



TUHINGA HUKIHUKI

Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

DRAFT

Regional Parks Management Plan

Issued 10 December 2021 for public consultation

DRAFT Regional Parks Management Plan

Auckland Council (2021). Draft Regional Parks Management Plan

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Wāhinga kōrero / Foreword from the Mayor



Auckland's 28 regional parks stretch over 40,000 hectares of open space and include more than 220km of coastline. They span a wide range of ecosystems and landscapes and provide sanctuary to hundreds of native and endangered plant and animal species.

Our regional parks also provide opportunities for relaxation, education and recreation, enable people to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of our natural environment, and support mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing, as well as offering world-class views and scenery. Their mauri and history are immensely valued by mana whenua.

Our Regional Parks Management Plan sets the vision and direction for managing Auckland's regional parks network over the next 10 years.

Aucklanders strongly value the experiences our parks offer and the ability they provide to freely access public open spaces. Through this plan, we propose the next steps for identifying how to protect kauri while reopening more tracks in the Waitākere Ranges and we set out our intentions for new parkland recently acquired at Te Arai and Mahurangi East – and much, much more.

The impacts of climate change are another key aspect of the plan, as we consider how to best manage regional parks for future generations, and how to maximise the opportunities these spaces provide. Access, differing wants and needs and safeguarding the special values of this park are also addressed.

I thank our strong network of volunteers, our rangers, staff and Aucklanders, who each contribute to the unparalleled experiences that our regional parks offer. I hope to see you at one soon.

Phil Goff

Mayor of Auckland

Wāhinga kōrero / Foreword from the Chair

In 2020 we announced our intention to review our 2010 Regional Parks Management Plan and prepare a new one. We invited mana whenua and the community to provide suggestions to help us prepare a management plan that will serve us well for the next decade.

Many responded and I thank you all for your contributions that have helped us to prepare this document.



Our regional parks are part of the heart and soul of Tāmaki Makaurau. How we manage them is extremely important and of great interest to many. The parks provide us large, natural spaces on land and access to our stunning coastline. They are places where generations of Aucklanders have been creating memories of happy times, times where we connect with family, community, and nature.

Featuring iconic landscapes, forests, beaches, our regional parks are an important part of our identity as Aucklanders and of what it means to call this beautiful place our home.

This draft management plan provides a vision and policies to protect, maintain and enhance these natural spaces for the diverse communities of Tāmaki Makaurau, present and future, to enjoy. It sets forth a vision of partnering with mana whenua, and supporting many to continue to be able to freely access these places, enjoy them, and to help us care for them.

I am excited to present this draft Regional Parks Management Plan. I invite you to read and comment. Let's make sure the plan that we finalise in 2022 will provide the best direction for our park management throughout the 2020s and beyond.

Councillor Alf Filipaina

Chair

Parks, Arts, Community and Events Committee

Preamble

Preparing the draft Plan

This draft Plan has been prepared following the process required under the Reserves Act 1997.

In accordance with the act, we invited suggestions from people and organisations and have prepared this draft Plan with full consideration of those suggestions.

Suggestions from organisations and the community

During September and October 2020, we sought suggestions from organisations and the community to help prepare this draft Plan. We received 758 submissions, including more than 50 organisations, and a petition signed by 3681 people¹.

These submissions contained recurring themes summarised here.

- People value the natural, undeveloped nature of regional parks and the ability to freely access natural open spaces as the city grows.
- Conservation and pest control are a priority for many.
- Regional parks are seen to be the natural place to educate and build connections to nature. Volunteering is strongly supported.
- Farm experiences are important to many and education about farming is supported. In contrast, the petitioners seek an end to the killing of animals.
- In response to the climate emergency, many suggest planting trees to capture carbon. In respect to farm emissions, mixed views are expressed, with some suggesting farming be reduced, more sustainable, regenerative or diversified. Some suggest farming stop, others want it continued. Alternative transport

options are supported to reduce visitor vehicle emissions.

- People want to know more about park history, particularly Māori history.
- Some oppose any commercialisation in parks; others provide qualified support for enhanced visitor services with controls.
- Outdoor groups and active park users seek more opportunities for their activities in more places.
- Dog owners want more space; others want areas kept dog-free and enforcement against uncontrolled dogs.
- Many submitters criticise vehicles on beaches, particularly at Muriwai, raising concerns over the safety of others and environmental damage.
- Many comment on their frustration about the track closures in the Waitākere Ranges to protect kauri and on the impact of growing visitor numbers.
- People consider the Hūnua Ranges have considerable untapped potential for active recreation.

¹ A summary of the suggestions is published at <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/region-al-parks-management-plan>

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Input from mana whenua

To date (30 September 2021), we have engaged with 16 of the region's 19 mana whenua entities. We have also reviewed other engagement and documents where mana whenua have told us what is important to them.

Mana whenua have told us they:

- aspire to a more substantive role in our regional parks that reflects the Tiriti principles, including co-governance and co-management
- offer their enduring support to protect and restore the environment, including care of taonga
- are concerned that many cultural sites, biodiversity and water quality are degrading over time, affecting their mana and wellbeing
- want to showcase their cultural associations with regional parks and strengthen their presence in them

- seek opportunities to build their capacity and capability through employment and business development
- recognise the importance of strengthening relationships, trust and understanding with the council and the community to improve park outcomes
- seek better understanding from council of mana whenua values, issues and circumstances
- seek access for customary activities, including cultural harvesting, in parks.

We heard differing views from mana whenua on how the draft Plan should reflect which iwi the council works with in managing a park. Some wanted the park / iwi relationships specified; others felt this would result in some iwi with interests being inappropriately excluded or their input undervalued.

Kōrerotia ōu whakaaro / Have your say

This draft Plan is released for consultation on 10 December 2021 for a 12-week period and your submission is welcome.

Written submissions must be received by midnight on 4 March 2022. No late submissions will be accepted. Submissions must be sent via one of:

Email: Regionalparksplanreview@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Online form: <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/regional-parks-management-plan>

Post: Submission, Draft Regional Parks Management Plan, Auckland Council, Private Bag 92300, Victoria Street West, Auckland, 1142

Hearings will be held in May 2022. You are welcome to speak to the hearings panel. To speak, by 4 March 2022, please:

- register your interest clearly in your written submission, or
- fill in the online form and identify your request to speak.

The hearings panel will consider all submissions (written and oral) before making recommendations to amend the draft Plan.

The governing body's Parks, Arts, Community and Events (PACE) Committee will consider these recommendations before approving the final Plan.

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1. Kupu whakataki / Introduction

About this draft Plan

The Regional Parks Management Plan (draft Plan) is an omnibus plan that sets the management direction, policies and desired outcomes for 28 regional parks.

The draft Plan outlines how to maximise the opportunities presented by our regional parks, and manage the challenges, particularly in light of climate change, across some 41,000ha of public open space.

It covers all aspects of land and visitor management and sets out the council's intentions in respect to partnerships and relationships with mana whenua and diverse stakeholders.

It covers the special values of each regional park, proposes a direction for managing specific issues and improving each park, and sets rules around use and development.

Once finalised, this draft Plan will replace the 2010 Regional Parks Management Plan, which covers 25 regional parks.

Ngā papa rēhia ā-rohe o Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland's regional parks

The 28 regional parks covered by this draft Plan are²: Ambury, Ātiu Creek, Āwhitu, Duder, Glenfern Sanctuary, Hūnua Ranges, Long Bay, Mahurangi East, Mahurangi West, Motukorea / Browns Island, Muriwai, Mutukaroa / Hamlins Hill, Ōmana, Ōrere Point, Pakiri, Scandrett, Shakespeare, Tāpapakanga, Tāwharanui, Tawhitokino, Te Ārai, Te Muri, Te Rau Pūriri, Waharau, Waitākere Ranges, Waitawa, Wenderholm, Whakanewha, Whakatīwai

Figure 1 Map: (next page) Auckland's regional parks in this draft Plan

² Three parks listed as regional parks in the LTP Schedule 1 are not covered by this management plan because:

- the Auckland Botanic Gardens is a distinctly different type of park with a focus on featuring botanic species, and will have its own management plan
- Te Motu a Hiaroa / Puketutu Island, was given by Watercare to mana whenua and since then has been co-managed by a trust involving the Auckland Council, Watercare, and a trust of the mana whenua owners. The council administers the site as a regional park under the governance of this trust. The trust is in initial stages of developing the future vision and master plan for the site and is not ready to consider whether to join this omnibus management plan.
- Mutukaroa / Hamlins Hill – is managed as a regional park supported by a management trust. The management trust is not currently active so forming a forward-looking plan for this park is not possible at this time.



Key

Regional parkland	Scandrett	Shakespear	Motukorea / Browns Island	Ōrere Point
Te Ārai	Te Rau Pūriri	Mahurangi East	Mahurangi West	Te Muri
Pakiri	Ātiu Creek	Tāwharanui	Wenderholm	Shakespear
Scandrett	Te Rau Pūriri	Mahurangi East	Mahurangi West	Te Muri
Wenderholm	Shakespear	Long Bay	Muriwai	Waitākere Ranges
Ambury	Āwhitu	Motukorea / Browns Island	Whakanewha	Ōmana
Duder	Waitawa	Tawhitokino	Ōrere Point	Tāpapakanga
Waharau	Whakatīwai	Hūnua Ranges	Glenfern Sanctuary	

Draft Plan focus

Through the input we received and our analysis of the context in which we are writing this plan (see chapter 0), we identify six key focus areas for management over the next 10 years.

Our commitment to Te Tiriti

- Acknowledging the principles of Te Tiriti partnership
- Acknowledging the importance of the regional parks to mana whenua
- Continuing to build meaningful partnerships with mana whenua
- Supporting expression of Māori identity in our parks and park naming

Adapting to climate change

- Managing a retreat from coastal erosion
- Creating more shade for visitors and stock
- Planning for greater fire and hazards risks

Mitigating climate change

- Prioritising forest and ecosystem health to keep our carbon stores
- Setting an emissions target and pathway for farming
- Promoting and enabling low emissions visitor access to parks

Protecting our biodiversity

- Safeguarding threatened species
- Protecting current and future biodiversity
- Partnering with kaitiaki
- Recognising regional parks' role in linking landscapes and ecosystems
- Building a culture of caring for nature

Adding value to the visitor experience

- Offering more tailored visitor experiences
- Striking a careful balance to retain natural character
- Prioritising and supporting mana whenua-led ventures
- Connecting our diverse communities in their way
- Retaining free access for informal recreation

Collaborating to achieve our outcomes

- Prioritising developing mana whenua partnerships
- Building on current collaboration with others
- Creating new collaborations that support park outcomes
- Reviewing our framework for commercial activities on regional parks



Figure 2 Key areas of focus

Concept and image courtesy of Te Uri o Hau

Our aspiration is to be world class

Our aspiration for our regional parks is to be one of the leading regional park systems in the world, that Auckland is proud of. This is across all outcomes:

- engagement with mana whenua
- conservation and heritage programmes
- sustainability
- visitor experience, recreation and facilities
- ranger service
- community programmes and partnerships.

We aim to achieve this through consultation on this draft Plan, and then delivery of its vision and protection of its values in partnership with mana whenua and with the active support of the wider Auckland community.

Defining a regional park

Our regional parks network is part of a much wider series of public and protected spaces across Auckland and Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi / the Hauraki Gulf. This includes 4000 local parks managed by the council, 34,000ha of conservation estate managed by the Department of Conservation, and lands managed by mana whenua, such as the maunga / volcanic cones of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland.

Our regional parks tend to be larger, natural spaces. On a continuum, they sit between local parks (that tend to be smaller, more cultivated open spaces that also contain many community facilities and playing fields) and the large conservation estate managed by the Department of Conservation. The regional parks represent many of the special natural and cultural qualities of the Auckland region. They provide a diversity of natural settings with no or limited development. They tend to attract visitors from across the region and beyond.



Our parks offer a diverse range of experiences, from enjoying the natural and cultural features of the landscape and the coastline to recreation activities. Some parks were purchased as farmland and this inherited land use continues today, providing visitors with opportunities to experience farming. Recreational activities in the outdoors make use of large areas and the natural landscape and can occur alongside restoration of natural ecosystems and preservation of Māori and early European settler heritage.

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Regional parks are hosted by park rangers, providing a distinctive and much appreciated service. Rangers interact with visitors and lead conservation efforts.

The regional parks are a special part of Auckland's identity. They contribute to our sense of place; they are places of enormous significance to mana whenua, and are also a source of pride for Aucklanders, many of whom actively contribute to their protection and enhancement.

Regional parks were historically acquired by regional public bodies, including water boards, and they tended to be rural. They reserved larger open spaces for the public to enjoy as the city grew. Many of these parks provide the opportunity for people to experience rural and coastal locations without having to travel far from the urban areas.

Some regional parks are now near to suburban areas and take on additional role in serving their local community, such as Ambury, Long Bay, Shakespear and the Waitākere Ranges.

Purpose and benefits of regional parks

The regional parks are purchased and managed to protect their intrinsic, natural, cultural and landscape values and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of the region.

Regional parks help protect and enhance our diverse indigenous ecosystems, cultural heritage and landscapes, and provide Aucklanders and visitors with access to nature, on land and to the coast. The network retains more than 225km of coastline giving access to unspoilt places and world-class sea views, showcasing some of Auckland's best natural features.

They offer people opportunities for social contact, relaxation and physical activity in a natural setting in their own way and at their own pace. In this way, the parks support mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing.

Statutory and planning context

How we manage our regional parks is governed by the principles of Te Tiriti, legislation and regulations, and by council policies, strategies and plans. See Figure 3.

Primary legislation

We manage our regional parks under the Local Government Act 2002 or the Reserves Act 1977³ and in accordance with other relevant legislation as outlined in Appendix 1. The council holds most regional parkland under the Local Government Act. About 27 per cent is classified as some form of reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

³ Both land held under the Local Government Act and reserves under the Reserves Act are referred to as parks and parkland.

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Figure 3 Policy framework influencing the management of regional parks

Most regional parkland is protected in perpetuity by orders-in-council under section 139 of the Local Government Act 2002.⁴

The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 acknowledges the national significance of the Waitākere Ranges and its surrounding area.

The Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 recognises the international and national significance of the land and natural and historic resources within the Hauraki Gulf and land within its catchment.

This process to prepare this draft Plan aligns with two statutory obligations:

- The Waitākere Ranges Regional Park plan must be reviewed at least every 10 years under section 20 of the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008
- Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 requires all land classified as a recreation, scenic, scientific, or historic reserve to have a current management plan in place

Appendix 1 provides more detail on the legislative and policy context.

Ownership and acquisition

Land ownership and how the council acquired the land guides its management and its governance.

Most regional parkland is owned by the council. The council and its predecessors acquired the land over more than a century by purchase, gifting and bequests, land transfer due to resource consents, compulsory purchase under the Public Works Act for water supply management or transfer from the Crown to the council. In some cases, parkland has come into council ownership or management initially by way of the Crown and / or by way of contested sales.

⁴ By way of the Local Government (Auckland Regional Parks) Order 2008, created under Section 139 of the LGA 2002.

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Some land under our management as a regional park is owned by others – the Crown, iwi, or by other parties such as the QEII Trust or Watercare. Where we are not the owner, the land is generally subject to some form of management or contractual agreement, and sometimes co-governance arrangements.

Crown land may be (and some has been) returned to mana whenua under Treaty settlements, in acknowledgement of earlier wrongful alienation of the land from their original owners.

Appendix 8 indicates whether each land parcel is held under the Local Government Act 2002 or the Reserves Act 1977, and if it is held under the Reserves Act, the reserve classification.

Conditions

Some land is subject to management constraints or requirements arising from:

- gifting or sale and purchase conditions
- conservation or heritage covenants
- easements held by others giving them rights, such as rights of way
- utility locations on or near the land, such as requirements to keep trees out of electricity lines under the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations 2003.

Appendix 2 lists gifts and covenants and identifies where conditions relate to those gifts or covenants.

Governance

Decision-making over regional parks, including the approval of the Regional Parks Management Plan rests with Auckland Council (with the exception of part of the Hūnua Ranges discussed below). This is identified in the Long-term Plan's allocation of decision making for non-regulatory activities⁵. Two members of the Independent Māori Statutory Board are members of the relevant committee of the Governing Body with responsibilities for regional parks.

A section of the Hūnua Ranges is excluded from this draft Plan

A section of the Hūnua Ranges in the Hūnua Falls area is excluded from this draft Plan to allow time for the council and Ngāi Tai ki Tamaki, the mana whenua owner, to jointly prepare the section relating to Hihiorapa Urupā, in accordance with the Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki Settlement Act 2018.

In addition, the future Hūnua Falls Scenic Reserve area is also excluded as this will vest in four mana whenua owners once the final two of four Treaty settlements have been concluded. In good faith, the council is seeking to prepare this section of the draft Plan with the future owners.

Once these sections have been jointly prepared by the relevant parties, they will be publicly consulted on as required by the Reserves Act, before being approved and added into the wider plan.

⁵ [Long-term Plan 2021-31](#): Volume 2, Part 3, 3.5(c)

Te ao Māori in park management

A key focus in this draft Plan is to support the principles of Te Tiriti in park management. This includes support for partnering with mana whenua (refer chapter 5). In so doing, we acknowledge and seek to embed te ao Māori into park management and build council's understanding and relationships with mana whenua as kaitiaki.

Te ao Māori is a way by which iwi, hapū and whānau understand and navigate the physical and metaphysical environment. Tikanga encompasses the principles and customary practices by which Māori give effect to this knowledge to navigate the world safely. Mātauranga is the body of knowledge developed around this worldview and experience. The wellbeing of whānau, hapū and iwi, and indeed te taiao (the environment) depends upon being able to practise and sustain mātauranga and tikanga.

Taking a te ao Māori world view as a component of managing regional parks will enhance that management. Integrating te ao Māori knowledge into behaviours and decisions is essential for successful and sustainable environmental management to protect and enhance the mauri of the natural environment⁶. It will ensure the notion of taiao, whenua and tāngata remain an important focal point for regional park related decisions.

A te ao Māori lens is structured around core Māori values and principles derived from Māori views of the world. These values and principles provide an insight into Māori concepts and beliefs anchored upon intergenerational symbiotic relationships between people, place, nature and the wider universe (whole living systems) and the reciprocal responsibilities and obligations to care for, protect, activate, maintain and regenerate these whakapapa relationships⁷.

Te ao Māori concepts such as kaitiakitanga, rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga offer to take an integrated approach to protecting and enhancing treasured environments such as regional parks for communities and for future generations. The practice of kaitiakitanga in park management recognises the vital importance of protecting the mauri / life force of the area and taonga within them in particular. Whanaungatanga reflects the interconnectedness of people with each other and with elements of the environment. Rangatiratanga relates to the importance of showing leadership and self-determination, while providing for others through warm hospitality is embodied in manaakitanga. Embedding these concepts into thinking and decision making supports a focus on the interrelationships between the natural environment and people.

Mana whenua have a unique relationship with the natural environment as kaitiaki. Their body of knowledge – both tangible and intangible – and cultural practices and heritage are all linked to the whenua. Through te ao Māori, these broader concepts, which acknowledge the interrelationship between the natural environment and people in how the world is viewed, can be adopted and practised by everyone.

In the Tāmaki Makaurau context, a te ao Māori perspective guided by mana whenua is fundamental to manage, develop, and enhance regional parks. Mana whenua want to see a te ao Maori perspective incorporated into strategies and initiatives which meaningfully protect and improve the environment, the quality of water and air, and reduce pollution⁸.

⁶ Auckland Plan 2050, p146

⁷ Te Tāruke-a-Tāwhiri, Auckland's Climate Plan, p32.

⁸ Tāmaki Makaurau Mana Whenua Forum, 10 Year Strategic Plan, September 2019, Outcomes Framework Natural Environment, p17. (Also see Appendix 1.)

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Given the council's obligations as a partner to act reasonably and in good faith, it is crucial for council to find ways to embrace the values of te ao Māori in its processes and culture in respect of tikanga, and mātauranga Māori to deliver benefits for mana whenua, Māori and the wider hapori / community.

The regional parks spread across Tāmaki Makaurau from Te Arai and Pakiri in the north, the Waitākere Ranges in the west, Mahurangi in the east and the Hunua Ranges in the south.

The whenua and wai underlying the regional parks and their surrounds were used in many ways by mana whenua and encompass many areas of cultural significance to mana whenua⁹. Historically, and continuing into the future, the whenua and wai within the parks are of immense political, cultural, spiritual and physical significance to mana whenua and to the wider hapori. This includes the natural elements: maunga, wai / waterways, whenua / lands and coastal areas.

These are the realms of the Atua including:

- Ranginui – the sky
- Papatūānuku – the earth
- Rūaumoko – deity of geological features
- Tāne – the deity of forest life and of man
- Tangaroa – the deity of sea and sea life¹⁰.

The significance of the whenua and wai of the regional parks to mana whenua is such that the relationship between te Taiao has profound implications for the way the distinctive values of the parks are understood, presented and managed. The cultural values of the parks are inextricably linked to the ecological, scenic and historic values, which are a part of the parks 'intrinsic worth' and 'distinctive quality', as well as their relationship with neighbouring whenua and the wai which flow to and from them.

⁹ 2010 Murdoch, Graeme. *Dreamers of the Day: A history of Auckland's regional parks*, pp52,84,266.

¹⁰ 2020 Department of Conservation, *Biodiversity in Aotearoa: an overview of state, trends and pressures*.

How to read the draft Plan

Book One presents our proposed vision, values, management framework, objectives and policies that pertain to all regional parks under this plan.

Book Two presents a chapter for each regional park with specific information and proposing management intentions relating to that park. When considering management of a park, all the general sections in Book One must be read alongside the park chapter.

Maps are provided for each park. These identify the location of key values including viewshafts, and park buildings, land cover including proposed areas to be revegetated and locations of management intentions where that is useful. The maps are illustrative and should not be relied upon for identification of every asset, feature or hazard.

The appendices provide additional information, and in the case of Appendix 4, additional policy detail.

2. Horopaki / Context

This chapter sets out the context in which this draft Plan has been developed, highlighting key trends relevant to the management of regional parks in the decade ahead.

These trends helped us identify the key areas of focus for the draft Plan.

Strengthening partnerships with mana whenua

Māori are the original people of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland with a wealth of experience and mātauranga / knowledge about local landscapes, cultural sites, plants and animals. The customary authority of mana whenua is underpinned by rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga in respect to the whenua and natural resources, as recognised through Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Auckland Council recognises 19 tribal authorities as representing mana whenua interests in Auckland¹¹. Each mana whenua has a different rohe and interest in the various regional parks. Some mana whenua have expressed a high level of interest in regional parks and in rebuilding their exercise of kaitiakitanga over ancestral lands.

In many cases, multiple mana whenua have associations with the same regional parks, and the strength and nature of their associations can vary.

Auckland Council supports partnering with mana whenua in managing regional parks. How we partner best with each mana whenua is an ongoing discussion that will evolve as priorities and our capacities to partner develop over time. This draft Plan supports the journey to explore greater partnership between council and mana whenua at various levels. It supports mana whenua to articulate aspirations for particular parks and continued kōrero on how to work effectively together. Refer to chapter 5 for our policies on partnering with mana whenua.

Exploring ways to work with multiple mana whenua and strengthening our relationships and our own cultural awareness should improve management of the regional parks and our responsiveness to legislative requirements.

An increasing number of Treaty claims have been settled, with more to come. We are witnessing evolving participation by mana whenua across economic, social, cultural and environmental domains.

Treaty settlements between mana whenua and the Crown provide redress for historical breaches of the Treaty including a historical account, cultural and commercial redress. Crown land may be returned to mana whenua through settlements. Within the Hūnua Ranges, some whenua has been returned to mana whenua. Settlement legislation sets new governance and management arrangements for these areas.

Some mana whenua also have formalised recognition and management roles relating to regional parks through legislation such as the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008.

We anticipate that a strengthened partnership approach through this draft Plan could lead to economic and employment opportunities for Māori, and for greater Māori cultural identity to be reflected in our regional parks. Some parks are likely to receive Māori names alongside existing European names. There will

¹¹ Refer to Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009

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be opportunities for returning Māori names and narratives to sites within regional parks, and potential for mana whenua involvement in tourism and conservation and heritage management.

Over time, as mana whenua and council develop ways to work together on shared priorities for conservation, heritage protection and visitor services, we anticipate cultural awareness and mātauranga Māori / customary knowledge will become integral to park management. Through this draft Plan, we seek to build mana whenua tikanga into our approach (such as including tikanga in the track development criteria in Appendix 4).

Aucklanders and visitors who are not mana whenua will also benefit from increased mana whenua involvement. They will be able to gain a greater appreciation of the history and cultural heritage associated with regional parks and to join in celebrating our shared natural and cultural heritage.

Responding to the climate emergency

The planet is in a climate emergency. Globally, humans have less than a decade to make the major changes needed to bring carbon levels in the atmosphere down to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Auckland's climate is already changing. We are starting to see higher temperatures, increased drought, more intense rainfall events and storm surges, and sea level rise. We expect this to continue even as the world acts to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change will impact on our communities, health and wellbeing, food supply, infrastructure, economy and natural environment.

At the same time, Auckland's carbon emissions are still increasing.

The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019 introduced a framework to help New Zealand develop policies to address climate emissions and adaptation¹². The legislation sets a new domestic greenhouse gas emission reduction target, establishes a system of emissions budgets, requires government to develop and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation policies and establishes an independent Climate Change Commission.

Auckland Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and in 2020 adopted Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan. In this plan, council has set a target to halve the entire city's emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

Implementation of Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan includes the action to: "Embed climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in all park plans for the region."¹³

In response, adaption to and mitigation of climate change are key focus areas for this draft Plan.

The impact of climate change

The council's coastal hazards forecasts show the regional park network's 225km of coastline is likely to be impacted more by storms in the near term and over the longer-term rising sea levels will claim much of today's coast.

¹² For more information about Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019: <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/climate-change-response-amendment-act-2019/>

¹³ Under Action B8 in the council's climate implementation plan.

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Over the next decade, popular beaches, ancient heritage sites, fragile sand dunes, coastal wetlands and native fisheries, buildings, car parks and coastal roads and tracks may be damaged by coastal floods and storm surges.

Our regional parks are home to some of the most critically endangered regional ecosystems that are threatened by sea level rise. As areas become submerged, plants and wildlife must retreat inland or be lost forever.

Sea level rise is also the greatest threat to many important cultural and historic heritage sites in our parks, as most Māori and initial European settlement occurred near the coast.

As land erodes, potentially dangerous contaminated sites may be exposed.

A hotter and drier climate will increase the fire risk and wind erosion and place more stress on indigenous biodiversity. Risk of insect and weed infestations and plant disease increases. Farming and revegetation will become more challenging as drought slows growth, places increasing pressure on water resources, and challenges young tree survival rates.

More frequent and extreme storm events will have significant and costly impacts. The council and community may face difficult decisions about protection, adaption, retreat or no action when damage occurs to heritage sites, natural ecosystems, buildings, tracks and roads.

More frequent and intense storm events may contribute more sediment to freshwater environments compromising native fisheries. Much of the sediment is generated by unsealed roads and car parks, making prevention planning more urgent.

These pressures on our long regional park coastline are likely to become more prominent over the next decade and beyond.

Our approach to adapting to these pressures are outlined throughout our land management policies in chapters 7, 9 and 10 of this draft Plan.



Figure 4 Whatipū carpark following the August 2021 West Auckland storm event. A significant amount of suspended sediment is in the stormwater from the road. Photo courtesy of Ursel Koppelman

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Mitigating through land management

The way we manage our land can have a large positive impact on the climate.

Regional parks contain about 35,000ha of mostly permanent indigenous forest and some exotic forestry. We estimate that some 250,000 tonnes of CO₂ is captured and stored across those forests and other natural ecosystems each year.

Keeping the forest we have healthy is by far the biggest positive impact we can make to mitigate climate change on regional parks.

Maintaining the health of forest and larger shade trees is essential for them to continue growing and storing carbon. This means protecting them from threat of fire and from browsing animals such as pigs, goats, deer, and possums with sustained pest control.

We can also plant more trees and other vegetation to capture more carbon including larger tree species to provide shade for visitors and animals.

We have committed approximately \$10m to plant 200ha of new native forest over the next 10 years to sequester more carbon as part of a wider \$152m effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across all council activities¹⁴.

We currently have nearly 1500ha over 18 parks in pasture, managed as sheep and cattle farming. Farm-related emissions make up approximately 20 per cent of the council's emissions profile, being 5300 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent greenhouse gases in 2020/21. This is 80 per cent methane from animals, 20 per cent from fertiliser use.

Our funded position retains a similar level of farmed open space throughout the next decade, with revegetation of a portion of the space resulting in a lower emissions level of 10 per cent of methane in line with our 2030 methane target.

Over the longer term, we expect some 400-500ha of regional parkland would remain in grass or similar low, open vegetation, in order to retain views from ridgelines and headlands, protect cultural heritage sites, and provide open areas for events and other recreational activities. Within these areas, grazing is likely to be the best land management option so visitors would continue to be able to see farm animals and farm operations in multiple parks and examples of farming heritage would remain.

The long-term vision for the remaining approximately 700ha of farmland hangs in the balance. Currently we propose in this draft Plan to continue to farm them. The alternative would be to seek funding from others to support revegetation of up to a total of 1000ha in the decade.

We have received a range of views from the community about our farming activities. Many love the open rural landscapes. Many others have asked us to plant more trees. Comments received in response to this draft Plan will help us to set the position.

Reducing vehicle emissions

Currently, we estimate people make approximately 1.1 million vehicle visits to regional parks in a year, almost all in their own cars powered by petrol or diesel.

¹⁴ In the Long-term Plan 2021-2031: a \$152 million package to reduce greenhouse gas emissions includes 'planting 200 hectares of native forest in our regional parks'. 1.2.2 Key issue 2 Climate Change action, page 12. <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-plans-strategies/budget-plans/The-10-year-budget-2021-2031/10yearbudgetfull/10-year-budget-2021-2031-volume-1.pdf> Revegetation areas are identified in the maps in this draft Plan.

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Assuming an average 30-60km round trip per vehicle, that is 17,000-34,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emitted by visiting vehicles each year – three to six times the emissions from our farming activities.

Emissions from transport are nearly half of New Zealand’s domestic emissions. To achieve targets of halving our emissions by 2030 radical changes are needed including in how we access regional parks.

In this draft Plan we focus on prioritising access to the parks by other modes than private vehicles. Broadening travel alternatives will also help improve equity of access and help relieve parking congestion at popular parks.

Regional parks can support the council’s target of helping 40 percent of Aucklanders’ cars and 100% of buses being electric or zero emission by 2030. The remoteness of our regional parks may be a barrier to EV uptake if people fear running out of electricity mid-trip. We can help this by providing for EV charging stations in more remote parks – for all modes (cars, buses and bicycles).

Protecting our biodiversity

Protecting and enhancing ecological health in our regional parks contributes to regional aspirations in the Auckland Plan 2050, and to national goals set in Te Mana o te Taiao, the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

Parks are centres for biodiversity

Regional parks contain important examples of the major ecosystem types and geological landforms found naturally in the Auckland region. These include sand dunes and wetlands, forested lowlands and mountain ridges, and streams that run from the ranges to sea surrounded by natural forest. Many of Auckland’s rare and threatened species find a home in these ecosystems.

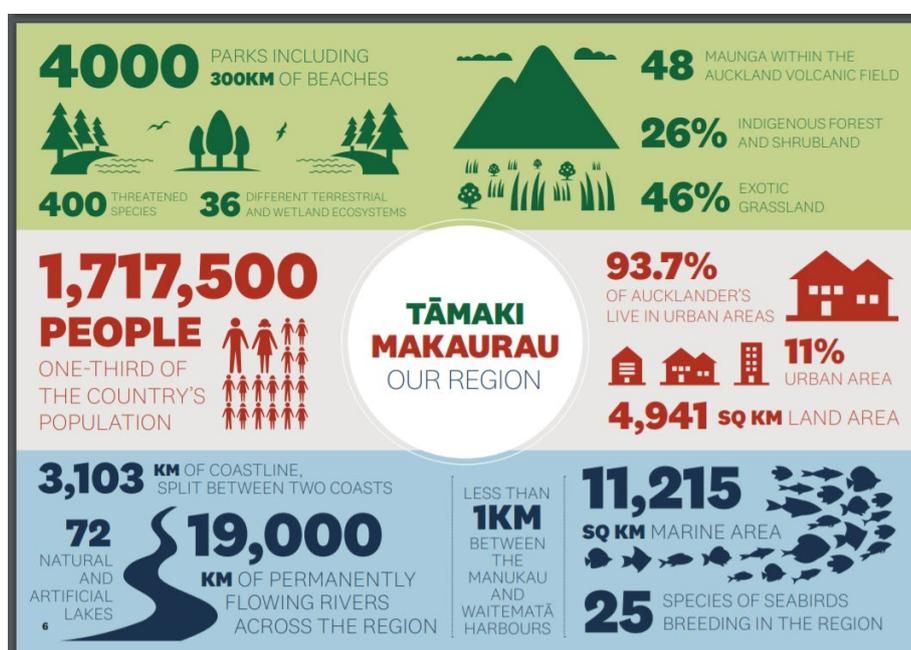


Figure 5 Overview of the environments and population of Tāmaki Makaurau¹⁵

¹⁵ From: Te oranga o te taiao o Tāmaki Makaurau: The health of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland’s natural environment in 2020. A synthesis of Auckland Council’s State of the Environment reporting. (page 6)

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Landcover is an important determinant of the health of the environment across the region. In 2020, half of the land cover in the region was exotic grassland associated with sheep and beef or dairy farming and about a quarter of land cover was mature indigenous forest or indigenous scrub/shrubland regenerating towards mature forest. The remaining quarter was everything else including the urban area which is 11 percent of the land area and expanding¹⁶.

Regional parks host much of Auckland's remaining, once widespread, native forest. Native forest areas in the Waitākere Ranges, Hūnua Ranges and on Aotea / Great Barrier Island have the highest levels of native plant species richness, ecosystem diversity and indigenous birdlife, and relatively low incursions of weeds and introduced birds. This is in large part due to their size and continuous areas of native forest within the parks.

Streams in regional parks are important remaining habitats for some of Auckland's aquatic invertebrate and native fish populations. Our rivers and streams host diverse communities of fish, aquatic plants, kōura / crustaceans, kākahi / freshwater mussels, and many invertebrates. Once relatively widespread, only a few giant kōkopu populations still exist in mainland Auckland.

Biodiversity is under pressure

Indigenous biodiversity is under constant pressure from animal and plant pests and from pathogens (diseases) such as kauri dieback disease that affects kauri, and myrtle rust that infects myrtle species including pōhutukawa and rātā.

Aquatic and marine systems face added burdens from nutrient and sediment loads, and physical alterations to water flows.

Climate change will further increase pressures and protecting biodiversity in regional parks will become more important as urban development continues across the region.

The council's Natural Environment Targeted Rate (NETR), introduced in 2018, funds projects that help protect our natural environment and tackle the pests, weeds and diseases that threaten indigenous species, including on regional parks. The key areas the NETR is used for are:

- plant pathogen pest management including upgrading tracks to protect kauri and managing myrtle rust
- protecting our islands and marine environment
- pest management on the mainland
- expanding community conservation effort.

Te mana o te wai / water quality

The importance of water and public access to water is recognised in legislation. The National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 outlines the fundamental concept of Te Mana o te Wai – recognition that protecting the health of water protects the health and wellbeing of the wider environment. It protects the mauri of the wai.

Regional parks contain many streams, lakes and beaches, which support natural ecosystems, provide public access to water, manage flood flows and store water.

¹⁶ [Te oranga o te taiao o Tāmaki Makaurau. The health of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland's natural environment in 2020.](#) Auckland Council Research and Evaluation Unit, RIMU. 2021.

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Lakes Wainamu, Tomarata and Rototoa are three of the region's most significant dune lakes with rich aquatic communities. All are either on regional parks, or regional parks are part of their catchments¹⁷ and influence their water quality.

Lake water quality faces pressures from sediment and nutrient run-off, pest fish and invasive plant introductions and a changing climate.

Many regional parks contribute to sensitive marine catchments: the Manukau, Kaipara and Mahurangi harbours, and the Hauraki Gulf. Extensive efforts and resources are being poured into trying to halt the deteriorating state of these marine areas, including through the Hauraki Gulf Forum, Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme, Mahurangi East Land Restoration Programme and Manukau Harbour Forum.

Management of regional parks can play a positive and leading role in supporting these marine remediation and protection programmes and in promoting land management that supports healthy freshwater environments.

The council's Water Quality Targeted Rate (WQTR), introduced in 2018, also helps make significant inroads into improving water quality. It provides investment for new stormwater infrastructure and initiatives to reduce wastewater, sediment and other pollutants contaminating waterways and marine environments.

Over time, the aim is also to reduce Safeswim public health warnings at recreational beaches across Auckland, including at many regional parks.

Kauri dieback is a significant threat

Kauri dieback disease is caused by *Phytophthora agathidicida*, a microscopic fungus-like organism. It lives in the soil and infects kauri roots, damaging the tissues that carry nutrients and water within the tree, effectively starving it to death. Dieback affects kauri of all ages and is currently incurable, resulting in kauri being classified a threatened species and endangering the overall health of kauri forests.

Kauri dieback is spreading across the natural extent for kauri of northern New Zealand, and the extensive kauri ecosystems within the Hūnua and Waitākere Ranges are areas of particular concern. The Hūnua Ranges remains one of the most important areas for kauri conservation as the expansive stands there appear to remain free of the disease.

Kauri are found in 16 of the regional parks covered by this draft Plan - Ātiu Creek, Āwhitu, Duder, Glenfern, Hūnua Ranges, Long Bay, Mahurangi, Shakespear, Tāpapakanga, Tāwharanui, Te Muri, Waharau, Waitākere Ranges, Wenderholm, Whakanewha and Whakatīwai regional parks. Declining health or death of kauri has a detrimental effect on the kauri, podocarp and broadleaved forests they are found in and on species that live in these forests.

Efforts and NETR funding over the past decade have helped to slow its spread, but a lot more sustained effort is required in the decade ahead. See Appendix 7: Kauri dieback management, for more information.

¹⁷ Te Rau Pūriri is east of Lake Rototoa and part of the same water catchment. Lake Tomarata links to Te Arai. Lake Wainamu is in the northwest of the Waitākere ranges.

Trends in park use

Population growth

The population of Tāmaki Makaurau is forecast to grow by 15.8 per cent from 1.66 million people in 2020 to over 1.9 million by 2031¹⁸ and to continue to grow.

This growth is planned to be concentrated in and around central Auckland, Albany in the north, Westgate in the north-west and Manukau in the south. Warkworth and Pukekohe will also experience significant growth as they transition from rural to future urban centres.

This growth will make our regional parks even more important as people seek time out from urban living. The city will be growing up around some regional parks. Parks now relatively remote in the north and south of the region will likely see increased visitor numbers, as more people live nearby.

Infrastructure projects like the new Pūhoi to Warkworth motorway (due for completion in 2022) will also lower obstacles for people to travel further north, increasing the visitor catchment of the eight regional parks in Rodney.

Since 2000, Auckland's population has grown rapidly and following suit, regional parks have experienced continued increases in visitor numbers. Muriwai, Wenderholm, Long Bay, Te Ārai, Tāwharanui, and Cornwallis in the Waitākere Ranges are the region's busiest regional parks. At peak times during summer, the facilities are beyond capacity as people flock to their beaches for a day out. With this popularity can come frustrations, such queuing to get a car park, limited toilet facilities, and infrastructure that doesn't cater for all types of needs. Higher visitor numbers can also negatively impact wildlife.

Increasing numbers of visitors will place additional demands on park services and infrastructure, on even basic facilities such as toilets.

To provide for the growing population and increasing development in many areas, purchase of more regional parkland will be desirable. In the future as the region's population continues to grow, council will carefully consider where the acquisition of new parkland is required to give more people the opportunity to experience the natural outdoor settings provided by regional parks, especially to address underserved areas or areas where demand is greater than supply. For example in the south near Pukekohe, communities are poorly served by regional parks.

Increasingly diverse needs

The digital world is now part of the regional park experience, and technology is brought to regional parks, from mobile phones to sound systems, with many visitors seeking digital information about parks and internet connectivity.

At the same time, some visitors come to regional parks to be “off grid”, to enjoy the natural world. They share the same facilities and areas for a completely different reason.

Regional parks cater for an increasing range of outdoor recreation. Water-based activities such as stand-up paddle boards and kite surfing are increasingly popular and people are using e-bikes.

Our regional parks continue to offer few opportunities for people with low mobility or disabilities or for older members of our communities.

¹⁸ Long-term Plan 2021-2031, growth assumptions on page 55.



Auckland's diversity:

<p>180 = approximate number of ethnicities and 175 languages</p>	<p>Almost a quarter of Māori live in Auckland (26.9% increase in the number of Māori living in Auckland)</p>	<p>28.2% (proportion of Aucklanders who identify with an Asian ethnicity) up from 23.1%</p>	<p>15.5% of Aucklanders who are of Pacific ethnicity (25.1% increase)</p>	<p>The number of older Aucklanders (those aged 65 and over) continues to increase over time, up 13.0 per cent since 2013. This is expected to approximately double in the two decades from 2018, reaching a total of 400,000 by 2038.</p>	<p>Disability – one in five Aucklanders were identified as disabled in the 2013 Disability survey.</p>
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Source: 2018 Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand

Figure 6 Auckland's diversity in 2021. (Source: LTP 2021-2031, page 8.)

Auckland has 180 ethnicities with strong and growing Asian, Pacific and Maori populations, and an increasing number of older Aucklanders. Our parks are where the region's rich cultural diversity comes to life and where communities have opportunities to connect with each other as well as with nature, in their way. Multiple languages are spoken, cultural traditions are celebrated, generations of whanau come together, park visitors are exposed to new ideas. Enabling people to connect with nature promotes the positive effect of nature for mental health and wellbeing.

Our service will continue to respond to these diverse needs and interests and will continue to seek to build an ethic of stewardship and caring for our special places in all Aucklanders. This needs to include ensuring the parks support and are welcoming to larger community groups and diverse language backgrounds.

Enhancing the visitor experience

Regional parks have so much to offer, and we want to get better at communicating the opportunities and at enhancing the visitor experience.

There are opportunities to use digital tools and social media to market the regional parks to a much broader audience, for example, to younger people who can help nurture regional parks into the future and advocate for their protection.

Digital tools provide another way to communicate the cultural value of regional parks, for mana whenua to meet their aspirations for telling their stories and to raise public awareness of their connection to the land.

Digital tools can provide an instant feedback channel to council staff when people want to raise concerns about their visit. They also offer solutions to specific challenges like advising on peak and low period use times to manage overcrowding. Live information about congested parks can help people better plan their visit or look for alternative parks to match the experience they're after.

Across the network there are many different experiences to be had. There are parks with a conservation focus, areas of unique wildlife, beaches suitable for swimming, large open spaces and facilities for family gatherings and community events, tracks and trails with unique features and some parks offer the ability to stay overnight.

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In 2021, council completed a survey of 2000 Aucklanders to better understand their use of tracks and preferences and needs for tracks. Half of Aucklanders have walked on a regional park track in the last five years and levels of satisfaction around track use is high. Most want to experience tracks with natural features and for the purposes of exercise, to support time in nature, wellbeing and social outings. Four in five track users and those interested in using tracks believe there are a diversity of tracks available across Auckland parks to meet their desired visitor experience.

There is high demand for park accommodation, which includes basic campgrounds and bach stays. While some people are happy with basic accommodation, others want higher quality facilities.

Many events held on regional parks are very popular, such as Ambury Farm Day, the Ōmana Children's Day, the Splore festival at Tāpapakanga, trail running, and Music and Movies in Parks.

Collaborating more to achieve our outcomes

Many people support our regional parks by volunteering and belonging to friends or care groups, historic societies and recreational groups. Volunteers contribute in a range of ways, including weed and pest control, planting, restoring historic assets, developing and maintaining recreational assets, and delivering recreation activities such as walking tours.

Many groups make a significant contribution to managing regional parks. They obtain funding from other organisations to support activities such as reintroducing threatened species and running community events. Groups bring people together, pass on skills and knowledge and encourage people to feel more connected or committed to their regional park. Recreational groups using the parks also volunteer for tasks such as track maintenance and clearance.

Volunteering and partnerships between the council and others to take care of our regional parks will continue to be essential.

Funding: a challenge and an opportunity

Responding adequately to the challenges and opportunities ahead of us would not be possible relying on council funding alone. Many of the intentions in this draft Plan are not funded. We present them as a challenge and as an opportunity.

We are not alone in managing the regional parks. We seek to strengthen our relationships with mana whenua including encouraging them to develop economic opportunities aligned with this draft Plan. We already rely on many community and commercial organisations who already work with the council to support the parks' natural and heritage values and to deliver a range of visitor services and experiences, such as learning experiences, guided tours, or events.

Over the next decade, we seek to grow these relationships and build new ones. The regional parks are special, natural and undeveloped spaces, and that very character is its essential drawcard. We seek to develop our capacity to work with mana whenua, community and commercial operators to deliver services and support the natural and cultural heritage so that together we can deliver this Plan.

3. Te tirohanga me ngā mātāpono / Vision and values

Te tirohanga / Vision

Treasured and resilient parks

The regional parks of Tāmaki Makaurau are some of our most special and unique places and are outstanding examples of healthy, resilient natural environments, providing a diverse range of experiences that connect us to nature and to our heritage and our identity. By caring for them we care for ourselves and future generations.

Mahi tahi / Working together

The Council partners with mana whenua and supports our volunteers, groups and community to care for our shared and treasured natural places.

The vision is intended to be enduring: a long term, open-ended outcome.

We have two sides to our vision. One side focuses on the parks themselves and our relationship with them. The other side focuses on our relationships: how the council, mana whenua and the regional community will work together in caring for and enjoying these special places.

Ngā mātāpono / Park values

At the heart of park management lie the park values. These values define what we want to protect, enhance, and enable on regional parks. The values are intended to act as a guide or checklist for decision making relating to regional park management.

For mana whenua, protection and enhancement of the mauri and wairua of the regional parks is paramount. A healthy mauri restores mana and provides the foundation for the parks to be restorative and nourishing places.

In submitting suggestions for this plan, overwhelmingly Aucklanders told us that they value the natural, undeveloped character of the regional parks. Many said they value regional parks as places where indigenous biodiversity can flourish and where people can enjoy natural settings in different ways.

Accordingly, this plan requires that more weight be placed on protection and enhancement of the regional parks' natural and intrinsic values over other values, as without healthy, resilient natural places all other values are diminished.

Wairuatanga / Spiritual and intrinsic value

Protection and enhancement of the mauri and wairua of the regional parks is paramount. This value expresses the inherent connection between people and place.

The regional parks have an intrinsic or innate value of their own: they exist and should be sustained in perpetuity, for their own sake.

Mana taiao / Natural values

Natural values of regional parks include:

- The outstanding examples of unique landscapes and distinctive geology that defines Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Mauri pūnaha hauropi / ecology and biodiversity:
 - the regional parks are significant storehouses of the region's unique indigenous biodiversity, including threatened species on land and in water, and in managed sanctuaries
 - the integrity and interconnectedness of ecosystems that enhance the mauri and wairua of the regional parks, from forested ridges, gullies and valleys, grassed pastures, and wetlands and coastal ecosystems including salt marshes, dune systems and mangrove habitats
 - natural environments of regional and national significance, such as the large native forests of the Waitākere Ranges, the northern montane forests of the Hūnua Ranges, and the dune wetlands at Whatipū Scientific Reserve
 - the important role regional parks provide as stepping stones or ecological corridors supporting the movement of wildlife across Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Wai / water as the source of all life, enabling whakaoranga / regeneration and growth – supporting health and ora tonutanga (intergenerational wellbeing)
 - the significant catchments in the Hūnua and Waitākere Ranges provide most of the city's water supply
 - where regional parks span ki uta ki tai / ridgelines to sea – entire watersheds – maintaining healthy land environments supports and nurtures the ora moana /health of coastal and marine areas.

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- Tauritetanga / balance and resilience: regional parks make a local and global contribution to supporting a stable climate particularly in resilient, thriving areas of forest.

Mana aotūroa / Cultural and heritage values

Cultural and heritage values include:

- The enduring associations that mana whenua have with regional parkland and the opportunity to demonstrate rangatiratanga (the right to exercise authority), to explain and observe appropriate tikanga (protocols), and pass mātauranga (knowledge) to future generations.
- Mana hononga tangata / making connections and providing manaakitanga / hospitality through sharing the history and culture of Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Historic heritage since the mid-1800s acknowledging the many connections Aucklanders have with the history and diverse uses of the sites including settlement, farming, resource extraction and milling, military, recreation and industry.
- The stories that help us understand and acknowledge those who came before us.
- The land is publicly owned and protected as parkland, free to access for a range of activities, and available for future generations to enjoy.
- The many generous gifts and bequests have been made of land within regional parks to the people of Auckland over more than a century are valued and acknowledged through this plan and through the telling of histories.
- Mana whenua expression of kaitiakitanga obligations and responsibilities on behalf of those who have been and who follow. Expressing kaitiakitanga is essential for wellbeing.
- Takotoranga whenua / landscape: views and vistas provide the sense of identity for mana whenua and all Aucklanders including the stunning coastal views, lookouts over forest, wetlands and pasture, and wide views of the significant geological, natural and cultural landscapes of Tāmaki Makaurau.
- The regional parks, in particular the coastline and harbours and distinctive dominant features help define the region's character and contribute to Aucklanders' identity, pride, and connection with the whenua – feeling at home.
- Wāhi tapū and other sites that have been significant and used by Māori over generations, such as distinctive pā sites on many coastal headlands, places for mahinga kai (collection of food), or places that reflect significant events in the hundreds of years of occupation by mana whenua, including many sites of archaeological significance.

Mana whai a rēhia / Social and recreational values

Regional parks are places of learning and discovery – of history, culture, and nature. Regional parks contribute to people's social, mental and physical well-being, including providing the ability to:

- connect with nature – to experience and explore large, healthy, natural places, to absorb the sights and sounds of nature, both by day and the dark sky at night
- explore wild places through nature-based outdoor activities on pasture, bush and beach, through play and relaxation
- connect with family and community in a relaxed natural outdoor environment
- access the coast and the sea

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- stay overnight
- to enjoy the psychological benefit of escape to places of peace and quiet for respite from the pressures of everyday life
- experience and learn about the unique indigenous plants and animals, geology and natural ecosystems and landscapes of Tāmaki Makaurau
- experience farm animals and farm practices
- to be actively involved in caring for our natural and cultural spaces.

Whai rawa whakauka / Economic values

The primary economic value of regional parks is tied to their natural and cultural values:

- Free access to beautiful natural environments boosts the economic attractiveness of Auckland as a place to live and work
- The ecosystem services (such as fresh water, air, carbon storage and biological diversity) provided by 41,000 hectares of natural space has an economic value that is incalculable and irreplaceable
- The stunning natural destinations and cultural history are a drawcard to visitors to Auckland, increasing their length of stay and boosting the local economy.

Strategic partnerships are valued where they support the achievement of the multiple outcomes of this plan, including creation of economic and employment opportunities for mana whenua.

A modest level of direct economic value (revenue) is derived by council from the provision of visitor services, including accommodation and bookable sites, and hosting of events. Revenue also comes from farming, from concessions/permits, and licences to third parties.

4. Whakahaere pou tarāwaho / Management framework

This part of the draft Plan sets out the framework we have developed as a tool to guide management of regional parks. The overarching approach this framework takes is to protect and maintain park values, enable recreational use of these special places and provide a quality visitor experience.

These categories assist in guiding the approach by which different areas within a single park or where relevant the entire park will be managed. The categories provide further guidance and finesse to decision making for particular areas of land, once the statutory considerations and requirements for each parcel of land have been taken into account.

The management framework approach:

- Groups parks into categories that describe the type of visitor experience that can be expected given the park values that must be protected
- Outlines the level of service and facilities that visitors can generally expect to find in the different zones within a park and within park categories
- Provides guidance on the factors to be considered when considering the design, development and layout of parks
- Enables the use of special management zones, where a different level of management is required in certain parts of a park to protect specific values or features.

The management approach for each individual park is also defined by the overall vision, values and policies outlined in this draft Plan.

Park categories

The park category system defines the type of experience a visitor can expect to have in each type of park, given the park values to be protected, the level of infrastructure in that category of park and the recreation opportunities offered.

This system enables each park to provide recreation opportunities based on its natural and cultural values and its capacity to absorb the activity, without threatening these values or the quality of visitor experience.

A range of recreational opportunities are provided across the regional park network, but not all activities are appropriate or provided for on each park.

Where the land is held under the Reserves Act the park categories are intended to provide further nuance and specificity to guide the reserve's management

For regional park land not held under the Reserves Act, or land falling within the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park which has special statutory considerations under the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008, these categories serve the function of a tool to provide guidance for their management.

Refer to Appendix 8 to identify land classified under the Reserves Act.

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The park categories are:

- **Category 1a: Natural and Cultural:** These parks focus on protecting park values and offer a remote or wilderness experience, allowing only low levels of use and development to minimise the effects of visitor activity.
- **Category 1b: Destination:** This new sub-category of Category 1 recognises that some parks with high park values also experience high visitor numbers. These parks need more intensive management and monitoring of the visitor experience and the potential impacts on park values.
- **Category 2: Developed Natural:** These parks allow for moderate levels of recreational activity, predominantly in farmland settings with remnant forest and ecosystems being managed or restored. The emphasis is on sustainably managing the key values in the park.
- **Category 3: Developed Recreation:** These parks are characterised by a higher level of development that allows for more recreational activity and high visitor numbers, while still protecting some key aspects of the park environment.

All recreational activities require infrastructure to support their use. The category system defines the extent of development and infrastructure expected on each park that is appropriate to the type of visitor experience and the park setting.

The park category also defines the type of core visitor services available at each type of park. At the lower end (category 1a) there are limited programmes and ranger presence. Categories 1b, 2 and 3 have more structured programmes, interpretation focused on social, education and environmental benefits of visiting parks, stewardship and volunteering and a visible ranger presence.

Table 1 provides a description of the park categories.

Table 2 sets out the category for each of the regional parks included in this draft Plan. Parts of some regional parks have been assigned to different categories to recognise that they provide a spectrum of recreation opportunities.

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Table 1: Description of the park categories

	Category 1a: Natural and cultural	Category 1b: Destination	Category 2: Developed natural	Category 3: Developed recreation
Management focus	Protection of the natural, historic, cultural and landscape values of the park is pre-eminent. Recreation opportunities provided where they are compatible with protecting those values.	Protection of natural, historic, cultural and landscape values of the park, while providing for a higher level of management of visitor activities and numbers in specific locations.	A range of recreational opportunities while allowing for sustainable management of the natural, historic, cultural and landscape values of the park.	An extensive range of active recreational activities, supported by facilities sensitive to the natural, historic, cultural and landscape values of the park.
Extent of development	Minimal level of infrastructure and development. Limited vehicle access and parking. Expected facilities: gravel-based car park except at some major arrival areas, information board, toilets, back country campground or limited vehicle-accessible campground. Tracks are generally developed and maintained to easy tramping track or tramping track standard ¹⁹ . Shorter walks may be developed and maintained to walking track standard.	Higher level of infrastructure and development to cater for the park (or part) being a major visitor destination. Vehicle access, car parks may be larger. Expected facilities: gravel-based or sealed car parks, information board, toilets, picnic areas, vehicle-accessible campground and in some locations accommodation (baches) and bookable sites. Tracks are generally developed and maintained to short walk or walking track standard. Some may cater for people with mobility difficulties.	Moderate level of infrastructure and development. Expected facilities: car park, toilets, information structure, picnic areas, trail system, back country and/or vehicle accessible campgrounds and in some locations accommodation (baches) and bookable sites. A spectrum of track standards from short walks to tramping tracks, recognising the variety of parks in this category.	High to moderate level of infrastructure and development, catering for a range of activities and high visitor numbers. Expected facilities: sealed car parks, toilets, information, picnic areas, barbecues, trails, vehicle-accessible campgrounds and in some locations accommodation (baches) and bookable sites, a ranger station. Tracks are developed to path (at arrival areas) or short walk standard. Longer walks are at walking track standard. Parks in this category are a focus for catering for people with mobility difficulties.
Recreation activities	Informal recreation activities: walking, tramping, picnics, camping. Limited group activities or events, maintaining the informal, unstructured recreation experiences in these parks.	Informal recreation activities: walking, picnics, vehicle accessible or walk-in camping. Group activities or events are managed to ensure that social and physical carrying capacity is not exceeded.	Informal recreation outside main arrival areas. More structured recreation is limited to the main arrival area, developed picnic areas and vehicle accessible campgrounds. Moderate group activity and events are facilitated.	Provision for more structured and group recreation, such as developed picnic sites with barbecues. Large group activities provided for. Broader range of discretionary activities allowed, including events.
Intensity of use	Levels of use and visitor numbers are low, although can be variable. May be subject to temporary closures or permanently restricted access.	Generally higher visitor numbers and more prolonged contact with other park visitors; large groups are more common than in Category 1a.	Moderate range of uses and visitor numbers. Higher visitor numbers may be experienced at the main arrival area and campground.	Wide range of use and higher visitor numbers. Managed to minimise potential conflicts between recreational use and environmental impacts.
Visitor experience	Generally a wilderness or remote experience in a predominantly natural environment, where the sights and sounds of human activity are few. Coastal regional parks are remote from urban areas and natural features are dominant.	Generally a natural environment experience, but in some areas or times of year visitor numbers will be high which means there will be a greater degree of social interaction.	A range of visitor experiences, with a mix of natural environments and limited active and social recreation areas.	Active recreation and large group activities are provided for, while still protecting the natural conservation, heritage and cultural values of the park.
Core visitor services	Ranger contact details available for emergencies. Ranger presence / education services at limited locations. Limited structured programmes and interpretation on conservation, environmental protection and stewardship.	Ranger contact details available for emergencies. Ranger presence / education services at some locations. Structured programmes and interpretation on conservation, environmental protection and stewardship.	Ranger presence / education services at limited locations. Structured programmes and interpretation on social, education and environmental benefits of visiting parks, stewardship and volunteering. Some designated and bookable sites available.	Ranger presence / education services available. Structured programmes, events and interpretation on social, education and environmental benefits of visiting parks, stewardship and volunteering, Designated and bookable sites available.

¹⁹ Refer to track policy on page 116 for track standard descriptions.

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Table 2: Park allocation to categories

Regional park	Category 1		Category 2	Category 3
	1a – Natural and cultural	1b - Destination	Developed natural	Developed recreation
Hūnua Ranges	All except areas identified in other categories	Mangatawhiri valley		
Muriwai	5 Mile Strip	Ōtakamiro Point / Maukatia Okiritoto Stream and Horse Park Mitchelson Block		Central /Motutara Muriwai Golf Course
Te Ārai	Te Ārai north	Te Ārai Point Te Ārai south		
Waitākere Ranges	All except areas identified in other categories	Arataki Visitor Centre and precinct Cascades-Kauri including Waitākere Golf Course Cornwallis Fairy Falls – Spragg Bush Glen Esk valley (including Kitekite Falls) Karamatura valley and farm Lake Wainamu Karekare Piha (Lion Rock, North Piha, Tasman and Gap Lookouts, Taitomo) Mercer Bay loop walk and lookouts	Pae o te Rangi	
Other	Motukorea / Browns Island Pakiri Tawhitokino Whakatiwai	Glenfern Mahurangi East Tāwharanui	Ātiu Creek Āwhitu Duder Mahurangi West Ōrere Point Scandrett Tāpapakanga Te Muri Te Rau Pūriri Waharau Whakanewha	Ambury Long Bay Ōmana Shakespear Waitawa Wenderholm

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Parks are generally placed under a single category, although in some parks several categories are applied to reflect the need for a different management approach in different areas. For example:

- Most of the Waitākere Ranges is in category 1a. This places our focus on protecting natural values while providing for low-impact recreational activities. These parts of the park will be managed to protect those natural values from inappropriate recreation activities.
- Specific locations in the Waitākere Ranges have been defined as Category 1b and 2 to reflect the level of use and development more accurately in these locations. These are natural areas that are experiencing high visitor numbers, requiring more intensive management and monitoring of the visitor experience and potential impacts (category 1b), or are suitable for greater recreational use (category 2).
- Ambury is an example of a category 3 park. It will be supported by a higher level of development that allows for more recreational activity and high visitor numbers, while still protecting some key aspects of the park environment.

General and special management zones are also used and are described in the next section.

Te whāinga / Objective

1. To manage parks using a category system that recognises the individual park values, type of visitor experience and recreational opportunities they provide.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

1. Adopt the category system described in Table 1 as a framework to reflect the overall management focus, visitor experience, recreational opportunities and level of development planned for each park or part of a park.
2. Manage the parks in accordance with their individual category and criteria described in Table 1.

General and special management zones

General and special management zones are used alongside the park categories to describe the level of service and infrastructure that visitors can generally expect to find in the different zones within a park.

General management zones

We manage these zones to minimise the impact of human activity and development on the park values and maintain the quality of the visitor experience and overall ambience of the park. We also aim to provide a relatively consistent layout, development and management of general management zones across the network.

The general management zones in a park may include:

Park entry

This zone has two purposes:

- To provide pre-entry information for park users outside the park indicating that a regional park is located nearby and to give direction using standard road signs that include the park name
- To welcome visitors and provide safe entry and exit to the park and present orientation and general access information to the park user, including the park's closure times.

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Automatic gates may be located at this point and will be open during prescribed opening times. They will be closed to vehicle entry after hours but will still allow vehicles to exit the park.

Access roads and tracks

The main access roads and tracks provide vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access into the park. They give the park user an introduction to the park and direct them safely to the arrival zone.

- The main access road will generally be sealed, except where this would be inappropriate to the character of the park or not warranted based on the level of traffic movement or maintenance costs
- Walking and cycling tracks will be provided to the appropriate track standard (refer to the Tracks section in chapter 11.)
- The access roads and tracks will be progressively upgraded to better support safe multi-modal access, in accordance with the Sustainable access policies in chapter 9.

Main arrival zone

A park may have one or more main arrival zones depending on its size. A main arrival zone contains vehicle parking and a concentration of park facilities and visitor services.

- Vehicle parking areas will be progressively upgraded to support multiple transport modes where appropriate, including buses, shuttles and bicycles, and electric vehicle charging may be installed, in accordance with the Sustainable access policies in chapter 9
- Signage containing information on the park's key features and facilities, park regulations, orientation maps, visitor brochures and access to online information
- WiFi coverage will be progressively added to main arrival zones to enable the park user to access online park information and make bookings
- An emergency telephone or emergency contacts details will be available where there is no mobile phone coverage. There may also be surveillance systems
- Toilets, changing rooms if near a beach, and drinking water are generally available in this area
- The main arrival zone may contain a staffed visitor centre, such as Arataki in the Waitākere Ranges
- Some main arrival zones may provide universally accessible facilities in accordance with disability access policies in Improving equity in chapter O11.

Secondary arrival zones

Several secondary arrival zones may be provided on larger parks. These will often be at track entrances or beach access points. They may provide some of the elements in the main arrival zone such as parking for multiple transport modes, notice boards, directional signs and toilets.

Amenity zones

These are the main zones where visitors will congregate for specific activities. They include picnic areas and open space for informal recreation, beaches, playgrounds, campgrounds and sites containing significant features of interest, such as viewpoints or historic features.

These zones may include facilities such as picnic tables, seating, barbecues, drinking water, shade structures and toilets to support recreation activities. Any infrastructure will be suitably located to avoid

adverse impacts on the park environment. Also refer to Open space and amenity settings in chapter 10 for how we manage these.

Tracks and trails

Track and trail networks are often the main recreational facility provided in parks. These provide access to key features and destinations and recreational opportunities for walking, tramping, cycling and horse riding. Park roads also act as walking tracks and trails unless restrictions are necessary for operational and safety reasons. Refer to our Tracks policy in chapter 11 for management of these.

Dedicated activity areas

Dedicated activity areas are areas where activities occur that may be at variance with the category assigned to a park, or have levels of development or use that exclude the general visitor.

These include bookable sites, golf courses, park operations depots, baches and lodges. Campgrounds and certified self-contained vehicle camping areas are also dedicated activity areas that are shared by those who have booked them.

We manage visitor use as a controlled activity for the bookable areas. Some facilities are operated or managed by others under licence. Visitors are generally restricted from operational facilities for health and safety reasons. Refer to chapter 11 for management of bookable areas.

The activities and associated facilities within each zone will reflect how visitors enter and use the park. Generally, park facilities and infrastructure will be limited to that necessary to serve the permitted and controlled activities of the park, consistent with the category and the purpose of the management zone.

Limits on the type, nature and frequency of activities may be imposed if they are considered to pose a threat to the park values or quality of the visitor experience in a management zone.

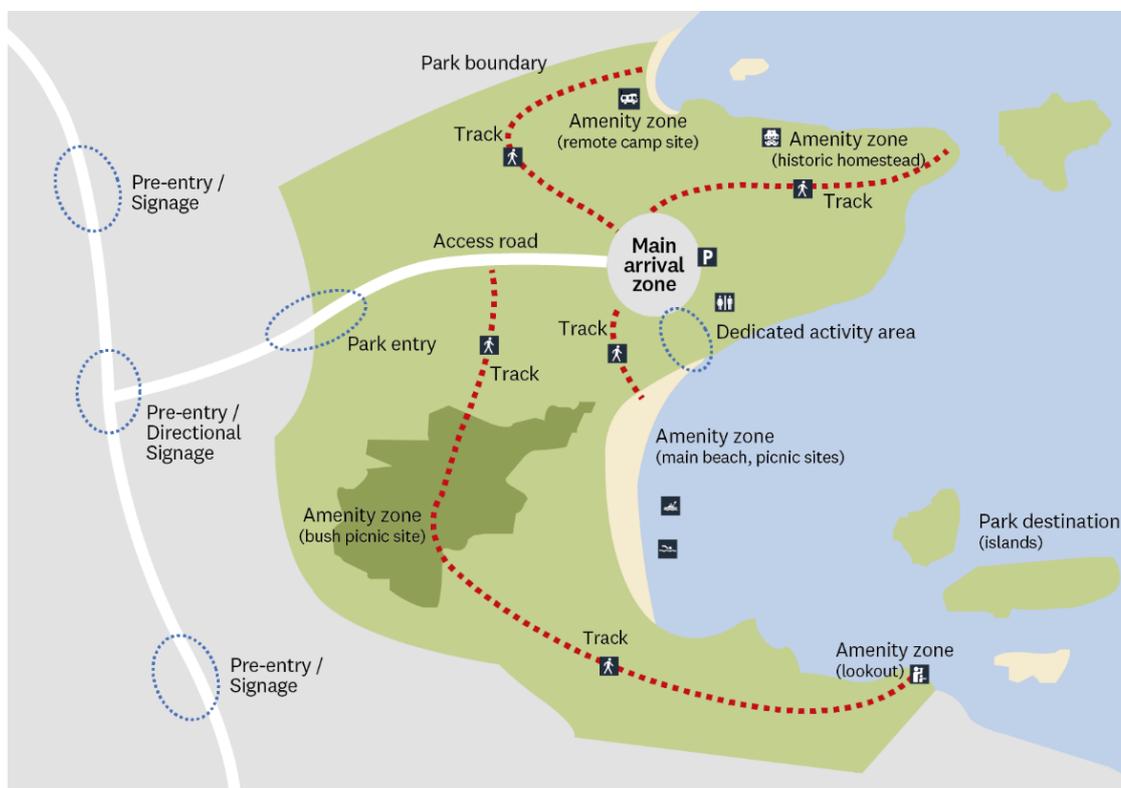


Figure 7: Illustration of general management zones

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The figure above identifies the general management zones described above and their typical relationship to the rest of a hypothetical park.

The remainder of the park outside the general management zones will be managed in accordance with the park's category. Visitors will generally be able to access all areas but should not expect to find facilities there apart from tracks leading to destinations or key features.

Special management zones

In some instances, we will need to apply specific management policies to recognise the unique values of the locality or feature that do not conform to the overall park category. These areas will be managed as special management zones, to reflect that in some circumstances a different level of management is required to preserve and protect these areas, or to safely provide for a higher level of use.

Some of these areas contain natural, cultural or historic features or are especially sensitive to the impacts of human activity. These include historic structures, archaeological sites, sites of significant cultural value to mana whenua, wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Other areas may contain major features and visitor attractions that increase the recreational demand and pressure for managing high visitor numbers in that area. Some examples include Arataki Visitor Centre, the open sanctuaries at Tāwharanui and Shakespear and the gannet colony at Ōtakamiro Point at Muriwai.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

2. To provide a consistent and quality visitor experience in the general management zones that minimises impacts on park values.
3. To manage the impacts of activity and development in high use areas and minimise effects on the special values, quality of visitor experience and ambience in these sensitive locations.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

3. Develop and manage parks based on the general management zones described in this chapter.
4. Apply the specific policies for the special management zones identified for each park in the park chapters in this plan, by considering:
 - a. the purpose of the special management zone, identifying its key features and values, including any special or sensitive natural, historic, cultural and landscape values
 - b. the intended nature and quality of the visitor experience
 - c. the primary management focus for the locality
 - d. the management actions that will ensure visitor activity is contained within defined levels and the values of the locality are protected and retained.
5. Apply specific limits on some activities within a special management zone as required, to protect park values and the quality of the visitor experience.

Design principles

The design, scale and location of all park development and infrastructure should protect and enhance the park values. It should also incorporate sustainable best practice as set out in chapter 9 Sustainable asset, water and energy management.

Design principles and site-specific design guidelines are tools to help guide the design, development and layout of parks. These include functional issues such as the siting and location of buildings and structures within the park setting; the proposed design elements (scale, materials, colour and texture); visibility from key vantage points within the park, adjoining public and private land and the coastal area; accessibility for all mobility levels; and safety and security.

Design guidelines are in place for Muriwai Regional Park and the Piha section of Waitākere Ranges Regional Park and will be progressively developed for other key locations requiring site-specific design input based on the following set of principles.

Te whāinga / Objective

4. To develop park infrastructure in a way that recognises and protects the unique character of a park and park values, and is appropriate to the park setting and category.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

6. Develop and maintain park infrastructure to meet park user needs in a manner that protects park values and incorporates sustainable best practice.
7. When undertaking a development, apply the following design principles:
 - a. Work with mana whenua, including considering appropriate tikanga, and opportunities for expression of Māori cultural identity.
 - b. Recognise the unique characteristics and values of each park, in particular the wilderness and landscape character of the locality.
 - c. Consider all alternative locations and options available to provide for activities on parks.
 - d. Avoid locating infrastructure on cultural heritage sites and features.
 - e. Restrict development to the minimum necessary to serve the needs of park users and operational requirements.
 - f. Keep structures (such as signs) to a minimum, appropriately located at visitor arrival points (such as car parking areas) and grouped or combined to avoid their cumulative impact and visual clutter.
 - g. Group buildings together and locate park infrastructure against natural features, such as hillsides and mature vegetation, and avoid prominent ridgelines or hilltops.
 - h. Limit visibility of park infrastructure from within and outside the park, from the coast and other public vantage points.
 - i. Consider the health, safety, convenience and accessibility of park users.
 - j. Use natural materials that reflect the colours and textures of the locality or are appropriate to the historic context.
 - k. Avoid formalising natural settings by restricting the use of straight lines, hard surfaces and edges and other urban elements.

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- l. Minimise land disturbance and vegetation clearance and impact on cultural heritage sites or features.
 - m. Utilise cost effective and sustainable design techniques and methods of construction.
 - n. Minimise lighting and consider the use of light shades to minimise the impact of light pollution from artificial lighting that is deemed necessary on the more remote parks.
 - o. Remove existing structures (including signs, railings, planting surrounds and other fixtures) that no longer serve a purpose.
8. Prepare and implement design guidelines for parks with areas of special character, or where parks values may be threatened or altered by development. These guidelines should cover specific aspects such as:
- a. The park values and landscape characteristics
 - b. The protection of vistas and view shafts
 - c. Clustering or grouping of facilities and structures
 - d. Design elements such as:
 - i. Siting and location of buildings
 - ii. Accessibility
 - iii. Safety and security
 - iv. Form and scale
 - v. Colour and texture
 - vi. Visibility and reflectivity
 - vii. Aesthetics and balance
 - viii. Alternatives.

Spatial planning

Until now, when the council has contemplated the spatial layout of a park for conservation and recreation we have prepared and consulted on a 'concept plan' (refer to Appendix 3 for a list of concept plans).

The concept plans have presented a spatial layout (map) and a mix of management and infrastructure proposals, with design concepts and a list of actions. Many actions require capital investment or additional operating expenditure. The consultation process tended to raise expectations that the proposed actions would be undertaken in a short timeframe. However, the plans were generally not costed. Remaining actions are generally not linked to committed capital funding or to any increases in operating funding, so implementation will continue to be slow.

In this draft Plan we identify a dozen opportunities for spatial planning²⁰. The opportunities are generally on newer parks where early-stage assessment is needed to identify opportunities for nature conservation, heritage protection and recreational use. Some are in established parks where we identify increasing visitor numbers and changing needs that suggest opportunities to improve the visitor infrastructure and layout²¹. We also propose to continue reviewing and/or implementing earlier concept plans²².

While we identify opportunities to undertake spatial planning, we do not have capacity to prepare all these plans in the next 10 years. Nor has the council set aside additional capital to deliver on these plans at this stage.

We intend to continue to undertake early-stage planning for regional parks in priority order based on where visitor pressures are occurring and likely to grow, or may release pressure from other parks; and based on funding availability, including the likelihood of attracting external funding to support a development.

Using these criteria we identify the top three priorities for spatial planning to be:

- Recreation plan including track network plan for the Waitākere Ranges to address the next steps for track development following implementation of the current 2019-2024 track reopening plan
- Recreation plan including track network plan for Hūnua Ranges to identify how the Watercare forestry block can be utilised, so that the tracks can be contemplated before revegetation
- Spatial plan for Te Arai as visitor numbers are predicted to increase rapidly in that area and the park has recently been extended with very limited existing facilities.

Projects committing capital investment are managed through the council's Investment Delivery Framework. The first step is strategic assessment, which can include needs assessment, a feasibility study, master plan and/or development plan. Further steps are required before funding is committed.

The planning process may involve public consultation (refer to chapter 14). The stage of planning and level of capital investment committed (or not) needs to be communicated to manage public expectations.

²⁰ To be clear, we are not referring to Shoreline Adaptation Plans (SAPs) here. SAPs are a separate planning process that council is undertaking to plan for management of coastal areas in response to coastal erosion, which can include regional parks. SAP actions for regional parks will be taken into consideration in park management (refer to Chapter 9: Sustainable management and climate change; coastal hazards, inundation, and sea level rise).

²¹ Refer to park chapters considering spatial planning at Ambury, Duder, Long Bay, Mahurangi East, Motukorea/Browns Island, Muriwai, Pakiri, Te Arai, Whakanewha; and proposed recreation plans / track network plans for the Waitākere and Hūnua Ranges.

²² Refer Appendix 3. These include earlier plans for Mahurangi West, Shakespear, and Karamatura, Little Huia, Mercer Bay and Taitomo in the Waitākere Ranges; a plan for Te Rau Pūriri is in draft.

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Te whāinga / Objective

5. To plan and manage new development on parks transparently in a way that protects park values, enhances the quality of the visitor experience, and identifies opportunities for partnership with others.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

9. Prepare early-stage plans (development, feasibility or other spatial plans) as part of a strategic assessment of park development opportunities for recreation.
10. Involve mana whenua in development of early-stage plans.
11. Ensure the plans consider:
 - a. the relevant objectives and policies of this plan
 - b. the park vision, values and features, park category and special management zones
 - c. recreational needs and trends, visitor use and potential future use of the park
 - d. the wider provision of similar outdoor recreational opportunities in other public open spaces
 - e. the potential to attract other parties to resource aspects of the plan
 - f. any other aspects useful to complete a strategic assessment under the council's Investment Delivery Framework.
12. Consider whether the planning triggers a statutory requirement for public consultation and when consulting, communicate the stage of assessment and whether any capital funding for the project is identified.
13. Prioritise planning efforts based on:
 - a. places with the highest and / or growing visitor numbers
 - b. pressures from increasing visitor numbers and inadequate existing infrastructure
 - c. potential to attract external funding to support a development.

5. Mana whenua partnerships

A key focus of this draft Plan is to support the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in park management²³. Mana whenua have told us that partnership, a key Treaty principle, is important to them in the management of regional parks.

Partnering with mana whenua brings te ao Māori values such as kaitiakitanga, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga²⁴ to parks management. Partnering recognises the rangatiratanga and wellbeing of mana whenua and underlines the importance of respect and understanding of the Māori culture and heritage in park management. This supports better outcomes in parks especially in caring for the natural and cultural heritage of the whenua and people's enjoyment of parks.

We recognise that working in partnership can occur at all levels of decision-making and management.

At one end of the spectrum is co-governance. Examples of co-governance arrangements within Auckland include Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara²⁵ and the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme. In each, council(s) and mana whenua are represented on a governing entity set up for that purpose. Co-governance can take a variety of forms and could cover one, more than one, or all parks.

Co-management is another form of partnership. At the management level, a management agreement with mana whenua might cover all or some management areas relating to a park such as staffing and commercial arrangements. The regional parkland on Te Motu a Hiaroa / Puketutu Island is co-managed by the council, Watercare and Te Motu a Hiaroa Charitable Trust, which is made up of three mana whenua owners. Te Kawerau ā Maki and the council have a management agreement on protecting the health of the Waitākere Ranges in response to the threat caused by kauri dieback. This covers aspects of environmental management and management of visitor access in sensitive areas.

Partnerships may also occur at a project or operational level, for example, working together to define the area and species of park plantings, how specific park assets are designed and maintained, and cultural heritage protection and interpretation.

At a governance level, the council is committed to an ongoing dialogue with mana whenua rangatira-ki-te-rangatira to consider the scope and models for mana whenua involvement in regional parks and wider matters.

At management, project and operational levels, the council is committed to working with mana whenua to develop effective options for greater involvement. This may include co-management of a park or of priority areas of interest within or across the parks.

By working closely with mana whenua we can support expression of a Māori identity and culture in parks, such as incorporating te reo Māori in park names and in signage, Māori design in park infrastructure and landscaping, celebrating Māori culture through events, and sharing mātauranga Māori and stories. We also seek to recognise the customary relationships and activities of mana whenua within parks. This includes the gathering of materials or use of water for customary use.

²³ Refer to chapter 0: Draft Plan focus section

²⁴ Refer to chapter 0: Te ao Māori in park management

²⁵ Te Poari o Kaipātiki ki Kaipara is a co-governance entity that oversees Kaipātiki, a reserve near Parakai in the South Kaipara area.

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We also recognise that regional parks can play a role in supporting the economic wellbeing of mana whenua. Refer to chapter 9 for the Sustainable procurement policies.

Effective partnerships require a focus on relationship-building to develop trust and efficiency in the way we work. Partnerships often encompass difficult conversations to agree priorities, roles and responsibilities. The way in which we partner with mana whenua will continue to evolve and grow. As such, we set an enabling framework for partnerships in this draft Plan, rather than prescribing any particular outcomes or methods.

There are many opportunities to work closely with mataawaka²⁶. For example, the council may work with an urban or community marae, local school, or Māori organisation together with mana whenua to improve a park. We acknowledge in this relationship that mana whenua retains the mana over the whenua. Working together will enable a variety of activities and programmes in parks such as youth development programmes that support Māori wellbeing.

The Local Government Act 2002 and the Reserves Act 1977 include statutory requirements as outlined in Appendix 1 for working with mana whenua. We also note the government's response programme to the Wai 262 Tribunal recommendations flows through to guidance for councils to strengthen our partnership approach (see Appendix 1).

Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau 2020 is the council's framework for bringing together aspirations that Māori have identified as mattering most for them, and the council's 10 strategic priorities to advance Māori identity and wellbeing. This framework provides practical steps to deliver on priority-aligned Māori outcomes.

Many of the general policies in this plan and the park-specific management focus areas and intentions reflect ways in which we can strengthen our partnership with mana whenua and support Māori outcomes.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

6. To strengthen partnerships with mana whenua in managing parks.
7. To acknowledge and support mana whenua relationships with their ancestral lands and taonga held within regional parks.
8. To support the expression of Māori identity and culture on parks.
9. To support Māori wellbeing through use and development of regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

14. Work with mana whenua on opportunities for greater involvement and partnership in park management including, but not limited to:
 - a. options to participate in park management including co-management
 - b. developing proposals for activities in regional parks
 - c. developing effective processes to engage early with mana whenua and work together across projects and programmes of work affecting park land and applications for discretionary activities²⁷
 - d. supporting capability and capacity building for partnership
 - e. developing processes with mana whenua to support implementation of this plan

²⁶ Māori who are not in a Tāmaki Makaurau mana whenua group.

²⁷ Discretionary activities are activities that require consent from the council and are not specifically provided for in this plan as a permitted or a controlled activity

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- f. developing options to engage Māori kaitiaki rangers
 - g. considering ways to strengthen involvement in parks identified by mana whenua as having cultural significance.
15. Acknowledge mana whenua relationships to parks and work with mana whenua to support expression of Māori identity and culture including, but not limited to:
- a. the provision of te reo Māori names and narratives for parks and park features (refer to Naming parks and park features in chapter 8).
 - b. acknowledging mana whenua associations with parks including through interpretation and information or tohu mana whenua
 - c. encouraging mana whenua leadership or involvement in education and interpretation programmes
 - d. incorporating Māori design into new park developments
 - e. supporting relationship-building and cultural inductions between mana whenua and those maintaining parks or working on parks, such as stakeholders, and concessionaires
16. Consider ways to strengthen relationships between council staff, contractors and mana whenua including, but not limited to:
- a. building staff and contractor capability and understanding of mana whenua values, ways of working and context
 - b. developing relationship agreements or memorandums of understanding.
17. Support mana whenua to recognise their customary relationship to the whenua in parks such as:
- a. enabling the appropriate recognition and consideration of mana whenua traditional practices and tikanga
 - b. considering options to support and manage access for customary activities and resource use
 - c. planting of plants for rongoā or traditional cultural harvest; and supporting the use of non-threatened plants for these purposes
 - d. enhancing the mauri of taonga within parks including, but not limited to, restoration and planting plans, conservation plans and managing biosecurity threats e.g., through rāhui.
18. Support opportunities to work with Māori to improve their wellbeing in alignment with the outcomes of Kia Ora Tāmaki Makaurau; for example, through programmes and services on parks that target Māori cultural, physical and mental health.

6. E tūonohono ā-hoa me ngā mahi tūao / Collaborating with others

Regional parks are public spaces and open to all to be involved and contribute and many do. We acknowledge the enormous contribution by volunteers and philanthropists in regional parks, in particular to support nature conservation, and also in a range of other areas. We aim to continue to provide support for volunteering and encourage people to be involved in caring for these special places.

When considering allowing commercial opportunities on regional parks, Council will comply with all Treaty-related decision-making obligations (including, to the extent they are relevant, the findings of the Supreme Court in *Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki Tribal Trust v Minister of Conservation* [2018] NZSC 122). Refer also to chapter 5: Mana whenua partnerships.

There are many possible opportunities to also build on our existing collaborations with the community and business sectors to realise outcomes that could not be realised from council investment or resources alone.

With significant philanthropic, community and business support, we can achieve greater outcomes in conservation protection and education, heritage protection and education, and services and facilities to support visitor enjoyment of the parks in ways that support the park values.

We aim to continue to foster a strong sense of stewardship and connection with our parks with all Aucklanders, and to foster social connectedness and belonging – to the place and to each other.

In this chapter, we set out a framework to strengthen existing and build new collaborations with community and business organisations who want to work with us to care for our regional parks and increase their ongoing relevance and accessibility to Aucklanders.

We need to work together

The council cannot deliver the vision and values in this draft Plan alone, including our ambitions to enhance and restore the incredible indigenous biodiversity and ensure our parks are resilient to climate change. In addition, the council has finite ability to fund new infrastructure to ensure the regional park experience keeps pace with a changing and growing Auckland.

Where we propose to improve conservation and heritage outcomes, and visitor services and facilities, we intend to pursue co-investment and partnership opportunities with other organisations to help make this happen. This approach would look to broaden and extend current examples of work with corporates and philanthropic or community organisations to leverage their efforts to deliver on shared goals, from biodiversity protection and carbon sequestration through to educational and recreational experiences.

Any new partnership or co-investment opportunities would need to align to existing policy including Facility Partnerships Policy 2018 and Community Occupancy Guidelines (once they are updated to include regional parks).

Supporting volunteering and partnerships

Volunteer and partnership activities in parks requires a significant investment of staff time and resources and we must invest our time wisely to deliver the best outcomes for both community and parks.

We will continue supporting our existing relationships with volunteers, community, corporate and philanthropic organisations where we share goals that align to delivery of this draft Plan.

Our support for volunteers and volunteer organisations will take the following forms:

- Continuing to support existing volunteers and organisations to help deliver this plan, as well as deliver the outcomes of council's wider strategic priorities and plans through use of regional parks
- Seeking to build new volunteer networks, particularly in parks without existing volunteer groups
- Continuing to look at effective ways we can support, acknowledge and encourage volunteers and nurture relationships, including encouraging young people to volunteer
- Ensuring volunteers have training, equipment and processes to be safe and have a positive experience
- Encouraging and supporting our volunteers to build relationships with mana whenua and to learn more about tikanga and kawa appropriate to the park
- Focusing our effort on achieving the regional priorities set for biodiversity protection or heritage protection for a site or a park and delivering this draft Plan
- Using a relationship agreement with groups and organisations to clarify support we can provide, what our shared goals are, and defining success
- Checking in regularly with volunteers and supporting organisations to help the relationship to continue to be effective in supporting our shared goals.



Volunteer checking transmitter on little spotted kiwi at Shakespear Open Sanctuary

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Philanthropic, organisational and corporate contributions

Over the next decade, we aim to build new relationships to deliver more of this draft Plan. This may require us to work in new ways and to develop our capacity to set up effective relationships.

Partnering with organisations can help us deliver projects or programmes on parks better, faster and/or cheaper. It is an important way to strengthen our delivery given the challenging pressures on budgets and capacity to achieve the proposals in this draft Plan.

We intend to partner with mana whenua in delivering activities or improvements that support Māori outcomes (refer chapter 5: Mana whenua partnerships). This supports te Tiriti principles and acknowledges the unique relationships and knowledge that Māori have with the whenua and wai within the parks.

When working with others, we are looking for:

- partners and collaborators whose values align with the plan's vision and values
- partners and collaborators whose resources or investment achieve park outcomes that would not be realisable without this investment
- to connect regional park management with other community aspirations connected to the local area of the park (e.g. trails, community environmental initiatives)
- to keep in-park acknowledgements as minimal as possible to preserve the undeveloped and natural look and feel of the park.

Refer also to the proposed review of the authorisations framework for commercial activities on parks in chapter 0: Authorisations (policy 216).

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

10. To support and broaden our community partnership and philanthropic networks, and opportunities for building collaborations which align with the values and vision of this Plan.
11. To achieve regional park outcomes set out in this Plan by leveraging business, community or philanthropic investment support where park aspirations could not be realised without the support and innovation of others.
12. To support park volunteers and partners to understand and support the council's focus on Te Tiriti principles.
13. To support park volunteers working in parks to work safely.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

19. Work with community and business organisations to support activities in parks that align with:
 - a. the values of regional parks (as set out in chapter 0)
 - b. park specific values and management intentions (refer to park chapters).
20. Continue to encourage and support volunteers in delivering improvements to parks or community outcomes including:
 - a. providing guidance to park volunteers and partners that supports their activities and safeguards their health and safety while working on parks
 - b. supporting volunteers to increase their skills and capacity by providing training and learning opportunities
 - c. supporting activities such as cultural inductions that build understanding of tikanga.

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21. Consider entering into relationship agreements with volunteer groups to clarify understandings of shared goals and to clarify the support that council can provide.
22. Strengthen our approach in working with community and business organisations including:
 - a. considering the most effective ways to support more volunteering and relationships
 - b. employing a robust approach to identify opportunities to create enduring, successful partnerships.
23. Identify opportunities for contributions from others including community stakeholders, government grants, and companies, noting that in-park acknowledgements must be as minimal as possible to preserve the undeveloped and natural look and feel of the park.

7. Whakamaru i te taiao / Protecting the natural environment

This chapter covers policies for all regional parks relating to:

- Protecting geological features
- Protecting biodiversity
- Managing pest plants, animals and pathogens
- Restoring indigenous ecosystems and revegetation
- Supporting the wider regional environment.

For mana whenua, the health and wellbeing of the environment is inseparable from the social, cultural, spiritual, economic, and environmental health and wellbeing of the people.

Councils are receiving messages through government strategies and policies to work in partnership with mana whenua²⁸. This plan reflects our intention to involve mana whenua in environmental management on regional parks at strategic and operational levels. We recognise and will support mana whenua in exercising their kaitiaki role on regional parkland. Exercise of kaitiakitanga restores mana and supports wellbeing in a holistic sense. As such, we will involve mana whenua in conservation management including water quality improvement, ecological restoration and pest management activities on regional parks. Activities include planning, delivery, monitoring and review at regional and at park levels.



²⁸ As evidenced by the government's implementation of the Wai 262 Waitangi Tribunal report, see Appendix 1 and see <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-kaupapa/te-ao-maori/wai-262-te-pae-tawhiti>

Protecting geological features

Geological features hold natural and cultural value. Some hold cultural significance, and scientific interest.

Regional parks contain many distinctive and outstanding geological features, including those recognised to be of international, national or regional significance. There is a table of identified geological features in regional parks in Appendix 5.

Geological features change due to natural processes such as water, air, heat and cold, earthquakes and volcanism, and vegetation growth. They can also be destroyed, changed or obscured by human activity, particularly by development or vegetative cover.

For mana whenua, geological events are linked to origin stories or cultural narratives. Telling the stories of the geological features is an important and valuable way of telling the bigger story of the formation and natural history of Tāmaki Makaurau.

Go to chapter 8 for Protecting landscapes.



Whaipū in Waitākere Ranges Regional Park

Te whāinga / Objective

14. To protect and value significant geological features on regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

24. Protect and maintain significant geological features on regional parks:
 - a. identified as Outstanding Natural Features in the Auckland Unitary Plan
 - b. identified in the New Zealand Geopreservation Inventory²⁹.
25. Maintain visibility and access to geological features for public education and awareness, where this is consistent with protecting their values.
26. Work with mana whenua to protect and interpret significant geological features on regional parks.

²⁹ Published and maintained by the Geosciences Society of New Zealand. Maps and site data are available at: <https://services.main.net.nz/geopreservation/>

Protecting biodiversity

This section covers ecosystem protection, species protection and enhancement, reintroduction of species and resilience to climate change.

The historic (pre-human) and current extent of Auckland’s indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems have been identified and mapped to align with the national ecosystem classification system developed by the Department of Conservation³⁰. With this information we have assessed and the regional threat status of the ecosystems and developed priorities for management.

‘Regional priorities’ in the policies below refer to areas identified as priorities for biodiversity protection due to having the best and / or representative example of an ecosystem, or a vulnerable or threatened species or ecosystem type. These priorities have been identified under the council’s 2012 Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy and will be adjusted in response to the National Policy Statement – Indigenous Biodiversity.

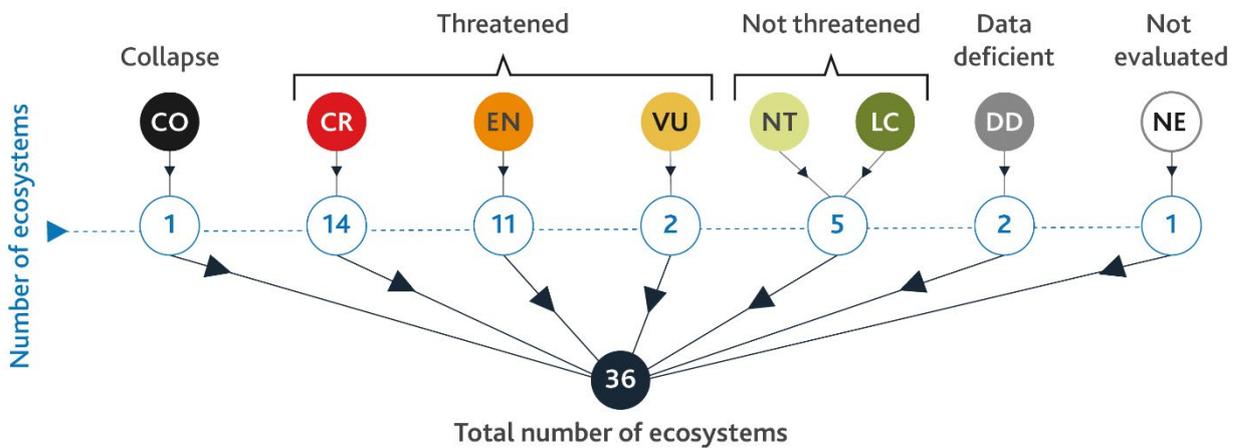


Figure 8 Threat categories for ecosystems in the Auckland region³¹

Thirty-two of the 36 terrestrial and wetland ecosystem types found within our region are located in regional parks, many of these mapped as biodiversity focus areas (BFAs)³² (the terminology may change over time). Our scientists are now developing guidance for managing sites identified as regional priorities. The BFAs represent the minimum number of sites requiring targeted management of critical pressures to ensure the viability of indigenous ecosystems, ecological sequences and species is maintained.

In addition to regional priorities, many other areas within regional parks contain high levels of biodiversity which with good stewardship can improve further. These areas also deserve attention and support and are often cared for by passionate communities and volunteers aiming to restore biodiversity in particular parks.

We also manage, with significant community support, five pest-free sanctuaries:

³⁰ Singers and Rogers 2014

³¹ Source: Figure 1 in Indigenous terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of Auckland, Auckland Council, 2017, page 12. The acronyms CO, CR, EN, VU, NT, LC, DD, NE refer to different status levels. A key to these is provided in this plan’s Appendix 6.

³² The BFAs identify priority sites for active management by Auckland Council. While these often correlate with the Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) scheduled in the Auckland Unitary Plan, BFAs are not a statutory instrument.

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- fenced sanctuaries at Tāwharanui, Shakespear and Glenfern
- unfenced sanctuaries, managed by intensive pest control, in the Waitākere Ranges (Ark in the Park) and in the Hūnua Ranges (Kokako Management Area).

These sanctuaries enable native wildlife to flourish free from predators and can be important havens for introduction of additional species. They also offer valuable nature experiences for visitors and support nature education programmes.

Indigenous wildlife naturally moves around. Protected wildlife can appear in unexpected areas (for example shorebirds might nest in a recreation area or in a paddock) disrupting human activities. Management of protected wildlife must be in accordance with the Wildlife Act 1953. Our approach is to set up protection as needed, such as temporary fences with signs to request that people avoid disturbing the wildlife. With the Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw we may temporarily exclude people from an area to protect wildlife.

Te whāinga / Objective

15. To protect and maintain indigenous species and ecosystems on regional parks to ensure they are healthy, functioning and viable in the long term.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

27. Work with mana whenua to review, deliver, and monitor biodiversity management priorities for regional parks.
28. Align regional park management decisions and actions that impact on biodiversity to the council's Indigenous Biodiversity Strategy, and to national requirements.
29. Endeavour to protect, enhance and restore indigenous ecosystems and habitat for threatened species on regional parks, giving particular focus to those identified as regional priorities.
30. Maintain and enhance water quality and improve fish passage to protect and enhance indigenous aquatic ecosystems.
31. Maintain and enhance the resilience of indigenous species and ecosystems to the adverse effects of unpredictable or intense events, such as storms or new incursions of pests or pathogens, through adaptive management.
32. Protect and maintain the long-term viability of indigenous species and ecosystems in low lying areas vulnerable to the effects of future sea level rise by:
 - a. providing for coastal ecosystem retreat in land use planning for parks, so ecosystems and habitats are given space to shift inland
 - b. implementing land preparation activities and active ecological restoration where necessary to support indigenous ecosystem retreat.
33. Manage access on a temporary or long-term basis where necessary to protect indigenous wildlife and threatened species, including supporting mana whenua application of rāhui for this purpose.

Restoring indigenous ecosystems

Restoration of indigenous ecosystems involves protecting and enhancing existing ecosystems as well as re-creating indigenous ecosystems. In priority order, we first aim to protect and enhance existing indigenous ecosystems, and secondly we aim to extend those areas of indigenous biodiversity through revegetation of grassed areas. This extends to water which, in te ao Māori is highly significant for its lifegiving qualities. The mauri of the environment and water is to be protected and respected.

Restoration includes:

- fencing to exclude stock, pest plant and animal control
- renewing natural water flows and levels
- assisting natural regeneration
- planting to enrich already regenerating areas and to start the restoration process on grassed areas
- placing wood in streams to create daytime cover and flood refuges for fish and deeper pockets of water to support different species.
- reintroducing species to a site
- translocating, or re-introducing, species to a site.

Translocating species to new habitats within regional parks will be considered where this will benefit the species and the receiving ecosystem and is consistent with regional biodiversity priorities. We will follow the Department of Conservation guidelines in these cases.

Revegetation, or planting a range of indigenous species, is a core activity that supports restoration of indigenous ecosystems. Revegetating grassed areas is a major activity on regional parks – and one of the key volunteer and third-party funded activities.



Restoring an ecosystem by replanting natives at Scandrett Regional Park

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Planting for restoration reasons can include planting in any part of a park to:

- directly enhance, restore and improve biodiversity such as:
 - establishing permanent indigenous ecosystems appropriate to the site
 - increasing habitat for indigenous wildlife including threatened species
 - buffering and protecting the viability of remnant indigenous vegetation and connecting vegetated areas
 - enriching areas of degraded indigenous vegetation
 - creating corridors or stepping-stones to support indigenous species moving across the wider region
 - completing ecological sequences
- stabilise land to reduce erosion
- protect water bodies and wetlands by preventing sediment loss and nutrient run-off
- sequestering carbon.

Planting is undertaken for many other reasons besides restoration of indigenous ecosystems. Refer to Specimen trees and plantings in chapter 10 for policies relating to planting for reasons other than biodiversity restoration.

Allowing areas to naturally regenerate, where there is a suitable nearby seed source, is appropriate in some places, and may be preferred if the sites are difficult to access. Weed control is necessary to ensure this is successful.

Planting must be appropriate to the site, considering risks of fire, and protection of viewshafts and landscapes. It should also maximise co-benefits – for example, planting for carbon sequestration should also aim for the best biodiversity and recreation result. Restoration must follow the council's Restoration Guide. For example, the guide explains that eco-sourcing of appropriate species is essential to ensure good ecological outcomes. Nursery biosecurity controls are critical to ensure revegetation is not responsible for introducing new pests to sensitive ecosystems.

Over the next 10 years the council has committed to planting some open areas on regional parks³³, including 200ha for carbon sequestration through planting permanent indigenous forest, and approximately 80ha for biodiversity enhancement.

Other council and community-funded programmes are also active in revegetation efforts on regional parks. Restoration planting is supported by the substantial efforts of many partners and volunteers (refer to chapter 6).

With the range of reasons for planting and the many people involved including external partners, coordination of planting efforts is essential. The key coordination tool is the revegetation plan. A revegetation plan explains the purpose of the planting, ensures the planting aligns with the park vision, considers the impact of the plantings on a range of park values (such as landscape, heritage and recreation values), and identifies how to achieve the best co-benefits possible. They help ensure coordination across biodiversity, heritage, recreational and other management intentions for that site.

³³ The Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 funds under its Carbon Lane for carbon sequestration, 200 hectares of revegetation on regional parks over 10 years. These blocks need to be at least 1 hectare square to meet carbon credit rules. The council's biodiversity enhancement programme continues to fund approximately 8 hectares per year for biodiversity enhancement, these areas can be any size or shape and may include dunes, wetlands and bush, and may include in-fill plantings to improve the biodiversity of regenerating areas.

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In this draft Plan, we identify new areas for restoration of indigenous ecosystems in areas that are currently mostly grassed in the maps. These areas are identified as the first priority for revegetation; other areas may also be revegetated over time. The boundaries of the areas are approximate.

Refer also to chapter 12 relating to commercial contribution to restoration on parks, including for carbon offsets or resource consent offsets reasons.

Te whāinga / Objective

16. To restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity on regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

34. Consider reintroduction of indigenous species to parks in accordance with:
 - a. regional biodiversity priorities
 - b. best ecological practice
 - c. Department of Conservation translocation procedures.
35. Undertake restoration activities to protect and enhance existing indigenous ecosystems and to revegetate other areas, prioritising the revegetated areas marked on the maps.
36. When intending to undertake revegetation on regional parks, prepare and implement a revegetation plan:
 - a. working with mana whenua and key community partners
 - b. in accordance with regional biodiversity priorities and best practice conservation management
 - c. in accordance with the council's Restoration Guide
 - d. using eco-sourced indigenous species suitable to the original ecosystem type(s) of the area to be planted
 - e. taking into account the likely impacts of climate change
 - f. considering the co-benefits of revegetation, such as erosion protection, landscape enhancement, carbon sequestration, water quality improvement, recreation and amenity
 - g. taking into account other regional park values and minimising impacts on them
 - h. taking into account other relevant strategies and plans.

Managing pest plants, animals and pathogens

Pest management (plant, animal and pathogen) is essential to protect natural, cultural and recreational values across all regional parkland.

Managing pest plants and animals

We manage pests in regional parks:

- to reduce threats to indigenous biodiversity
- to support recreation and amenity (who wants to sit on prickly gorse at a lookout point?)
- for safety (e.g. removal of dangerous Phoenix palms)
- to support animal welfare in farmed areas
- to align our efforts with our neighbours' and community activities to manage their pests
- to work towards aspirations for a park and the region to be pest free.

Our pest management in regional parks must give effect to the [Mahere Whakahaere Kīrearea ā-Rohe Regional Pest Management Plan 2020-2030³⁴](#) (RPestMP) within the Auckland region, and within the Waikato region, to the Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan.

Much of the council's pest management effort goes to delivering the outcomes of the RPestMP which identifies priorities and approaches to manage pest plant, animal and pathogens. Significant and sustained community efforts also go into this work. Regional parks receive particular attention as they are centres for biodiversity, particularly regional parkland in the Waitākere Ranges, Hūnua Ranges, Hauraki Gulf islands. With sustained management of pests, we can greatly enhance the biodiversity values of a park can and restore the mauri of a site.

It is much more cost-effective to prevent pest incursions than to manage pests once they have arrived. Our pest management includes preventative measures, and ongoing monitoring to detect and respond early to pest incursions.

Pest management takes sustained effort by multiple parties. We acknowledge the enormous amount of ongoing work by many volunteer organisations and dedicated individuals whose efforts have had an enormous positive impact. We will continue to work closely with mana whenua and a range of agencies and groups to plan and deliver effective pest management programmes.

Regional parks include some notable plants scheduled under the Auckland Unitary Plan giving them particular protections. In a few instances some of these plants are species identified as pests in the Regional Pest Management Plan. These include Norfolk Island hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonii*) and Phoenix palm (*Phoenix canariensis*). Scheduled notable plants that are also pest species will be managed to avoid them spreading seed and to protect public safety.

³⁴ Regional Pest Management Plans are reviewed and updated usually every 10 years. The policies in this draft Plan should be read as relating to the current RPestMP at the time.

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Managing pathogens including kauri dieback

Pathogens, including those causing kauri dieback disease (*Phytophthora agathidicida*) and myrtle rust, are an ongoing biosecurity threat. They are especially difficult to manage because of their microscopic nature which means they can often travel undetected to new locations.

How we manage kauri dieback is detailed in Appendix 7.

Introduced hygiene measures can also help reduce the risk of new pest and pathogen introductions to parkland such as the frog chytrid pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and the invasive exotic alga *Didymosphenia geminata* (didymo or rock snot).

Our pathogen management priorities are to:

1. Limit further spread of pathogens to areas that are not infected.
2. Protect infected trees and ecosystems.

In respect of kauri dieback, we are:

- working with mana whenua to protect kauri
- surveying kauri health across regional parks
- supporting research into the pathogen and how it spreads
- implementing phytosanitary measures
- developing and following standard operating procedures based on current best practice
- restricting access by closing tracks
- improving track standards and/or realigning tracks before reopening
- consulting with the community over impacts on recreational access
- exploring ways of providing for different types of recreational access and experiences across the region, while protecting kauri.

In some circumstances we may determine that the short- or longer-term closure of tracks and the creation of buffer zones or quarantining of entire catchment areas is justified. This may include protection of pristine areas or containment of infection within high-risk disease zones. Visitor and recreational access may be restricted in these situations.

Responding to new threats

New and often unforeseen biosecurity threats, whether from pest plants, animals or pathogens, may arise over the life of this plan. A changing climate increases the risk of new and existing threats adversely affecting indigenous ecosystems. With hotter and drier weather, indigenous ecosystems will come under increasing stress and their integrity can be weakened as species respond differently to the changing conditions and to disruptive events like storms or fire.

New tools and technologies may also become available to alter the way we manage biosecurity threats.

Monitoring for threats and adapting our priorities to respond is important.

Responding promptly to new threats is also very important. A timely response can be more cost-effective and achieve a better outcome. Pests can often be more easily eradicated where numbers are low.

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Where novel situations arise, we will work within national biosecurity controls and guidelines and closely with national biosecurity authorities. We will base our management response on the best available scientific information and mātauranga Māori. We will collaborate with mana whenua and community conservation groups and take a precautionary approach to address new or increased biosecurity threats.

Where we are responding in an adaptive way to novel biosecurity risks, we will inform and explain the actions we take to the wider community and in particular to park users. It is especially important to communicate where our approach sets conditions or prohibitions on visitor access for biosecurity reasons.

Te whāinga / Objective

17. To manage pest plants, pest animals and pathogens to protect indigenous biodiversity and other park values.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

37. Work with mana whenua and the community to deliver:
 - a. the regional park related programmes identified in the relevant Regional Pest Management Plan³⁵
 - b. agreed pest management actions set for a park.
38. Monitor and report on the emergence or change in status of biosecurity threats on regional parks.
39. Utilise up-to-date, best practice pest management methods, including emerging tools and technologies where applicable.
40. Where novel biosecurity risks or significant changes to risks occur (not covered by the RPestMPlan):
 - a. work with mana whenua to consider and select an appropriate adaptive management response, taking a precautionary approach, considering mātauranga Māori and tikanga, available evidence, and available tools including tools under the Biosecurity Act
 - b. collaborate with community conservation groups
 - c. inform and explain the approach to park users and the wider community
 - d. continue to assess and review and adapt the management approach to learn from evidence and optimise the outcomes.

³⁵ The [Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan](#) applies to the parts of the regional park network that lie in the Waikato region.

Supporting the wider regional environment

Regional parks are special places with relatively high levels of indigenous biodiversity, and we can support restoration of the wider regional environment – land and sea – to protect and enhance the region’s overall biodiversity and resilience.

Regional park management can help to improve the resilience and connectivity of indigenous ecosystems and species surrounding regional parkland.

Regional parks occupy catchments that flow into some of the region’s most sensitive streams, wetlands, harbours including into Tīkapa Moana / Te Moananui-ā-Toi / the Hauraki Gulf, and the Manukau, Kaipara and Mahurangi harbours. These receiving environments are sometimes overloaded with sediment and contaminant run-off from many human-related activities and infrastructure such as roading. Regional parks can play an important role in enhancing water quality in receiving environments by supporting the planting of native vegetation and restoring natural ecosystems, using good farming practice and generally by reducing nutrient and sediment loss from regional park farmland, unsealed roads and car parks. (refer to chapter 7: Restoration of indigenous ecosystems and chapter 10: Pastoral land management).

Most of the regional parks on the eastern side of the region lie within the catchment of the Hauraki Gulf.

Through this draft Plan we support the Sea Change – Tai Timu Tai Pari – Hauraki Gulf Marine Spatial Plan (May 2017). We continue to deliver programmes that align with the objectives of Sea Change, including undertaking marine and island habitat restoration, biosecurity, improving water quality and monitoring and research. Regional parks play an important role in contributing through land-management activities to reduce sedimentation and contaminant loading into the marine environment and protecting indigenous seabird and shorebird populations, habitat and nesting sites.

The government has outlined intentions³⁶ to restore the mauri of the Hauraki Gulf, such as proposing new marine protected areas, including seafloor protection in areas adjacent to some regional parks. We will investigate opportunities for enhanced protection when submitting on proposed marine protected areas, as part of a broader approach to ensuring marine protection outcomes. We advocate for higher levels of marine protection in areas adjacent to land that we are managing as terrestrial sanctuaries. This is to establish a naturally protected sequence of ecosystems that run ki uta ki tai – from ridgelines to the coast.

We acknowledge regional parks are important for people to access the coast and marine areas for recreation, including fishing and collecting kai moana. Some parts of the regional park network also have high investment from the community in protection and biodiversity enhancement. That is why in these areas, specifically at Tāwharanui and Shakespear where seafloor protection is proposed in the adjacent marine environment, we believe a greater level of marine protection would be desirable.

Te whāinga / Objective

18. To promote and support regional parks in playing a positive role in improving water quality and biodiversity across the regional environment.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

41. Advocate to protect, restore and enhance indigenous biodiversity that moves between regional parks and the wider terrestrial, estuarine and marine environment.

³⁶ These intentions were set out in the *Revitalising the Gulf* report (June 2021) outlining the government’s response to Sea Change.

TUHINGA HUKIHUKI Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

42. Act as an exemplar for sustainable land management to support restoration of marine habitats and improved water quality in receiving environments and to promote best practice.
43. Manage regional parks adjoining marine areas, particularly marine reserves and proposed or future marine protected areas, in a manner that protects, restores and enhances biodiversity values and ecological connections with the marine areas.
44. Manage parks that contribute to the coastal area of the Gulf with consideration of the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000 and collaborate with the Hauraki Gulf Forum.
45. Investigate formally including regional parks that contribute to the coastal area of the Gulf into the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.
46. Promote and advocate for a high level of marine protection, particularly in the marine areas adjoining mainland sanctuaries on regional parks at Tāwharanui and Shakespear.

8. Whakamaru i ngā uara ahurea / Protecting cultural values

This chapter covers policies for all regional parks relating to:

- protecting cultural heritage
- naming of parks and park features
- protecting landscapes
- protecting the dark sky experiences.

These policies focus on protecting and providing for those values of regional parks that are important to people from a cultural perspective.

Protecting cultural heritage

Use of the term cultural heritage here includes Māori and European heritage and the heritage of other cultures.

The regional parks of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland hold a rich tapestry of cultural heritage reflecting our history and identity. Many parks are in areas that attracted settlement and activity in the past including coastal locations and hilltops. They include wāhi tūpuna / ancestral places of cultural significance to Māori relating to their enduring relationships to the park and its surrounds. Our parks also tell the story of our more recent past including settlement, farming, resource extraction and milling, military, recreational and industrial uses.

In te ao Māori, cultural heritage goes beyond the links to historic events, use or occupation. It encompasses the relationships, stories and whakapapa to an area, carrying spiritual as well as cultural significance. Heritage is described as wāhi tūpuna / ancestral places which are taonga tuku iho /treasures passed down. Kaitiaki / guardians are duty-bound to safeguard the taonga handed down through generations of tūpuna /ancestors.

Cultural heritage includes tangible, physical features, as well as intangible values. It encompasses cultural landscapes which reflect how nature and human activity have combined over time, demonstrating the relationship between people and the environment.

Tangible or physical features include:

- tohu or traditional landscape markers
- landscape features such as trees, hills, streams, and natural resources
- archaeological sites or features including:
 - those of Māori origin such as pā / earthwork fortifications, kāinga / settlements, rua kūmara / pits, urupā / burial places, garden boundaries and middens / food refuse
 - sites of early European settlement and evidence of residential, farming, industrial and commercial activities such as mills, dams and water races, and gum digging

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- historic buildings such as homesteads, churches, baches, defence and coastal structures, memorials, or monuments
- historic cemeteries and sites of spiritual significance including urupā
- historic trees, gardens, plantings, and landscapes.

Intangible values include relationships with places or features with historic narratives including origin stories, whakapapa or long-held associations reflecting events. These include places where individuals lived or where notable events or activities occurred.

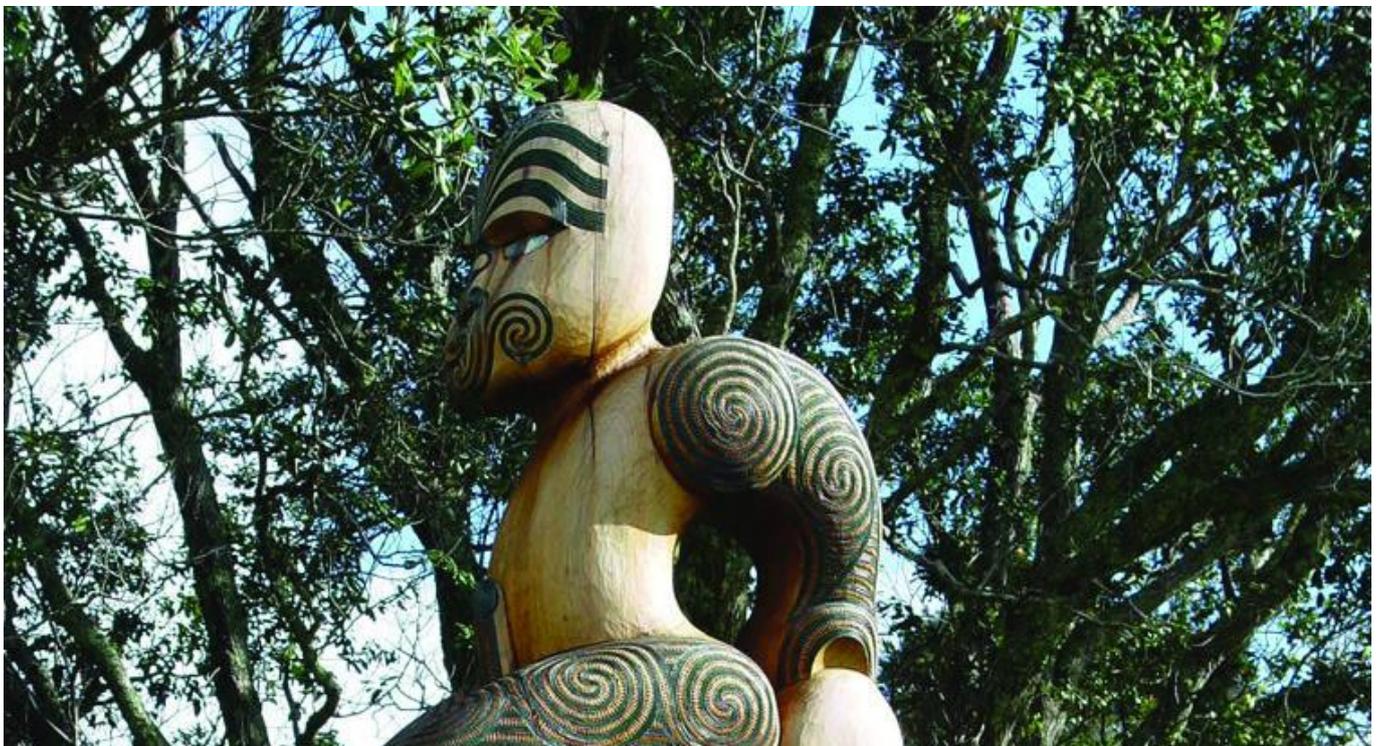
Some parks have unique examples of Auckland's heritage such as early European industry, settlement and water supply development in the Waitākere and Hūnua Ranges. There is also heritage relating to tourism and recreational use of the coast such as early holiday accommodation.

Benefits

Recognising cultural heritage within parks raises awareness and understanding of the history of the area. It supports a sense of connection to that place and strengthens people's sense of identity. Putting history at the forefront of people's minds also provides an opportunity to acknowledge and learn from the past.

Telling the various stories of the land also supports and acknowledges the people who have used and occupied those areas in the past. It adds a richness to understanding the perspectives of iwi and local families.

Cultural heritage also provides insights into ways that people dealt with environmental changes in the past and can be a symbol of resilience against adversity.



A carving at Karanga-a-Hape (Cornwallis), representing Hape, a tupuna of local mana whenua Te Kawerau ā Maki.

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Challenges

A lack of awareness and understanding of the value of cultural heritage places these taonga at risk. They may be damaged by activities ranging from:

- climate change impacts such as sea level rise and erosion
- park development and activity, such as track building, fencing, farming or planting
- vandalism or fossicking.

In many cases, we don't fully know the cultural heritage values underlying our regional parks. Early engagement with mana whenua is vital to identifying cultural values and has important implications for management and development. Lack of early engagement with mana whenua and heritage specialists increases risks that park development or use adversely affects these values.

Heritage buildings typically require frequent maintenance and repair with appropriate materials which may be costly. Unused historic buildings and structures may be damaged by vandalism or may be unsafe to access. Adapting heritage buildings to suit contemporary use may be desirable where this is consistent with maintaining heritage values.

Approach

Our approach is to protect and actively manage our significant cultural heritage.

We aim to:

- identify significant sites in the regional parks where they are not known
- establish priorities for actively managing heritage based on site significance and threats, for example, heritage at risk, safety issues, managing public access and providing information where it delivers the best outcomes
- protect significant and representative range of cultural heritage places
- work with heritage specialists to preserve cultural heritage and get prioritised practical guidance on managing cultural heritage. We may use various site-specific tools such as surveys, cultural assessments, conservation plans in designing that guidance; however, we seek efficient and cost-effective ways to manage several sites within a park or across parks rather than relying on individual plans.
- work with mana whenua where guidance or plans relating to Māori heritage is being designed, or where any work is proposed on wāhi tūpuna. This recognises and supports the kaitiaki role of mana whenua and their living relationship with taonga.

Planting may place heritage values at risk or be culturally inappropriate. However, planting and vegetation management may also provide site protection to stabilise erosion, manage weeds or fire risk or discourage inappropriate visitor access.

We intend to raise awareness of, and provide information on, cultural heritage through means such as signage, digital interpretation or guided walks. Developing interpretation takes time and is likely to be undertaken progressively. Where mana whenua wish their stories to be shared and sites recognised, we intend to work with them to enable this.

We see opportunities to link information to heritage trails which provide visitors with an activity and a reason to visit a park, enhancing their enjoyment and awareness of park history.

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Several community organisations support our heritage on regional parks and put many hours of volunteer time into its preservation and into providing a service for visitors. Their efforts are valued.

We favour a precautionary approach to protecting cultural heritage, as its integrity is lost when modified. Development proposals should consider options to avoid cultural heritage when locating and upgrading trails, facilities, or other improvements. Providing visitor access may be acceptable to support education and interpretation. Where archaeology is modified, options to retain or return recovered archaeological material should be investigated with mana whenua and heritage specialists. This supports recognition of tikanga and mitigates risks around compromising the archaeological record. We seek to work with mana whenua to develop guidance on repatriating cultural heritage material.

When Māori kōiwi / human remains are discovered, the council will work with mana whenua, New Zealand Police and Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (HNZPT) to ensure appropriate reburial.

Legislative and regulatory requirements

The Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 protects all pre-1900 archaeological sites (whether recorded or not), along with those post-1900 sites gazetted for protection under that act. An approval (called an archaeological authority) from HNZPT is required where activities impact cultural heritage sites.

Significant places are protected in the Auckland Unitary Plan and the Auckland Council District Plan – Hauraki Gulf Islands section. Rules and other provisions of these plans protect sites and places of significance to mana whenua and historic heritage.

The Reserves Act 1977 requires that historic and archaeological features are managed and protected in a way that is compatible with the reserve's primary purpose. This is in addition to protections noted above.

When archaeological sites or features are uncovered during park development, the HNZPT Act 2014 and Auckland Unitary Plan accidental discovery rule applies. The council works closely with mana whenua for sites of Māori origin to ensure that culturally appropriate discovery protocols are followed during implementation of the rule. This may mean public access is restricted for a time.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

19. To identify, protect and manage cultural heritage for the wellbeing, education and appreciation of existing and future generations.
20. To work with mana whenua to identify priorities for the preservation and management of Māori cultural heritage.
21. To avoid and minimise adverse effects of activities on cultural heritage.
22. To support protection of built heritage including through maintenance and adaptive reuse.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

47. Establish priorities for the identification and preservation of cultural heritage taonga across the network of regional parks, including actions to establish baseline measures and monitoring.
48. Seek to manage and protect cultural heritage in accordance with relevant legislation, and consider the following:
 - a. relevant policies and plans such as conservation plans, iwi management plans, cultural values assessments and management or maintenance plans for heritage assets
 - b. compatibility with the park values, Reserves Act classification, park category, management focus and intentions in the park chapters.

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49. Work with mana whenua to preserve and manage Māori heritage including the following:
 - a. priorities for identification, preservation, and management
 - b. identifying tikanga for management, such as public access to wāhi tapu or culturally sensitive areas
 - c. establishing baseline measures and monitoring
 - d. providing information and interpretation of wāhi tūpuna where appropriate
 - e. providing opportunities for early involvement on new proposed activities
50. Review or formulate maintenance plans or guidelines to protect cultural heritage using current best practice such as:
 - a. guidance on grazing and vegetation management on cultural heritage sites
 - b. maintenance of heritage buildings or structures
 - c. Inspection and maintenance of heritage trees.
51. Encourage public appreciation of cultural heritage through measures such as the development of cultural heritage trails, or provision of information and interpretation, including digitally accessible information.
52. Endeavour to maintain and update council's heritage databases while ensuring that sensitive information is safeguarded.
53. Proposals for new activities or development on parks will consider relevant specialist advice and:
 - a. identify and avoid adverse effects on cultural heritage
 - b. consider options for mitigating impacts where practicable.
54. Where sensitive materials including previously unknown or recorded kōiwi or cultural heritage sites are discovered during park operations or development, the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014 and Auckland Unitary Plan accidental discovery rule applies, and mana whenua tikanga will be followed.
55. Support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and structures for the benefit of park use and the wider community, where the use does not compromise the historic values of the buildings.
56. Before alteration or adaption of a heritage building is undertaken, consider the following:
 - a. relevant specialist advice and guidance
 - b. existing conservation plans, assessments, or maintenance plans
 - c. availability of appropriately qualified specialist trades to undertake the work.
57. Manage, where feasible, the wider cultural landscape relationships and context of cultural heritage to retain the integrity of their cultural settings.

Naming parks and park features³⁷

Naming of parks or park features³⁸ is an opportunity to reflect on the cultural, natural or recreational values of a particular location or tell the story of heritage of an area. Names also strengthen the sense of place and identity of the local community and other Aucklanders.

Locations often have layers of informal and formal names in both Māori and English that have been used over time. In addition, the naming of the area is considered a source of identity and mana to mana whenua.

Naming or renaming parks with a Māori name increases the visibility of te reo Māori in our communities. Auckland Council supports the use of te reo Māori names for regional parks. This aligns with recognition of te reo Māori as an official language and as a cultural treasure (refer Auckland Council's Māori Language Policy).

Engaging with mana whenua on the cultural and historical relationships with the land enables them to:

- recognise and celebrate their stories
- recognise Māori names as entry points for exploring historical narratives and customary practises which can be incorporated into the development of sites and enhance sense of place connections
- address incorrect spelling of Māori names
- recognise Māori place names through signage and wayfinding.

Auckland Council recognises the importance of respecting the names presented by mana whenua, including the reinstatement of original Māori placenames, as taonga. We may publicly consult on the intention to invite mana whenua to provide a name for a park or park feature but will not publicly consult on the name that is received.

Dual naming of parks will also be considered for a new park or park feature. This is where there is a te reo Māori name and an English name, and neither is a translation of the other.

An English-only (or non-Māori) name for a new park or park feature may also be supported for example to reflect European heritage values.

The continuity of a name and ease of identification with a name are also important considerations. Any proposed new names should have strong rationales to support them.

Section 16 (10) of the Reserves Act outlines the procedure for officially naming or renaming reserves held under that Act.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

23. To tell the story of the place reflecting the area's natural and cultural heritage or significant park values through the names of parks and park features.
24. To support Māori names for parks and park features to acknowledge and support mana whenua relationships with parks and promote visibility of te reo Māori in the community.

³⁷ In accordance with existing policy, at its meeting on 11 November 2021, the council's Parks, Arts, Community and Events Committee resolved to invite mana whenua to provide a Maori name and narrative for Ambury, Glenfern, Long Bay, Ōmana, Shakespear, and Wenderholm regional parks, to be adopted as dual names for the English-named parks (Ōmana is to be replaced). Refer to [PAC/2021/61](#)

³⁸ Includes a track or a destination such as a lookout, geographic feature, grove of trees or wetland or pond.

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Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

58. When reviewing or seeking a te reo Māori name of or for a park or a park feature either work with mana whenua to identify a name or invite mana whenua to provide a name (which may form part of a dual name).
59. Where we have invited mana whenua to provide a name for a park or park feature honour this by using that name.
60. Where a park or park feature name has been a condition of the acquisition of the land, honour the agreement by using the name.
61. Consider consulting with the community or with groups with a particular interest or knowledge about:
 - a. any proposed name for a park or park feature or
 - b. the intention to invite mana whenua to provide a Māori name.
62. Consider dual naming of parks as part of naming a new park or a park feature. For consistency, use the format te reo Māori / English as specified in Auckland Council's Māori Language Policy.
63. Consider the following criteria in respect to all new names given to parks or park features:
 - a. they are not offensive
 - b. they are generally not named after living people
 - c. they should not include sponsor names
 - d. the name should not already be in use elsewhere in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland.
64. When seeking an English or non-Māori name in any other language, either as a standalone name or as part of a dual te reo Māori / English name, give consideration to:
 - a. the natural, cultural heritage and recreational values of the park
 - b. historic name or names for the site
 - c. ease of identification
 - d. the New Zealand Geographic Board name for relevant areas within the park
 - e. any significant event or public figure relevant to the park.
65. When reviewing interpretive signage and public information relevant to the park, consider outlining the rationale or narrative relevant to naming the park in accordance with the Interpretation policies in chapter 11.

Protecting landscapes

Our regional parks provide free access to areas of stunning natural beauty from forest, beaches, the sea and rural scenery. They offer an escape from our heavily urbanised landscape and to access the coast and beaches. They also offer a variety of experiences and recreational opportunities, and many reflect our cultural heritage.

Most regional parks are managed to protect and enhance existing natural ecosystems such as wetlands, salt marshes, dune systems or forest remnants. In addition, open farmed landscapes and woodlots have been maintained to take advantage of their broad landscape views, countryside character and recreational and educational opportunities.

The Auckland Unitary Plan identifies and protects important features and landscapes from inappropriate development. Aside from these areas, the council may change the mix of landscape experiences in a particular park or across the park network over time, such as by retiring planted areas or by planting open areas (refer chapter 10: Management of farmed settings).

It is important that our regional parks offer a variety of experiences. For example, the Waitākere Ranges are mostly indigenous forest whereas Ambury is mostly an open landscape. This means that while more modified uses of land such as farming or exotic woodlots may be restored to natural ecosystems over time, we will still seek to retain farmland or exotic woodlots – albeit at a reduced scale.

Park development must be sympathetic to the landscape, from scale and materials through to colours, textures, and location of structures. Sightlines are also important, offering visitors views to the coast, significant landforms, and geological and cultural features. Viewshafts to be protected are identified in the park maps.

The Reserves Act requires reserves to be managed and protected in a way that is compatible with their primary purpose.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

25. To protect the integrity and variety of cultural and natural landscape experiences across the network of regional parks.
26. To support public access to significant views³⁹ from within regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

66. Identify significant viewshafts and vistas within and from parks, including consideration of views from heritage sites, significant landforms, and the coast.
67. Maintain significant viewshafts and vistas as identified in policy 66, including those shown in the park maps, including appropriate planting and vegetation maintenance to preserve views.
68. Prior to park development that may impact on cultural and natural landscape experiences, consider relevant design guidance, or undertake a landscape assessment to ensure that impacts on landscape values are considered.
69. Support opportunities to advocate for landscape protection of regional parks when development or redevelopment of adjoining lands is proposed.

³⁹ In this plan, we only consider viewshafts from within the boundary of a park. This does not include views from neighbouring residential properties that intersect with a park.

Protecting dark skies

Remote regional parks offer a night sky relatively free from light pollution. They support opportunities for learning such as astronomy and maramataka observations, and for storytelling and events such as Matariki. They also support ecosystems in offering a relief from light pollution that might otherwise have a wide range of impacts on plants and animals ranging from foraging activity to navigation impacts to hormone production.

Thanks to the quality of its starry nights, Aotea / Great Barrier Island, including Glenfern Sanctuary, has been declared an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. Sanctuaries differ from Dark Sky Parks or Reserves in having a very remote location with few nearby threats to the dark sky quality.

In supporting a dark sky experience, we must maintain safety for park users yet reduce lighting pollution from our parks. We also advocate for other landowners or tenants nearby to consider this when planning lighting.

While not a Dark Sky sanctuary, the Waitākere Ranges offers a similar experience. The Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act 2008 recognises their 'quietness and darkness' as a heritage feature to protect and enhance for present and future generations.

In supporting a dark sky experience, we must consider safety for those staying overnight, while reducing light pollution from park lighting and land developments or activities near parks.

Te whāinga / Objectives

27. To preserve and enhance the dark sky experience in remote regional parks while providing for safe use of parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

70. When renewing infrastructure or planning new park development, consider opportunities to minimise light pollution in remote regional parks⁴⁰ or in those parks where dark sky experiences are identified in the park chapter.
71. Consider opportunities to develop design guidance to support dark skies within parks.
72. Support the development of opportunities, information and interpretation to learn or engage in dark skies through activities or events on the park.
73. Support opportunities to advocate to other sources or potential sources of significant inappropriate light pollution near remote parks or parks where a dark sky experience is identified.

⁴⁰ Those parks not close to existing sources of significant light pollution.

9. Whakahaere tauwhiro me te huringa o te āhuarangi / Sustainable management and climate change

The chapter outlines our approach to:

- Embedding our response to climate mitigation and adaptation
- Providing sustainable and equitable access to regional parks
- Sustainable management including procurement of built assets, water, wastewater and energy
- Sustainable management, including adaptation to climate change, in respect of:
 - coastal hazards, inundation, and sea level rise
 - fire management
 - contaminated site management.

Embedding our response to climate change

Adapting to a changing climate

Chapter 2 describes the impacts climate change is likely to have on regional parks.

Preparing for climate change means identifying at-risk sites and species, and planning ahead with close involvement from mana whenua, other agencies, and community groups.

We're using a variety of tools and techniques to manage climate-related risks including:

- Climate risk and vulnerability assessments (CRVAs). We are assessing all council assets including regional parks. CRVAs may identify additional management actions for regional parks.
- Monitoring environmental changes. Our environmental scientists are monitoring changes and developing tools and data to inform responses.
- [Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways \(DAPP\)](#). This flexible planning and adaptation technique will help us deal with the uncertainty around climate change. It is based on the idea of making decisions as conditions change, before severe damage occurs, and as existing policies and decisions prove no longer fit for purpose.

Our adaptation responses include the following.

- Identifying and planning a retreat of coastal ecosystems from areas at risk of flooding and sea level rise.
- Managing infrastructure in vulnerable places:
 - managing a retreat of built structures, accessways, and other infrastructure from areas at risk of erosion or flooding from storms and sea level rise
 - avoiding locating new long-term structures in vulnerable areas
 - considering the best course of action for heritage sites in vulnerable areas.

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- Planning to reduce the impact of drought on:
 - indigenous plants and wildlife in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to avoid declines in vulnerable species and ecosystem collapse
 - pastoral management.
- Responding to increased risks from plant and animal pests and pathogens.
- Being prepared for a higher level of fire risk.
- Managing contaminated sites that might be at risk of exposure due to erosion or inundation.

Te whāinga / Objective

28. To manage regional parks to be resilient and adapt to climate change.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Refer to adaptation policies in the following sections in this chapter:

- Coastal hazards, inundation, and sea level rise
- Sustainable asset, water and energy management
- Fire management

Refer to adaptation policies in chapter 7 on:

- Protecting biodiversity
- Restoring indigenous ecosystems.

Refer to adaptation policies in the chapter 10 on Pastoral management.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Regional parks have critical roles to play in supporting our transition to net zero emissions by 2050. Chapter 2 describes three key levers we can use to mitigate climate change on regional parks:

- sequestering more carbon in our forests
- reducing visitor vehicle emissions
- reducing farm-related emissions.

Te whāinga / Objective

29. To embed Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan mitigation policies and aims into park management.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Refer to climate mitigation policies in:

- chapter 7 – Restoring indigenous ecosystems
- this chapter – Sustainable access
- chapter 10 – Pastoral management.

Sustainable access

We want more people to enjoy our regional parks without increasing vehicle traffic and emissions. The problems are:

- Currently, most visitors use their private vehicles to access regional parks. Emissions from these vehicles is by far the largest source of emissions relating to regional parks.
- At popular parks, the car parks are congested at peak times, making access difficult and less safe.
- Some people can't afford to drive, can't drive or don't have their own vehicles, so cannot access many regional parks.
- Some people don't know about what regional parks have to offer or how to access them.

Turning this around is a challenge. It requires reprioritisation of resources to change park arrival areas and provide safer pedestrian and cycle access, and group or public transport services. It also requires a new marketing approach to help people see they can change the way they travel.

Improving access by walking, cycling, and public/group transport

Where practical, we will progressively enable greater access to regional parks by walking, cycling, public and group transport and carpooling, working with Auckland Transport where relevant. This is intended to reduce emissions and congestion, improve equity of access and provide social, mental and physical health benefits.

Making physical changes to the entry and arrival zones to accommodate people arriving by foot, bicycle and group transport will happen as part of our renewals and development programme in regional parks.

Previous trials of public transport to some regional parks have shown that this is unlikely to attract large numbers of regular users. Providing group or public transport linked to events and promotions on popular days is more likely to attract people and may help relieve car park congestion. Event organisers will be encouraged or required to bring event attendees to regional parks by public or group transport.

Mode shift is more likely to be possible where people live near a regional park or where parks are in urban areas with public transport and these parks should be a priority.

More diverse transport offerings to regional parks could be provided by commercial and community transport operators.

Supporting the shift to electric vehicles

Regional parks can support the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) by providing EV charging facilities in the park or nearby. We will identify appropriate locations and look at ways of making this work within car parks.

When EVs are more common, we could consider incentives to encourage their use and discourage use of petrol and diesel-powered vehicles, such as designating some car parks for use only by EVs.

Improving equity of access

We are willing to work with social services and community organisations to broaden access to regional park experiences through opportunities such as facilitated group trips, special deal day-outings using public transport and targeted travel and overnight accommodation packages.

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Improving the capacity of existing car parking

In many parks where the car park is full, visitors park along surrounding roadsides. In many arrival zones, the car parks are gravel and lane markings don't exist, meaning they're not used efficiently, as drivers tend to leave larger spaces than necessary between vehicles.

We will identify ways to encourage safe parking and efficient car park use to improve capacity while retaining a 'natural' feel as much as possible. This may include marking car park spaces and sealing.

We may consider prioritising parking spaces for vehicles with several occupants and for buses and shuttles, using technology to support enforcement.

Demand management tools (refer chapter 11) such as introducing paid parking should only be considered to manage congestion where alternative access options are available.

As a rule, car parking for private vehicles should not be increased, unless for safety reasons or where we design more efficient access that includes other modes of transport.

Overflow car parking areas are provided for events and peak use days in some parks.

Improving information and promoting mode shift

While marketing regional parks is, strictly speaking, beyond the scope of this draft Plan, it is mentioned here because it helps promote our objectives and park values.

Traditionally, people have found out about regional parks through 'word of mouth'. Now, one photo posted on social media from a well-connected individual can result in crowds at a beautiful spot within hours. We can't control social media, but we can use the same tools to promote sustainable and equitable access to regional parks.

Providing up-to-date, accurate online information about access options to regional parks is particularly important for those who don't have their own vehicle or those with mobility needs. Promoting alternative ways of accessing regional parks could include:

- targeting park users best placed to shift modes
- raising awareness of the climate impact of travel
- supporting use of regional cycling and walking trails as they are developed
- developing 'explore your region' packages to encourage Aucklanders to holiday near home
- targeting promotions for diverse groups and in multiple languages
- monitoring user feedback to help us keep making improvements.

Te whāinga / Objective

30. Reduce greenhouse emissions relating to park user travel and improve equity of access to regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

74. Improve safe entry and arrival by walking, cycling, public and group transport to regional parks including by:

- a. supporting creation of safe and attractive cycle and walking access routes into regional parks from local communities

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- b. supporting connections with long-distance cycle and walking trails such as Te Araroa, the proposed Pūhoi to Mangawhai cycle trail and proposed Hūnua cycle trail, to regional parks by provision of appropriate arrival zone design, services and facilities
 - c. introducing structural elements that support cycling and bus access when renewing or redeveloping park entry and arrival zones, such as:
 - d. secure parking for e-bikes and bicycles, e-bike charging points and bicycle maintenance stations
 - e. shuttle and bus turning areas and parking and EV charging points
 - f. other facilities that overcome barriers identified by user feedback
75. Investigate where EV charging facilities for private vehicles can support quicker uptake of electric vehicles within the regional park network and seek to work with third parties to provide EV charging.
76. Work with Auckland Transport to improve and promote public transport to regional parks near to urban areas (such as Long Bay, Ambury, Shakespeare, Piha, Muriwai, Whakanewha).
77. Encourage third parties to provide group transport options, including:
- a. Encouraging or requiring event organisers to arrange bus services or carpooling to events
 - b. Encouraging private operators to provide user-pays group transport and active options, from bus tours to kayak or water taxi hire
 - c. Support provision of a carpooling system and ride and share options
 - d. work with community organisations to provide access for people who face barriers to accessing regional parks.
78. Promote and inform potential park users of the range of access options including by:
- a. Improving and keeping up to date the online access information
 - b. Develop a sustainable marketing strategy and deliver marketing promotions to support mode shift and equity of access
79. Raise awareness of the climate impact of travel, such as by investigating introducing a voluntary carbon off-set scheme for park users.
80. Improve the efficiency of car parking layouts.
81. Continue to monitor visitor and vehicle numbers to regional parks.

Coastal hazards, inundation, and sea level rise

Flooding, land instability and coastal erosion are the most commonly occurring natural hazards in our region. The frequency and intensity are likely to increase with climate change. The effects are location-specific.

We have embedded the council's adaptation policies in Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan as they relate to coastal areas of regional parks in this section.

The first part of our response is to let these natural processes occur and to adapt to the change. In many locations, it is preferable to provide space for dynamic coastal processes to function.

In general, we will not build new seawalls or hard engineered structures, and will remove or move rather than replace infrastructure in the coastal environment as it deteriorates or is damaged. Coastal areas are particularly dynamic and rising sea levels will become increasingly difficult to manage using hard engineering such as seawalls.

Similarly, we will need to adapt our land use. For example, we may have a track in a vulnerable area that must be removed or realigned when it is too compromised.

We will retain existing infrastructure in the coastal zone until a trigger point is reached⁴¹. Triggers points include:

- at asset renewal
- when a storm event damages infrastructure
- when inundation starts to occur more frequently
- when erosion reaches a pre-defined point.

Good reasons will be needed to invest in renewal in the same place.

We may continue siting necessary temporary structures, such as surf lifesaving towers, in natural hazard zones.

Where significant Māori heritage sites are threatened by natural hazards such as coastal erosion, we will consider the appropriate treatment of those sites with mana whenua on a site-by-site basis.

In general, where historic heritage sites such as homesteads, or park facilities such as baches or toilet blocks are threatened, we will manage a retreat, or remove the facility if retreat is not viable.

Where indigenous ecosystems are threatened by increasing inundation and sea level rise, we will support ecosystems to shift inland, or to adapt naturally – we may lose freshwater habitat but gain saltmarsh habitat. We will factor in how long it takes for ecosystems to re-establish in new locations.

To provide an example of supporting an ecosystem to retreat inland, many coastal parks have remnant coastal forest dominated by pōhutukawa. These are threatened in some places by coastal erosion. To avoid losing the ecosystem, we will plant pōhutukawa further inland. This helps the coastal forest to re-establish further inland and, in this case, will also retain pōhutukawa as a valued landscape feature.

The second part of our response is to improve the resilience of coastal areas to inundation and to slow down erosion processes. Again we prefer to use nature-based approaches.

⁴¹ This is an example of [Dynamic Adaptive Policy Pathways](#) planning.

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For example, our preferred methods to manage and restore dunes include:

- appropriate weed control and planting
- defining (and redefining) visitor accessways through dunes
- where permitted, restricting vehicles to hard sand only between MHWS and the toe of a dune.

Where sediment or sand is moving naturally along a coastline, coastal accretion can modify stream mouths, the channel alignment could be altered to erode adjacent shoreline or the stream mouth could become blocked, resulting in flooded areas. The default position is to allow natural processes to take their course.

While such inundation of stream banks can be beneficial for spawning native fish, where this presents a significant and ongoing risk we may consider realignment (including clearing a stream mouth). Our preference is to reuse any excavated clean sand locally, such as for beach nourishment and erosion management.

Where existing artificial structures in the coastal marine area were historically placed to reclaim land or armour a shoreline we will consider whether to remove them. We will consider the role they currently play in coastal processes and are likely to play in future, whether they are consented and effectively engineered, and the amenity (or lack of) that they provide.

The approaches described in this section are used in our shoreline adaptation plans (SAPs). These consider the potential impacts of coastal hazards, climate change and the needs and values of mana whenua and local communities. We are preparing SAPs, with mana whenua and community involvement, for sections of the coastline throughout the region.

The SAPs will propose adaptive land use change for a specific location over time. For example, in some places the dunes may retreat inland where a car park is currently sited.

Coastal erosion also causes public safety risks such as undercut headlands. We will follow council guidance for managing acceptable levels of risk and refer to other guidance, such as that developed by the Department of Conservation, for risk management in natural areas.

The council's publicly available hazard maps⁴² indicate areas susceptible to coastal erosion and flooding, including the impact of sea level rise. These maps will continue to evolve as new information comes to light and will provide valuable information to support adaptation planning.

In some park chapters we identify vulnerable areas and management intentions for those areas based on existing coastal hazard assessments.

Te whāinga / Objective

31. To avoid, mitigate or adapt to coastal hazards, while maintaining a natural environment and allowing natural processes to function.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

82. Adapt to climate change impacts and coastal hazards including:

⁴² Coastal flooding: [Auckland's exposure to coastal inundation by storm-tides and waves - Knowledge Auckland](#)

Coastal erosion: [Predicting Auckland's exposure to coastal instability and erosion - Knowledge Auckland](#)

Coastal flood and erosion hazard areas can be viewed on [Geomaps](#) under "development restrictions". [Auckland's Hazards Viewer](#)

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- a. promoting as a general policy, a managed retreat from erosion zones and coastal areas that are increasingly inundated
 - b. when structures affected by coastal hazards fail or when other trigger points are reached, in general prefer to move them to less vulnerable sites or remove entirely rather than repair them
 - c. implementing adaptation policies in a shoreline adaptation plan where it applies to a regional park
 - d. follow best practice guidance for hazards risk management.
83. Avoid and mitigate the impact of coastal erosion with the intention to slow down the rate of erosion by:
- a. promoting soft engineering solutions to retain a natural beach buffer and to strengthen natural features (such as salt marsh, beaches, and dunes) in preference to using hard protection structures to manage natural hazards
 - b. continuing to maintain and restore dunes to help stabilize them
 - c. implementing mitigation policies in a shoreline adaptation plan where it applies to a regional park.
84. Support coastal hazard understanding and planning by keeping a record of changes:
- a. continuing at least annual photographic monitoring of the coastline
 - b. monitoring more active systems more frequently.

Sustainable asset, water and energy management

This section sets out our approach to applying sustainable best practice in the design, construction, management and operational use of built assets, water, and energy in regional parks. This includes a commitment to sustainable procurement⁴³.

Asset design and development

Under Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan, the council is developing a new Sustainable Asset Standard to improve sustainable design and maintenance of built and park assets.

We will seek to involve mana whenua in the design of new assets.

We are trialling the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA)⁴⁴ framework for park design to deliver sustainable outcomes across parks. ISCA assesses and certifies projects to drive sustainability innovations and outcomes.

Energy management

We intend to manage energy use sustainably and source it from renewable sources as much as practicable.

The main park-related energy uses in park operations are transportation (people, equipment, stock), maintenance (mowers, hand tools), and building use.

The council is committed to phasing out fossil fuel use. For regional parks, we prefer using electric vehicles and tools, and we intend to look into alternatives to phase out LPG which is often used for water heating in park buildings and for barbecues.

Some parks are connected to the national grid. Grid electricity is predominantly generated from renewable sources with a national goal to phase out fossil fuel electricity generation by 2035⁴⁵.

Where we need electricity in off-grid locations, we prefer to install solar energy for in-situ use. Other small-scale renewable energy generation options also could be considered for on-site energy use.

In line with council policy on sustainable design, any new buildings and major building renewals will adopt sustainable energy design and minimise energy used in construction and embodied energy in materials. Examples may include minimising waste during construction and installation of solar hot water.

Water supply and use management

Climate change will require major shifts in the way we use water and how our water infrastructure must respond to more frequent drought and water supply shortages.

⁴³ Refer to the council's Procurement strategy, sustainable framework and objectives:

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/plans-projects-policies-reports-bylaws/our-policies/Pages/procurement-strategy-policy.aspx>

⁴⁴ The Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) operates in Australia and New Zealand with the purpose of enabling sustainability outcomes in infrastructure. It provides:

- a rating scheme for planning, design, construction and operations of infrastructure assets
- education, training and capacity building
- connections for suppliers of sustainable products and services
- forums for experts to share knowledge and lift the community of practice
- recognition and reward for best practice.

⁴⁵ In 2019 the Minister of Energy signalled an aspirational goal to reach 100% renewable energy generation by 2035.

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-embracing-renewable-electricity-future>

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We have adopted a long-term target to reduce per-capita water use over 30 years by 15-20 per cent⁴⁶

Water used in regional parks is sourced from bores, streams, rainwater tanks, and from the metropolitan supply. As a general principle, we prefer to use sources other than stream water because taking from stream water impacts negatively on its ecology, particularly in times of low flow.

Improving sustainable water use across the parks network includes low impact design such as harvesting rainwater, wastewater reuse, and installing water saving measures such as composting toilets.

Potable (drinkable) water is provided at most locations such as the main arrival areas and campgrounds. Potable water will generally be provided where there are facilities like toilets that require a water supply. Water supplied will be clearly marked if it is unsafe to drink.

A significant proportion of the region's metropolitan water supply is sourced from the Hūnua and Waitākere Ranges. Large parts of these parks are under the control of Watercare Services Limited, a council-controlled organisation. The park chapters for the Waitākere Ranges and Hūnua Ranges Regional Parks contain management intentions that support protection of these water supply catchments.

Wastewater and stormwater management

We recognise the discharge of human waste and other contaminants into waterways is offensive to Māori. We will progressively design and plan new systems and upgrades with the involvement of mana whenua.

Wastewater and sewage disposal systems may change over time based on best environmental best practice, available technologies and the level of use.

Wherever practicable, we will use closed toilet systems such as vault or composting toilets, or systems with a high level of treatment for discharges. Pit toilets will only be used in remote locations where other solutions are impracticable. Flush systems will only be considered in high use areas where factors such as smell are critical, such as main arrival areas and in larger campgrounds, and where it is practicable to provide for sustainable disposal systems.

Some visitors are not familiar with vault, composting or pit toilets and may not be comfortable using them. We will provide information at toilets to support these visitors.

Stormwater must be managed to care for nearby waterways. This may include day-lighting streams (returning them to their natural form), riparian planting, the use of porous paving and techniques that reduce run-off and sedimentation.

Unsealed (metalled) roads and car parks can produce and discharge sediment into receiving environments in a similar way to bulk earthwork sites but over a considerably longer period. We will seek to minimise sediment loss into sensitive waterways and prioritise work according to the regional priority of the sensitive ecosystem.

Sustainable procurement

When sourcing suppliers for all goods and services to regional parks we follow the Auckland Council [Procurement Policy, Sustainable Procurement Framework and objectives](#).

⁴⁶ The target will sit in our water strategy for Auckland, which is under development. Mana whenua have gifted the vision for the strategy: Te Mauri o Te Wai o Tāmaki Makaurau: The life-supporting capacity of Auckland's waters is protected and enhanced.

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The objectives include boosting participation and improving economic outcomes for Māori, Pasifika, and local suppliers, particularly those who face barriers in participation. We will also be looking for carbon emissions reduction and waste management practices when considering suppliers.

In response to improving Māori outcomes and building mana whenua capacity in regional park management, we will consider how we can provide opportunities for rangatahi to work in regional parks. We will look for opportunities for mana whenua to supply goods and services to regional parks.

Education on sustainability

Regional parks offer an opportunity for the council to showcase sustainable design and use.

Te whāinga / Objective

32. To apply best practice in sustainable management of built assets on regional parks including their design, development, renewal, maintenance, and operational use that:
 - a. involves mana whenua in design and development
 - b. improves energy efficiency, energy conservation, and use of renewable energy
 - c. conserves water use and supports sustainable supply
 - d. avoids or minimises environmental impacts from use and disposal of wastewater and stormwater
 - e. promotes efficient use of resources and the appropriate disposal of waste.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Sustainable design and development

85. Invite mana whenua to be involved with park and built asset design and consider tikanga and opportunities to incorporate Māori cultural elements into sustainable design
86. In the way we design, build and renew infrastructure, follow best practice and frameworks in sustainability including:
 - a. use of low embodied energy in materials
 - b. efficient energy and water in construction and building use
 - c. climate resilience
 - d. minimal carbon emissions and waste
 - e. consider whole-of-life asset costs
 - f. consider park visitor, staff, community and supplier well-being.

Sustainable renewals, maintenance and operations

87. Consider sustainability criteria when prioritising the development, renewal and maintenance of built assets, including but not limited to opportunities to:
 - a. enhance mauri
 - b. improve cultural safety
 - c. reduce environmental harm (e.g. replacing stream water use, or sealing roads to reduce sediment impact on streams)
 - d. cater for visitor diversity
 - e. improve equity
 - f. consider how many visitors may benefit from the improvement
 - g. implement the Sustainable access policy in chapter 9 to introduce alternative access options

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- h. support economic development opportunities that are align to the park values
 - i. implement the policies and management intentions in this draft Plan.
88. In accordance with the Auckland Waste Management and Minimisation Plan consider ways to:
- a. minimise waste generation
 - b. maximise opportunities for resource recovery
 - c. reduce harm from residual waste.

Sustainable energy management

89. Practise sustainable energy management including considering:
- a. use of electricity to power vehicles and tools in preference to fossil-fuels
 - b. efficient operational use of vehicles on and between parks
 - c. generating electricity from renewable energy sources for on-site energy use in off-grid situations and where practical
 - d. phasing out use of fossil fuel energy in buildings and park facilities such as LPG for hot water where practical.

Sustainable use of water

33. In providing and maintaining water supply in regional parks:
- a. reduce dependency on streams for operational water requirements by using other sources, such as through installation of rain tanks
 - b. provide, where practicable, potable water at all main arrival areas, picnic areas and campgrounds
 - c. label water supplies as to whether they are fit for human consumption or require a level of treatment
 - d. monitor the quality of water supplies and implement water treatment improvements on water supplies in relation to the known levels of risk
 - e. promote water conservation.

Wastewater management

90. Design and construct stormwater and wastewater management systems to restore the mauri of wai / water, minimise environmental impact, impact on park users, and conserve use of water.
91. Engage mana whenua on any planned development or significant upgrade of wastewater treatment and disposal systems.
92. Install only closed sewage disposal systems in the Hūnua and Waitākere Ranges water catchments.
93. Progressively replace pit toilets with vault, composting or, where appropriate, flush toilets.

Sustainable procurement

94. Ensure mana whenua have opportunities to respond to procurement opportunities.
95. Follow the council's procurement policy, sustainable procurement framework and objectives when procuring goods and services.

Fire management

The statutory responsibility for fire suppression in regional parks lies with Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ). The council is responsible for protecting the natural values of the parks, which are the largest areas of public land in the Auckland region.

Fire is a real risk with big consequences

All fires, whether lit naturally, accidentally, or deliberately can pose a risk to park visitors, native vegetation, species, historic places, artefacts, park assets, and adjoining property. The risk of fire is likely to increase as an impact of climate change, with our average climate likely to become hotter and drier.

Fires can and do occur. As recently as 2019 and 2020, fires have caused extensive vegetation damage at Duder and Waitawa Regional Parks. The fires were caused by fishermen having open fires on the beach.



Fire damage at Duder Regional Park, March 2021

Safe use of fire in limited circumstances

There is a tension between reducing fire risk as much as possible and enabling park visitors to use fire for cooking food and learning. Our approach is to limit fires lit by park users to controlled settings where it is relatively safe to use solid fuel (wood) for barbecue cooking, or fire pits for children to learn some basic survival and bush craft skills and learn about fire safety. Refer also to the section in chapter 11 on Safe barbecues, cooking and fires.

Park users are not allowed to make fires in any other place, including uncontrolled settings such as beaches or dunes.

Open fires, including portable barbecues using solid fuels, are only permitted in amenity zones where the risk can be effectively managed. However, this is subject to the provisions of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017. During a Restricted Fire Season, fires are allowed only with a permit from FENZ. On hot days where there is a very high risk of fire, fire pits and solid fuel barbecues will be closed to avoid fire.

Our Smokefree policy prohibits smoking in parks. Fireworks are prohibited on all Auckland Council parks.

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No fires will be permitted when a Prohibited Fire Season has been declared.

Fire as a land management tool will be used sparingly, such as when there are no other options for managing the remains of logging by-product from tree felling operations. All such fires are subject to regional and district plan requirements and permits.

Preventing and managing fire risk

We will work with adjoining landowners, mana whenua and other agencies to reduce the risk of fire affecting park values and assets. This will include the following:

- Reviewing subdivision or land use consenting processes as an affected neighbour, to ensure matters such as proximity, fire risk and defensibility of the proposed activity, are considered
- Considering using fire-resistant species when developing revegetation and planting plans
- Working closely with utility companies, particularly electricity suppliers, to ensure power lines within regional parks minimise the threat of fire and are free of vegetation
- Removing fire prone vegetation, such as long dry grass and pampas as well as vegetation with high flammability such as gorse.

Parks staff as land managers have a good level of understanding of wildfire management, and will assist FENZ in preventing fires in many ways including:

- maintaining a current and regularly reviewed fire prevention and suppression plan
- ongoing assessment of significant fire hazards on regional parkland
- erecting fire signs at predetermined sites to signify the increase in fire danger and to display information about restricted or prohibited seasons
- disestablishing fire pits and solid fuel barbecues in restricted or closed fire season conditions
- managing or considering restricting field operations that pose a risk of fire, such as plant, machinery and tools that generate sparks
- maintaining water sources including hydrants, fill point couplings, water storage tanks and water collection ponds
- educating visitors about threats of fire in park land, responsible use of fire, and the principles of fire prevention
- enforcing the Outdoor Fire Safety Bylaw 2014 (or any subsequent bylaw that replaces it)
- recording information available on a daily basis such as the Fire Weather Index which is used by rural fire agencies and is available nationally, or allowing for automated recording of information, such as remote weather stations in parks
- participating in management initiatives or groups to advocate for the protection of regional park land and park assets from the threat of wildfire
- providing opportunities for staff to join volunteer fire brigades relative to their work and home locations
- ensuring all long-term planning for capital development and renewals considers fire risk. Roads, car parks and facilities should be accessible by fire trucks, have access to water supply, and be designed for fire defensibility.

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- working with FENZ to support fire-fighting on park land by assisting with logistics, local knowledge, providing access to park roads, park buildings and water supplies to fight fires.

We intend to prepare fire recovery plans for all sites affected by, or at risk of, wildfire, in priority order. These will determine whether there are local seed sources that would allow the area to regenerate naturally, what priority will be given to weed control, and whether some revegetation should be used to assist regeneration or allow for more fire-retardant plant species to be grown, or to improve the amenity of the area.

Te whāinga / Objective

34. To prevent and reduce risk of fire damage on regional parks by effective visitor and operations management of fire risks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

96. Only permit the public use of open fires, including portable barbecues using solid fuels, in amenity zones, and when the fire is permitted by controls implemented through the Fire and Emergency Act 2017.
97. Fires:
 - a. must be attended at all times
 - b. are subject to Fire and Emergency New Zealand regulations and the Fire and Emergency NZ Fire Plan for Tāmaki Makaurau 2021
 - c. must have suppression means present at all times and be extinguished when requested to do so.
98. Progressively replace all solid fuel barbecues on regional parks with electric barbecues.
99. Reduce fire risk around campgrounds, designated sites, tracks, and heritage buildings and structures by appropriate vegetation management, including species selection in any future plantings in the surrounding area.
100. Not use open fires for operational purposes, with the rare exception of controlled burning of logging by-product from tree felling operations subject to regional and district plan requirements and consents, when these cannot be chipped or disposed of in any other way.
101. Prepare and implement fire recovery plans where necessary, which will include revegetation options and weed control priorities.

Contaminated land and closed landfills

The past use of hazardous substances in industry, agriculture and horticulture has left a legacy of soil contamination throughout the Auckland region.

People and animals can be exposed to hazardous substances by direct skin contact with contaminated soil (the most common exposure route); swallowing contaminated soils or contaminants in food (e.g. vegetables, fruit, animal produce) or contaminants in water; or breathing vapours or contaminated dust (the least likely exposure route except for asbestos).

Contamination can also:

- limit the use of land
- cause corrosion that may be threaten building structures or in-ground infrastructure
- require remediation plus ongoing management and monitoring for residual contamination.

In regional parks, contaminated land tends to be from legacy farming practices that involved storage, use or disposal of hazardous substances including equipment maintenance and refuelling, pest and weed control, sheep dips and waste disposal. While the public do not have access into operational areas or generally have limited opportunity to interact with contaminated soils or eat produce off those soils, contamination must be managed.

Park buildings, structures and pipes known or suspected to contain asbestos must be identified in a site-specific Asbestos Management Plan (AMP). Work that could disturb and release fibres which can be inhaled are subject to legislative controls. Under an AMP, the public would not be exposed to any source of contamination and would be excluded from areas where it was present but not able to be removed or encapsulated (e.g. under buildings or in roof spaces).

Te whāinga / Objective

35. To ensure contaminated areas of parks and buildings/structures are used in a way where sufficient controls have been put in place to either eliminate or mitigate risks to workers, park users and the wider environment⁴⁷.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

102. Ensure use of contaminated land is in accordance with national and regional standards and guidance including all requirements under consents, approvals and site management plans.
103. Manage contaminated land in accordance with any council policy developed for managing its contaminated land portfolio.
104. For regional parks containing identified contaminated land prepare a park specific site management plan to identify the location and type of contamination, any isolation barriers, consents, and management controls, to avoid exposure or discharge and to identify actions required if emergency situations arise.
105. Identify buildings, structures, pipes, or soils containing asbestos by survey or investigation and ensure they are subject to controls in an Asbestos Management Plan available on-site.

⁴⁷ Often this does not mean the land cannot be used, but restrictions may be placed over sensitive uses and activities to avoid or manage the risks from exposure or discharges.

10. Penapena pāmu / Managing farmed and open settings

Introduction

The farmed settings on regional parks include pastoral land and woodlots of plantation trees for harvest. The open space and amenity settings include visitor recreational areas near to arrival zones and beaches.

Farmed and open space settings allow for potential visitor recreation in these ways:

- The open space and amenity settings support informal and booked recreation close to facilities and major attractions, like beaches.
- The pastoral and woodlot settings provide diverse experiences and recreational opportunities bringing visitors deeper into the parks.
- Pasture and open spaces keep the terrain open and allow for expansive views.
- Farmed settings can provide opportunities to demonstrate climate resilience in food production, sustainable farming best practice and to provide for cultural harvesting and council or community uses of products.

These areas have the potential to cater for more activities as visitor numbers increase, with the added benefit of helping to reduce visitor pressure on indigenous ecosystem settings.

Farmed settings and open spaces in some locations also provide important habitat to some indigenous wildlife, including herpetofauna (reptiles and frogs) and birds such as takahe or kiwi. In these locations, we keep the sites open to support the wildlife habitat.



Farming at Tāwharanui Regional Park

Open space and amenity settings

These recreational areas are often near arrival zones and include grassed areas and beaches. They tend to be heavily used for informal recreation such as picnicking gatherings, and for events. They include campgrounds, bach settings and other sites used for overnight stays. (For a definition of arrival zones, see General and special management zones in chapter 4.)

These open spaces are managed to provide for large volumes of visitors and groups safely and comfortably within natural settings that are maintained to support access to visitor facilities.

The grassed areas are usually mowed, with amenity plantings of indigenous species managed to avoid built infrastructure and to improve the visitor experience.

Visitors are encouraged to avoid sensitive areas containing important biodiversity or cultural heritage within these settings. We often provide information to support visitor understanding and encourage appropriate behaviour around sensitive sites. Dunes, for example, are often fenced off to enable access to the beach to prevent damage sensitive ecosystems or cultural heritage sites.

Education programmes, way-finding information and interpretation of park values are often focused or based in these areas.

Te whāinga / Objective

36. To manage open space and amenity settings in a suitable format for visitor use and in accordance with park values and the park category.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

106. Design and manage open space and amenity settings to support visitor enjoyment while protecting sensitive areas, including:
 - a. providing for shade and shelter, anticipating a hotter, drier climate
 - b. considering relocating amenity areas further back from the coast where they are subject to repeated inundation
 - c. accommodating diverse and sometimes conflicting visitor activities within the same area
 - d. finding practical ways to avoid or minimise visitor impact on sensitive areas.
107. Develop service levels for a park to set standards and priorities for park maintenance of these spaces, in accordance with the visitor levels, park category and park values.

Farmed settings

Introduction

We aim to optimise the net revenue from activities such as farming and woodlot management to reduce the burden on the ratepayer.

Managing productive activities, while remaining aligned to the overall regional park vision and park values, places a unique set of constraints on our farming operations not experienced by commercial farmers. The regional parks vision and values, including protection of landscapes and views, providing for visitor enjoyment, and protection and access to cultural heritage, are all very relevant to the farmed settings. Consequently, the farmed settings are managed primarily for protection and public use rather than for production and profit.

Farming has a flow-on impact on the health of waterways and surrounding land environments.

Water holds an important spiritual and cultural association for Māori. Water is recognised as a significant issue in the Mana Whenua Kaitiaki Forum's 10-year Strategic Plan, particularly the objectives relating to member iwi roles as kaitiaki, seeking te mauri o te wai be improved and enhanced.

We work with mana whenua to restore water bodies, including through joint remediation programmes⁴⁸. These flow through to the environmentally sustainable management of all farmed settings, where we focus on restoring and enhancing surrounding ecosystems through riparian planting, retiring steep, erosion-prone slopes from grazing and progressively replanting these and selected areas within each park.

Pastoral management

We intend to continue managing the pastoral settings primarily by farming sheep and cattle. We expect the area available for farming will drop slightly as the proposed revegetation plans for each park are progressively implemented over the next 10 years.

Our farming approach is to follow best practice in sustainable land management, including ensuring good animal health, minimising sediment and nutrient run-off into the region's sensitive waterways, adapting to climate change and steadily reducing greenhouse gas emissions over time.

Our park ranger services cover farming, visitor services, education and conservation management, and a dedicated farm business unit provides sustainable farming expertise.

Farming activities support and are integrated into general park management activities to ensure they support park values and visitor enjoyment of these areas.

Farm management aims to be efficient and cost-effective to optimise the net economic return to the council without compromising the role and purpose of regional parks, the vision and park values.

The pastoral settings are important areas for visitor recreation and have potential to expand visitor offerings.

- Farm animals are an attraction for many visitors, enabling them to observe and experience a working farm and to learn about our farming heritage.

⁴⁸ For example the Kaipara Moana Remediation Programme, and the Hauraki Gulf Forum

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- Visitors enjoy walking over a varied terrain, farmed landscapes, and expansive views. In some cases, mountain bikers and horse riders use farmed areas.
- Open pasture (where stock are excluded) can host large community groups and events.

Informal visitor access is allowed in pastoral settings except when farm operations pose a safety risk.

We aim to mitigate the impact of farming activities on the climate by:

- reducing farm-related emissions at least in line with overall regional and national emissions targets⁴⁹
- planting more trees to sequester carbon, including some 200ha of indigenous forest for climate mitigation (see Responding to the climate emergency in chapter 6 and Restoring indigenous ecosystems in chapter 7)
- providing for the option of planting more shade trees in suitable open areas
- allowing for the option of planting small woodlots of indigenous or exotic trees.

Our pastoral management must adapt to climate change. Hotter and drier conditions, and more frequent and intense storms, will bring challenges for grass growth, water supply, animal health, and economic returns. In response, we will:

- focus on productivity and animal health
- stay under / within the carrying capacity of the land
- stop grazing low lying paddocks affected by rising sea levels and regular inundation
- prioritise planting more trees for shade and shelter
- allow for a regional park to be considered as a host for demonstrating regenerative agriculture practices as part of a climate adaptation response.

Considering the climate emergency and the ongoing financial challenges in respect to COVID-19, we propose to undertake a review of pastoral management on regional parks.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

37. To manage the pastoral settings efficiently, cost-effectively, and environmentally sustainably to support park values.
38. To support and increase opportunities for visitors to use, learn from and appreciate these settings.
39. To steadily reduce greenhouse gas emissions from pastoral farming in line with national and regional emissions targets.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

108. Sustainably manage pastoral settings to:
 - a. support the improved health of the receiving terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments by:
 - i. working with mana whenua to incorporate their values in protecting and managing water
 - ii. contributing to a continued reduction in sedimentation and nutrient levels in receiving environments

⁴⁹ The national targets as at 2021 are: 10% reduction in biogenic methane from 2017 levels by 2030, and 24-47% reduction by 2050. Te Taruke-a-Tawhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan targets are: 10% reduction in methane emissions from livestock by 2030 and 47% reduction by 2050 (page 48).

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- iii. not taking water from streams in times of low flow and moving away from using streams as a water source
 - iv. seeking more secure alternative water sources
 - b. support and improve soil health and pasture health
 - c. demonstrate best practice in animal welfare and husbandry
 - d. display excellence in land management and be a respected community leader, particularly in catchments with active marine remediation programmes.
109. Provide safe, positive and informative farming experiences for visitors:
- a. generally allow access to pastoral areas, but manage and restrict access to ensure visitor and stock safety.
 - b. provide opportunities for visitors to observe and learn about aspects of farming operations, including through farm days
 - c. provide opportunities in several locations for visitors to observe lambs in spring
 - d. provide opportunities for visitors, particularly youth, to experience farming.
110. Manage all farmed settings (pastoral and woodlot) in an efficient and cost-effective manner that supports general park management including:
- a. aligning with and supporting the park values
 - b. responsibility managing public funds by optimising the net economic return
 - c. supporting the safe recreational use of pastoral and plantation woodlot areas
 - d. developing more opportunities for recreational use and enjoyment of pastoral, mixed productive and woodlot settings.
111. Steadily reduce farm-related emissions at least in line with regional and national reduction targets for animal emissions (biogenic methane) by 2030 and setting a pathway to meet 2050 targets.
112. Monitor and report on emissions annually through the council's greenhouse gas inventory.
113. Review the pastoral management on regional parks and through the review, consider:
- a. our investment in pastoral land management
 - b. community uses for and benefits of pastoral space
 - c. climate goals including recognition of the potential contribution from revegetation.

Woodlots and other productive settings

A woodlot is a plantation of trees grown for eventual harvest of the timber among other purposes. The tree species may be indigenous or exotic.

Woodlots can provide natural, shaded settings for recreation. Woodlots with open understoreys can be suitable settings for active recreational activities such as mountain biking, running and navigation sports.

They can also produce timber for⁵⁰:

- cultural harvest of indigenous species by mana whenua
- council use, such as for seating, benches, bollards and other timber structures in parks
- mataawaka and community use, such as for woodworking or carving
- some financial return (although overall the activity is not expected to be profitable).

Managing existing woodlots

Small woodlots exist on some parks including at Ātiu Creek, Waitawa, Te Ārai, Te Muri, 5 Mile Strip at Muriwai, Hūnua Ranges near the lower Mangatawhiri Valley, and Tāpapakanga. Often planted by former owners, most have not been maintained in accordance with their original purpose.



Woodlot at Ātiu Creek Regional Park

⁵⁰ In contrast, it is important to note that mature indigenous trees in permanent indigenous forest settings have a high biodiversity value as habitat for many other species and our preference is for these to be left in natural forested areas.

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Note: This section does not apply to the large forestry block in the Hūnua Ranges managed by Watercare which is being progressively felled and revegetated in permanent indigenous forest cover for water supply protection.

Management of existing woodlots must be based on an assessment of their current condition.

Woodlot management, particularly during and after harvesting can result in large soil loss, affecting waterways and cultural heritage sites. Sustainable environmental management involving appropriate expertise is essential.

Land used for a woodlot or crops can revert to other land management uses allowed for in this draft Plan, including pasture and indigenous land cover. Alternatively, woodlots can also be replanted to provide for recreational use such as new track networks.

Considering potential woodlots

This draft Plan discusses the potential for woodlots rather than identify specific locations within parks. Establishment of future woodlots can be considered in farmed settings that fit the park category and provide for mana whenua or community use, as well as recreational benefits.

Managing woodlots requires well-planned and long-term commitment to realise any benefits. Neglected woodlots lose their commercial, research, recreational and amenity value. There must also be mana whenua and community support for establishing a woodlot for eventual harvest.

Any proposed woodlot must be included in successive park management plans to ensure they meet cultural, environmental and recreational outcomes.

Other planting options

We allow for trials of mixed productive regenerative systems where they fit with the park category and park values. This provides options for demonstration trials of regenerative mixed productive agri- and horticultural systems, which may be considered under the council's climate adaptation programme.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

40. To manage existing woodlots in an environmentally sustainably manner through this draft Plan.
41. To allow for consideration of future woodlots and other productive settings.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

114. Assess and state the management intentions for all existing woodlots.
115. Manage woodlots according to environmentally sustainable woodlot management techniques to avoid sediment run-off and other adverse environmental impacts, particularly at and after harvest.
116. Allow for contemplation of new woodlots and other productive settings providing they support park values and fit a park category.
117. Any new woodlot or other productive setting must articulate benefits such as providing:
 - a. a shaded setting for recreational use
 - b. a more diverse range of recreational opportunities
 - c. carbon sequestration
 - d. a demonstration or trial of climate resilient or regenerative productive systems
 - e. timber for eventual mana whenua, mataawaka, community, or council extractive use.

Specimen trees and plantings

Specimen trees

Large native or exotic tree species make excellent specimen trees. When mature, they can act as a park icon while providing significant amounts of shade for visitors and farm animals, habitat, and climate benefits. The Urban Ngahere Strategy recognises the benefits obtained from large specimen trees and this also applies to regional parks.

Some parks already have mature trees, mostly in areas close to former homesteads where they often have historic value, or in coastal recreational locations.

Some individual or groups of trees are scheduled as notable trees under the Auckland Unitary Plan, giving them additional protection. These trees need special care, including arboricultural specialist support.

Existing mature specimens of non-pest exotic species will be removed where they are a safety concern, or they are contributing to ecosystem degradation. (Refer to Managing pest plants, animals and pathogens in chapter 7.)

Planting other than for ecosystem restoration

Many suggestions were received for additional trees to be planted to provide shade and shelter for visitors and animals. With climate change, the need for shade will be greater and it will be more difficult to grow trees in a drier climate, so planting and maintaining shade trees is a priority.

We prefer planting eco-sourced indigenous species, but non-pest exotic specimen species may be considered in open space, amenity or farmed settings.

Exotic species may be used to enhance heritage gardens or orchards associated with heritage buildings. They may also provide shade for stock or prevent erosion.

Exotic trees offer benefits, such as fast growth which produces shade and carbon storage faster; they can be deep rooting, deciduous or hardier in an open environment. They also help provide a wide range of habitats and food sources for indigenous birds and animals.

Community suggestions for an arboretum on a park could be considered for an appropriate location, as this will add to the range of diverse recreational experiences available on regional parks and can align to park values. An arboretum features a collection of named specimen trees, usually widely placed to obtain full tree crowns, with clear areas underneath, suitable for botanising, picnicking, semi-shaded walks and grazing by animals.

We may plant vegetation other than for restoration to provide for:

- soft protection for significant heritage sites
- buffers to prevent sediment and nutrients entering waterways
- mana whenua cultural harvest
- council, mataawaka or community harvest (e.g. timber)
- sequestering carbon
- stabilising erosion
- improving land productivity

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- providing shade and shelter for park users and stock, including specimen trees
- creating a diversity of recreational settings (including active outdoor recreation, natural play spaces, or botanical arboretums)
- creating and enhancing iconic landscapes such as pōhutukawa near coastlines
- trials in food production, agri-forestry, or regenerative mixed productive systems as climate adaptation initiatives
- improving amenity, such as screening out buildings or neighbouring development, or landscape enhancement
- education and advocacy.

We will prioritise plantings that enhance park values, park resilience to climate change and fit with the park category.

Unauthorised plantings of any species are prohibited as this can affect park values. Native species must be eco-sourced to preserve local genetic populations, and planted in appropriate places. In many cases, exotic species will not be appropriate.

Plantings must have a planting plan that considers park values, impacts, and coordination with overall park management.

Pruning and removing vegetation

Vegetation may be pruned or removed to maintain infrastructure, structures and visitor amenity.

Our normal practice is to maintain our track network at least annually. We monitor trees for health and safety risk in high-use areas after storm events. Pruning or removal follows best practice guidelines with arborist input when required.

Continual maintenance and pruning may not always be the best option. For example, where a tree is too close to a track or blocking a view shaft, we may remove it.

Where possible, we will plant to avoid the need for ongoing maintenance, such as planting 3m back from a track edge.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

42. To provide more specimen trees on regional parks for amenity, shade and shelter, and climate mitigation benefits.
43. To promote and enhance park values through establishment and management of appropriate plantings.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

118. Prioritise planting of tree species to provide shade and amenity, recognising their increased importance with climate change.
119. When planting, prepare a planting plan for new trees and other vegetation that:
 - a. promotes and enhances park values
 - b. prefers the use of indigenous plants (though considering exotics in some situations)
 - c. considers the council's Restoration Guide

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- d. uses eco-sourced indigenous species suitable to the original ecosystem type(s) of the area to be planted where indigenous plants are used
 - e. aims to achieve co-benefits, such as erosion protection, landscape enhancement, carbon sequestration, water quality improvement, recreation and amenity
 - f. considers and aims to minimise the impact on park values
 - g. takes into account other relevant strategies and plans.
120. Require park users to seek permission first to plant single plants or trees, or groups of plants or trees that are not provided for in a planting plan.
121. Manage vegetation that impacts on infrastructure and visitors by pruning or removing plants for the following reasons:
- a. maintenance of tracks, accessways and other built infrastructure (such as signs or powerlines)
 - b. health and safety
 - c. maintenance of viewshafts as defined in the maps
 - d. pruning to support tree health and resilience, in accordance with specialist arborist advice
 - e. to support efficient management of the above.

11. Penapena wheako manuhiri / Managing visitor experiences

Regional parks are Aucklanders' natural outdoor playgrounds. For many of us they are the place where significant holiday memories are created, of times spent in bush and at the beach, of community and family time spent together enjoying being outdoors in large, natural spaces.

Free access to regional parks is important for physical and mental well-being and are places where social connectedness and belonging – to the place and to each other, are fostered.

This part of the plan sets out how we will provide for, support and manage a diverse range of recreation opportunities, activities and experiences for Aucklanders and others, and the use of regional park land.

In this section we acknowledge the growing diversity and number of Aucklanders and outline how we will enable people to enjoy the parks in their way, in a manner consistent with park values and the purposes for which it is held.

This section explains that access to the regional parks is free for informal recreation, and provides for improvements to be made to equitable access. It sets out what we may charge for, general rules for use, the facilities and services provided, and our intentions to further enhance the visitor experience by working with community and commercial organisations.



Providing for a range of recreational uses

People value the regional parks for the relatively undeveloped and natural outdoor spaces that lend themselves to outdoor recreation activities such as picnicking, relaxing, walking, playing informal games, and enjoying nature.

Healthy parks build healthy people and healthy communities. Parks contribute to people's wellbeing by providing opportunities to experience nature and interact with nature. They provide for spiritual and physical wellbeing by providing public spaces for all to enjoy in their own way.

We aim to add value to visitor experiences by providing these opportunities in parks to build community, connections, and cater for diversity.

We will retain the natural character of the parks and prioritise free access for informal recreation.

Priority is given to activities which are informal and compatible with the park reserve classification (if any), park category, vision and values. When deciding where activities are provided, council also considers the location of other opportunities on regional parks and the broader regional open space network.

Most everyday activities on parks are allowed as of right. Some activities require permission or authorisation (refer to chapter 12). In some cases, a code of conduct or a bylaw may apply.

'Informal' recreation are activities that are permitted as of right such as those that:

- are informal or casual and are consistent with the values of the park
- meet conditions in a bylaw or code of conduct to avoid any potential impact on either the environment or other park users, such as dog walking
- are not identified in this plan or by the Reserves Act as requiring authorisation or regulated in a bylaw, and do not unduly interfere with the use and enjoyment of other users of the park.

Informal recreational activities include picnicking, relaxing, walking, running, swimming, playing, games using portable equipment like kilikiti or volleyball, or kayaks or surfboards, games where infrastructure has been supplied such as disc golf or orienteering courses, birdwatching, kite flying, filming and photography for personal use, botanising, exercising, and cooking on supplied facilities.

Unpowered model aircraft gliding, paragliding and hang gliding may occur where conditions allow and where there is sufficient space to not disturb other users. Parks where hang gliding or paragliding is allowed without a specific permit are listed in the policy. Other parks are considered unsuitable for various reasons relating to challenges with launching or landing sites due to growth in park use and restoration of coastal edges, or some parks are subject to a controlled area notice relating to kauri dieback. Sites may be designated in the park chapter.

We can improve equity and wellbeing by making parks accessible and welcoming to everyone. This includes expressing manaakitanga / welcome in all parks and provision of park infrastructure which provides for diverse communities. We aim to provide opportunities in parks to build community, connections, and cater for diversity.

Focus area six in the Auckland Plan 2050 is to focus investment to address disparities and serve communities of greatest need. People-based initiatives put the needs of vulnerable Aucklanders, including children, young people and families, at the centre of decision-making and support those most at risk of poor outcomes.

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In respect to regional parks, adopting an equitable approach means prioritising investment in regional parks to where it can meet the needs of communities of greatest need. This will include meeting our obligations in the Maori outcomes strategy as well as to improve the outcomes of Pasifika, as a significant part of the population of Tāmaki Makaurau (243,966 in the 2018 census) and other growing ethnic communities.

The general range of activities provided for in each regional park is identified in the **Recreational provision** sections of each park chapter.

Policies relating to some popular activities are found in this chapter:

- walking, tramping, running, navigation sports, games like disc golf
- water recreation
- play
- cycling and mountain biking
- horse riding.

Mana whenua, community and commercial operators may provide new activities, services or experiences for park visitors, with authorisation (refer to chapters 5, 6 and 6).

Te whāinga / Objective

44. To provide opportunities for all Aucklanders to enjoy the regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

122. Seek to provide a range of recreational opportunities and experiences across the regional park network:
- a. that fit well within natural, undeveloped outdoor settings of regional parks
 - b. that can be accommodated alongside environmental and heritage values
 - c. recognising parks are held for a range of purposes and that different opportunities should be provided in different parks
 - d. that complement those provided in other public open spaces
 - e. considering the needs of local communities as well as the wider needs of the regional community.
123. Allow and provide for an accessible, diverse and compatible range of informal activities on regional parks which do not detract from the park's purpose, values or enjoyment by other users including:
- a. walking, tramping and running on designated tracks and open pasture areas
 - b. individual and group activities such as picnicking, barbecuing, relaxing, swimming, kayaking, surfing, paddle-boarding, exercising and fitness training
 - c. individual and group play, sports and games, such as disc golf and orienteering on approved courses, volleyball, kilikiti, throwing or kicking balls
 - d. cycling on designated tracks, roads and open pasture areas
 - e. vehicle use on park roads open to the public, in car parks and any other specified areas, primarily to enter and exit and transport people and equipment
 - f. filming and photography for personal use
 - g. bird-watching, botanising, snorkelling

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- h. kite-surfing, kite flying providing the flight does not impact on birdlife
 - i. model aircraft gliding, unpowered paragliding and hang gliding at Ātiu Creek, Āwhitu, Duder, Muriwai, Ōmana, Shakespear, Te Rau Pūriri, Waitākere Ranges at Piha, Waitawa and Whakatiwai, with specific permission required for any other site.
124. Use demand management tools where necessary to manage congestion or conflicts (refer to the Demand management tools section in this chapter).
125. Work with mana whenua to identify relevant:
- a. tikanga and kawa relevant to park use and ways to communicate this to park users
 - b. opportunities for mana whenua to add value to visitor experiences.
126. Promote equity of opportunity to access and enjoy the regional parks, with a particular focus on supporting those with greatest need, including the outcomes of Pasifika, as a significant part of the population of Tāmaki Makaurau, as well as other growing ethnic communities, and providing access for those with limited mobility and other disabilities.
127. Provide for safe and enjoyable recreational use through a range of mechanisms, including, but not limited to:
- a. prioritising provision of up to date, widely available and accurate park information including on wayfinding, safety, appropriate behaviour, recreation opportunities, both off-park to support preparation for a visit, and on-park
 - b. prioritising provision of adequate facilities in arrival zones to meet basic visitor needs and safety including toilets and way finding
 - c. prioritising provision of shade and shelter from wind and sun by trees and vegetation and built structures
 - d. maintaining facilities and park operations in a way that minimises their impact on visitor enjoyment
 - e. providing a dedicated ranger service to facilitate visitor enjoyment, educate visitors and manage and monitor demand and behaviour
 - f. providing and enabling provision of services to enhance the visitor experience by considering the benefits of:
 - i. working with members from Auckland’s diverse communities to understand the needs and requirements and offerings relevant to particular communities or visitor demographics, including multi-lingual introductory information
 - ii. supporting development of a range of opportunities that meet the needs of those with various levels of ability
 - iii. supporting programmes and activities which provide opportunities for communities of greatest need to access and use the parks
 - iv. providing for appreciation of cultural heritage, natural values and building a sense of connection to and caring for the park
 - v. providing for events, programmes and other initiatives
 - vi. providing for bookable sites
 - vii. providing for hire of recreational equipment
 - viii. providing for volunteering opportunities
 - ix. enabling opportunities that may broaden park users’ experiences.

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- g. monitoring and responding to shifts and changes in demand for recreational activities and, where appropriate, providing for them in accordance with the authorisation framework
- h. increasing the capacity and resilience of parks to host more recreational activity where compatible with the park purpose and values acknowledging the growing regional population and where appropriate provide facilities to accommodate more visitors over time
- i. recognising and safeguarding the value of regional parks in providing respite from urban development and noise, and as places where visitors can enjoy natural and undeveloped outdoor environments
- j. allowing vehicles to move off designated roads and areas where this is necessary for:
 - i. authorised park management, including conservation programmes, farming and fire control
 - ii. search and rescue and other such critical emergency events and services
 - iii. access to approved overflow car-parking areas
 - iv. authorised activities where this use has been specifically approved by the council, or
 - v. exceptional circumstances where no reasonable alternative access is available and authorisation is given by the council.



Tāpapakanga Regional Park

Improving equity

Direction 1 in the Auckland Plan is to foster an inclusive Auckland where everyone belongs, and focus area 5 recognises, values and celebrates Aucklanders' differences. To reflect the Auckland Plan directions in regional park management we must make sure the parks are welcoming places for our diverse communities: including diverse ethnicities, age and abilities.

All facility upgrades undertaken on regional parks should factor in disability access. However, upgrades happen slowly and across the network there will still be limits to accessible opportunities for people with low mobility including disabled people, low vision and blind people, older people, children and families and gender diverse people. We intend a focus going forward to be to provide opportunities for people with low mobility to access the water.

Equity of access means providing opportunities and infrastructure for everyone regardless of abilities, gender or ethnicity. We will consider providing gender-neutral toilets and changing facilities, private or family changing areas, and how different ethnic communities can better enjoy their stay at regional parks such as identifying and developing park locations that can sufficiently cater to the recreational needs of large community and family groups.

Te whāinga / Objective

45. To improve the inclusive use and enjoyment of parks by all people regardless of abilities, gender or ethnicity.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

128. Recognise and provide for differences in peoples' recreational and use needs, where appropriate, through:
 - a. seeking to remove barriers to access
 - b. considering cultural needs when planning and providing recreation and education opportunities
 - c. making provision for cultural events and practices.
129. Support programmes which provide access to groups who find it difficult to access regional parks.
130. Identify priority sites for improving accessibility for people with low mobility and progressively implement improvements focusing on:
 - a. opportunities to park a vehicle and enjoy the view
 - b. providing low mobility access to picnic tables and toilets
 - c. access for people with low mobility to safe swimming beaches
 - d. promoting and allowing vehicle access to key event, picnic sites and activity areas for people with low mobility
 - e. opportunities to develop wheelchair accessible and mountain buggy accessible destination experiences (with facilities) to view points, heritage features, play spaces, and nature trails.
131. Continue to design facilities following universal access and safety by design principles to reduce barriers to participation.
132. Provide for park open spaces and park facilities which meet the needs of diverse community user groups.

Walking and running activities

Providing opportunities to walk, run, and tramp is an important component of providing for physical and social well-being of people within the region. Regional parks provide some of the main opportunities for people to walk, tramp and run, including navigation sports in regenerating and mature bush, coastal and farmed settings.

Informal and organised orienteering and rogaining are appropriate activities in regional parks. Permanent courses for informal use are set up in Ātiu Creek, Āwhitu, Duder, Ōmana Huia, Waitakere Ranges Regional Park, Te Rau Pūriri and Mahurangi West regional parks, designed for beginners, families, youth and school groups with options for more experienced orienteering. Other courses are being explored at Huia in Waitākere Ranges, Tāpapakanga and Waitawa. Organised orienteering or rogaining events require a permit.

Geocaching can be a suitable activity, providing players are careful with where they hide the caches to not include sensitive habitats or damage cultural heritage sites.

Disc golf courses are set up at Waitawa and Pae o te Rangi farm in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park.

These activities could lead to environmental damage in sensitive environments, so therefore such use must be avoided. We use education and signage in the first instance to help guide visitors to minimise their impact and stay away from sensitive locations.

Also refer to the Tracks section later in this chapter.

Te whāinga / Objective

46. To provide for a diverse range of walking, tramping, running and navigation sport opportunities on regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

133. Provide a network of different walking, tramping and running opportunities on regional parks in accordance with the Tracks objectives and policies.
134. Allow walking, tramping and running on open and farmed areas and, if necessary apply restrictions in some locations in accordance with the Restrictions on access objectives and policies.
135. Continue to provide for informal orienteering on designated courses on some parks working with orienteering clubs.
136. Provide, where appropriate, pedestrian access to the coastal areas adjoining regional parks.
137. Discourage and / or actively prevent off-track activity in wetlands, watercourses, dunes, indigenous forest and Watercare Services Limited's licenced land through education, signs, blocking off access, track design and compliance measures.

Supporting safe water recreation

Many of the coastal regional parks provide much-valued public access to the region's stunning coastline. People enjoy picnicking, relaxing and playing on the beaches, swimming, surfing/body boarding, fishing, diving, kayaking and recreational boating.

Many regional parks also contain freshwater streams, swimming holes and waterfalls.

We seek to provide safe access to the coast in a manner that has minimal impact on sensitive ecosystems such as dunes or on wildlife.

Some regional parks offer opportunities to hand launch boats from the beach, or use wharves, piers and jetties or boat ramps. People also visit the parks from the water.

There is limited onshore parking for vehicles with boat trailers, wash down areas, showers and toilets to support boat users. Where there are boat ramps, the car parking is often taken by boat users for multi-day or all-day trips and this prevents access for other users.

Te Ara Moana – The Sea Pathway kayak trail from Ōmana to Waharau includes overnight camping at four regional parks along the route. This may be extended to Waiheke and inner Hauraki Gulf islands. A northern kayaking trail along the north-eastern coast connecting Wenderholm, Te Muri and Mahurangi regional parks is being investigated.

Kite surfing may have an impact on birds, as anecdotally the kites can disturb wildlife and inhibit breeding patterns.

Use of regional parks for set-netting is prohibited – see chapter 12: Prohibited activities section.

Water safety is a key focus in our parks – refer to the section below on Park visitor safety.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

47. To support safe access to the water for recreation.
48. To support sea-based watercraft recreation and transport.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

138. Where appropriate, continue to maintain facilities on coastal regional parks that enable watercraft recreation and transport, taking into consideration alternative access points near the park.
139. Where appropriate, continue to provide access to coastal areas for hand launching of recreational watercraft.
140. Monitor the safe use and potential impact on nesting birdlife of kite surfing, and liaise with kite surfing groups to ensure safe use minimises impacts on park values.
141. Support the Ministry for Primary Industries promoting and enforcing fisheries regulation by allowing signs about fishing regulations to be installed on the parks, reporting incidents, and in some cases having park rangers as honorary fisheries officers.

Cycling and mountain biking

There are a wide range of cycling activities on some regional parks including recreational cycling, mountain biking, and pump tracks. In the future as regional cycleways are developed, cycle touring and bike-packing through some regional parks will be available.

Most riding is on tracks shared with other users, although there are purpose-built mountain bike tracks and separate cycle paths in some parks.

We have 60 kilometres of grade-separated mountain bike tracks in regional parks, all in the south of Auckland. They range from beginner pump tracks through to a level six tracks.

Some regional park cycle tracks connect into the region's wider local and national cycling network, providing routes for commuters, touring groups and rides.

Bike ownership and uptake of electric bikes (e-bikes) is increasing, and mountain biking is a growing outdoor activity. As an active recreational pursuit cycling provides health and well-being benefits. Informal cycling and mountain biking are suited to many outdoor environments on regional parks and also provide a way of getting to the park.

E-bikes have made cycling accessible to more people; they are able to cycle for longer and further, and tackle routes which previously would have been too difficult. This means there are more people using mountain bike and shared tracks in regional parks. E-bikes are heavier than traditional bicycles and can't easily be thrown over stiles and gates which restricts their access in the parks. Adapted e-bikes and trikes enable people with mobility problems to be active, but they can be wider than typical bicycles.

We aim to provide beginners and easier to intermediate graded opportunities, which are family-friendly and available to a wider range of people to use. Where longer and tougher gradients exist and where other alternatives are not readily available, we seek to provide more challenging experiences also. Looking beyond the regional parks, as a council we intend to provide more opportunities for biking in all its forms throughout the network.

Cycling and mountain biking includes all types of bicycles (including e-bikes, bikes with trailers) but not fossil-fuel powered mopeds or motorbikes.

E-bikes can come in a range of sizes and power ratings. An electric bike is defined by being powered by electricity as well as by the rider through pedals. In regional parks, we allow the use of lower powered electric bikes (≤ 300 watts) in designated off-road areas, on off-road biking trails and cycle ways. We treat higher powered electric bikes (> 300 watts) as motorbikes, which are prohibited from recreational use on regional parks. This approach of permitting lower powered electric bikes (≤ 300 watts) is consistent with the Department of Conservation's approach on public conservation land.

Te whāinga / Objective

49. To provide an accessible and diverse range of recreational cycling and mountain biking opportunities in regional parks where appropriate.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

142. Provide and maintain, and where appropriate expand and enhance the network of recreational cycling and mountain biking opportunities on regional parks to complement Auckland's regional cycling network in consultation with relevant user groups, including consideration of improving connectivity within the regional parks and to other public open spaces or destinations.

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143. Encourage cyclists and mountain bikers to 'share with care' with other track users and to stay on designated tracks.
144. Where appropriate, remove barriers to e-bikes on tracks and trails to allow access by designing gates and other barriers to be bike friendly.
145. Support opportunities for more visitors to see and experience the parks by bike by:
 - a. enabling opportunities to hire bikes to use on regional park cycle and mountain bike tracks
 - b. working with organisations who bring Aucklanders who have low participation in sport and recreation activities into the regional parks to use cycle and mountain bikes
 - c. providing infrastructure to support bicycle use such as secure bicycle parking or bicycle repair stations at key destinations such as beaches and campgrounds.



Waitākere Ranges Regional Park

Play

Regional parks provide opportunities for children to learn through experience, to connect to nature, and raise their awareness of the natural, historic and cultural values of our parks.

Children benefit greatly from having time, space and permission for play in regional parks. Play in a natural environment can provide mental and physical benefits and a lifelong appreciation for nature. Traditional Māori ways of play are deeply connected to the natural environment. Moving loose material such as stick, leaves, seeds and stones, and going off-track, are important parts of play for children.

Regional parks provide a wide range of unstructured or free play including kick about spaces and opportunities to interact with the natural environment. Beaches and the bush provide the most opportunities for play.

Urban-style playgrounds are not generally provided in regional parks. The exceptions are Ōmana and Long Bay, which are very popular parks for families.

Play-friendly places can have built structures, they can also be big grassy areas where visitors bring their own equipment for games or spaces where loose materials are provided. Parks can provide opportunities to build huts, provide ropes swings in trees and offer opportunities to build and cook on fires.

In some areas frequented by large community and family groups, and where space is available to accommodate numbers, we will consider provision of simple facilities such as posts for volleyball, as is currently the case at locations like Ambury.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

50. To create a welcoming environment for children and families by providing opportunities to play near to parking, toilets and accessible tracks.
51. To provide safe and appropriate enjoyment of a range of fun, interesting and challenging nature play opportunities for child and adult adventures.

Te kaupapa here / Policy

146. Consider ways to provide for inclusive opportunities for everyone to play regardless of age, gender, ability or confidence to play, such as:
 - a. opportunities for nature play, wilderness play, messy spaces and loose parts play
 - b. access to bush areas particularly in park arrival zones and campgrounds, or where not possible, designated nature play spaces where children can play
 - c. large, flat grassed areas for games and facilities such as posts for volleyball
 - d. loose natural materials for play like seeds, branches, leaves
 - e. quirky fun unexpected experiences with temporary or permanent art installations and events.

Recreational horse riding

Recreational horse riding is popular in regional parks. Recreational horse riding as an informal activity is allowed for horse riders with a permit in designated areas within 12 regional parks: Ambury, Ātiu Creek, Āwhitu, Duder, Hūnua Ranges, Muriwai, Te Ārai, Te Rau Pūriri, Waitākere Ranges (Pae o Te Rangi), Waitawa and Whakanewha. It is to be allowed at Te Muri once access is available. We propose to introduce the permit system to Whakanewha through this draft plan to better support communications with horse riders on this park.

Horse riding is controlled through a permit system to prevent negative impacts through compaction, disturbance, and trail widening. There is also the potential for user conflict on multi-use trails if poorly designed, constructed and signposted.

The areas where recreational horse riding is allowed are generally the farmed, open pasture areas which provide a suitable amount of space for horse riders and other park users to avoid contact with each other. In these settings, horse riders are also able to see other people approaching and adjust their speed or route accordingly. Shared tracks are only provided where the track design provides the necessary sight lines and width to safely accommodate horse riders and other track users. Horse riding is not allowed in picnic areas, campgrounds and bookable day sites.

We will continue to review the overall regionwide provision for horse riding on a regular basis.

Te whāinga / Objective

52. To provide a range of recreational horse riding opportunities that minimises negative impacts on natural, cultural and recreation values.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

147. Continue to provide horse riding opportunities where suitable in the parks identified.
148. Require a permit for horse riding in regional parks to ensure riders understand and comply with the guidelines for riding horses at regional parks and beaches and to provide a contact list for liaison.
149. Continue to enhance the provision of recreational horse riding in regional parks through provision of relevant infrastructure such as tethering rails and self-closing gates.
150. Continue to provide fenced enclosures to hold horses overnight near overnight accommodation at Ātiu Creek.
151. Liaise with horse riding individuals and organisations to manage recreational conflict, safety risks and environmental damage associated with recreational horse riding.

General rules and conditions for park use

Bylaws on regional parks

The council uses [bylaws](#) to make rules about a range of behaviours and activities including on parks to help ensure public safety and enjoyment of public places by all who want to use them. Refer to Appendix 1 or to the council's website. If any policies or proposals in this draft Plan are in conflict with a bylaw, the bylaw prevails.

Te whāinga / Objective

53. To enable recreational use and enjoyment of regional parks aligned to this draft plan, in a way that minimises impact on park values and other park users.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

152. Facilitate recreational use in regional parks where this is compatible with:
- a. the reserve classification, if held under the Reserves Act
 - b. council bylaws
 - c. the park category set out in chapter 4: [Whakahaere pou tarāwaho](#) / Management framework and the regional park vision and values, set out in chapter 0
 - d. the individual park values as set out in the park description and mana whenua associations in each park chapter
 - e. authorisations in chapter 12.
153. Manage the impacts of recreational use through a range of mechanisms, including, but not limited to:
- a. utilising bylaws or codes of conduct to set parameters or conditions on activities
 - b. setting conditions, appropriate behaviour, temporary restrictions and/or limits on certain activities with respect to:
 - i. the park's particular natural and cultural values
 - ii. the safety and enjoyment of other park users
 - iii. the spread of pest plants and animals and pathogens, such as managing areas subject to controlled area notices due to kauri dieback disease
 - iv. removal of rubbish
 - v. wildfire risk
 - vi. visitor responsibility to be prepared and manage personal risk
 - vii. safe use including water safety
 - viii. farm animals and park operations
 - c. setting an authorisation framework, as set out in chapter 12: 12. Ngā whakamanatanga / Authorisations for park use, and managing all activities in accordance with the authorisation framework.
 - d. exploring and potentially enabling rangers to utilise the enforcement powers available under the Reserves Act (in addition to existing powers under bylaws).

Park visitor safety

There are safety risks associated with using regional parks and it is important that visitors understand these risks so they can manage these risks appropriately. There may be a range of safety risks when walking, running, tramping, swimming, or playing in outdoor environments. The risks may relate to physical features and conditions including farming activities, water, sun exposure, and from other park users.

There are actions the council can take to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. For example we can provide easily available information on track types (refer to the Track policy) and links to climatic conditions and remind people to prepare before they come.

We can also provide information to help support the experience to be a positive one, for example by providing easily available information to help visitors minimise their impact on a park and understand any restrictions that may be in place before they arrive. It is important for visitors to check our information so that they are aware when we have restricted access to an area and why (refer to the Restrictions on access policy below).

Water safety is a particular concern. Park visitors need to be adequately and effectively informed of the dangers inherent in New Zealand waterways as preventable drownings occur at beaches, in harbours, rivers, and waterfalls. We will endeavour to implement on parks the accepted industry best practice and/or Australasian standards, such as AS/NZS 2416.1:2010 Aquatic Safety Signage for worksites and public spaces.

Smoking is not permitted in regional parks under our Smokefree Policy. This is to improve the health and well-being of Auckland's communities by reducing the prevalence of smoking, de-normalising smoking behaviours, and providing public places free of smoke.

Te Whāinga / Objective

54. To endeavour to do all that is reasonably practicable to minimise risks to public safety which includes informing visitors of the hazards and risks in regional parks so that they can follow advice and take appropriate steps manage these risks.

Ngā Kaupapa Here / Policies

154. Recognise the importance of park users taking personal responsibility to manage risks associated with outdoor recreation, and manage regional parks to support visitors and volunteers to safely enjoy approved activities by:
 - a. Identifying, assessing, prioritising and managing risks to park users so far as is reasonably practicable on an ongoing basis.
 - b. Ensuring the level of risk is appropriate to the activity and the skill level of the likely participants by:
 - i. ensuring, as far as possible, that recreational infrastructure provided to enable or enhance activities in regional parks are constructed and maintained to an appropriate standard
 - ii. using security measures where these will effectively facilitate the safe use of the park
 - iii. ensuring, as far as possible, that individuals, including park volunteers, participating in an activity understand, and take steps to minimise, the level of risk inherent in that activity
 - iv. working in partnership with outdoor safety agencies to provide consistent messaging

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- v. liaising with emergency services and local communities to coordinate efforts to minimise risks to park users
 - vi. including, where appropriate, conditions on discretionary activity consents related to visitor safety
 - vii. providing signage to inform visitors of potential dangers and that they must take responsibility for their own personal safety.
155. Inform park users of the danger inherent in waterways by:
- a. providing consistent signage across the region that meets AS/NZS 2416.1:2010
 - b. continuing to collaborate with and seek expert advice from Water Safety New Zealand, Drowning Prevention Auckland, Surf Life Saving Northern Region, Surf Life Saving New Zealand and work with other agencies like the YMCA to improve water safety in freshwater and coastal environments and to promote water safety
 - c. employing drowning prevention strategies including standard signage, designation of hazardous water bodies
 - d. providing and maintain Personal Rescue Equipment that meets national standards (currently in development) at sites identified by expert advice.
156. Prohibit smoking in regional parks in accordance with the Auckland Council Smokefree Policy.
157. Seek to provide more shade at barbecues, campgrounds, bookable sites, arrival areas, car parks, play spaces and other areas where park visitors gather.
158. Employ design approaches to the layout of parks which facilitates passive surveillance and minimises the unnecessary seclusion of facilities and areas, in particular arrival areas and visitor facilities.
159. Where a threat to park user safety from other users including from their dogs, equipment, or behaviour, is identified:
- a. work with the relevant enforcement agencies to address the threat
 - b. enforce the Public Safety and Nuisance Bylaw and other bylaws
 - c. where activated, use enforcement powers available to rangers under the Reserves Act.
160. Consider use of surveillance technology in arrival zones and other places to help manage risks to users or property and compliance with park authorisations for use.

Visitors are responsible for their rubbish

Regional parks have had a ‘take home all your rubbish’ policy since 2005. This is to encourage people to minimise waste by bringing only what they are prepared to take away again, and so that they can recycle materials through urban recycling schemes. When it was introduced, most park visitors responded positively by taking home their rubbish. The amount of rubbish left on parks reduced significantly.

We want visitors, commercial and community operations and those attending events to take responsibility for the waste they bring into parks and to minimise the amount of rubbish produced.

Over time more visitors have tended to leave rubbish on parks, and it was obvious from some people’s suggestions for this draft Plan that they were not aware of the take-rubbish-home policy. Raising awareness of the policy will help with compliance.

This rubbish-free approach is in line with Auckland’s aspiration of being Zero Waste by 2040 and Auckland Council’s Waste Management Minimisation Plan 2018.

Te whāinga / Objective

55. To require all park users including recreational visitors, commercial and community operators, lease and licence-holders to take responsibility for minimising waste and removing their rubbish from the park.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

161. General rubbish bins are not provided at regional parks.
162. Promote the ‘take home your rubbish’ policy including through periodic campaigns to raise awareness and improve the effectiveness of the policy.
163. In accordance with the Waste Management and Minimisation Bylaw, require each commercial, community event operator to prepare a waste management and minimisation plan that implements the waste hierarchy (rethink, reuse, reduce, recycle), to eliminate non-recyclable packaging and take responsibility for removal of their and their clients’ (park users) recycling and rubbish.
164. Provide for organic waste composting in vehicle-based campgrounds and baches.
165. Work to reduce litter and illegal dumping through enforcement and educational campaigns.

Restrictions on access

There are a range of reasons for which access to parts of a park will be restricted, for operational, safety, protection of park values, temporary exclusive uses, or emergency reasons.

Te whāinga / Objective

56. To provide for rāhui, permanent and temporary closures of parks, parts of parks and park facilities where required for safety, protection of park values, events, operational or emergency reasons.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

166. Restrict access to a park or an area of a park either temporarily or permanently for a specified time, subject to statutory and bylaw requirements, including where:

- a. an activity or event has been granted the right to restrict public access as part of its conditions of authorisation
- b. operational works are being carried out on the park
- c. there are unfavourable ground conditions
- d. there are biosecurity risks, such as the spread of kauri dieback
- e. the park or area requires remediation, for example to address a physical hazard
- f. a rāhui has been put in place by mana whenua
- g. there are adverse impacts on other important park values including natural, historic, recreational or cultural values
- h. there are concerns for the safety of the community
- i. there are farming operations which require the exclusion of visitors for the safety of stock and / or visitors e.g. during lambing
- j. restricting access is an obligation under a specific Act, such as the Biosecurity Act 1993, Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 or the Public Health Act 1956.

167. Prohibit access to park offices, depots, service yards, ranger operational areas and storage areas.

Demand management tools

Some places on regional parks are becoming increasingly popular leading to high levels of congestion at car parks, on tracks, and at popular destinations like waterfalls. In other places conflicts are arising between different user groups wanting to use the same space.

We may introduce demand management tools over time, where necessary to protect park values and a quality visitor experience. This could be in situations including but not limited to:

- where increasing demand is causing unsustainable or damaging use of the facility (such as a track) or resource (such as a sensitive natural area like a waterfall), or
- safety risks to park users, or
- congestion to the extent that the quality of experience for visitors or for the local community is considerably diminished (such as car park and internal park road congestion).

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As an example of demand management, vehicles on Muriwai beach have been the cause of many years of conflict with other beach users and increased other risks such as fire risks along a long, remote, forested shoreline. After community consultation, the council is trialling a new method of controlled access through the regional park to the beach.

Demand management tools provide a way to manage entry to a site. They may include a fee or charge, or a requirement to make a booking or be registered. They may require visitors to travel to the site on shuttles from a more distant location. They might require track users to walk one way along a loop track, or use temporal management to minimise conflict between different users. They are used throughout the world in popular parks including in Aotearoa New Zealand to manage demand where congestion or safety is an issue and are an essential tool in the park management toolkit.

Aucklanders have long enjoyed the ability to arrive a regional park and freely access it for informal recreation and the principle of free and open access remains. Demand management tools would only be used as an exception to the rule where necessary. Refer also to reasons for fees and charges under the Free access, fees and charges section in this chapter.

Te whāinga / Objective

57. To manage popular or congested sites safely and sustainably through the use of demand management tools / controls.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

168. Consider use of a range of demand management tools to manage congestion, impacts on park values, or risks to public safety due to high demand at a popular site, track, or feature, including but not limited to:
 - a. fees or charges
 - b. promotion techniques to encourage people to move to other locations
 - c. restrictions or controls, such as registering to obtain a permit or requirement to make a booking to enter a site or walk a track at a certain time, or time-limits on car parking
 - d. restricting access to parking areas to transport operators only for drop-off and pick-ups
 - e. time-based controls (e.g. only in effect at congested or peak times)
 - f. capacity determining frameworks and techniques such as defining user carrying capacities and tools like Photo-point monitoring.
169. Consider use of fees or charges for certain activities on parks as a demand management tool, and when doing so:
 - a. consult on the introduction of a charge for a demand management purpose
 - b. the charge should not create an inequitable barrier to access.

Services and facilities to support park use

People visit parks for a wide variety of reasons. They provide opportunities to connect to nature (land and sea), have a respite from the city, for fitness and health, and to connecting with family and community. The time visitors spend in the parks range from short visits to run on a track to spending the whole day in the park.

Park visitors need a range of park facilities to support and make their visits more enjoyable.

For example, Pasifika visitors have told us they visit regional parks because they are free. They bring their whole families or large church or social groups to visit the park for the whole day and they need large flat spaces to gather and play, sufficient shade and good toilet facilities. At beaches they want outdoor showers to hose off sand and salt and changing facilities before travelling long distances home again.

We provide a range of services designed to facilitate and enhance the visitor experience including the ranger service, onsite interpretation, learning opportunities, online information and booking services.

We provide a range of facilities such as toilets, signage and park information, barbecues, shelters, bookable sites for day use, campgrounds, baches and lodges.

To provide for more visitors and suit the needs of a wide range of visitors we need to periodically review what visitors want and aim to provide services or infrastructure to support their visits. This is likely to include making available more large flat grassed areas close to toilets, barbecues and car parking and good shade for large groups who visit the parks for the whole day. As our population grows more of these spaces will be necessary.

Organisers of large casual groups using general areas of the parks that cannot be booked are advised to communicate with the council (e.g. contact centre, or ranger) ahead of time to ensure they can be adequately and safely accommodated on a site, in a way that does not detract from the experience of other park users, disturb wildlife or impact tracks or ground conditions. This will depend on the activity, the capacity of the park and its facilities to absorb numbers.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

58. To provide park visitor facilities to support increasing the capacity and resilience of parks to host park visitors.
59. To manage popular park facilities to ensure equitable access for everyone.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

170. Consider feedback provided by park users and make changes to facilities to enable Aucklanders from all cultures to feel like the park is for them.
171. Manage bookable sites as a controlled activity subject to conditions and requiring advance booking.
172. Consider providing more large flat open grassed areas with good vehicle and pedestrian access, quality shade and access to facilities suitable for large groups.
173. Consider what facilities and spaces should be made available to equitably accommodate different visitor needs, such as outdoor showers and changing rooms at beaches.

Safe barbecues, cooking and fires

Picnicking and barbecuing, which may involve cooking at the park, is very popular in regional parks.

Many park users enjoy cooking over solid fuel in particular as a part of their culture. We want to enable people to enjoy a park in their way but also have to balance this against protecting the park from wildfire.

Fires, whether lit naturally, accidentally or deliberately, pose a risk to park visitors, native vegetation, species, historic places, artefacts, park assets, and adjoining property. The risk of wildfire is likely to increase with climate change, with hotter and drier days.

Barbecue facilities (89 barbecues) are installed on 13 regional parks. Currently they use a range of fuels: electric, LPG, and solid fuel. Park users may bring their own portable barbecues and gas stoves into regional parks for use in amenity zones (refer chapter 4, General and special management zones, Amenity zones).

In this draft plan we propose phasing out installed solid fuel barbecues where they present a potential wildfire risk, and to discourage park users from bringing their own solid fuel barbecues, and/or provide for and educate about safe disposal of embers. The wildfire risk with visitors using solid fuel, is created by their need to dispose of hot embers after cooking on-site.

We also propose, where practical, to phase out LPG as a fuel in favour of electricity to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions (see the section in chapter 9 on Sustainable asset, water and energy management). This is however not likely to be practical in many locations that are remote from an electricity supply.

Open fires, including portable barbecues using solid fuels, are prohibited except in amenity zones where the risk can be effectively managed.

During a Restricted Fire Season, fires can only be used in these areas with a permit obtained from Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ). Fires are not permitted when a Prohibited Fire Season has been declared.

On days of very high wildfire risk, installed solid fuel barbecues will be closed and park visitors will not be able to use portable barbecues in parks.

The policies in the Fire management section in chapter 9 apply to park visitors and should be read alongside this section.

Open fires are not permitted when a Prohibited Fire Season has been declared.

Te whāinga / Objective

60. To safely manage cooking and campfires on regional parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

174. Visitors are only permitted to have fires including portable barbecues using solid fuel:

- a. in designated areas
- b. where they are attended by an adult at all times
- c. in accordance with fire authority restrictions.

175. Visitors must extinguish fires when requested to do so by council or Fire and Emergency New Zealand staff.

Tracks

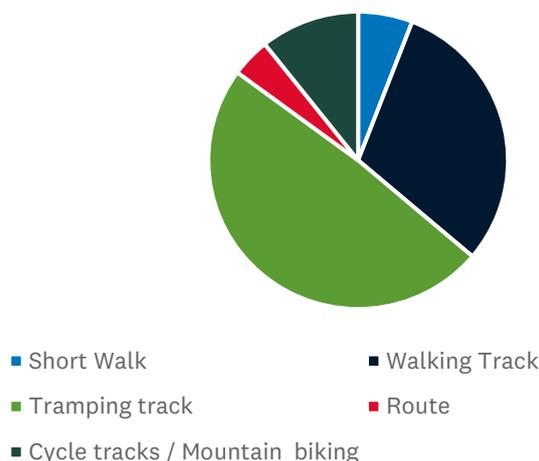
Track systems are often the major recreation facility in many regional parks and one of the main ways people enjoy and experience parks. They connect people to destinations, views and experiences, provide opportunities for walking, tramping, trail running, biking and horse riding. Some tracks are iconic walks or rides, connecting to the wider local and national track and trail networks and attracting tourists as well as Aucklanders. Tracks provide opportunities to tell stories and to interpret the natural and cultural landscape. Well built and maintained tracks help protect forest health.

In many places park roads and service lanes also act as walking tracks and trails for horses and cycling.

We have more than 500km of tracks across our regional parks ranging from formed paths to back country routes. This includes tracks currently closed due to kauri dieback disease, particularly in the Waitākere Ranges.

Our regional parks track network by type of track is set out in the diagram.

Regional park track network



User needs research

In 2021 we asked 2000 Aucklanders about how they use regional park tracks, what they like about the tracks and how we could improve the track network.

Most track users are walking (99 per cent), followed by running, cycling and dog walking, with some using wheelchairs (8 per cent).

Over 50 per cent of those surveyed had used very easy tracks which are mostly flat and up to a one-hour journey. These tracks are also more commonly used by people with children.

Around 8 per cent of people use the more challenging tracks and routes. Most of these people are walking these tracks which are also used by runners and cyclists to a lesser extent.

The current track network, made up of short to moderate length and relatively easy terrain, appears to be catering well for most peoples' needs. These types of tracks are being used by the largest number of people.

The research identified a need for more child-friendly track provision. More people disagreed there are enough tracks catering for 'younger children'.

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Māori and Pasifika respondents were much more likely to say provision of activities or attractions for children are important when choosing a track. Māori and Pasifika generally have higher preferences for amenities.

The users of the longer, more challenging, more rugged tracks, overnight walks and cyclists all identified that there were not enough challenging tracks in the network.

Most respondents said they want tracks to have natural features, to be good for exercise, be child friendly, have good amenities, and be a 1 to 3 hour journey.

The most important amenities that people mentioned are signage, access to toilets and secure car parking. Track users want to have a low impact on forest health, experience native bush and walk on tracks which are well maintained.

Approach to track development

To make tracks more legible for users, we intend to assign each track to a recognised track classification. Following a national standard helps us to communicate to users the type of track experience they can expect and provides an assessment tool to identify whether we are providing the appropriate type of track for most users of that track.

Track types and descriptions are provided in this table.⁵¹

Track classification	Description
Path	Well formed and well defined, providing for easy walking for all ages and fitness levels. Could include steps, boardwalks. Suitable for any type of footwear.
Short walk	Well formed and well defined, providing for up to one hour's easy walking suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Could include steps, boardwalks. Walking shoes recommended.
Walking track	Cater for those who want an extended walk up to a full-day return. Usually reasonably easy day trips, suitable for a relatively inexperienced visitor with a low level of backcountry skill. Light walking boots recommended.
Easy tramping track	Cater for less experienced trampers expecting a low-risk experience in the backcountry. Well-defined by either track formation or markers. Could contain some rough and uneven areas. Light walking boots or tramping boots recommended.
Tramping track	Cater for trampers, generally follow the lie of the land and are commonly not formed. May cover a wide range of terrain and cater for people with moderate to high backcountry skills and experience. Tramping boots recommended.
Route	Generally unformed and lightly cut trails with marker posts only, for experienced backcountry users with navigation and river-crossing skills. Tramping boots recommended.

Over time, physical conditions and the use of tracks changes. Where we need to make changes, we will follow the principles set out in Appendix 4 Track development principles.

We will apply the track assessment criteria under principle 3 in Appendix 4 when deciding which tracks to reopen and when considering proposals for new tracks.

Where tracks have increasing use, upgrades and improvements to design to accommodate more users will be appropriate over time. This will also make them more resilient to weather events, protect the forest, and provide for people with low mobility.

⁵¹ Source: New Zealand Standards Handbook: Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures

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Over time it is likely that we will develop new tracks, reroute some and close others while continuing to offer a variety of experiences. Consideration will be given to where other community tracks are located when considering priorities for tracks and different users on regional parks.

If tracks regularly become congested to the point where there are safety concerns or track use causes environmental degradation, we may have to introduce some form of booking system.

One-way loop tracks can reduce congestion and provide for multiple uses, especially on shared tracks. They also allow for social distancing.

We intend to refer to emerging best practice within New Zealand for developing tracks suitable for recreational cycling and mountain biking. Cycling tracks will be marked with standard cycling grades and use standard icons to make it easier for the user, such as AU/NZ standards and International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) standards. Grading tracks according to difficulty is used widely to support users to prepare safely.

Shared tracks minimise environmental impacts and maintenance costs while single-use tracks are appropriate for some activities like technical mountain biking where sharing is difficult.

Where tracks are shared use across modes (walking, cycling, horse riding), we encourage track users to ‘share with care’ – by being responsible for their own safety and being courteous to others. We will do our part with appropriate signage, pointing out hazards, and progressively upgrading shared use tracks to conform to best practice where possible.

To support users with low mobility, we aim to reduce physical or design barriers that may compromise access and to provide at least one accessible or barrier-free track in every regional park.

The ‘Limits of Acceptable Change’ (LAC) model was developed internationally for managing protected landscapes by determining what environmental impacts from “desirable” social activities are acceptable, and then determining management actions to ensure that the activities remain constrained within the limits of acceptable change.

There are opportunities for more multi-day walks in regional parks by building new tracks and connecting up with the local path network and national trails. Some of these networks already exist and could be marketed as day walks, multi-day walks or great walks.

Improving the quality of the existing track network will allow more users to be accommodated.

Volunteers, stakeholders and partners can help us develop and maintain tracks consistent with the park management intentions and the policy set out in chapter 6.

Te whāinga / Objective

61. To provide an easily understood track network that offers a range of opportunities for current and future recreational needs, complementing other opportunities in the region.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

176. Use widely understood track types defined in the NZ Standard for Tracks and Outdoor Visitor Structures as a basis for developing tracks and for communicating what types of tracks are available for visitors across the network.
177. Continue to provide for shared-use tracks and use internal park and service roads as part of the track network.
178. Continue to provide opportunities for remote and backcountry track experience within the network.

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179. Apply best practice standards for mountain bike trails, such as in the New Zealand Mountain Bike Trail Design and Construction Guidelines, and use standard commonly accepted icons for bike trails to be more legible for users.
180. Consider providing for one way loop tracks particularly for shared tracks and highly used tracks.
181. Consider providing single use tracks for activities where they cannot safely share with other users, for example mountain bikes and horses.
182. Expand and enhance the track network to complement Auckland's regional track network, with particular emphasis on:
 - a. improving the connectivity within the regional parks and to other public open spaces
 - b. endeavouring to provide one accessible track in each park (more in larger parks) for people with low mobility.
183. Consider progressively adopting the 'Limits of Acceptable Change' (LAC) model in managing and monitoring the condition of tracks, and determining possible responses to environmental, cultural and recreational impacts.
184. Consider managing visitor numbers, users and modes on congested tracks by restricting times, users, numbers or requiring bookings or other demand management (refer to the Demand Management tools section).
185. Provide for volunteers or partners to construct and maintain tracks via a formal agreement between Auckland Council and the volunteers or partners.



Te Ara Tūhura / Hillary Trail in the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park

Place name, way finding and warning signs

Place name and wayfinding signs enable people to get their bearings and find their way around parks. They identify locations, convey context and provide site-specific information on routes, distances, track conditions, timeframes and hazards.

Refer to chapter 4, [Whakahaere pou tarāwaho](#) / Management framework for general design guidance on infrastructure placement.

Te whāinga / Objective

62. To provide signs which encourage exploration of parks, improve the visitor experience and keep visitors safe.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

63. When planning the design, content and location of signs or information, consider the:
 - a. Auckland Council's Māori Language Policy
 - b. Puka Aratohu mō ngā Pānui Whakairi a te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Council Signage Manual
 - c. Regional Parks Signage manual, which determines the unique regional parks signage colour palette
 - d. standard track icons used across New Zealand for mountain biking and walking, to improve legibility for track users.
186. Use signs to:
 - a. inform park users of recreational facilities, opportunities or events
 - b. provide directions, timeframes for walking, track conditions and recommended routes
 - c. inform park users of hazards, gate closing times and of safety messages such as water quality, park closures or relevant bylaws and rules
 - d. direct people to interpreted sites and significant features.
187. Integrate signs into the park so they do not detract from natural and cultural or amenity values of the park such as by:
 - a. limiting the number of messages conveyed on site to the most important
 - b. combining messages (from different council departments and external agencies) on one sign to reduce clutter and maintenance
 - c. attaching signs to buildings or existing structures where practical or appropriate (but not onto heritage features or fabric).

Interpretation

Interpretation provides information about a park and is designed to raise awareness of its unique and significant features. Stories about parks and the people associated with them can be told via audios, videos, signs, displays, guided walks and visitor programmes. Art of all kinds can also be used to tell stories of place and some pou in our parks serve this function.

Mana whenua, park users and staff have identified opportunities to improve and extend interpretation in the park network to:

- raise awareness of significant sites and topical issues
- share and widen perspectives and provide social and cultural context to park stories
- inspire environmental advocacy and involvement in park programmes
- collaborate with communities, partners and stakeholders, especially mana whenua
- offer inclusive and bi/multi-lingual content
- encourage exploration and foster learning on park sites.

Interpretation can help visitors to develop a deeper connection to a place. Many opportunities to provide more interpretation on regional parks have been identified in the park chapters, in response to staff and community suggestions and mana whenua input. Often these relate to cultural heritage.

Interpretation is an important way of acknowledging and recording expression of Māori identity and acknowledging man whenua relationships with parks. It is also a way of telling stories about the European settler history of these places.

Embracing digital and mobile forms of interpretation allow us to tell complex and multilingual stories about parks, and can reduce sign clutter in parks and costs associated with vandalism and wear and tear.

Improving the quantity and quality of off-park interpretation (e.g. websites, publications and apps) can set the scene for potential park visitors and reach those interested in their regional environment. On-site technology such as QR codes and apps can help visitors access knowledge during their visit on site, and to access knowledge hosted off site.

Te whāinga / Objective

64. To develop interpretation which connects visitors with nature and facilitates an understanding of parks, places, culture and heritage.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

188. Use interpretation to communicate the values and policies in this plan by:
- a. increasing awareness of the role of mana whenua role as kaitiaki and their connection to a park and the stories they want to share
 - b. raising awareness of or demonstrating:
 - i. topical environmental issues especially those promoted by the council
 - ii. community-led activities
 - iii. restoration programmes
 - iv. heritage features

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- v. sustainable management practices on the park.
189. Provide interpretation that is accessible and understandable to people of different ages and abilities in a variety of forms to cater for different learning styles such as:
 - a. signs, videos, audios, visitor programmes, guided walks, workshops and activation events on parks
 - b. off-park and online and digital forms of interpretation for those planning a park visit, or for those who are unable to visit parks e.g. videos and apps
 - c. visitor centre displays and programmes that interpret stories about park places and people.
 190. Adhere to Auckland Council's Māori Language Policy 2016 when planning the design, content and location of signs or information.
 191. Use art for park interpretation purposes especially that generated by the regional parks' artist-in-residence programme.
 192. Work with other environmental and cultural agencies to extend audiences and share resources and stories where appropriate including the Department of Conservation, Auckland Zoo Auckland Museum and Auckland Art Gallery.
 193. Use interpretation best practice principles and employ innovative techniques.

Accommodation

Regional parks are the largest providers of camping experiences in the Auckland region, with capacity to provide for more than 1800 people in campgrounds and more than 210 bookable sites for self-contained vehicles. There are also baches and lodges in the network catering for at least another 200 people across the network. Where land is held as a reserve provision of overnight accommodation must comply with Reserve Act requirements.

Staying overnight in a park provides visitors with an additional way to experience a park at minimal cost. Regional parks offer a variety of campgrounds, lodges, baches and parking for certified self-contained motorhomes and caravans. They provide an opportunity for many Aucklanders to have a holiday in a rural and / or beach setting without having to travel far from home.

Park accommodation is well used during summer, on weekends and school holidays.

Our intention continues to be that we will provide basic overnight experiences in a mix of coastal, forest and farm locations at affordable rates. The low fees reflect the basic nature of the facilities provided and to keep the cost of the accommodation low to not be a barrier for many people. It is also a more cost-efficient model for the council.

Due to the popularity of many sites, the main difficulty to obtaining accommodation becomes the ability to be first in line to book it. Many families and groups make repeat visits year after year, forming life-long and inter-generational memories of the parks. To enable newer park users to have the opportunity to try the accommodation, there is an opportunity to promote the availability of the accommodation at times when it is not busy, such as mid-week and off-season.

There is potential to work with organisations providing services for young people and other groups to expand the opportunities for staying overnight to those who do not have all the equipment.

New accommodation opportunities could be provided by commercial or social enterprises including partnering with iwi to provide marae style stays and other local groups providing or servicing new accommodation.

There are opportunities to consider expanding the amount and range of accommodation by contracting others to provide these services and facilities. For example, mobile accommodation like tiny homes or caravans provide camping opportunities, because they are mobile they can be used to test new locations, be grouped together for events or be put in remote locations. We don't think it is appropriate for council to enter into this market, but we could contract others.

Park accommodation also provides opportunities for programmes such as artists in residence which help to promote the parks.

Some non-bookable park accommodation is used by volunteers and contractors for temporary accommodation, or used by parks staff, or rented to parks staff for residential accommodation, which can have the added benefit of having a ranger living on site. Our priority is to utilise park accommodation to enable visitors to stay on regional parks where possible, recognising that in some circumstances the location or layout of a building may not be suitable for this purpose.

Camping in vehicles is only allowed in regional parks in certified self-contained vehicles at designated spaces for these vehicles and upon booking and payment of the fee. Camping in vehicles is prohibited in any other type of vehicle and in any other part of a regional park.

Te whāinga / Objective

65. To continue providing an affordable, accessible and diverse range of overnight accommodation experiences in regional parks where appropriate.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

194. Periodically review the use of buildings suitable for overnight accommodation on the parks and deploy these buildings to their best use, taking into consideration the following factors in order of priority:
- the need for, or utility of, a ranger presence on the park
 - its potential as bookable accommodation
 - its potential as park volunteer and contractor accommodation
 - rental accommodation available to the public.
195. Continue to provide the current services, and where appropriate consider working with others to develop a range of additional bookable accommodation opportunities on regional parks (with different levels of service) including for:
- vehicle-accessible campgrounds (accessible by conventional vehicles)
 - back-country campgrounds (accessible by foot, horse, mountain bike and/or watercraft)
 - sea kayak / waka trail campgrounds (only accessible by water)
 - baches
 - lodges
 - tramping huts
 - certified self-contained vehicle parking areas
 - certified self-contained vehicle campgrounds
 - assisted camping like glamping, safari tents, caravans or tiny houses.
196. Prohibit camping outside of the designated areas.
197. Utilise appropriate existing park buildings to provide a range of accommodation for holiday rental.
198. Utilise park accommodation to provide for park related programmes, such as:
- targeted use of accommodation for new users including introductions to camping
 - targeted use of accommodation for people in need, such as respite opportunities for families e.g. women's refuge, families with children with disabilities
 - temporary accommodation for volunteers / contractors
 - artist in residence programmes.
199. Identify opportunities to develop new accommodation and new ways of using existing accommodation, including assisted camping, mobile accommodation, new campgrounds and baches.

Learning opportunities

Our regional parks offer extensive opportunities for the public to learn about nature, farming, cultural heritage, sustainable management and adapting to climate change. Education programmes also raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the park values and instil an ethic of stewardship.

Mana whenua have many stories to tell about the cultural history and significance of sites within regional parks.

Many of the natural and cultural features on regional parks have considerable scientific and educational value. Awareness and understanding of these values can enhance the visitor experience.

Regional parks enable the council to showcase low-carbon and renewable energy sources, and low impact technology in park buildings and infrastructure.

In some parks, we provide facilities for specialised outdoor education and recreation programmes aimed at developing skills and confidence in the outdoors and knowledge of the environment. We also operate a visitor centre and education programmes.

Regional parks are used by schools across the region with opportunities for outdoor education, lodges, camping and sporting events, and recreation. Schools also contribute to the park network by participating in planting, weed and pest control and monitoring.

Other organisations offer residential facilities including at the Hūnua Falls (Kokako Lodge), Āwhitu (Āwhitu Educational Camp) and Waharau (Waharau Outdoor Education Centre). The YMCA operates the Shakespear Lodge at Shakespear and Camp Adair which adjoins the Hūnua Ranges.

Te whāinga / Objective

66. To provide learning opportunities that will enhance the visitor experience and increase understanding of the value of our parks.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

200. Provide places to learn about park values, extend recreation skills, personal development, conservation management, mātauranga Māori and encourage a sense of stewardship and caring for parks.

201. Continue to provide education programmes including ranger-led programmes:

- a. general community education programmes
- b. school education programmes
- c. park user education programmes.

202. Provide information and learning experiences in multiple languages.

203. Work with mana whenua to tell stories about the cultural heritage and significance of sites within regional parks.

204. Continue to provide education programmes targeted at kohanga reo / kindergarten, kura kaupapa / primary schools and whare kura / secondary schools.

205. Give priority to providing and supporting education programmes for school-aged students and in particular, programmes that are aligned with the New Zealand school curriculum that raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the natural environment, mana whenua, historic and recreation values associated with regional parks and their sustainable management.

12. Ngā whakamanatanga / Authorisations for park use

In this chapter we set out how the council manages activities that require specific authorisation on regional parks.

For the 27 per cent of regional park land held under the Reserves Act decisions made about any proposed use of parks space must comply with the provisions of that act.

Most everyday informal recreational activities on parks are allowed as of right, provided the park values can be maintained and protected. Where people or organisations wish to use park space for activities that might have an impact on the park, or prevent others from also using the park or an area within the park at the same time, or require exclusive occupation of part of a park, or run commercial activities in public areas, authorisation is required. What we term as controlled and discretionary authorisations cover these instances.

We group activities in regional parks into four categories:⁵²

- Permitted: are generally allowed on all parks. These include many of the informal recreational activities discussed in chapter 11. In some cases they may be subject to restrictions to protect park values, align with the park classification and park category and ensure visitor safety.
- Controlled: where we set conditions around an activity type. It needs to be carried out in a specific location and may involve temporary allocation of an area or structure for a specific use.
- Discretionary: where the council makes its decision on a case-by-case basis, to be able to consider and place controls over impacts. All commercial activities, leases and licences require discretionary authorisation.
- Prohibited: are considered inappropriate because of their potential adverse effects on the environment, their incompatibility with the park vision, other approved activities or their impact other park users. Any activity listed as an offence under the Reserves Act or under relevant bylaws are also prohibited.

The authorisations framework is intended to ensure impacts on the park and park users are considered and managed, and we take a consistent and principled approach to assessing proposals.

Bylaws are referred to where they relate to certain activities that require authorisation. Please refer to the council's website for information on bylaws. A brief description is in Appendix 1.

⁵² These terms are not to be confused with the same language used in Resource Management Act 1991 processes.

Controlled activities

We have specific controls over some activities on regional parks which include staying overnight in designated areas, use of a bookable site or building, vehicular access where not normally granted, or recreational activities that can impact on other park users, such as horse riding.

Granting permits for pig hunting in the Hūnua Ranges may be reviewed over the next ten years, and potentially phased out, if the forestry areas become more open to other users and/or if kiwi are introduced in relevant areas.

Approvals will generally be by way of a permit or booking confirmation, obtained in advance. Activities will generally only be declined if capacity is reached, or the activity is outside the conditions set for the activity. Restrictions, such as conditions of use, codes of conduct, and temporary closures, may apply.

Controls can be applied to activities that are generally allowed where they are found to have an adverse impact at a location. The controls would be applied under the Demand management tools policies in chapter 11. For example, the council could impose limits on group sizes in specific locations or at specific times to reduce congestion impacts.

In some situations booking a site is not the only control an activity may require. If the booking is for an event or trading activity the relevant bylaw will apply and a discretionary permit may also be required.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

206. Manage the following activities as controlled activities through council's bylaws and other controls under the Local Government Act 2002 and Reserves Act 1977:
- a. recreational horse riding on designated tracks and in designated areas
 - b. pig hunting in the Hūnua Ranges (forestry areas)
 - c. overnight stays in designated areas
 - d. use of bookable sites
 - e. use of meeting and event venues or sites
 - f. vehicular access over internal park roads for people with limited mobility where public vehicular access is not normally provided
 - g. any other activities that the council sets controls over (as such running fitness training in parks⁵³).
207. Monitor high use areas of regional parkland and where a demand management tool is likely to be a suitable solution to reducing or mitigating impacts, investigate establishing controls as set out in the Demand management tools policies in chapter 11.

⁵³ Refer to the council's code of conduct for running fitness training in parks
<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/licences-regulations/commercial-activity-park/Pages/running-fitness-training-bootcamps-park.aspx>

Discretionary activities

Activities described as ‘discretionary’ require specific authorisation from the council on a case-by-case basis.

The Reserves Act has specific requirements for activities that require authorisation on park land held under this act. The classification of the reserve and the type of authorisation being sought will determine which part of the act applies.

There are various types of council authorisations for discretionary activities. Some authorisations are issued under a bylaw or other specific statutory process, or they may be a landowner approval. The authorisation can take the form of a concession⁵⁴, permit, consent, easement, licence, lease or some other formal agreement. Authorisations to:

- occupy tend to be in the form of licences, or historically leases
- use parks for commercial activities (for example to trade or provide or carry out services) in a park tend to be in the form of concessions or licences
- use, such as for a one-off event like a wedding, or a small series of events like a sporting series or research activities, tend to be issued as event permits.

Conditions may be included in the authorisation to ensure the activity is well managed, to reduce or offset negative impacts of the activity or obtain lasting benefits, and to ensure it is carried out safely and in accordance with our sustainable management policies.

Generally, activities with only a minor or low impact will not require in-depth assessment. Higher impact activities will need a robust assessment to determine whether they should be authorised.

This section outlines how the council intends to manage discretionary activities, including:

- the requirement for discretionary activities to obtain authorisation
- the information that needs to be submitted when making an application
- what matters may be considered in assessing an application
- matters which might be included as conditions, if necessary to manage adverse effects
- additional policies applying to community occupancy, commercial activities, filming, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) including drones, research, public and private utilities, and plaques and memorials including memorial plantings.

Other authorisations from council may also be required, such as resource or building consents. Bylaws on trading, events, filming, alcohol and signs may be particularly relevant.

⁵⁴ Concessions in this plan are defined as ‘authorisations held by private businesses or not-for-profit organisation operating in regional parks to provide products and services designed to enhance or facilitate the park visitor’s experience’

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Consultation requirements

In some cases, formal public notification or consultation may be required either under the Reserves Act or the Local Government Act.

The starting point for determining whether an application for a discretionary activity requires public consultation is to identify whether the regional park land is held under the Reserves Act or Local Government Act (refer to Appendix 8).

Notwithstanding the above, the council will continue to meet our obligations regarding te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi in providing opportunities for mana whenua to be consulted on relevant proposals for discretionary activities and developing processes with mana whenua to trigger when consultation may occur.

Where a discretionary activity is contemplated in this plan (refer to x section), the council will generally not undertake further public consultation on the proposal or notify persons potentially affected by the proposal (other than where we have an obligation under an existing authorisation or legislation).

General discretionary assessment approach

This section outlines the assessment approach for discretionary activities on parks. If the activity requiring authorisation has a standalone policy, this general policy should be read with that policy to determine whether it applies.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Scope and process

208. Manage as discretionary activities:

- a. all commercial activities on a regional park
- b. any activity (except a controlled activity) that involves the exclusive occupation of an area of a regional park
- c. any activity that requires the erection of permanent structures and buildings by any party other than the council
- d. use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) including drones, including their recreational use to film a regional park
- e. events
- f. installation of plaques and memorials including memorial plantings
- g. filming
- h. research and collection activities undertaken by individuals or external agencies
- i. adventure sport activities that go off-track or have particular safety requirements, such as abseiling
- j. activities not identified elsewhere in this plan that have a temporary or permanent impact on park values or the enjoyment of a park by other users.

209. Develop and maintain processes or procedures agreed with mana whenua in relation to their involvement in processing and assessment of authorisations.

210. Assess each application for a discretionary activity against the criteria in policies 211-214 (General decision-making criteria) and either approve, approve with conditions or decline discretionary activity applications.

Application information

211. Ensure that applications for a discretionary activity include the following information, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the activity proposed:
- a. A description of the proposed activity, including the preferred location, number of people involved (including participants, spectators and support staff/volunteers), and the duration/frequency of the activity.
 - b. An explanation of how the activity is aligned with the Reserves Act classification and purpose for which the land is held (if relevant), the park category (refer chapter 4), and any positive benefits to the park and park visitors.
 - c. A description of the potential adverse effects of the activity on park values and any actions the applicant proposes to take to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects.
 - d. A description of the potential adverse effects of the activity on park visitors and approved activities and uses of the park, and any actions the applicant proposes to take to avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects.
 - e. An assessment on whether the proposal could reasonably be undertaken in another location on the park, on another regional park or on another location, where the potential adverse effects would be significantly less.
 - f. A statement detailing what other approvals or consents, if any, are required.
 - g. Identification of those persons interested in or affected by the proposal (including mana whenua), the consultation undertaken, formal responses from those consulted and the applicant's responses to any issues raised in the formal responses.
 - h. An assessment of risks to public safety and a description of the mitigation measures proposed.

General decision-making criteria

212. Consider whether a discretionary activity provides positive benefits including:
- a. promoting stewardship and understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park
 - b. enabling mana whenua to exercise kaitiakitanga and enhance their long-term wellbeing, the mauri of the park and its natural and cultural values
 - c. demonstrating environmental best practice and a sustainable approach to managing the activity
 - d. increasing and supporting access to the parks by communities of greatest need and sectors of the community that are not current users of the parks
 - e. opportunities for park visitors to enhance their enjoyment of the park or extend themselves by developing skills in the outdoors
 - f. contributing to park management and development.
213. Consider the following criteria when assessing applications for a discretionary activity:
- a. the views of mana whenua
 - b. consistency with the classification, where the park land is held under the Reserves Act
 - c. consistency with other acts that guide the council in the management of the area of interest, including the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act and the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act
 - d. consistency with this plan including vision, values, policies, and relevant park chapter
 - e. the adverse impacts, including cumulative impacts of the proposal on the park values, park infrastructure, approved activities and the enjoyment of other park users

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- f. any measures that can be taken to avoid, remedy, mitigate or minimise the adverse impacts of the activity
 - g. the degree to which exclusion of the public is necessary for the protection of public safety, the security or competent operation of the proposed activity
 - h. any relevant oral or written submissions received through consultation or public notification of the proposal, if any consultation is undertaken
 - i. whether the proposal could reasonably be undertaken in another location where the potential adverse effects would be significantly less
 - j. the capacity of the park to accommodate the activity including any reduction in open space and impact on the functionality of the park
 - k. any relevant bylaws, bylaw controls and any approved code of conduct for that activity
 - l. the proposal is not inconsistent with Watercare Services Limited's lease/licence document with respect to water supply reservoirs and associated buffer lands if these areas are affected
 - m. the positive benefits as identified in policy 211.
214. Consider additional criteria when assessing new applications from persons or organisations holding existing authorisations:
- a. the applicant has complied with all previous authorisation conditions
 - b. the applicant has complied with all regulatory requirements
 - c. the applicant used the full portion of rights allocated
 - d. the applicant has promoted appropriate behaviour on the park with respect to environmental stewardship and other park users
 - e. the absence of successful convictions or infringement actions taken against the applicant under the Local Government Act 2002, Reserves Act 1977 and other relevant legislation.
215. Impose conditions on approved discretionary activities to protect the regional park environment, the health, safety and wellbeing of visitors, and to facilitate park operations, including:
- a. the location, duration, time of day and time of year of the activity
 - b. measures for avoiding remedying and mitigating adverse effects on the environment and natural and heritage resources
 - c. the number of people (including participants, spectators and support staff / volunteers) who may participate
 - d. the use of park facilities or services
 - e. compliance with any safety standards and legislation, and measures the applicant will take responsibility for the safe conduct of their activity
 - f. monitoring of the authorisation and any conditions imposed
 - g. any other matter the council considers relevant to ensure the activity is compatible with the objectives and policies of this plan.

Commercial activities

As a general rule, all commercial activities on regional parks are regarded as discretionary activities requiring approval. An exception to this is fitness training on park land, which is a controlled activity under this plan. It is allowed providing the council's code of conduct is followed (see the council's website for [fitness training on a park](#)).

A reserve's purpose is defined by its classification under the Reserves Act which places constraints on whether and how commercial activity may be allowed and how it is authorised. Public notification of a commercial proposal may be necessary where it is not in conformity or contemplated in a park in the lease and licence section, or where legislation requires public consultation.

Council bylaws also regulate some commercial activities on parks, including trading, filming, events and signage. These types of commercial activities are assessed under criteria in relevant bylaws, with consideration given to additional criteria in this plan. Other commercial activities are assessed under the general discretionary criteria in this section to ensure the trading activity is appropriate to the park classification under the Reserves Act (if any), values and category.

The requirements of the legislation and bylaws are both the basis for authorising commercial activities on parks. Auckland Council manages legislative requirements for commercial activities through a landowner approval process.

Various commercial activities take place in regional parks. These can include guided tours, temporary or seasonal activities such as mobile food vendors, equipment hire, events that charge for entry and commercial filming.

Commercial activities can enhance visitor experiences by providing additional services. They may make park spaces more vibrant and contribute to people's enjoyment of the park. Commercial activities can help explain the park's values and deepen people's appreciation through activities such as nature, cultural or heritage tours. Commercial operators can be the community face to many park users and tell park stories.

However, commercial services and facilities provided on regional parks have the potential to detract from the essential experience of being in a natural, undeveloped place. Some of the most cherished values of regional parks is in retaining for the millions of people in this bustling city, some places of retreat. So an essential condition for commercial provision of services and facilities in regional parks is that commercial signage is kept to an absolute minimum, including branding and on-park marketing promotions.

Commercial activities on parks have generally been considered on a 'first-in first-served' basis by the council assessing an application from an operator who has approached the council.

While continuing to allow for this, we propose to review the commercial and council services provided on regional parks to take a more proactive approach in identifying opportunities where commercial activities could enhance the visitor experience in a way that is compatible with the vision and values of regional parks. This could lead to the council seeking expressions of interest from commercial operators or forming partnerships (including with mana whenua) to operate services or develop facilities. A range of possible service allocation models and collaboration / partnership models could be explored.

The council's sustainable procurement framework is relevant to the commercial activities we allow to occur on regional parks. The council's sustainable procurement policy will be considered where relevant including our goal to promote intentional supplier diversity by connecting buyers with Māori and Pasifika businesses.

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Commercial activities that support community outcomes (such as social enterprise) or support community groups or clubs will be examined against this section. The benefits of the activity are included in the assessment criteria.

An individual, group or organisation may apply to the council for a licence to undertake a discretionary activity on an ongoing basis (with regular review periods), for example, tourism operators running guided walks. As a general principle, these approvals will be limited where the public are readily accessing and enjoying the parks and there is little capacity for additional discretionary activities.

Land transitioning to parkland or newly acquired by the council sometimes has existing commercial activity as part of its previous use. While the land is waiting to be developed, these activities may be allowed to continue.

Te whāinga / Objective

67. To provide for commercial activities in regional parks where they enhance the experience of park users, protect park values and are aligned to:
 - a. the vision, values and policies of this plan
 - b. the park category and Reserves Act classification and park values expressed in the park chapters
 - c. any relevant bylaws.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Reviewing the way we work with commercial operators

216. Review the council's allocation, location and expected benefits of commercial activities across the regional parks to ensure the framework:
 - a. complies with all Treaty-related decision-making obligations (including, to the extent they are relevant, the findings of the Supreme Court in *Ngāi Tai Ki Tāmaki Tribal Trust v Minister of Conservation* [2018] NZSC 122)
 - b. fosters a collaborative approach between council and operators to deliver services to park visitors
 - c. considers equity and sustainability policies
 - d. provides an optimal financial return to council
 - e. represents a fair charge for access to regional parks to the operator
 - f. incentivises operators to support the mana whenua partnership objectives in this plan
 - g. incentivises operators to achieve objectives in this plan relating to sustainable management including waste management and mitigating climate change
 - h. benefits parks and park visitors consistent with this plan.
217. Consider applying an allocation mechanism for commercial visitor services to be provided in regional parks, and where relevant, follow the council's sustainable procurement process and use our sustainable procurement programmes such as Amotai.
218. Work with mana whenua to provide cultural inductions for commercial operators.

Decision-making criteria

219. Assess applications for commercial activities other than trading under the General decision-making criteria (policies 211-214) for discretionary activities.

TUHINGA HUKIHUKI Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

220. Assess trading applications under the trading bylaw criteria, and consider the following additional decision-making criteria:
 - a. consistency with the classification, where the park land is held under the Reserves Act
 - b. views of mana whenua
 - c. whether the trading activity enhances the experience of park users consistent with the park category and values outlined in the park chapters
 - d. limit the number of operators and frequency to protect the natural and undeveloped character of regional parks and the visitor experience, and avoid congestion and excessive noise
 - e. limit the duration of any authorisation for trading to twelve months (per bylaw)
 - f. any relevant oral or written submissions if consultation or public notification of the proposal is undertaken.
221. Work with and be led by mana whenua on initiatives to develop commercial operators' knowledge, awareness and ability to articulate cultural heritage values, relevant to the service it aims to provide and the park.
222. Assess how a commercial operator supports delivery of Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan outcomes.

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Events

Many wonderful family and community memories are made on regional parks and many of the most memorable are from attending events.

Regional parks are ideal locations to host a wide range of community events and many, such as Ambury Farm Day, draw large crowds. The larger open spaces on some regional parks and the ability to accommodate people on-site by camping can enable multi-day events and festivals to be held.

Public events bring many positive benefits to the regional community. They bring people together to share memorable experiences, celebrate different cultures, enable cultural expression and increase cross-cultural awareness. At the same time they can bring economic benefits to the region by drawing people in and invigorating local economies.

The council's Events Policy identifies the council's reasons for supporting public events. The policy applies to events held on regional parks. The council's guiding principles in the Events Policy are to seek to be open, transparent and accountable; be inclusive, accessible and value mātauranga Māori; be responsive and collaborative; and act sustainably in holding events.

Many Aucklanders use regional parks to host private events, such as wedding ceremonies or birthdays. A private gathering is treated as an 'event' when it triggers certain thresholds.

Approval to hold events is required in advance when the event is over a certain size and duration, is likely to impact on other park users, damage grounds, require special vehicle access, have amplified music that may impact on other park users, or require a liquor licence or road closure, or there is an intention to hold a ceremony on a culturally sensitive site.

Weddings are treated as an event regardless of size and require authorisation. Wedding receptions are not generally approved on regional parks as private parties requiring exclusive use of spaces would be inconsistent with the park values on the public land.

In assessing authorisations for events in particular, the council seeks to:

- ensure the event is well-managed, to optimise the community benefit

TUHINGA HUKIHUKI Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

- protect important park values from the impacts of large groups of people and event infrastructure, including risks to cultural, historic, natural and recreational values
- ensure parks are reinstated after the event to at least the same condition as before the event
- manage impacts of events on other park users including noise, lights and park closures
- ensure safety and security matters are well managed including access and parking.

A single authorisation may be provided for a series of similar events held over a period of time.

Events must also comply with relevant bylaws about events and seek regulatory approvals such as resource consent as appropriate.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

223. Assess event applications under the event bylaw criteria, and consider the following additional criteria when assessing any event application:
- a. consistency with other approved park authorisations, leases and licences
 - b. the duration and timing of the event
 - c. measures to manage negative impacts of the activity on the park and other park users including vehicle parking arrangements and clean-up activities
 - d. sustainable management of the event, such as carpooling or bus travel arrangements for event attendees
 - e. the requirement for rest periods for popular event locations so the community can enjoy the park
 - f. specific restrictions in individual parks chapters which may include restrictions on event locations, event duration, seasonal restrictions, participant numbers and event types
 - g. criteria in any relevant bylaw about trading.

Filming (commercial and organised)

The council is 'film-friendly' and aims to facilitate filming within the region recognising that filming has regional social and economic benefits. The regional parks provide iconic and unique settings that are highly attractive to filmmakers.

Filming activities in regional parks are treated as a discretionary activity. They are authorised through the Auckland Film Protocol under the relevant filming bylaw.

For the purposes of this plan we refer to the definitions of filming in both the bylaw and Auckland Film Protocol⁵⁵. It covers both commercial filming and organised filming for non-commercial uses.

Filming activities can have positive impacts, showcasing a regional park and its natural and cultural values. The activities however can also have negative impacts. The filming activity can impact other park users and the park environment. The film may influence people's behaviours at a park and increase visitation in sensitive locations.

The process for obtaining permission to film is managed through Screen Auckland who is the contact for filming activity permissions on public land in Auckland. The commitments, conditions and guidelines for filming in the Auckland region are set out in the [Ngā Tikanga Hopu Whakaahua i te Rohe o Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland Film Protocol](#).

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

224. Provide for organised filming activities in regional parks in a way that minimises impacts on park values and other park users.
225. Work with Screen Auckland to consider applications for filming activities consistent with the Auckland Film Protocol, any bylaw and this plan, focusing on:
 - a. mitigating any negative effects caused by filming in the park location
 - b. considering favourably filming that would contribute to Auckland's social, economic and environmental outcomes
 - c. identifying areas of cultural significance to mana whenua on regional parks that need to be considered and managed to avoid adverse effects
 - d. identifying areas of regional parks where filming on or of the park might generate unintended significant visitor growth that leads to adverse effects on the natural, cultural or recreational values of the park.

⁵⁵ Filming is defined in the Trading and Events in Public Places Bylaw 2015 as 'the recording of images, moving or still, for commercial purposes or at a scale that might unduly obstruct use of a public place, but excludes the recording of a private celebration or event or the recording of current affairs or news for immediate release'. In the proposed 2022 bylaw, it is proposed as 'filming, meaning the recording of moving or still images as part of an organised activity whether or not for monetary gain (for example, recordings for a documentary, educational curriculum, television, feature or short film, social media or similar project).' In the Auckland Film Protocol, it is 'The act or period of photographing moving images, be it digitally, on tape, or on film stock, for broadcast on television, in movie theatres or for internal corporate, educational or private use'.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (including drones)

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), also known as remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS), unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or as drones are used in parks for recreation, research, search and rescue, park operations such as kauri dieback monitoring, filming and photography.

The presence and noise generated by UAVs can undermine people's sense of privacy and enjoyment of a park or disturb animals including birds and farm stock. This can occur if the UAV is flying near or over regional park land even if launched from outside the park.

Flying drones / UAVs in a regional park is a discretionary activity and must comply with the relevant bylaw (including about public safety and nuisance) and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) [rules](#).

General authorisation to use UAVs may be contained in council's [Code of Conduct for Drones and UAVs](#). Applications to operate UAVs for filming is made through Screen Auckland (see Filming (commercial and organised)).

The CAA sets rules for the use of unmanned aircraft under the Civil Aviation Act 1990. This includes restrictions on flying in particular zones. Nine regional parks are in drone no-fly zones specified by the CAA, as these are generally in air or heliport flight paths.

Unpowered model aircraft gliding has been allowed in some regional parks for many years and is a generally permitted activity in some locations (refer chapter 11, policy 123.i). Ambury, Muriwai, Long Bay and Duder Regional Parks are regularly used by model aircraft gliders. Where the council has granted a lease or licence for a group such as a model aircraft club to operate model aircraft that activity is managed through the conditions of the lease or licence.

UAVs can be a useful tool to assist council in efficient and effective operations on parks. The council may at times use UAVs for a range of park operations.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

226. Allow council use of UAVs for operational purposes and to support search and rescue operations.
227. Require authorisation in advance for all commercial and recreational use of UAVs and drones on and over regional parks.
228. Require authorisation in advance for all parties wishing to use UAVs to film or photograph regional parks (including for non-commercial use).

Decision-making considerations

229. Consider the general decision-making criteria for discretionary activities, the council's code of conduct for UAVs and the following criteria for not allowing UAVs to be flown over:
 - a. areas where park access is temporarily restricted
 - b. picnic areas, campgrounds, campsites and park accommodation or other areas where it would be impractical to avoid flying over people
 - c. areas identified as restricted in any code of conduct for drones and UAVs, or any no-fly area specified in CAA rules.

Public and private utilities

Utilities in this plan refers to infrastructure providing telecommunications or radio communications services, electricity generation or transmission services, and systems for water, wastewater and stormwater. Examples include cell towers, power lines, transformers, scientific monitoring and research infrastructure, water pipes, filtration systems and pumpstations for water, wastewater and stormwater. Water supply dams and related infrastructure located in the Waitākere and Hūnua Ranges are addressed in these park chapters.

Public and private utilities may provide essential services to parts of the region. For example, overhead power reticulation runs through parts of the Waitākere Ranges Regional Park servicing communities such as Piha and Anawhata. Utilities may also unlock land adjacent to regional parks for development where it is zoned for intensification or changes in land use.

The open spaces of parks are often perceived as convenient and logical places to locate public and private utilities. However, this can result in:

- restrictions on community access, use and future development
- negative impacts on park values including natural, cultural, heritage, landscape and recreational values
- decrease in the amenity of a park
- the need to trim trees and vegetation to avoid power lines
- temporary or permanent loss of parkland and negative impacts on the park during installation or access for maintenance.

In general, the council does not support the use of regional park land for public and private infrastructure, unless there is a clear benefit to the park or the negative impacts of the activity have been addressed. Applications for new utilities or the renewal of existing utilities will be considered a 'discretionary' activity.

Where they are proposed to be located on regional park land managed as reserve, section 48 of the Reserves Act prescribes how easements for utilities will be considered and when the proposal will require public notification.

Section 48A of the Reserves Act addresses how proposals for telecommunications stations will be assessed and when public notification will be triggered.

Where upgrades of existing utilities or renewal of authorisations are being considered, the council may review options to improve the facility to fit better with the park. Examples include the undergrounding of an existing above-ground water reservoir, the screening of existing infrastructure, or reducing the size of structures.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

230. Generally avoid public and private infrastructure being located on parks particularly where it restricts or prevents current and future use, enjoyment and development.
231. The development of utilities on parks will not be approved except where they cannot reasonably be located elsewhere (including locations where negative impacts are less), the impacts on park values can be avoided or minimised and where they meet the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977 for park land held under that Act.

TUHINGA HUKIHUKI Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

232. Consider a range of options to improve the impact of utilities on parks including options for enhancing park outcomes, offsetting impacts with improvements elsewhere in the park or park network.
233. Enable the installation of utilities that support park operations and recreational use of the park.

Decision-making considerations

234. When assessing an application to locate utilities on a park or to upgrade an existing utility consider the general discretionary assessment approach and the following criteria:
 - a. measures to reduce the impact of utilities on future development or enhancement of the park (e.g. locating utilities including pipelines around the perimeter of the park)
 - b. co-siting with existing compatible park and utility structures
 - c. minimising the footprint of structures
 - d. seek, wherever practicable, to have overhead power reticulation undergrounded on regional parks
 - e. options to hide, screen, disguise or improve the visual impact of infrastructure and/or to improve park values
 - f. proposals to offset adverse impacts in circumstances where utilities cannot reasonably be located elsewhere.
235. Consider seeking relocation or removal of existing utilities:
 - a. on termination or expiry of a lease, easement or right of way for a utility
 - b. where the utility has become redundant
 - c. where changes are proposed to improve the park for recreational or community use or enhance park values
 - d. where impacts of the utility on community access and enjoyment are considered inappropriate.

Plaques and memorials and the scattering of ashes

Parks are often seen as desirable places to commemorate people and events.

This policy covers requests to install plaques, memorials, memorial plantings and the scattering of ashes where they commemorate a particular or event.

Memorials have in the past taken the form of monuments such as obelisks, statues and pillars, or other structures such as gates or artworks. They may also appear as landscaping or planting. Typically, plaques are a metal plate fixed to surfaces like a park bench. They are frequently requested by people to celebrate a life, especially where that person had a personal connection with a park.

Similarly, people often request to scatter ashes on parks or into waterways within parks. In some cases, people want to mark a memorial or new birth through planting a tree.

Plaques and memorials offer most benefit to the wider public where they commemorate people or events of significance. They may help build understanding across cultures, serve as a reminder of historical events or societal culture or have education benefits.

They may tell uncomfortable or emotive stories to help raise awareness of key issues and build understanding, such as of historic events. Some memorials are works of art and may be appreciated for their own heritage values.

However, plaques and memorials within parks can create a feeling of solemnity and exclusivity. The message and the atmosphere aren't always appropriate or conducive to the use and enjoyment of the park by the wider community. Acknowledging particular people or events may also reflect outdated historical perspectives.

The council must consider the appropriateness, scale, quantity and location of plaques and memorials to ensure they do not detract from the natural setting of a park or create clutter. This is especially important as the removal of plaques and memorials later is frequently an emotive issue.

Planting a tree or other plant as a memorial can also be problematic because of this emotional investment where those trees or plants do not thrive or need special maintenance. An exotic species could be weedy and not appropriate to the site. Indigenous species should be eco-sourced from a reputable source.

For these reasons, we prohibit plantings without permission in a regional park and we prohibit the scattering of ashes in regional parks. Refer to the **Prohibited activities** section.

Plaques and memorials that are relevant to the park are preferred.

With the exception of closed cemeteries, we do not allow personal plaques or memorials to be placed within parks. We prefer people consider other options such as holding a private event in the park, or improving parks through activities such as volunteer planting, donations or granting permission to tell significant stories in educational material such as park interpretation.

Reviewing outdated plaques and memorials is an important aspect of managing parks. Providing a balanced historical view that is reflective of the history of the place or people of the area may mean adding to, or revising, their existing messaging. Removal may be required when they are cluttering a park, impacting options for renewal or improvements, or reducing people's enjoyment of the park.

It is important to work with mana whenua, heritage specialists and community stakeholders when reviewing existing plaques and memorials to ensure different views are considered.

TUHINGA HUKIHUKI Mahere Whakahaere i ngā Papa Rēhia ā-Rohe

Closed cemeteries and urupā are considered heritage areas and have protections under legislation to protect those heritage values. Proposed plaques and memorials in these areas should be consistent with heritage values. The Cemeteries and Crematoria Code of Practice 2014 provides guidance for certain activities in closed cemeteries including ash interments.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

236. Encourage people seeking personal plaques and memorials to consider other ways to commemorate people, groups or events.
237. Work with mana whenua to assess applications for plaques and memorials including consideration of their location and interpretation.
238. Remove existing personal plaques or personal memorials when necessary, where:
 - a. improvements or enhancements to the park are approved
 - b. an associated park asset (such as a park bench with plaque) is to be renewed
 - c. the plaque or memorial has fallen into disrepair
 - d. the plaque or memorial was not approved.
239. Where personal plaques or personal memorials are proposed for removal, make all reasonable efforts to notify the applicant or family.
240. Work with mana whenua and communities to update cultural narratives associated with existing plaques and memorials where the opportunity arises.
241. Support education on the inappropriateness of scattering ashes in waterways in te ao Māori and the negative impacts of scattering ashes on park values.

Decision-making considerations

242. Assess applications for plaques and memorials as discretionary activities applying the general authorisation assessment criteria and in addition they will no longer be permitted unless:
 - a. they are associated with a grave within a cemetery in the park
 - b. they are relevant to the proposed location and are associated with a group or event of significance; being a person, group or event of enduring interest to mana whenua and/or the wider community
 - c. they acknowledge persons who have contributed in a significant way to the development of Auckland's regional park network
 - d. they acknowledge events within the park of historical, environmental or cultural significance, or the opening or naming of a park or a major facility on the park
 - e. they acknowledge the gifting of significant land to the Auckland regional parks network or were a condition of a gift of land
 - f. they acknowledge a collective community action for the park.

Research

The council recognises the importance of research on regional parks. This policy outlines the general circumstances where research, including the collection and removal of material may be allowed as a discretionary activity. It recognises that while it is desirable to increase our knowledge about parks, the primary purposes of the regional parks covered by this plan relate to the protection of park values and the provision of recreation opportunities. It is therefore important that research complements rather than detracts from these purposes.

The removal of material as part of a research programme may have more significant adverse effects on park values than other methods of research. For this reason, we need to assess the effects of these activities more rigorously before making a decision on an application. This policy identifies matters to which particular regard will be given.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

Decision-making considerations

243. When assessing applications to undertake research on regional parks consider the general authorisation assessment for discretionary activities and the following criteria:
- a. the degree to which the research adds value to council's management of parks and is aligned to the objectives and policies of this plan
 - b. the nature of the project and credentials of the applicant
 - c. the public benefits of the research
 - d. the necessity for it to be carried out on a regional park
 - e. the techniques to be used, especially with respect to the taking of samples
 - f. strategies and actions which are proposed to avoid, remedy or mitigate and monitor any adverse effects of the research on park users and natural and cultural resources
 - g. whether the results will be publicly available and the dissemination of results is planned
 - h. any impediment to public access to the park
 - i. any physical impacts on the park including the erection of buildings or other structures.

Carbon offsets or resource consent mitigation or offsets

In the climate emergency, many companies wish to offset their carbon emissions. Approaches from commercial (or philanthropic or community) parties who wish to support restoration efforts and help mitigate climate change are considered favourably.

The council registers carbon credits for reforested areas on regional park land. We have a preference to retain carbon credits as the long-term responsibility for management of the forested land rests with us.

Approaches to do planting as a carbon offset are considered as a discretionary activity to ensure the activity follows restoration policies and to ensure it is coordinated with other park management activities and the biodiversity, heritage, recreational and other management intentions for that site (refer chapter 7: Restoring indigenous ecosystems section).

Any requests to undertake mitigation or offsetting activities in regional parks to meet resource consent requirements to offset environmental impacts in other places should also be considered via a discretionary application. The council expects resource consent requirements to offset to be fulfilled in the catchment in which the development is taking place. However, in exceptional circumstances other land is sometimes considered. Any such applications will be closely scrutinised as a restoration on a protected regional park does not compensate for ecological loss in the original catchment. Considering the proposal as a discretionary application ensures all aspects are considered.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

244. Treat approaches to offset carbon or offset resource consents as discretionary activities and apply the general discretionary assessment.
245. Consider favourably approaches to offset carbon by supporting restoration efforts on regional parks where they align with the vision and values of this plan and wider environmental values.
246. Consider the following additional criteria in assessing offers by commercial (and philanthropic and community) entities to undertake planting and restoration work on regional parks (including for mitigation or offset purposes):
 - a. whether all relevant aspects of the activity are planned and managed well in accordance with the Restoring indigenous ecosystems section in chapter 7: Whakamaru i te taiao / Protecting the natural environment
 - b. whether activities are coordinated with other park management activities and with the biodiversity, heritage, recreational and other management intentions for that site
 - c. putting an agreement in place where appropriate to ensure council and other party goals, commitments and responsibilities are clear.
247. Seek to retain carbon credits for reforestation work on regional parks.

Leases and licences

For the purposes of this plan we define a lease as providing for the exclusive use of a park area or a building while a licence provides for non-exclusive use.

Leases and licences may be granted over land held under the Reserves Act and Local Government Act. The Reserves Act prescribes how leasing and licencing may be approved on reserve land according to its classification. Proposals for leases and licences should align with the Reserve Act classification, and where relevant the park category and objectives and policies in this plan. For parkland held under the Local Government Act under section 138(2) we must consult on the granting of a lease for more than six months that has the effect of excluding or substantially interfering with the public's access to the park.

Leases within regional parks are generally considered to be undesirable because the parks are for public use. We have a general preference to issue licences rather than leases, particularly to commercial occupants. However, some circumstances might justify a lease. For example, where investment is made in a facility partnership we would consider formalising occupancy under a lease. The facility purpose would be expected to align with the plan's vision, values and objectives, and with statutory requirements.

At times the council may partner with organisations to provide community services or support outcomes in a local community. Refer to chapter 6: E tūonohono ā-hoa me ngā mahi tūao / Collaborating with others, the [Facility Partnerships Policy](#) and the [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport Investment Plan 2019-2039](#) for our position.

Community occupancy

Community leases and licences are a significant way in which we support community organisations.

Community leases and licences provide space in parks for non-profit organisations delivering activities, services or programmes that serve community needs or enhance a park's values. They allow groups to carry out social, cultural, educational, heritage and recreational activities as well as work that enhances parks. These include recreational clubs, community groups such as marae which provide outdoor education and other social outcomes, and environmental organisations such as 'Friends of Parks' groups.

Lease and licence agreements may include conditions to support community outcomes such as sharing of facilities and making membership affordable and accessible. They may include conditions to protect the park environment, the health, safety and wellbeing of park users, and to facilitate park operations.

The council's Community Occupancy Guidelines 2012 do not currently apply to regional parks. The intention is to bring regional parks into these guidelines when they are next reviewed.

Consideration of new leases and licences

Some existing leases on regional parks include golf courses, restaurants, community organisations, charitable trusts, commercial forestry and metropolitan water supply catchments. Many have historic origins that pre-date the land being vested for regional park purposes. The metropolitan water supply catchments carry out essential functions in perpetuity for the public good.

We are willing to contemplate granting new leases and licences within existing activity footprints for provision of certain types of community or commercial activities and services in certain facilities or locations, noting that the lease or licence holder of an existing asset or area may change over time. We list these in the tables at the end of this section. Some of these facilities or activities are also mentioned in park chapters.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

68. To provide opportunities where appropriate for community activities which enhance the park users' experiences, support conservation activities or encourage a wider range of park users.
69. To protect park values and outcomes sought for the park including minimising loss of community access when considering any lease or licence arrangement.
70. To support activities that meet community needs, enhance environmental outcomes and enhance parks and people's experience of them.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

248. The assessment of community occupancy proposals should consider the following:
 - a. ability to provide access to regional parks by users who might not usually have access to regional parks
 - b. if located in a building, the ability to reuse an existing park building
 - c. options to provide for shared use or community use and access to park space or facilities
 - d. any recreation or community needs provision plan or assessment, and compatibility with a network view of the need for that activity to occur on a park, including and not limited to the outcomes of application of park and recreation management assessment tools or frameworks to the proposed activity.
 - e. the viability of the proposed activity.
249. Conditions may be imposed in any occupancy agreement to protect the park environment, the health, safety and wellbeing of visitors, and to facilitate park operations and ensure alignment with any statutory requirements for the land. These include but are not limited to:
 - a. the location and duration of the activity
 - b. the times of day or year the activity may be undertaken
 - c. measures for mitigating adverse effects on the environment and natural and heritage resources
 - d. methodology and measures for monitoring the effects of the activity
 - e. the number of people (including participants, spectators and support staff / volunteers) who may participate
 - f. the use of park facilities or services
 - g. health and safety factors
 - h. a trial period to assess the effects of the activity on the park
 - i. meeting accreditation and/or training requirements
 - j. any modifications / alterations to the proposed activity and associated infrastructure
 - k. the review of the approval and/or any conditions imposed
 - l. any other matter council considers relevant to ensure the activity is compatible with the objectives of this plan.
250. The council has a preference to grant licences rather than leases, particularly for commercial activities, with the exception of leases granted to Watercare Services Ltd or for facility partnerships in line with the Facility Partnerships Policy.

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252. Leases and licences are contemplated within existing activity footprints in the regional park specified, for provision of community activities and services listed.

Regional park (area)	Community lease or licence contemplated for
Ambury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organised recreation for an equestrian centre and pony club and for flying non-motorised model aircraft
Āwhitu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilities for organised outdoor education and camping accommodation organised recreation for golf
Hūnua Ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ham radio accommodation or supply operators for the Hūnua Trail outdoor education lodge accommodation and facilities at Kokako Lodge
Long Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building for historical society use
Mahurangi East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintenance and use of Vine House by a water sports club
Muriwai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> surf lifesaving, surf club, fire and emergency services, environment conservation
Shakespear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> activities and accommodation facilities for outdoor education
Waharau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> activities and accommodation facilities for outdoor education camping facilities
Waitākere Ranges (Central)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> amateur radio operations accommodation or supply operators for the Hilary Trail
Waitākere Ranges (North)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organised recreation for golf accommodation or supply operators for the Hilary Trail
Waitākere Ranges (South)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a museum at Huia building facility for community use
Waitākere Ranges (West)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organised outdoor recreational and educational activities including camping facilities facilities supporting marine related recreation, education and safety activities including surf lifesaving
Waitawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organised outdoor recreation, education, and marine based activities (including accommodation, camping and safety activities)
Wenderholm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building for historical society use

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254. Leases and licences are contemplated within existing activity footprints in the regional park specified, for provision of commercial activities and services listed.

Regional park (area)	Commercial lease or licence contemplated for
Hūnua Ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telecommunications, scientific monitoring and research activities and facilities • fire and emergency services • forestry
Long Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telecommunications, scientific monitoring and research activities and facilities
Muriwai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas for recreational skills training including for a surf school • provision of food and drink • camping facilities
Pakiri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pastoral grazing
Te Rau Pūriri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilities related to pest fish control and eradication
Waitākere Ranges (Central)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telecommunications • scientific monitoring and research activities and facilities • operation of Rose Hellaby House
Waitākere Ranges (South)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pastoral grazing • lodge and camping accommodation at Whatipū • provision of a wastewater disposal field

Prohibited activities

'Prohibited' activities are activities in this plan which are inappropriate on regional parks, because they would have permanent adverse effects on the park environment or are incompatible with the park vision and values and the existing provision of recreation opportunities, or impact on the safety of park user. No approval will be given for prohibited activities to take place on a regional park.

The Public, Safety and Nuisance Bylaw 2015 provides for the plan to specify some prohibited activities. Some may be an offence under the Reserves Act.

Animals

Animals (other than dogs or horses addressed elsewhere in this plan) such as livestock, pet cats, ferrets and other domestic animals, could have a detrimental impact on the park values as a result of competition for food source and predation. Taking or releasing animals onto regional park land without authorisation is an offence under the Reserves Act and bylaws about animals.

Burials and scattering of ashes

Burials on regional parks are not considered appropriate as they:

- change the chemical composition of the soil and waterways
- present future operational issues in the maintenance and development of these areas
- significantly impact other park visitors through the activity itself
- make the areas sacred / tapu for many ethnicities and therefore effectively render these areas inaccessible to the public.

Occasionally there are marine mammal strandings on beaches adjoining the parks. The Department of Conservation is responsible for responding to these strandings, and there may be occasions where burying marine mammal bodies on regional parks is the preferred option. Auckland Council will work with the Department of Conservation to facilitate this.

We prohibit the scattering of ashes in regional parks as this can be a very sensitive matter. Scattering of ashes in water is culturally inappropriate for Māori. Different cultures have different ways of dealing with cremation and the disposal of ashes. Scattering ashes on parkland can be unsettling for those maintaining or enjoying these spaces.

The council provides areas for ash scatterings at North Shore Memorial Parks, Waikumete Cemetery and Manukau Memorial Gardens.

Camping or overnight stays in vehicles (outside specified areas)

Camping and overnight stays in vehicles is provided as a controlled activity in specific areas in many of the parks. Outside of these areas camping and overnight stays in vehicles is prohibited under the Reserves Act where relevant, and in relevant bylaws about public safety and nuisance.

Mining

Mining, and the associated exploration and mining activities, substantially alter the affected landscape, ecosystem and flora and fauna. These activities are prohibited because they are not consistent with the vision of regional parks and would detract from the park values and the enjoyment and safety of park

visitors. Taking of mineral rock or soil samples for research is considered a 'discretionary' activity under the Research section above.

Off-road recreational vehicle use

Off-road recreational vehicle use (for example, motorbikes and four-wheel drive vehicles) can have a significant impact on other park users, including safety risk, and can damage the park environment and cultural heritage sites, particularly in wet conditions, and disturb farm animals and wildlife. Recreational off-road motorised vehicle activity is popular, however the council has not identified any areas on regional parks where this can be accommodated and therefore it is a prohibited activity. Instead, we are working with other landowners, such as Woodhill Forest, to identify areas elsewhere within the region that maybe suitable and welcomed on private land.

Recreational hunting

Recreational hunting can pose safety risks to other park visitors and can be incompatible due to the off-track nature of the activity. Pig hunting is managed by the council as part of pest control programmes. It is only undertaken by contractors in the Waitākere Ranges, and by contractors or hunters in the Hūnua Ranges that have a council permit and follow the conditions set by the council. Refer also to the Controlled activities section.

Set netting

The Ministry of Fisheries is responsible for set netting regulations. The council believes that this form of indiscriminate fishing is inappropriate in coastal waters adjoining regional parks, where the intention is to protect and enhance the natural values. We continue to intend to work with the Ministry of Fisheries to encourage their development of regulations that ban set netting in front of regional parks. We intend to discourage this activity until such time as regulations are developed, by not allowing set netters to use the park to access coastal areas.

The council has identified areas and times where for public safety reasons (such as people swimming into nets) set netting should be prohibited due to the area being used by other park users. These areas are set out in bylaws about public safety and nuisance.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

255. Prohibit activities from occurring on regional parks that may have a significant adverse impact on the park values, or would significantly detract from the enjoyment and safety of other park users.
256. Prohibit people from bringing in, leaving or removing animals (including dogs), unless permitted in a bylaw or in this plan, or with the prior approval of the council.
257. Prohibit burial of bodies, body parts, placentas, animals and ashes on all regional parks with the exception of:
 - a. park farm animals
 - b. animals killed through biosecurity programmes
 - c. burials of marine mammals
 - d. burials in cemeteries that haven't been formally closed.
258. Prohibit the scattering of ashes on all parks with the exception of the scattering of ashes in cemeteries that haven't been formally closed.
259. Prohibit camping outside of designated camping areas in regional parks.

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260. Prohibit overnight stays in vehicles outside of designated spaces for certified self-contained vehicles on all regional parks.
261. Prohibit all mining activities, including prospecting, exploration and mining, within regional parks with the exception of mining activities approved by the Crown on Crown land administered as a regional park, where the Crown expressly reserved ownership of minerals.
262. Prohibit off-road motorised recreational vehicle use in regional parks (excluding electric bikes of less than or equal to 300 watts).
263. Prohibit recreational hunting on all regional parks except where authorised through a permit for the Hūnua Ranges, or a council pest control programme.
264. Continue to use the process in the relevant bylaw to prohibit use of regional park land for set netting access and activities and to prohibit set netting for public safety reasons, and work with the Ministry of Fisheries to seek a wider ban on set netting through fisheries regulations.
265. Prohibit activities which are identified as a permitted, controlled or discretionary activity in sections of this plan but which have been specifically excluded from occurring on an individual park where outlined in the park chapter.

Fees and charges

As stated in the values chapter, access to regional parks is free of charge to all people for informal recreation. Where services or facilities are provided that provide a higher level of service to a park visitor, the council or an authorised commercial or community operator may collect a fee or charge from park users for the additional service. This occurs in many instances, from bookable day and camping sites, baches and park buildings, through to events.

The council may charge fees where an activity requires the special or exclusive use, or provision of an area, facilities or services that provide a private benefit to a park user. Costs to the council include administration costs of controlled activities, and processing and monitoring costs of discretionary activities.

We may charge below the current market value for the activity where it will result in proven public good; such as increased provision of recreation opportunities, park visits by sectors of the community that are currently under-represented in the parks, or it has educational value. In these cases, we may set conditions to ensure this public good is realised. These conditions could relate to fees and charges, interpretation of the park values, access to facilities and programmes and club membership.

The council's charges for the regional parks network are identified in the recreation pricing schedule, of which copies are available from the council. Other fees may also be applied as determined on a case-by-case basis with regard to the criteria in the first policy in this section.

Te whāinga / Objective

71. To recover costs, to the council, associated with activities on regional parks where the benefit to a recipient is greater than that derived by the general public.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

266. Charge fees for controlled and discretionary activities which:

- a. reflect current market values
- b. reflect the degree of private benefit and/or public good to be gained from the activity
- c. cover, or partly cover, costs to the council in supporting the activity.

267. Set discretionary activity conditions to ensure the intended public good is realised when fees are set below market values to reflect this element of the activity.

268. Set out fees and refund policies in the council's recreation pricing schedule and review this schedule annually.

13. Whakahaerenga / Administration

Managing unformed legal roads

There are some unformed legal roads (also known as ‘paper roads’) sited within regional parks. These are not to be confused with the internal access roading found within regional parks. Legal roads are legally under the management of Auckland Transport, but in effect is managed as regional parkland. The council wants to formalise the management of unformed legal roads within regional parks with Auckland Transport to protect park values.

Where the potential function of the land as public road has been superseded by the surrounding land’s parkland status, we will seek to incorporate the paper roads into the park land through a formal road closure process.

Te whāinga / Objective

72. To protect park values through appropriate management of unformed roads.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

269. Seek a formal agreement with Auckland Transport over the management of unformed legal roads within and adjacent to regional parks to protect park values.

270. Work with Auckland Transport to progressively close unformed roads in regional parks that are not necessary for other reasons.

Management transfers

Most regional parkland is best managed by the council. However, there are a few circumstances that may prompt a review, such as:

- the land is used more for local community purposes and would be more appropriately managed by a local board
- the land area is isolated from the bulk of regional parkland and may be more effectively managed by a local board or another agency
- the land is vested in mana whenua through a Te Tiriti settlement, which provides for transfer of management from the council
- the land is a smaller parcel adjacent to a larger area of public open space managed by another agency.

Likewise, for similar reasons the council sometimes manages land vested in another agency. There are parcels of Crown land within the regional park network that have been managed by council as regional park for many years. Usually the land adjoins or is surrounded by regional parkland, and it is most effectively managed as regional park.

The Department of Conservation (DOC) manages marginal strips and other lands adjacent to several regional parks. The council and DOC may by mutual agreement consider management transfers where this integrates management and achieves better conservation and use outcomes.

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Transfer of management does not transfer ownership. This section identifies those circumstances where transfers may be contemplated. Any transfers must follow relevant legislation, where applicable, and be covered by a management agreement or other mechanism.

Te whāinga / Objective

73. To manage regional parkland and adjoining public land adjoining in an integrated manner.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

271. Consider the transfer of management in whole or in part, of:

- a. regional parkland to a relevant public agency or iwi authority, or
- b. other adjoining open space land to the council

where the proposed transfer:

- i. promotes effective and efficient management of resources and parkland
- ii. will not compromise recreational use or the integrity of natural and cultural resources on a park, or
- iii. enables mana whenua to practically express kaitiakitanga over sites and landscapes of significance

272. Consult with any affected parties on a proposed transfer of management where the proposed transfer could result in changes to park user access.

Honouring gifts and bequests

Where land is gifted, bequeathed or transferred to the council for regional parkland purposes, the council will honour the intentions of the donor or transferor included in the terms of any formal document confirming the gift, bequest or transfer.

Where land has been gifted to contribute to regional parks, this will be acknowledged in a variety of ways such as naming of the park or features in the park, on-park interpretation and online information.

Appendix 2 lists gifts of land for regional parks and identifies where conditions attach to the gift.

Significant gifts or donations of money have also supported the acquisition of regional parkland. Many contribute to regional parks with their time and resources. These gifts and donations are acknowledged in appropriate ways.

All acknowledgements will be in accordance with the policies on Naming parks and park features in chapter 8, and in accordance with the Plaques and memorials and the scattering of ashes section in chapter 12.

Te whāinga / Objective

74. To honour any commitments relating to the gifting, bequeathing or transfer of land to the council for regional parkland purposes.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

273. Promptly carry out and maintain undertakings entered into by the council relating to the gift, bequeathing or transfer of land to the council for regional parkland purposes.

274. Consider how to acknowledge gifts appropriately in a variety of ways.

Protecting ‘in perpetuity’

The regional parks are acquired and managed on behalf of the people of Auckland, to protect their natural and cultural values and for their use and enjoyment.

Knowing the parks are there, that they are in public ownership and that they are protected in perpetuity for future generations, is a significant part of their value to many people.

Most regional parks are protected in perpetuity by way of an Order in Council made under section 139 of the Local Government Act 2002. This helps to ensure they are retained in public ownership. In effect this means that these parks are, except for minor boundary adjustments as permitted under section 139 (3), protected from disposal.

Te whāinga / Objective

75. To retain regional parks in perpetuity for the benefit of the people of Auckland.

Te kaupapa here / Policy

275. Seek orders in council under either s139 or 139A of the Local Government Act 2002 for regional parkland that is added to the regional parks network.

Encroachments

Encroachments are temporary or permanent structures, gardens or materials placed or built in parks without a written authorisation from the council.

They range from significant structures like buildings, decks, swimming pools, seawalls and boat ramps to temporary structures like gardens, landscaping and occupation such as vehicles or boats. Encroachments also include illegally stored materials such as waste and building material from adjacent building sites.

Auckland Council is aware there are existing encroachments on parkland, but we have not done a comprehensive review of them.

Encroachments are often identified when property changes ownership, subdivision is planned, members of the public inform the council or when further use, development or maintenance of the park is proposed.

Placing private structures on parks can:

- restrict or prevent public access through the park
- restrict the future use and development of park land or lead to permanent loss of park land
- decrease public use and enjoyment of the park, including perceptions that public land has been privatised
- negatively impact visual and physical amenity and natural, cultural or other values of the park
- pose a health and safety risk for the public.

The cumulative impact of private structures may effectively dispose of parkland or make it unusable for recreational and community use.

Many encroachments such as gardens and fences can be easily removed. However, the removal of more substantial permanent structures such as driveways or parts of buildings can become contentious and

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emotive. In some cases, property owners contend that they purchased the property after the encroachment was put in place, or that they had received approval for the encroachment from a legacy council or staff member.

It is important to understand that the granting of a resource or building consent does not replace the need for approval from the council as landowner and does not give people the right to build on parkland.

The council does not support encroachments on parkland. As the landowner of parks, we have the right to require any encroachments to be removed or to remove an encroachment at the private landowner's expense.

Under the Reserves Act some types of encroachments fall within section 44 (unauthorised use of reserve) and more broadly are an offence under section 94 of the Act. The council also has powers under bylaws about public safety and nuisance to prohibit and remove encroachments from park land.

New encroachments will be addressed as a priority. The longer an encroachment stays in place, the greater the likelihood a new owner might think they have a right to that land.

Investigating private structures on parks which have existed for some time is expensive and time-consuming. In general, the council will prioritise investigation and removal of private structures on parkland based on the criteria listed in the policies below and as resources allow.

Ngā whāinga / Objectives

76. To keep regional parks free from encroachments.
77. To use a criteria-based approach to prioritise the removal of existing encroachments.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

276. When reviewing existing encroachments, the council will prioritise addressing those which:
 - a. present public health or safety issues
 - b. are new or can be easily removed (for example sheds, gardens and fences)
 - c. prevent or constrain use, development or enhancement of a park
 - d. impact adversely on public use or access of a park, especially along the coast and waterways
 - e. impact adversely on natural, historic or cultural heritage values, or ecological processes.
277. Encroachments will be required to be removed by the encroaching landowner, at their cost, and the park reinstated to the satisfaction of the council.
278. Where a structure cannot be removed easily, the council may agree to a managed removal process, which may include authorising occupation or use of park land for a finite period of time. The agreement may require the removal of the encroachment/s in the event of the sale, subdivision or development of the encroaching property.
279. The council may consider incorporating encroaching structures into the park as a council asset without reimbursement to the encroaching landowner where there is a clear public benefit that outweighs any negative impacts, costs or risks.

14. Whakatinana me pūrongorongo / Implementing and reporting

This chapter presents:

- how funding for implementation of regional park intentions is set
- how we will prioritise delivery
- when we will consult over park changes
- an intention to report annually on delivery of this plan.

Implementing

Funding Plan delivery

This draft Plan does not set the funding for regional parks. Instead, funding of activities within the council is allocated through the publicly consulted Long-term Plan process. This sets the budget for the following ten years. In the intervening years, the council publishes an annual budget. These processes allow the council to prioritise spending across its wider portfolio and respond to changes in budgets and revenue, such as impacts from Covid19.

Once finalised, this draft Plan will offer guidance to annual and long-term planning processes. The funding priorities for regional parks should align to achieving the vision, values, objectives, and management intentions in this draft Plan.

Role of Plan

Once finalised, this Plan will inform relevant council decision-making related to regional parks. This plan should also be read alongside relevant council bylaws, policies and strategies.

Prioritising delivery

The general policies in this draft Plan and the management intentions in each park chapter together set out ambitious goals.

The council's long-term plan for the decade 2021-2031 was prepared in light of funding pressures due to the pandemic. It provides for modest levels of capital investment sufficient to replace some aging assets and takes a steady approach to operational funding levels.

The aspirations expressed in this draft Plan, where they suggest new investment, are generally not costed and funding is not set aside. In many cases, new investment is more likely to occur where investors in the wider community are able to step in and partner with the council to develop services or facilities.

In our [10-year Budget 2021-2031 Long-term Plan](#) we have decided to use alternative ways to deliver services, such as through partnerships, digital channels and multi-use facilities (refer [page 14 of the LTP](#)). This has informed our emphasis in this plan on delivery through collaborating with others (refer chapter 6).

Within the council's existing budgets for each operational area (such as environmental services, heritage, or parks, sports and recreation), we intend to prioritise the management intentions in this plan.

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Ongoing capital expenditure supports all facilities, park and farming operations. These include upgrades to tracks, fences, buildings for visitor use and park operations, heritage buildings, and farming assets such as stockyards, farm equipment, water supply and purchasing the stock.

We provide criteria to help guide capital expenditure decisions. Refer also to criteria in the Spatial planning section in chapter 4.

Consulting over park changes

The council is required to consult on a given decision in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government Act (and the Reserves Act, for reserves-related decisions). We will consult in accordance with our legal obligations.

The consultation requirements are likely to be triggered when:

- planning for significant changes to parks
- developing a response to new threats or to changing park use
- proposing a management response that was not contemplated in this plan
- proposing a variation to or comprehensive review of this plan.

For example, we consulted on a five-year track reopening plan following track closures to protect kauri in 2018. We consulted on options to manage the conflicts between vehicles on Muriwai beach and other users in 2020-21. The proposed planning exercises for recreation planning at Waitākere and Hūnua Ranges and Te Arai would involve public consultation.

The extent and nature of public consultation may also take into account IAP2⁵⁶ guidance and other guidance used by the council.

Te whāinga / Objective

78. To prioritise delivery of the policies and management intentions in accordance with overall council policy, consulting as prescribed by legislation.

Ngā kaupapa here / Policies

280. Use the values and policies in this draft Plan as criteria to help set priorities for delivery, noting council priorities may shift to respond to new opportunities or challenges as they arise during the life of this plan.

281. Base priorities for capital expenditure (for renewal, upgrade and development of assets) on, in priority order:

- a. ensuring basic facilities are available at appropriate locations in every park to enable safe and hygienic use (toilets, wayfinding signage, tracks, shade and shelter) (refer to policy 126 in chapter 11, Providing for a range of recreational uses)
- b. addressing any urgent or timely public safety hazards
- c. addressing any conflicts in visitor use
- d. improving equity of provision (refer to chapter 0: Improving equity section)
- e. improving sustainability of provision (refer to chapter 9: Sustainable access section)

⁵⁶ International Association for Public Participation

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282. In addition to the priority areas identified in policy 281, priorities for capital expenditure should consider:
- a. legislative requirements (such as health and safety risk)
 - b. operational risk
 - c. public reputation
 - d. availability of external funding.
283. Publicly consult as prescribed by legislation and in accordance with council standards for good engagement practice, on key decisions in respect to regional parks.

Reporting

Community suggestions for this draft Plan included requests that delivery of this plan be reported on regularly. Mana whenua, volunteers and community members who are actively involved in caring for the regional parks have a particular stake in understanding where the council efforts are going, and how their contributions fit into a bigger picture.

Other benefits in reporting regularly on delivery of this Plan include:

- enabling mana whenua and key stakeholders to provide valuable feedback
- helping boost a community sense of connection and shared stewardship
- highlighting and recognising community efforts and providing inspiration to others
- helping plan, coordinate and prioritise effort for the future.

Communicating about delivery against the management intentions in this draft Plan will be relatively efficient and doing so yearly is a suitable reporting timeframe. Within an annual report we could also provide links to other information produced in that year. The council produces a range of information relating to regional parks, from monitoring the state of the environment to surveying park visitors.

Te whāinga / Objective

79. To regularly communicate progress and work undertaken relating to regional parks and delivery of this plan.

Te kaupapa here / Policy

284. Produce and publish an annual report on progress made in delivering this plan including considering appending links to research reports relating to regional parks produced in that year.