

15 September 2017

Chief Executive Officer
Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Private bag 12803
Tauranga 3143

Plans for Maramatanga Park

Health begins where we live, learn, work and play. Many of the crucial underlying factors that affect the health of people and communities are directly influenced by the decisions and activities of councils. The Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB) is required under legislation to improve, promote, and protect the health of people and communities; to promote the inclusion and participation in society and independence of people with disabilities; and to reduce health disparities by improving health outcomes for Maori and other population groups.

For these reasons, the BOPDHB is committed to working collaboratively with councils and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the plan for Maramatanga Park. This submission has been prepared by Toi Te Ora Public Health (Toi Te Ora) which is the public health unit of the BOPDHB.

Open Space and Health and Wellbeing

'Healthy Open Spaces: A summary of the Impact of Open Spaces on Health and Wellbeing' is an information paper produced in 2010 by Regional Public Health¹, a unit of the Hutt Valley District Health Board. The definition of open spaces contained in this report includes green spaces such as regional and local parks and reserves, sports fields and other recreation areas.

Toi Te Ora has used this paper as a primary information source in the preparation of this submission. Two useful aspects of the report include a summary of the connections between open spaces and health and wellbeing, and a list of features of healthy open spaces.

The connections between open spaces and health and wellbeing include:

- open spaces increase people's contact with nature and spaces of cultural significance (cultural or spiritual wellbeing/*te taha wairua*)
- open spaces promote social interaction and cohesion (social wellbeing/*te taha whanau*)
- open spaces promote physical activity (physical wellbeing/*te taha tinana*)
- open spaces reduce stress and promote relaxation (mental wellbeing/*te taha hinengaro*).

Healthy open spaces are those that:

- are of high quality, readily accessible, culturally appropriate, and well connected to streets and amenities
- are developed in partnership with the community
- provide variety of functions including opportunities for physical activity, access to the natural environment, and play for children
- respect and provide for a diverse range of cultures, ages, abilities and socio-economic status
- conserve and promote cultural heritage
- build on natural features to inspire a deep connection to place



- provide diverse habitats for appropriate species to enhance biodiversity
- create safe and healthy places for connecting with others, recreation and mental relaxation.

Health Impacts of the Maramatanga Park Plan

Element of the Plan	Impact on health and wellbeing	Recommendations
Upgrading or providing new sports facilities	Increases quality of the park, provides opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.	As physical activity increases thirst, provide water fountains, safely sourced from the council supply, to encourage healthy beverage choices and waste minimisation practices.
Increased parking	Increases accessibility to the park for people who drive, but also contributes to the overall car dependency of the transport system, which has a negative effect on health and health inequalities.	Provide bicycle parking at the park to encourage and enable park users to access the park using the Omokoroa/Tauranga Cycle Trail, and promote Child Independent Mobility which is important for children's healthy development. Consider need to improve footpath infrastructure to increase access for local communities.
A potential community building	Depends on the services offered by the community centre. However, in general, community centres improve health and reduce health inequalities by positively contributing to a wide range of health determinants, including providing a sense of place and belonging if designed with local residents, especially tangata whenua.	Work with the Te Puna community and Kai Western Bay to identify if a community garden may be of interest alongside the community centre. Design the community centre in partnership with tangata whenua to promote cultural wellbeing. Apply universal design principles to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Connect with Toi Te Ora to identify ways the centre could create health promoting environments.
New playgrounds	Provides opportunities for play and social interaction, particularly among young children and their families/whanau. However, research exists suggesting many playgrounds are bland and boring and may be developed more as a service for adults (by keeping kids out of the way) rather than children.	Involve local kids in the playground design as encouraged by the Children's Commissioner on their " Listening2Kids " website. Design playgrounds to be suitable for a range of ages and abilities, and consider the design principles for children's outdoor space identified in the literature to promote children's healthy development (Toi Te Ora is able to assist with this if required). Provide shade and fruit trees near the playground to promote sun safety and increase access to healthy food. Consider planting options that support native species and biodiversity.



Element of the Plan	Impact on health and wellbeing	Recommendations
Potential skatepark	Provides opportunities for physical activity and social interaction, particularly popular among youth which is important in the 'screen' age.	As undertaken when designing the Omokoroa skate park, involve local youth in the Maramatanga skatepark design. Consider the planning and design elements that have successfully contributed to the community and amenity value of the Omokoroa skate park.
Toilet facilities	Increases the quality and accessibility of the park.	
Fitness stations	Provides opportunities for physical activity	Consider fitness stations that will appeal to the widest range of users possible, in particular consider the needs of people who are trying to get into fitness, older people and people with disabilities.

In addition to the above recommendations related to specific elements of the plan, the following comments and general recommendations are offered:

- A recent community survey² undertaken by Toi Te Ora showed that people are concerned about the loss of native species in terms of the impact that it has on their health and wellbeing. There is also emerging evidence that development approaches that support connection with native species, healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are beneficial for health and wellbeing³. Therefore it is recommended that consideration is given to looking at how the development of Maramatanga Park can support local ecosystems and biodiversity such as with native plantings supporting native birds and other native species.
- To help ensure safety and encourage community use of all facilities, it is recommended that the plan is reviewed in terms of the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This would include, for example, considering elements such as lighting, natural surveillance and visibility, and building design.
- It is recommended that universal design principles are applied to ensure accessibility to the range of park facilities and amenities for people with disabilities.

Overall, the BOPDHB is in support of the Maramatanga Park plan as in general it will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The recommendations provided above will further enhance the health and wellbeing benefits and help mitigate or reduce any potential negative impacts.

We do not wish to speak in support of this submission at a public hearing.

Kind regards,

Sally Webb.

SALLY WEBB
Board Chair



The primary contact for this submission is:

Dr Neil de Wet
Medical Officer of Health
Toi Te Ora Public Health
Phone: 0800 221 555
Neil.deWet@bopdhb.govt.nz

References:

1. Regional Public Health (2010). *Healthy Open Spaces: A summary of the Impact of Open Spaces on Health and Wellbeing*. <http://www.rph.org.nz/content/d893f45e-9d35-4906-bde7-c4912036c97e.cmr>.
2. Toi Te Ora – Public Health Service (2016). *Issues of Health and Wellbeing Population Survey 2016*. <http://www.ttophs.govt.nz/vdb/document/1765>.
3. Medical Officer of Health Report (June 2017). *Health for All – an essential transition in our thinking*. <https://www.ttophs.govt.nz/vdb/document/1821>.

