



Draft Wellington Play Spaces Policy

17 November 2016

This submission has been prepared on behalf of Mt Cook Mobilised, a group which represents residents of Mt Cook, and is affiliated to the Newtown Residents' Association.

Mt Cook Mobilised (MCM) thanks Wellington City Council for the opportunity to comment on the *Wellington Play Spaces Policy, October 2016 - Draft*. Mt Cook is situated close to central Wellington, and is experiencing population densification in line with Council's urban growth policy. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of children living in Mt Cook over recent years. Mt Cook is also home to a substantial University student population.

Mt Cook Mobilised agrees with the direction of the Play Spaces Policy. Incorporating nature, shade, and toilets are ideas that we value. We appreciate the in-depth analysis that is provided in the draft policy.

The following comments pertain primarily to the play spaces as they exist in Mt Cook, and places in Mt Cook with good potential to be developed for recreation.

Mt Cook residents value the green spaces around Mt Cook, particularly the Town Belt. In terms of formal play areas for younger children to climb and swing, in 2010 Mt Cook Mobilised made a case to Council to install some play equipment. The Mt Cook Play Area on Hutchison Road was created. This play space has a flat area near Wallace Street with equipment suitable for children up to 12 years old. This play space is also used by students from Te Whaea, the NZ Dance School and Toi Whakaari, the NZ Drama School, which is situated adjacent. On its western side, the play area has a slope with well-established trees, with a net for kicking 'goals' through. Mt Cook Mobilised would like to see the slope enhanced as a play space for children over 12 years - a flying fox, slacklining, or a BMX riding track for children have been suggested by residents. Another suggestion is to install a gas BBQ that families, or students, can use to further enhance their time at the Play Area.

Aside from the Mt Cook Play Area, the next closest play equipment is at Central Park on the eastern edge of Mt Cook, southern Hanson Street in Newtown, Newtown Library, Pirie Street Park in Mt Victoria, Frank Kitts Park or Waitangi Park. Families with toddlers are likely to drive to play equipment outside Mt Cook.

Mt Cook Mobilised applauds the City Council's initiative to work with schools to both upgrade the school play areas and encourage the public to use the school equipment. To this end, we would like to see the Wellington High School Tennis Courts being considered for upgrade as a play space for teens and young adults. In 2015, Mt Cook Mobilised met with the Principal of Wellington High School to ask about the fate of the WHS Tennis Courts on Tasman Street, near Rugby Street. Our finding was that Wellington High would be interested in collaborating with the community and the Council to make better use of the tennis courts. As things stand, Wellington High funding is being directed towards strengthening their buildings, with no possibility of undertaking a solo project to upgrade the tennis courts. (The courts are in disrepair, the asphalt on the courts has many holes from water damage and the wire fences are quite rusty. The fences are lifting and no longer serve to keep balls on the courts). Any undertaking to make better use of the Wellington High tennis court space would

be a sizeable project, and would be an asset to this growing part of the city, and to Wellington High School. (N.B. The courts are away from the main WHS campus, making a dual school/public facility more workable.) Massey University is a neighbour of Wellington High School, and it would be reasonable to include Massey in discussions. Mt Cook Mobilised also met with Deputy Mayor Eagle and a Recreation Advisor. We learnt that Wellington has plenty of tennis courts, but our conclusion was that the space could easily be put to another recreational use. Please Note: In this instance a Skate Park would not fit with the school's needs.

Close to the WHS Tennis Courts is the Basin Reserve. Mt Cook Mobilised endorses the concept of the Village Green for the Basin Reserve, and we see great benefit in including a children's play area, both for the benefit of young children attending events at the Basin, and for local families (particularly those living in apartments) and families who are keen to spend time at the Basin Reserve. We feel that the Basin is underappreciated by Wellingtonians, most feel no need to visit unless it is to watch a cricket match, this is a pity, and hopefully something that will change over time. We appreciate that design work is in train for the Basin Reserve, and of course there will be a delicate balance between the Village Green and the possibilities for the heritage Museum Stand.

In terms of incidental play space, in Mt Cook we are very fortunate to have Papawai Reserve. Its plantings including a community orchard with a bug hotel, are places where children can discover nature and entertain themselves by playing and inventing games in the mature foliage. This area has been designed and realised by the Papawai Restoration Group. Every spring Mt Cook Mobilised holds a Spring Fling to celebrate this place, and the children delight in the novelty races put on for them.

The mountain biking trails above Mt Cook are another feature of the Town Belt in Mt Cook. We appreciate that Pukeahu National War Memorial Park is a space for picnicking and contemplation, rather than play equipment.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Play Spaces Policy, and potential for enhanced play spaces in Mt Cook. We endorse the direction of the policy. Mt Cook is a small suburb, the Adelaide Road densification spine will see many more people live in this area in the coming years. They and their families, along with the sizeable student population already resident in Mt Cook, will benefit from any upgraded play areas that are developed in the coming years.

Mt Cook Mobilised would like to speak to Councillors in support of this submission.

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