



# VICTORIA ESPLANADE

**Masterplan**

2018







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## VICTORIA ESPLANADE



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# 1. Framework





# Introduction

## Welcome to the Victoria Esplanade Reserve Masterplan

Victoria Esplanade is one of Palmerston North's largest and most popular recreation reserves. It is often called the city's 'premier park', and it attracts over half a million visitors per year.

The park's size and the diversity of its features lend it to providing for a wide range of activities. Whilst the extensive playground and the miniature railway are among the most popular reasons for people to visit, the rose gardens, native bush areas, and the recently completed Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery Centre are also key attractions.

A significant and somewhat unique feature of Victoria Esplanade is the ongoing development of new facilities in response to community funded interest. Nearly every year major new features are planned or constructed, such as the Junior Road Safety Park (JRSP), the proposed new Lions mini-golf course, or planned cycling and walking connections to the new He Ara Kōtahi bridge across the Manawatū River.

As such, over the past 18 months, Palmerston North City Council has been embarking on a masterplanning process to help guide the future development and management of the park. The plan builds on previous proposals spanning the past 20 years.

The plan is values based, the values having been derived from engagement workshops that have been undertaken in the development of the plan, and also based on significant community consultation that has previously been undertaken as part of the long term plan processes.

This document forms the overall Victoria Esplanade Reserve Masterplan. It provides the strategic overview under which detailed elements of the Masterplan will be developed. It outlines the park values and the park character areas, before providing an overview of the values strategy and the development requirements for each area.









# Desired Outcomes

## What are the key objectives of the Masterplan?

Victoria Esplanade Reserve is expected to always be developed and improved as new ideas and budgets are introduced. The key objective of the Masterplan is to help shape those projects so that they contribute to the park's values, as well as simply providing for new activities. It is envisaged that as each project is completed, it will not only be an attraction in itself, but will also have enriched the character of the park and enhanced the enjoyment people have within it.

Previous masterplans for the park have struggled to survive beyond a few years. To ensure this plan has longevity, and is successful, the following desired outcomes are sought:

### Allow Flexibility

The most important learning from previous masterplanning exercises for the park is that Victoria Esplanade must be allowed to continually develop and adapt. Throughout its future there will be new ideas for facilities and activities that are suggested, just as there has been throughout the history of the park's development.

For this reason, the Masterplan should not present a set of development plans or drawings. Rather, it must provide a set of guidelines for the ongoing development of the park that allows for flexibility in what the park will provide for in the future.

### Respect the Values

Whilst flexibility in the growth of the park is sought, it is critically important that all future development respects the core values of the park - those attributes that define why people love visiting and recreating in the park.

The Masterplan needs to be values based. That is, all decisions on the development and management of the park should stem from, and be regularly tested against, the identified values. All development needs to be undertaken in a way that underpins and enhances the values, and should seek to minimise the undesirable attributes.

### Involve the Community

Whilst there is often a desire to 'get on and build', the most effective way in which new development ideas can be assessed and considered is through involvement of the park community and stakeholders including iwi.

The masterplanning process has been built on extensive historical community engagement, and has involved a series of stakeholder and Council workshops. However, such engagement shouldn't stop on the approval of this Masterplan Framework (Part 1), but must continue through the formulation of development concepts (Part 2) and in the building of new park facilities.

### Use the Masterplan

Victoria Esplanade will forever be faced with new development and new management challenges. It is imperative that park managers respect the guidance provided by the Masterplan, and follow the processes it sets out.





# Masterplan Overview

## What is a Masterplan and how does it work?

### What is a Masterplan

It is recognised that the development of an overall plan for Victoria Esplanade is crucial to provide guidance around the development and management of various facilities within the park, the types of activities that can be catered for, and how to best maintain (or enhance) the park's existing assets.

The Masterplan will become the guiding document for all decisions regarding the development, maintenance and management of the park. It contains the approved long-term strategies, area development plans and management policies.

### Masterplan Approach

The Masterplan has been prepared to support the Palmerston North City Council 2018-28 Long Term Plan process (LTP) with the intention to provide guidance on future development and management within the reserve.

The Masterplan builds on significant work that was undertaken by the Council between 2005 and 2009. Other historical masterplan proposals have been developed during this period. External consultants (Isthmus Group and Titchener Monzingo Aitken Ltd) undertook extensive community consultation which remains relevant today. Other historical information, including earlier masterplan proposals contained in the Council archives library, have also been considered.

Ongoing engagement with the community, iwi and key stakeholders has been undertaken throughout the masterplan process, and it is envisaged that this involvement will continue.

### Parts of the Masterplan

The following diagram illustrates the masterplan structure, which contains the following parts:

#### *Part 1: Masterplan Framework*

This document provides the overall strategic framework for the Masterplan. It outlines the park values (and undesirable attributes), the values strategy, and the development requirements that have been developed in consultation with stakeholders and approved by Council. The Framework is the only part of the Masterplan that is available as a static, printable document.

#### *Part 2: Development Concepts*

This part of the Masterplan consists of several sections, each covering aspects of the park (such as circulation or signage), or specific areas within the park (such as Park Central). It interprets the Masterplan Framework 'on the ground' - setting out where and how the development requirements will be delivered so that the values strategies are achieved.

#### *Part 3: Operational Policies*

This part of the Masterplan contains management objectives and policies, the status and desirability of various activities within the park, and the current annual budgets.

#### *Part 4: Planning Toolkit*

The Planning Toolkit provides an overview and contains all of the resources necessary to make development and management decisions about the park. It sets out how the 'User Forum' will work, and the process for 'approving' new developments within the park.

#### *Part 5: Background*

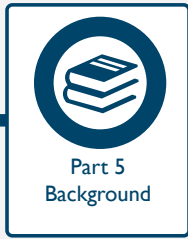
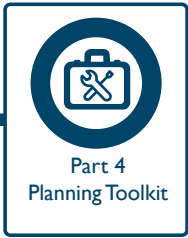
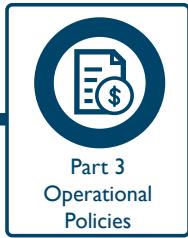
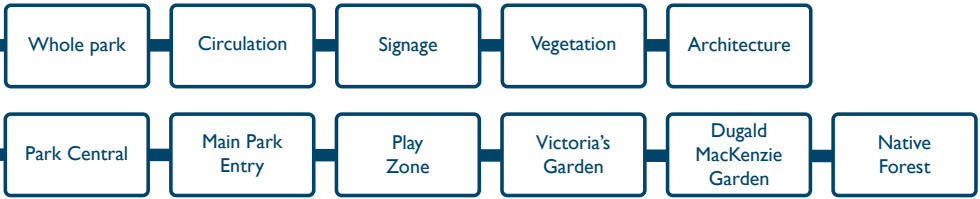
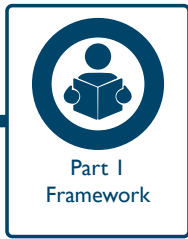
Historical information about the park has been collated, and this is contained in this part of the Masterplan for future reference.





# Masterplan Framework

Victoria Esplanade Masterplan





# Park Values

What do people love about Victoria Esplanade?

## Park Vision

The vision for Victoria Esplanade Reserve is to deliver on the promise of being the best park in Palmerston North.

It should be a park that continually evolves, but through the process of evolution it should strive to deliver on the core values and be a cherished asset to the people of the city. It should provide for a range of activities for a range of different people, and be accessible to everyone.

## Community Engagement

The 2005-2009 work undertaken by the Council involved extensive community consultation to identify what people loved about the park. This research has been reviewed in the process of developing this current masterplan.

In addition, in the preparation of this Framework, key stakeholders and interest

groups were consulted with, including (amongst many others) the Esplanade Scenic Railway, Mana Whenua, Forest & Bird, The Rose Society and Community Representatives.

Interestingly, the values identified in recent workshops with the interest groups strongly reflected the values identified in 2009. These values also strongly resonated with those people involved in the day-to-day management of the park.

## Park Values

Through a series of workshops numerous values and park attributes were discussed and refined.

The final set of five values outlined on the right have been rigorously tested, and are considered to best represent what the park is all about. In addition, the interest groups identified a set of undesirable attributes which are outlined below.

## Undesirable Attributes

During the community engagement, it was determined that where possible any development or management of the park should avoid the following undesirable attributes:



### Unslightly Rubbish

Rubbish needs to be kept under control - with effective recycling



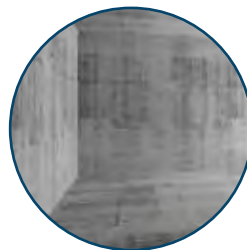
### Hard Surfaces

Too much open car parking or asphalt areas - the park should represent green, soft spaces.



### Poor Maintenance

All facilities that are created at the Park need to be able to be readily maintained and cared for.



### Stark Architecture

Too much concrete, creating stark architecture or features needs to be avoided..



### Anti-Social Behaviours

Everything at the Park should promote social interaction and activation of place.



### Family

Victoria Esplanade attracts a large number of family groups, who come for the enjoyment of the facilities as well as the open space areas.



### Seasonal

Although the native trees are important, so too are the exotic flowering trees that provide seasonal colour and interest.



### Victorian

Users of the park enjoy it's Victorian Heritage, displayed through architectural features such as the Rose Garden Bandstand, boundary fences & gates, and the formal layout of some garden areas.



### Community

We recognise that a key reason people visit Victoria Esplanade is because it provides an opportunity to socialise with family and friends.



### Native

The remnant and regenerating areas of native bush, together with the vast number of native trees throughout the Park, are of significant value to Park users.

Core values identified by Council and refined through engagement with the community and interest groups:







## 2. Development Concepts





# Strategic Overlays

What other park elements need consideration?

## What Are Strategic Overlays?

Whilst the physical development of the park will happen within each of the Character Areas, there are attributes of the park that need to be considered more holistically. In the master-plan, these have been considered as 'Strategic Overlays', because they are park wide considerations that will influence the development outcomes in each area.

The Strategic Overlays are not to be treated as prescriptive, but rather are included to help guide any future development in a way that responds to the park as a whole, so that the wider values of the park, and its character, can be retained and enhanced.

There are four Strategic Overlays which are outlined over the following few pages.

*“Victoria Esplanade should be a pedestrian friendly park where people can park on the peripheries and walk or ride throughout the park”*







# Circulation

## Circulation Development and Management Recommendations

### Existing Circulation

Threading together each of the character areas are roads, footpaths, cycle networks, and the Esplanade Scenic Railway. It is important that any development concepts (in Part 2 of the masterplan) consider wider objectives of circulation, set out as follows:



#### Pedestrian and Casual Cyclists

The most common method of circulation through the park is by walking. It is important that the park provides for a range of different routes, and different experiences for walkers, whilst catering for a range of different abilities and group sizes. The analysis has identified that there is scope to improve pedestrian access between character areas, but equally it is important that some routes retain a sense of mystery. Casual cyclists, particularly children on bikes (with parents walking), amble through various parts of the park. There is a need to ensure that some key routes can accommodate such cyclists.



#### Vehicles and Commuter Cyclists

Vehicles are a common method of arriving at Victoria Esplanade via the three entry points. The internal road network, consisting of Palm Drive and Victoria Esplanade Drive provide for through route between these entry points, with a one way system operation around the cafe.

Commuter cyclists pass through the park, either on the road or on some of the dedicated cycling routes to the River path. Commuter cyclists tend to move quickly, and need routes that are clear of pedestrians.



#### Esplanade Scenic Railway

The Esplanade Scenic Railway provides an almost full loop throughout the park, with stations near the Main Park Entry car park, the café, and near to the playground. The train could be utilised for transporting school children to the new Wildbase Recovery Centre, reducing the need for buses accessing Park Central.

## Circulation Strategy

Overall the circulation strategy is to develop and manage the parks circulation to help improve connections, accessibility and safety throughout the park. Enhanced circulation needs to achieve increased pedestrianised areas and encourage walking and casual cycling within the park, as well as promoting use of the ESR as a key circulation mode. The Circulation Strategy also encourages higher speed circulation such as vehicles and commuter cyclists to be limited to the peripheries to promote safe and desirable walking and cycling.

### Pedestrian and Casual Cyclists

As the most common method of circulation, walking and cycling needs to be the key circulation focus throughout the heart of the park and key activity areas. pedestrian paths are the primary link between character areas and activities, this can be reinforced through strengthening of viewshafts, widening of paths and enhanced connections and transitions within the path network. Extended open spaces can also accommodate for pedestrians and cyclists

### Vehicles and Commuter Cyclists

There are three vehicle entry points into Victoria Esplanade, two of which provide a route right through the centre of the Park. Whilst access to car parking is important, so too is providing for safe pedestrian activity, particularly around Park Central and the new Wildbase Recovery Centre. Reducing vehicles within the centre of the park will help to improve safety and increase opportunities for pedestrian areas.

There are also opportunities for improving the access from Park Road so that it better aligns with Cook Street and provides a stringer viewshaft into the park and enhanced connection to the city.

### Esplanade Scenic Railway

The much loved ESR train is not only a fun activity but an important aspect of circulation within the park. Using the train as a key circulation method within the park provides users options to access different areas of the park without relying on vehicle transport. There are also opportunities for schools or large groups visiting Victoria Esplanade and the Wildbase facility to use the train as a key transport mode within the park rather than bringing large buses or many cars into the heart of the park. Direct access from activities to the train stations and enhanced pedestrian areas around the stations will help to reinforce this.



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## Circulation Opportunities and Considerations

Core values identified by Council and refined through engagement with the community and interest groups:

### Surface Materials

Over the years various surfaces have been installed throughout the park as new developments or paths have been installed. Unfortunately there is little integration of these surfaces, yet they present a great opportunity to create new routes and promote connectivity. Future development of paths will need to respond to the strategies and values of the area in which it is proposed.

### Visual Connections

Some areas of the park feel disconnected due to the arrangement of paths and lack of visual connection between different areas. However, developing key axis and focal points will enhance connections between different areas across the park. This may require relocation of paths or tree management along avenues to maintain key visual connections.

### Wayfinding

Circulation throughout the park needs to be clear and easy to navigate. Visual connections are a key aspect of this, making it clear for users to see where they are going. Viewshafts help to achieve this.

### Path Hierarchy

Reinforcing key arterial paths such as a primary axis in Victoria's Garden and main paths into Park central will enhance wayfinding qualities and connections between different areas of the park.

### Commuter Cyclists

As the new He Ara Kōtahi Bridge is constructed it is anticipated that there will be increased use of access through the west end of Victoria Esplanade between Park Road and the river. There will be a need to accommodate for commuter cyclists as well as pedestrians and casual cyclists and to reduce conflicts between these different users. Therefore, there is a need to improve the connection to the river for commuter cyclists with separate access for pedestrians and family cyclists.

### Enhance Connection to City

The existing access to Victoria Esplanade Drive is offset from Cook Street, which presents a traffic safety issue. There is an opportunity to realign the entry through the vacant space between the park and the Lido, and in the process improve the wayfinding values through a strong vista into the park from the city. This provides an opportunity to enhance pedestrian and cycle access into the park off Cook Street as well as a potential connection to the river for commuter cyclists.

## Circulation Opportunities and Considerations (cont)

### Peripheral Parking

The space between cherry avenue and the neighbouring Lido is one of the most under-utilised areas in the park. Given the demand for parking (especially during ESR or Fitzherbert Park event days), potentially this area could be developed as an additional car park. This would accommodate parking that could be removed from Palm Drive in a move to pedestrianise Park Central. Enhanced visual and physical connections between key areas and parking will improve the use of parking areas, particularly car parks that are currently under utilised such as the car park located behind the cafe.

### Rationalise Paths

There are a large number of formal and informal paths and tracks throughout the park, the native forest in particular has many under utilised paths as a result of too many paths and lack of direction and destination. Reducing some of these paths, and restricting access to the paths only, will help address the balance between people in the bush and it serving as an important native habitat. Rationalisation of paths throughout the park will be necessary to reinforce key arterial paths and connections to potential future developments.

### Improve Connection to River

In places, as identified for Victoria's Garden, Native Forest and Main park Entry it will be necessary to create more direct links through to the river. This needs to be balanced out with the need to ensure the protection of existing vegetation.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Pedestrianising Palm Drive and Victoria Esplanade Drive in front of the Wildbase facilities will improve pedestrian safety for the area and allow for larger areas of open space and enhanced connections for pedestrians.

Aligning key paths and developing small hubs or transition zones where paths converge will assist in improving wayfinding and access between different activity areas.

### Increase Safety

Installation of safe pedestrian crossings such as raised platforms will help to improve safety in areas where paths cross roads and higher vehicle movement. For example, where Victoria Esplanade Drive passes through the connection between the pedestrian/train station area in Main park Entry and Dugald MacKenzie Garden. Pedestrian access will also need to be considered between the Junior road safety park and the play ground. Separating pedestrian and family cyclists from the car park will help to improve safety of users in this area.

### Enhance ESR Connections

The ESR is a key component for circulation throughout the park, and future developments should utilise and reinforce this through enhanced connections between activity areas and the ESR stations with a particular focus on improved pedestrianised areas around the stations.

Relocation of the Park Central Station from behind the cafe to a more visual and central location will also help to achieve improved connections with ESR and circulation opportunities.









# Signage

## Signage Development and Management Recommendations

### Existing Signage

Unsurprisingly for a reserve of its age, there is a legacy of signage dating back several decades. There are a significant number of signs across the reserve, including many in key locations that are outdated and inaccurate. In places, signs add to the heritage value and character of the reserve, or the character area in which they are located. Within the bush area, wooden trail markers reflect the style normally found within large conservation estates, and there are older signs that have a historical quality about them. However, there are also a number of newer signs throughout the reserve that have little branding or style-relevance to the Esplanade, and are simply functional.

It is considered that a number of signs throughout the reserve warrant removal as they are no longer relevant. There are also opportunities for the installation of new signs, including interpretative signs that explain important aspects of the park as well as enhanced wayfinding signage to assist in explaining where and how to use facilities in the park, as well as strengthening the park values outlined in this masterplan.

*“Park signs need to be clear and easy to understand”*



## Signage Strategy

Signage needs to reflect the overall park values and respond to the underlying character areas. Clear branding using Victoria Esplanade logos, colours and icons will help to reinforce the park identity and provide an understanding of how to use areas of the park, how to get around the park, as well as educational aspects of historical, cultural and biodiversity values within the park. It is considered that the development of a long term signage strategy that reflects the longer term development visions of the reserve would be beneficial.

### Wayfinding

The size and scale of Victoria Esplanade provides a large variety of spaces and activities throughout the park. Therefore it is important to provide wayfinding information to help people understand where they are, how to access different activities and encourage people to experience different areas of the park. The identity of each character area provides a basis for wayfinding across the whole park that can be reinforced through clear messages and icons.

### Interpretive

The park is not only made up of areas of different character and activities but also has a variety of historical, cultural and ecological values that can be reinforced through

interpretive signage that contains relevant and information to the area. Interpretive Interpretive signage can also reinforce the park values.

### Information

Information signage is important for people to understand any rules set out for the park such as open hours or discouraged activities. Management of signs is required to ensure sign content is consistent throughout the park and reflecting the parks branding and values. Over time information and rules in the park may change, therefore signs will need to be easy to update when required.



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## Signage Opportunities and Considerations

Based on the strategy and development requirements, the following section provides an outline of the potential long term development opportunities that might help to achieve the overall values strategy for the park. Signs and sign furniture can help to reinforce the character of the park, or a particular area of the park. It is considered that the development of a long term signage strategy that reflects the longer term development visions of the reserve would be beneficial.

### Wayfinding

Wayfinding can be strengthened throughout the park by enhancing focal points and sightlines to increase visibility and an understanding of connections between areas and where activities are located. Focal points will help to further enhance these viewshafts by adding a focus at the end of strong axis.

### Interpretive

Information about the park including history, cultural and biodiversity are all a part of the parks make up and an important aspect of the park that should be shared with people. There is an Opportunity to modernise the existing kiosk in Park Central as an information kiosk providing information about the whole park.

### Information

There is specific information that needs to be clearly displayed to explain expected behaviour of people within the park, such as rules around specific areas or discouraged activities.

### Activity Information

Throughout the park are a variety of activity areas that require specific information about that activity or the area it is in. Although each of the areas throughout the park are unique there needs to be consistency in appearance of signs throughout the park.

### Park Entry

There are three main entry points into the park off Park Road, Manawaroa St and Fitzherbert Ave. These are the gateways to the park and development of signage that captures this will help to reinforce the identity of Victoria Esplanade and welcome visitors to the park.

### Historical

The history of the park is evident through many of the features and signage that has been installed over the years. While it is encouraged to remove outdated signage, some wayfinding features are of a quality that can be maintained and reflect the history of the park.

## Signage Opportunities and Considerations (cont)

### Character Areas

Signs and sign furniture can help to reinforce the character of the reserve, or a particular area of the reserve. The character areas identified through the masterplanning process reinforce the identity of each area of the park and the values associated with these areas. Using the character areas in signage will assist in understanding how to navigate the park.

### Sign removal

Many of the existing signs in Victoria Esplanade vary in appearance, age and quality. Signs that are no longer relevant or do not reflect the overall signage strategy of park values should be removed..

### Biodiversity

The native forest has biodiversity values that with appropriate signage can shared with people using the park for educational purposes. Installing signs that are consistent throughout the Native Forest will help with easier interpretation and use of the area. There are existing species names on some of the trees throughout the park which with consistent signage could be educational and encourage people to learn more about 'nature'.

### Safety

Additional signage may be required in the park to ensure people are aware of potential risks or hazards and appropriate behaviour that is expected of people in these areas. for example the train crosses roads and paths that requires people to give way to the train. Other signs include potential circulation and traffic conflicts that are made aware of on signs. Ensuring there is a consistency throughout these signs will helps to reinforce the parks values and safety within the park.

### Third Party

There are many third party groups associated with the park who have a significant involvement in the upkeep and future of the park. As a result of many associated groups with the park there are a large variety of signs throughout the park that relate to specific activities or areas. However this also adds an inconsistent aspect to signage and wayfinding. There is a need to develop signage guidelines that third party groups can use to ensure signage is consistent across different activity areas.

### Consistent Appearance

All signage throughout the park should be consistent with character areas as well as being cohesive with the whole park branding

### Cultural

At this time there are no particular elements of Rangitāne culture expressed at least in a physical form at the Esplanade. One explanation of this may be that the heavy European influence in the design, layout and management of the space may have either directly or indirectly limited such opportunities. However, a series of pou carved by Rangitāne iwi will be erected in late 2018 at the entrance to the Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery facility. In addition, immediately south of Esplanade are the Okatia Steps leading into the river and the He Ara Kotahi bridge being constructed over it to the west. Both features have had involvement with Rangitāne. It is also noted discussions continue with Rangitāne through the masterplan process around their future aspirations for cultural expression at the Esplanade.









# Planting

## Planting Development and Management Recommendations

### Existing Planting

Trees and shrubs throughout the park provide an overall backdrop to the activities that are undertaken, and help to link together each of the character areas. There is currently no overall planting strategy or planting design for the park, other than in specific areas such as the bedding plants or rose garden.

There appears to be little in the way of an overall planting strategy or design for Victoria Esplanade, other than in specific areas such as the bedding plants or within the rose garden. Native species can be found throughout the reserve, including several very large species such as kauri and totara. Often these trees have been planted (and many are now getting relatively large) in areas that will be compromised by other trees, current or future activities, or by each other (eg kauri trees planted too close together). Some specimen trees are well selected to provide shade, but there are others that clearly provide maintenance hassles (such as leaf drop or root invasion). In some places, specimen trees are reducing the potential effectiveness or success of adjacent planting beds, either as a result of shading or acidity within the soil.

A few trees have been well located to positively contribute to the character of the reserve or an area (such as within the road corridor). However, there are also a number of trees and planting beds that are poorly located and reduce views, the usability of an area for recreational activity, or simply reduce desired openness.

There are numerous trees within the reserve that are nearing their maturity, and will leave significant openings in the canopy after their death. Some trees may also begin to pose fall hazards in coming years. There appears to be little in the way of a replacement strategy for such tree losses, and the loss of trees has potential to significantly change the character of some areas of the reserve.



## Planting Strategy

Trees and shrubs will always be a strong feature throughout Victoria Esplanade, providing variety in seasonal colours and indigenous habitat. Vegetation throughout the park requires ongoing maintenance and management to ensure planting is in good condition and planning for future planting is carefully considered.

### Seasonal

A value identified for the park that was reinforced through the values workshop was the element of seasonality that is evident throughout the park in exotic trees, the rose and camellia gardens as well as annual flower beds and borders. The seasonal vegetation provides diversity in colour and amenity that changes throughout the year.

### Planned

It is inevitable that planting will be ongoing in the park, however it is important that future planting is planned for and responds to the Character Area values. Maintenance of vegetation quality of planting reflects the park values.

### Native

Native vegetation is dominantly found in the Native Forest Character Area, this was also a characteristic that was identified as a key value of the overall park. The native vegetation is significant not only within Victoria Esplanade but also as a native forest within the urban setting of Palmerston North. The Native planting offers amenity values that are significantly unique to other areas of the park and has biodiversity values that provide indigenous habitat and educational opportunities.

*“We love the mix of native and exotic vegetation throughout the whole park”*



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## Planting Opportunities and Considerations

Based on the strategy and development requirements, the following section provides an outline of the potential long term development opportunities that might help to achieve the overall values strategy for the park. Signs and sign furniture can help to reinforce the character of the park, or a particular area of the park. It is considered that the development of a long term signage strategy that reflects the longer term development visions of the reserve would be beneficial.

### Respect Existing Planting

The existing planting in the park is reflective of the parks history and how the gardens have evolved over time, therefore there is a need to respect this and ensure that existing planting is maintained and included in the future of the park.

### Maintain Quality Planting

Many areas of the park are loved by the public for the amenity values the planting within the park offers, for example the exotic seasonal element and native vegetation provide unique and quality planting that requires maintenance to ensure the quality of upheld.

### Plant for the Future

The masterplanning process has identified Desired Outcomes that require future changes to planted areas. For example, to enhance viewshafts to the river and desired axis for circulation some areas of the Native Forest may require removal, however this is a long-term objective that can evolve as plants age and require removal and don't get replaced to accommodate for the alignment of paths or viewshafts.

### Planting Styles

A variety of planting styles are found in different areas of the park and are generally across a specific area. Development of planting within Victoria Esplanade needs to respond to the key areas in the park, in particular the Character Area Values. Planting styles help to reinforce key values and amenity.

### Park Values

The park values strongly reflect the seasonal and native qualities of the vegetation within the park. Future vegetation will need to be reflective of this and respect the existing vegetation that adds to the value of the park.

### Character Areas

Each character area has unique qualities and values that are reflective of the vegetation in the area. The vegetation helps to define the area and strengthen the identity and the overall experience of the area.

## Planting Opportunities and Considerations (cont)

### Maintenance

The quality of planting is reliant on the standard of maintenance. Different types and styles of planting will require different levels of maintenance to ensure the vegetation is reflective of the character and values of the park.

### Plant Lifespan

Trees and plants have a lifespan that should be respected and be used to inform future development and planting plans. There is an expectation that planting will need replacing or can allow areas to be developed differently as vegetation reaches the end of its lifespan.

### Planting Beyond Park

Integrating the borders of the park into the surrounding context can be enhanced through planting that is extended from the park, particularly exotic or native specimen trees that are used within the park. Trees and shrubs can also enhance the amenity and quality of 'gateways' to the park.









# Architecture

## Architecture Development and Management Recommendations

### Existing Architecture

There is a significant variety of architectural features throughout Victoria Esplanade that reflect the history of the park as new features of many different ages and styles have been introduced and developed over the years. A notable style reflective of the is evident throughout the park in features including the chin link barriers surrounding the urban boundary, iron gates, seat and the cafe which is an example of modest Neoclassical architecture. The building lacks the over-exuberance of embellishments, but reflects the stone work highlights, (despite it being a wooden building) soffit decorations, Piedmont gables and swept sash windows common of the age.

There is little consistency between the architecture of park furniture such as seats, rubbish bins and bollards and their location within a particular character area. Modern seats are often located next to period designs and the placement seemingly random with many appearing to have been placed simply because there was a space, rather than any particular consideration of a view, vista or activity.

It is considered that over time a greater consistency of design and placement could be achieved by contributing to the character of each area, and the reserve as a whole. Within the park, there are few fences and barriers, but those that are present generally add little architectural value to the reserve. A single bollard near the eastern entrance to the playground is reminiscent of the Victorian heritage, but surrounding barriers are simply constructed post and rail. The boundary fence between the Esplanade and Fitzherbert Park, and along the western boundary to the car park, is a simply painted timber paling fence. Although lacking in any style, it does have a recessive quality. However, it also reduces cross-visibility and potentially creates CPTED issues. An Art Deco style barrier is located in the centre of the reserve, around the RSA paddling pool. There is no clear reason for the existence of this barrier, other than providing wind shelter, but its design does add a sense of interest and value to this area. In other locations barriers are modern stainless steel installations.



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## Architecture Strategy

Overall the buildings and park furniture have an identity that is uniquely Victoria Esplanade. The architectural forms are well placed and well maintained adding value to each character areas and the park as a whole.

### Identity

The architecture of buildings and park furniture has a degree of consistency throughout the park, yet also reinforces a sense of place for each park area.

### Form

Architectural form provides aesthetic qualities but also amenity value, it is important architecture is identifiable, for example a toilet block should be easily identified as a toilet block and not disguised as something else. This also assists with wayfinding and understanding the space. Architectural form needs to add value to a space and reflect the character of the area it is placed as well as the park as a whole.

### Function

All architectural features have a function whether that is simply to provide a barrier for safety purposes, a place to sit or a shelter. It is important that the feature is usable and functional for its intended purpose. This includes consistent quality through ongoing maintenance and replacement if necessary.

*“The park furniture and architecture feels like it belongs here”*



## Architecture Opportunities and Considerations

Based on the strategy and development requirements, the following section provides an outline of the potential long term development opportunities that might help to achieve the overall values strategy for the park. Signs and sign furniture can help to reinforce the character of the park, or a particular area of the park. It is considered that the development of a long term signage strategy that reflects the longer term development visions of the reserve would be beneficial.

### Architectural Identity

The architecture located in each character of the park is unique to that area and contributes to the overall identity of the park. Enhance existing architecture in accordance with the Values Strategy to ensure values and character are reinforced and maintained.

### Replacement

Replacement of old equipment in a style that reflects the area of the park in which it is located can help to reinforce identity and achieve overall park values. This may require a new location for replacement equipment to be placed to help achieve this.

### Restoration

Refresh old equipment in a way that respects its history within the park and its contribution to the surrounding character.

### Removal

Remove buildings and furniture that doesn't contribute to the park values or character, including damaged or outdated features.

### Upgrade

Undertake ongoing maintenance and use this to explore ways to achieve architectural upgrades that better contribute to the values and character of the area and whole park.







# Character Areas



# Character Areas

What are the various areas within the Park?

Victoria Esplanade contains a wide variety of activities spread across unique areas of the park. To assist with the masterplanning process, the park has been divided up into a series of character areas, as shown on the map below.

The character areas were identified through assessment of the unique attributes of a wide number of areas throughout the park. Initially, over 20 areas of differing character were identified, but these were refined to six identifiable areas, each easily understood by all.

Whilst all of the character areas contribute to the park experience as a whole, each area has enough subtle differences that allow their future directions, and the activities they support, to be treated differently.

The following pages of this Masterplan Framework explore each of the character areas in more detail, explaining how the area contributes to a user's experience of the park. For each area, a 'values strategy' provides the longer-term strategic direction for development.

A set of 'Development Requirements' then sets out the longer-term development goals for each area, covering safety and accessibility improvements, new activities, improvements to existing facilities, etc.

As noted in the previous section the 'Strategic Overlays' consider the elements that connect each area of the park together, these being Circulation, Vegetation, Signage and Architecture.





### Park Central

Located in the centre of the park, this character area is defined by its sense of openness. It is home to a number of key features, many of which have different architectural styles, and it hosts a wide variety of activities. Of all the character areas within the park, this area is the most diverse. However it is also the key hub that serves all areas of the park.



### Main Park Entry

The main entry to the park from Cook Street is well known for its striking cherry avenue, particularly popular during spring months. A large car park at this end also provides access to the main Esplanade Railway Station (and maintenance hub). This area will also provide an important connection to the soon to be completed He Ara Kōtahi pedestrian bridge over the Manawatū River



### Play Zone

The playground is one of the most popular features of the park. The facilities have been extended haphazardly over the years, and as such it contains a variety of play structures that are 'of their time'. However, the seemingly random collection of equipment contributes to its uniqueness and interest. Importantly, the play zone includes areas of open space, which are used for picnics



### Dugald MacKenzie Garden

The rose garden is a strongly defined space that has a dominating formal character, typical of many municipal rose gardens throughout the world. It has a spoke design, with strong avenues branching out from a central pond. One of these avenues, adorned by a pergola structure, forms the existing main entry into the garden. The Dugald McKenzie Garden also contains a range of Rhododendron and Camellia trees, and is popular for wedding photographs.



### Victoria's Garden

The eastern end of the park is most reminiscent of the Victorian history of the park and its botanical beginnings. The garden areas are densely planted with a variety of native and exotic shrubs, with a number of narrow paths leading in several directions. Located around the planting are more open areas that provide a traditional park like character, providing sweeping lawns and longer vistas.



### Native Forest

The edge of the park that flanks the Manawatū River contains dense areas of regenerating native bush, with some taller species that are likely to have been growing since the original bush was burnt down towards the end of the 19th Century. The bush area provides a dominant backdrop to many other areas of the park, and provides an important habitat for a wide range of birds.





Park Central



# Park Central

Strategy and Development Requirements



*'We always end up in Park Central for an icecream.'*



## Existing Character

Located in the centre of the reserve, this character area is defined by its sense of openness. It is home to a number of key features, many of which have different architectural styles, and hosts a wide variety of activities. Of all the character areas within the park, this area is the most diverse, and could easily be further subdivided into defined nodes. However, the dominant presence of mowed lawn and a surrounding border of tall, dense bush trees ultimately defines and helps to unify the space.

The area is divided by the road corridors, with Park Road in particular having a strong character in its own right, although the avenue of Norfolk Pine trees also strongly contribute to the identity of Park Central. Parking right around the area reduces connectivity across the space, both visually and physically. Dominating the centre of the area is the Esplanade Caf , previously described in this report as having a somewhat Gothic Revival architectural style, despite it being a timber building. It is possibly one of the most recognised facilities in the reserve, and contributes strongly to its overall Victorian heritage.

The paddling pool is more reflective of an Art Deco style, although the decorative panels surrounding it help to connect with the caf . It's concrete surround and containment within walls makes it a dominant feature in its location, although also reduce its connection to the wider area. This is exacerbated by several mature trees that surround it

The bird cages are a strong link back to the Victorian roots of the reserve. They are dark, heavy features that draw the eye to them, yet there appears to be little interest in them from park users.



## Existing Character (cont)

The education facility and David Black Conservatory have their own entrances, and are both soon to be incorporated into the Wildbase Recovery Centre. This centre will feature a high block wall that will privatise these areas somewhat, although has potential to be softened with appropriate planting and architectural decoration.

The duck pond is the final major feature of this character area, and has a more naturalised appearance, with softer planted edges and a timber boardwalk. Ducks and other water fowl appear to regularly spill out onto the adjacent lawn. Bedding plants are a key feature of Park Central, with several geometrically shaped gardens located right through the area. These are regularly maintained and provide extensive colour throughout the area. Other garden beds include perennial and frangible shrub species.

Open lawn provides space for picnics, and there is evidence that this area is popular for this activity. A small event space is located west of the café, although this is poorly defined and relatively small. Trees are predominantly exotic, planted as specimens to provide shade for picnics/sitting, and an overall park-like amenity.

Two somewhat hidden away gardens in this area include a memorial to colleagues in the Council who have passed away (featuring kauri plantings), and a small scented garden adjacent to the education centre. These spaces lack any connection to the wider Park Central area.



## Strategy

The values strategy for Park Central is to develop and manage the area toward it being the active heart of the park. The space needs to be open and suited for safe and desirable use by people; it needs to be the hub that leads people to other parts of the park; it needs to be flexible to allow for a variety of different organised activities; and the activity areas need to come together to provide a unified character.

### Heart

As the centre of the park, Park Central is the place where most people visit, or pass through. It is from here that all paths need to extend to other areas of the park - leading people on journeys of discovery throughout the whole park (encouraging them to visit areas they might not have been to before). It is ideally placed to be the main focus of circulation and wayfinding throughout the park.

### Activity

Park Central is also a destination in its own right, ideally placed amongst a variety of activity centres including Wildbase Recovery,

Peter Black Conservatory, Esplanade Cafe, the Birdcages, and the Paddling Pond.

In addition, Park Central is an appropriate place to hold larger organised events (such as small concerts, picnic days or sports events).

### Family

The nature of the activities that happen at Park Central suggests that it should be highly focused on people. The activity centres need to be well connected (and safe), and there needs to be an open character (less vehicle orientated) that allows for good visibility across the area, and into the depths of other areas in the park.



## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure that all features and activity centres can be easily accessed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly.

### Increase Pedestrian Safety

Reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, and take measures to improve pedestrian safety.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Seek to strengthen physical and visual links to other areas of the park, especially Dugald MacKenzie Gardens and Play Zone, the Croquet car park, and to the river. Also improve pedestrian connectivity within the area.

### Improve Parking Opportunities

Enhance opportunities for parking in close proximity to key activity areas (eg Café, Wildbase, etc).

### Cater for Bicycles

Allow for commuter cycling through the area, cater for family biking, and provide bike stands.

### Upgrade and Integrate Activity Centres

Tie together the architecture and connectivity between activity centres, especially Wildbase, Paddling Pool, Conservatory entrance and any new activity centres.

### Develop New Feature Activity Centres

Build and integrate new feature activity centres such as oriental gardens, bonsai house, or other feature gardens.

### Improve Bird Cages / Aviaries

Redevelop the bird cages into aviaries that provide better habitat and a more engaging experience, while strengthening the

connection to Wildbase.

### Iwi Expression

Consider opportunities for iwi expression.

### Improve ESR Train Connectivity & Safety

Promote the use of the ESR station for trips to Wildbase and other activity areas, while improving train safety for all users of the park (including improved platform, warning signals/lights, fenced off areas).

### Enhance Caf  as Key Destination

Build an extension to the caf  so that it can better cater for visitors to the park, especially during events. Work with the caf  tenant to ensure accessibility is maximised.

### Create More Open Space

Develop more open space for hosting functions and events, and for use by school groups. Should include large areas of open grass, and also potentially hard-surface areas for use as educational stations.

### Improve Signage, Interpretation

Replace old signage to provide better navigation and improved education/interpretation. Install new information kiosk.

### Review and Install Artworks

Review current artworks and add new art/ sculpture from local artists (eg Paul Dibble).

### Cater for Alternative Vehicles

Consider how to best accommodate newer types of vehicles, such as EVs, Scooters, etc.

### Provide Quality Toilet Facilities

Ensure that there are enough toilets to meet user demand, that they are accessible, safe and clean.

### Improve Utilities

Enhance lighting and upgrade power supplies for events.

## Considerations

### Reducing Vehicles

The development requirements seek a pedestrian friendly area, reducing vehicle focus and the perception of the park as a place to loop through in a vehicle. A pedestrian focus aligns more strongly with the values strategy for this area of the park and through potential relocation of Victoria Esplanade Drive it will still be possible to drive right through the park.

### Pedestrian Connections

The existing connections from adjacent areas of the park are not well aligned to Park Central. For example the rose garden main gates are better aligned to the road than to pedestrian connectivity. Consider the direct linkages into the Dugald MacKenzie Garden, encouraging more people to discover and enjoy what this area has to offer. The connection between Park Central and Play Zone is compromised by the adjacent hockey fields, the road and car park. However, this is potentially one of the most important links in the park - as families move from the playground to activity centres such as the cafe or paddling pool. A recent path has helped to improve safety through this connection, but there remains an opportunity to consider this link more holistically in accordance with the other opportunities outlined for this area.

### Pedestrian Safety

The existing parked cars through Palm Drive, and to some extent the movement of vehicles through this space, hampers pedestrian connectivity across the area and decreases pedestrian safety around the key activity centres. Ways to reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflicts in this area should be a key priority, potentially in the longer term considering the removal of vehicles from this area.

### Create Flexible Open Spaces

Park Central is already well utilised for organised events, but there remains an opportunity to consider how these could be better provided for. This might be through provision of greater space, or by reconsidering the location of services. There may also be potential to extend the space beside the cafe outward, across to the area by the paddling pool.

### Vegetation Clearance

Creating some of the desired outcomes will require the removal of vegetation, particularly garden beds and smaller trees (nearly all large trees can be retained). This could be managed through the longer term by establishing a long term planting strategy and planting new areas in advance of removing vegetation.



## Considerations (cont)

### Removing Close Parking

Removing Palm Drive through the centre of Park Central comes at the loss of 24 car parks, however also comes with the benefit of increasing pedestrian safety and usability, and enhanced amenity. The loss of the car parks can be mitigated through enhancing the connection from the Café Carpark, which is not well known about, and will also be addressed through the establishment of an additional 100-120 car parks in Main Park Entry, which is to become the 'Park and Walk' and 'Park and Ride' entry to the park.

### Servicing Activity Centres

Through careful design of the new aviaries, it should be possible to provide for a shared service area at the back of Wildbase Recovery. When assessing the location and alignment of the new aviaries it is important to consider the benefits to be derived from creating a new viewshaft to the river, and in bringing the entrance to the aviaries close to the entrance to Wildbase Recovery.

### Integrating Architecture

The main built forms in Park Central consist of a variety of different architectural styles - from the Art Deco paddling pool to the more modern Wildbase Recovery and are part of the architectural history of the park. To ensure this is respected and to allow future development, additional buildings or alterations to existing buildings will require consideration to ensure they, along with various existing forms come together to present a more unified character. Potentially this could be achieved through colour, the use of materials connecting the forms, and through planting.

### Removing Fence Around Café

There may be concerns by some that removing the fence around the café will create a safety risk. However the relocation of the road will reduce through traffic, and a café seating area that is open will be more aligned with the character and values strategy for the area.

### Train Station

The existing train station located behind the Esplanade Café and consists of a simple gravel platform which overlooks a car park. In line with the wider circulation strategies for the park, where the train becomes an important mode of movement, consider the location of the station and how it might become more central to this area of the Park.

### Aviaries

The bird cages have long been a popular feature of Victoria Esplanade, yet they are fast becoming outdated. The facilities themselves are small, and receive increasing criticism from park users - there is an increasing desire to allow captive birds greater freedom of movement. Larger aviaries are currently being considered. The footprint of any future upgrade should be considered in the context of other opportunities outlined on this page.

### Funding for Road Relocation

Relocation of the roads is likely to be the priciest element of the desired outcomes, however it also will provide the most significant opportunities to enhance Park Central in accordance with the Values Strategy. Rather than consider the road relocation budget as a separate item, this could be achieved in stages as part of other development projects (such as the aviaries).

## Considerations (cont)

### Relocating ESR Station

Potential relocation of the ESR station requires involvement and agreement with the ESR society, and potentially dislocates it from the café. However, this can be managed through creating a bold new station that becomes a feature of Park Central, and through ensuring viewshafts from the station to the central plaza area.

### Phoenix Palms

The Phoenix Palms are an identifying feature of the park as a whole, but their arrangement is wholly focussed on creating an avenue feature through which the road has historically run. Removal of the road could potentially diminish the relationship between the palms and the open space that is created, so it is important that some sort of shared path or walkway is retained between them.

### Nighttime Activities

Creating a large open space that is devoid of vehicles has the potential to create safety and security concerns during the night. This could be addressed by installing lighting or CCTV, or by locking the park at night. This should be monitored as various developments are undertaken.

### Duck Pond

Whilst the duck pond is a popular feature in the park, it is by no means unique to Victoria Esplanade - there are numerous duck ponds across the city that offer better habitat for ducks, and better opportunities for people to interact. The pond also creates issues with droppings. Considering the removal of the duck pond may present opportunities for new or relocated activities within this area of the park that help to help realise the opportunities outlined.

### Links to City

The entry from Manawaroa Street is well used, even it is not destined to be the main park entry point. There exists an opportunity to 'extend' the park down this street, through the use of planting and street furniture, helping the park connect with the wider city.

### Links to River

It is not well known about, but there is a reasonable connection from Park Central to the Manawatu River. Unfortunately it is tucked away behind existing buildings, and has the appearance of a maintenance entry. There is a significant opportunity to enhance this link, especially visually from the centre of Park Central, and provide for greater pedestrian connectivity in accordance with the Manawatu River Framework.

### Car parking

With a strong focus on pedestrian connectivity through Park Central, it is imperative that good parking facilities remain available for the café (and other activity centres). The existing pedestrian link from the car park could be enhanced so that it becomes less of a 'back door' and takes on more status as an important entry into the park.

### Planting

The specimen trees and garden beds within Park Central are a significant attribute contributing to the character of the area. Retain these and consider future planting that ensures the character is upheld. However, potential development of Park Central may require removal of some of the existing garden beds to increase open pedestrian space and key circulation routes. Consider how the amenity value and variety of colour that the gardens provide needs to be included in future development of the area and further develop structural shrub planting around the perimeters of park central and integrate new developments with shrubs

## Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the park masterplan is not just to understand the potential opportunities, but also consider how these opportunities might be realised in a way that provides an overall enhancement of the park. Rather than 'silo' each project, the analysis has sought to explore ways in which individual development projects (such as new aviaries) could provide greater enhancement of the values for this area of the park.

From this analysis a set of 'desired outcomes' was developed and reviewed with the intention that as individual projects are developed, the design for such projects can be considered against these outcomes for this area of the park. In addition, the analysis has sought to identify potential issues that might arise as projects develop, and provide suggestions about how such issues might be avoided or mitigated.

In undertaking this process, it is envisaged that any new development project in this area of the park, no matter how big or small, can be integrated in a way that helps build toward delivery of the wider park objectives, without negatively impacting on the park's values.

A preliminary concept plan for the area has been created that graphically demonstrates how the longer term delivery of development projects could be realised on the ground.





## Specific Opportunities Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Better Connection to Dugald MacKenzie Garden

Signify the entrance to Dugald MacKenzie Garden by developing a potential mini plaza, an artwork or defined space that signifies the main entrance into the Dugald MacKenzie Garden. Most likely located directly at the end of the Phoenix Palm avenue, near the existing iron gates.

### 2. Pedestrianise Palm Drive

Remove vehicles from Palm Drive to facilitate pedestrian movement across the whole Park Central area. Potential development of a shared path beneath the Phoenix Palms will give them context as an avenue.

### 3. Retain / Upgrade Toilet Facilities

Allow for the future upgrading of the facilities to cope with larger groups of people within the Park Central area. Particularly important for organised events and/or school trips. Integrate the architecture of the building with the historical context of Park Central.

### 4. Upgrade and Integrate Paddling Pool

Retain the paddling pool as a key family activity in Park Central, and consider how it can integrate with the surrounding open space and the architecture of the other built forms in the area.

### 5. Retain Café in Key Location

The café is well placed in the heart of Park Central, creating a key public attraction. Allow for its operational expansion in a manner that doesn't detract from its architectural prominence (ie expand at the rear). Consider redesigning the entry deck so this is more obvious, and open up the outdoor eating area so it integrates more with the park (ie remove the fence).

### 6. Enhance Pedestrian Access from Car Park

The Croquet car park is located within close proximity to the café and has parking capacity for 108 vehicles. Enhance access between the car park, cafe and central area to allow the car park to become the main parking for Park Central.

### 7. Enhance Entry from 'Café Carpark'

To counter the effects of removing vehicles in Palm Drive, significantly enhance the entry from the car park as a key entry point into the park. This will also require reconfiguring the café outdoor eating area so that it becomes more prominent.

### 8. Future Vehicles

Provide for future vehicles such as parking for electric vehicles and scooters as well as a potential charging stations for electric vehicles.

### 9. Accommodate bicycles

Improve cycle connections into Park Central from Manawaroa St, as well as other areas of the park. Provide bike racks in a central location to further accommodate for cycling.

### 10. Amenity lighting

Improve and install lighting for events held in Park Central and potentially install lighting for crime prevention in key locations.

### 11. Enhance Connection between cafe and the heart of Park Central.

Develop improved pedestrian access across the whole area, with a particular focus on access into the central heart of the area.

## Specific Opportunities (cont)

### 12. Create Large Central Open Space

Through removal of vehicles on Palm Drive, the relocation of paths, and the integrating of the paddling pool, create a sense of open space in the centre of Park Central. This can be used for families to gather, or for larger organised events.

### 13. Strengthen Connection to River

Create a viewshaft and pathway from the centre of the park to the river, utilising the existing pathway through the bush in this location. This will require removal of the old bird cages, and some minor changes to planted borders in Park Central. This could also be an opportunity for establishment of a Sensory Garden, or could be a new feature garden.

### 14. Create Central Plaza

Create a new feature plaza area which can be used by families for picnics, by school children during class visits, or for organised events. The plaza needs to be designed to connect all of the activities within Park Central. It should also contain wayfinding and interpretative signage.

### 15. Upgrade Peter Black Conservatory

Redevelop the front entrance to the Conservatory so that it is more integrated with the surrounding open space, and

more directly connected to the new plaza. Investigate ways to integrate architecture with surrounding built forms such as the café, paddling pool and Wildbase Recovery.

### 16. Info Kiosk

Improve the prominence of the info kiosk and upgrade the shelter and overall amenity. Install new information and allow for ongoing additions to the information as projects within the park occur, this could be accommodated for through a digital and interactive information board that can be constantly updated.

### 17. Aviaries

Develop new, larger bird aviaries directly adjacent to Wildbase Recovery, using the opportunity to relocate Victoria Esplanade Drive and create a viewshaft to the river. The aviaries should promote modern day husbandry and create a more natural experience for birds and visitors.

### 18. Enhance Manawaroa Street Entry

Recognise the importance of this entry into the park as being an important route to the Café and other activity centres within Park Central. Allow for a viewshaft from the entry into the pedestrianised open space, and extend the planting in the park down Manawaroa Street



## Specific Opportunities (cont)

### 19. Establish new Large Feature Garden

Remove the duck pond and replace with a new large feature garden that completes an activity perimeter around Park Central. This could be a new Chinese or Asian Garden, or just a shady picnic spot.

### 20. Bonsai House

Develop a bonsai house to accommodate the bonsai collection.

### 21. Artworks

Consider location of any new artworks or sculptures and ensure artworks are well integrated and lend to the overall values and character of the area (for example potential Paul Dibble Sculpture).

### 22. Integrate Wildbase Recovery

Through removal of Victoria Esplanade Drive, integrate the entry into Wildbase Recovery with the new plaza, and with new aviaries directly adjacent. Utilise planting to help integrate the tall fence.

### 23. Upgrade (and potentially relocate) ESR Station

Move the train station to a more prominent location that provides better access to the activity centres such as Wildbase Recovery and the Aviaries. Allow for safety fencing around the station that also doubles as a barrier along the relocated Victoria Esplanade Drive. Ensure viewshaft from the station to the central plaza.

### 24. Enhance connection to ESR station

Relocate the station to enhance visibility and accessibility from the heart of Park Central. Upgrade the station to be more prominent and reflect the character of ESR and Park Central.

### 25. Enhance Connection to Play Zone

As part of the road realignment, also realign paths from Park Central to the Play Zone, allowing for a safer more defined connection. Ideally relocate the path on the 'park side' of the road, rather than against the park boundary. Also allow for connection to the central car park.

### 26. Realign Victoria Esplanade Drive

Push the vehicles out of the centre of Park Central to give way to a pedestrian focussed area. Align road with park boundary to maximise space for the activity centres, allowing for increased open space.

## Concept Plan



NORTH  
Scale 1:2000 @ A3



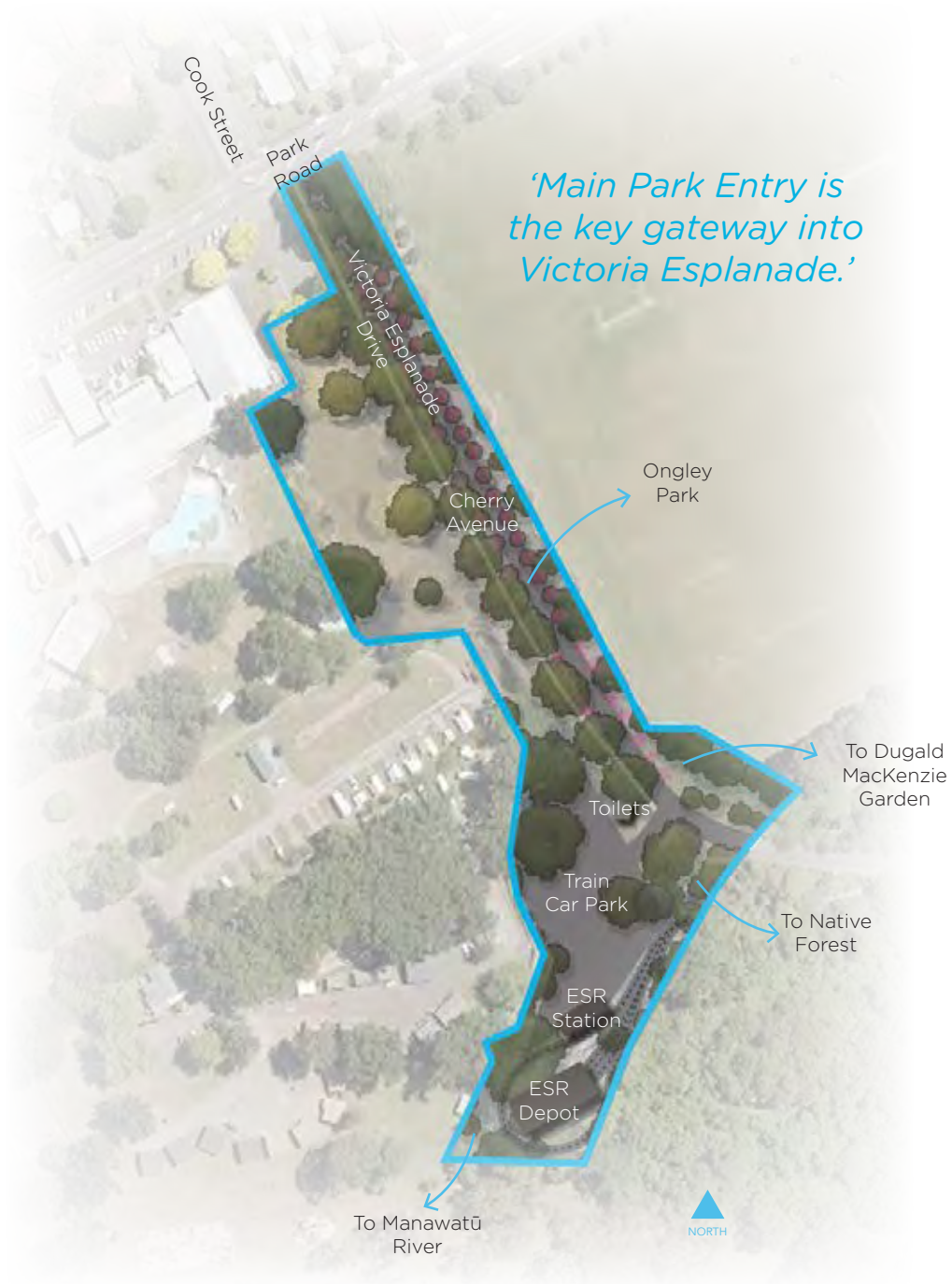


# Main Park Entry



# Main Park Entry

Strategy and Development Requirements





## Existing Character

The main entry to the park from Cook Street is well known for its striking cherry avenue, particularly popular during spring months. A large carpark at this end also provides access to the main Esplanade Railway Station (and maintenance hub). This area will also provide an important connection to the soon to be completed He Ara Kōtahi pedestrian bridge over the Manawatu River.

The overall character is dominated by the car park space, and it has a generally functional amenity. Several tall single trees provide shade within the car park, but these could not be described as specimen quality. However, they do have a mature scale and quality, and provide a sense of containment to the native bush area. Shrub planting on the car park islands is patchy, and generally consists of native ground-cover.

The ESR depot is a corrugated iron building that has a light-industrial architectural character. Its green colour helps it recede into the surrounding bush area, and recent planting will help to screen it further. Construction of a new Station and Ticket Office (further described below) is underway and expected to be completed by mid-2018. This will improve the user experience from the old breeze-block structure that was recently demolished.

A small pedestrian over-bridge and some arm-signals add to the railway aesthetic, although the bridge does not actually lead anywhere significant. A concrete block toilet building in the centre of the area has recently been painted with a train mural.

An important connection to the Manawatu River and soon to be constructed He Ara Kōtahi bridge is concealed in the corner and difficult to access. It is noted as part of the Manawatu River Framework, a much wider shared path will be constructed in this location, to be completed in 2019.

The boundary fence bordering the neighbouring camping ground is a simple timber paling fence, painted green, providing a hard edge that does not add significant character or amenity value.

The area is regularly used by users of the neighbouring Fitzherbert Park during game days, and during these times the car park can reach capacity. However, more regularly the car park is a vast open, asphalt space. The cherry avenue, originally planted in the 1920's, is very popular. However the access does not align with Cook Street.

### Esplanade Scenic Railway

The ESR was first constructed at Victoria Esplanade in 1969, and has since become one of the most popular attractions in the park. The main headquarters for the railway, including the maintenance buildings and main station, are located within the Main Park Entry character area.

Construction of the new Esplanade Station and ticket office has been completed this year (2018) The new building has been constructed of corrugated iron, and will include associated landscape works (that are being developed in conjunction with a new river link). There is significant potential for the ESR to become a key transportation link throughout the remainder of the park.

## Strategy

The values strategy for Park Central is to develop and manage the area toward it being the active heart of the park. The space needs to be open and suited for safe and desirable use by people; it needs to be the hub that leads people to other parts of the park; it needs to be flexible to allow for a variety of different organised activities; and the activity areas need to come together to provide a unified character. Whilst the future focus of Main Park Entry is to be a gateway and ultimately a large car park, it is important that these functional activities do not detract from the aesthetics of this area of the park. The values strategy for this area is to create a sense of arrival that typifies what people will experience once they step out of the car and enter the park.

### Cherry Avenue

The avenue of cherries extending from Park Road is perhaps one of the most well known botanical features of the park. People come from all over the city to admire the trees, especially when in blossom. Main Park Entry needs to be the showcase of seasonal - where people arriving to the park feel the immediate transition from the urban surroundings into the park setting.

### Park and Walk

There is already extensive parking in this area of the park, much of which is under utilised, and there is space for even more. Largely this results from a perceived lack of pedestrian connectivity to other areas of the park - particularly Park Central. Ideally, through changes to circulation throughout the park, this area could become the key place to leave the car and walk.

### Park and Ride

The new ESR railway station (to be opened in 2018) will become the key hub for the railway, and the station will dominate this area of the park. The train is also destined to become a key transportation mode through the park - ferrying people from Main Park Entry to Park Central (to engage in the activity centres there) or to the Playground. This area of the park needs to celebrate the close connection of the ESR with Victoria Esplanade.



## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure that all pedestrian areas can be easily accessed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly.

### Strengthen Entry

Enhance opportunities for pedestrian and vehicle access into the park off Park Road. Realign Victoria Esplanade Drive with Cook street to provide for safer vehicle entry and enhanced sightlines into the park.

### Enhance Cherry Avenue

Strengthen the prominence of the cherry avenue, considering opportunities for improved amenity and experience of the cherry avenue. Consider how to balance the use of the avenue as the main vehicle entry with the desire for people to photograph and enjoy it.

### Increase Pedestrian Safety

Reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, and take measures to improve pedestrian safety, particularly around the ESR station, car parks and entry into the park.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Seek to strengthen physical and visual links to other areas of the park, especially to Dugald MacKenzie Gardens and Native Forest. Also improve pedestrian connectivity within the area.

### Improve Parking Opportunities

Enhance opportunities for parking in close proximity to the ESR station and consider opportunities for increased parking capacity that can cater for coach and overflow parking. Consider the impacts of Fitzherbert Park on the overall parking capacity.

Improve Connection to the River  
Consider how to enhance the visual and physical connections between this area of the park and the river.

### Cater for Bicycles

Allow for different user access through Main Park Entry including access for commuter cyclists to He Ara Kōtahi bridge. Mitigate any potential conflicts between other users in the area (such as pedestrians and vehicles), particularly around the ESR station.

### Improve ESR Train Connectivity & Safety

Promote the use of the ESR station for access into the rest of the park encouraging a park and ride approach, as well as improving train safety for all users of the park.

### Improve Connection to the River

Consider how to enhance the visual and physical connections between this area of the park and the river.

## Development Requirements

### Install Gateway Artwork

Work with mana whenua to develop an appropriate entry artwork feature that also respects the Victorian Heritage of the park.

### Enhance Visual Connections

Ensure key axis are enhanced through focal points to help strengthen visual connections, particularly the key entry axis into the park.

### Provide Quality Toilet Facilities

Ensure that there are enough toilets to meet user demand, that they are easily accessible from the ESR station, and are safe and clean.

### Iwi Expression

Consider opportunities for iwi expression.



## Considerations

### Planting

The existing avenues of trees in park central are a significant aspect of Main Park Entry reflecting the history of the park and providing strong desire lines and seasonal value. As trees age or are damaged they may require removal, replacement planting should be undertaken to maintain the strong axis in this area. Potential realignment of the road may also be enhanced with an additional avenue of trees and there may be opportunity to plant more specimen trees and shrubs around the car park, train station and fences to help integrate the new developments.

### Links to City

The entrance from Park Road is well used and is likely the most used access into the park. There is opportunity to enhance this entrance by realigning it with Cook Street and installing traffic control and improved pedestrian safety.

### Cherry Avenue

The cherry avenue is a key seasonal attraction in the park and contributes to the character and values of the park. Ensure future development strengthens pedestrian access and the overall experience provided by the avenue.

### Architecture

The architectural elements within Main Park Entry vary across the area, including victorian style bollards, concrete block toilet and the new ESR station. Existing architecture and additional buildings or alterations to existing buildings will require consideration to ensure they, along with various existing forms come together to present a more unified character. Potentially this could be achieved through colour, the use of materials connecting the forms, and through planting.

### Tree Removal

Potential development of the entrance from Park Road may require removal of some of the existing trees to accommodate for this increase in open pedestrian space and

key circulation routes. Consider long term strategies for trees to ensure the strong avenues are retained.

### Pedestrian Safety

The existing car park (and some movement of vehicles through this space), hampers pedestrian connectivity across Victoria Esplanade Drive and decreases pedestrian safety around the ESR station. Ways to reduce vehicle/pedestrian conflicts in this area should be a key priority.

### Pedestrian Connections

The existing connections from adjacent areas of the park are not well aligned to Main Park Entry especially to Dugald MacKenzie Garden and the Native Forest. Consider the direct linkages into these areas encouraging more people to discover and enjoy what this area has to offer.

### Connection to River

There is an existing connection from Main Park Entry to the Manawatū River, unfortunately it is tucked away and is not well sign posted. There is a significant opportunity to enhance this link, especially widening the access and consideration of materials and space for different users.

### ESR Station

The new station is a significant feature within Main Park Entry and can now accommodate for increased number of users. Development of the area surrounding the station will require consideration of pedestrian safety.

### Car parking

The car park provides convenient parking spaces for those using the ESR rail. However, when sports events are occurring on Ongley Park and busy weekend in Victoria Esplanade there is significantly higher use of the parking area. There is potential to enhance parking opportunities by developing a future parking area in the under utilised area adjacent to the Lido.

## Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the park masterplan is not just to understand the potential opportunities, but also consider how these opportunities might be realised in a way that provides an overall enhancement of the park. Rather than 'silo' each project, the analysis has sought to explore ways in which individual development projects (such as new aviaries) could provide greater enhancement of the values for this area of the park.

From this analysis a set of 'desired outcomes' was developed and reviewed with the intention that as individual projects are developed, the design for such projects can be considered against these outcomes for this area of the park. In addition, the analysis has sought to identify potential issues that might arise as projects develop, and provide suggestions about how such issues might be avoided or mitigated.

In undertaking this process, it is envisaged that any

new development project in this area of the park, no matter how big or small, can be integrated in a way that helps build toward delivery of the wider park objectives, without negatively impacting on the park's values.

Within Main Park Entry, the analysis and detailing work has been undertaken more extensively than in other areas of the park, as it was determined some development needed to happen in this area in relatively quickly as a result of the proposed new He Ara Kōtahi pedestrian bridge. In particular, the options below have focussed on key circulation opportunities, including commuter cycling, and the concept plan has been developed to a greater level of detail. As part of this work, the opportunities analysis work has also included developing artistic impressions of the recommended key outcomes, which are displayed below.



### Opportunities Analysis Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Align vehicle entry with Cook Street

The existing access is offset from Cook Street, which presents a traffic safety issue. There is an opportunity to realign the entry through the vacant space between the park and the Lido, and in the process improve the vista into the park from the city.

### 2. Enhance Cherry Avenue

The cherry avenue is one of the most spectacular features of this area of the park, but can regularly be impacted by the presence of vehicles. It is considered that pedestrianising this avenue, and adding seating, will create a better viewing experience.

### 3. Create new car parking

The space between the cherry avenue and the neighbouring Lido is one of the most under-utilised areas in the park. Given the demand for parking (especially during ESR or Fitzherbert Park event days), potentially this area could be developed as an additional car park.

### 4. Create commuter cyclist access to He Ara Kōtahi bridge

Develop a cycle path for the predicted increase of commuter cyclists accessing the new He Ara Kōtahi Bridge through Victoria Esplanade.

### 5. Retain toilet and improve connection with key activities

Allow for the future upgrading of the facilities to cope with larger groups of people within the Main Park Entry area. Integrate the architecture of the building with the historical context of Park Central.

### 6. Improve amenity of existing car park, and re-align parking to increase parking capacity

The car park is a large open space that is regularly seen as a void of asphalt - one of the undesirable values of the park. There is scope to improve the flow and efficiency of the car park area, and as part of this improve the overall amenity with tree and shrub planting.





## Specific Opportunities (cont)

### 7. Soften boundary fence

The fence is an abrupt, hard edge to the park, representing one of the undesirable values of the park. There is scope to provide a planted edge of shrubs and trees that softens this edge, and helps to contribute to the wider park amenity.

### 8. Enhance pedestrian precinct around ESR station

Develop a larger pedestrian area around the ESR Station by removing parking directly adjacent to the station. Improve safety by developing pedestrian areas around the car park and the river.

### 9. Utilise railway bridge

The pedestrian bridge over the railway is a prominent feature that currently doesn't lead anywhere. There is an opportunity to utilise this bridge, whilst also improving access through the park. It is worth noting that the bridge is well located to provide a view over the main working area of ESR.

### 10. Integrate the new ESR station

The current station building is located on the edge of the car park, and does not provide an inspiring place for families to wait to catch a train. Work is underway to improve the overall amenity around the new station complex, which needs to be focused on pedestrian activity.

### 11. Improve connection to the river

The existing river access is located behind the ESR maintenance sheds. It is difficult to find, and presents various safety & security risks.

Work is underway to reconsider the access, including potentially borrowing land from the neighbouring Council owned camping ground, to improve access and visibility.

### 12. Consider focal feature such as artwork

The vista from Cook Street, together with new pedestrian links into the Dugald MacKenzie Garden, could be enhanced with a key artwork or structure. This could potentially be a carving developed by Rangitāne to reference the cultural history of the park.

### 13. Strengthen connection to Dugald MacKenzie Garden

Pedestrian links from this area to the main park are difficult to find, and fail to provide good connectivity. Given this area is where the main car park is located, with potential for further expansion, it is considered that there is scope to improve the pedestrian connectivity through to the Dugald MacKenzie Garden, and beyond to Park Central.

### 14. Enhance existing pathway visibility

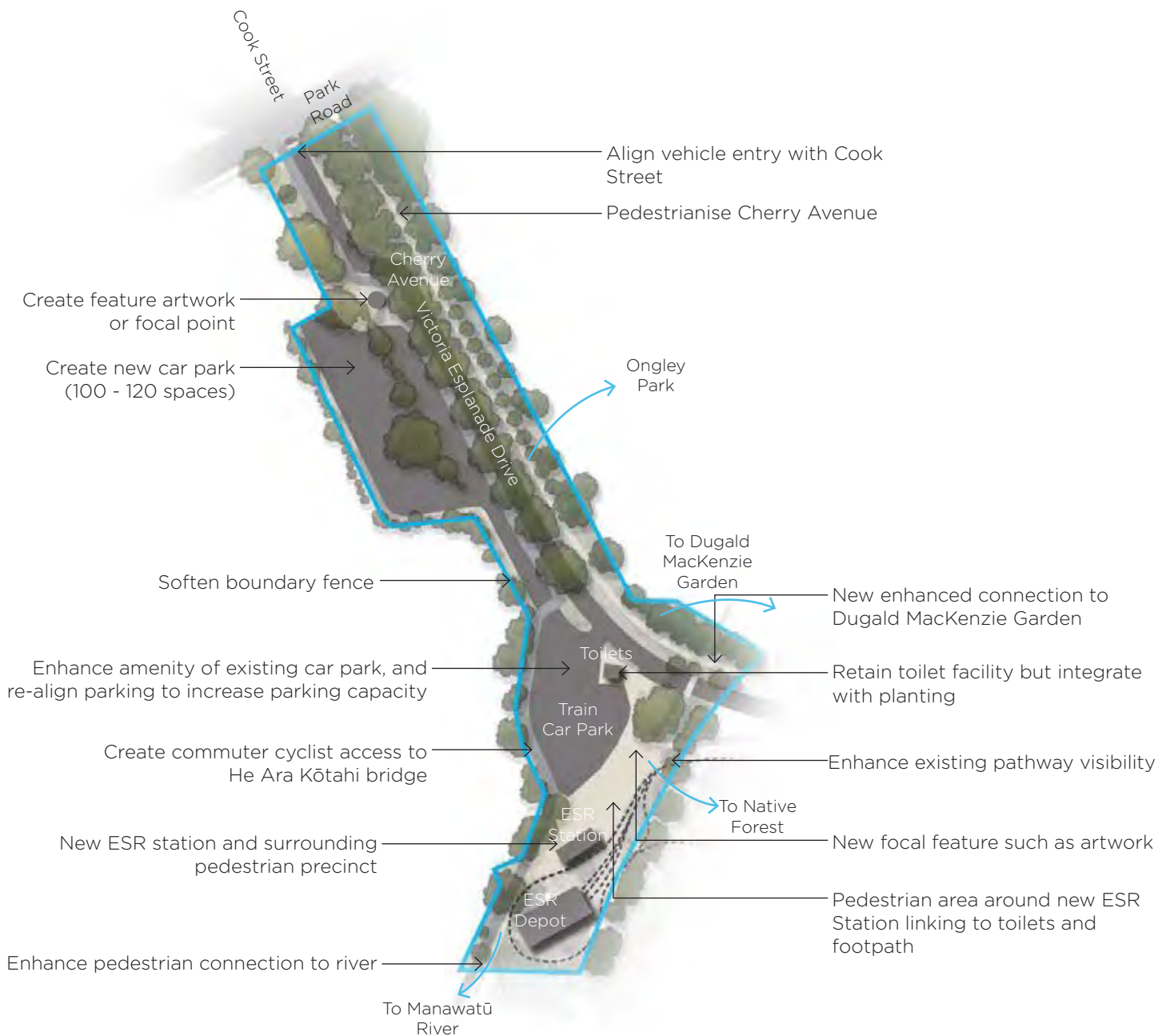
Enhance the visibility and pedestrian access from Main Park Entry and the ESR station to the existing path providing access to Park Central. Consider plant placement and improved wayfinding.

### 15. Enhance connection to Native Forest

Enhance visibility and direct access to paths within Native Forest. Wayfinding can also assist with this.



## Concept Plan







Play Zone



# Play Zone

Strategy and Development Requirements



*'The playground in Victoria Esplanade is the best playground in Palmerston North!'*

## Existing Character

The playground is one of the most popular features of the reserve. It is apparent by its character that it has organically grown over the years by way of construction of equipment 'of its time'. However, the seemingly random collection of play equipment actually contributes to its uniqueness and interest.

Areas within the playground aren't expressly defined, and it is evident that this is appreciated by users who run between various pieces of equipment. However, more recently installed equipment at the eastern end, adjacent to the car park, are targeted at junior children. This facility contains brightly coloured equipment, shade sails and safety matting.

An older style block toilet building adjacent to this facility has been spruced up with brightly coloured doors and features. A modern recycling station has also been installed in this location.

Large open space separates this area from the main playground facility, and it is evident that this space is popular for picnics and parents. Visibility through this section is an important consideration.

The main playground consists of a variety of equipment including timber 'nature adventure' style forts through to modern facilities such as in-ground trampolines. A flying fox runs adjacent to the railway line, and defines the edge of the playground.

Observation of user behaviour within the playground indicates there is no particular preference for the style or colouring of any particular piece, rather the equipment is used for its merits in providing recreational value.

Paths through the space vary, and include a relatively dominant axis path constructed of asphalt with flush concrete kerbs, crushed limestone, and safety falling surfaces.

Much of the low planting through the playground area is relatively new, consisting of ground cover native plants that provide colour and texture. Some older plantings include more traditional herbaceous borders. Trees are located throughout the area, and in places become a core part of the play equipment.

The area is relatively well defined, bordered each end (east and west) by car parks, to the north by Fitzherbert Park, and to the south by the railway line. Through the more open space (between the junior and main playground), there is a relatively strong visual connection through to the English Park character area.

The ESR railway station adjacent to the playground is a simple block building that has been painted green. It is tucked behind the flying fox and other play equipment, and adds little to the overall character of the playground area.

### Lions Mini Golf

In 2017 an opportunity has arisen to install an 18 hole mini-golf facility in the park, and it has been identified as an ideal activity to compliment the Play Zone. During 2018 designs will be developed, and it is anticipated that construction will start in 2019. For more information about the Mini Golf project, please click on the button to the right.

## Strategy

The Play Zone area of the park is all about play on traditional (and less traditional) built play structures. The space needs to be innovative, interesting, and challenging, and everything in the playground should promote principles of sharing and looking out for each other. The Play Zone is all about community fun.

### Activity

Play Zone is all about active play, and to deliver this the playground needs the best facilities. The playground equipment needs to be interesting, engaging, challenging, safe, and fun! In addition, the facilities need to work together, promoting active use across the whole area, and cater for a wide range of users - in terms of age and ability.

### Family

The Play Zone is regularly used for families. Space is needed to provide for rugs to be laid out for picnics, and seats are required for those less able to participate. The whole playground area needs to encourage family involvement - not just attendance!

### Community

Playgrounds are important places for social development. They encourage strangers to talk to each other, and are places where respect and patience are learned. The Play Zone area of the park should promote social interactions and engagement amongst all users of the park, no matter what their background.





## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure that all features and play areas can be easily accessed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly.

### Provide for all Ages

Ensure equipment and activities cater for all ages, including toddlers, primary and secondary aged children, young adults, adults and the elderly.

### Develop New Play Opportunities

Build and integrate new play equipment and activities that encourage play (such as the potential Lions mini golf), and ensure that they integrate with the park as a whole (rather than becoming 'fenced off').

### Increase Pedestrian Safety

Reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, particularly around the car park and Junior Road Safety Park (JRSP), and take measures to improve pedestrian safety.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Seek to strengthen physical and visual links to adjacent areas of the park, including Park Central, Victoria's Garden and Native Forest. Also improve pedestrian connectivity within the area, especially to disconnected activities such as the JRSP area.

### Cater for Bicycles

Cater for family biking to and within the area and integrate the JRSP. Mitigate any potential conflicts between different users where cycling occurs, and provide bike stands.

### Upgrade and Integrate Equipment

Tie together the style of any architecture and play equipment to strengthen connections across the area as well as any new features.

### Improve ESR Train Connectivity & Safety

Enhance the connection between play areas and the ESR station. Consider improved train safety for all users of the area, with a particular focus on children (including improved platform, warning signals/lights, fenced off areas).

### Enhance Open Space

Develop open grass spaces for family picnicing, parents sitting and watching, and to promote informal play.

### Develop consistency

Use new surfaces and materials to help update and pull together the architectural style of the playground, ensuring these are consistent with the aesthetics of play and the safety of users.

### Provide Quality Toilet Facilities

Ensure that there are enough toilets to meet user demand, that they are easily accessible from the ESR station, safe and clean.

## Considerations

### Car Park

Creating a more direct route between the Junior Road Safety Park and the central Play Zone may result in the loss of 2-6 car parks, however provides benefits of increased pedestrian safety. The loss of parking spaces can be mitigated through a stronger connection to the car park at the eastern end of Park Zone and through additional parking provided for Esplanade Reserve at Main Park Entry.

### Pedestrian Safety

There are car parks located at both the east and west ends of the Play Zone, however with close proximity to the playground, future enhancements should consider safety around children and vehicles. Also consider ESR train activity.

### Paths

The connection between Park Central and Play Zone is compromised by the adjacent hockey fields, the road and car park. However, this is potentially one of the most important links in the park - as families move from the playground to activity centres such as the cafe or paddling pond. A recent path has helped to improve safety through this connection, but there remains an opportunity to consider this link more holistically in accordance with the other opportunities outlined for this area.

### Connection to City

The existing entrance from Fitzherbert Ave is the key vehicle access from the city to Play Zone. However this only provides access to the Fitzherbert car park. Consider opportunities to enhance visibility of this entrance and direct pedestrian access from Fitzherbert Ave into Play Zone.



## Considerations (cont)

### ESR Station/Rail Extension

The playground train station is located at the pinch point between this area and Park Central. It also creates a significant barrier between the playground and the Native Forest. ESR are considering options for extending the railway further into the playground, potentially connecting it to the new bike park at the eastern end.

### Open space

Open space is important in Victoria Esplanade, yet it is in surprisingly little supply. People enjoy the views across the more open areas, as well as simply sitting on the lawn having picnics. Open space is also important for wayfinding, and for crime prevention. It's important to ensure that the future development of the park, and particularly the Playground Zone area, does not compromise the areas of open space.

The development of additional activity areas such as mini golf will reduce the size of open space, however the location identified for this is under utilised and retaining open space in other areas of the Play Zone will ensure the character is retained.

### Removal of paths

Some paths may require removal as play equipment is added and rationalisation of materials and surfaces is undertaken.

### Planting

There are young specimen trees located at the west end of the Play Zone along with a range of mature specimens around the perimeters of the area and closer to the playground. As trees age or are damaged, ensure that any new trees are spaced to reflect the Play Zone Character and values, including consideration of interesting shapes and colours. When choosing new species for the area, reflect on the idea of fun, accommodate for play and climbing. Plants will particularly need to be hardy in this area.

### Architecture

The architectural elements within Play Zone are eclectic as a result of additional equipment and structures over the years. However generally the structures have an overall play theme. Consider ways in which future architecture can reflect the values and character of the area.

### Junior Road Safety Park

The bike park is a relatively new addition to the park, located on what was once a managers cottage. It is ideally located away from more open activities, allowing it to be fenced for safety purposes, however it also has poor connectivity into the rest of the park.

### Connection to River

The location of Play Zone requires access through other areas of the park to access the river. Ideally consideration of strengthened access through Victoria's Garden and Native Forest will enhance the connection between Play Zone and the river as well as surrounding areas of the park.

### Connection to Park Central

The connection between Park Central and Play Zone is compromised by the adjacent hockey fields, the road and car park. However, this is potentially one of the most important links in the park - as families move from the playground to activity centres such as the cafe or paddling pond. A recent path has helped to improve safety through this connection, but there remains an opportunity to consider this link more holistically in accordance with the other opportunities outlined for this area.

## Considerations (cont)

### Connection to Victoria's Garden

The English Country Gardens found in the Victorian Ages were prime places for fun. They promoted a sense of mystery and excitement. With the Victoria's Garden and Playground Zone areas of the park being directly adjacent to each other, there is merit in blurring the boundaries - moving from structured play through to natural play.

### Surface materials

Over the years various surfaces have been installed as new playground facilities have been upgraded. Unfortunately there is little integration of these surfaces, yet they present a great opportunity to create new play routes and promote connectivity, even engagement in the playground.

### Play Equipment

Most of the playground facilities in the park have been developed adhoc, in isolation from each other, as space and budgets have allowed. Now that space has become a little more restricted, there is significant opportunity to think about how the varying structures could be connected together - either by surfaces or perhaps even by bridges.

### Additional Activities (mini golf)

The new proposed mini golf has the potential to be a fenced encroachment into the park, separated from it rather than connected. However, through careful design, and potentially the use of organic curves and planting, it will be possible to integrate the facility into this area of the park. There may also be an opportunity for the ESR train to run through the middle of the course!

### Bike park

The bike park is a relatively new addition to the park, located on what was once a managers cottage. It is ideally located away from more open activities, allowing it to be fenced for safety purposes, however it also has poor connectivity into the rest of the park.



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## Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the park masterplan is not just to understand the potential opportunities, but also consider how these opportunities might be realised in a way that provides an overall enhancement of the park. Rather than 'silo' each project, the analysis has sought to explore ways in which individual development projects (such as a new playground feature) could provide greater enhancement of the values for this area of the park.

From this analysis a set of 'desired outcomes' was developed and reviewed with the intention that as individual projects are developed, the design for such projects can be considered against these outcomes for this area of the park. In addition, the analysis has sought to identify potential issues that might arise as projects develop, and provide suggestions about how such issues might be avoided or mitigated.

In undertaking this process, it is envisaged

that any new development project in this area of the park, no matter how big or small, can be integrated in a way that helps build toward delivery of the wider park objectives, without negatively impacting on the park's values.

A preliminary concept plan for the area has been created that graphically demonstrates how the longer term delivery of development projects could be realised on the ground.

## Opportunities Analysis Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Enhance connection to Park Central

Realign the shared use paths from Play Zone to Park Central, allowing for a safer more defined connection. Ideally relocate the path on the 'park side' of the road, rather than against the park boundary. A recent path has helped to improve safety through this connection, but there remains an opportunity to consider this link more holistically in accordance with the other opportunities outlined for this area.

### 2. Develop and integrate proposed Lions mini golf

The new proposed mini golf has the potential to be a fenced encroachment into the park, separated from it rather than connected. However, through careful design, and potentially the use of organic curves and planting, it will be possible to integrate the facility into this area of the park. There may also be an opportunity for the ESR train to run through the middle of the course. Consideration of planting and architectural styles will help integrate any new activity areas.

### 3. Enhance play equipment

Integrate any additional play equipment within the existing play areas to help reduce sprawl of equipment and preserve the open space. Add in new equipment in locations of similar play (eg. smaller children or adventure play).

### 4. Retain train station and enhance connection

Retain/ upgrade the Play Zone train station, enhancing the connection between the train and the Play Zone. Visibility and direct access to the train station will also help with this. ESR are considering options for extending the railway further into the playground, potentially connecting it to the new bike park at the eastern end.

### 5. Retain and expand open space

Open space is important in Victoria Esplanade, yet it is in surprisingly little supply. People enjoy the views across the more open areas, as well as simply sitting on the lawn having picnics. Open space is also important for wayfinding, and for crime prevention. It's important to ensure that the future development of the park, and particularly the Playground Zone area, does not compromise the areas of open space.

### 6. Upgrade surface materials

Develop paths, play surfaces and additional activity areas in keeping with existing character and values. Consideration and removal of some existing path surfaces may also be required to help achieve this.

### 7. Retain toilet facilities

Retain the toilet facilities and ensure any upgrades accommodate for increased number of users of the Play Zone and respond to the historical context of the park.

## Opportunities Analysis Map

### 8. Enhance connection to Victoria's Garden

Enhance the connection between Play Zone and Victoria's Garden. The transition between the two spaces can be informal with paths and planting helping to blur the boundaries. Extending characteristics of the Play zone may help this.

### 9. Improve accessibility and safety around car park

Develop pedestrian areas around the car park and develop a pedestrian link to the ESR park.

### 10. Strengthen connection to the JRS Park

The JRS is separated from the main play area by the Fitzherbert car park. A direct connection will help with safety, particularly around vehicles and establish a closer relationship with the play area.

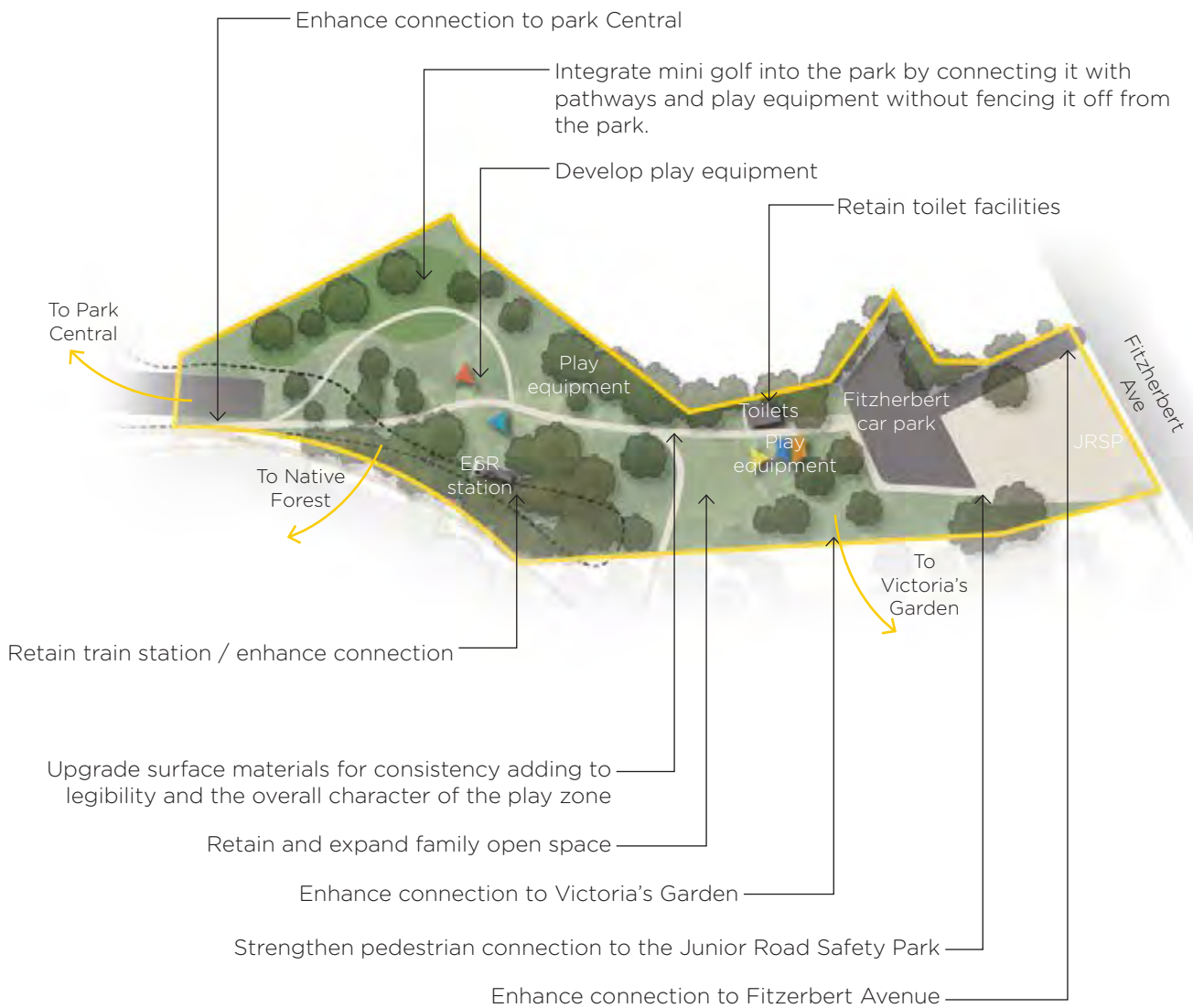
### 11. Enhance connection to Fitzherbert Ave

The Connection from Fitzherbert Ave is dominantly vehicle orientated, enhancing a pedestrian connection into the Play Zone will allow for a stronger connection between the road and the park.





## Concept Plan



Scale 1:2000 @ A3





# Dugald MacKenzie Garden



# Dugald MacKenzie Garden

Strategy and Development Requirements



*'The Dugald MacKenzie Garden could quite possibly be the best rose and camellia garden in the country.'*

## Existing Character

The Dugald MacKenzie garden is a strongly defined space that has a dominating formal character, typical of many municipal rose gardens throughout the world. It has a spoke design, with strong avenues branching out from a central pond. One of these avenues, adorned by a pergola structure, provides the main entrance into the garden, gated with elaborate tall steel gates. The pergola is constructed of white brick and timber.

The central pond feature is somewhat of an anomaly to the formal design, with a non-symmetrical shape, and the presence of a rough-stone viewing platform. Camelia and Rhododendron trees form an important backdrop to the roses, and are well loved by the Camelia Society.

A rotunda is located on the southern edge of the garden, although this is not located on a spoke-axis, and is semi-concealed behind a specimen tree. However, the rotunda has an architectural design typical of what one

might expect in a rose garden. Various specimen trees are located throughout the gardens, although there appears to be little consideration of their contribution to the overall design and character of the garden. There are two main paths in the garden, an older one constructed of asphalt, and a newer one constructed of concrete and cobblestones.

Various seats are located within and largely around the perimeter of the garden. These vary considerably in style, and some are adorned with memorials. A seat near the central pond is accompanied by a small birdhouse on a pole, which contains a swap-book library. The garden is strongly contained by the surrounding Northern Buffer character area, and the eucalyptus trees in particular are a dominant feature when viewed from the garden.



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## Strategy

This area of the park is all about the rose and camellia collections, laid out in a classical spoke format. Everything in the garden needs to reinforce this formality, and promote its seasonal, romantic attributes.

### Seasonal

Whilst roses don't display attributes of all the seasons, they are undoubtedly a seasonal attraction for many. The spring blooms of the Dugald MacKenzie rose beds attract people from all over the country, and the flowers of the camellia garden backdrop are the perfect counterbalance.

### Romantic

It's not surprising that the Dugald MacKenzie garden is the photographic setting for a significant number of Palmerston North weddings, and often the gardens are used for informal events such as birthday parties. The garden exudes romantic charm.

### Formal

The very nature of this garden means its layout has to be formal. The extensive variety of rose species demands mass planting in distinctive beds, further reinforced by structured pathways and well placed seating.

## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure that the garden can easily be enjoyed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Seek to strengthen pedestrian connections to (and between) Park Central and Main Park Entry. Also improve pedestrian connectivity within the area, considering key routes and encouraging use of under utilised areas, whilst also not losing sight of the romance of the garden layout.

### Upgrade and Integrate Architecture

Tie together the architecture and different features to strengthen connections across the area, particularly features such as the gazebo, pergola and seating.

### Enhance Existing Features

Consider opportunities to better integrate and strengthen the prominence of any existing features such as the Gazebo and pond. Remove/reduce unsightly objects such as the pump-shed rock feature.

### Rationalise furniture

Consider placement and rationalisation of seats/park benches and future furniture within the area.

### Improve Utilities

Undertake drainage improvements to ensure amenity is maintained and paths and garden beds are accessible in all seasons/weather.

### Develop Rose Garden

Continue to explore the development of the rose garden design so that it can continue to be a showcase for traditional and new varieties.

### Enhance Camellia Gardens

Develop the camellia garden walkway as a notable garden in the park, enhancing its romance and connectivity with the rose garden.

### Create structured spaces

Seek to strengthen spaces through structured tree planting and garden bed placement. Consider key spaces of the garden and how they are used such as catering for weddings and photos.

### Improve Signage, Interpretation

Replace old signage to provide better navigation and improved education/interpretation.



## Considerations

### Rose Garden

Accommodating for enhancement of the camellia gardens may reduce the space for the expansion of rose beds. Consider relocation of rose beds to accommodate for future growth of the garden in a structured manner.

### Vegetation Clearance

To align with the structured garden design of Dugald MacKenzie Garden trees may be identified for removal. This can be mitigated with a long term planting strategy that involves a holistic approach to new planting and tree removal.

### Eucalyptus Trees

Consider the life-span of the eucalyptus trees located along the northern boundary of Dugald MacKenzie will get to an age where they will require removal, consideration around replacement trees may be required to ensure a wind shelter for the garden. In the short term, maintenance may be required to ensure limbs don't damage gardens below and

### Planting

The existing trees within Dugald MacKenzie garden are placed seemingly random and vary in quality and age. Trees will require quality maintenance and removal as they age. Planning for the future of the rose garden may require removal of some trees and more structural planting of trees to reflect the structural elements of the garden.

A number of mature trees appear randomly scattered throughout the garden, with many detracting from the formality of the overall design. Structural trees have the potential to add to the overall character of the garden, but potentially this needs planning in a more holistic manner.

The Camellia's are an important feature of the garden, but are a bit lost at the back, and tend to be seen as a backdrop rather than a destination in their own right. Opportunities to extend the camellia garden should be considered as part of the overall plan.

### Garden Layout

If there is a desire to expand the rose garden, this will need to reflect the traditional structural layout of the existing rose beds.

### Park Furniture

There is no shortage of park benches in the Dugald MacKenzie garden. Next to some of the newer seats are some that are showing extensive ageing, or ones that have slowly been overtaken by the surrounding planting. It would be beneficial to reconsider the location of seating throughout the garden, and also adopt an overall style that reflects the romantic value of this part of the park. Connections to adjacent areas  
Pedestrian links from Main Park Entry are difficult to find, and fail to provide good connectivity. Given this area is where the main car park is located, with potential for further expansion, it is considered that there is scope to improve the pedestrian connectivity through to the Dugald MacKenzie Garden, and beyond to Park Central, as part of the wider circulation objectives.

The existing connections to Park Central are not well aligned with the Dugald MacKenzie garden - indeed the main gates are better aligned to the road than to pedestrian connectivity. As part of the wider circulation strategy for the park, a key opportunity in this area is to consider the direct linkages into the Dugald MacKenzie Garden, encouraging more people to discover and enjoy what this area has to offer.



## Considerations (cont)

### Architecture

Dugald MacKenzie Garden has structures that lend to the overall character and aesthetics of the area including the pergola, gazebo and features such as the gates and pond. Any future development should consider the architectural history of these.

The pergola is a dominant structure that was donated to the park by the community. However, it doesn't provide any significant connection to anything - partly because of the lack of connectivity through to Park Central. Any development of the garden needs to consider how to best integrate the pergola.

The gazebo is a prominent feature of the garden, and well used. Unfortunately its location is hampered by a poorly located structural tree. To enhance the romantic and formal values of the park, potentially the gazebo could be better aligned to a key axis in the garden.

### Pond

The pond pump is a large structure in the middle of the park, which has attempted to be disguised by installing a rooftop viewing platform. However, in reality the pump station detracts from the wider vistas of the park that are enjoyed not just from the pond, but also from some of the key avenues across the garden.



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## Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the park masterplan is not just to understand the potential opportunities, but also consider how these opportunities might be realised in a way that provides an overall enhancement of the park. Rather than 'silo' each project, the analysis has sought to explore ways in which individual development projects (such as new aviaries) could provide greater enhancement of the values for this area of the park.

From this analysis a set of 'desired outcomes' was developed and reviewed with the intention that as individual projects are developed, the design for such projects can be considered against these outcomes for this area of the park. In addition, the analysis has sought to identify potential issues that might arise as projects develop, and provide suggestions about how such issues might be avoided or mitigated.

In undertaking this process, it is envisaged

that any new development project in this area of the park, no matter how big or small, can be integrated in a way that helps build toward delivery of the wider park objectives, without negatively impacting on the park's values.

A preliminary concept plan for the area has been created that graphically demonstrates how the longer term delivery of development projects could be realised on the ground.

## Opportunities Analysis Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Enhance connection to Main Park Entry

Develop a link from the key paths within Dugald MacKenzie Garden and Main Park Entry. Locate paths back from the road side to increase safety. Reflect the characteristics of the garden in the path design.

### 2. Enhance perimeter camellia walk

Create a more visible path around the camellia gardens that reflects the structured layout of the garden and provides a stronger connection with the camellia gardens. Extend the camellia gardens and enhance the connection between the camellia gardens and the wider Dugald MacKenzie Garden.

### 3. Strengthen entrance axis

Strengthen the prominence of the entrance path and pergola from Park Central. This could be achieved by connecting the structure along the length of the path.

### 4. Enhance aesthetics of the pond

Underground the pond pump station to enhance the visual connection across the rose garden and the overall aesthetics of the pond.

### 5. Develop strategy for park furniture

There is no shortage of park benches in the Dugald MacKenzie garden. Next to some of the newer seats are some that are showing extensive ageing, or ones that have slowly been overtaken by the surrounding planting. It would be beneficial to reconsider the location of seating throughout the garden, and also adopt an overall style that reflects the romantic value of this part of the park.

### 6. Improve drainage

During wetter months the rose garden is susceptible water accumulation and therefore muddy and wet areas that can not be access. Drainage will address this issue and allow the garden to be appreciated throughout the year.

### 7. Consider structural tree planting

Establish a long term approach to structural tree planting that adds to the character and values of the garden.

### 8. Strengthen connection to the gazebo

The gazebo is a prominent feature of the garden, and well used. Unfortunately its location is hampered by a poorly located structural tree. To enhance the romantic and formal values of the park, potentially the gazebo could be better aligned to a key axis in the garden.

### 9. Enhance connection from Park central

Potentially a mini plaza, an artwork or defined space that signifies the main entrance into the Dugald MacKenzie Garden and transition into Park Central. Most likely located by the existing iron gates.

### 10. Strengthen connection to 'Croquet' car park

The existing access between Dugald MacKenzie Garden and the 'Croquet' car park is of reasonable condition, however future improvements including stronger visual link and signage will strengthen this connection.

## Concept Plan







Victoria's Garden



# Victoria's Garden

Strategy and Development Requirements



*'Victoria's Garden is  
Palmerston North's most  
significant botanical interest  
garden.'*



## Existing Character

This area is reminiscent of the Victorian history of the park, and its botanical beginnings. The garden area is densely planted with narrower paths, and the park area has a more open character with sweeping lawns and longer vistas.

It is dominated by exotic plants, although there are also a number of native trees vying for space. Many of the trees have a distinctive form or texture, or are notable flowering trees (such as Magnolia), and in many places there are more than one specimen of each species planted together.

The understorey is typical of many English Garden styles, including clusters of frangible shrubs and perennials, often densely planted in large groupings. In the English Park the understorey tends to be denser, framing the view, but within the English Garden it varies, often letting the texture of the taller storey trees be visually dominant.

A number of maple trees adorn the boundary, spilling over into a pavement garden (outside of the reserve).

Visibility and access to the Manawatū River is relatively restricted, via a set of steps (and a ramp) hidden behind a toilet building in the English Park Area.

The building has a functional character, and ultimately detracts from the vista that could be obtained. Further planting within the river corridor (outside the reserve) further restricts views.

Two main axis paths run parallel through the area, one having recently been asphalted. However neither of these paths has a featured start or end point, but rather they curve away and join other paths. There are good vistas from one path across the grass sweep to the playground - very typical of an English Park design.

Other than the two axis paths, the footpaths have a rambling quality. Most paths are surfaced in gravel, although the edge material varies (including stone, kerb, paving). In some areas the grass is edged also. The path leading to the river is a patterned asphalt and concrete path.

Furniture through both areas varies, including a mix of park-style benches and seats, and different styles of barrier fencing.

At the eastern end of the area, adjacent to the playground, is a stand of specimen nikau trees. Adjacent to this area are some open garden bins - again a common feature of larger English Gardens.



## Strategy

Victoria's Garden is the botanical centre of the park. A place that reflects the park's history, encouraging people to explore and learn. It needs to provide places for quiet contemplation, yet connect to wider open community spaces. It should have a style and character that reminds people of its history and importance as one of the earliest parks in the city.

### Victorian History

As other parts of the park have been progressively developed over the years, the Victorian History has become somewhat eroded. Yet, in this area of the park, subtle references hint at this important past. It has the potential to remind people of the park's early development, a process that started just as the city was being established.

### Botanical Discovery

From Rhododendrons to Ribbonwoods, Maples to Magnolias, Victoria's Garden is a botanical wonderland. Indeed - it's really Palmerston North's only true botanic garden. A place where the plants take centre stage. Variety is key, yet the plants need to come together in a carefully orchestrated harmony.

### Exploration

Early English gardens were about exploration and discovery. Informal grass paths led explorers to interesting spaces, taking them on a journey from private enclaves to open shared spaces. However, there was always a strong avenue that guided people home, often anchored by an architectural folly that inspired fun.



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## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure there are routes that can be easily accessed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly, whilst also respecting that some paths need to retain a sense of mystery and naturalness.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Seek to strengthen physical and visual links to other areas of the park, especially Play Zone, Park Central and Native Forest, also improve pedestrian connectivity within the area.

### Reconsider Bicycle Use

Consider how the Manawatū River Path or other areas of the park could be used to take the pressure off the need for wide, fast-cycle use within the area, so that it can be enjoyed at a more leisurely pace.

### Develop Botanical Nature of the Garden

Enhance the botanic aspect of the area with new gardens and trees, using interesting or rare varieties. Tie together the collection of trees and garden beds through Victorian inspired themes.

### Strengthen Path Hierarchy

Develop a key axis path with a focal point, reflecting Victorian Garden styles, to enhance visual connections and direction through the area. Consider the hierarchy of paths and informal connections through the area.

### Install New Architectural Folly

Enhance the Victorian Heritage style through the addition of an historically inspired 'folly', used as a focal point to strengthen the key axis.

### Improve Signage, Interpretation

Replace old signage to provide better navigation and improved education/interpretation.

### Reflect English Country Garden Style

Enhance the design of the garden to reflect the themes and approaches used in traditional English Country Gardens (such as those designed by Capability Brown or Gertrude Jekyll).

### Enhance Connection to the River

Develop improved connections to the river without unnecessarily clearing riparian vegetation. Strengthen visual sightlines to the river over the long-term as the natural life-cycle of trees changes the density of the garden edge.

### Provide Quality Toilet Facilities

Ensure that there are enough toilets to meet user demand, that they are accessible, safe and clean.

### Iwi Expression

Consider opportunities for iwi expression.

## Considerations

### Vegetation Clearance

To improve connectivity throughout Victoria's Garden, strengthening of the key axis, an architectural focal point and connections to the river may require vegetation removal and long term consideration of tree locations. However there are benefits in this with improved access and visibility to the river. Viewshafts can be developed and maintained through maintenance techniques rather than vegetation removal.

### Planting

It's difficult to determine whether this area of the park was ever 'designed', or whether it just established organically. In either case, there is an opportunity to develop a new 'landscape plan' for this area of the park. Ideally this would reflect the English Garden styles pioneered by gardeners such as Humphry Repton and Gertrude Jekyll.

The charm of this area is the variety in botanical planting. Ideally this would be further enhanced, with the area managed as the prime botanic garden in the city. This might include more variety of exotic species, but also should include native trees that transition from the neighbouring Native Bush area of the park.

The botanical species and mature trees located within Victoria's Garden are a significant aspect of the character and values of this area. Consider future planting of trees and botanical gardens to reinforce the English botanical garden as well as maintaining existing botanical specimens.

### Connection to adjacent areas

The English Country Gardens found in the Victorian Ages were prime places for fun. They promoted a sense of mystery and excitement. With the Victoria's Garden and Playground Zone areas of the park being directly adjacent to each other, there is merit in blurring the boundaries - moving from structured play through to natural play.

### Connection to River

There are significant opportunities in this area of the park to strengthen the connections to the river - fulfilling some of the objectives of the Manawatū River Framework. Most notably is the connection by the pier structure, which is visually hampered by the toilet block, but other vistas might also be possible further to the west.

Connection to the City and Fitzherbert Ave  
This entrance is remarkably popular, despite it being located below the elevation of the road. This may be reconsidering the architectural gates, or alternatively may involve relocating the entrance as part of the desire to increase connections to the river.

### Architecture

Generally the architecture within Victoria's Garden varies greatly and is understated. some furniture has a park style, however the toilet block is a concrete block building. Ideally future architectural elements will lend to the english botanical garden style and further reinforce the values and character. Focal points and Key Axis

Victoria's Garden feels disconnected from the wider park. Partly this is due to the arrangement of paths, and partly it results from the vastly different character of this area. However, a new focal point located near the boundary with the Native Forest and Play Zone areas would help to bring these parts of the park together. Currently there are two main avenues through the centre of Victoria's Garden. The tree-lined, more southerly avenue is perhaps the most striking - yet it needs to be maintained in order to retain this status. This will include tree management along the avenue, similar to work that has been done in recent years.

## Opportunities Analysis

The purpose of the park Masterplan is not just to understand the potential opportunities, but also consider how these opportunities might be realised in a way that provides an overall enhancement of the park. Rather than 'silo' each project, the analysis has sought to explore ways in which individual development projects (such as a new playground feature) could provide greater enhancement of the values for this area of the park.

From this analysis a set of 'desired outcomes' was developed and reviewed with the intention that as individual projects are developed, the design for such projects can be considered against these outcomes for this area of the park. In addition, the analysis has sought to identify potential issues that might arise as projects develop, and provide suggestions about how such issues might be avoided or mitigated. In undertaking this process, it is envisaged

that any new development project in this area of the park, no matter how big or small, can be integrated in a way that helps build toward delivery of the wider park objectives, without negatively impacting on the park's values.

A preliminary concept plan for the area has been created that graphically demonstrates how the longer term delivery of development projects could be realised on the ground.



## Opportunities Analysis Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Strengthen transition to Native Forest

The transition between the Native Forest and Victoria's Garden can be enhanced by an architectural feature and the convergence of many paths. Informal paths between the two areas will also help strengthen this connection.

### 2. Establish an architectural focal point

An architectural feature at the end of the primary axis that runs through Victoria's Garden will help define a focal point for the path. This focal point may be a small plaza or transitional hub where a number of paths converge.

### 3. Retain and enhance vegetation

The native bush buffer between Victoria's Garden and the river can be further enhanced with additional planting where viewshafts and paths are not located. Consideration of the transition between the bush and the english style planting will be required.

### 4. Enhance botanical garden

Developing the gardens in an english garden style to reflect the historical context and characteristics of the area.

### 5. Strengthen connection to Play Zone

The transition between the Play Zone and Victoria's Garden can be enhanced by extending planting and elements of the Play Zone into this area. Informal paths between the two areas will also help strengthen this connection.

### 6. Enhance Primary Axis

Of the two axis running through Victoria's Garden, strengthening of the most southern path will be supported by the existing tree avenue. The alternate axis may be integrated into the botanical garden through planting and removal of the pavement.

### 7. Enhance visual connection to the river

Viewshafts will create a strong visual connection between Victoria's Garden and the River and improve awareness of the proximity to the river.

### 8. Retain toilet facilities and integrate with planting

While the toilet facilities are not centrally located they provide for users at the east end of the park. Upgrading of the toilets will require consideration of the architectural context and integration through planting.

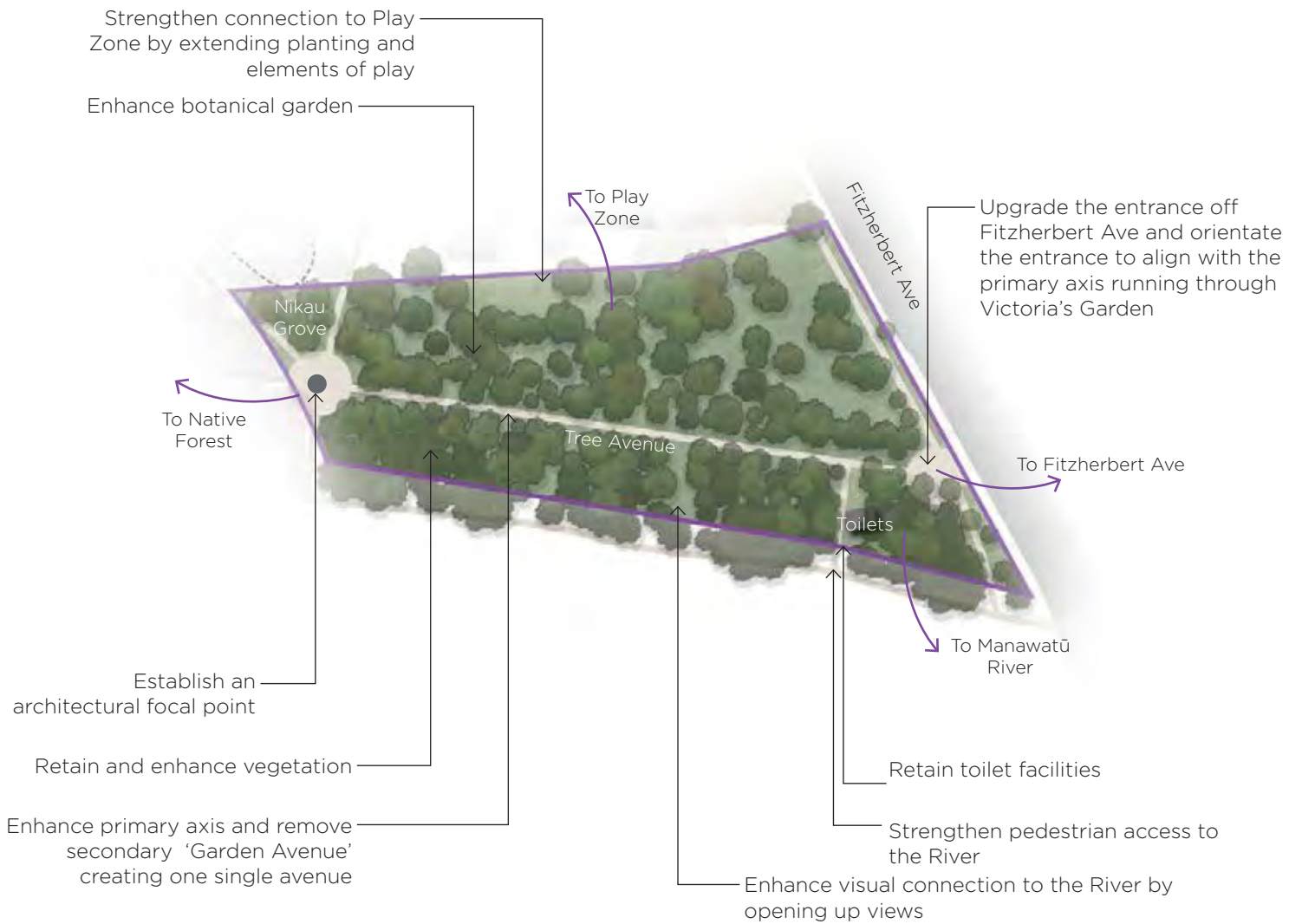
### 9. Strengthen access to the river

Creating direct access will provide a physical connection and increase access opportunities to the park. strengthening existing or partial paths will help reduce impact on the existing bush.

### 10. Enhance connection to Fitzherbert Ave

Upgrade the entrance off Fitzherbert Ave and orientate the entrance to align with the primary axis running through Victoria's Garden. Additionally, enhancing the path running parallel to Fitzherbert Ave will help to welcome people to the park.

## Concept Plan











# Native Bush



# Native Bush

Strategy and Development Requirements



*'The native forest area of Victoria Esplanade is Palmerston North City's greatest biodiversity asset.'*

## Existing Character

The native bush area of predominantly native bush occupies the largest area of the reserve, and contains taller species that are likely to have been growing since the original bush in the area was burned down towards the end of the 19th Century.

The eastern end of the area has a much denser understorey than the western end, but also it contains significantly more walking tracks. Its proximity to the Playground and Park Central areas also cause it to be more frequently used, with a 'getting lost' feel being part of its attractiveness.

Varying topography in the western end contributes to increased visibility through the middle layers of the bush, and as a result there appears to be more opportunity for bird spotting.

The bush is dominated by native species, although it is far from pristine remnants. Various undesirable native and exotic species have established, and require ongoing maintenance. Nevertheless, the area has a high degree of naturalness, further enhanced by the presence of free ranging birds, largely native forest species.

Signage is varied, and includes 'nature' style signs signalling tracks and walkways. There are also some older, somewhat outdated maps showing walking routes.

Paths are largely surfaced with gravel, and have an uneven, wandering nature, although there is a wider axis path running parallel to the river, and also an asphalt cycle track running approximately though the boundary of the two areas. In some places the tracks have been degraded by frequent use and water.

The bush provides a dominant backdrop to many other areas of the park.



## Strategy

The native forest is Palmerston North's urban forest. Ongoing planting of a variety of native species will help it become ever more resilient and abundant, whilst helping people to understand and learn about nature. The bush needs to provide a balance between good native habitat and human engagement.

### Biodiverse

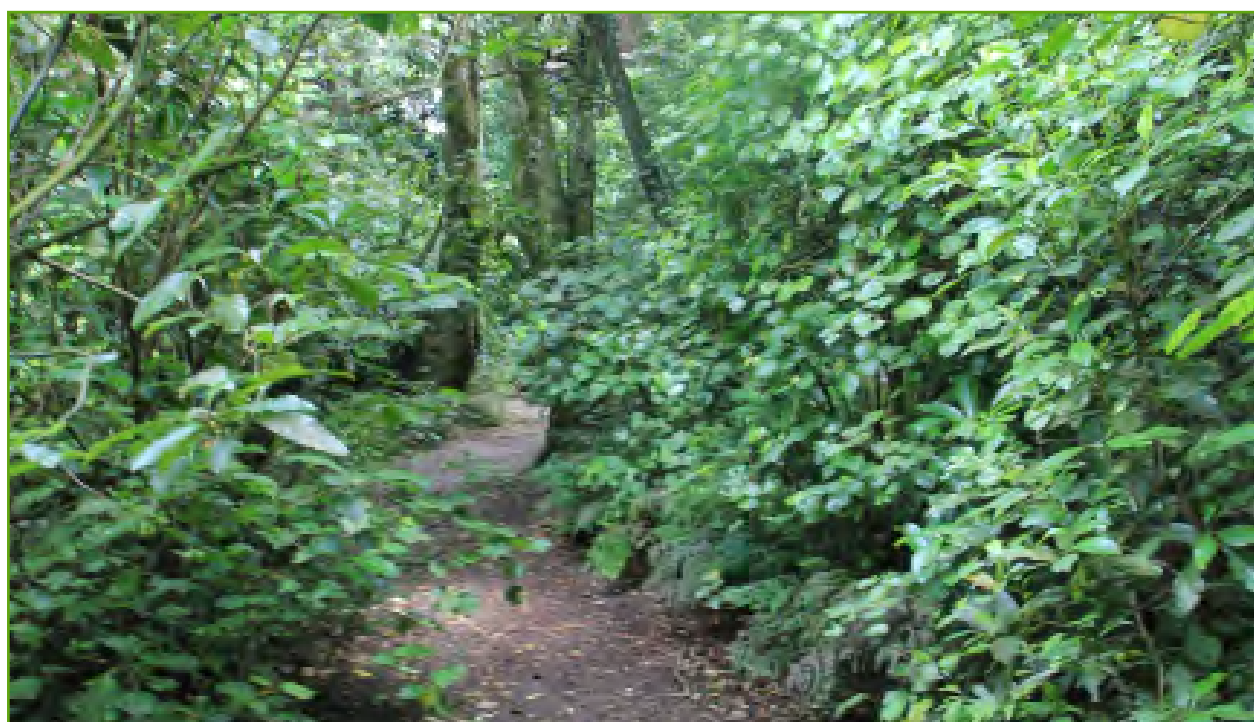
The native forest includes trees that have been growing since the very first clearance fires were halted. Although a relatively small stand of vegetation, it's importance as an urban biodiversity hub cannot be underestimated. Over time, greater species need to be established so that the bush becomes more and more resilient.

### Accessible

Although seemingly contradictory to the other values, the native forest needs to remain accessible. It is a place where people can engage with nature, experience the greenery and bird life, and learn about the ecosystems around them. People should be encouraged to get involved - to help plant and maintain the bush.

### Abundant

Unfortunately some areas of the native forest have been thinned out, or suffer from a lack of lower forest tiers. The native forest needs to be lush - abundant with plants and nature. Plants should be eco-sourced from the Manawatū Ecological Region, so that it reflects the habitat of this area of the country.



## Development Requirements

### Improve Accessibility

Ensure all key pathways can be easily accessed by users of all abilities, including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs and the elderly.

### Enhance Pedestrian Connections

Strengthen physical and visual links to adjacent areas of the park (especially Park Central, Play Zone, Victoria's Garden and Main Park Entry). Also seek to improve connections to the river and connectivity within the area. At the same time, cater for 'self-discovery', allowing people to feel a sense of remoteness.

### Reconsider Bicycle Use

Consider how the Manawatū River Path or other areas of the park could be used to take the pressure off the need for wide, fast-cycle use within the forest.

### Develop Feature Areas

Enhance and integrate existing and new feature areas such as the fernery and educational trails.

### Enhance Biodiversity

Continue to undertake planting using species that promote biodiversity, including rare or endangered species. Also use plants that provide good habitat or food sources for native fauna. Avoid the planting of mass mono-species (such as karaka tree groves).

### Layer Planting

Use a mix of planting species that provide a range of vertical tiers, representative of native New Zealand forests.

### Respect Existing Planting

Don't unnecessarily remove existing vegetation, but rather consider the natural life-cycle of plants and use this to inform future plans for new paths and viewshafts.

### Improve Signage, Interpretation

Replace old signage to provide better navigation and promote education of species through tree identification and interpretation signage.

### Enhance ESR Train Route

Allow for potential future ESR train upgrades within the area where the mystery and quietness of the forest can be experienced.

### Iwi Expression

Consider opportunities for iwi expression.

## Considerations

### Vegetation Clearance

The desired outcomes seek stronger sight lines and direct links to the river, Park Central and adjacent areas. Through relocation of trees and straightening and widening of some paths this will be achievable. However, where paths are removed planting can be undertaken.

### Biodiversity

With future planting include a wider variety of native vegetation, this may require removal of some over populated species such as karaka and provide an opportunity to introduce additional native species. Ensure a diverse level of biodiversity is provided in the Native Forest through an extensive variety of planting and indigenous habitats. Through ongoing planting of a diverse range of species, the forest area will become more resilient over time. This is particularly important given its dual role as a native habitat and place for people to walk through. Plants should be sourced from the Manawatū ecological region, and be in keeping with the river esplanade habitat.

### Weed and Pest Management

As an urban forest in a diverse park there will be continual challenges with maintenance. Most likely the best improvements to the native forest area will come from ongoing, targeted weed and pest management.

### Canopy

Planning for the future of the Native Forest needs consideration of canopy cover and opportunity for plant succession. Ensure trees of High and Medium canopy heights are included in the forests future planting.

### Removing paths

There is a large number of formal and informal paths and tracks through the native bush. Reducing some of these paths, and restricting access to the paths only, will help address the balance between people in the bush and it serving as an important native habitat.

The removal of paths will reduce the opportunities for exploration, however this can still be accommodated for where discover and explorative paths are developed in the eastern end of the Native Forest.

### Architecture

Barriers, seats and signs vary throughout the Native Forest as they have been installed over different time periods. Ideally future structures will lend to and reinforce the character and values of the area.

### Link to river

In places, as identified in other areas of the masterplan, it will be necessary to create more direct links through to the river. This needs to be balanced out with the need to ensure the protection of the overhead canopy.

### Signage

Signage throughout this area is adhoc, resulting from many years of signage projects. Removing old signage and markers and replacing it with better interpretation and wayfinding signage will help people understand how to behave when in the forest area, as well as providing more engaging education.

### Connections to adjacent Areas

The pedestrian bridge over the railway is a prominent feature that currently doesn't lead anywhere. There is an opportunity to better utilise this bridge and enhance the connection through to Main Park Entry.



## Opportunities Analysis

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A preliminary concept plan for the area has been created that graphically demonstrates how the longer term delivery of development projects could be realised on the ground.



## Opportunity Analysis Map



## Specific Opportunities

Using the Specific Opportunities plan as a guide, this section provides an overview of each opportunity for this area of the park. As outlined above, it is intended that any new development is measured against these outcomes to ensure that it is positively contributing to the park experience.

### 1. Enhance connection to Main Park Entry

A path that connects between the Native Forest and Main Park Entry near the train station to provide a direct link into the Native Forest area and help to link the two areas. There may be an opportunity to incorporate the existing ESR bridge.

### 2. Reduce Karaka trees

Undertake a review of the areas where karaka are growing and develop a long term plan for removal and maintenance to ensure other species can thrive in the area.

### 3. Enhance connection to Park Central

A key path between the Native Forest and the main plaza of Park Central to help integrate the two areas

### 4. Rationalise paths and develop key routes

Reduce the number of paths and trails within the Native Forest. This may allow for areas of additional planting where paths are removed.

### 5. Enhance access to river

The straightening of existing curved paths will enhance the transition through to the river and be reinforced by strong viewshafts as a result of path straightening.

### 6. Develop ESR rail deviation

Undertake a review of the ESR railway through the Native Forest and plan future rail extensions or alterations in accordance with the values and character of the area

### 7. Strengthen visual connection to the river

Create viewshafts and direct paths utilising the existing pathways through the bush in this location.

### 8. Improve adventure and educational trails

Rationalising the paths within the Native Forest will reduce opportunities for informal paths, however developing an area that provides opportunity for increased discovery and adventure paths will counteract this.

### 9. Strengthen connection to Play Zone

Enhance the connection between the Native Forest and Play Zone. The transition between the two spaces can be informal with paths and planting helping to connect the two areas

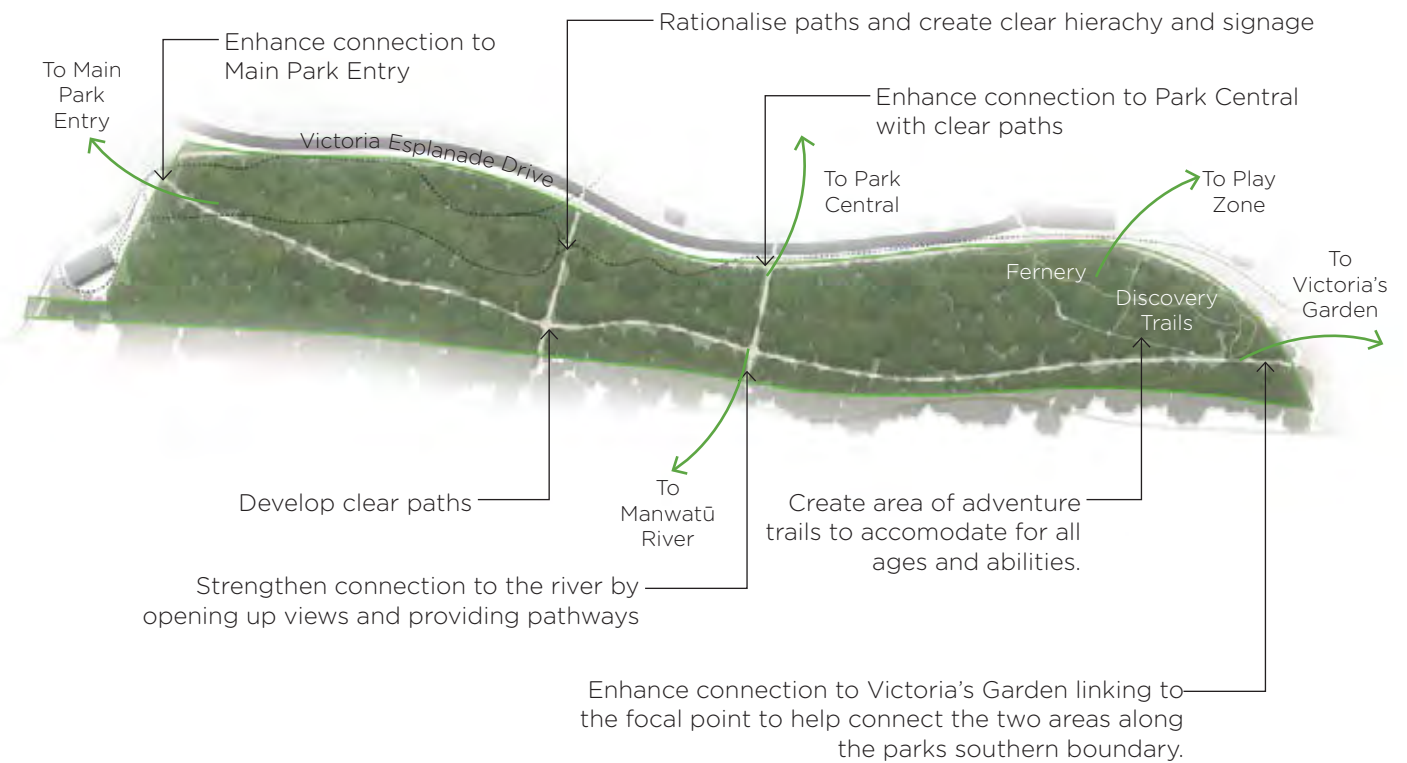
### 10. Enhance fernery and water connection

Establish a water connection to the fernery and undertake a review for future developments of the fernery. Enhance paths to accommodate for all ages and abilities and install signage in keeping with the area.

### 11. Enhance transition to Victoria's Garden

A path linking through to the focal point in Victoria's Garden to help connect the two areas along the parks southern boundary.

## Concept Plan









# Masterplan - Summary Concept Plan



# Masterplan



## Park Central

1. Enhanced pedestrian connection to Dugald MacKenzie Garden
2. Pedestrianise Palm Drive
3. Retain toilet facilities
4. Upgrade paddling pool and integrate with open space
5. Create central open space area
6. Enhance entry from 'Café Carpark'
7. Retain Café in key location
8. Enhance connection to river
9. Establish a new small feature garden
10. Create a central plaza for sitting / picnics / education
11. Upgrade conservatory
12. Integrate Wildbase Recovery as key activity centre in the heart of the park
13. Establish new large feature garden
14. Relocate Victoria Esplanade Drive away from pedestrian open space
15. Enhance Manawaroa Street entry as secondary entrance to park
16. Establish new aviaries
17. Relocate ESR train station closer to activity centres
18. Realign paths to Play Zone



## Main Park Entry

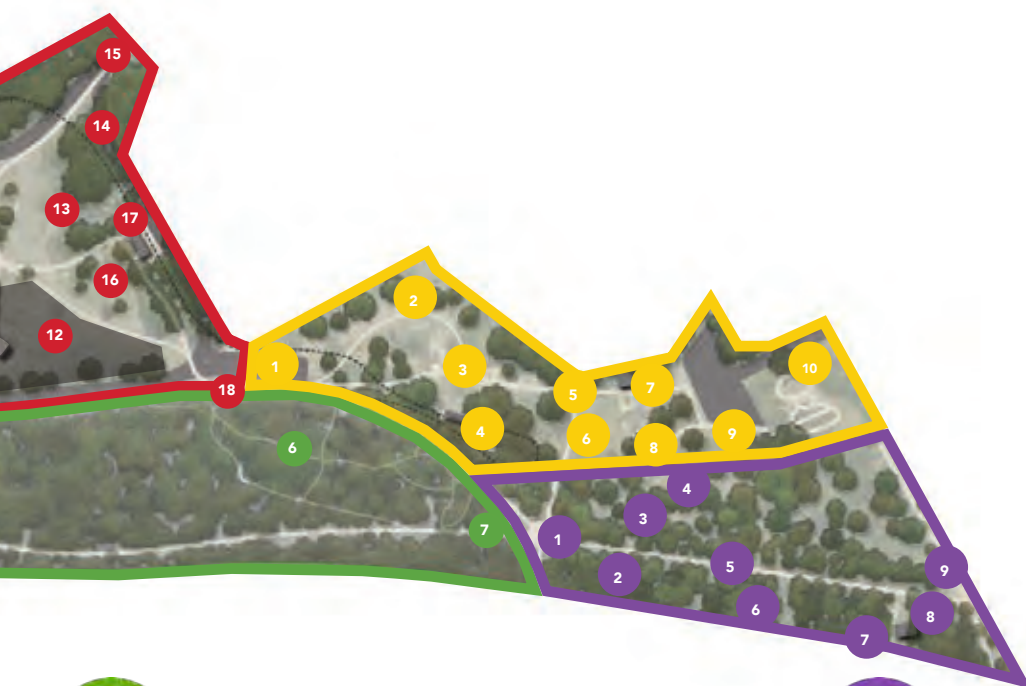
1. Align vehicle entry with Cook Street
2. Pedestrianise Cherry Avenue
3. Create new car park (100 - 120 spaces)
4. Soften boundary fence
5. Create commuter cyclist access to He Ara Kōtahi bridge
6. Enhance pedestrian connection to river
7. Enhance amenity of existing car park, and re-align parking to increase parking capacity
8. New EST station and surrounding pedestrian precinct
9. Retain toilet facility but integrate with planting
10. New focal feature such as artwork
11. Enhance existing pathway visibility
12. New enhanced connection to Dugald MacKenzie Garden



## Dugald MacKenzie Garden

1. Enhance connection to Main Park Entry
2. Enhance Perimeter path
3. Consider tree location
4. Relocate Gazebo
5. Enhance aesthetics of the pond
6. Strengthen entrance axis
7. Enhance connection from Park central
8. Enhance Camellia gardens





## Native Forest

1. Enhance connections to Main Park Entry
2. Rationalise paths and create clear hierarchy and signage
3. Develop key paths
4. Enhance connection to Park Central
5. Strengthen connection to the river
6. Create area of adventure trails
7. Enhance connection to Victoria's Garden



## Victoria's Garden

1. Establish an architectural focal point
2. Retain and enhance vegetation
3. Enhance botanical garden
4. Strengthen connection to Play Zone
5. Enhance primary axis
6. Enhance visual connection to the river
7. Strengthen access to the river
8. Retain toilet facilities
9. Enhance connection to Fitzherbert Avenue



## Play Zone

1. Enhance connection to Park Central
2. Integrate mini golf
3. Develop play equipment
4. Retain train station/enhance connection
5. Upgrade surface materials
6. Retain and expand open space
7. Retain toilet facilities
8. Enhance connection to Victoria's Garden
9. Strengthen connection to the Junior Road safety
10. Enhance connection to Fitzherbert Avenue



## Park Wide Projects

1. Develop signage and wayfinding plan
2. Installation of signage and wayfinding
3. Developed design plan for Park Central
4. Developed design and detailed design plan for Main Park Entry
5. Rangitane naming for the park
6. Rangitane expression elements (waharoa, signage, pou)
7. Create park brand (logo, staff uniform)
8. Improvements of pedestrian and cycle accessibility





## 3. Operational Policies





# Management Policies

The Policies that Govern Management and Behaviour

## Introduction

Palmerston North City Council owns and administers Victoria Esplanade as an area for 'public good'. Public access to the park is permitted and encouraged, and over the years it has led to significant community interest in how the park behaviour is managed.

The park does not have any formal reserve status under the Reserves Act 1977, however management of public access within the park falls under the discretion of Palmerston North City Council and a number of bylaws. In addition, some activities in the park are also governed by the Resource Management Act 1991.

### Primary Functions

This masterplan for Victoria Esplanade, in both its online and documented forms, provides the following functions:

- Establishes a framework for managing development of the park;
- Represents a contract with the general public as to how PNCC will manage the park on its behalf; and
- Highlights the unique nature and values of the park and its varying character areas and addresses the need for specific management of these areas.

### Plan Implementation

A range of stakeholders were involved in the development of the masterplan, and the masterplan was also based on significant public engagement work undertaken by PNCC consultants between 2005 and 2009.

The Masterplan will be deemed operational following formal adoption by PNCC (at which time this note will be updated to reflect the plan length).

The Document Version Control section at the bottom of every page contains information on the status of each section.



### Values Based

The Plan is 'values based'. This means that decisions about future use and development of the parks is based on the core values and desired outcomes for the park, rather than by the setting of specific development policies. The values strategies and desired outcomes for each character area collectively set the vision for the park as a whole.

The role of parks is recognised internationally for the significant contribution they make to protecting our natural environments and building healthy communities. Since the early days of industrialisation, parks were considered to provide a refuge from crowding associated with urbanisation. Over time their contribution to healthy biodiversity, culture and heritage, recreation opportunities, and social and economic well-being are increasingly valued.

The key values that underpin the approach to managing Victoria Esplanade are as follows:

- Family Fun
- Seasonal
- Victorian
- Indigenous
- Community

### Cultural Value

Victoria Esplanade occupies land that was once occupied by Rangitāne. Although it now legally belongs to PNCC, and is available for use by all members of the community, the cultural value of the land is recognised.

The park provides an opportunity to reflect kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and the relationship between iwi and their ancestral land.

The park also include sites that have historically been used for European settlement and land-use practices, and provide an opportunity to reflect this through park management that values the region's heritage. Contemporary culture and heritage is also valued. Built and non-built features, such as structures, buildings, landforms, land practices and locations associated with past events are reminders of this history for both pre- and post-colonial era communities.

The Masterplan respects the importance of these values and encourages preservation and / or enhancement of cultural and heritage landscapes and features, thereby ensuring the Palmerston North history is effectively communicated to current and future generations.

## Visitor Management

This part of the masterplan recognises the wide range of health and social benefits that Victoria Esplanade brings to the community, as well as its role in fostering custodianship and environmental awareness. It balances recreation and visitor use with other park values, recognising that not all activities need to be provided for in this park, and that in certain situations activities will be restricted where other values or activities are put at risk.

When considering development support recreation or visitor activities, preference will be given to opportunities that provide the greatest community benefit, and are consistent with both the values and the desired outcomes for the park. This approach relies on understanding that the capacity of the park to absorb recreation activities and visitor access is based on a clear understanding of the individual park's vision, values and character.

The following provides a guide for assessing the appropriateness of activities:

### Encouraged Activities

Activities that are encouraged or allowed are those that are generally compatible with the park environment and of benefit to the wider community and/or visitors to the park.

PNCC will encourage activities where:

- The use is consistent with the park values, park character and the desired outcomes;
- The park has capacity to absorb the activity;
- The use complements other activities being provided for in the park;
- The use derives high benefit to the wider community;
- There is low potential for adverse impacts on the park environment as a result of the the activity; and
- It is affordable for PNCC to provide or facilitate.

### Limited Activities

Activities that require some level of limit or control due to the potential for adverse impact on, or user's enjoyment of the park environment; or as the activity provides limited or selective community benefit.

PNCC may limit activities where one of more of the following reasons apply:

- The potential for adverse impact on the park environment as a result of the activity is medium to high and cannot be reasonably avoided, reduced or mitigated;
- There is some inconsistency with the park values, park character and/or the desired outcomes;
- There is limited or variable capacity for other parks to host the activity;
- There is selective or limited benefit to the community; and/or
- Due to management reasons the park may require temporary restriction (eg closure of areas of the park for maintenance).

## Visitor Management

### Discouraged Activities

Activities that are classified as discouraged or not allowed must be justified for good reasons. The activities could be: contrary to the park vision and / or values; have little community benefit; conflict with other uses; create a public nuisance; or are better provided for elsewhere.

PNCC may exclude activities from the park where one of the following reasons apply:

Medium to high potential for adverse impact on the park environment which cannot be avoided or remedied;

The activity is inconsistent with the park values, park character and/or the desired outcomes;








The activity can be better provided for in another park or PNCC owned open space; and/or

Public health and safety is identified as being at real or imminent risk.


















## Movement

	 Main Park Entry	 Park Central	 Play Zone	 Victoria's Garden	 Dugald MacKenzie	 Nashe Bush	 Comments
Walking	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Walking is encouraged throughout the whole park!
Walking with Dogs On-Lead	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Dogs should be on a lead and under full control of their owner
Walking with Dogs Off-Lead	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for dogs off-lead
Commuter Cycling	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Commuter cycling is encouraged on marked cycleways and on-road
Family Cycling	Limited	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Family cycling is encouraged on shared paths and on-road
Horse Riding	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for horses
Motorcycling	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Motorbikes need to stay within the road corridor
4WD / Off-Road	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	4WD/Off-Road vehicles need to stay within the road corridor
Buses / Coaches	Encouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	The best facilities for buses are in Main Park Entry only
Mobility Scooters	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Mobility scooters are encouraged throughout the whole park!
PNCC Approved Vehicles	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Service vehicles should move slowly and give way to park users
All Other Vehicles	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	All other vehicles need to stay within the road corridor







## Expression

	 Main Park Entry	 Park Central	 Play Zone	 Victoria's Garden	 Dugald MacKenzie	 Nashe Bush	 Comments
Ranglaine Artwork	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Any culturally inspired artwork should be designed for its location
Heritage Artwork	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Any historically inspired artwork should be designed for its location
Modern Artwork	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Modern artwork should be assessed for its appropriateness
Architectural Features	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Architectural features should be designed to match the character of the area
Memorial Plaques	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Memorial plaques to be considered on a case-by-case basis
Memorial Seats	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Generally memorial seats are discouraged, but can be considered case-by-case
Wayfinding Signage	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	All areas should have good wayfinding signage
Incorporative Signage	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	All areas should have targeted incorporative signage
Safety Signage	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	All significant public safety risks should be appropriately identified
Railway Signage	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	N/A	N/A	Encouraged	Railway signage should be installed to appropriately manage safety







## Appearance

	 Main Park Entry	 Park Central	 Play Zone	 Victoria's Garden	 Dugald MacKenzie	 Native Bush	Comments
Flower Beds (Annuals)	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Annual flower beds are best suited for more open areas
Herbaceous Borders	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Herbaceous borders are best suited in Victoria's Garden
Shrub Borders (Native)	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Native shrub borders can be used effectively across the whole park
Native Trees	Limited	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Limited	Encouraged	Native trees should be limited in areas where seasonal values are important
Exotic Trees	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Exotic trees should not be planted in the native bush area
Open Space	Limited	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	All areas other than the native bush should have plenty of open space
Water Features	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Discouraged	Water features should be designed to match the character of the area
Boundary Fences	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Boundary fences should be designed in keeping with the character of the park
Lighting	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Limited	Lighting should be used in areas of high dusk/night time activities only
Roads	Encouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Road access should be limited to Main Park Entry or to internal car parks only
Car Parks	Encouraged	Limited	Limited	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Car parks should ideally be limited to Main Park Entry
Buildings	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Buildings should be designed to match the character of the area
Weed Management	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Ongoing weed control is really important
Pest Management	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Ongoing pest management is really important

## Engagement

	 Main Park Entry	 Park Central	 Play Zone	 Victoria's Garden	 Dugald MacKenzie	 Native Bush	Comments
Daytime Opening	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	The park should always be open during the day
Nighttime Opening	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Night time opening should be regularly assessed for security/safety risks
Peaceful or Passive Enjoyment	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Victoria Esplanade is all about peaceful, passive enjoyment!
Organised Recreation	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Organised recreation should be assessed on a case-by-case basis
Organised Events (eg Concerts)	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Organised events should be free to the the public, and assessed case-by-case
Club Meetings	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Victoria Esplanade encourages club meetings!
Volunteering	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Volunteers are welcome to assist in organised management or development
Guided Walks	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Victoria Esplanade encourages guided walks by appropriately qualified people!
Staff as Ambassadors	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	All PNCC staff should act as ambassadors of the park

## Activities

	 Main Park Entry	 Park Central	 Play Zone	 Victoria's Garden	 Dugald MacKenzie	 Native Bush	Comments
Sale of Alcoholic Drinks	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Alcohol should only be sold in the cafe or at special events
Drinking of Alcohol	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Limited	Discouraged	Alcohol in the park is generally discouraged except at the cafe or special events
Smoking	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is a smokefree park!
Sale of Souvenirs	Limited	Limited	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Souvenirs should only be sold by approved concessionary holders
Commercial Activities	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Assess commercial activities against park values and desired outcomes
Drones or RC Aeroplanes	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for RC flying equipment (except for PNCC)
Kite Flying	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for kites
Family Picnics	Limited	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged	Limited	Victoria Esplanade welcomes people having picnics!
Skateboarding	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for skateboarders
Fitness Trails	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Discouraged	Victoria Esplanade is not suitable for fitness trails





# 4. Planning Toolkit



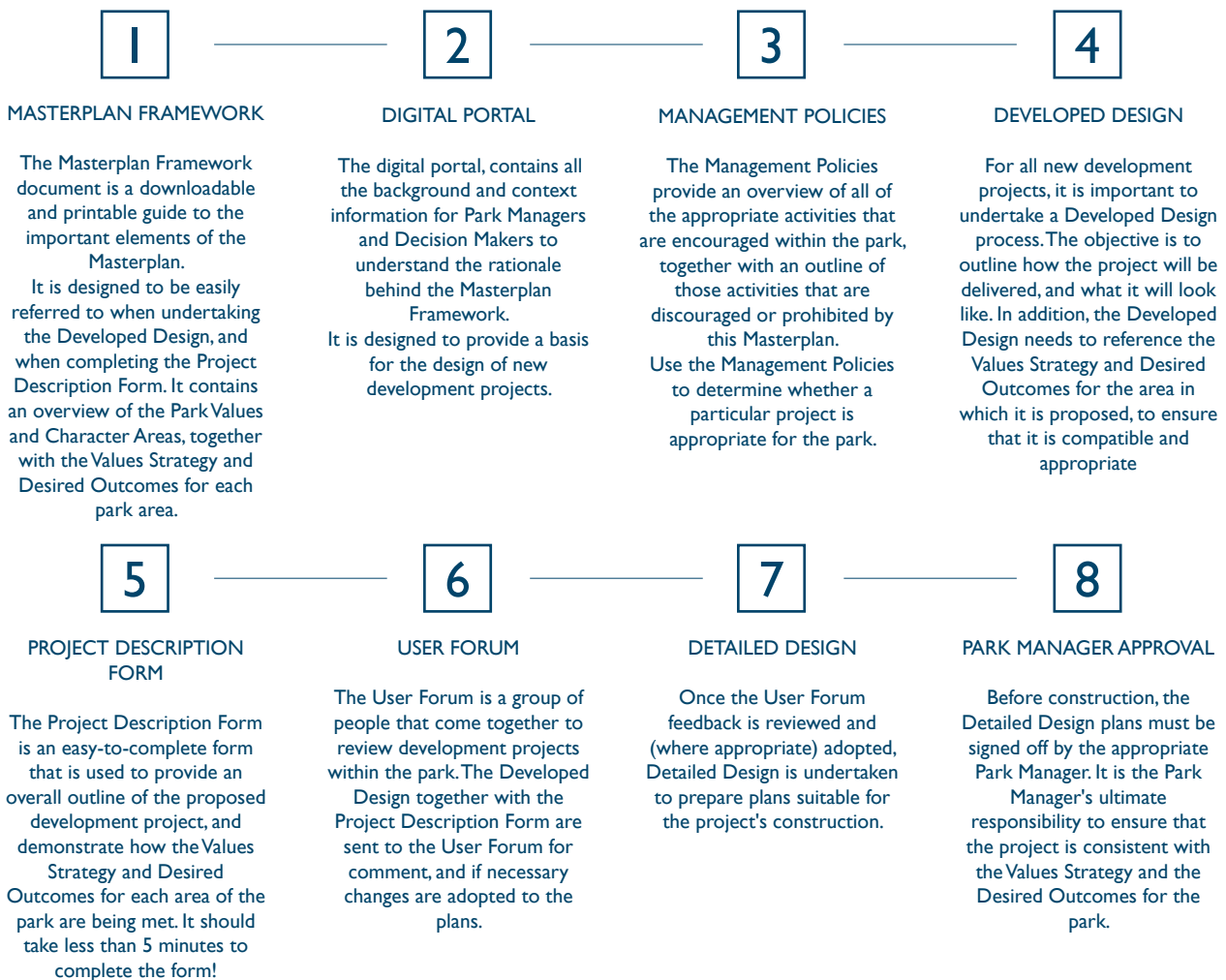
# Planning Toolkit

How to use the Masterplan

## Where to next?

The masterplan has been developed to be easy to follow, and easy to use. For park managers, most of the information required will be within this Masterplan Framework, together with the Development Concepts contained in Part 2, accessed through the online portal. Understanding the information contained in these parts will provide the context needed to make appropriate development and management decisions.

Part 4 of the masterplan, the 'Planning Toolkit' sets out a process for the design and development of larger scale capital projects, as well as containing the necessary resources for decision making. This process is briefly outlined below:



To view a Project Description Form see Appendix.









## 5. Background



# History and Context

The setting for the Victoria Esplanade Masterplan

## History

Esplanade Reserve has a significant history in the context of Palmerston North City and wider Manawatū region. The location of the park has a strong connection with the Manawatū River and the Rangitāne people as well as a significant European influence since establishment in 1897.

This page provides an overview of the history of the park and its context within the wider city of Palmerston North, the parks values and the planning context under which the reserves management needs to be considered.

### History

The city of Palmerston North was settled in the mid 19th Century.

Victoria Esplanade was one of the earliest public open spaces to be created. First established in 1897, it was named to commemorate Queen Victoria's 60th Jubilee. Influences of the Victorian Era can be seen throughout the park, and remain an important park of its character.

The English Garden styles of the 18th and 19th Centuries are also celebrated within the park, particularly the mix of native vegetation with the more colourful arrangement of deciduous and flowering shrubs and trees.

The first avenue of flowering cherries was planted in the 1920's, and the aviaries were first established in the 1950's. The Palm Trees through the centre of the Park were donated by the City of Napier in the early 1920's.

### Pre-European History

The location of the Esplanade along the right bank of the Manawatū River is intrinsically tied to the tikanga (customs) of the Rangitāne people.

Although the area was formally sold by tangata whenua to the NZ Government (prior to the Treaty of Waitangi), Rangitāne have retained kaitiakitanga and have interest in both the prosperity of the land and the people who use it.

Currently there are few references to Rangitāne culture expressed in a physical form within the park. However, a series of pou carved by Rangitāne iwi will be erected in late 2018 at the entrance to the Central Energy Trust Wildbase Recovery facility, beginning the reconnection of people to this place.

Ongoing engagement with Rangitāne is anticipated.

### Park Development

Victoria Esplanade has had a long history of development. Indeed, the ongoing addition of features and facilities, often in a seemingly random manner, is one of the key characteristics of the park.

The playground has long been a key attraction, and this has been extended on numerous occasions.

Perhaps the most iconic feature is the Esplanade Scenic Railway, which is one of the biggest and most successful miniature trains in the country.

The rose garden is one of the largest and most respected in New Zealand, and contains a wide variety of specimens that are not available anywhere else.

It is anticipated that the park will continue to attract new ideas for facilities and features.

## Masterplan Context

### City Context

Palmerston North is the main city of the Manawatū-Whanganui Region of the North Island. The official limits of the city take in rural areas to the south, north-east and west of the main urban area, extending to the Tararua Ranges.

The city was officially settled in the mid 19th Century, and Victoria Esplanade was one of the earliest public open spaces to be created. There are now over 200 parks and reserves within the city that are managed by the City Council, 50 of which have playground facilities.

### Character Context

Victoria Esplanade is located in the southern fringe of the city, directly adjacent to the Manawatu River. Pedestrian and cycling connections are provided along the river to a number of other open spaces, including across a number of bridges (including the soon to be completed He Ara Kotahi bridge).

Fitzherbert, Ongley and Manawaroa Parks are located directly along the northern boundary of Victoria Esplanade. These provide for a variety of organised sporting activities.

The Palmerston North Holiday Park borders the western boundary, together with the Lido Indoor Pool.



## Masterplan Context (cont)

### Planning Context

Although not expressly referred to, relevant planning and legislative frameworks have been considered in the development of the masterplan.

Specifically, this includes overarching legislation such as the Resource Management Act (RMA), and the Reserves Act. In addition, local and regional frameworks including the District Plan, the Long Term Plan, and the Manawatū River Framework have all been consulted during the preparation of the plan. The Planning context is outlined below.

### Parks Context

The Esplanade is located within a network of parks and recreational facilities. Directly adjacent to the reserve, along the northern boundary is Fitzherbert, Ongley and Manawaroa Parks which contain a range of organised sport facilities. Directly to the west is the Lido, a Council owned public swimming pool that has both indoor and outdoor facilities. The Palmerston North Holiday Park borders the reserve, the Lido and the river corridor, and has a range of tent, caravan and cabin sites. Both the Lido and the Holiday Park are fenced off from the Esplanade. The opposite river bank is zoned rural, and is currently managed by various organisations associated with Massey University.

### Connections

Vehicle access to the Victoria Esplanade Reserve is primarily obtained by way of entry through gates located in Park Road and Manawaroa Street. The internal road network, consisting of Palm Drive and Victoria Esplanade Drive, provide for through route between these entry points, with a one-way system in operation around the café. Car parking is provided right along the internal road network, although there are more significant designated areas near the Esplanade Scenic Railway (Park Road entry), the western end of the children's playground and off Fitherbert Ave. A car park is also located north of the café. Pedestrian and cycle access is also provided through these entry points with additional entry points located along the Manawatū River corridor reserve boundary and informal tracks through to Ongley Park.

### 2005-2009 Development Work

Between 2005 and 2009 the Council engaged landscape architects Isthmus Group and Alan Titchener to prepare a 10 year development plan for the Esplanade.

The process involved detailed (and lengthy) engagement with the Council (including Councillors), various stakeholders, and the wider public. Many of the submissions and analysis that was undertaken as part of this process has been retained in the archives library at the Council, and has been reviewed in the preparation of this document.

## Policy Context

### Resource Management Act

The Resource Management Act (1991) is the overarching legislation that controls the actual and potential effects of development. It is relevant to the potential future development of the Park as various aspects of the proposed design may require Resource Consent, or may need to be undertaken within the constraints of existing consents

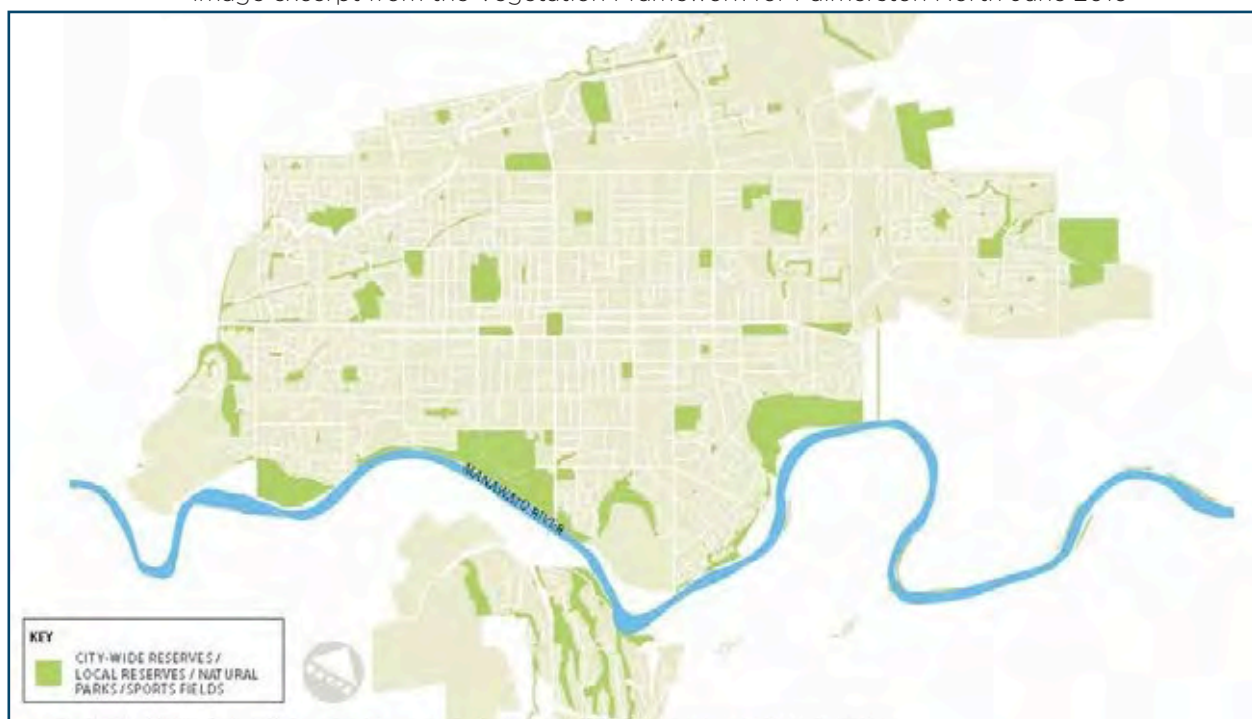
### PN District Plan

The Palmerston North City District Plan provides overarching guidance for the assets and activities associated with the Park, and provide the local context of the RMA. The Esplanade is located within the Recreation Zone of the District Plan

### Palmerston North Reserves Act (1922)

The Palmerston North Reserves Act (1922) enabled council to lease reserves for the purposes of 'recreation, public gardens, parks and domains and.. outdoor games'.

Image excerpt from the Vegetation Framework for Palmerston North June 2016



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## Supplementary documents

### Vegetation Framework

The vision of the document is to create a citywide green network that celebrates our local and imported biodiversity and contributes to a healthy and attractive city, its surrounding villages, the Manawatū River and its green corridors.

The main aims of the framework are:

1. To communicate the vision for Palmerston North's trees and other public plantings.
2. To provide a citywide vegetation framework that can be used by different groups of people.
3. To set out the principles and techniques to be used to implement and manage vegetation, ensuring its viability in the long term.

### Long Term Plan (2018-2028)

The Palmerston North City 10 Year Plan sets out budget priorities for the development of Council assets, including the Park. The focus of this LTP are three 'City Shaping' moves designed to help achieve the overarching vision of 'Small City Benefits, Big City Ambition'. The moves are enabling sustainable growth, transforming the city centre and development of the Manawatū River network.

### Manawatū River Framework

The Manawatū River Framework provides a strategic vision for any development located in close proximity to the Manawatū River over the next 30 years and recognises the importance of the river to the City.

The framework includes a number of key directions to achieve good design outcomes and identifies projects that have an opportunity to improve the river space. The framework focuses on enhancing physical connection to the river, creating it as a key destination with things to do and expressing Rangitāne o Manawatū's connection with the river.





# Previous Masterplans

Previous Masterplans Developed for Victoria Esplanade Reserve

## 2005 - 2009 Masterplans

Between 2005 and 2009 the Council engaged landscape architects Isthmus Group and Alan Titchener to prepare a 10 year development plan for the Esplanade.

The process involved detailed (and lengthy) engagement with the Council (including Councillors), various stakeholders, and the wider public. Many of the submissions and analysis that was undertaken as part of this process has been retained in the archives library at the Council, and has been reviewed in the preparation of this document.

The below image is the final 'Concept Plan' that was developed following the 2005-2009 engagement and design work. Notably, the plan includes increased linkages to the river from the café area, increased areas for pedestrians (reduced vehicle areas), and the introduction of strong avenues to help with park navigation.

The 2005-2009 work was labelled 'Project Phoenix' and involved extensive work across a number of linked parks, including Victoria Esplanade.

For more information view the 2005 Walkway Development Plan Proposal and 2009 Masterplan Slide Presentation.





## Overview

The masterplan took the form of a largely graphical document (reproduced below), accompanied by additional drawings and recommendations for a series of staged developments involving investments between \$1.2m - \$1.7m annually for 6 years.

It is understood that initial reactions to the masterplan were positive from all parties, and funding was made available for the earlier recommended stages. However, in time, new priorities were established and the masterplan was filed.

The key learning to take away from the 2005-2009 work was that prescribing development within the Esplanade was too restrictive. The focus of this document is therefore not on providing specific development objectives, but in detailing longer-term key moves that can help the park develop as and when budget allows, whilst remaining true to its core values.

### Key Findings

Key findings from the work at this time led the overall brief, as follows:

- Retain the status of a Regional Park
- To have a masterplan
- To bring the separate elements of the Esplanade together
- To address the issue of assets nearing the end of their life
- To address the issue of public reaction against birds being in small cages
- To make a connection with the river corridor and link into Te Araroa

### Recommendations

Key recommendations in the completed reports included:

- Realign entrance driveway from Park Road
- Increase connectivity from the rose garden to the river, and install a pier as a focal point
- Upgrade the cafe
- Remove the existing bird cages and replace them with large aviaries
- Remove the duck pond
- Remove the road from behind the conservatory to create better movement and activation



# Workshops and Engagement

## Workshops

Throughout the masterplanning process ongoing discussions and engagement with Stakeholders and Councillors. Consultation with Iwi has also been undertaken and is ongoing.

### May - July 2018

In mid 2018 a series of workshops were held at the Esplanade Cafe to explore and define the key values and desired outcomes for the Esplanade.

These workshops were attended by key stakeholder and community representatives. The purpose of one particular workshop was to explore the park values, identified above. Two groups were established, and each group was asked to identify photographs that represented the values that most resonated with them. Interestingly, both groups identified almost identical values, which also reflected the values identified in the 2005 to 2009 work.

### July 2018

In July 2018 discussions were had with a number of stakeholders about key areas of the park and the values related to these. The purpose of the visit was to further explore and understand the importance and values of areas of the park from the perspective of community members, key activity representatives, the park manager and iwi representative. The discussions and perspectives conveyed reinforced the values identified in the workshops held earlier in the year.

### October 2018

In October 2018 a workshop was held to present and discuss key opportunities and concepts developed around specific character areas and development opportunities that have been identified as priority areas. This workshop brought together many key stakeholders, iwi and councillors, and provided the opportunity for open discussions where everyone was able to express their thoughts and opinions on the ideas presented. These have been collaborated and are reflected in the development of the Masterplan.









# Appendix





# Appendix

VICTORIA  
ESPLANADE



# History

## 9.0 History

### 9.1 Administration and Management

1877	Borough Council formed and 361 acres (146.09ha) received from Central government for use as "a public park and recreation ground and botanic gardens"
1877-90	Leasing of the land for grazing. Much of the established bush was burned and replaced with grass.
1890	Palmerston North Reserves Act – divided the land for various recreation and community purposes. 39 acres (15.78 ha) retained as an esplanade primarily for riverbank stabilisation
1897	Opening of the Esplanade area for recreation. Named Victoria Esplanade to commemorate the Boroughs celebration of Queen Victoria's 60 year reign on throne.
1922	Palmerston North Reserves Act passed, includes Victoria Esplanade in schedule.
1930	Palmerston North receives "City" status.

### 9.2 Use and Development

Active development and formal use started in the arboretum area and subsequently spread northwest through to what is now the Central Area. A short history of the general developments in the reserve, the history of the special activities and keynote events are given below.

#### General Open Space areas

1897	Opening of Reserve for recreation. Area fenced and metal footpath formed. "English" trees planted.
1900	Installation of road and carparks
1918-19	Queen Victoria Drive formed to cater for motor transport
1907	Tea kiosk erected and relocation of band rotunda from The Square.
1908	Wellington Acclimatisation had fishpond and hatchery near band rotunda.
1917-25	Ornamental pond constructed, duck ponds formed east of conservatory.
1921	Victoria Drive sealed.
1937	Planting of phoenix palms along what is now Palm Drive.
1930s	Planting of Cherry Trees
1937	Building and donation of paddling pool by RSA.
1943	Tea kiosk demolished.
1960s	Demolition of band rotunda.
1963	One-way traffic was instituted in Victoria Esplanade.
1964	Car parking area completed and new rest room built. Bridle path started.
1968	Rhododendrons planted on Victoria Drive under the Cherry Trees.
1970's	Opening of scented garden. Vandalism ensued.
1975	Awa-Tap Mini Golf Course opened by Awapuni Jaycees next to miniature railway and motor camp.
1976	Floodlights installed for golf course to stay open longer, road from playground from Fitzherbert end closed.
1980	Scent garden renamed shade garden due to change in focus to plant growth.
1980s	New paddling pool built
1989	Stopbank development (raised 1m in height and reshaped) along existing track in bush.
1997	Construction of Education Centre, Installation of gates, Centennial planting of 100 cherry trees along Cherry Tree Drive.
1999	Cycle Criterium
2000	Cycle Track constructed and opened
2002	Revamp of public toilets, construction of carpark adjacent to Miniature Railway.

#### Dugald MacKenzie Rosegardens and Trial Grounds

1964	30 rose beds planted by the Manawatu Rose Society in conjunction with the National Rose Convention
1966	Naming of rosegardens following the death of the Superintendent of Parks, Douglas MacKenzie



1966-67	Construction of fountains and a white stone and wood pergola
1968	Official opening of the Rosegardens. Installation of iron gates.
1969	The National Rose Society of New Zealand conducted a rose trial ground within the Rose Garden. 104 varieties of roses planted in an additional 25 rose beds. At this time, these were the only rose Trial Grounds in the Southern Hemisphere.
1974	Council built a raised platform to view the roses better. Later that year "Rose Sunday" at the Esplanade attracted about 4000 to 5000 visitors.
1977	The Plant Varieties office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries contacted Council requesting an area in reasonable proximity to the Rose Society Trial Grounds for the establishment of a museum collection of roses covered by plant selectors' rights in New Zealand.
1988	A new irrigation system was installed at the Trial Grounds and the Dugald MacKenzie Rosegarden.
1990	A collection of Camelia species planted on the perimeter of the rose garden.

#### Children's Play Area

1962	Installation of a concrete train and a rocket shaped slide.
1964	Under 5's area built, comprising a slide, rocker and 2 seesaws.
1976	Closing of road at Fitzherbert Rd entrance to playground to improve safety and reduce through traffic. Addition of new safety surface to play area.
1979	Three storey pole house constructed for Under 12's, comprising a slide, jump pit and firemans pole.
1981	Council adopted development plan for playground proposed by Massey University students
1982-86	Redevelopment of playground with "Yellow Brick Road" (Theme originated from Wizard of Oz), with flying fox, slides, tyres and various wooden structures installed in a staged fashion.

#### Miniature Railway

Late 1960s	Manawatu Miniature Railway and Model Engineering Society worked with Council to construct 1400 feet of rail in Victoria Esplanade. Railway station plan approved and engine shed and fences constructed. Bush clearance undertaken to make way for tracks.
1969	Official opening – 3000 people travelled on the 5 carriage train, with rides costing 10 cents. Engine shed constructed.
1974	Report of 250,000 passengers since opening day.
1976	New locomotive installed
1979	Gala Day held for 10th anniversary, and celebrating of 500,000 passengers.
1982	Society leased the railway operation to the Kiwanis Club.
1993	Council granted funding to upgrade area near the railway station and for construction of an overhead bridge.
1998-99	Manawatu Miniature Railway and Model Engineering Society renamed the 'Palmerston North Esplanade Scenic Railway Society'.
2001	Construction and sealing of adjoining carpark.
2003	New extension of tracks, due for completion Nov 2005.

#### Aviary

1937	Aviary constructed near the western end of Palm Drive
1940	Birds removed from the Square and introduced to Victoria Esplanade.
1955	Construction of new aviary in present location, demolition of original aviary.
Late 1950s	Extensions to cope with increasing numbers of birds as a result of breeding programmes.
1983	Upgrade of the aviary complex to prevent vandalism.
1993	Two extensions undertaken to the existing aviaries to include large vegetation into cages.
1995	Blue Duck Aviaries constructed under the guidelines of the Department of Conservation.
2003	Consultation undertaken to determine role of aviary at Victoria Esplanade.

**Victoria House**

- 1988 Chief Post Office relocated from Main Street to Victoria Esplanade for tearooms. The Palmerston North Esplanade Scenic Railway Society gifted \$107,000 from railway operation revenue for renovation of the Old Post Office.
- 1990 Opened as a café
- 2003 Third lease granted and reopened s tearooms/café.

**Conservatory**

- 1940 - 1951 Begonia hot-house erected using second hand tomato growing greenhouses and named the "Peter Black Conservatory".
- 1951 New glasshouse built
- 2003 Consultation undertaken to determine role of conservatory at Victoria Esplanade.

**Bush Area**

- 1913 Replanting undertaken with lancewoods, lacebark, coprosmas and pittosporums.
- 1965 Bush walk from playground to motor camp constructed.
- 1969 Railway tracks installed through bush.
- 1971 Small nature walk developed with the Manawatu Branch of Forest and Bird Protection Society.
- 1976 Manawatu Riverbank Walkway and bridle track developed.
- 1980 Measure walk installed by the Manawatu Walkways Promotion Committee.
- 1990 Nature Trail redesigned and streamlined.

**Adjoining Land**

- 1925 Development started on the Municipal Motor Camp (now called Palmerston North Holiday Park).
- 1966 Lido Swimming Centre (now Lido Aquatic Centre) opened on adjacent land.
- 1989-90 Leisureland complex built.

**Events**

- 1964 "Cherry Sunday" 20,000 people with 5000 cars passed through Victoria Esplanade.
- 1965 "Cherry Blossom Day" – 2149 cars passed though in one day, with 8000 cars passing through in the week.
- 1974 Rose Sunday – estimated 4-5000 visitors.
- 1979 Pilot "Rose Sunday" held.
- 1988 "Esplanade Promenade" - First Open Day intended as a family gala.
- 1989 "Autumn Antics" – estimated 8-10,000 attendance
- 1990 "Esplanade 1990" – 10-12,000 people attended.
- 1991 "A Lark in the Park" – 15-20,000 attendance. Orion Motorcycle Club had charity miniature road race in the central circuit of the reserve.
- 1992 Esplanade Open Day – estimated 15,000 attendance
- 1993 Esplanade Open Day – estimated 18,000 attendance
- 1994 Esplanade Open Day – estimated 20,000 attendance
- 1997 Esplanade Centenary, including a variety of events: the opening of the Education Centre, Installation of Main gates, Unveiling of Information Board in Rosegardens and brass sculpture in the Conservatory, and opening of Miniature Railway extension down to the Children's Play Area.

## 10.0 Physical Characteristics

### 10.1 Landscape Identity and Character

The general landscape character of Victoria Esplanade is of a large open space and a large bush area, and is generally regarded as a relaxing place to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Victoria Esplanade is one of the oldest reserves in Palmerston North and is one of the few public places where the community can get close to the river. It is a destination park for many motorists with a changing landscape that always has something to see. Victoria Esplanade has a variety of activities within its boundaries that cater for all ages and interests.

The major definable areas of the reserve include the access corridors, the central area, the rose gardens, the children's play area, bush area and the arboretum (see Figure 10.1).

**Access Corridors** – These are the road corridors that are dominated by strong avenue planting, including the trees on Cherry Tree Drive and the Canary Island Date Palms on Palm Drive.

**Central Area** – Centrally located, this area has a cluster of destination activities that include the aviary, conservatory, education centre, Victoria House, paddling pool, duck pond, formal bedding and perennial plantings and the work depot.

**Rosegardens** – Formal rose gardens, which include national rose trial beds and PVR trials.

**Children's Play Area** – A large destination playground with components that are unique to Victoria Esplanade.

**Bush Area** – A remnant lowland forest remnant with high ecological value. Tracks run through the bush area to the water edge and the majority of the miniature railway tracks are set within this area.

**Arboretum** – A collection of exotic specimen trees in a grassland setting. The general theme is natural exotic woodland, which is accentuated with dense underplantings of the specimen trees.



*Path through Victoria Esplanade arboretum*



Caretakers Cottage (now demolished)  
Source: Stuff

1800	1877	1900	1925	1950	1975	2000	2017
Land formed part of a huge tract of native bush. As the Esplanade lies close to the Manawatu River and the nearby Ruahine and Te Moutoa Poutoa Pa sites the Rangitane people would regularly have passed through the area for mahinga kai (food gathering) and other (bunga) (customs)	Land given to Borough of Palmerston North by Central Government	Victoria Esplanade Reserve created to commemorate 60th Jubilee of Queen Victoria	Queen Victoria Drive formed from Fitzherbert Avenue to Park Road	FSA donates the children's paddling pool	Children's playground developed by Jaycees	Old PN Post Office relocated to create new tea rooms	Junior Road Safety Park (opened 2017)
		Band Rounds erected from the Square (demolished 1960's)	Gardens at eastern end laid out.	New aviary constructed	Miniature golf House constructed in the children's playground	Sculpture conservatory established by Rose Society	ESR depot (opened 2017)
		Concrete fence erected along Fitzherbert Avenue, reusing chains from the Square first erected in 1879	Flowering cherries planted along drive	New glasshouse built using former tomato growing greenhouses	Opening of a Miniature Railway	Camellia garden developed	ESR Station and Ticket Office (due mid 2018)
		Timber Pergola erected	Fish Pond	Development and opening of the Dugald McKenzie Rose Garden by the City Council and PN Rose Society	Measured walks installed by the Manawatu Walkway Promotion Group	Native bird aviary added to the existing aviary	Central Energy Trust Wildlife Recovery Facility (due late 2018)
		Caretakers Cottage built	Caretakers Cottage built	Peter Black Conservatory erected and named	Scented garden for the blind constructed by Rosarians	Main entrance gates installed	Concept development plans created by consultants following extensive engagement with community
				Nature walk developed by the Manawatu Section of Royal Forest and Bird	Construction of the Lath House Conservatory	Education building opened	New Operations depot
					Upgrading of the children's playground by Rotary Club	Miniature Railway extended to children's playground	Caretakers Cottage demolished



# Background

Previous Masterplans Developed for Victoria Esplanade Reserve

## 2003 Masterplan



The 2003 Masterplan for Victoria Esplanade largely focused on management policies rather than masterplanning or long term development. However, it included the above plan that highlighted some proposed developments. Most notably is the pedestrianisation of Palm Drive (under the Phoenix Palms) and construction of a central courtyard.





# Project Description Forms

## How it works

The Project Description Form is an easy-to-complete form that is used to provide an overall outline of the proposed development project, and demonstrate how the Values Strategy and Desired Outcomes for each area of the park are being met. It should take less than 5 minutes to complete the form.

Fill out the form with detailed descriptions of the proposal, how it will integrate with the park, reflect the park values and achieve the desired outcomes.

On completion of this form, distribute it together with the Developed Design drawings to the User Forum for feedback and discussion.

Final approval for the project needs to be obtained from the Park Manager.

# 5 Victoria Esplanade Masterplan Project Description Form



Form Completed by:

Date:

Project name:

What is the approximate development budget?

(Projects under \$1000 do not require this form to be completed)

Briefly describe the project and the key components of the development:

Describe how the project will enhance the overall park values:

(Family fun, Community, Victorian History, Native Bush and Seasonal)

Describe how the project will avoid or mitigate impacts on the undesirable values of the park:

(Industrial architecture, hard lines, vast areas of asphalt and unkempt)





# 5 Victoria Esplanade Masterplan Project Description Form



Does the project contravene any Management Policies contained in the Masterplan Planning Toolkit? If so, describe why this project is considered appropriate:

What Character Area is the project proposed to be located?  
(If it is a project that embraces several Character Areas (such as circulation, signage etc) then it will need to be more carefully considered as a core element of the Masterplan)

Describe how the project is consistent with the Values Strategy of the Character Area in which it will be located:

Describe how the project is consistent with the Development Requirements of the Character Area in which it will be located, or why a departure from the Development Requirements is appropriate:



# 5 Victoria Esplanade Masterplan Project Description Form



Describe how the project will be accessed by the public:

Describe how the access that is established will enhance the Masterplan objectives for park circulation or mitigation impacts:

Describe the materials that are to be used to construct the project, and how these will enhance the architectural style of the Character Area (outlined in the Masterplan) in which the project is to be located:

Describe the planting that is to be used within the project (if relevant), and how this planting will enhance the planting style of the Character Area in which the project is located:

On completion of this form, distribute it together with the conceptual design to the User Forum for feedback and discussion. Final approval for the project needs to be obtained from the Park Manager.







November 2018  
[www.wayfinder.nz](http://www.wayfinder.nz)



Landscape Planning & Strategy