



DRAFT Victoria Park

Reserve Management Plan 2025



TE KAUNIHERA Ā ROHE O
WHAKAAHURANGI
STRATFORD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

The Stratford District Council (Council) manages 6.9108 hectares of reserve land known as Victoria Park. The management and preservation of this reserve delivers, for both current and future generations, the following:

- Community use and enjoyment
- Recreational and sporting pursuits
- Protection of the environment

Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 requires Council to prepare a management plan for Victoria Park. Council is required to keep this management plan under continuous review. This document is the second edition of the Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan and supersedes all previous reserve management plans.

The Victoria Park Reserve Management 2025 will focus on goals and outcomes for this reserve. The preparation of this management plan allows Council, together with the community, to establish the desired mix of uses and values for this reserve and set in place a consistent policy to guide the day-to-day management, as well as the long-term development.

Victoria Park was reserved for recreation purposes in 1891/92 under the provisions of the Land Act 1877. The site was originally known as the Stratford Domain and was renamed to Victoria Park in 1897, in commemoration of the 60 years reign of Queen Victoria. Trees were planted on the reserve and the lake was formed by damming the creek running through the park

Sports facilities began in 1902 with basic playing fields, expanded in 1923 to include a grandstand, terraces, an athletics track, tennis courts, and a playground. While some features have changed, the park remains focused on sports and recreation.

As part of Stratford District Council's 2018-2028 Long Term Plan, the addition of a Bike Park, Pump Track, ½ Basketball Court, and BBQ Pavilion was completed in 2021 with a \$2 million government grant. In 2024, the Stratford Bike Park won a Merit Award for Active Park/Sportsground at the Recreation Aotearoa - Green Pavlova Awards.

This Reserve Management Plan contains policies and objectives for effective management, which is aimed at maximising use, enjoyment, and continuing development, while balancing biodiversity and ecological sustainability. These objectives and policies are also guided by other planning documents and processes such as the Long Term Plan and the Parks, Reserves and Cemeteries Asset Management Plan.

1. Introduction

Section 41 (Reserves Act 1977) requires the Stratford District Council (SDC) to prepare a management plan for Victoria Park. SDC is required to keep this management plan under continuous review.

The result is the development of the Parks Activity Management 2006. A district wide Reserves Management Plan 2011 was developed, with the 1st edition of the Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan 2018 created to focus solely on the management and future development of Victoria Park.

This is the 2nd edition of the Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan.

1.1. Purpose

This management plan is a community document. It is intended to provide the community with certainty about the function and management of this reserve.

The Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan (the Plan) focuses on goals and outcomes for this reserve. The preparation of the Plan allows Council, together with the community, to establish the desired mix of uses and values for this reserve and set in place a consistent policy to guide the day-to-day management, as well as the long-term development.

Council has prepared the Plan to:

- Satisfy the statutory provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.
- Provide a comprehensive planning document with clear policies and objectives to enable it to manage the reserve for the purpose it is set aside for.
- Provide the community with an opportunity to have quality input into the future of the reserve.

1.2. Objective

The objectives of the Parks, Reserves and Cemetery Activity are to:

- Provide an attractive and functional reserve that satisfies community social and recreational needs.
- Provide appropriate, safe, accessible, and exciting outdoor areas that inspire people to undertake appropriate passive and active recreational activities.
- Plan for, and forecast, the cost-effective investment to anticipate demand trends that may affect this investment.
- Maintain adequate management systems for all matters to ensure Victoria Park is maintained to meet adequate service and safety standards.
- Provide for informed community consultation on all matters regarding Victoria Park.
- Include Iwi in any future development of Victoria Park.
- Protect any sites discovered within the park that potentially could be of significance to Māori and afforded appropriate protection as required by the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014.

1.3. Scope

The Plan addresses all activities that occur within the reserve. It is envisaged to read in conjunction with all of Council's Activity Management Plans.

Activities and operations identified in this plan feed into the Parks, Reserves and Cemeteries Asset Management Plan and District Plan.

1.4. Strategic and Legislative Context

Stratford District Council has been appointed by the Crown to control and administer Victoria Park pursuant to the Reserves Act 1977. The Act empowers Council to carry out certain actions, impose rules relative to the use of the reserve and develop objectives and policies regarding its future development.

In 2011, in accordance with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977 (“the Act”), Stratford District Council prepared and adopted a District-wide Reserve Management Plan for all reserves owned and/or administered by Council. That plan outlined Council’s general intentions in respect of the use, development, maintenance, protection, and preservation of reserves. It also established policies in this regard and referred to the Parks Activity Management Plan 2006 for details of planned developments.

Section 41(4) of the Act requires Council to:

“Keep its management plan under continuous review so that the plan is adapted to changing circumstances or in accordance with increased knowledge”.

The Plan contains policies and objectives for effective management which is aimed at maximising use, enjoyment, and continuing development, while balancing biodiversity and ecological sustainability. These objectives and policies are also guided by other planning documents and processes, such as:

- Asset Management Policy
- Parks, Reserves and Cemeteries Asset Management Plan
- Taranaki Regional Council’s Regional Walkway and Cycleway Strategy for Taranaki 2007 (currently under review)

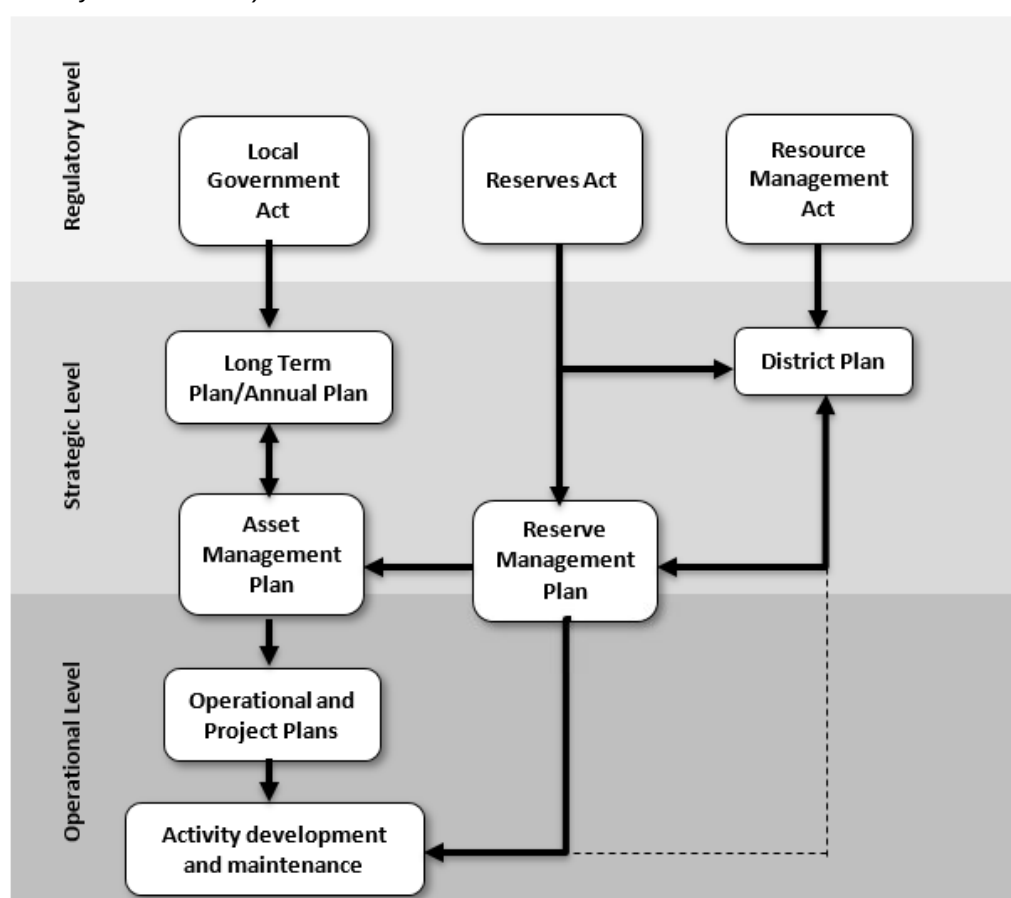


Figure 1: Reserve Management Strategic Framework

2. Victoria Park

2.1. Location and Access

Victoria Park (**Figure 2**) is bordered to the north by Regan Street (SH.43), to the east by Cordelia Street, to the south by Fenton Street and to the west by Orlando Street. In total it comprises nearly 7 hectares and is the second largest park in the Stratford township.



Figure 2: Victoria Park, Stratford

Victoria Park is located approx. 250 metres from the retail centre of Stratford and contains the following features:

- Bike Park
- Pump Track
- ½ Basketball Court
- BBQ Pavilion
- Croquet Green
- Playground
- Skate Park
- Sportsground
- Building Facilities
- Croquet Club
- Victoria Park Lake
- Green Space

There is one public carpark within the park, servicing the Croquet Greens, Playground, and Sportsground.

2.2. Land Status and Legal Description

Victoria Park occupies land that is contained within one certificate of title as detailed in **Table 1** below. All areas are recreation reserve subject to the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.

Table 1: Land Status and Legal Description

Land	Description
Legal Description	Sections 24-38, 67-81, 111-124, 151-163 and 1039, and Part Section 150 Town of Stratford
Area	6.9108 hectares
Status	Recreational Reserve – NZ Gazette 1981 page 3659
Vesting	Stratford District Council – Vesting Order 8292359.1
Zone	Protected Area
Primary Use	Informal recreation and organised sports

2.3. History

Victoria Park was reserved for recreation purposes in 1891/92 under the provisions of the Land Act 1877. The site was originally known as the Stratford Domain and the Stratford Town Board was appointed by the Crown as the Domain Board. This role later evolved to the Stratford Borough Council and then the Stratford District Council.

In 1897, in commemoration of the 60 years reign of Queen Victoria, trees were planted on the reserve and was renamed Victoria Park. On the initiative of the Stratford Acclimatisation Society, a lake was formed by damming the creek running through the park at the Cordelia Street frontage and stocked with perch. In its early days it became a popular spot for anglers, boaters, and swimmers before finally adopting the more passive role it enjoys today as a stormwater detention pond and home of waterfowl.

In 1902 the first sports facilities were established with the development of basic playing fields south of the lake and in 1923 these were further developed with the addition of a grandstand on the lake side and raised terraces around the other three sides. At the same time an athletics track was established along with tennis courts and a children's playground north of the lake. Some of these facilities have since been removed and over the years a variety of other facilities have been developed, but today Victoria Park remains as primarily a sporting and active recreation venue.

As part of SDC's 2018-2028 Long Term Plan consultation, the creation of a Bike Park, Pump Track, ½ Basketball Court and BBQ Pavilion project received great support, and council included the project in their LTP programme. A \$2 million grant from the Government, through their Shovel Ready Programme, meant the project was delivered in 2021, without financial help from ratepayers. In 2024 at the Recreation Aotearoa - Green Pavlova Awards, the Stratford Bike Park won the Merit Award for Active Park/Sportsground.

Table 2 outlines the chronological history of King Edward Park.

Table 2: Chronological History

Date	Action
1891	Sections 24 – 33, 67 – 76, 111 – 124 and 150 – 163 Town of Stratford reserved for recreation purposes by Gazette 1891 page 3.
1892	Sections 36 – 38 and 79 – 81 Town of Stratford reserved for recreation purposes by Gazette 1892 page 1071. Reserve brought under Public Domains Act 1881 by Gazette 1892, page 1653. Stratford Town Board appointed as the Domain Board and named Stratford Domain.
1897	Celebration of Queen Victoria's 60 years as reigning monarch, trees planted and the reserve renamed Victoria Park. A lake was also developed at this time and stocked with perch by the Stratford Acclimatisation Society.
1902	Basic sports fields were developed on the south side of the lake.
1920	Stratford Borough Council appointed as the Domain Board.
1923	Upgrade of sports fields with the addition of a grandstand, raised terracing, athletics track, and tennis courts. Children's playground developed north of the lake.
1926	Victoria Park Memorial Gates unveiled by General Sir Andrew Russell, C.M.G., K.C.M.G. ANZAC Day 25 th April 1926.
1954	Stage built over the lake in recognition of Stratford's 75 th Jubilee – used for concerts and band recitals.
1958	135 square metres of reserve revoked and sold to adjoining owner (Gazette 1958 - page 1141)
1960	Unformed portion of Ariel Street between Regan and Fenton Street stopped and along with Sections 34, 35, 77 and 78 Town of Stratford formally added to the reserve by Section 10 Reserves and Other Lands Disposal Act 1960.
1968	Stage over lake demolished.
1989	Reserve classified as recreation reserve pursuant to Reserves Act 1977.
1996	Sporting facilities that had been developed over the years came under review leading, in subsequent years, to the relocation of the croquet greens, removal of an old roller-skating rink and the development of the northern sports field, the skatepark and the children's playground.
1997	Fenton Street boundary was planted in rhododendrons and flowering cherry trees.

Date	Action
1997	Exeloo toilets installed in Victoria Park.
1999	The old grandstand was demolished, and a new Grandstand was built.
2009	Reserve formally vested in Stratford District Council.
2015	The skatepark was extended.
2017	Bike Park project concept design incorporated into Victoria Park Reserve Park Management Plan 2018
2018	Bike Park project integrated into the Long-Term Plan (2018 – 2028)
2020	Shovel Ready Funding approved – Construction of Bike Park, Pump Track, ½ Basketball Court, BBQ Pavilion & Exeloo toilet (North) underway
2021	Bike Park official opening
2023	Sportsground (Ground 1) received a significant drainage upgrade, due to ground issues. Old Skate Bowl filled in (Health & Safety risk) – new location confirmed and new Skate Bowl installed
2024	Bike Park wins Merit Award for Active Park/Sportsground at The Recreation Aotearoa - Green Pavlova Awards.



Figure 3: Victoria Park Lake (1909)

3. Progress So Far

This section sets out how we have progressed so far, including:

- What we have achieved since 2018.
- Review process.
- Stakeholder feedback.

3.1. What have we achieved?

Table 3 provides a summary of our achievement so far in terms of actions that were identified in the Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan 2018.

Table 3: 2018 Actions and Progress Status

No.	2018 Proposed Actions	Who	Progress Status
1	Improve amenity value of central lake through selective removal of vegetation	Stratford District Council	Ongoing (planting as and when needed)
2	Develop northern sports field in accordance with concept development plan	Stratford District Council	Complete
3	Develop fitness trail adjacent path around lake	Stratford District Council	Elected Members removed this project from being included in the 2024-2034 LTP
4	Construct cricket indoor training facility	Stratford Cricket Club	Ongoing
5	Review of all lighting requirements within this reserve	Stratford District Council	Elected Members removed this project from being included in the 2024-2034 LTP
6	Formalise reserve encroachments relative to Croquet Greens	Stratford District Council	Complete

3.2. Review Process

Council, in accordance with Section 41 of the Reserves Act 1977, is required to develop and regularly update reserve management plans for the reserves it controls.

The process for reviewing the Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan is detailed in **figure 4** on the following page.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of feedback for the existing Victoria park Reserve Management Plan (2018).

Management Levels of Service

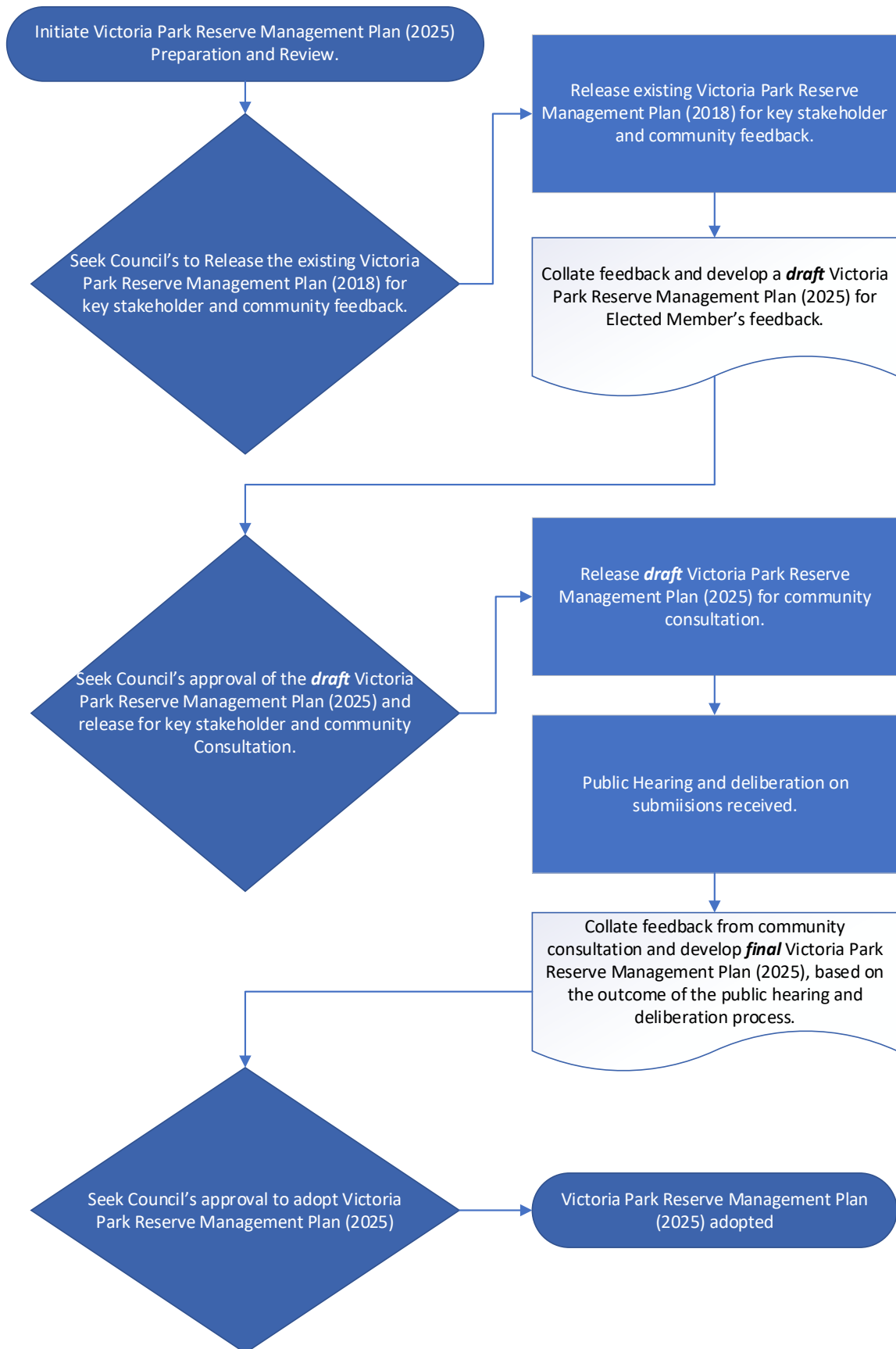


Figure 4: Review Process

4. Management Levels Of Service

4.1. Introduction

The different spaces in Victoria Park are described in detail within this section. Policies and Objectives for each of those spaces are also noted.

4.2. Levels of Service

This section outlines the levels of service provided across seven key categories. Each category represents a critical area of focus to ensure the effective management and delivery of services that meet community needs and expectations. The levels of service have been developed to provide clarity and consistency across all facilities of Victoria Park.

4.2.1. Walkway Accessibility

To assess user needs, walkway tracks are graded using the Australian Walking Track Grading System. The grading system assesses a walk's difficulty based on several criteria, including experience required, steps, gradient, path quality and signage. The walk's final grade is based on the most difficult of these five criteria, rather than an average.

	Grade 1	No bushwalking experience required. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users.
	Grade 2	No bushwalking experience required. The track is hardened or compacted surface and may have a gentle hill section or sections and occasional steps.
	Grade 3	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Some bushwalking experience recommended. Tracks may have short steep hill sections, a rough surface, and many steps.
	Grade 4	Bushwalking experience recommended. Tracks may be long, rough, and very steep. Directional signage may be limited.
	Grade 5	Very experienced bushwalkers with specialised skills, including navigation and emergency first aid. Tracks are likely to be very rough, very steep, and unmarked.

Management Levels of Service

4.2.2. Building Accessibility

Council has several buildings within Victoria Park that have varying degrees of accessibility



Wheelchair Accessible

Building is wheelchair accessible



Not wheelchair accessible

Building is not wheelchair accessible

4.2.3. Seating

This assesses whether there is seating in the reserve.



No Seating

Accessible seating is unavailable



Seating

Accessible seating is available (back rest, arms etc.)

4.2.4. Cycling Control

As per the Council's Parks and Reserves Bylaw, cycling is prohibited within any of Council's parks and reserves

"... except where special approval is granted and then on those areas set aside specially for such purpose."

Currently there are two main areas for cycling within Victoria Park, specially set aside for such purpose (Bike Park and Pump Track spaces). There are also various trails which are used on an ad hoc basis by cyclists which warrants a measure of coordination and regulation. Both walking, jogging, and cycling have many health benefits, however cycling in certain areas can create conflicts with other users and may adversely impact areas of a reserve.



Cycling Permitted

Walking paths that are deemed to be suitable for cycling.



Cycling not recommended

Walking paths that are not suitable for cycling due to terrain, tree roots, stairs etc



Figure 5: Walking track only

4.2.5. Dog Walking

The Stratford District Council Control of Dogs Bylaw 2020 addresses the control of dogs in public places. Amongst others, the bylaw recognises the need to:

- Minimise danger, distress, and nuisance to the community.
- Avoid the inherent danger in allowing dogs to have uncontrolled access to public places frequented by children, whether children are accompanied by adults or not.



Unleashed

Dogs may be unleashed but under continuous control in this area.



Leashed

Dogs must be controlled on a leash in this area.



Dog Prohibited

Dogs are not permitted in this area.

Management Levels of Service

4.2.6. Smokefree

As per council's Smokefree Environments – Public Spaces and Community Events Policy, it states that all council Parks and Open Spaces and council owned buildings and facilities are smokefree areas.



Smokefree Area

Stratford District Council Policy

Smokefree Environments – Public Spaces and Community Events

4.2.7. Weed Control

Stratford District Council uses the following methods for control of weeds.

Table 4: Weed Control

Name of Chemical	What is it used for?	Frequency of Application
Agpro Green Glyphosphate 510	General weed control in gardens, reserve & footpath edges & walkways	Spot application – Weekly Main application - Quarterly
Agpro Picloram Gel	Stump gel used for cut & pasting on selective weed trees	Monthly
Agpro Moss & Mould Killer	Control the growth of moss & mould mainly on hard surfaces such as paved areas	Quarterly
Agpro Organosilicone	Help plants absorb chemicals (useful for hard to kill weeds such as gorse & broom)	Quarterly
Agpro Terbutylazine 500	General weed control in reserve & footpath edges & walkways	Quarterly
Agpro Terminate	General weed control in reserve & footpath edges & walkways	Quarterly
Agpro Haloxyfop	Control selective monocotyledon weeds such as bamboo	Twice yearly
Agpro Lawnclean	Control selective dicotyledon weeds in lawns such as thistles (usually only sports fields)	Twice yearly
Agpro Triclop 600	Control woody dicotyledons such as gorse or broom	Twice yearly
Ken-Zon Herbicide	Control selective dicotyledon weeds in lawns such as thistles (usually only sports fields)	Twice yearly

Management Levels of Service

Name of Chemical	What is it used for?	Frequency of Application
Kiwicare Lawnguard	Control selective dicotyledon weeds in lawns such as thistles (usually only sports fields)	Twice yearly
Dupont Acelepryn Insecticide	Control grass grub in sports turfs namely the croquet green.	Annually

4.2.7.1. Future Projects

- Phase out the current use of chemicals within Victoria Park, to a natural weed control option. Further investigations and costings will be required in the first instance.

4.3. Bike Park



The Stratford Bike Park is not only an active, recreational space, it is a space that encourages a healthy lifestyle, while affording opportunities for tamariki to learn vital cycling and scooting safety skills. The growing confidence of our young people has an ongoing positive effect on their physical health and the way they can interact with and safely navigate through their streets and neighbourhoods.



Figure 6: Bike Park (1)

There is currently no lighting within the Victoria Park Bike Park, as previous floodlighting on the northern sports field was disconnected.

4.3.1. Policies

The Control of Dogs bylaw prohibits dogs in designated public places and requires dogs to be constrained by leash in a “leash controlled public place”. Accordingly, in the absence of such a resolution, dogs are permitted to be exercised off-leash but “under continuous control” within Victoria Park, **except within 20 metres of the children’s playground where they are prohibited.**

Like the Parks and Reserves bylaw, the Public Places bylaw puts restrictions on several activities within public places (which include reserves) and helps reinforce the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977 (2023). It impacts specifically relative to Victoria Park in that it prohibits the use of skateboards, scooters, and similar human-propelled wheeled devices other than in designated areas such as the skate park, bike park and pump track.

Developed in 2024, the Sustainability Policy outlines Councils role and commitment to supporting the development of a sustainable district. For example, Guiding Principle One is “We consider our natural resources as taonga (treasures), and we will work with our treaty partners and the community to protect and look after them”.

4.3.2. Objectives

- To prevent activities occurring that have an adverse impact on the natural environment and amenity values of Victoria Park or detract from the enjoyment of other park users.

Management Levels of Service

4.3.3. Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Bike Park Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within this space.	Bike Park Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within this space.

4.3.4. Future Projects

- Install new lighting to highlight the Bike Park space and deter vandalism in the evening and at night. Lighting is often required or desirable in reserves to facilitate evening sports, improve security, deter vandalism, or enhance the visual appeal at night of physical features such as trees or monuments.
- Create an accessible path from the current pathway to the Exeloo toilets (northern side)
- Continuation of native planting, as and when needed.



Figure 7: Bike Park (2)

4.4. Pump Track



The Pump Track space within Victoria Park was created to cater to different levels of cycle ability levels; for rangatahi, grown-ups, and adventurous tamariki looking for their next challenge.



Figure 8: Pump Track

4.4.1. Policies

The Control of Dogs bylaw prohibits dogs in designated public places and explains that **dogs are not permitted within 20 metres of children's play equipment, including the pump track**, which is built next to the playground, (but are permitted within the park), provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler.

Developed in 2024, the Sustainability Policy outlines Councils role and commitment to supporting the development of a sustainable district. For example, Guiding Principle One is "We consider our natural resources as taonga (treasures), and we will work with our treaty partners and the community to protect and look after them".

4.4.2. Objectives

- To prevent activities occurring that have an adverse impact on the natural environment and amenity values of Victoria Park or detract from the enjoyment of other park users.

4.4.3. Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Pump Track Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Tracks may have short steep hill sections, a rough surface. Not suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within this space.	Pump Track Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Tracks may have short steep hill sections, a rough surface. Not suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within this space.

4.4.4. Future Projects

- Install seating around edge of Pump Track, so families can sit comfortably while watching their whanau and/or friends.
- Install new lighting to highlight the Pump Track space and deter vandalism in the evening and at night.
- Native Tree planting for shade and uptake of stormwater runoff.



Figure 9: Pump Track sign

4.5. ½ Basketball Court



Before the new ½ Basketball court was constructed, an aged basketball hoop with a small concrete pad utilised this space. Over the years there have been comments and feedback provided to council from the community, to upgrade this small space. Once it was determined the amount of grant funding council would receive from the Shovel Ready Fund, the scope of works for the Bike Park concept plan broadened, ensuring a new ½ Basketball Court could be developed.



Figure 10: ½ Basketball Court

4.5.1. Policies

Dogs are not permitted within 20 metres of children’s play equipment, which is neighbouring to this court, (but are permitted within the park), provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler.

Like the Parks and Reserves bylaw, the Public Places bylaw puts restrictions on several activities within public places (which include reserves) and helps reinforce the provisions of the Reserves Act 1977. It impacts specifically relative to Victoria Park in that it prohibits the use of skateboards, scooters, and similar human-propelled wheeled devices other than in designated areas such as the skate park, bike park and pump track.

Developed in 2024, the Sustainability Policy outlines Councils role and commitment to supporting the development of a sustainable district. For example, Guiding Principle One is “We consider our natural resources as taonga (treasures), and we will work with our treaty partners and the community to protect and look after them”.

4.5.2. Objectives

- To prevent activities occurring that have an adverse impact on the natural environment and amenity values of Victoria Park or detract from the enjoyment of other park users.

4.5.3. Levels of Service

Current	Proposed
½ Basketball Court Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is not permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available outside the fenced space.	½ Basketball Court Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is not permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available outside the fenced space.

4.5.4. Future Projects

- Extension or addition (next to basketball court) for younger children to play basketball or handball.

4.6. BBQ Pavilion



To continue with an all-inclusive space, a wheelchair accessible BBQ pavilion was installed so that users have the option to cook, eat and spend time with whanau for a longer period of time. This space is maintained to enhance casual public use and enjoyment of the reserve and through the Shovel Ready fund, the space is more superior than the original concept design.



Figure 11: BBQ Pavilion

4.6.1. Policies

Facilities such as barbeques, tables and lighting will be provided and maintained in appropriate locations to enhance casual public use and enjoyment of the reserve.

Dogs are not permitted within 20 metres of children's play equipment, which is neighbouring the pavilion, (but are permitted within the park), provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler.

4.6.2. Objectives

- To prevent activities occurring that have an adverse impact on the natural environment and amenity values of Victoria Park or detract from the enjoyment of other park users.
- To provide a social gathering space, where children can play and enjoy this inclusive, green space.

4.6.3. Levels of Service

Current	Proposed
BBQ Pavilion Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating / picnic tables are available in this area.	BBQ Pavilion Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface with no steps or steep sections. Suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating / picnic tables are available in this area.

4.6.4. Future Projects

- No future projects have been allocated for this space.

4.7. Croquet Green



The croquet greens occupy approximately 2,200 square metres of reserve land dedicated to that sport and not available to any other user. Croquet is very much a minority sport, and the Stratford Croquet Club has a very limited membership, currently only around thirty-four players. It is fair to say that because of this its future will be constantly under review as required by the Reserves Act 1977.



Figure 12: Croquet Green

4.7.1. Policies

A lease may be granted to the Stratford Croquet Club for the area it exclusively occupies for a term of 10 years with a right of renewal for a further 10 years, subject to the conditions outlined in Schedule 1 of the Reserves Act 1977.

4.7.2. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Croquet Green To maintain the croquet green to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Croquet Green To maintain the croquet green to a standard that meets the needs of the community.

4.7.3. Future Projects

- No future projects have been allocated for this space.

4.8. Playground



Public playgrounds are vibrant spaces that foster creativity, physical activity, and social interaction among children. They provide a safe and stimulating environment where kids can explore, play, and learn while promoting community engagement and a sense of belonging for families. These dynamic spaces offer diverse and well-designed equipment that encourages both fun and development, promoting physical fitness, imaginative play, and the development of essential social skills in a joyful and inclusive setting.

Victoria Park provides the largest and most popular formal playground in the district. It is situated adjacent to the croquet greens on Orlando Street and contains 13 pieces of play equipment ranging from simple swings and slides to climbing structures and a mouse wheel.



Figure 13: Playground Seesaw

4.8.1. Policies

All play equipment will be maintained to meet the requirements of New Zealand Standard 5828 as updated.

To provide further diverse play equipment as appropriate to meet the demands of reserve users.

Dogs are not permitted within 20 metres of children’s play equipment (but are permitted within the park), provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler.

Developed in 2024, the Sustainability Policy outlines Councils role and commitment to supporting the development of a sustainable district. For example, Guiding Principle One is “We consider our natural resources as taonga (treasures), and we will work with our treaty partners and the community to protect and look after them”.

4.8.2. Objectives

- To ensure that the play equipment in Victoria Park meets the needs of reserve users and is maintained in safe working order.

4.8.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Playground To maintain the playground to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Playground To maintain the playground to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
To maintain the playground that meet the requirements of New Zealand Standard 5828	To maintain the playground that meet the requirements of New Zealand Standard 5828

4.8.4. Future Projects

- Replace older playground equipment or parts that no longer meet playground standards.
- Provide more accessible seating in key locations.
- Create wheelchair accessible pathway to the accessible swing.
- Addition of sunshades to be installed over current playground equipment.
- Provide bintainers / recycling stations within playground area (removing the necessity of current general waste bins)



Figure 14: Playground

4.9. Skate Park



The Skate Park comprises several concrete structures including a newly built skate bowl; three half pipes; two quarter pipes; seven ramps, rails, or ledges; a set of stairs and a wave.

Lighting of the pathway on the southern side of the lake linking Cordelia and Orlando Streets has recently been reconnected (after disconnection to build new bowl) ensuring safety lighting, particularly in the vicinity of the skate park.



Figure 15: Skate Park

4.9.1. Policies

The Victoria Park Skate Park will be maintained and developed in such a manner to provide a challenging and interesting environment for children and to encourage community use.

4.9.2. Objectives

- To ensure that the skate park in Victoria Park:
 - Meets the needs of reserve users
 - Is well maintained
 - Is a safe environment for users.



Figure 16: Skate Park User

Management Levels of Service

4.9.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Skate Park To maintain the skate park to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Skate Park To maintain the skate park to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface and steep sections. Not suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within the skate park area.	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface and steep sections. Not suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are not permitted in this area, and seating is available within the skate park area.

4.9.4. Future Projects

- Replace the metal path with concrete, ensuring stones don't track into the skate park and cause trip hazards.
- Re-surfacing the skate park, removing all unnecessary skate hazards and continuing to provide a safe space to use for all users.
- Consider native tree planting nearby to provide shade for skate park users and soak up excess stormwater.
- Spectator seating next to bowl.
- Installation of a drinking water fountain.

4.10. Sportsground



Section 54 of the Reserves Act 1977 empowers Council to grant leases or licences for uses of or activities on recreation reserves, provided such uses or activities are associated with recreation, the purpose of the reserve. Permits are granted for specific one-off or seasonal uses of the reserve or sportsfields within the reserve.

Permits are granted seasonally to the Stratford Eltham Rugby and Sports Club for the use of the sportsfields (winter), the Stratford Cricket Club for the use of the sportsfields (summer), and the Stratford Croquet Club for the use of the croquet greens (summer).

Season permits may also be issued to any other sport that is considered appropriate. One-off permits may also be issued to organisations or individuals for privately organised activities and events that are considered appropriate to the primary purpose of the reserve.

Fees and charges for these permits are determined by Council on an annual basis.

Rugby

The Stratford Eltham Rugby Sports Club (SERSC) are currently catered for with the provision of two fields. With these two fields (Ground 1 and Ground 2) and two further fields in King Edward Park (Page Street Sportsground) available to rugby, there is considered adequate supply for the number of teams fielded by the club.



Figure 17: Rugby fields at southern end of Victoria Park



Figure 18: SERSC - 2024 CMK Premier Champions

Management Levels of Service

Cricket

The Stratford Cricket Club utilises the two southern fields as its principal ground and maintains its premier turf wicket between the two rugby fields.

Leases are generally granted to clubs or organisations requiring exclusive, long-term use of an area of a reserve to erect a building consistent with the reserve's purpose such as a sports clubhouse. Council is empowered to grant such leases for periods of up to 33 years with further renewals under certain circumstances and subject to numerous conditions, including the right of Council to terminate if the land and/or building is not being adequately used or if Council considers the land would be better used by another organisation or for a better recreational purpose. Appropriate rentals are determined by Council on a case-by-case basis.



Figure 19: Stratford women's cricket team

4.10.1. Policies

Liaison will be maintained with sporting organisations at local, regional, and national levels to ensure the use of the current sports fields is optimised or to determine whether it is appropriate that an alternative code be given use of any facility.

Current sports fields will be maintained to ensure the requirements of sporting organisations to, at least, a local level is met.

Liaison will be maintained with sporting organisations at local, regional, and national levels to determine what, if any, ancillary facilities are necessary to optimise the use of the current sports fields and to explore funding opportunities for such developments.

4.10.2. Objectives

- To ensure that the sports fields in Victoria Park:
 - Provide fit for purpose sport facilities for both senior and junior sport.
 - Maintain the current provision of sports fields providing the current demand levels are at least maintained.
 - To continue to permit the use of the open space areas within the park for social or cultural events provided there is no adverse effect on the sportsfields and subject to any policy or bylaw relative to the use of public places current at the time and to conditions of use contained in the Reserves Act 1977.

Management Levels of Service

4.10.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Sportsground To maintain the sportsground to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Sportsground To maintain the sportsground to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even grassed surface, so may not be suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available within the grandstand area.	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even grassed surface, so may not be suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available within the grandstand area.

4.10.4. Future Projects

- Field upgrade of Ground 2, due to be upgraded in the 2025-2026 Financial Year (a continuation of Ground 1 upgrade which occurred in 2023).
- To facilitate the Cricket Club improvements to the cricket clubrooms.

4.11. Building Facilities

An integral part of any reserve development is the extent to which Council provides user friendly facilities. This is determined both by recreational uses of the reserve that create the need for various items of facilities and Council's aspirations regarding its optimum use.

The following buildings located in Victoria Park are owned by the sports clubs:

- Cricket Pavilion (Stratford Cricket Club)
- Croquet Clubrooms (Stratford Croquet Club)

The two sports clubs hold Licence to Occupy agreements with Council for leasing this part of the reserve.

The Reserves Act requires, as a condition of any reserve lease, the right of the administering authority to terminate the agreement if the land and/or building is not being adequately used or if Council considers the land would be better used by another organisation or for a better recreational purpose.

Cricket Clubrooms



Existing buildings at the southern sports fields include a cricket pavilion and an adjoining concrete block storage shed (formerly owned by the Stratford Athletic Club but acquired by Council when the club relocated to the Stratford Primary School).



Figure 20: Stratford Cricket Clubrooms

Croquet Clubrooms



A privately owned building on the reserve is the croquet clubroom for which there is currently no formal lease in place. The Stratford Croquet Club has a very limited membership but enjoys exclusive use of the area of the reserve occupied by its two greens and clubrooms.



Figure 21: Stratford Croquet Clubrooms

Management Levels of Service

Exeloo Toilets (Southern end)



Built in 2015, the two accessible Exeloo toilets in this area provide respite for those using the sports fields, skate park, passers-by and truck drivers who have ample space to park on Orlando Street, next to this facility.



Figure 22: Exeloo Toilets (Southern End)

Exeloo Toilets (Northern end)



Built in 2021 alongside the Bike Park, Pump Track, ½ Basketball Court and BBQ Pavilion, these two accessible Exeloo toilets provide respite for users, but also have a unique look, due to the artwork on the outside of this facility.

Local artist Wharehoka Smith graciously worked with council to not only create a meaningful design on the outside of these toilets but then continued the beautiful design starting from the entrance of Victoria Park (Fenton Street) all the way through to the Bike Park.



Figure 2320: Exeloo Toilets (Northern End)

Grandstand



A grandstand is situated at Field One of the sports field. While its use is limited, it serves as a seating area during both the rugby and cricket seasons, with priority given to the users of these sports.



Figure 24: Field No.1 Grandstand

Memorial Gates & Historical Features



The entrance arch and gates at the intersection of Orlando and Fenton Streets stand as the sole formal commemorative feature in Victoria Park.

Erected in 1926 as a memorial to soldiers killed in World War One, this structure is a significant part of Stratford's heritage and is listed as a Category 2 Historic Place by Heritage New Zealand.



Figure 25: Memorial Gates

4.11.1. Policies

Sports clubs or organisations with buildings on the park will be permitted, with Council's prior written approval as to size and content, to erect club or organisation facility signage with a sponsor logo or name, provided that such logo or name does not occupy more than 10% of the sign area.

Sports clubs required to maintain facilities within the park that receive corporate financial support will be permitted, with Council's prior written approval as to size and content, to erect corporate advertising signage on fences or railings surrounding such facilities but not reserve boundary fences.

Every effort will be made to protect, preserve, and highlight any known cultural, historical, heritage or commemorative structures or features within the park.

Any request for future commemorative features will take into consideration the appropriateness of the proposed feature and its compatibility with the character and use of the reserve, whether there is any benefit to the community in the use of the reserve and the ease and cost of ongoing maintenance.

4.11.2. Objective

- To ensure that the facilities in Victoria Park:
 - Are fit for purpose and maintained to a standard highlighted within the Lease Agreement
 - Are preserved for future generations to enjoy
 - Cater for any future request for expansion or beautification, while ensuring they are of substantial benefit to the reserve and the community and do not detract in any way from the natural values of the reserve or inhibit any potential future development.

Management Levels of Service

4.11.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Facilities To maintain the facilities within Victoria Park to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Facilities To maintain the facilities within Victoria Park to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface, suitable for wheelchair users within all areas. Cycling is permitted within these areas, dogs are allowed in these areas, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available around these building facilities.	Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Flat even surface, suitable for wheelchair users within all areas. Cycling is permitted within these areas, dogs are allowed in these areas, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available around these building facilities.

4.11.4. Future Projects

- To create an accessible pathway from the main path to the entrance of the Exeloo toilets.
- To install a mural on the back, internal wall of grandstand, which will give the space a community friendly atmosphere – and will be more pleasing than the current unpleasant graffiti-ridden space.
- To support the sports clubs request for any expansion or development on the current building facilities.

4.12. Victoria Park Lake



The once natural waterway (creek) bisecting the park has long been piped and now forms part of a stormwater system that feeds into the central lake at the western end before continuing its way out at the eastern end from where the stormwater journeys to the Patea River. The lake serves primarily as a stormwater detention pond that needs to be de-silted from time to time, (approximately every three to five years) but also provides scenic value and is home to waterfowl (principally ducks) that provide a source of entertainment for young and old alike.

Views of the lake from the northern side are practically covered by dense vegetation. As the lake has recently been drained and de-silted this year (2024), with many unhealthy trees being removed, which has now created view shafts in this area. This has been completed without risking destabilisation of the lake edge.



Figure 21: Victoria Park Lake (1)

While there are no notable trees within Victoria Park that are afforded protection under Council's District Plan, there are several native and exotic trees and shrubs surrounding the central lake. Many of these have historical value in that they were planted in 1897 in commemoration of the record reign under Queen Victoria. These trees give character to the park and careful management is necessary to keep these trees well-maintained.

4.12.1. Policies

No activity on the reserve will be approved if there is any possibility of any measurable adverse effect on water quality or adverse impact on aquatic ecosystems.

Notwithstanding the above policy, periodic draining, and de-silting of the lake to maintain its role as a stormwater detention pond is allowed, subject to any necessary resource consent in terms of the TRC Regional Fresh Water Plan.

No further development of the reserve will be approved that impacts negatively on the view of the central lake from within the reserve.

Landscape plans must accompany any application to further develop the reserve or extend any existing building or facility on the reserve.

Developed in 2024, the Sustainability Policy outlines Council's role and commitment to supporting the development of a sustainable district. For example, Guiding Principle One is "We consider our natural resources as taonga (treasures), and we will work with our treaty partners and the community to protect and look after them".

Management Levels of Service

4.12.2. Objectives

- To ensure that the Victoria Park lake:
 - Enhances the scenic value by creating appropriate view shafts through the removal of selected and/or inappropriate plant species.
 - Maintains and, where practical, further develop formal cultivated areas in keeping with established or carefully considered new landscape themes.
 - Preserves the scenic and recreational values of the central lake while recognising its role as a stormwater detention pond.

4.12.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Lake Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Compacted surface and may have a gentle hill section or sections and occasional steps. Cycling is permitted within this area, dogs are allowed in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available around the lake.	Lake Suitable for all ages and fitness levels. Compacted surface and may have a gentle hill section or sections and occasional steps. Cycling is permitted within this area, dogs are allowed in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is available around the lake.

4.12.4. Future Projects

- Re-plant some of the lake surrounds with harakeke (highly absorbent and great filtering plants) which will ensure water quality is maintained and provide shelter for fish and bird species during summers
- Construct a jetty to be used by remote control boats
- Upgrade the walkway that creates an accessibility trail through the park
- Plant native plants between the walkway and the sports field to enclose the walkway on the southern side of the lake
- Add picnic tables at the grass area on the southern side of the lake



Figure 22: Victoria Park Lake (2)

4.13. Green Space



This green space was previously utilised by the Stratford Eltham Rugby Sports Club for training purposes (known as Ground 3). This space is now underutilised, as the addition of the Bike Park and Pump Track has reduced the ability for this space to be used in a certain way.

There is now an opportunity to determine what this space can be used for, and future projects can be decided upon and initiated.



Figure 23: Empty green space

4.13.1. Policies

Any other future development not covered by this management plan, apart from the installation of minor items of park furniture, track development that does not require any indigenous plant or tree removal or the replacement of existing facilities, will be subject to prior public consultation and Council approval by way of formal resolution.

In approving any future developments within the reserve, due consideration will be given to the principles outlined in the National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand.

4.13.2. Objectives

- To ensure that any further development of Victoria Park does not impact adversely on any landscape features, natural values or built heritage, meets the needs of reserve users (while having no adverse effects on neighbouring properties) and is environmentally sustainable in terms of its design, construction, long term maintenance and intended function.
- To provide additional facilities where Council is satisfied there is sufficient demand, and it is clear they will be of benefit to the public.
- To ensure any future building development, earthworks or future plantings do not visually compromise any of the natural landscapes and are appropriate to the setting.

Management Levels of Service

4.13.3. Current Level Of Service

Current	Proposed
Green Space To maintain the green space to a standard that meets the needs of the community.	Green Space To maintain the green space to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even grassed surface, so may not be suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is not available.	Suitable for most ages and fitness levels. Flat even grassed surface, so may not be suitable for wheelchair users. Cycling is permitted, dogs are in this area, provided they are under the continuous control of a responsible handler and seating is not available.

4.13.4. Future Projects

- No future projects have been allocated to this green space.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK FOR VICTORIA PARK RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN (2018)

Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholder feedback includes:

- Feedback from Iwi as per the engagement of 1 August 2024.
- Community feedback sought in September 2024.
- Feedback from Elected Members obtained in a Council workshop in November 2024.
- Community Survey requests over the years.
- Officer recommendations.

Iwi Feedback (August 2024)

No feedback from Iwi was provided on the current Victoria Park Reserve Management Plan 2018.

Community Feedback (September 2024)

Summary of Community Feedback includes:

- Collaboration with Partners
 - Consideration of how the new Collaborating for Active Spaces and Places Taranaki strategy can align to the Plan with the importance of co-designing community spaces.
 - Ensuring sportsgrounds are maintained to a standard that meets the needs of the community.
 - Assist and support the sports clubs when they are applying for funding to upgrade their facilities.
 - Signage highlighting smokefree/vape free spaces.
 - Provide an environmental sustainable section within the Management Plan.
 - Ensure that Management Plan shows access for those with a disability and explore safe passages between each park space.
- Playground:
 - New playground equipment (for tamariki of all ages), or upgrades of current equipment
 - Addition of sun cover over playgrounds with sunshades or trees.
 - Add to, or extend ½ basketball court, so another hoop can be added, to be used for younger children, or another concrete space for handball and other games.
- Cultural Elements:
 - Signage explaining what piece of playground equipment is, area of park is called in Te Reo (and the English translation).
 - More artwork around the park, that consists of cultural murals or paintings.
- Entertainment
 - More music or events in the park (open green space).
 - Mini version of Christmas lights in the park.
 - Utilising the green space for gypsy fairs and other community events to bring everyone together.

- Facilities/Amenities:
 - More picnic tables (inc. accessible tables) and seating in park.
 - More sheltered areas and add side shelters onto current pavilions
 - Toilet next to bike park needs an accessible path
 - Add a mini putt (covered) into green space
 - Lighting in the park
 - Install more water fountains
 - More signage highlighting the playground area is a dog free space
 - Paint parking lines in carpark
 - Addition of water play area
 - Move croquet to green space
- Natural Beauty:
 - Planting of new native plants for the park to remain as natural as possible, as that is the beauty, attraction of it
 - Flower beds in certain areas will also brighten up the space
 - Planting of fruit trees.
- Walkways:
 - Make pathway around lake more tidy and accessible, and keep maintaining.
 - Further enhance biodiversity areas next to walkways, with the potential of extending the walkway.
- Lake:
 - Potential to use lake for RC boats or other lake friendly activities.

Community Survey Feedback over the Years

Summary of feedback from the community includes:

- Upgrade of sportsgrounds (drainage upgrade).
- Replace older playground equipment.
- Install more rubbish bins.
- Upgrade of Skate Park.

Officer Feedback

Officer Recommendations includes:

- Provide more picnic tables and more seating areas.
- Apply Sustainability Policy to the park - protect, enhance and preserve natural habitats and ecosystems - more native plantings to protect lake and people from extreme weather patterns. Empower and facilitate ways for our community to reduce waste.
- Partner with Mana Whenua and schools to research current native species in lake and restore back to native fish species as per GP1 and the Acts that govern the Reserve.
- Provide bintainers / recycling stations within playground area (removing the necessity of current general waste bins).

