



# HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL'S PLAY STRATEGY

*Tuuhura te tini taonga o Kirikiriroa hei  
whakapakari tinana, wairua, hinengaro*

**2019 - 2039**

# HE MAIMAI AROHA

---

The Maimai Aroha of King Taawhiao creates a vision for health and well-being. The vision enjoins us to be active in exploring the natural beauty of our world as a means to discovering physical and spiritual wellness and connection.

Ka maatakitaki iho au ki te riu o Waikato  
Aanoo nei hei kapo kau ake maaku ki te kapu o taku ringa,  
Ka whakamiri noa i toona aratau. E tia nei he tupu pua hou.

Kia hiwa ake au i te tihi o Pirongia,  
Inaa, hei toronga whakaruruhau moona ki tooku  
tauawhirotanga

Anaa! Te ngoto o toona ngawhaa i ngoona uma kiihai i  
aarikarika a Maungatautari, a Maungakawa,  
ooku puke maunga, ngaa taonga tuku iho.  
Hoki ake nei au ki tooku awa koiora me ngoona pikonga He  
kura tangihia o te maataamuri.

E whakawhiti atu ai i te koopuu maania o Kirikiriroa,  
Me ngoona maara kai, te ngawhaa whakatupu ake o te  
whenua moomona,  
Hei kawe ki Ngaaruawaahia, te huinga o te tangata.

Araa, te pae haumako, hei okiokinga moo taku Upoko,  
Hei tirohanga atu maa raro i ngaa huuhaa o Taupiri.

Kei reira raa, kei te oroko hanganga o te tangata,  
Waahia te tuungaroa o te whare, te whakaputanga moo  
te Kiingi.

I look down on the valley of Waikato, as though to hold it  
in the hollow of my hand and caress its beauty, like some  
tender verdant thing.

I reach out from the top of Pirongia, as  
though to cover and protect its substance  
with my own

See how it bursts through the full bosoms of  
Maungatautari and Maungakawa,  
hills of my inheritance:  
The river of life, each curve more beautiful  
than the last.

Across the smooth belly of Kirikiriroa, its  
gardens bursting with the fullness of good  
things, towards the meeting place at  
Ngaaruawaahia.

There on the fertile mound I would rest my  
head and look through the thighs of Taupiri.

There at the place of all creation...  
let the King come forth.



# CONTENTS

## *Raarangi Kaupapa*

---

<b>1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>06</b>
What is play?	06
Why does play matter?	07
Play strategy on a page	09
Structure of the strategy	10
Why does Council care about play	10
Hamilton's current state of play	12
Why have we developed this strategy?	12
How have we developed this strategy?	14
What is the scope of the strategy?	14
Strategic context	15
<b>3. VISION FOR PLAY IN HAMILTON CITY</b>	<b>17</b>
Vision	18
Purpose Statement	19
Outcome Areas	21
<b>4. NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>28</b>

# 01

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Whakaraapopototanga*

---

It is widely recognised that physical activity has a range of benefits for individuals and broader society. Hamilton City Council's Play Strategy aims to provide a range of opportunities for people to engage in physical activity across Hamilton City.

In order to ensure that these opportunities are available to as many people as possible, we have defined organised sport, informal recreation and 'pop-up'/spontaneous play as 'play'.

The Play Strategy is a vision for the next 20 years for impacting positively on the physical activity levels of people who live in or visit Hamilton City, and to articulate the Council's contribution to play within the city.

The vision - 'Hamilton is a great place for everyone to play' - is supported by a purpose statement and four outcomes areas. The purpose statement - 'Hamilton City Council ensures the provision of spaces, facilities and services to enable everyone to play and be active' - recognises that Council is responsible for the majority of the infrastructure which supports people to play.

Four outcome areas provide high-level focus for the areas in which Council will work to achieve progress towards the vision. The development of the strategy was strongly informed by what the community told us about organised sport, informal recreation and 'pop-up'/spontaneous play, as well as national and international research.

The four outcome areas are:

- Hamilton is reimagined as an urban playground;
- Decision-making is informed by evidence and community voice;
- Hamilton's play opportunities are achieved through collaborative partnerships;
- We are responsive to changing play, sport and recreation trends.

The Play Strategy is deliberate in its focus on Council-owned/managed spaces, facilities and services. We recognise that the city's open spaces, walkways and cycleways, sports grounds, roads and footpaths and aquatic facilities can either support or hinder people to play.

However, we recognise that Council is only one organisation which enables people to play. We hope that articulating how Council contributes to making Hamilton City a great place to play will create fertile ground for collaboration with sports organisations and other key partners.

In the short term, the Play Strategy will be used to reprioritise and refocus the projects and programmes which currently support play (as outlined in Council's 2018-28 10-Year Plan). It will also be used to develop an action plan which will make progress towards the outcome areas, and in the long term, contribute to the vision of Hamilton being a great place for everyone to play. This action plan will be incorporated into the development of the projects and programmes contained in Council's 2021-31 10-Year Plan.

The play landscape which currently exists in Hamilton City is rich, diverse and ripe with future opportunities.





"PLAY IS WHEN  
YOU HAVE LOTS  
OF FUN"

- Community feedback





# INTRODUCTION

*Tiimatanga korero*

## WHAT IS PLAY?

We're using a broad definition of 'play' which includes organised sport, informal recreation and 'pop-up'/spontaneous play. Play is about 'physical fun and adventure wherever you are'.

Some of us play competitive sport at an elite level, which involves a significant commitment to training, perseverance and achieving results.


Others of us are in a social sports team which meets once a week to compete. We might also cycle off-road paths on a sunny day, or meet with our friends to walk or run a popular local loop.

Sometimes we play in our neighbourhood streets with our friends, which happens spontaneously. All of these activities – and many, many others – constitute play.

Having a broad and inclusive definition of play as organised sport, informal recreation and 'pop-up'/spontaneous play is a deliberate act. We hope this approach will spark new, innovative approaches to retaining existing – and engaging new – participants in being physically active.







“THE PARKS ARE A  
BIG ATTRACTION  
TO COME AND  
LIVE IN HAMILTON”

- Community feedback

## WHY DOES PLAY MATTER?

In short, play is good. Sport New Zealand states that “sport and active recreation creates happier, healthier people, better connected communities and a stronger New Zealand”<sup>1</sup>. Play is a critical element in improving people’s individual wellbeing, as well as being of benefit to our wider community.

### Benefits of play for individuals

For babies and children, play develops essential physical and emotional skills which are the building blocks for life <sup>2</sup>. Play also enables children to learn vital social skills which translate outside the play setting. Characteristics such as perseverance, courage, teamwork and empathy are some of the skills which play engenders in children. These skills are important in building positive relationships with others across all life phases.

Engaging in play across all stages of life is a protective factor against a range of physical diseases, including obesity, dementia and heart disease<sup>3</sup>. Play also helps us to retain a good quality of life as we age: it maintains physical strength and flexibility, improves balance and coordination and reduces the risk of falls (which can often result in joint, bone or muscular injuries)<sup>4</sup>.

More recently, the positive impact of play on people’s mental health has been well-documented. ‘Prescribing’ regular physical activity, particularly in green space, is a central part of treatment plans for mild depression, and has been shown to improve wellbeing more than those who don’t engage in this activity<sup>5</sup>. There is also increasing evidence of the value of physical activity in improving self-confidence, self-esteem and physical self-perception in young people<sup>6</sup>.

Play is a vital part of what makes up a fulfilled life. Without the ability to go for a walk on a river trail, play competitive or social sport, go to the skate park, play in the streets with our friends, visit a playground, go dancing at a local hall or run around in some green space, we deprive ourselves of a component of what it is to lead to a more fulfilled life.





## Benefits of play to society

In addition to play having a number of benefits to an individual, play also matters at a broader scale.

Play is an important part of our cultural fabric: many people identify with sporting heroes as sources of inspiration. Local, regional and national sporting events, along with adventure and recreation tourism, are sources of economic benefit<sup>7</sup>.

Play also helps to build social cohesion and connection. Strong relationships which are developed through participation in physical activity can endure and act as a protective factor against social isolation. The social connection built through play – on the sports field, in the local pool, the basketball court or in the street – creates stronger communities.

The impact of people being physically active also has a positive impact in other domains, including on environmental wellbeing:

*“...Societies that are more active can generate additional returns on investment including a reduced use of fossil fuels, cleaner air and less congested, safer roads”<sup>8</sup>.*

Conversely, the human and economic cost of physical inactivity is high<sup>9</sup>.

Increases in physical activity also results in significant savings to the community through less funding being required for inactivity related diseases and deaths<sup>10</sup>.



# PLAY STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Below is a high-level outline of Hamilton City Council's Play Strategy. This is discussed in more detail in Section 3.

## VISION

Hamilton is a great place for everyone to play.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

Hamilton City Council ensures the provision of spaces, facilities and services to enable everyone to play and be active.

## OUTCOME AREAS

### Hamilton is reimagined as an urban playground

We develop a connected and accessible network of play opportunities throughout the city.

### Decision-making is informed by evidence and community voice

We increase our use of evidence, research and information to understand the needs for play in the city.

### Hamilton's play opportunities are achieved through collaborative partnerships

We work with sports organisations and other key partners to deliver play opportunities for everyone.

### We are responsive to changing play, sport and recreation trends

We embed sustainability and resilience practices and principles in to facilities and infrastructure.



# STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGY

The Play Strategy is broken into the following sections:

## INTRODUCTION

- What play is
- Why play matters
- Play strategy on a page
- Why Council cares about play
- Hamilton's current state of play
- Why we have developed this strategy
- How we have developed this strategy
- The scope of the strategy
- The strategic context the strategy sits in.

## VISION

The vision, purpose and outcome areas and what the future looks like.

## NEXT STEPS

How we plan to progress the vision.

## WHY DOES COUNCIL CARE ABOUT PLAY?

### Play is a vital component of a liveable city

A liveable city provides more than the basics of job opportunities, housing and transport; good play infrastructure and services are vital components of a liveable city.

A city which embraces play and provides a range of play opportunities helps people to live more meaningful and fulfilled lives. It turns Hamilton from just a place to live and work, into a home city to be proud of.

"WITHOUT AWESOME PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS, HAMILTON WOULD REALLY FEEL SO MUCH LESS LIVEABLE. THE CONTRIBUTION TO QUALITY OF LIFE IN THIS CITY CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED"

- Community feedback

"THE PARKS... ARE A BIG ATTRACTION TO COME AND LIVE IN HAMILTON"

- Community feedback

Hamilton's existing play infrastructure and its particular geography – predominantly flat with a unique gully network and river system – presents a range of potential opportunities to enhance and improve the city's liveability.

### Council is responsible for the majority of the city's play infrastructure

Council has a legal mandate through the Local Government Act 2002 and the Reserves Act 1991 to provide for and manage play infrastructure. Council manages a range of play infrastructure, including over 1100 hectares of open space (including sports parks), two aquatic facilities and over a thousand kilometres of off-road cycle and walkways, suburban streets and footpaths on behalf of the community.

Council also offers support to sports codes through operating grants and community funding. While sport organisations, education institutions and business are important stakeholders in this ecosystem, Council is also a significant contributor in this space given the spaces, places, facilities and services it manages.

Given the well documented benefits of play to individuals and society, Council has a direct ability to impact on the wellbeing of Hamiltonians through providing fit for purpose play infrastructure. Play supports people to actively engage with their city and is a vehicle which connects different parts of our community together.

In addition to managing the city's play infrastructure, Council is responsible for a range of environmental outcomes, including maintaining and improving biodiversity and restoring and protecting the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River. Open space (such as natural areas, parks and gullies) is therefore an important resource which can be used to improve social, environmental and cultural wellbeing in other domains which Council is responsible for.

The community has made a significant investment in play infrastructure to date. Council has a duty to ensure that Council-managed play infrastructure provides opportunities for everyone to realise the return on their investment.



## Council can have a positive impact on health and wellbeing

Council is in a position to have a positive impact on people's mental health and physical activity levels; we can contribute to improving individual and community wellbeing. The negative impacts of issues such as physical inactivity and traffic congestion on individual and community wellbeing is well-documented. It is recognised that this also has a significant economic impact in terms of the health spend and economic productivity<sup>11</sup>.

Conversely, research has shown that healthier, happier individuals are more likely to do well in other areas of their lives, whether it is in social or professional situations<sup>12</sup>. It is also recognised that an individual's health is significantly shaped by a range of social determinants, and that many of these determinants sit outside of the health system<sup>13</sup>. Local government is a key influencer in this space.

Given that Council manages the publicly owned open space network, aquatic facilities, the roading network and provides a number of services, we have a direct impact on physical activity levels.

The World Health Organisation recognises that local government has a direct influence on people's physical activity levels through its ability to create active environments<sup>14</sup>.

Council is also in a favourable position to help deliver on national social, economic and cultural wellbeing imperatives. We all prosper when people play in our green spaces. We grow stronger as a community when we compete in sporting events together. We all flourish when we create opportunities for children to benefit from being physically active and for our families, neighbours and friends to be connected, healthy and well.



## HAMILTON'S CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

This section provides some highlights of the 'state of play' in Hamilton. It provides a snapshot of some of the ways in which people currently play in Hamilton and what Council provides in terms of play infrastructure, services and facilities.

### How people currently play in Hamilton

- Fifty seven percent of young people and 58 percent of adults (aged 18 years or more) do enough physical activity each week to positively impact their health.
- Physical activity which is fun is an important driver for young people and adults alike:
  - 52% of adults will only engage in the physical activity if it's fun;
  - 62% of young people (aged 8-17 years) participate in physical activity to have fun<sup>21</sup>.
- Twenty-two percent of Hamilton adults belong to a sports club.
- People in Hamilton have competing demands on their time:
  - 58% of adults have other commitments which take priority over physical activity;
  - 39% of young people (aged 8-17 years) are too busy.<sup>22</sup>
- Council's sports parks, open space, aquatic facilities, playgrounds and streets are the amongst the top five places and spaces where people are active:
  - Of those adults who had been active for the last seven days, 50% were on the road or footpath, 38% on a walkway, and 34% in a public park, field or playground;
  - Of those young people (aged 8-17 years) who had been active for the last seven days, 59% were in a playground, park, field, astroturf or outdoor pool<sup>23</sup>.

### How does Council provide for play?

- Two main aquatic facilities (Waterworld and Gallagher Aquatic Centre) and five partner pools across Hamilton City.
- In 2016/17, over 470,000 people visited Waterworld, while over 91,000 people visited Gallagher Aquatic Centre.
- Over 1100 hectares of open space and sports grounds.
- Off-road walk and cycleways and over a thousand kilometres of footpath across the city.
- Eighty-five playgrounds, of which eight are destination playgrounds.

## WHY HAVE WE DEVELOPED THIS STRATEGY?

Within the last decade, there have been significant changes in people's physical activity and participation in sport and recreation.

### • Changing trends

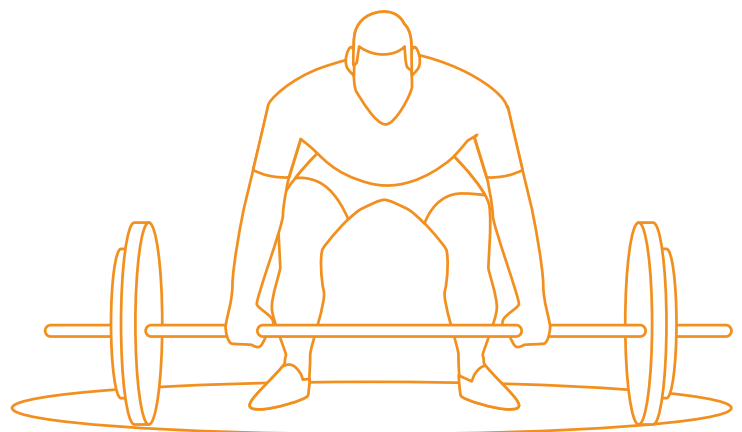
Indications from regional and national research<sup>15</sup> are that participation in organised sport is declining, while participation in informal recreation is increasing. 'Pop-up'/spontaneous play, and particularly children's play, has received an increased amount of research and government attention, with particular focus on the value of unstructured play on the development of children's emotional, physical and mental skills and abilities<sup>16</sup>.

### • Diversity and representation

Increased diversity and representation within play – particularly in organised sport – has challenged many traditional sports to improve the appeal to a wider range of people and to focus on aspects of sport other than competition<sup>17</sup>.

### • Equity of opportunity

Research on the participation of girls and women, as well as people of diverse ethnicities and abilities, has highlighted the fact that play opportunities are sometimes not available to the entire community in equal measure<sup>18</sup>. However, a tailored approach and greater attention to increasing diversity has yielded positive results in those organisations and clubs who are leading the way<sup>19</sup>.





"WE DO LOTS OF WALKING  
AND CYCLING AND REALLY  
APPRECIATE HAVING SO  
MANY PLACES TO GO"

- Community feedback





## HOW HAVE WE DEVELOPED THIS STRATEGY?

To ensure we have developed a strategy which focuses on the right things, we've drawn on a number of different sources of information and tested ideas with a range of different people and organisations:

- **Desktop analysis of current information held by Council**
- **Research into global, national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans**
- **Discussion with Council staff involved in play infrastructure provision, management, policy and planning**
- **Assessment of current local and national play trends (including analysis of Active New Zealand data)**
- **Discussion with key stakeholders in Hamilton, including Sport Waikato**
- **Workshops with Hamilton City Council elected members**
- **Workshops with Council staff and senior management**
- **Workshops with sports clubs**
- **Discussion and testing ideas with a wide range of people in the community.**

We've also struck a balance between two bodies of knowledge in developing the strategy: what the community has told us and what research and evidence tells us.

During November and December 2018, we spoke with over 300 people at a range of community events. We asked them two questions:

- **How do you currently play in Hamilton, and**
- **What we can do to make Hamilton more playful?**

We had some great conversations with a wide range of people and received some insightful and useful feedback.

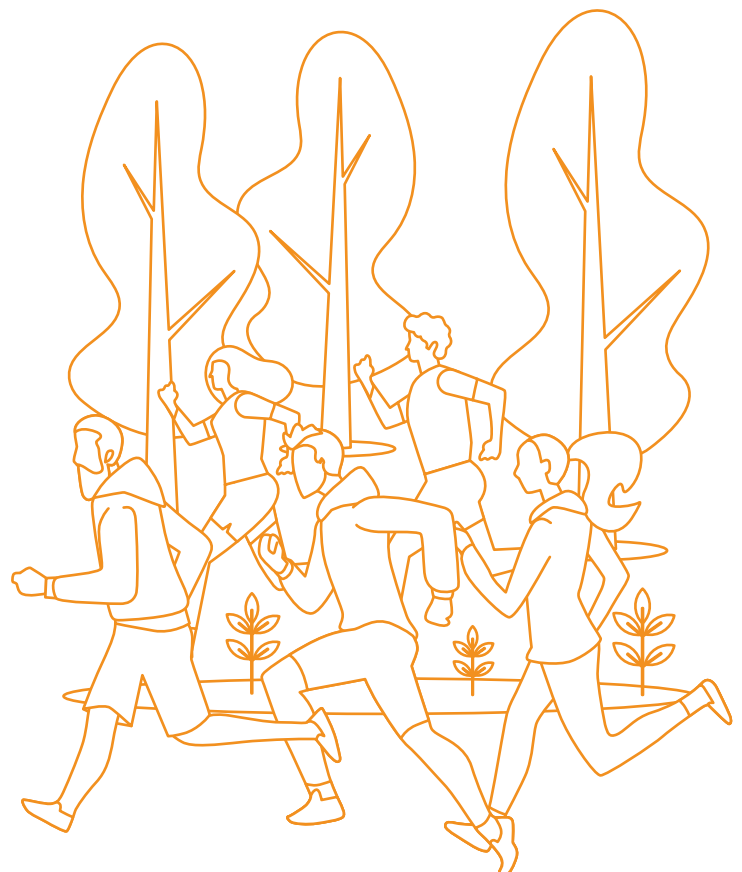
We've used these thoughts and conversations to inform the vision, purpose statement and outcome areas, which has ensured that the voice of the community is at the heart of this strategy.

## WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY?

The Play Strategy is deliberate in its focus on Council owned and/or managed play infrastructure<sup>20</sup>. However, Council recognises that working with others is critical to impacting positively on people's physical activity levels and enabling people to play.

We recognise that sports clubs, volunteers, education institutions, philanthropic funders, iwi/Māori, regional and national sports organisations and participants are vital contributors in the play ecosystem. We also know that when we work together as team with others in the play ecosystem, our community benefits.

However, the Play Strategy is deliberate in its focus on Council owned and/or managed play infrastructure. The premise is that if Council does the best with what we manage, it creates fertile ground for collaboration and enables others in the play ecosystem to succeed. If we do our work well, it makes it easy for others to succeed - which ultimately creates more opportunities for people to play.



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Play Strategy considers and aligns to a range of global, national, regional and local strategies, policies, plans and guidance. These documents have been used to test and develop the vision, purpose statement and outcome areas for play in Hamilton City. Having a sound understanding of this strategic context ensures that the Play Strategy is congruent with current thinking about how we improve people's activity levels and develop a city which has a wealth of play opportunities.

## INTERNATIONAL GUIDANCE

Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 (World Health Organisation)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

United Nations sustainable development goals - 3 (good health and wellbeing), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 15 (life on land).







"I LOVE IT  
BECAUSE I PLAY  
A COOL SPORT  
WITH GREAT  
TEAMMATES"

- Community feedback

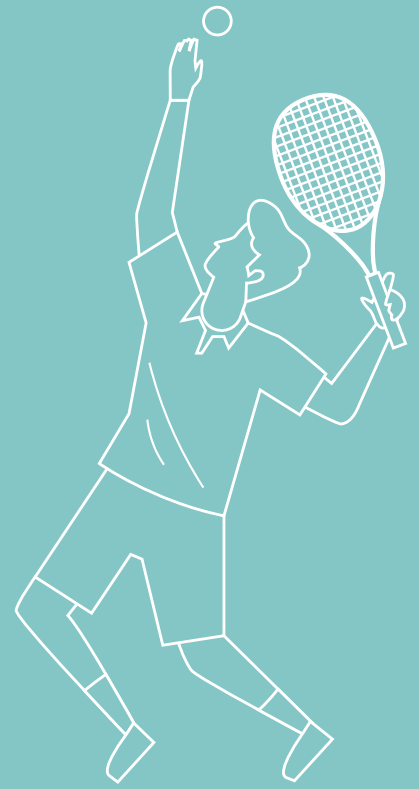


# 03

## VISION FOR PLAY IN HAMILTON CITY

*Taakaro moo Kirikiriroa*

---



### **This section outlines:**

- The vision for play in Hamilton City
- Council's purpose and role in achieving the vision
- The outcome areas we'll be working in to effect positive change.

### **The vision, purpose statement and each outcome area has two aspects:**

- A description of what our future looks like – this is an aspirational statement of what we want play to look like in 2039. This will ensure that everyone has the same understanding of this future and has clarity on what Council will be doing to contribute to this future;
- We also use two important sources of information in developing the vision, purpose and outcome areas:
  - **What the community told us about play;**
  - **What research and evidence tells us.**

All outcomes are interconnected and should not be read in isolation.

# VISION

## HAMILTON IS A GREAT PLACE FOR EVERYONE TO PLAY.

### What our future looks like once we've achieved the vision.

- We've 'put Hamilton on the map' and have developed a reputation as an urban recreation play space in terms of our open space, playgrounds, sporting events and organised sport sector. People know Hamilton to be a place of adventure, exploration, competition, joy and fun.
- Our walkways, cycleways and sports grounds are accessible, well-connected to key destinations and safe.
- Council's investment is targeted to play infrastructure to enable 'everyone' to play. In some cases, we've invested more heavily in some population groups or areas within the city in order to create an 'even playing field'.
- We have a wide range of opportunities for elite sportspeople, club level participants and young people to engage easily in organised sport.
- Our community understands that play isn't just about playgrounds and have adopted the 'physical fun and adventure wherever you are' approach to physical activity. Sports clubs within Hamilton understand their valuable contribution to the play landscape and know that they are providing a range of choices for people to be physically active.
- As a result, Hamiltonians have increased their participation in physical activity overall. As the barriers to participation have reduced, the disparity between some population groups has also decreased.

### How we developed the vision

#### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:

- Overall, the open space network in Hamilton (including dog parks, natural areas, sports parks, river paths) is highly valued by Hamiltonians. These are places which people access for free and engage in a range of activities which are of value to them.
- To enable more people to be more physically active, people would like to see more fun activities which take place in their local community or suburb, which are low-cost and family focused.
- Health issues, injury and disability are the main barriers which people self-identify as being a barrier to them being physically active.
- Sports organisations within Hamilton would like to create more opportunities for all ages to play organised sport together.



#### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Recent research has indicated that the full range of play opportunities are not necessarily available (or easily accessible) to all ages, genders, ethnicities, abilities and income levels<sup>25</sup>.
- Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the rights of children to "rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities"<sup>26</sup>.

# PURPOSE STATEMENT

## HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL ENSURES THE PROVISION OF SPACES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO ENABLE EVERYONE TO PLAY AND BE ACTIVE.

### What our future looks like once we've achieved the purpose.

- Council provides a range of accessible play infrastructure and services to enable people to make choices about how they play.
- We gather information to help us make good decisions on play infrastructure which meets community need and is cost-effective.
- All relevant parts of Council have adopted the play approach and look for opportunities to embed it in to their work.
- We see a wide range of organised sport played on Council-managed sportsfields and in our facilities.
- We have a safe, convenient and enjoyable network of paths which enables people of all ages and abilities to engage in physical activity and get to key destinations.
- Council-managed facilities are of good quality and designed to be adapted in response to societal demand. They function as community hubs, where partnerships are used to create multiple opportunities for people to be involved in organised sport, informal recreation or 'pop-up'/spontaneous play.
- As a result, we see a range of people of different ethnicities, gender, age and abilities visible in the people on Council-managed sports parks, open spaces, playgrounds and in our facilities.



### How we developed the purpose statement

#### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:

- People have a low level of awareness of the breadth of play opportunities which are available in Hamilton.
- People want to know about play opportunities which are close to where they live.
- Safety is an issue which impacts on some people's play experiences and their decisions to go some places. In particular, women mentioned river paths and isolated parks as places which are unsafe or perceived as unsafe.
- Sports organisations are keen to work with Council to share data and information to ensure organised sport thrives in Hamilton.

#### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Council has a significant role to play in embedding physical activity across Hamilton. This role is supported by global organisations such as the World Health Organisation, which notes that "physical activity is important across all ages, and should be integrated into multiple settings"<sup>27</sup>.



"MORE SHOULD BE  
INVESTED IN AREAS  
OF LOWER RATES OF CAR  
OWNERSHIP (POORER AREAS)  
AS THOSE PEOPLE WILL  
BENEFIT MORE"

- Community feedback



Photo credit: The Peak, Rototuna Hamilton



# OUTCOME AREAS

## OUTCOME AREA ONE

Hamilton is reimagined as an urban playground: We develop a connected and accessible network of play opportunities throughout the city.

## OUTCOME AREA TWO

Decision-making is informed by evidence and community voice: We increase our use of evidence, research and information to understand the needs for play in the city.

## OUTCOME AREA THREE

Hamilton's play opportunities are achieved through collaborative partnerships: We work with sports organisations and other key partners to deliver play opportunities for everyone.

## OUTCOME AREA FOUR

We are responsive to changing play, sport and recreation trends: We embed sustainability and resilience practices and principles in to facilities and infrastructure.



# OUTCOME AREA ONE

## HAMILTON IS REIMAGINED AS AN URBAN PLAYGROUND: WE DEVELOP A CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK OF PLAY OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

### What our future looks like once we've achieved Outcome Area One

- Hamiltonians love getting out in their city and exploring new places to be physically active. People who live in and visit Hamilton explore the city with a sense of joy and wonder, whether it be by bike or on foot. They enjoy the unique natural environment within an urban city, and use it as a place of respite and to recharge.
- Our open spaces, sports grounds, aquatic facilities, playgrounds and river and gully systems connect with each other. People can move seamlessly by foot or by bike between parks, schools and across the city - primarily through green space.
- Our streets and footpaths are places where people move and interact, and where children play safely.
- Play infrastructure is integrated with other Council facilities and infrastructure and assists in delivering on other Council outcomes.

### How we developed Outcome Area One

#### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:

- For people who cycle, the lack of connectivity across the cycle network (both on and off-road) impacts on their enjoyment of cycling and, in some cases, impacts on their route and trip choice<sup>41</sup>.
- There is strong support for more cycling infrastructure (particularly off-road biking trails) which is suitable for all ages and abilities and which connects to key destinations.
- Small changes can be made to existing infrastructure to prompt 'pop-up'/spontaneous play in Hamilton: "I want to see more general 'Tarzan-ness' and climbing rocks through all our underpasses" - Community feedback.

#### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Connection with nature offers a retreat from the urban environment and helps to reduce anxiety and stress in children and adults alike<sup>28</sup>.
- Walkways and public parks, fields and playgrounds are in the top five places for Hamilton adults to be physically active<sup>29</sup>.





# OUTCOME AREA TWO

**DECISION-MAKING IS INFORMED BY EVIDENCE AND COMMUNITY VOICE:**  
WE INCREASE OUR USE OF EVIDENCE, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS FOR PLAY IN THE CITY.

## What our future looks like once we've achieved Outcome Area Two

- We use a range of data and evidence to improve equity of participation in physical activity across all population groups.
- We use data, national and international research on sports preferences and trends and community information to help make us make sound decisions for play within Hamilton.
- We keep an eye on long-term demographic changes within Hamilton City and what this means for changing play preferences and the associated demands for infrastructure, facilities and services.
- We use the information we already collect to guide planning and policy to create play infrastructure which the widest range of people will use. We have strong monitoring and analysis of trends in organised sport, informal recreation and 'pop-up'/spontaneous play.
- We have regular conversations with our community to understand how they play. We also share research insights on the benefits of play with sports organisations and other key partners to understand what impact the investment in play is having on the community.

## How we developed Outcome Area Two

### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:

- Sports organisations expressed a willingness to share the information they have on their sports code to support the growth of organised sport in Hamilton.
- The community want to help shape the future of play in the city, and they want to hear back about how their input is being used to make decisions.

### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Sport New Zealand recognises the importance of an insights approach, which is a balance between big picture data and local knowledge in making decisions<sup>30</sup>.
- Sport Waikato also supports an evidence-based approach to physical activity projects, programmes and initiatives.



# OUTCOME AREA THREE

HAMILTON'S PLAY OPPORTUNITIES ARE ACHIEVED THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: WE WORK WITH SPORTS ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER KEY PARTNERS TO DELIVER PLAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE.

## What our future looks like once we've achieved Outcome Area Three

- We have strong, productive relationships with organisations who are committed to supporting and enabling people to play in Hamilton. We work with schools, Sport Waikato, central government agencies, philanthropic organisations, sports organisations and clubs, Iwi/Māori, health organisations and the community to deliver a wide range of play opportunities.
- Council and sports clubs collaborate as we value what they do to support people to play within Hamilton. Sports clubs in the city are strong and vibrant, and are united in their vision of offering a range of play opportunities for people of all abilities, activity levels, age, gender and ethnicity.
- Council supports sports clubs to be innovative in their approach to attracting more participants, particularly those which involve short trials in new approaches.
- We collaborate with our partners on funding opportunities, particularly those which have multiple benefits across a number of wellbeing.
- The broad approach to play, and the resulting improvements to wellbeing, is well understood across Council. Staff use this knowledge to build physical activity into Hamilton's built environment.

## How we developed Outcome Area Three

### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:

- Sports organisations told us that interactions with Council are largely transactional, and they are seeking a more proactive, collaborative relationship with Council. They suggested an 'Open Day' for sports - run in partnership with Council, which would encourage sports clubs to run 'have a go' events.
- The community recognises that collaboration has a multiplier effect on the benefits of play: "Good work on the combined facilities such as Rototuna Junior High School (The Peak) - working with the Ministry of Education, Sport Waikato and other agencies is something Council should be more proactive in" - Community feedback.
- "Sports grounds are well-utilised by public groups, but only used very traditional sports. Would love to see some more dynamic use of the space or forward thinking from Council to better support community or small social group events to happen".
- Sports organisations consider that Council has a key role in promoting and encouraging play and to be an influencer in this space.



### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Sport Waikato has a strong focus on collaboration with sports organisations and councils.
- Sport New Zealand recognises the importance of partnerships, noting that "the best outcomes are achieved when partnerships are developed with those outside the sports sector"<sup>33</sup>.



# OUTCOME AREA FOUR

WE ARE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING PLAY, SPORT AND RECREATION TRENDS: WE EMBED SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE PRACTICES AND PRINCIPLES IN TO FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

## What our future looks like once we've achieved Outcome Area Four

- Organised sports within the city have a range of ages, gender and ethnicities involved, which reflects our diverse communities in Hamilton. Our sports fields and facilities are well-utilised across the weekdays, all seasons, and by a range of sports and community organisations.
- We have enough sports fields for a broad range of sports in Hamilton, and can repurpose fields in response to changes in sports preferences.
- We make funding decisions which are based on sound evidence, meet the needs of the community and address equity.
- Council provides practical information, guidance and support on how to achieve efficiencies through sharing resources and knowledge across sporting codes.

## How we developed Outcome Area Four

### WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US:


- The community recognises the important contribution that sports parks make to people being able to be physically active in Hamilton: "Wonderful seeing the age range and variety of sports levels and types of sports able to access a park, a great incentive to a healthy city" - Community feedback.
- However, there are opportunities to improve on both the play infrastructure and the ways in which sports codes work together: "Lack of facilities ie not enough toilets, not enough carparking, no access to power unless you ask the clubrooms onsite and they can be very hard to work with especially if you are another sporting code" - Community feedback.



### WHAT RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE TOLD US:

- Hamilton's population is ageing, although this is less marked than in some other urban centres in the Waikato Region. As a result, the demands for play opportunities (and associated infrastructure, services and facilities) will be required to change and adapt over time.
- In terms of sporting facilities, Sport New Zealand recognise there are multiple challenges, including: gaps and duplications, facilities which aren't fit for purpose, are unaffordable and are due for replacement<sup>34</sup>.



A young person is captured in mid-air, performing a skateboard trick on a wooden ramp. They are wearing a bright yellow t-shirt with an Adidas logo and a crest, khaki pants, a pink baseball cap, and sneakers with red laces. Their left arm is extended upwards, and their right arm is pointing forward. The skateboard has a colorful graphic design. The background features lush green trees and a clear blue sky.

"SKATING GIVES  
ME FREEDOM, TEACHES  
ME TO NEVER GIVE UP  
AND TO KEEP TRYING  
DIFFICULT TRICKS"

- Community feedback



# 04

## NEXT STEPS

### *Mahi anga whakamua*

---

In the short term, the Play Strategy will be used to test current projects and programmes (as outlined in Council’s 2018-28 10-Year Plan) to ensure they are aligned to the vision, purpose statement and outcome areas contained in this document. This testing presents the opportunity to change – or reprioritise – some work areas to ensure that they contribute towards making Hamilton a great place for everyone to play.

The strategy will also be used to develop an action plan which will make progress towards the outcome areas, and in the long term, contribute to the vision of Hamilton being a great place for everyone to play. This action plan will be incorporated into the development of the projects and programmes contained in Council’s 2021-31 10-Year Plan. Monitoring of progress on the strategy will also be undertaken and reported back to the community on a regular basis.

It is hoped that the Play Strategy provides additional clarity on the role Council has in enabling everyone to play. Council looks forward to engaging in a continuing dialogue with sports organisations, other key partners and the wider community on the value of play in improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians.



# REFERENCES

## *Raarangi pukapuka*

---

- 1 Sport New Zealand, 2017: The Value of Sport – Main Report, page 2. Accessed from <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/The-Value-of-Sport-Main-Report.pdf>.
- 2 <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/About-us/2015-PhysicalLiteracyDocument-Online.pdf>
- 3 <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/The-Value-of-Sport-Main-Report.pdf>
- 4 [http://www.agewell.org.nz/health\\_physical\\_activity\\_exercise.html](http://www.agewell.org.nz/health_physical_activity_exercise.html)
- 5 <https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/be-active-mahi-kakama/>
- 6 The Value of Sport – Main Report, 2017, Sport New Zealand, page 5. Accessed from <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/The-Value-of-Sport-Main-Report.pdf>
- 7 The Value of Sport – Main Report, 2017, Sport New Zealand, page 27. Accessed from <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/The-Value-of-Sport-Main-Report.pdf>
- 8 World Health Organisation, 2018: Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world. World Health Organisation, Geneva, page 6.
- 9 <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/The-Value-of-Sport-Main-Report.pdf>, page 9
- 10 Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, Wellington Regional Strategy Committee, 2013: The Costs of Physical Inactivity: Toward a regional full-cost accounting perspective.
- 11 Auckland Council, Waikato Regional Council, Wellington Regional Strategy Committee, 2013: The Costs of Physical Inactivity: Toward a regional full-cost accounting perspective.
- 12 <https://www.nzrecreation.org.nz/Site/advocacy/manifesto.aspx>. Access 13 February 2019.
- 13 <https://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>. Accessed 14 February 2019.
- 14 World Health Organisation, 2018: Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world. World Health Organisation, Geneva, page 32-35.
- 15 Active New Zealand Survey, Sport New Zealand, Moving Waikato 2025, Sport Waikato.
- 16 Sport New Zealand, 2017: The Importance of Play – Sport New Zealand’s Play Principles. Source: <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/Sport-New-Zealand-Play-Principles-Nov-2017.pdf>, Accessed 15 February 2019.
- 17 <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/sport/321689/is-new-zealand-really-a-sporting-nation> Is New Zealand really a sporting nation? RNZ report, 3 January 2017. Accessed 22 October 2018.
- 18 <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Women-and-Girls-Govt-Strategy.pdf>. Accessed 13 February 2019.
- 19 Sport Waikato’s new initiative focuses on encouraging and supporting girls and women of all ages to be physically active (thisisme.org.nz/), while New Zealand Cricket has recently employed a National Female Participation Manager, who is focused on attracting more women and girls to the sport.
- 20 For the purposes of the strategy, ‘play infrastructure’ is defined spaces and facilities which are managed by Hamilton City Council. It includes the open space network (which includes sports fields, parks, and natural areas), aquatic facilities, playgrounds and off-road walkways and cycleways.
- 21 Sport Waikato Active New Zealand – Young People (5-17 years) in Hamilton Participation Profile.
- 22 Sport Waikato Active New Zealand – Young People (5-17 years) in Hamilton Participation Profile.
- 23 Sport Waikato Active New Zealand – Young People (5-17 years) in Hamilton Participation Profile.
- 24 Parks and Open Spaces Activity Management Plan, Hamilton City Council.
- 25 Sport New Zealand, 2018: Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. Sport New Zealand, Wellington. The Waterboy <https://www.thewaterboy.org.nz/>
- 26 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations.
- 27 World Health Organisation, 2018: Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world. World Health Organisation, Geneva, page 6.
- 28 Healthy Nature Healthy People <https://www.doc.govt.nz/healthy-nature-healthy-people>. Accessed 21 February 2019.
- 29 Sport Waikato Active New Zealand – Adults (aged over 18 years) in Hamilton Participation Profile.
- 30 <https://sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/SPNZ-AG1039-SPNZ-Insights-AW4.pdf>
- 31 Sport Waikato, 2016: Moving Waikato 2025. Sport Waikato, Hamilton.
- 32 Sport Waikato, 2016: Moving Waikato 2025. Sport Waikato, Hamilton.
- 33 Sport New Zealand: Better Value from New Zealand Sporting Facilities: The New Zealand Sporting Facilities Framework, page 8. Sport New Zealand, Wellington.
- 34 Sport New Zealand: Better Value from New Zealand Sporting Facilities: The New Zealand Sporting Facilities Framework. Sport New Zealand, Wellington.



## **FURTHER INFORMATION**


### **Business and Planning**

Hamilton City Council

Garden Place, Private Bag 3010, Hamilton

 /HamiltonCityCouncil

 @CouncilHamilton

 07 838 6699

**hamilton.govt.nz**