

Colson Street Reserve Proposed Land Exchange Engagement Summary

August 2025

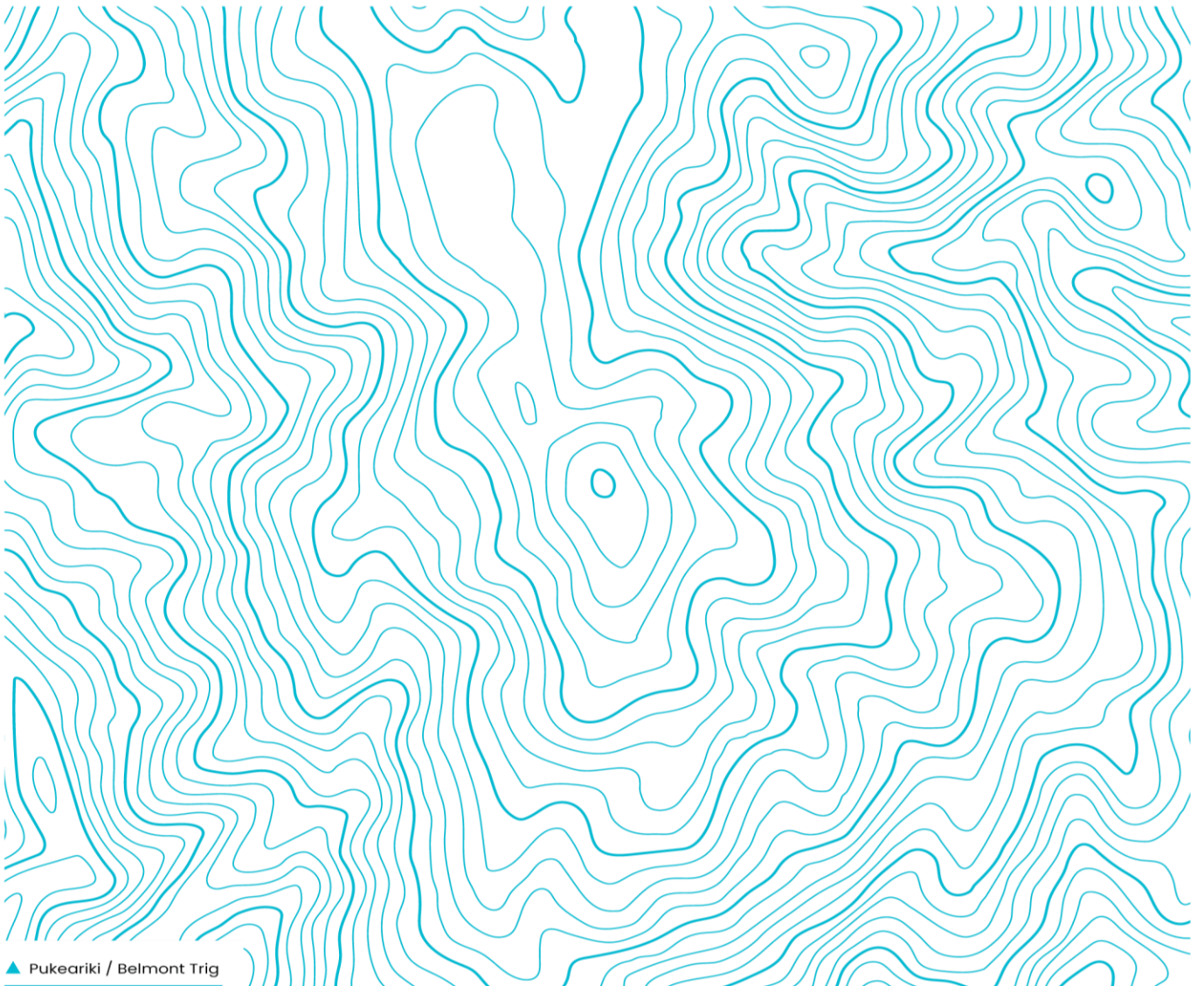


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Background

1. In May 2025, Council approved community engagement for an exchange of land under the Reserves Act 1977. The proposal involved exchange of part of the Colson Street Reserve (LOT 82 DP 19516 PS 6-21 RESERVES) for part of adjoining residential Urban Plus Ltd (UPL) land.
2. The proposed exchange includes the re-positioning of the existing reserve to the corner of Colson Street and Hollard Grove, with potential benefits from both a reserves and a housing supply perspective.



Public notification and community engagement

3. The engagement for the proposed Colson Street Reserve land exchange took place from 5 June to 16 July 2025. This included:
 - a. A public notice in the Hutt News (in accordance with the notification requirements under s15(2) of the Reserves Act 1977).
 - b. A dedicated page on the Council's website, including an overview of the proposal, pros and cons, links to maps, information on how to submit and key dates.
 - c. An online survey on the Council website (which had 529 visits), with Frequently Asked Questions (111 views).

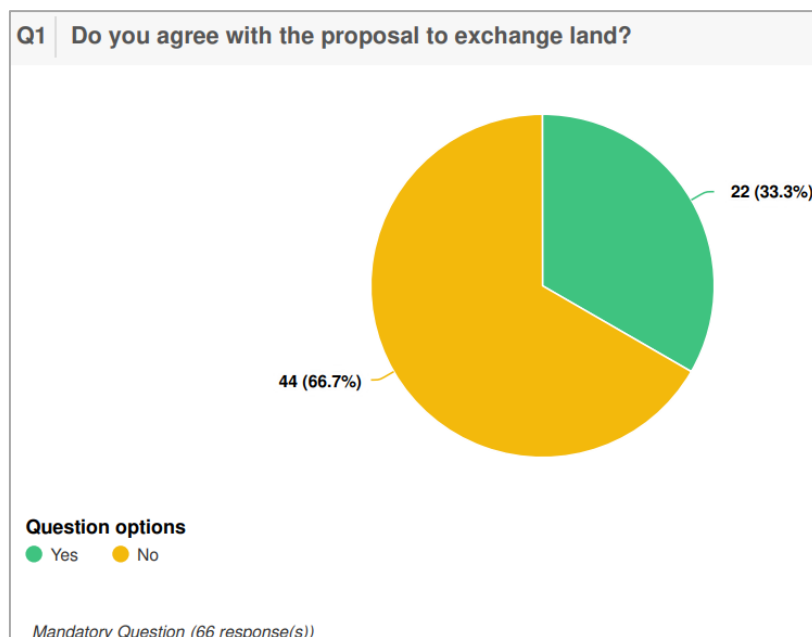
- d. Signage on site at the Colson Street Reserve, with a QR code for easy access to the online survey.
- e. Letter drop-off to UPL tenants, immediate neighbours and the nearby community.
- f. Further Hutt News advertisement and a social media post (12,043 views).

Online Survey results

4. The online survey had the following seven questions.
 - a. Do you agree with the proposal to exchange land?
 - b. If not, what changes to the proposal would make you more supportive?
 - c. Is there anything you would like the Council to consider when making a decision on the proposal?
 - d. Any other comments?
 - e. Do you want to be heard at a Council meeting on this matter?
 - f. Name / email
 - g. Demographic questions.

Survey Results

5. Council received 66 responses, with one third supporting the proposal and two thirds opposing it.



6. 14 survey respondents indicated they wished to be heard.
7. Responses to survey questions 2 to 4 were open-ended, providing respondents the opportunity to provide comprehensive feedback. These are summarised in the themes section below.

Email responses results

8. Council received nine emails through the haveyoursay email, UPL and a Councillor. These included:
 - a. one enquiry.
 - b. one survey respondent emailing supplementary photos.
 - c. three were new respondents and not supportive of the proposal.
 - d. four were from the same person and not supportive of the proposal. This respondent asked to speak at a hearing.

Overall engagement result

9. Putting the survey and email responses together, we received a total of **70 submissions**. The overall results are:
 - Slightly over two thirds **(68.6%) opposing** the proposal.
 - Just under one third **(31.4%) supportive** of the proposal.
 - A total of **15 respondents want to speak** at a hearing.

Themes from all submissions

10. The majority of respondents expressed concerns about:
 - a. The loss of the current reserve.
 - b. The reduction in proposed reserve provision.
 - c. The impact of proposed housing development on local residents.
 - d. Concerns around safety and usability of the proposed reserve location.
 - e. Insufficient or missing information.
 - f. Community wellbeing and recreational needs.

11. These six themes are discussed in detail below:

a. Irreversible loss of current reserve/green space

Many respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining the current reserve in its entirety due to its mature oak trees, natural aesthetics, recreational and ecological value. Concerns were raised about:

- Loss of the reserve as a recreational and social hub.
- Loss of five mature oak trees that provide shade, natural habitat for birds and other biodiversity benefits.

b. Reduction in proposed reserve provision

Many respondents expressed concerns about the reduced size of the proposed reserve. These included:

- Issues around a significant net reduction in reserve land (1,800m²) which equates to about 42% of the current size (4,325m²).
- Reduced functionality for the community, for e.g., less useful for walkers, dogs and children.

c. Impact of proposed housing development on local residents and the current surrounding properties

Several respondents opposed the proposal due to concerns relating to:

- Loss of privacy and sun of their own property from proposed multi-storey housing.
- Potential decline in their property values.
- Scepticism towards UPL and overdevelopment.
- Increased traffic on narrow and already busy roads (especially Colson Street).
- Parking – fear that the proposed new housing will not provide sufficient off-street car parking.
- Inadequate community infrastructure to support added density.

d. Safety and usability of the proposed reserve

Safety and usability concerns were prevalent regarding the proposed new reserve's location. These included:

- Increased proximity to roads, raising risks for children and pets.
- Loss of natural shelter and privacy at the new site.
- Reduced usability due to street-facing positioning. The current reserve provides natural enclosure, privacy, safety and accessibility.

e. Insufficient or missing information

Many respondents highlighted:

- Their lack of support due to insufficient information on the proposed development (both housing and the reserve).
- Perceived prioritisation of housing outcomes over public benefit from the reserve, without any cost-benefit analysis, open space benefit analysis, and community impact assessment.
- The lack of evidence on the current reserve's usage and safety.
- The lack of information and transparency on whether other sites were explored for housing development.

f. Community wellbeing and recreation needs

The current reserve was described by many respondents who opposed the proposal as:

- A space for community interaction and mental well-being (activities that were mentioned included tai chi, meditation, sub-bathing, groups relaxing and chatting under the trees and picnics).
- Essential for children's play, dog walking, and exercise.
- Serving a community that is already underserved in terms of proximity to other parks or facilities.
- Wildlife corridor – many birds nest and roost in the oak trees for protection
- A valuable amenity – space of great value to families who purchased their adjoining house because of the reserve. To one family, the green space is known as 'the Oaks' and it was a significant factor in their decision to purchase their home and establish their roots in the community.

12. Various out-of-scope comments were also made by those who opposed the proposal. These comments related to specific housing design and suitability, general opposition to urban intensification. Some submitters wanted UPL's development at 12 Hollard Grove paused so the whole site can be considered comprehensively.
13. Most respondents who supported the proposal made no or minimum comments. Other supporters expressed a desire for the following specific features:
 - a. Some linkage between Hollard Grove and Colson Street.
 - b. Adequate fencing and safety (cameras) around the proposed reserve.

- c. A dog park.
- d. Parking for new housing.
- e. Cycleways to decrease reliance on cars.
- f. More trees along the boundaries of the proposed reserve.
- g. Repurposing tree logs from the lost oak trees for natural play structures.
- h. Providing safer visibility and more accessible green space.
- i. Considering the concept of 'universal design' for housing development.
- j. Reconsidering the size of the new reserve, i.e. if reducing the reserve size is reasonable.

Conclusion

- 14. The community engagement results on the proposed Colson Reserve Land Exchange shows general opposition to the exchange.
- 15. It is noted that the Council's Reserves Investment Strategy has listed Colson Reserve to be improved in the medium term, and that the Long-Term Plan has budgeted \$400k for it.