

Parks

Activity Management Plan 2006

Stratford District Council

Appendix J of LTCCP

Parks Activity Management Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Stratford District Council provides and manages Parks and Reserves under the provisions of:

- Local Government Act 1974 (2002),
- Reserves Act 1977
- Burials and Cremations Act 1964 (and their amendments).
- Council Bylaw
- Various Council policies

and to meet the community outcomes of:

- Comprehensive social, recreational and cultural facilities accessible to all.
- Affordable high quality core services and facilities.
- A diverse natural environment that is accessible to all.
- A built environment that is attractive, safe and healthy.
- A district with a clear identity where people experience a sense of belonging and pride.

The Parks network consists of:

- passive reserves (gardens, walkways, trees, lawns, playgrounds, amenity plantings, neighbourhood parks and esplanade reserves),
- district cemeteries (two operating and five closed),
- active reserves (sports fields and courts).
- Various accessory buildings and memorials.

The Parks provide for a range of active and passive recreation activities from which the quality of life of the community benefits physically, socially, economically and personally.

The Parks network is managed under a Facilities Management Contract and income is directly derived from user charges and the general rate.

Council will continue the role of provider and guardian of the district Parks network in perpetuity and in a manageable and affordable manner, for the Stratford District community.

The purpose of this plan is to provide for the long term management of Councils Park network. It considers Council's strategy for the future, examines current practices and enables the community to be more informed about district parks issues.

1.2 LTCCP Community Outcomes

In preparing the first LTCCP Council has used both current and new information concerning community outcomes. To arrive at the Regional outcomes research was undertaken in conjunction with our two neighbouring Local Authorities, New Plymouth District Council and South Taranaki District Council and the Regional Authority, Taranaki Regional Council. The four Councils appointed AC Nielsen Ltd to identify community desired outcomes for the regional community; those desired outcomes that will add to or sustain the community's well-being.

The community was actively engaged in the process to identify what they considered important and which five outcomes they thought required most attention over the next five years. While the primary focus was on outcomes common to the regional community each district was required to identify any local preferences.

The Stratford community was directly consulted on key outcomes for the district and these have formed the basis for Councils LTCCP.

The Regional and Stratford community outcomes to which the Parks primarily contributes are addressed in Volume One, Chapter "Levels of Service/Performance Measures" of the LTCCP.

1.3 Parks Goal and Principal Objectives

The Parks activity goal is:

“To provide a well maintained, attractive and purposeful Parks network that provides for community enjoyment and well-being”.

and the principal objectives are:

- (a) To provide an attractive and functional Parks network that satisfies community social and recreational needs.
- (b) To provide appropriate, safe, accessible and exciting outdoor areas that inspire people to undertake appropriate passive and active recreational activities.
- (c) To plan for, and forecast, the cost effective investment for the future provision of Parks and to anticipate demand trends that may effect this investment.
- (d) To maintain an adequate management systems for all matters relating to Parks that ensures that the Parks network is maintained to meet adequate service and safety standards; and
- (e) To provide for informed community consultation on all matters with regard to the Parks Network.

2. Levels of Service and Detailed Activities

The levels of service and performance measures are discussed in Volume One of the LTCCP under the chapter "Levels Of Service/Performance Measures".

2.1 User Satisfaction

Current parks surveys by Council can be subject specific or generic depending on the information sought. The frequency and methodology is best determined by the target audiences and specific information required. They also can lead to information where further analysis and research may be required.

2.2 Safety Records

The parks network by its very nature is subject to safety issues in the use and provision of both passive and active recreation environments. Council continually seeks to maintain the network in a safe condition and monitors safety issues according to the associated risk.

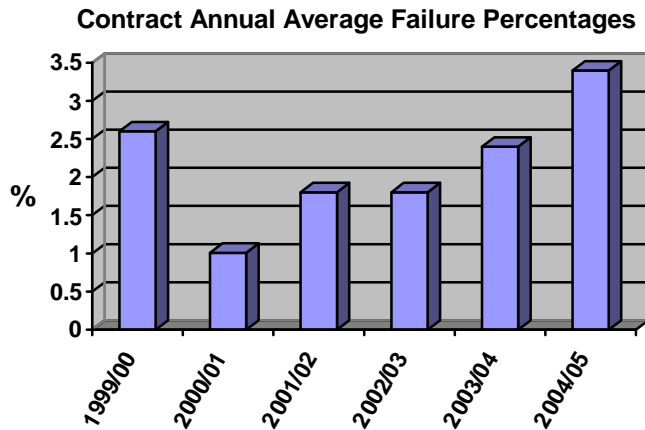
Particular areas such as walkways and playgrounds are a main focus of safety for Council, and important areas to the community.

2.3 Standards of Maintenance

Council undertakes monthly site inspections on contractor's performance against required contract specifications. The inspection records failures against the contract specifications and results in non-compliance notices to the contractor with timeframes for required action. The defaults are recorded as percentages against the 239 random sampled monthly inspection items.

This measure not only helps assess the contractor's performance but also Council's effectiveness as manager of the contract.

This process has the ability to be subjective in its application and could benefit from a review of contract specifications. The table below therefore could be interpreted as performance related both in terms of the contractor and also the subjective element in the inspection process.



2.4 Response Times

Community requests for service come directly to Council where the work required to satisfy that request is determine and an instruction is issued to the contractor. The work to be done by the contractor is required to be completed in a response time as set out in the facilities management contract.

2.5 Planned Projects

Annual plans list a number of renewals, capital and major works items that are targeted to be completed as part of the annual parks activity. This item measures the percentage completion of these projects so the community can see the result of its investment in identified works in the parks area.

2.6 Levels of Service Issues

The following are some of the issues currently faced by Parks. In the case of walkway improvements and sport field issues no additional funding for capital development has been allowed for. However in the future it is something that Council may wish to further consider.

(a) **Playground Upgrade**

Some of the current playground equipment needs modifying to comply fully with the NZ Playground Safety Standards particularly in terms of under surfacing or soft fall areas. Council is aware of this and has planned an upgrade over time. To maintain a safe environment all non-conforming equipment has been removed and minor maintenance performed on under surfacing.

In the past Council has used log peelings for soft fall material under playground equipment. Log peelings are no longer an acceptable solution and will progressively be replaced using bark nuggets. Immediately under the swings it is proposed to replace the soft fall material with safety matting which has superior wear properties than the bark. A sum of \$2000 has been allowed in 2006/07 for safety matting.

Other items that need replacing are the swings in Centennial Park and this is programmed for 2009/10 at a cost of \$5000. In 2011/12 and 2012/13 sums of \$20,000 and \$3,200 have been allowed for playground equipment renewals that are likely to be needed because of normal wear and tear and changes to current safety standards.

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It would however be desirable to bring the playgrounds up to the standard in a quicker timeframe than currently planned but this would impact on the funding capability of Council.

The current Council funded programme is:

2006/07	Parks General	Matting under swings	\$2,000
2009/10	Centennial Park	Replace swings	\$5,000
2011/12	Parks General	Renew equipment and under surfacing	\$20,000
2012/13	Parks General	Renew equipment and under surfacing	\$3,200

(b) **Walkway Improvements**

In 2004/05 the Carrington Walkway from the top of Regan Street to Brecon Road and Cordelia Street to Swansea Road was resurfaced and generally upgraded. This was to address issues of surface condition, trip hazards and overgrowth. The track was widened, drainage improved, the surface metallised, growth taken back from side of tracks, roots removed and banks and edges reshaped.

No provision has been made for funding any upgrade of the walkways around the 50 acre block west of King Edward Park (2.35 km) or the section east of Swansea Road which follows the north bank of the Patea River to the old power station and returns to Swansea Road along the south bank of the river (3.0 km). These two tracks are referred to as wilderness tracks and are maintained to a lesser standard than the well formed tracks through the urban parks.

The contractor's responsibility for these wilderness tracks is to keep them clear of growth and the areas on either side free of plant pests. If there is a requirement to lift these tracks to a higher standard there will need to be additional funds made available.

The following scenario provides some options for consideration for future walkway upgrading with the cost based on an estimate of \$10,000 per kilometre or \$55,000 for the full length.

	Current Level of Service	Medium Level of Service	Improved Level of Service
Change in Service	No Change – Basic maintenance only	Upgrade all the walkway over the next 10 yrs. Upgrade main links within the first 5 yrs and outer areas within the following 5yrs.	Upgrade all the walkway within the next 5 yrs Upgrade main links within the first 2yrs and outer areas within the following 3yrs.
Change in Costs per annum	Maintain current programme	Annual cost averages out as a 1.35% increase in the Parks budget for the next 10yrs Annual budget addition of \$5,000 per annum.	Annual cost averages out as a 2.7% increase in the Parks budget for the next 5yrs. Annual budget addition of \$10,000 per annum.
Impacts	Continued trip hazards and other possible safety risks for users Under-utilised community facility Walkways never of a suitable or consistent standard.	Community aware of upgrade programme Better utilisation of facilities in short term by Community Walkways of a consistent and suitable standard within 10 yrs.	Increased Community value in shorter term Walkways of a consistent and suitable standard within 5 yrs Tourist promotional potential within 2 years.

(c) **Sports Grounds**

Council has recently completed a survey of all sports clubs to determine their collective needs in the next three years. The initial results indicate that there will be insufficient grounds to meet the projected demands of the various codes if all their needs are to be satisfied. The problem is exacerbated by, rugby in particular, wanting to start its season earlier this year.

The Council policy is that the winter season commences on 1 April and finishes on 30 September each year. Rugby has indicated that in 2006 their season commences early February when cricket is still using the shared Victoria Park grounds.

Issues with the use of fields are:

1. Hockey has indicated that they require a second synthetic turf at King Edward Park adjacent to the existing. If this proceeds it will result in the loss of the artificial cricket wicket located in this area. Cricket need this wicket and if the second synthetic turf is to proceed a new site for a synthetic cricket wicket will need to be formed.
2. Rugby league require a field in Stratford and originally it was considered that one of the fields at Page Street could be used. However rugby is projecting increased numbers and to accommodate all teams will possibly need both the Page Street fields for games and some training.
3. Victoria Park No 1 field is over utilised for games and training both by local teams and teams from outside the district who consider Stratford a useful centrally located venue to meet and train. More often than not this training is done on the No1 field.
4. Soccer senior and juniors have combined into one club with the result that the total area of the Swansea Road fields will be used for soccer. Prior to this only one full sized field was in use. It is now proposed that there be one full sized field plus four smaller fields.

Discussions are continuing with the clubs to see what, if any, solution can be found with the number of fields that Council has available. No provision has been made for providing any additional fields. Rugby league has been advised that there will be no fields available for its use in the foreseeable future.

3. The Existing Situation Described

3.1 The Parks Network

The Parks Network in the Stratford District Council comprises of:

- (i) 36.7 ha of passive reserves comprised of:
 - gardens, lawns, trees, and amenity street plantings;
 - 2 neighbourhood parks and 3 playgrounds;
 - 6 foot bridges.
- (ii) 4.6ha of two operating Cemeteries.
5 closed cemeteries.

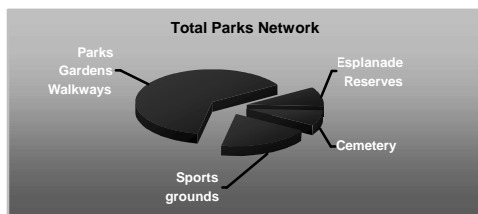
- (iii) 11.4 ha of active reserves comprised of:
 - 2 Croquet greens;
 - 6 netball/tennis courts;
 - 5 rugby fields;
 - 3 cricket wickets;
 - 2 soccer fields;
 - 2 hockey fields.
- (iv) 11km of walkway.
- (v) 5.6 Ha of 14 Esplanade Reserves.
- (vi) Accessory structures and building:
 - Grandstand at Victoria Park
 - Toilet block at Victoria Park
 - Memorial gates at Victoria Park
 - Malone gates at King Edward Park

Main users of the parks network are residents although regional visitors and tourists use amenities such as the sport grounds, larger garden parks and the river walkways.

The district is framed by Mt Taranaki on its western boundary and steep hill country leading to the Whanganui River on its eastern boundary. Its topography is dominated by a volcanic ring plain radiating from the mountain and therefore it has numerous water courses.

The parks are characterised by the terrain and water courses with particularly the Patea River playing a dominate role in the main gardens and walkway network.

High rainfall and temperate climate provides for lush growing conditions and the native vegetation of temperate lowland mountain forest dominates many of the natural areas of the parks network.



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(a) The summary of Councils Park assets (as at 30 June 2004) is summarised in the table below.

Asset Description	Unit	Quantity
Land	ha	3674.65
Esplanade Reserves	num	14
Cemeteries(open)	num	2
Cemeteries (closed)	num	5
Walkways	Km	11
Fencing	m	4,252.10
Boundary Fencing	m	1,424.66
Hedges	m	2,713.30
Wooden Barriers	m	822.20
Bridges	num	5
Lights	num	31
Sealed Surfaces - f/paths, carpark, etc	m2	4,078.72
Unsealed Surfaces	m2	4,980.21
Grass Area	m2	18,392.22
Rubbish bins	num	28
Seats/Tables	num	27
Signs	num	13
Playgrounds	num	3
Raised Bark Areas	m2	715.60
Skateboard Area	num	1
Climbing Frames	num	4
Seesaws/Slides	num	7
Swings	num	10
Playground Modules	num	3
Spring Toys/Maypole/Fort	num	3
Sports grounds	num	4
Hockey	ha	1.54
Soccer	ha	3.12
Artificial Cricket Wicket	num	2
6 Sealed Tennis/Netball Courts	m2	5354
Netball Shelters	num	6
Croquet Greens	m2	2120
Rugby/Cricket Fields - Page, Victoria	ha	3.87
Rugby/Cricket Fields - Victoria	m2	9733
Accessory buildings and structures		
Grandstand at Victoria Park	num	1
Memorial gates at Victoria Park	num	1
Malone gates at King Edward Park	num	1
Exeloos Victoria Park	num	2
Grandstand Victoria Park	num	1
Croquet Club Rooms	num	1

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- (b) 10 Year Budget Projections are detailed in the LTCCP.
- (c) Asset Valuations

The asset valuations for parks are under review with attention being focused on estimated asset life. These reviewed valuations will be included in the next LTCCP (see 3.2a).

3.2 Issues

(a) **Asset Management - Depreciation and Valuations**

Current planning and forecasting has been based on assumptions that need further examination. Although the assets are depreciated this depreciation is not funded.

One area required to be reviewed is the useable life of assets. The New Zealand Parks industry along with other local government and asset management specialists, prepared the “NZ Infrastructure Asset Valuation and Depreciation Guidelines” in 2001. In this they provide a useful guide in terms of the industry accepted useable life of assets. With some acknowledgement of local environmental and other unique factors, these are a useful guide for Council.

One example of the existing planning is that Councils current estimated life for playground equipment is 50-60yrs. Industry guidelines are between 10-25yrs.

A full review needs to be applied to all parks assets to provide a more accurate estimated life expectancy which will lead to a more accurate programme of depreciation and renewal requirements.

(b) **Management and Development Planning**

The basis for development in King Edward and Victoria Parks has been 20 year old management plans as required under the Reserves Act 1977. Any work undertaken in these parks has to comply with or not be contrary to these plans. It is time that these management plans were reviewed but to date compliance has not been an issue as generally the plans are still relevant to this day.

Another initiative has been the preparation of a parks development plan for King Edward Park which outlines a list of actions to improve the overall park standard for which on average \$18,600 is budgeted for annually. In addition there is \$1,000 per annum provided for new and replacement plantings.

The Council continues to maintain and/or as appropriate improve the quality of its parks asset. The various activities undertaken by Council have strived to achieve this. However the specific goals and objectives of these activities have not been clearly documented or identified as part of an overall strategy for the parks network.

There are also limited recorded standards and/or design guidelines for physical components such as signage, park furniture, street garden plantings and prioritised maintenance treatments.

The scale of the Stratford parks network does not demand in-depth strategic planning. However it would benefit from a more formally planned approach that provides a set of guiding principles enabling more co-ordinated future management.

Parks is facing and will continue to face a number of resource and rationalisation challenges over coming years. It is important that a clear sense of direction and purpose is developed that will protect its values and enhance its assets in an affordable, prioritised and efficient manner for today’s and future communities.

(c) **Stratford Identity Project**

The community identified in the 2004/2005 LTCCP a desire to improve the ‘appearance’ and appeal of Stratford. This is under investigation with the aim to present the community with a number of options generally focused on the CBD area. This project should be developed more fully by June 2006.

This will have an effect on the design and future direction of the street gardens, main entrance garden strips and street trees. It is important that this is not produced in isolation and parks managers have input into determination of the process that effects their planning, management and maintenance requirements.

(d) **Asset Database Information Management**

Currently parks asset management information is maintained in a number of excel databases. There is no one system that allows for easy maintenance of records or access to asset analysis or reporting.

Council has adopted the “Biz-e-asset” asset management database system. All the Parks asset information will be entered and reporting structures set by June 2007. This will enable greater ease in reporting, analysis and management of asset information.

(e) **Playgrounds**

Councils existing playgrounds do not entirely meet the NZ playground safety standards, NZS EN 5828:2004 *Playground equipment and surfacing*.

The existing wood peel under surfacing is no longer accepted and needs to be replaced with a bark matting, and some of the equipment is no longer deemed safe under the new standards.

To minimise problems Council has removed some of the offending play equipment and has started a programme of under surfacing replacement. However the current funded programme is not sufficient to meet the standards immediately and these will be phased in over time.

(f) **Toilets**

The toilets in Victoria Park were supplied by Exeloo in 1997 at a cost of \$100,000 and are state of the art with automatic doors, paper dispensers, self cleaning and hand driers. Because of the harsh treatment of some of the electronic components these are now becoming unreliable and need upgrading. An allowance of \$15,000 is included in 2006/2007 to upgrade these components with new improved parts.

(g) **Malone Gates**

The Malone Gates, which are a significant historic feature of the town, are in need of refurbishment. Over the years the white plaster on the concrete pillars that support these gates has gradually weathered off leaving them with a mottled appearance. To restore them to their original state they need a new coat of white plaster. The estimated cost of this work is \$20,000 and it is programmed to be completed in 2013 before the centenary of the battle of Chunk Bair.

4. Maintenance and Operating

4.1 Ownership

Council intends to continue to own, control and manage the Parks network within the district. The maintenance works are contracted out through a facility management contract. The contract is managed by Council's operations business unit.

J & L Taranaki Ltd has the current Parks Management contract until 30 June 2006, with under certain conditions, right for renewal until 2009.

4.2 Estimated Costs Over Next 10 Years

The estimated cost of operations and maintenance for the next ten years is detailed in the financial sections of the LTCCP.

The trend lines for the last seven years show a gradual inflationary increase but no significant changes other than a 9% rise in the maintenance contract cost in 2003.

The agreement between J & L Taranaki Ltd contains a clause that provides for additional annual contract payments for the years 2006/09 which are to be adjusted according to the cost fluctuation formulae in NZS3910:2003. An allowance has been made for cost fluctuations in the 10 year estimated using the BERL price level change adjuster.

4.3 Issues

(a) **Street Trees**

Council manages approximately 1,100 street trees within the Stratford urban area. Many of the trees are requiring maintenance works that the current contract does not provide for.

Council is undertaking a review of its street trees provision and management, to assist in determining a clear strategy for future funding and maintenance. The strategy will identify priority works required on the trees, produces forward plans for removal, maintenance, replacement, species selection, and funding requirements to meet this programme.

Outcomes will be affected by the determination of the Stratford Identity Project as discussed in 3.2 (d).

Another consideration with trees is the impact on other areas of Council particularly roading and services. As part of the review consideration will be given to minimise disturbance of underground services whilst maximising the root growth potential of the trees, determining the impacts on visibility and other road safety management issues, and residential view shafts.

In Regan Street in front of the Stratford Primary School there is a stand of approximately 55 Kowhai trees which were planted in 1941 by Women's Division of Federated Farmers in memory of Mrs Polson who was a founder member. The 30 trees to the west of the entrance to the Primary School are not separated from the road by any barrier to prevent cars parking or driving under them to obtain a better view of games being played on the school grounds. The result is that the ground under the trees is very compacted and the roots damaged. A number of these trees have died and had to be replaced. Due to lack of proper drainage in this area it does become very wet which also does not help the health of the trees.

As an interim measure to prevent cars parking and driving under the trees \$10,000 has been budgeted in 2006/2007 to erect a timber barrier around the trees. The area under the trees will be progressively mulched. Long term it is proposed that kerb and channel be constructed along this section of Regan Street.

The remaining 25 Kowhais to the east of the Primary School entrance are already protected from traffic damage by kerb and channel.

(b) **Carrington Walkway and Bush Remnant**

The Carrington walkway includes the majority of the bush clad riverside walks that are part of the walkway network in the Stratford urban area.

Good progress has been made on improving the standard of central sections of the walkway to meet contract specifications. There is a need to continue to closely monitor the contractor's performance in this area.

In the bush areas Council is actively controlling plant pests and replanting areas as opportunities arise. There is also policy that native trees are the main planting as the new walkways are developed.

Walkway surface and bush area maintenance is detailed in the maintenance contract but upgrading and development is specifically excluded.

This activity requires a clear plan of prioritised improvements and maintenance that would achieve a more effective use of resources which would benefit the community's ability to access and enjoy walkways and bush remnant areas. This should not necessarily have any effect on the required funding for operational maintenance.

The walkways around the 50 acre block west of King Edward Park and the walkway east of Swansea Road have not been formed to the same standard as those through the centre of town and no provision has been made to do any upgrading work in the current budget. They can be considered as more of a wilderness walk and have a lower standard of maintenance than that required for the central tracks. The contractor's responsibility is to keep the paths clear of growth and eliminate plant pests.

(c) **Cemetery Information**

Administration of the cemetery and keeping of the burial records is provided by Councils Corporate Services. Costs are recovered through direct user charges and rates.

It is likely that in the future the public and particularly genealogists will want further access to cemetery records. Current demand is manageable and provided through a computer records database.

Council is considering providing this information over Councils website which will provide for easier community access and minimise the required level of administration servicing.

(d) **Sport grounds Use Seasonal Conflicts**

Winter sports codes, in particular, are changing the times when they start and finish their seasons. In the past winter field use was confined to the period from 1 April to 30 September each year. Rugby has indicated that in 2006 their season is to commence in early February. There is obvious conflict as the main rugby and cricket grounds are at the same venue although rugby can use secondary fields at Page Street until cricket has finished.

The main impacts are the ability to undergo seasonal maintenance works particularly when trying to meet the standards required by opposing codes such as rugby and cricket. There is also a need to ensure that rugby keep off the combined grounds until the cricket is finished.

(e) **Care of Grounds**

Although the contractor is responsible for maintaining the sports fields users have an obligation to treat them with respect and not to damage them beyond repair with inappropriate use. A code of practice for the use of the fields will be developed and issued to all sports clubs.

(f) **Contract Management Monitoring**

The maintenance contract is generally operating satisfactorily. At present descriptions of work requirements are being reviewed with the contractor and this will improve contractor understanding of his responsibilities.

Council has a monitoring programme to ensure that there is compliance with the maintenance contract.

Continued improvement of the monitoring programme is aimed at accountability and measuring performance. This will assist with improvement in asset information and is an evolving process that will continue to be reviewed with the focus on improvements and efficiencies.

(g) **Beautification of Victoria Park**

On the south side of Victoria Park between the hedge at the top of the bank and the Fenton Street footpath there are a number of rhododendrons and flowering cherry trees. They are separated from the footpath by a barberry hedge which has protected and concealed these plants as they have become established.

Now that the plants are established it is time for both hedges to be removed so that the public can enjoy the benefit of this beautification. The plantings were done some 10 years ago when a row of lawsoniana were removed. The estimated cost for the removal of both hedges and the construction of a security fence along the top of the bank is \$20,000. This amount has been included as a capital work to be funded from grants.

(h) **Heritage Trail Signs**

This is a new item in the parks area of responsibility. There are two heritage trails in the Stratford District, the Forgotten World Highway and the Stratford Walkway.

The Forgotten World Highway links Stratford with Taumaranui via SH43. This was the first heritage trail created in New Zealand. It was funded through a grant and each site is signposted and gives descriptive heritage details. Since it was developed and had one upgrade there has been no money budgeted for ongoing maintenance or renewals. There is now a need to do some major maintenance and some signs need replacing.

The Heritage Walk is a 30 to 40 minute walk around the town that explores interesting features and parks, gardens and bush. There are 19 sites of interest with their own descriptive plaque describing the significance of each particular site. Like the Forgotten World Highway signs there is no budget to do maintenance or renewals.

An asset list of these signs and a programme of work needs to be developed so that they can be brought up to and kept to a high standard. If these trails are to be promoted as a feature of the district they need to be kept in a good state of repair at all times.

To fund this work \$10,000 per annum has been budgeted over the next three years and \$5,000 per annum for the following years. These figures may need to be revised once a full assessment of the asset has been completed.

5. Future Demand

5.1 Future Demand Predictions

(a) **Population**

Population growth in the district and demand on the parks system has remained reasonably consistent over the last 15 years. Statistics NZ predicts slight declines over the next decade and there are no indicators that signal any change in these trends for the future.

Stratford District Council has targeted the districts population to grow by 33% to 12,000. This desire is reflective of the outcomes from the LTCCP. There is no defining timeframe for this growth and no provision has been made for this possible growth. If a population increase is to occur it is anticipated that it will be a progressive trend happening over a number of years. When population trends start to show a significant increase strategies will be developed to accommodate this growth. No provision has been made for population impacts on parks in budget forecasts.

The following are two assumptions on the population increase of 33% or 3,000 (equating to 1000 new households) and their impacts on the parks activity. The assumption for the northern location for the increase is based on current subdivision trends. (Note - It is assumed for both scenarios that maintenance and operational costs will increase accordingly.)

1. *That within 10 yrs the population increases to 12,000 and this increase is 90% (900 Households) in the northern Stratford urban area and 10% (100 Households) in the rural area throughout the district.*

The level and pattern of increase would have no impacts in the rural areas and some impacts in the Stratford urban area.

Subdivisions in the Stratford urban area could result in a demand for small neighbourhood parks with some plantings, play equipment and park furniture. The provision of such space and facilities would be funded by subdivision contributions. It is not anticipated that there would be any impact on other passive parks areas but there could be a demand for additional sports fields and this possibility would need to be kept under review.

There would be no effect on other existing parks facilities, cemeteries or sports grounds, as current provision would meet the extra use demand.

2. *That within 10yrs the population increases to 12,000 and this increase is 50% (500 households) in the Stratford north western urban area and 50% (500 households) rural.*

This level and pattern of increase would have effect both on rural and the Stratford urban area.

In the rural area the impact could be the demand from growing numbers in the rural townships putting pressure on the rural domains for increased facilities.

This may or may not be able to be provided under the current land and domain board system, and could result in Council being approached to meet this demand. Such facilities as sport grounds, land for clubs, playgrounds and rural walkways/picnic areas could be desired.

The costs of this are difficult to anticipate with so many unknowns. The best guesstimate of costs could be around \$100,000.

In the urban area impacts such as scenario one above would be probable but to a lesser extent. Again there would be no effect on other existing parks facilities, cemeteries or sports grounds, as current provision would meet the extra use demand.

(b) **Community Recreation Strategy**

National trends in recreation over the last decade have showed a decline in formal recreation activities such as organised sports, and an increasing growth in more active informal leisure activities such as walking, gardening, swimming, general exercising and other more passive activities. (SPARCS 1997-2001 Recreation Trends Report). However the results of a recent survey of all Stratford sports clubs and their needs over the next three years indicate that Stratford is not following this trend.

The increased demand for the use of sports fields is being discussed with the codes in an endeavour to develop a strategy that will meet the majority of user needs by better utilisation of the fields that are presently available.

(c) **District Cycle and Walkway Strategy**

The Taranaki Regional Council in consultation with the three district Councils; South Taranaki, New Plymouth and Stratford, are preparing a cycle and walkway strategy for the district.

The aim is to provide a district network of walkway and cycle ways in an integrated and co-ordinated manner for the Taranaki community and tourists alike.

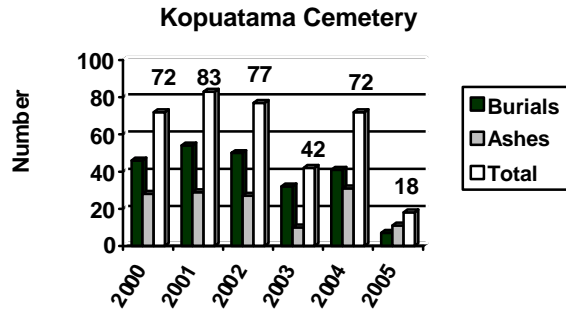
Planning is at the initial stage however it is likely that in the future Stratford will have a role to play in some form of provision or management of the network. No financial provision has been allocated at this stage or any need of financial input identified.

(d) **Cemetery Provision**

The table below show the historic demand for the main operating cemetery. The Midhirst Cemetery has had 5 burials and 5 ash internments since 1996. Current population trends and indicators do not show a great change in demand.

On the current trends the main district cemetery, Kopuatama Cemetery, has enough space for the next 50 years and Midhirst enough space for the next 35 years. Berm strip provision is provided on an as required basis under the maintenance contract.

There has also been a trend from burial plots to ash memorials and this is providing for a more conservative use of the space in the Cemeteries. The table below shows recent numbers and all figures are calendar year with 2005 figures to 30 March.



6. Capital Expenditure

6.1 Historic and Estimated Capital Expenditure

Over last seven years various one-off projects such as a new playground, public toilet and skate park have been undertaken. Minimal other works have been done to improve the asset beyond its original service levels. The next ten years show a modest plan to improve the asset and maintain this improvement programme. Details of the funding levels are in the LTCCP.

6.2 Future Capital Works Programme

Over the next ten years capital works are focused on Park Development, and limited one-off projects which include:

2006/07	Protection of kowhai's Regan Street	\$10,000
2006/07	Fenton Street beautification	\$20,000
2007/08	Kopuatama Cemetery Entrance Sealing	\$12,000
Ongoing	Parks development programme	\$19,500

The parks development programme is aimed primarily at improving King Edward Park. This is an ongoing programme to improve signage, tracks and removal of some of the older exotics that are becoming dangerous and need replacing. Included is \$1,000 for replantings.

6.3 Other Capital Works Issues

(a) **Stratford Identity**

This capital project reflects the community's desire to make Stratford a more attractive place to live. Council has reserved funds for this project but details of what development will be involved are still being discussed. Therefore the impact on parks short or long term has not been identified.

(b) **Cemetery Still Born Monuments**

Nationally communities have expressed a desire to see their still born children formally remembered in cemeteries. It is likely in the future the Stratford district may have to address this. Appropriate treatment of the issue and necessary funding sources will need to be determined should this need arise.

7. Renewals, Depreciation and R&M Major Works

- 7.1 Although the Parks assets are depreciated this depreciation is not funded and therefore renewals cannot be funded from reserve.

Any major maintenance required to retain the current level of service is funded directly from rates and detailed in the financial section of the LTCCP under the heading of R & M Major Works. The major items included in this category ie. those costing more than \$5,000 are included in the table below:

The major activities undertaken in the renewal programme include:

ACTIVITY	DATE	COST
Upgrade Exeloos	2006/07	\$15,000
Clean Victoria Park Lake	2006/07	\$5,000
Playground upgrades – see 2.3(a)		Various
Fencing replacements		Various
Replaster Malone Gates	2013/14	\$20,000
Refurbish King Edward Park Swing Bridge	2014/15	\$40,000
Kopuatama Cemetery water reticulation	2008/09	\$5,000
Clean Victoria Park Lake	2012/13	\$5,000
Kopuatama Cemetery replace depot roof	2012/13	\$5,000

7.2 Issues

(a) **Asset Condition Rating**

No condition evaluation has been undertaken for parks physical assets. This would be a worthwhile exercise along with 3.2a, which will enable a more accurate assessment of the remaining life of assets. This will result in the ability to produce a more prioritised and accurate assessment of the requirements of the asset management renewal programme.

An asset condition rating will be programmed for completion by 30 June 2008.

8. Funding

8.1 10 Year Financial Plan

Councils parks (including sports grounds) and cemeteries activities financial 10 Year financial summary is shown in the financial section of the LTCCP. All values are based on today's figures with an allowance for inflation.

The 10 Year programme is based on maintaining a flat level of funding requirement and therefore minimising great variances in rate requirements.

8.2 Funding Policy

Activity: Parks (including Sport grounds and Cemeteries).

Description of Activity:

“The provision of a well maintained, attractive and purposeful Parks network that provides for community enjoyment and well-being”.

Benefits Accrued:

- The whole community as the parks network is provided for public good; and
- Specific facility or service users.

In the past Council had considered that the urban sector had more immediate access to the parks and there was a targeted rate of 20% of costs to the urban sector. Council has now reviewed its Revenue and Funding Policy and concluded that targeted rates do not fairly represent the benefits to the targeted ratepayers generally. Council has accepted the view that parks should be funded from the general rate using capital value rating.

For sports grounds and cemeteries there is some cost recovery from users by way of charges.

The table below shows the expected cost recoveries.

Funding Sources and Mechanisms:

Activity	Desired Benefits		Modified Benefits		Funding Mechanism	
Sports grounds	70	30	90	10	General Rates	Charges
Cemeteries	5	95	70	30	General Rates	Charges

8.3 Schedule of Fees and Charges 2005/06

The new fees for 2006/2007 are in italics.

(a) Cemetery

Plot Purchase	
Burial (excluding Soldiers Cemetery)	\$370
Ashes	\$105
Children	\$190
Internments	
Adults (including Soldiers Cemetery)	\$325 \$380
Children under 10yrs	\$200
Stillborn	\$150
Ashes	\$60
Second Burial (same plot)	\$295
Re-opening Fee	\$295
Additional	
Extra depth	\$70
Breaking of concrete	\$60
Conversion of plot to lawn type (maintenance and perpetuity fee)	\$210
Disinterment or re-interment	\$190
Permit Fees	
Application for erection of headstone, kerbing, concreting, plaque, lawn conversion (per grave)	\$18
Administration	
Clerical per internment	\$44
Transfer of purchased plots	\$22
Duplicate of certificate or purchase of plot	\$22

(b) **Sports grounds**

Softball	- Summer and winter	\$280 per season
Athletics and Cycling		\$280 per season
Cricket	- Private	\$36 per day
	- Club	\$280 per field per season
Croquet		\$280 per field per season
Soccer	- Private	\$36 per day
	- Club	\$280 per field per season
Hockey	- Private	\$36 per day
	- Club	\$280 per field per season
Netball	- Private	\$36 per day
	- Club	\$550 per season
Schools	- Weekday use of fields/courts	Free
	- Weekend use of fields/courts (except KE)	\$36 per day
	- Weekend use of King Edward Park Sat morning	Free
Tennis		\$550 per season
Rugby	- Victoria Park No3	\$280 per field per season
	- Victoria Park No 1 & 2	\$450 per field per season
	- Page Street	\$280 per field per season
	- Private	\$36 per day
	- Summer (touch)	\$16 per team

9. Resource Consents

9.1 Resource Consents

There are no current resource consent issues for any of the parks activity. Parks holds one consent for a walkway swing bridge over the Patea River.

10. Demand Management

Demand management is to modify customer demands for service in order to maximise utilisation of assets or to reduce or defer the need for new assets. In the sports field area there is likely to be a demand for additional fields to meet the needs of some codes due to increased numbers of participants, a change in the timing when the fields are required and the over use or misuse of fields in unsuitable weather.

10.1 Demand Management Policies

With the pressure being placed on some field's council may need to introduce a demand management strategy which could include one or a number of the following components:

- Controlled use - so that surfaces are not damaged due to over use or being played or practiced on during inclement weather.
- Incentives - price structures or fines for inappropriate use of fields.
- Education - increased understanding of the asset and changing habits.
- Demand substitution - provide alternative venues.
- Regulation - restrict time of use.

However due consideration needs to be afforded to clearly identify the level of impacts if a change in demand is forecasted or desired.

10.2 Demand Issues

Council needs to be aware of the possible impacts on resource requirements and the threat of deterioration of its assets due to what the community can afford and how it uses the facilities.

As discussed in 5(b) a recreation strategy could be developed that examines the trends in demand and plans a strategic approach for Councils management and provision of its current facilities and the resulting impacts for now and for the future.

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11. Significant Negative Effects

11.1 Significant Negative Effects

There are no significant negative effects caused by the parks activity.

12. Significant Forecasting Assumptions, Uncertainties, Risk Management

12.1 Assumptions and Uncertainties

General Assumptions and Uncertainties	
Asset Life	Based on industry and accounting standards.
Capital cost impact on operations	The community can assume that as it seeks improvements and additions to its assets, rises in operational costs may occur due to the additional of improved infrastructure that will exist.
Constraints of Council	Due to the size of the Stratford District and correspondingly the size of the Council, the level of investment in planning, analysis and improvements is limited to what best suits the community both in practical and affordability terms 2006.
Depreciation	Based on 2006 valuations and forward depreciation allowance has been made for future capital. Not funded as older costly assets may not be replaced and therefore their maintenance only is managed.
Financial Values	All at today's 2006 values.
Funding allocations	All funding is based on expenditure predictions and as at 30 May 2006.
GST	Not included in financial forecasts.
Historic assumptions	Up to now Council has operated on historic assumptions and has managed the district according to the level the district can afford. The LTCCP process will determine its future approach to many areas of its asset management.
Inflation	Allowances have been made for inflation in forecasts.
Interest on investments	5%
Interest rate on loans	9%
Knowledge	No commitment or contingencies that Council is aware of has been excluded.
Population Growth	Assumed constant at 9,000.
Service Levels	Unless stated are remaining constant.
Stratford Identity Project	The impact of the proposed 'Stratford Identity' project has not been determined.
Valuations	Current valuations are based on 2006 figures.

Activity Assumptions and Uncertainties	
Activity management Plans (AMP)	This is the first AMP for Parks. As such it will be the subject of continual improvement as information and analysis develop.
Asset Information - Biz@asset management system.	The information provided has been developed from an existing asset register managed through in-house information. Over the next 12 months an asset management system will be adopted and this will permit more manageable and accurate control of asset information.
Asset Life and Asset Conditions	Asset condition ratings have not been done and therefore all renewal projections are based on age rather than conditions. In some cases the expected life is far beyond industry standards and requires review.
Demographics	Current population age percentages will not significantly change.
Recreation Trends	Current trends in recreation will not markedly change.

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12.2 Risk Management

A high level risk assessment of Council activities has been undertaken and is considered within the next LTCCP. This covers the generic issues of governance and business practices and common issues in group activity areas.

The table below outlines some of the key asset risk issues and rates them according to the guidelines in Appendix 2.

Further more in depth analysis for risk for the parks activity should be undertaken in the future.

Risk	Controls	Consequence	Likelihood	Accept Risk
Injury resulting from sub standard play equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection Regime • Renewal Programme • Compliance to NZ Playground standards • Maintenance operations 	Moderate	Unlikely	No
Fault in Walking bridges causing injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance Inspection regime • Renewal programme • Bi-Annual construction inspections 	Major	Rare	Yes
Failure to manage boundaries with private properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Plan • Identifying encroachments • Community liaison 	Minor	Likely	Yes
Actions of contractor causing harm or nuisance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedures • Compliance with relevant health and safety standards for operating of machinery and use of chemicals • Staff training • Contract conditions and monitoring 	Moderate	Moderate	Yes
Specimen tree falling and causing harm to property or person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arborist assessments • Renewal programme • Removal programme • Maintenance requirements • Inspection regimes 	Major	Unlikely	Yes
Mistakes made in cemetery booking administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedures • Computerised system for records • Sexton liaison 	Moderate	Unlikely	Yes
Structural failures on man-made facilities causing personal harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction standards • Renewal programme • Inspection regime 	Moderate	Moderate	Yes
Walkers tripping over hazards causing injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection regimes • Renewal and maintenance programme • Construction standards 	Moderate	Moderate	Yes

13. Plan Review / Public Consultation

13.1 Reference to the Public Consultation Undertaken

Council has consulted the community to establish funding levels and agreed community outcomes as discussed in the introduction of this plan.

In addition Council uses other practices such as:

- specific project or issue consultation.
- community surveys.
- annual plan submissions.

Council will continue to consult with the community as it further develops its LTCCP and undertakes its normal business practices.

13.2 When the Plan is Intended to be Next Reviewed

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by 30 June. Any changes and development will be expressed through the annual plan and LTCCP process.

14. Conclusion

This activity plan is the first for Parks. As such it will be improved as more asset information, planning and analysis are developed. The improvement plan in Appendix 1 outlines some of the works required.

The parks activity over the next ten years is mainly focused on maintaining the asset to current service levels and identifying a maintenance development programme of King Edward Park and Street trees.

Appendix 1

Improvement Plan

Note: PAM = Parks Asset Manager, OM = Operations Manager, CE= Chief Executive, SAM = Services Asset Manager.

Item	Task	2006/07				2007/08				2008/09				Responsibility
		Quarters				Quarters				Quarters				
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Asset Management	Finalise input and implement Biz-E-Asset asset management system.													PAM/SAM
	Review all estimated life of assets according to industry guidelines and adjust renewal and depreciation levels accordingly for the next LTCCP.													PAM
	Undertake asset condition rating on priority assets.													PAM
Maintenance Contract	Review specifications to avoid ambiguity.													PAM
Planning	Review current management planning to form a strategy for the future direction and management of parks.													PAM/OM
Request Monitoring	Review current systems of requests/complaints recording for monitoring, reporting and improvement purposes.													PAM/OM/CE
Risk Assessment	Review current assessments to more accurately identify and mitigate significant risks.													PAM/OM
Stratford Identity	Review a concept for this project and determine the impacts on Parks.													PAM/OM/CE
User Satisfaction	Consider and as appropriate determine a community consultation strategy for parks issues.													PAM/OM/CE

Appendix 2

Risk Consequence / Impact Guidelines (Qualitative Measures)

Risk Score	Risk Rating	Risk Description	Description of Impacts in example activity areas			
			Financial risk management	Human resources	Political	Business risks
		Generic Impact Description	Revenue loss, Cost Increases & Financial or Budget Liability	Security incident, OH&S effect, Reduced performance, Key people/Resources unavailable	Adverse press, Reputation damage, Legal repercussions	Clients not served, Operations interrupted. Assets/Infrastructure unusable, Info Systems out
5	Catastrophic	Disaster with potential to lead to business failure	Huge financial loss. Significant over expenditure at Organisational and output level, where there is no capacity to adjust budget across the Portfolio or no means to seek additional funding. 100% loss of Business Unit funding.	Multiple staff or public affected, debilitating injuries and fatalities or widespread medical attention required. Loss of a significant number of key management level staff, impacting on skills, knowledge, and expertise needs. Severe staff morale problems.	Concentrated public and political interest and major loss of public support. Union involvement.	Major detrimental effects on clients. Consequences would threaten survival of the service, and also the organization. Long-term sustained loss of production capability.
4	Major	Critical event, which will be endured with proper management	Major financial loss. Significant overrun at Organisational and output level, where management response requires significant additional funding, or termination or reduction of other initiatives. Possible 75% loss of Business Unit funding.	Extensive effects, injuries, hospitalisation or single fatality. Loss of some key staff, resulting in skills, knowledge, and expertise deficits. Severe morale or other organisational problems affecting performance and productivity.	Short-term public and political interest. Constant media attention, major internal inquiry and some union resistance.	Loss of production capability. Consequences would threaten survival or continued effective function of the service. Requires top-level management intervention.
3	Moderate	Significant event, which can be managed under normal circumstances	Significant financial loss, up to 50% of budget funding. Business Unit impact only, with some redistribution of existing budget.	Significant effects needing management action. Medical treatment, but no fatalities. Short-term skills, knowledge, expertise deficits.	Isolated public interest. Some medial interest and/or industry complaints, small internal inquiry.	Consequences could mean that the service is subjected to a significant performance review or a changed way of operating. Senior management involvement.
2	Minor	Event with consequences, which can be readily absorbed, but which requires management effort to minimize the impact	Some financial loss contained within Unit, 25% loss of budget funding. Minor over expenditure requiring monitoring and corrective action within existing budget.	Minor effects – injuries, but no fatalities. Health impact or probability leads to lost time or potential of public liability claim. Little skills deficit.	Local issue, isolated concerns raised by interest groups, with little media interest.	Consequences affect efficiency or effectiveness of the service. Managed internally.
1	Insignificant	Not worth worrying about. Existing controls and procedures will cope with the event.	Little or no financial loss, <5% budget funding impact.	No injuries or fatalities, little supporter action required. No skills or knowledge loss occurring.	No investigation required. Minimal to no effect on public reputation.	Affects only a small group of clients. Negligible service impacts dealt with by routine operations.

Risk Probability Guidelines

Risk Score	Risk Rating	Description of Event	Frequency
5	Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances High level of known incidences Strong likelihood of re-occurring with high opportunities / means to re-occur	Daily / Weekly
4	Likely	The event will probably occur in most circumstances. Regular incidences known (recorded / experienced) Considerable opportunity / means to occur	Monthly
3	Moderate	The event should occur at some time A few infrequent, random occurrences (recorded / experienced) Some opportunity or means to occur Council engineering projects usually designed to this level	Annually
2	Unlikely	The event could occur at some time No known incidences recorded or experienced Little opportunity, means or reason to occur Council engineering projects would require some compelling Capital risk justification to design to this level	Every 2-5 years
1	Rare	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances Highly unheard of Almost no opportunity to occur Council Engineering would require very compelling Capital Risk justification to design to this level.	Every 10 years