

## Auckland Council open space provision policy

### [00:16] - Rob Cairns

There's lots of things the parks can do and do do, so we try to simplify our thinking process by thinking about it in four main things, and we use these four things effectively as layers that overlay different individual parks, and our bigger park network.

The four things we use are called Enjoy, Treasure, Connect and Utilise.

### [00:44]

So the first one, Enjoy, is all about how people use parks, really, and it's all those things that people go to parks for.

It's playgrounds and sports' fields and big areas to run around and fly a kite and ride your bike and all that sort of stuff that people go to parks to enjoy.

That's a really important layer, obviously, recreation, particularly when you're in a big city, but in any sort of place.

So thinking about what happens in each individual park for recreation and how the different parks and the network provide different sorts of recreation and different opportunities is really important.

### [01:23]

The second one is called Treasure, and that's all about the special things that are in parks and open spaces that aren't necessarily about people, that's things like cultural significance, especially here in Auckland.

There's lots of heritage sites, sites of special significance to iwi. It's about ecology especially. So there's lots of wildlife, native plants.

It's about landscape and the significance of special bits of landscape, and where we are today is in the midst of an old volcanic crater, and the landscape of that crater is one of those really important things to think about.

And it's often art and other things that are really important to people but are sort of intrinsic to that place.

### [02:13]

The third one is Connect, and that's about how people move through spaces and use the open space network to get from A to B, which isn't really necessarily anything to do with the park other than it

being a convenient way of getting from where they live to their school or the shops or where they go to work.

And our park network provides a really valuable connection network that's off roads. It's safe for kids to ride their bikes and learn to ride.

It's more pleasant to walk around than the busy, traffic ridden streets.

So the Connect part of the network is really important.

#### [02:52]

The fourth area is what we call Utilise, and that's really picking up all the stuff the parks do that aren't necessarily directly related to them being parks in the traditional sense.

So for us, it's really important around things like stormwater network systems.

So the park that we're sitting in here at the moment, for example, forms a really big stormwater retention area.

So if really heavy downpours, the waterways fill up first and then eventually the whole basin can fill up, slowly drain away and takes all the stormwater from the surrounding city area without causing floods and damage to people's property.

#### [03:33]

We use these four ways, really as a just as a framework for how we think about what we're going to do when we're planning investment in our parks.

So we use that at a network scale. So when we're looking across big areas of the city, we can think about each of those layers individually.

We can plan the recreation, the Enjoy network layer.

We can plan the Connection network layer, the Treasure network layer and overlay those and then start to make some sensible trade-offs.

Where we can't do everything in one place, we can work out where we want to shift a recreation pursuit, for example, to somewhere that's less sensitive from a Treasure point of view.

So we find it a really useful frame for understanding what's there, understanding how the things relate to each other, and making those trade-off decisions about what we do where.

And the same applies to an individual park, so not just to that network. When you come to a specific place, you can start to look at that park and understand within the park where are the bits that you treasure that you might want to protect and keep people a little bit more away from.

Where are the bits where you really want to focus recreational activity?

Where are the connections through the park? Where might you want to be storing stormwater if you need to store at all? Or growing lots of trees to help with your carbon?

The four layers we've been talking about, they enable us to set up a framework for understanding where we need to be investing in our open space network to deliver on a whole lot of different benefits.

So that's the recreational benefits and it's protecting things that are important and it's delivering on stormwater, for example, and connections.

[05:09]

We then need to, as part of that planning, determine both how much money we need to do that and then work out within the realms of how much money we have available what's the most important thing to do first, second, third, etc.

So that's a bit of an iterative process. But at the heart of it is understanding what you want to achieve through that planning process. So you've got a really clear picture of what you want to get to.

We recognise that none of this is going to happen straight away. So it's a long term view that we need to take, and looking at prioritising how you're investing in order to get you to where you want to get to in the most efficient way.

So we look at critical things about acquiring land or getting land; that is the start of everything when you're looking at the open space network.

[05:56]

So we look to see through our planning where we need land that we don't currently have and we prioritise securing that land.

Once it's gone, it's gone. And it's very, very hard to get back, so you get the land first.

And then often the land can sit there. It doesn't need to have a whole lot of money invested.

It can serve a perfectly suitable purpose just as open space and the investment that you make in developing your open space network needs to be really dedicated based on where is the highest need, what's the most effective way of meeting that need with the most cost efficient delivery of service.

When we're looking at that, we tend to look at the overall area, identifying what the current provision is and where there's gaps and provision.

And we often do that again using those four key layers.

So we might look at the recreation layer and parts of that might be, say, sports fields provision so we could identify where your existing sports field provision, where are the gaps, where it's not so easy for people to access a sports field. That would start to direct you to say that's where we need to be focusing our next investment in sports fields in those areas.

Similarly for playgrounds or barbecues and picnic tables, see where the gaps are, that's where should be identifying priorities.