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## 4.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Swanson reserves lie within the Waitakere Ward. The Swanson Stream is identified as a City-wide Green Network linkage, which links together a number of areas of ecological significance.

A number of strategic and local issues influence this Plan. This section contains the background information relating to the strategic framework within which the Reserve Management Plan has been prepared.

### 4.1 Green Network

The objective of the Green Network is to link existing open space, streams and bush remnants into an ecologically continuous, vegetated, Green Network extending from the ranges, along the stream and road networks and across open spaces to the sea. Within this corridor, which includes both private and public land, the full natural progression of coastal to mountain vegetation, habitats and processes is able to take place.

#### **The Green Network will be used:**

- To protect significant natural vegetation and wildlife habitats;
- To develop ecological corridors which will allow for the movement of wildlife, and the slow migration of plants;
- To protect significant landforms;
- To protect water quality in streams and waterways bordered by the network;
- To make the city a more attractive place visually;
- Potentially to service households and business needs;
- As a flood protection tool;
- To provide public access to and along the coast, streams, lakes and other waterways;
- To help integrate the City's natural and urban environments and
- To help create a new city form...separated by the Green Network but also linked by means of walkways and cycle ways.

The Swanson Stream is one of the major waterways that connects the Ranges and the Waitemata Harbour and therefore provides a significant opportunity to implement the objectives of the Green Network. Several of the Swanson reserves lie along the margins of the Swanson Stream (Swanson Scenic Reserve, Stream Reserve and Esplanade Reserve). The value of these reserves is in the fact that together they operate as a corridor or linkage to surrounding areas of vegetation on the hills to the north, in particular, Kay Road, the Billy Joe Stream site, Crows Park and Swanson Scenic Reserve. In addition, the corridor is buffered to the south by Redwood Park, which, while not containing significant vegetation, is a large area of green, open space with high recreation values.

Other reserves in the upper catchment included in this Plan are directly connected to the larger vegetation mass of the Waitakere Ranges and protect the headwaters of the Cassell and upper Swanson Streams.

The Swanson Stream corridor is important to the Green Network because it contains one of the major streams of the major catchment in Waitakere City, links significant areas of protected bush in the surrounding catchment and offers key opportunities to demonstrate the Green Network itself.



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## 4.2 Project Twin Streams

Project Twin Streams aims to improve and protect the stream banks and stream water quality of the major streams that flow into the Waitemata Harbour. The Project originally focused on the Oratia and the Opanuku Streams and now includes the Swanson Stream. Catchment goals are achieved through partnerships between the Council and the Community and involve “on the ground” activities such as planting, weeding and clearing, as well as involvement in community celebrations such as festivals. All activities help to raise awareness of streams and their ecology and emphasise the importance of caring for them.



**Community Planting Day - Swanson Esplanade Reserve August 2004**

## 4.3 Parks Strategy

The Swanson Reserves Management Plan is being prepared in the context of the Parks Strategy, which provides guidelines on the management of parks within the City. The Parks Strategy has been developed in accordance with Waitakere City's Greenprint and outlines an integrated vision for the future of Waitakere City parks based on ten objectives:

- Increase the use and enjoyment of parks
- Extend and improve the city's natural ecosystems
- Increase the opportunities for people to enjoy nature on parks
- Sustainably manage parks as part of the wider landscape
- Increase the use, range and quality of sports facilities within the city
- Protect the heritage values within the city
- Provide quality local and neighbourhood parks that are within walking distance throughout the city
- Work in partnership with iwi on the management of Waahi Tapu
- Involve communities in the design and management of parks
- Improve the management and administration of parks.

The Parks Strategy identifies three different categories of reserve according to their purpose, City-wide, Local and Neighbourhood. Swanson Scenic Reserve is a City-wide reserve, the balance are local or neighbourhood. In addition, many of the reserves have a Green Network function.



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The Green Network reserves are Swanson Scenic Reserve, Swanson Stream Esplanade Reserve, Welsh Hills Reserve, Kitewaho Reserve, Kitewaho Plantation 1 and 2, and Awhiorangi Reserve. Kay Road and the Billy Joe site also fall into the Green Network category. These esplanade and scenic/bush reserves allow public access to significant natural local features, provide for bush protection, ecological enhancement, passive recreation and retention of local amenity.

The remainder are Local or Neighbourhood 'township' reserves located within Swanson Village. These reserves provide for a variety of other local recreational needs and include Swanson Station Reserve, Swanson Heritage Park, Robert Knox Memorial Reserve and Swanson Oaks.

The Parks Strategy classifies the Swanson Stream Corridor as a City-wide corridor with a Green Network focus. The Strategy also identifies the Swanson Stream as one of three streams in the City with enough parkland beside them to become an ecological corridor.

The following Parks Strategy objectives relate directly to the Swanson reserves:

## **Objective 2**

### **Extend and improve the city's natural ecosystems**

- 2.2** A representative range of ecosystems should be represented within the parks network, including the following ecosystems:
- Outstanding bush areas around Sunnyvale and Crows Roads, Swanson, Colwill scarp and Huruhuru scarp in Massey
- 2.4** A continuous corridor of natural ecosystems should be established along the Opanuku, Paremuka and Swanson Streams.

## **Objective 3**

### **Increase the opportunities for people to enjoy nature on parks**

- 3.2** A high priority should be given to developing access to the Waitemata coastline and to the Opanuku, Paremuka and Swanson Streams
- 3.3** Walkways through native ecosystems should be developed so that they connect to a comprehensive walking network
- 3.4** Establish an esplanade reserve or access strip beside the coastline and all streams and rivers in the city that are greater than 3m in width

## **Objective 5**

### **Increase the use, range and quality of sports facilities within the City**

The Waitakere Ward has a low standard of provision of sports fields and courts. Swanson in particular, needs to have a local park upgraded to provide areas for formal sport use.



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## 4.4 Weed Strategy

The goal of the WCC Weed Strategy is the “Protection of the quality, resilience, biodiversity and ecological integrity of Waitakere City’s natural habitat from the impacts of environmental weeds”.

The Strategy directs Council’s approach to the management of environmental weeds. It describes Council’s long-term goals and objectives, and provides a framework to guide the Council in carrying out its roles and responsibilities with regard to identifying, prioritising and managing weed impacts. Council has also prepared specific documents that relate directly to the management of weeds within the Swanson reserves.

## 4.5 Swanson Reserves and Public Access Plan.

Council commissioned the draft Reserves And Public Access Plan as part of the Swanson Structure Plan to in order to assess the effectiveness of the local reserve network and to guide the future development of reserves in the Swanson area. The RAPAP aims to develop a reserve network that will cater for existing and future local populations through community consultation.

The draft Swanson RAPAP report identified the following areas where specific additions and/or improvements could be made to the reserves network:

- The establishment of a local domain as a community focal point providing for most of the communities passive and informal active recreational needs.
- Improved public access throughout the existing Reserve Network and Local Area.
- The establishment of safe bridle trails.
- Enhance and link the existing Green Network. Some increases to the Green Network to improve public access to protect and enhance particularly significant natural areas.

## 4.6 Te Kawerau A Maki Trust Resource Management Statement

In 1840, John White, a travelling European in the west, observes that “in the produce of the land and sea, Kawerau do not pay tribute to any chief, nor could they be commanded by any adjoining tribe or hapu to assist in any act whatever, nor could a chief go to any of the Kawerau fishing grounds without the express permission of the Kawerau people” (Rules Section, District Plan 1998 p3).

The Resource Management Statement outlines the concerns and goals of the Kawerau a Maki Trust with regard to the sustainable management of the Taonga within the tribal area of Te Kawerau a Maki. Resource management issues are addressed by the Kawerau a Maki Trust within the context of achieving a balance between:

- The maintenance of spiritual and cultural values,
- Environmental and heritage protection and enhancement, and
- Social and economic development.

In general, Te Kawerau a Maki support any activities occurring on reserves that:

- Encourage a sense of community and community ownership,
- Promote natural values and sustainability, summed up in the Eco-City vision, and
- Promote cultural diversity.



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Te Kawerau a Maki supports the ability of community groups to apply to use reserves for non-profit purposes, such as cultural activities, educational purposes or programmes with environmental benefits. Te Kawerau a Maki actively encourage activities consistent with their own objectives, particularly:

- Native revegetation and planting schemes.
- Activities that raise awareness of tangata whenua issues, such as kaitiakitanga, tribal history of the area.
- Historical cultural and ecological interpretation, such as signage with information of historical relevance, or explaining the traditional uses of certain plants.
- Sustainable collection of plant materials for cultural purposes such as medicine or weaving, with prior consent of the Parks department.
- Any activities consistent with Maori culture, such as Hangi, Kapa Haka etc.

## **4.7 Ngati Whatua**

Ngati Whatua exercises kaitiakitanga over the material and non-material resources of their tribal area through their relationship with Council (see section 6 RMA91). Ngati Whatua customary rights are sourced in the continued occupation and use of resources within this area. Implicit in the Maori resource management principle (kaitiakitanga) is reciprocity. Tangata Whenua are therefore obligated to protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of the same area. These ancestral resources since 1840, the time of European settlement, have declined dramatically. Ngati Whatua through their relationship with Council therefore seeks:

- the restoration of the mauri and protection of these resources.
- the restoration and protection of bio-diversity.
- The restoration and protection of customary practices and traditions.

## **5.0 Management Plan Objectives**

### **5.1 An Integrated Vision for the Reserves**

There are 14 separate reserves in this Management Plan - including the future reserves; the balefill and Billy Joe site. They are distributed throughout the catchment, but geographically located in two main groups. The largest group is clustered around the Swanson Stream and its tributaries, and is related by its connection to the Stream corridor. A smaller group consisting of the four local purpose reserves lies nearby, clustered around Swanson Road. The remaining bush reserves are scattered through the catchment and are connected by their shared ecological values as part of the greater foothills bush environment.

The reserves are bound by their recreational value to the Swanson and wider community and their environmental value in protecting the ecosystems within the reserves. This Plan proposes to take a holistic approach to their evaluation and management in order that these recreational and natural values are best managed in the context of the wider community and the environment.

The protection of the natural character of the reserves, in particular the unique Swanson Foothills vegetation and landscape, and the provision for appropriate local recreational use and development forms the primary focus of the Plan.

### **5.2 Approach to Preparing Policies**

In recognition of the need to evaluate and manage the Swanson Reserves in an integrated and holistic manner, a generic approach has been taken to the development of policies. The Management Plan acknowledges that the reserves must meet the needs of both local and City-wide user groups whilst retaining their environmental values. The reserves generally share similar management issues and therefore require a consistent approach in terms of policy.

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Objectives and Policies are based on the various issues associated with the reserves. In some cases there are issues and/or development opportunities that are specific to a particular reserve. These issues are addressed in Part 3 of the Plan, by way of the Table of Works, which prioritises specific proposals for each reserve.

### **5.3 Community Expectations for the Reserves**

The process of preparing this Management Plan began with public notification of the intention to draft a Plan and an initial submission period beginning in November 2001. In February 2002, an informal public workshop was held at Swanson School. This was well-attended and comments and suggestions noted. When the submissions period closed in March 2002, a total of 10 written submissions had been received, including a petition of 56 signatures and a submission from the Residents and Ratepayers Ass.

The draft reserve Management Plan was publicly notified in August 2003 and, at the close of submissions in October 2003, 5 written submissions had been received.

An Advisory Group consisting of members of the Waitakere Community Boards, Council staff and Taumata Runanga was established to facilitate both the public consultation and the development of this Management Plan.

### **Township Reserves**

The Swanson community has a historical tradition of independent thought and active participation in local and regional politics - as embodied in the life of William Swanson, which continues today. This tradition resulted in the Kay Road balefill Mediation Agreement and is evident in the initiation and development of the town centre reserves in Swanson. The land for Swanson Station Park and Swanson Heritage Park was purchased by the community with funds from the Trust established following the Mediation Agreement. These parks were subsequently developed through the Swanson 2000 study and planning process and are held in trust by Council for the community. Swanson Oaks was purchased with Council funding, but has been developed through the same Swanson 2000 study and planning process.

The development of the Station Park and facilities, including the relocation of the old railway station from Avondale, was completed in 2000. The other town centre reserves; Swanson Oaks and Swanson Heritage Park are being developed as a joint initiative by the community and Council.

Swanson Oaks was completed in 2003/4. The detailed design for the Heritage Park (working title) was completed in the 2002/2003 financial year, with the physical works being budgeted in the 2004/5 Annual Plan. These parks are to be managed by Council, with the Parks dept responsible for their maintenance and upkeep, with ongoing community liaison.

Council is responsible for gazetting the appropriate classifications for these three reserves under the Reserves Act 1977. *Local Purpose (Community Purpose)* was proposed as the most appropriate classification of all the classifications possible under the Reserves Act, it allows for the highest degree of flexibility and is the only one to grant the administering body the right to grant lease and licenses without seeking the approval of the Department of Conservation. The primary purpose of a *Local Purpose Reserve* is 'land reserved for the purpose of providing and retaining areas for such educational, community, social, or other local purposes as specified in the classification' (8/39 Reserves Act Guide).

### **Swanson Scenic Reserve Carpark**

Ritchie's Transport Holdings operate out of a depot next to the Swanson Scenic Reserve. Prior to 2001, Ritchie's staff used the Swanson Scenic Reserve carpark for all-day, off-road parking. The Scenic Reserve carpark has two entrances off Swanson Road. The carpark has a rough grass surface with an underlying layer of metal and is often unusable in winter months. The carpark area is a historical landfill and was filled with clean fill between 1975 and 1980.

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In May 2001, a report was presented to the Waitakere Community Board detailing the fact that the high use of the carpark was causing damage to the metal/grass surface. The board recommended that P 180 restrictions be placed on the carpark. Subsequently, in June 2001, John Ritchie of Ritchies Transport approached the Community Board with a request that the parking restrictions be lifted and in return, he would pay for an upgrade of the carpark. Ritchie's proposal was that to excavate an area of the carpark, compact base course metal an area suitable for 40 cars and seal the eastern entry. It was subsequently agreed that the Swanson Reserves Management Plan would be the best place to resolve the issue, as it would allow the proposal to be viewed in the context of an integrated Plan for the reserve and provide the opportunity for community input.

Through the consultation process, the community expressed reservations about the proposal and Ritchies were asked to present a detailed design including engineers' drawings of the proposed carpark, to be constructed to Council standards. In doing so, it became apparent to Ritchies that the costs of the development outweighed the advantages, and Ritchie's subsequently withdrew their proposal on July 2004.

## **Swanson Beyond 2000**

Between May and October 1998, the Swanson community participated in a vision development process, known as Swanson 2000. The project was largely community initiated and resourced – through time contributed by members of the Swanson Residents and Ratepayers Association and funding of consultants by the Swanson Balefill Trust. Waitakere City staff and politicians also had some input. The aim of the project was to develop a long-term vision for the evolution of Swanson as a distinctive community. The project involved extensive community consultation with local groups, stakeholders and individuals. Two public meetings were held, attended by 140 and 90+ residents.

The Swanson 2000 Concept that was developed included 8 key areas. The following three relate directly to the objectives and policies of this Management Plan:

- **Enhanced local character and identity**
  - Create strong feeling of entry to and departure from Swanson using elements of native planting, distinctive design of bridge railings and sculptural features located in the two parks
  - Use materials that reinforce local character and rural qualities
- **Strengthened community focus**
  - Reinforce and extend community facilities/rooms at historic Swanson Station Building
  - Develop Station parks to provide activities and interest for the youth of the community
  - Involve the youth of the community in the detailed design and construction of the station parks
- **A green network with recreation opportunities and ecological enhancement**
  - Restoration work and creation of walking/bridle/cycle pathway along the Swanson Stream Esplanade Reserve
  - Connection of pathway to Te Rangi Hiroa and Kay Road reserves
  - Retain and enhance views from Swanson Road into and across the golf course.



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## Kay Road

In 1983, Waitemata City Council acquired the land that contains the Kay Road balefill. This process involved public consultation, notification and a hearing.

In May 1996, Council notified its intention to prepare a draft Reserves Management Plan for the Kay Road balefill site and adjoining Crows Park. A community workshop was held at the Swanson School in August 1996, providing an opportunity for residents to make comments and suggestions in the development and management of the reserves. The Kay Road Reserve and Crows Park draft Management Plan was produced in August 1996, at which time the landfill was still operative. Due to ongoing engineering and Aftercare issues, the balefill was subsequently removed from the draft Plan and the Crows Park Reserves Management Plan was adopted by the Waitakere Community Board in 2001.

The original submissions to the Kay Road Reserve and Crows Park draft Management Plan have been considered in the development of this Plan.

In 2003, the Kay Road Site Management Committee was reconvened in order to oversee the provisions of the draft Swanson Reserves Management Plan that relate to the future management of Kay Road. This Committee, established by the 1997 Mediation Agreement between community and Council, includes 3 members of the community and 3 from Council.



Views across Kay Road Balefill