

ESKDALE PARK

Reserve Management Plan

THEMES & CONCEPTS

We are here

The Eskdale Park RMP process

- 1** Council notifies the community that the process is underway, calls for community input and gathers user data.
- 2** The input and data from step 1 is analysed and used to prepare key themes and concepts.
- 3** Those key themes and concepts are presented to the community for feedback, to check we are on the right track.
- 4** The feedback from steps 1, 2 and 3 is analysed and used to prepare a Draft Reserve Management Plan.
- 5** Public submissions on the Draft Reserve Management Plan are called for.
- 6** A council hearing is scheduled at which submitters to the draft plan can support their submission by speaking at the hearing.
- 7** Council adopts the final Reserve Management Plan subject to amendments made during the hearing.

What you told us...

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. In addition, respondents were asked their level of comfort regarding a range of potential new facilities within Eskdale Park, including children's pump track, formal car park exercise equipment, barbecues and pathways, as well as access from the park to recreation facilities on private land across the river (given the desire expressed by Hawke's Bay Mountain Bike Club).

You can read the full FOLKL report [here](#).

That phase was followed by a public workshop, which helped refine the values, constraints and opportunities within the park. You can access the workshop information from [here](#).

1252
PARTICIPANTS



What could be improved

- Relationships between current and potential user groups (dog walking, walking and cycling)
- Railway corridor (safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists)
- Access from state highway (safety)
- Placement, access into and quality of toilets and changing facilities
- More exercise opportunities
- Cycling accessibility from i-Way network
- Dog and owner behaviour
- River access
- Park location signs and more welcoming entranceway
- Encourage greater use of the park
- Security
- Risks related to driving and parking within the park
- Playground (dated)
- Historical information
- River vegetation (weeds, willows etc.)
- Tree hazard management (limb-drop risk)
- Flood planning

What you liked

- Esk River access
- Trees
- Natural Beauty
- Open Space/rural character
- Heritage and memories
- Peacefulness
- Space for family activities, walking, picnicking and dog exercise

Given the desire expressed by the Hawke's Bay Mountain Bike Club to access its trails on Pan Pac land from Eskdale Park is the driver for the preparation of this Reserve Management Plan, feedback on this issue is specifically addressed. It is important to note that no proposal has been received by Hastings District Council on this matter, and therefore no prior decisions on this have been made.

Respondents to the survey who commented on the possibility were either very uncomfortable or very comfortable, with just 22 per cent selecting any of the five options between those two. A higher level of comfort was expressed provided that any infrastructure did not detract from the park's atmosphere or amenities, or use was made of the area of the park currently leased for grazing. The FOLKL report noted strong and conflicting views, which were further highlighted during the workshops. Differing views were noted both between members of the community local to the park, and between cycling and non-cycling advocates.



Archaeological report

ARCHAEOLOGY HAWKE'S BAY

- No recorded archaeological sites within Eskdale Park
- It is likely that periodic flooding will have destroyed or buried any potential archaeology
- Any earthworks should be undertaken using Accidental Discovery Protocols.

Historical report

HISTORIAN MICHAEL FOWLER

- Sets out the modern history of the reserve, including a summary of land acquisition.

Cultural aspirations

- Eskdale Reserve falls within the land bounds of Napier marae, in particular Petāne, Tangoio and Te Haroto
- Te Taiwhenua O Te Whanganui-a-Orotū (iwi-mandated authority for Napier), with Maungaharuru Tangitū Trust and Mana Ahuriri Trust, is preparing a Cultural Aspiration Report for this RMP process.

Other information we have gathered...

As the public engagement was being carried out, Council commissioned specialist reports to help us understand the historic context of the park, the health and importance of the trees in the park, and any archaeological considerations. You can access the specialist reports from [here](#).



Arboricultural report

PAPER STREET TREE COMPANY

- Site survey recorded 1239 items
- 52% canopy coverage with tree health good overall
- The majority of canopy coverage (50%) is poplar – a cultivar with a high propensity for limb failure – the majority mature specimens showing emerging mechanical weaknesses
- Current risk of harm is low due to low site occupancy levels and Council's proactive management approach – but the risk (loss of environmental amenity, increased maintenance cost and duty of care to public safety) is rising
- Recommends continue planting plan and proactive replacement/removal. Staged removal of compromised trees (four in first three years; seven in three to six years); replace with long-lived specimens.

Key themes & concepts

Council's parks team and our specialist advisers have now collated all of the available information to distil the key themes and concepts that will assist us to develop the Draft Reserve Management Plan. That signals the move into the regulatory phase of the process, which is governed by the Reserves Act 1977. The draft plan is expected to be published and formal submissions called for by June 2022.

Key themes

- 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.

Concepts to be further investigated through the draft plan stage

This list is not exhaustive, nor does the inclusion of an idea mean it will make the draft plan; rather it reflects some of the most common ideas raised during the public consultation phase. Some will require input from other regulatory bodies (e.g. Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Department of Conservation, Waka Kotahi), which will guide the way forward.

- 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 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 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 natural 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

We thank everyone who has been involved in this process; your input has been very valuable. We welcome your feedback on the key themes and concepts that will guide the next stage. To let us know what you think, email eskdalepark@hdc.govt.nz