



The Future of Active Recreation

We are fortunate to have a wide range of choices when it comes to active recreation; walking, swimming, cycling, equipment-based exercise, fishing, running, scootering, skating and more.

Active recreation is the term used to describe the way in which our community participates in physical activity, connecting with each other and with the outdoor environment, regardless of our age, life stage, income, culture, or physical ability.

We're thinking ahead with support and funding from Sport New Zealand and Sport Hawke's Bay to ensure we create places that support our community to be involved in active recreation for the future of our District.

Why is active recreation important?

Active recreation contributes to our local identity and is a part of where we have come from and who we are today. Some of our favourite active recreation assets like The Tukituki Trails have put us on the map and provide awesome experiences for our local community and visitors to the district, amongst a depth and breadth of outstanding local opportunities we have in our patch of Central Hawke's Bay paradise.

Participation in active recreation is growing. This is helped by a growing awareness of the benefits of physical activity and participation on one's personal wellbeing and wairua. On the back of unprecedented growth, an increasing older population, and time pressures that demand greater flexibility of participation in Central Hawke's Bay, ensuring we position our district and community to become or remain physically active is critical to planning and delivering on a thriving Central Hawke's Bay for the future.

Why are we having this conversation?

While we've already got some outstanding assets across our district, we want to understand how those assets' current and future use will change with growth and changing expectations and demands from our community. As a result, we want to make sure that we are appropriately planning ahead so that we are ready and prepared for the changes that will be required ahead.

We also want to better understand what inequalities there are currently in the provision of active recreation assets or services in our community, what else (if anything) we need to be planning for in the future, or simply supporting existing community initiatives to ensure their ongoing success.

Like all of our services, we also want to better understand how we pay for these services and assets and where the cost of these should lie. In a Central Hawke's Bay context, where major investment is required across all of our assets and with the pressures of growth, we want to ensure we have carefully considered our investment requirements and achieve the 'best bang for our buck' for our communities.

With the potential for other external funding opportunities ahead, such as the funding recently received for the Tukituki trails, we also want to make sure that we can clearly identify future opportunities that can be funded and delivered from sources other than ratepayer funds.

We have created this discussion document to start the conversation about the future of active recreation across our district. This conversation will take many forms over the following months, and we hope that together we can all create a shared vision for the future of active recreation that will guide our community investment in the future.

How active recreation contributes to our Project Thrive outcomes?

Connected Citizens	Active recreation is a popular way in which our community connect with each other and connect with the outdoor environment.
Proud District	Active recreation contributes to our local identity and is a part of where we have come from and who we are today. Places like the Tukituki Trails have put us on the map and provides awesome experiences for our local community.
Strong Communities	Active recreation is where our community participate in physical activity that best meets their needs without the pressure of a competitive or structured environment. This contributes to creating a strong and thriving district.
Durable Infrastructure	Active recreation spaces and places, resources and opportunities meet the needs of our community today and into the future.

Our active recreation facilities now:

Some active recreation facilities are provided on Council's open space network.

Examples include:

- Russell Park where in addition to the sports complex and sports fields there is a BMX track, splash pad, playground, fitness equipment, skatepark and dog park/training area.
- Mudge Hunter Park where in addition to the pool, there are a range of experiences for youth including a basketball half-court, skate park and BMX track.
- The Tukituki Trails and other river trails are used extensively for walking and cycling. The tracks provide for a range of activity including mountain biking and separate bridle trails for horse riding in some areas.
- Otane Playground and it's 'not quite a half court' basketball area.
- Takapau Recreation Ground skate ramp.
- Our rivers and coastline provide numerous opportunities for swimming, fishing and having fun in the water.

Council also supports community organisations to deliver or enable active recreation programmes and activities, in particular ones that align with Project THRIVE and our Community Wellbeing Strategy.

- Council supports Sport Hawke's Bay with a service agreement to facilitate the advancement of sport and recreation to increase participation across the district.
- Through Council's Community Pride and Vibrancy fund community groups are able to apply for funds that activate the community. There are also commercial and community groups that provide access to active recreation opportunities either through facilities or through programmes, activities and events. For example, the Hatuma Half Marathon has built up a reputation as a relaxed and friendly family event. The Half Marathon starts and finishes at the Waipukurau Racecourse and takes in the entire circumference of Lake Whatumā.

It is interesting to note that historically, Lake Whatumā was used for a range of recreational uses including rowing, sailing and speed boating. However, due to the frequently low lake levels, these activities ceased some time ago. There is also limited public access to the lake as most land surrounding it is in private ownership.

The Centralines Sports Complex in Waipukurau offers a wide range of programmes including spin classes, water aerobics, and active school holiday programmes.

Earlier this year we received submissions to our Long-Term Plan on active recreation with the following requests:

- Support funding proposed for a cycling strategy recognising the growth of our area and increasing access to Tukituki trails and other walkways and cycleways connectivity throughout the district.
- Ensure the correct education programmes are in place to allow young people in our community to benefit from the funding invested into these trails.
- The concrete cycleway originally planned to run along the entire shoulder of State Highway 2 between Waipukurau, Waipawa and Otane should be resurrected. This would become a commuter trail, especially with the increasingly popular use of electric bikes, that would alleviate highway congestion and promote healthy lifestyles.

We think that the key principles guiding the future of active recreation in our district could be:

- Provide an environment that gets more people, more active, more often, for life.
- Provide a wide range of active recreation opportunities for everyone, regardless of their age, income, culture, ability, or geographical location.
- Work together with a diverse network of individuals, groups and organisations to effectively meet the active recreation needs of our community.
- Provide safe and accessible active recreation opportunities.

Some trends around the future of active recreation include:

Sport New Zealand's Active New Zealand survey consistently shows that the most popular activities undertaken by New Zealanders are 'recreational' in nature: walking, swimming, cycling, equipment-based exercise, fishing, jogging/running and pilates/yoga. The majority of survey participants take part in these and other activities on a casual basis, on their own or with others, with just one in five taking part in activities through regular club competitions. This highlights how significant active recreation is as a component of people's lifestyles. The most recent Active New Zealand survey results show that walking is the most popular form of recreation activity in our district.

Within the recreation sector, there is a widely held view that participation in active recreation is growing, fuelled by a growing population and societal change such as a growing older population, increasing cultural diversity and time pressures that demand greater flexibility of participation (as compared to activities that require set times).

Sport New Zealand have prioritised rangatahi as a key focus group for active recreation and sport and seek to reduce the drop off in activity levels from age 12-18 and increase levels of activity for those who are less active. The Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund is an initiative to support the delivery of quality active recreation opportunities for rangatahi. The Fund prioritises groups who are more at risk of missing out or being less active, including girls and young women, disabled people and those living in higher deprivation communities.

The opportunities we have identified so far include:

- Active recreation participation for young people can positively contribute to them being happy and healthy, respected and connected, and involved and empowered. These are all outcomes of Central Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework (2019). It provides opportunities for young people to be active, create social connections and a sense of belonging, establish cultural connections and get out amongst nature.
- Our Youth Action Plan supports the provision of programmes that encourage young people to keep themselves healthy and well such as recreational, educational and fitness programmes that encourage healthy and active lifestyles.

- Regular active recreation participation impacts the physical, mental and emotional health of older people. It keeps them well for longer and allows them to stay connected to their communities and age in place. Walking is the most preferred activity by older people followed by gardening. Physical wellbeing is the biggest motivation to participation in active recreation for older people.
- We have a really good starting point to build on active recreation opportunities in our community. This is helped by a growing population, an active ageing population with more time to participate in recreational activities, facilities that increase accessibility to recreation opportunities and societal trends of preferring to participate in non-competitive, unstructured and flexible forms of physical activity.
- This process is a great opportunity to understand what connects people to the places where they undertake active recreation. This will also help us understand the barriers that impact on our community's ability to participate in active recreation and look at how we can respond to these.
- Cycle skills and on-road cycle safety education is important and has a strong connection to active recreation. There is a need to make it a priority in schools and the wider district as part of a larger focus on Active Transport. An effective and sustainable delivery model needs to be identified and implemented to ensure all Central Hawke's Bay children are provided with the opportunity to learn and develop age and stage appropriate cycle skills, including on-road safety knowledge and learning experiences in safe and appropriate spaces and places. We also need to ensure we provide safe streets and cycle paths for children to use.
- The increasing popularity of cycle tourism and electric bikes is likely to see the number of cyclists increase in coming years. The Central Hawke's Bay is in a strong position to enhance its position for recreational cyclists due to the Tukituki River Trails and planned extensions and the Gumtree Mountain Bike Park. The opportunity exists to develop a suite of on and off-road cycling trails between towns and out to key points of interest including coastal and inland towns and villages. This was picked up as a key opportunity in the Tourism Destination Plan completed in 2020.
- Supporting culturally distinctive pathways that enable Māori to participate in active recreation opportunities. For example, MaraeFit is a marae-centric initiative that provides opportunities for sport and recreation organisations, whānau, hapū and marae to increase their physical activities and capability in an 'as Māori' context. This initiative was undertaken by Sport Hawke's Bay and included marae located in Central Hawke's Bay.
- Ensure that active recreation is integral to all planning processes that shape the future of our district, including town centre development, transport networks, and provision of water infrastructure. We need to provide linked up infrastructure that is flexible to meet the diverse and changing needs of those participating in active recreation. For example, the growing popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters.
- We need to provide and promote a variety of active recreation experiences for all ages including easily accessible walking tracks with regularly placed seating, skate facilities, fishing spots, BMX facilities, basketball courts, frisbee golf, and events such as the Tukituki raft race.
- Promotion of all the active recreational opportunities we have on offer in Central Hawke's Bay so our community and visitors know what is there, and what can be used for what purpose.
- Potential for further external funding opportunities, such as the funding recently received for the Tukituki trails.

The challenges we have identified so far include:

- We need to better understand existing inequities in the active recreation sector particularly for young women, disabled rangatahi, and rangatahi Māori, and what else (if anything) we need to be planning for in the future, or simply supporting existing community initiatives to ensure their ongoing success.
- Growth will impact on our active recreation experiences. More people will be using existing parks and services. There are likely to be expectations that they offer higher levels of service (e.g., more playgrounds and walking trails) reflective of people's experiences in places they have lived in before or that different and new experiences are provided.
- Participation needs are changing which may be due to a range of factors including growing cultural diversity, growing social inequality, the impact of social media and technology, and growing demand for more flexible active recreation opportunities in preference to more structured, club-based activity.

- The impact of a more rigorous regulatory environment on the ability to deliver active recreation programmes and events. For example, Health and Safety legislation and Adventure Activities regulations.
- National benchmarking on the provision of youth facilities (eg. skate parks, basketball half courts) highlights that our district is well below what other similar sized districts provide. The number of youth facilities (skate parks or basketball half courts) has a median of 2 per 1,000 youths (aged 15 to 24 years). Our provision is currently 0.9 youth facilities per 1,000 youth.

Let us know your ideas?

We're still in the early phases of this work, however we are keen to hear your ideas to support active recreation in Tamatea - Central Hawke's Bay. You can do this by completing our online survey at www.chbdc.govt.nz/thriving-places-and-spaces or emailing us on thrivingplacesandspace@chbdc.govt.nz