

INTRODUCTION

“A strategy is a vision of the future and how to reach it. If you don’t have a vision of the future you are going nowhere.” Albert J Dunlap - *Mean Business*

Since its formation in 1966, Manukau City Council has acquired an extensive network of parks through a combination of local government amalgamation, purchase, vesting at subdivision and philanthropy.

Although Council has remained highly responsive to the demands of a growing population in a rapidly developing and diverse city, the parks network has largely evolved without an overall strategic plan in place. With the city now reaching the level of maturity defined in *Tomorrow’s Manukau*, it is appropriate that the provision and development of its parks network is subject to strategic consideration.

Making Connections has been designed with that purpose in mind.

Manukau City Council is now responsible for the management of over 400 individual reserves totalling in excess of 2,000 hectares. In addition there are over 100 kilometres of esplanade reserves around the coastline and along major streams and rivers.

Six Auckland Regional Council parks totalling 4,500 hectares, and over 600 hectares of Department of Conservation estate situated in Manukau City further enhance this network.

For the purposes of strategic planning and management Manukau City Council has categorised the existing parks network in the following way:

- 16 Premier Parks of city-wide significance. These parks are generally Public Open Space Zone 1 (Heritage) or Zone 2 (Passive Outdoor Informal Recreation) in the Manukau Operative District Plan 2002⁶
- 350 Neighbourhood Parks generally Public Open Space Zone 2
- 50 Sports Parks generally Public Open Space Zone 3 (Active Outdoor Recreation and Organised Sports)
- 40 Community Purpose Reserves (or parts of reserves) generally Public Open Space Zone 4 (Community Purpose Buildings and Indoor Recreation Facilities)
- 100 kilometres of Esplanade Reserves generally Public Open Space Zone 5 (Esplanade Reserves, Drainage and Water Quality Areas).

This grouping of parks is reflected in **Making Connections** and is also consistent with the asset groups of the Manukau Parks Asset Management Plan and the combined park management plans approach adopted by Council in November 2001.

Making Connections takes a strategic position on each of these park groups, together with a position on a number of generic goals across each group.

The key factors that have influenced **Making Connections** are:

- The characteristics of Manukau, particularly its diverse communities with their different needs and aspirations⁷
- The growth of the Auckland region, with a projected doubling of the population by 2050⁸

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- Changing recreation trends, particularly the casualisation of participation and the increase in informal activities such as walking.⁹

The goals and actions within **Making Connections** have also been influenced by the recognition of five values that are commonly used to define the quality of parks:

1. Recreation & Sport - parks as places that offer easy access to a variety of enjoyable outdoor activities. Surveys have shown Manukau residents have a primary connection with parks as open space for play, relaxation and 'freedom'.¹⁰
2. Ecology - parks as habitats for plants and animals. This is a recognition that parks play an important role in supporting the ecological systems that humans require for survival, thus creating a fundamental connection to nature.
3. Landscape - parks as landforms offering visual appreciation and a sense of place. These places often exist as a contrast to the built environment and offer opportunities for connection with the natural environment.
4. Heritage - parks as places that allow identification with the past and protect it for the future. This may include parks as places that contain physical structures such as pa sites, cenotaphs or homesteads, or parks as land with historical connection to human settlement.
5. Community - parks as places that allow spiritual and cultural refreshment, that acknowledge the spiritual or cultural connection that people often feel with the land.

These values are acknowledged throughout the goals and actions of **Making Connections** in an integrated way.

6. The Manukau Operative District Plan 2002 is a requirement of the Resource Management Act 1991 and, amongst other things, includes provision to ensure that Council manages its parks in a sustainable way.
7. Refer to *The Changing Face of Manukau* (MCC, 1999).
8. & 9. Refer to Manukau Parks Asset Management Plan, Chapter 4, Growth and Demand Forecasts.
10. Refer to Manukau Parks Asset Management Plan, Chapter 3, Levels of Service.