

Testing our thinking: Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan New Zealand Infrastructure Commission Te Waihanga 2024

Comments [REDACTED]

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the document entitled “Developing an enduring National Infrastructure Plan”. My brief comment is also important to others involved in the management and advocacy of public open space. A major omission in my view is the recognition of the key role public open space plays in NZs infrastructure. Open space is not only for recreation and many other community activities but for conservation and environmental mitigation [flooding, coast erosion etc]. Citizens need easy access to public open space including parks, recreation space and structures as well as community facilities such as libraries. This is not only for recreation but for health and wellbeing. It is local government that provides these facilities for citizens. Too much is often taken from a national direction and not at a local level. For example, parks are mainly seen in the light of DoC facilities, yet the majority of New Zealand do not have easy access to these. Also, some types of recreation such as stadia and large events are large projects having major impacts on infrastructure. Many roads, energy and telecom industries service park and recreation facilities and there is need for a holistic approach to be taken in the planning and management of both.

Parks and public open space have a function in providing for other infrastructure such as water and waste pipelines, telecoms, and transmission lines. [often seen in management plan policies]. These traditional infrastructure facilities are put on these public spaces, depending on their type, and not taking difficult private land. On the other hand, conservation open space values may also be protected on unformed road reserves and land set aside for future traditional infrastructure such as new roads and rail lines etc.

Public open space is often the “Forgotten Infrastructure” with no national plan and left as low priority for government due to lack of funding. National direction is needed.

As we moved towards climate adaption there will be areas where infrastructure cannot be built such as flood plans and coastal areas, therefore these “climate adaption open spaces” should be considered as part of our infrastructure where built facilities cannot take place unless with costly engineering. Other productive land uses other than pure conservation could take place such as forestry, farming and horticulture. In other words, a broader approach is needed in infrastructure planning.

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MSc recreation resources, Associate member International Rangers Federation, retired park manager and now community volunteer. [REDACTED]