



Ko te Mahere Hukihuki Whakahaere a-Rāhui o te Papa Rēhia o Herepohō

Draft Eskdale Park Reserve Management Plan

INFORMATION AND SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Introduction

The Draft Eskdale Park Reserve Management Plan was notified for public comment on Saturday 2 July 2022.

This Summary Document has been written to give an overview of the process that has been followed and key actions included in the Draft Eskdale Park Reserve Management Plan (Draft Management Plan).

We are seeking submissions on the Draft Management Plan from 2 July until 2 September 2022.

The purpose of this Summary Document is to:

- Explain how the Draft Management Plan has been prepared
- Identify the goals and key actions contained in the Draft Management Plan
- Identify the proposed concept plan, and key actions
- Provide FAQs on the key items of interest
- Explain how to make a submission on the Draft Management Plan.

Please note that this Summary Document provides an overview of the Draft Management Plan. This document does not provide a comprehensive rundown of the Draft Management Plan. Please read the Draft Management Plan in full before making a submission.

Where to find the Draft Management Plan

The Draft Management Plan is available to read on the Hastings District Council website
www.myvoicemychoice.co.nz

Alternatively, hard copies of the document can be read at the following locations:

- Hastings District Council Customer Service Centre, 207 Lyndon Road East, Hastings
- Hastings, Flaxmere, Havelock North, Napier and Taradale Libraries
- Hawke's Bay Regional Council Customer Service Centre, Dalton Street, Napier

Summary of the Draft Management Plan

The Draft Management Plan is a high-level policy document rather than a detailed operational plan.

The Draft Management Plan identifies the vision, objectives, policies and development and enhancement priorities for the Park over the next 10 years. Developed with comprehensive input from park users and stakeholder groups, the Draft Management Plan provides Council with a clear framework for the day-to-day management and decision-making for the Park. The process aims to ensure that management and development of the Park is based on sound principles and that, through consultation, the aspirations and requests of the community have been clearly identified and considered.



Background

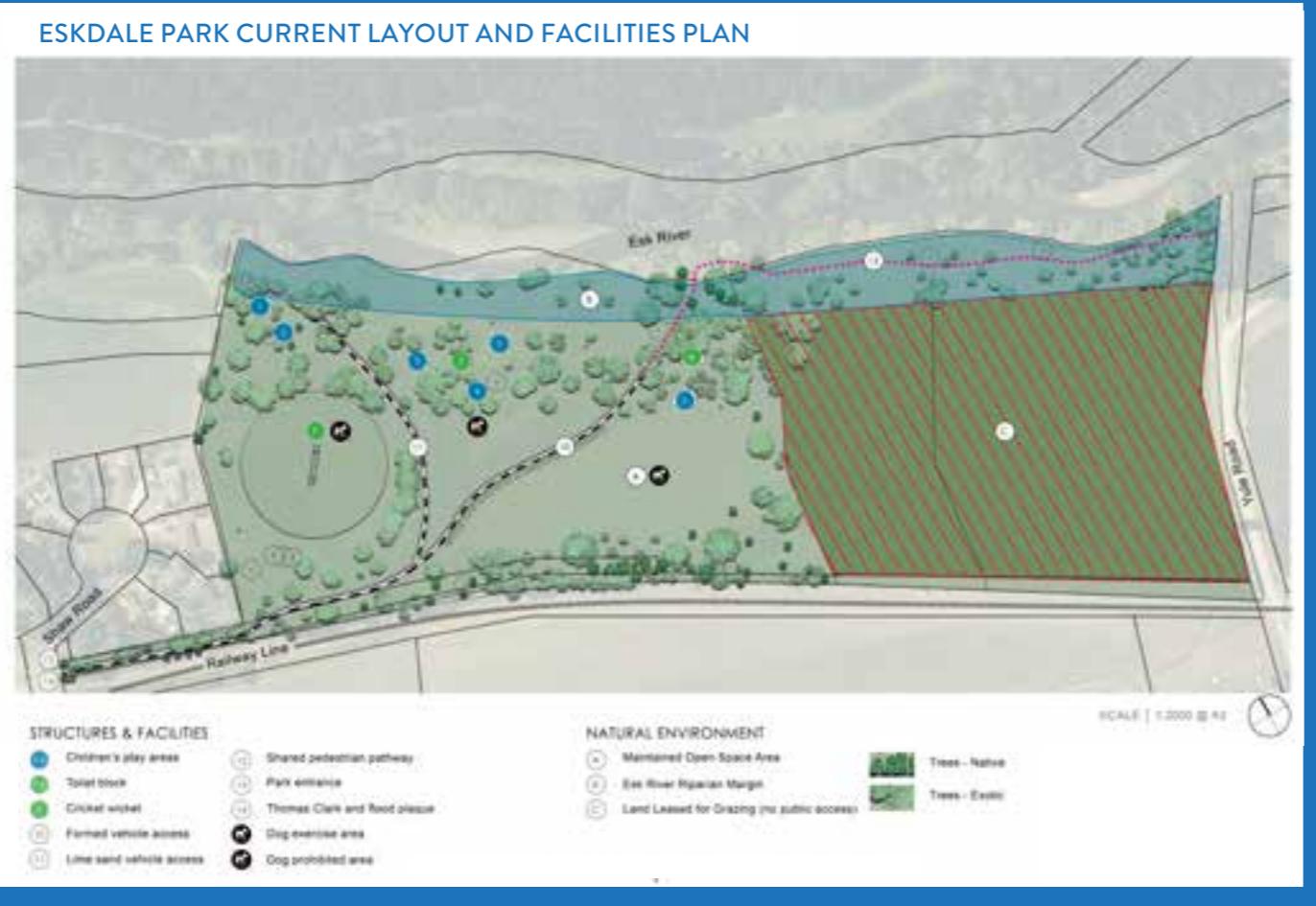
Eskdale Park is 12.5452ha in size and located within the Esk Valley, 20km north-west of Napier on the banks of Te Wai-o-Hingāngā Esk River.

The Park is a Recreation Reserve in terms of the Reserves Act 1977, and is owned by the Crown via the Department of Conservation. The administration and control of Eskdale Park is vested with Hastings District Council.

6.6ha of the Park was gifted by Thomas Clark in 1919 and by the estate of Thomas Clark in 1923.

The Park is in two adjacent parts; the publicly accessible park area of 7.8834ha (the western portion of the Park), accessed off Shaw Road, and a 4.6618ha area that is currently leased for private use, accessed off Yule Road.

The Park has an open character with large exotic trees, open grass areas, six separate play areas and two toilet blocks. Dogs are only permitted within the grass area to the south of the main entrance road. Within the Park, vehicle movement is unlimited.



The process we have followed

Council resolved to prepare a Reserve Management Plan for Eskdale Park on 8 December 2020. The impetus behind this was public concern regarding an indication by the Hawke's Bay Mountain Bike Club that it would like to build a footbridge on part of the Park to access new mountain bike trails across the Esk River on privately owned Panpac land.

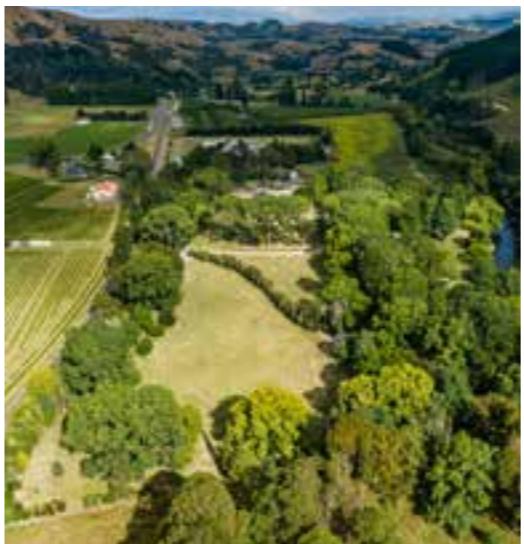
The Draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 which requires that before preparing a Draft Management Plan, Council shall:

- give public notice of its intention to do so; and
- in that notice, invite persons and organisations interested to send written suggestions; and
- in preparing that management plan, give full consideration to any such comments received.

Council published its intention to prepare the Draft Management Plan in the HB Today on 6 March 2021. In addition, personal letters were sent to approximately 1300 residents who lived in proximity to the Park, a signboard was located in the Park advising of the process, and a comprehensive social media campaign was launched.

In addition, on behalf of Council, independent research company FOLKL carried out interviews, held a park gathering and co-ordinated a survey, to find out what park users and members of the community liked about the Park and what improvements they would like to see.

That phase was followed by two public workshops, which helped refine the values, constraints and opportunities within the Park.



THE ESKDALE PARK RMP PROCESS



What you have told us

Feedback was received and analysed from over 1000 members of the community. This, together with input from a number of specialist reports, including Archaeological Report, Arboricultural Report, Ecological Report, Historic, and Acquisition Report, was summarised into a Key Themes and Concepts Document that was released to the community on 14 March 2022.

The Key Themes identified were:

- Retaining, valuing and enhancing the open green space, trees and riparian margin
- Acknowledging and recognising the history of the Park
- Developing enhanced play and recreation facilities for varying interests, ages and abilities
- Improving connections to and within the Park
- Addressing user conflicts (dog walking, vehicles in the Park)
- Incorporating the land currently leased for grazing into the publicly accessible part of Eskdale Park
- Improving access to Esk River.

The summary document also included a number of concepts that Officers were requested to investigate for inclusion in the Draft Management Plan as follows:

- Providing an accessible path network for all user groups (including elderly and disabled)
- Defining dog off-lead areas
- Developing vehicle-free areas
- Creating an inviting entrance (a sense of arrival)
- Creating and enhancing space for events (e.g. family picnics, community events and farmer's markets)
- Improving river access and enhancing the riparian margin
- Considering public access off Yule Road
- Connecting park to external pedestrian/cycling networks (i-Way)
- Making use of adjoining parkland currently leased for grazing for wider public use (eg parking/biodiversity planting/nature play/new public entryway/and/or access into Panpac forest for a range of user groups)
- Installing new facilities (picnic and barbecue areas)
- Providing exercise facilities/equipment that fit with the Park's natural character
- Upgrading toilet facilities (including wheelchair access)
- Creating separate play areas for different age groups (including nature play)
- Upgrading existing play areas and play equipment
- Accommodating more activities for youth (little kids through to teenage)
- Upgrading the cricket green
- Recognising and reflecting the heritage of the Park
- Protecting and managing the mature trees and preparing a tree succession plan
- Considering the balance between exotic and native plantings
- Planning for natural hazards, principally flooding.



Vision and Goals

All of the issues and suggestions identified during the consultation have been considered during the preparation of the Draft Management Plan, which was released by Council for public consultation on 2 July, 2022.

The Draft Plan sets out the proposed vision and key actions, detailed on this page, for the park.



Park Vision

A rural country park providing a welcoming, safe family environment for all ages and abilities; with opportunities for recreation, natural play and river access in an open tranquil setting with mature trees; where history is honoured and new memories are made; with a thriving ecosystem where indigenous vegetation is restored, and Te Wai-o-Hingānga | Esk River benefits from enhanced biodiversity on the land.



Goals and Key Actions

Te Whakatipuranga o Te Taiao

Healing of the Environment

GOAL

There are fully functioning ecosystems within the Park where indigenous flora and fauna are prioritised, soil is conserved and Te Waio-Hingānga | Esk River benefits from thriving biodiversity on land.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Establish an indigenous forest patch within the 4.7ha area that is currently planted with eucalyptus woodland and pasture.
- Establish an indigenous riparian shrubland/forest along Te Wai-o-Hingānga | Esk River that is contiguous with the Te Hukawai-o-Hingānga (Esk) River Care Group planting area, while retaining open connected views along the margin.

Te Whakatipuranga o Te Taiao | Healing of the Environment is a principle that is a call to action, to give back to the environment and continue to develop the Park in ways that contribute to positive partnerships for the protection, enhancement and reinstatement of indigenous flora and fauna across Heretaunga Hastings District.

This principle guides Hastings District Council's Reserve Management Plans in their inclusion of Mātauranga Māori, as expressed by mana whenua, as a significant contributor to the appropriate reinstatement of taonga species.

Ahi Kā Roa

The Living Presence

GOAL

The Park reflects and celebrates the layers of heritage of the whenua and its use over time.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Work with mana whenua on the development of the Park in a way that is conducive to fostering Ahi Kā Roa and reinstatement of customary use and activity to the Park.
- Work with mana whenua and the community for the design and interpretation of pūrākau stories, whakapapa genealogy, and toi arts installed across the Park where appropriate for their respective interpretation.
- Work collaboratively with mana whenua, stakeholders and the community to achieve the vision for the Park and aspirations of the Plan.
- Enable the continued guardianship of the leased block for private use until either the restoration of the land to an indigenous forest block commences and/or a determination on public use of this land is made.

Ahi Kā Roa | The Living Presence recognises that all parks and reserves have a unique shared mana whenua and community heritage. The natural features and location of each park attract various individuals, families, and groups of people who maintain strong connections with their local park.

Ahi Kā Roa | The Living Presence encourages and enables community participation and contribution to the parks, specifically ensuring that Eskdale Park is managed in a way that reflects its purpose and values. This principle also holds the aspiration that mana whenua may foster a sense of Ahi Kā through partnership and participation in the ongoing protection, enhancement, and reinstatement of indigenous flora and fauna.

Manaakitanga

Sharing our Experience

GOAL

The Park is a safe and tranquil sanctuary, providing a rural environment for relaxation, physical activity, education and environmental action in a natural and largely undeveloped setting to enrich the experience of users.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Introduce Management Zones characterised by their landscape features, existing facilities and use and deemed acceptable future use.
- Retain the freedom of users to access the Park without restriction, while delineating the new playground and cricket oval with natural barriers to restrict vehicle access and clearly delineate dog exercise areas.
- Replace the two toilet blocks with a fully accessible toilet block consolidated to a central location, close to the formed access for mobility impaired users.
- Upgrade and consolidate park furniture to comprise a rural character, positioned in high use areas under trees, open areas, accessible by pathways, or where views can be obtained of features such as the river or Eskdale Church.
- Facilitate opportunities for larger group gatherings with large rustic picnic tables.
- Crown lift and remove trees where required for safety or to open views across the Park.
- Upgrade the main entrance to the Park to provide a high quality well signposted entrance along the entire route. Consolidate signage into a singular sign and provide clear information on park closure and uses, and consider replacing the control gate and providing CCTV.
- Improve movement through the reserve by formalising sealed surfaces for vehicle movement areas.

Manaakitanga | Sharing our Experiences is a principle to guide the accessibility and enrichment of the visitor experience for people of all ages and abilities. This principle acknowledges the role of parks as places of holistic wellbeing and areas for enjoyment, relaxation, physical activity, education and environmental action. Each park has its own unique experience and this principle is critical to augmenting and enriching the experience for residents and visitors to the District.

Whai Oranga

Promoting Healthy Activity

GOAL

The Park is accessible and welcoming, with a range of facilities to meet the passive and active recreation needs of people of all ages, abilities and interests, set within a unique natural environment.

KEY ACTIONS:

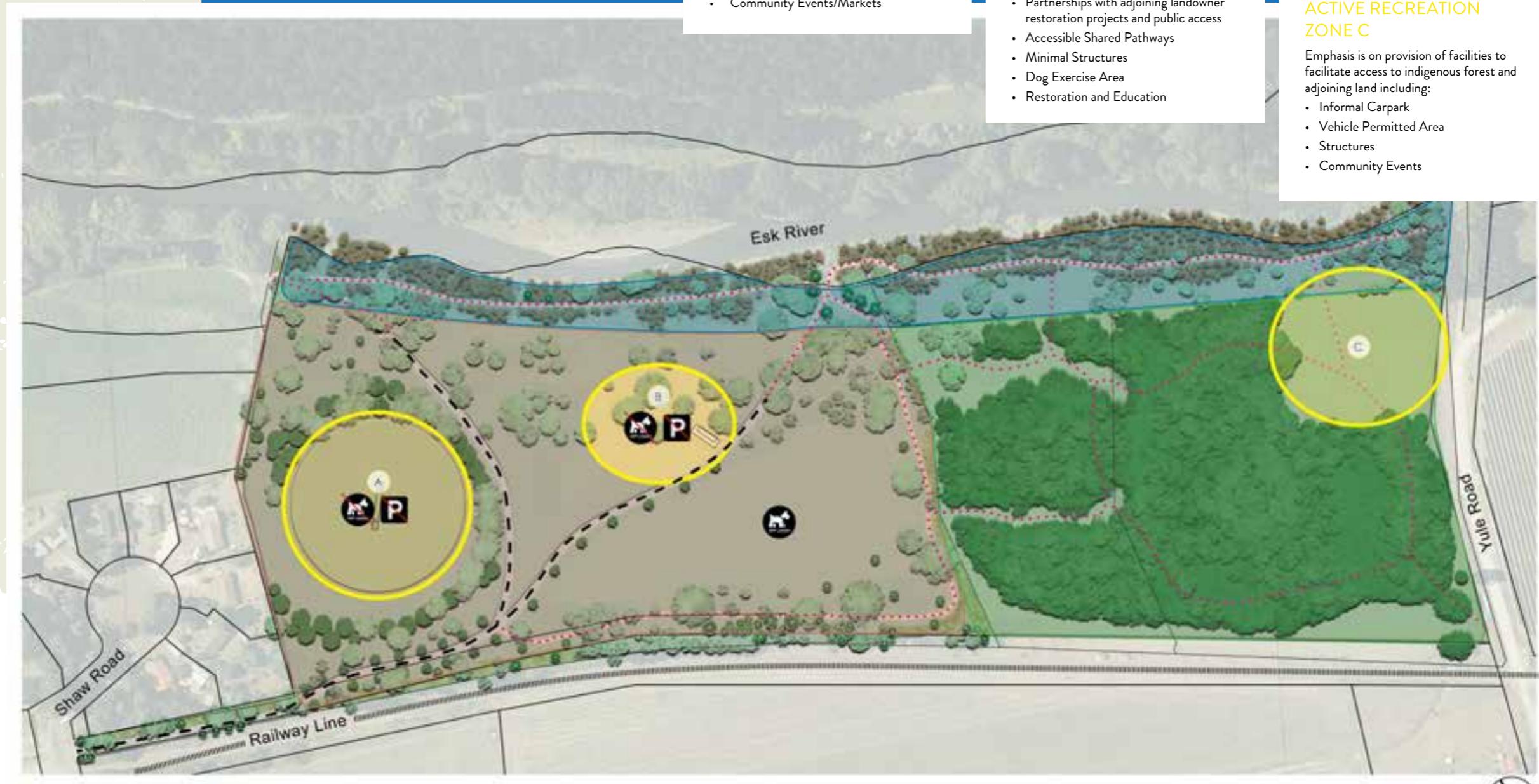
- Encourage increased park use and accessibility by providing educational trails and natural surface pathways for recreational walking and cycling and 'learn to cycle' opportunities for young children in a safe environment. Provide fitness stations, markers and wayfinding along the pathways with clear distances.
- Upgrade and consolidate play facilities in a single area to improve legibility of activity mix and user safety; designed to complement the rural environment.
- Use strategically placed natural and functional barriers to inhibit vehicle movement onto the cricket oval and within the playground; and clearly delineate dog exercise areas.
- Consider applications that provide opportunities for enhanced and additional recreational opportunities where the impact on the Park or park users can be avoided or mitigated.

Whai Oranga | Promoting Healthy Activity encourages the provision of passive and active opportunities for engaging in healthy activity. For some people healthy activity could be in the ethereal merits of flora to support mental and spiritual wellbeing, for some it may be physical activity for bodily wellbeing. Whether the activity is found in the design of playgrounds, sensory gardens, pathways, or outdoor fitness equipment, Whai Oranga Promoting Healthy Activity ensures that wellbeing is core to park management.

Delivering the Vision – Management Zones

The Park is a space for the whole community to enjoy a range of recreation activities. The current freedom to access all parts of the Park without restriction can create conflict between users (particularly vehicles, children and dogs).

It is therefore proposed to introduce Management Zones to indicate how facilities, activities and landscape areas may be grouped to ensure the safety of park users; protection of key features and achieve the desired experience and environmental outcomes.



PLAN KEY

- Dog Exercise Area
- Dog Prohibited Area

- Existing shared pathway
- Existing vehicle access
- Proposed shared pathway

MANAGEMENT AREA

- Active Recreation Zone
- A Active Recreation Zone A
- B Active Recreation Zone B
- C Active Recreation Zone C

- Passive Recreation Zone
- Ecological Enhancement Zone
- Riparian Enhancement Zone

SCALE | 1:2000 @ A3



ACTIVE RECREATION ZONE A & B

Emphasis is on safe play for all ages and abilities, with well-designed facilities to support family and group recreation, including:

- Cricket Oval
- Bespoke Children's Playground
- Structures (Toilet, Shelter, Community Barbecue)
- Vehicle Restricted Area
- Dog Prohibited Area

ACTIVE RECREATION ZONE C

Emphasis is on provision of facilities to facilitate access to indigenous forest and adjoining land including:

- Informal Carpark
- Vehicle Permitted Area
- Structures
- Community Events

Proposed Concept Plan

The following Concept Plan, included in the Draft Management Plan identifies investment in the following key actions:

- 1 Upgrade and consolidate play facilities in a single area in bespoke rural theme.
- 2 Replace the two toilet blocks with a fully accessible toilet block consolidated to a central location, close to the formed access for mobility impaired users.
- 3 Create interpretive signage that tells the story of the history of the Park.
- 4 Upgrade and consolidate seats and picnic tables to comprise a rural character.
- 5 Provide community barbecue and shelter.
- 6 Upgrade and consolidate bins.
- 7 Enhance park entrance off Shaw Road.
- 8 Formalise existing limesand access road.
- 9 Encourage increased park use and accessibility by providing educational trails and natural surface pathways for recreational walking and cycling and 'learn to cycle' opportunities for young children in a safe environment.
- 10 Succession planting around the cricket oval.
- 11 Establish an indigenous forest patch within the area that is currently leased. Enable the continued guardianship of this land for private use until either the restoration of the land to an indigenous forest block commences and/or a determination on public use of this land is made.
- 12 Establish a native riparian shrubland/forest along Te Wai-o-Hingānga | Esk River that is contiguous with the Te Hukawai-o-Hingānga (Esk) River Care Group planting area.
- 13 Retain the freedom of users to access the Park without restriction, while delineating the new playground and cricket oval with natural barriers to restrict vehicle access and clearly delineate dog exercise areas.



FAQs

Why are we proposing to consolidate the new park facilities (including playground, toilet and barbecue) into one area?

There are six different play areas and two toilet blocks scattered throughout the Park. While many park users like the convenience of being able to drive to these facilities without having to walk long distances, conversely other users consider the presence of vehicles (and dogs) close to the play areas a safety issue.

It is therefore proposed to design a new rural-themed playground, in consultation with the community that will be centrally located in the Park, together with a new accessible toilet facility and barbecue. This area will be delineated by the use of natural and functional materials such as stepping logs and furniture to restrict vehicle access and to indicate that dogs are not allowed. With these facilities and the cricket oval protected; vehicles will be able to continue to have unrestricted access to the rest of the Park.

Can we still drive to our favourite picnic spot?

Yes! We know that the freedom and ability to drive and park at a favourite play or picnic spot was one of the favourite features of the Park. The proposed design will enable this to continue, while protecting key activity areas (cricket oval and children's playground) from vehicles and dogs.

What could these new facilities look like?

As with all of Hastings parks and reserves, play equipment and park furniture can be selected to fit the character of a park. While things like toilet blocks must conform to Council's base design (ensuring sustainability, ease of cleaning, and safety), the exteriors can be adapted to suit an individual park. The community clearly identified a desire for new facilities (particularly the playground) to respond to the rural character of the area, incorporating natural materials. Council will work with the community and local schools to design these spaces.

What about accessibility?

It was identified that some people didn't visit the Park due to the lack of accessible facilities and the lack of pathways to access features. The Plan proposes a pathway around the perimeter of the Park; and through the new forest area in the future, to encourage further use of the Park by the wider community. In addition, safety surfacing on the new playground will ensure the facilities are accessible to children of all ages and abilities. The toilet block will be fully accessible.



Why are we proposing an indigenous forest?

The original park ecosystems and surrounding area were kahikatea, tōtara and mataī dominant alluvial forests; of which now less than 10 per cent of indigenous vegetation remains. There is therefore an opportunity for the Park to be part of a regional collaboration to halt biodiversity decline, and contribute to the restoration of a forest in the landscape.

It is proposed to work with the community, mana whenua and statutory agencies to establish an indigenous forest on the land currently leased for grazing. External funding will be sought to fund the forest over a six year period. Council will enable the continued guardianship of this land for private use until this project commences.

The vision is to reinstate flora and fauna to the Park that holistically supports improvement of water quality, establishes bird corridors, provides plants for customary harvest and use, and has an education focus. The forest will be accessible to the public via a network of pathways.

What about work already being undertaken by the Te Huka Waiohinganga (Esk) River Care Group

The Draft Plan acknowledges the aims of Te Huka Waiohinganga (Esk) River Care Group to restore biodiversity to the land and water of the catchment. Council will work in partnership with the Care Group to establish an indigenous riparian forest along the edge of the Park that is contiguous with the existing restoration areas to the north of the Park.

What about the Hawke's Bay Mountain Bike Club?

As most people involved in this process to date are aware, Eskdale Park has been identified by the Hawke's Bay Mountain Bike Club (HBMBC) as an optimal location to provide direct access via a footbridge across the Esk River to new mountain bike trails being constructed on private land owned by Pan Pac, opposite the Park. It is this public expression of interest that is the principal driver for the preparation of this Management Plan.

While, to date, no application requesting permission for such use has been received by Council, given community debate on the matter it is appropriate that the Management Plan provides direction as to how Council would deal with an application for a footbridge, should one be received.

That direction is provided within the Draft Plan, and an Active Recreation Zone (C) identified that may be suitable for such an activity, should such an application be received and all of the permissions required from other statutory agencies can be obtained. More information on this aspect of the Plan is available at www.myvoicemychoice.co.nz



What happens now?

Let's talk
Me kōrero tātau

Making a submission

The community can now make formal submissions either in support or opposition to any part of the Draft Plan. A submission is your chance to tell us what you think of the Draft Management Plan.

Council respects that members of the community use and value the Park for different reasons; and as such, will have different opinions on how the Park should be managed and developed into the future; and what recreation activities, in their opinion, may or may not be acceptable. In reading this Management Plan, Council encourages you to remember that parks and reserves in the District are for all members of the community to use and enjoy for recreation purposes. It is the role of Council to balance the diverse and varied needs of the community; and enable the Park to continue to be used for a wide variety of recreation use, today and into the future, provided that such activities can be undertaken without having an adverse impact on the key environmental and cultural characteristics of the Park.

**Submission forms
are available at the
following locations:**

- Customer Service Centre, Hastings District Council
207 Lyndon Road East, Hastings,
- Hastings, Havelock North, Flaxmere, Taradale and Napier Public Libraries
- Hawke's Bay Regional Council Customer Service Centre, Dalton Street, Napier
- Online at www.myvoicemychoice.co.nz

To make your submission as effective as possible, please state which section or policy number you are commenting on, whether you agree or disagree with it, explain your reasons for agreeing or disagreeing and state what you think is an appropriate change.

Please note, your submission, including your name, will be a public document, and attached in full to the hearing report for consideration by Council. (your contact details will remain confidential).

Return your submission form:

ONLINE

www.myvoicemychoice.co.nz

EMAIL

parks@hdc.govt.nz

POST

Hastings District Council, Freepost
108623, Private Bag 9002, Hastings 4122

DELIVER

Hastings District Council, Customer Service
Centre, 207 Lyndon Road, Hastings

SUBMISSIONS
CLOSE: Friday
2 September 2022

Speaking at a hearing

As part of your submission, you can speak to your submission at a hearing. Speaking at a hearing gives you the chance to explain your submission to Council and present evidence that supports your written submission. It gives you the opportunity to talk to Council about your thoughts and suggestions before they make their decisions.

If you wish to speak to your submission at a hearing, please either tick the box on the submission form, or make sure you state this if you do not use the form.

If you have any questions please email parks@hdc.govt.nz.

Council officers will be available at a drop-in event at Eskdale Park on **Sunday 31 July 2022, between 2pm and 4pm** to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. (In the case of wet weather, the event will be held at Hukarere College.)

We look forward to your comments on this plan for Eskdale Park.

MY VOICE
MY CHOICE