocks, tors and cliffs); a small area of forest remnant on the southwest boundary; and its role as a connector within the both the SNA and the Western Forests Key Native Ecosystem (identified by Greater Wellington Regional Council), which extend from Johnsonville Park to Otari-Wilton's Bush. - Recommend classify Scenic Reserve (a).
Desire to retain flexibility for human use A small minority expressed concern that reserve classifications should not unnecessarily restrict recreational use or future management options. Specific comments included that recreation should be the primary purpose; that biking and access should not be unnecessarily restricted; that vegetation clearing, firebreaks, and infrastructure should be possible where needed; exotic species allowed if useful, and ecological protection be balanced with public use. One submitter was specifically concerned that protection of indigenous vegetation, especially in perpetuity, would result in views out from open ridgetop areas being lost as those areas grew over. <i>Submission no's: 6, 69, 95, 103</i>	While more emphasis is placed on protecting and preserving natural and landscape values in scenic reserves than in recreation or historic reserves, the Reserves Act 1977 provides for public access and for amenities and facilities (including tracks) to be provided in open areas of scenic reserves to enable public benefit and enjoyment. Most people using the Outer Green Belt value the scenic and natural qualities and, so, balancing access and use with protection of those values is what underpins the OGB's management. Furthermore, the 'principles for ecologically sustainable tracks' in the Council's <i>Open Space Access Plan</i> apply throughout the track network, regardless of the type of reserve. In terms of open ridgetop views, the OGBMP acknowledges that vegetation is likely to eventually grow over some ridgetop areas but makes specific provision for defined viewpoints to be kept clear (Policy 4.3.2.1 (3)). No change.

Comments about implementation and resourcing	
Track development and access improvements	The OGBMP and Open Space Access Plan (OSAP) contain objectives, policies and plans to guide how the Outer Green

A number of submissions focused specifically on track networks, noting Skyline Walkway connections, endorsing rationalisation of informal tracks, protecting existing track networks, endorsing new access opportunities from several sites, and noting the need to balance track development with ecological impact. <i>Submission no's: 5, 20, 53, 82, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 105</i>	Belt track network is managed and developed, including managing environmental impacts. The suggestions for track development on private land are outside the scope of the proposed classifications and inappropriate for Council to comment. Noted.
Funding and implementation Some submitters stressed that reserve status alone is insufficient to protect and restore natural values without active and ongoing management. They emphasised the need for funding and practical management to achieve restoration outcomes, including for weed and pest management, monitoring and maintenance, and called for more transparent implementation plans and budgets. <i>Submission no's: 3, 23, 28, 65, 95, 98, 100, 104, 105</i>	Agreed. Reserve classification clarifies the primary purpose of reserve land for future management. Weed and animal pest control is guided by <i>Our Natural Capital, Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan</i> and the relevant reserve management plans but the amount of funding available is decided through the Council's overall Long-Term Plan and Annual Plan budgeting processes. Noted.
Community restoration, volunteering, and partnerships. Some submissions highlighted the importance of community involvement, university initiatives, ecological groups, and volunteer restoration projects in helping to achieve desired outcomes for the reserves. Planting activities were mentioned and partnership with mana whenua, Victoria University, Forest & Bird, Zealandia and Kia Mouriora. <i>Submission no's: 36, 47, 65, 86, 97, 99, 100, 105</i>	Council is grateful for and values the significant contribution of community groups in helping protect and restore the Outer Green Belt. The Council makes provision for this through Principle 5 in the OGBMP, "Community participation in managing the Outer Green Belt is enabled and supported." Noted.

Site-specific reserve management comments	
Requests for continued expansion of protected land Some submitters argued the Council should continue acquiring and protecting additional land beyond the current proposals, especially to add to the Outer Green Belt and suggesting specific adjoining private land. <i>Submission no's: 44, 50, 51, 57, 63, 95, 105</i>	The OGBMP provides for the Outer Green Belt to be completed as an inter-connected series of reserves. However, land acquisition is subject to opportunity, funding availability, assessment of land suitability and assessment that ownership is the best option for protecting the important site values. i. Noted.
Westchester Drive i. Improve native planting and look into removing pines. ii. Potential creation of appropriately sited parking on the flat area. <i>Submission no's: 98, 103</i>	ii. Native planting is managed as part of a city-wide forest restoration programme. Similarly, the need for pine removal is assessed and prioritised as part of Council's city-wide tree management programme. iii. Development of parking on the reserve is not envisaged, as street parking in the vicinity is considered adequate. Noted.
268 Ohariu Valley Road i. Would like to see tracks and vehicle access rationalised, noting need to balance desire for new tracks against the ecological impact of tracks. ii. Ensure track access to outcrop for recreation (climbing, abseiling, geology). <i>Submission no's: 105, 98:</i>	i. Tracks have been planned, developed and rationalised in recent years, taking into account potential use / suitability of existing farm tracks and the need to cater for different user groups. ii. The tracks up from Erlestoke/Chippenham Crescents provide access to the vicinity of the rock outcrops. Noted

Otari Farms i. Concern that long grass, now grazing has ceased, could be a fire hazard near adjacent pine forests, especially if summers become like currently in Europe. ii. Create shared bridle paths that would be open to horse riders as there are many horse riders and several riding clubs in areas adjacent to Otari Farms. Riders need access to public areas as rural roads are hazardous with motorised and cycle traffic increasing. <i>Submission no's: 28</i>	i. Restoring former grazing land to native forest does increase fire risk until planted areas establish. Council has commissioned a wildfire risk management plan for the Outer Green Belt which includes a risk analysis report and activity control guidelines based on the risk. Messaging to remind people of the current FENZ fire restriction level and general tips for staying safe will be ongoing and, if required, some restrictions may be implemented in the Outer Green Belt. ii. Horse riding is limited under the OGBMP to sectors 1 and 2 in the northern part of the OGB and farm tracks in Te Kopahou and is not envisaged in the Otari Farms Reserve, where trails will remain principally the shared Skyline Track, with connecting tracks to Johnston Hill Reserve and Otari-Wilton's Bush Reserve, which are closed for horse riding.
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