

Reserve Management Plans - proposed work programme

Meeting: Council Briefing
Date of meeting: 07 October 2020
Reporting officer: Hamish Watson, Parks and Recreation Manager

Purpose/Ngā whāinga

To provide an overview of the existing Reserve Management Plans (RMPs) of Council and their proposed review cycles, present a proposed Omnibus Reserve Management Plan approach for most of Council's reserves that includes categories of reserves across the District, and outline how these planning approaches incorporate the parks of the District that are not classified as reserves.

Context/Horopaki

Council owns, manages, controls or administers two key types of parks and reserves in the District. Those that are reserves under the Reserves Act 1977 (the Act) and other properties that are managed as 'parks'. For both types it is important to plan for and manage these areas in a way that meets the various needs of the users, which can include local, regional and even international visitors and users.

Section 41 of the Act requires Council to prepare a reserve management plan (RMP) for each reserve under its control, management, or administration and to keep that plan under continuous review. The definition of a 'reserve' under the Act includes various types of reserves, including the many esplanade reserves within the District, as well as the more commonly known local purpose and recreation reserves.

Council currently has the following RMPs:

Reserve Management Plan	Status
Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain)	Operative – last reviewed in 2016. The next review is due in 2026.
Pou Tu o Te Rangi and Harding Park	Operative – last reviewed in 2012.
Northern Wairoa Memorial Park	Operative – adopted in 2015. The next review is due in 2025.
Mangawhai Coastal and Harbour and Reserve Management Plan	Operative – Adopted in 2009, the next review is overdue.

Council also manages the Mangawhai Community Park, which is not a reserve under the Act, in accordance with an adopted Master Plan. This Master Plan was developed in 2014 and is scheduled for review in 2024.

There are several older RMPs that were prepared in or around 1987. While these are technically still operative (RMPs do not become invalid if not reviewed) these are no longer used by staff when managing these reserves. They are treated as historic references rather than operational documents.

Council is not meeting the requirements of the Act for developing and maintaining RMPs for all reserves in the District. This report outlines a proposed option for addressing this gap through developing an Omnibus RMP. This approach includes retaining the individual RMPs for our two 'premier' reserves, as well as providing a proposed approach to the planning for the Council's parks that are not classified as reserves under the Act, including the Mangawhai Community Park.

Discussion/Ngā kōrerorero

Omnibus Reserve Management Plan

RMPs are intended as a way for Council to work with its communities to consider how reserves should be managed, what activities should be allowed and how they may be further developed. RMPs can identify a community vision for the form a reserve, or group of reserves, should take and a list of projects that are required to make that happen. RMPs can then inform budgeting and asset management planning matters.

Meeting the requirement to develop an individual RMP for every reserve is however very onerous and raises particular concerns about consultation fatigue. To address this, many councils prepare what are often called 'Omnibus' RMPs, a single RMP that includes most, or all reserves in the district or city, which are grouped into a number of categories. The RMP then details a range of chapters and associated provisions that apply to all reserves of a given category. In this way the RMP provides specific rules, management direction and development goals for all reserves of the same category.

Staff are proposing to develop an Omnibus RMP to both meet statutory requirements as well as ensuring the community input provided throughout the development process and the resulting RMP can be implemented through subsequent Long Term Plan development processes.

Attachment A provides an overview of the proposed categories. This includes a section on Council's 'Premier Parks' which are described in a following section in this report. It is also proposed that all existing RMPs, including the RMP for Northern Wairoa Memorial Park (but excluding Premier Park RMPs) are incorporated into the proposed Omnibus RMP for completeness and to create a functional single planning tool.

Parks Plans

As outlined, the requirement to have a RMP does not apply to those properties Council owns, controls or manages which are not reserves within the meaning of the Act, e.g. Mangawhai Community Park. In addition, local purpose and government purpose reserves are generally exempt from this requirement. Council has two options if it wishes to develop planning documents for these types of parks. Council can choose to manage these under the provisions of a RMP or it can develop a non-statutory management plan, e.g. the Mangawhai Community Park Master Plan 2014.

The Mangawhai Community Park Master Plan is addressed in the following section. For the remaining parks within the District, it is proposed that where appropriate (due to size, location and nature of use) these types of areas are included in the Omnibus RMP for consistency of approach and planning.

Premier Parks

The approach taken when developing the proposed categories for the Omnibus RMP was to identify the 'Premier Parks' in the District and that due to their unique nature, these types of reserves and parks should retain their individual reserve or master plan approaches. These reserve or parks are:

- Mangawhai Community Park
- Pou Tu o Te Rangi and Harding Park
- Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain).

Review programme

The Pou Tu o Te Rangi Joint Governance Committee have signalled they would like to begin reviewing the current RMP soon, slightly ahead of the usual 10 year time period. The remaining two premier parks/reserve plans are due for review in 2024 (Mangawhai Community Park) and 2026 (Kai Iwi Lakes (Taharoa Domain)).

It is proposed to align the review programme of the Pou Tu o Te Rangi and Harding Park RMP with the development of the Omnibus RMP, subject to the direction received at this meeting.

The statutory development of a RMP is very community orientated process, involving two rounds of public consultation and as a result it will take at least 10-12 months to complete the formal statutory processes required.

While background work and preparations for the above actions can begin immediately, it is not proposed to formally commence the statutory process until after the statutory consultation on the 2021-2031 Long Term Plan 2021-31 has been completed, to avoid community confusion and consultation fatigue.

The statutory process requires that public notification of Council's intention to create a District Reserve Management Plan as per section 41(5) of the Reserves Act 1977 must be made at the beginning of the process and this will require the associated resolution of Council.

Next steps/E whaiake nei

Subject to the direction received at this meeting, staff will commence with the necessary background and technical work required to support the RMP review and development processes. Staff will then report back to Council for a resolution in April or May 2021, to commence the statutory processes for an Omnibus RMP and the review of the Pou Tu o Te Rangi and Harding Park RMP.

Attachments/Ngā tapiritanga

	Title
A	Reserve Management Categories – proposed Omnibus RMP