



Matamata-Piako District Council Long Term Plan Submission

18 April, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Matamata-Piako District Council (MPDC) Long Term Plan.

As the major provider of sport and recreation facilities and services in Matamata-Piako District, we greatly appreciate the positive outcomes Council investment provides for a wide range of sports codes, demographics, cultures, ages and abilities. We also acknowledge the challenge Council faces with balancing the various competing demands such as growth, transport, climate change and water quality in the context of the current economic climate.

Council investment into the play, active recreation and sport sector makes an enormous contribution to the overall health and wellbeing of people in Matamata-Piako. Sport NZ and Sport Waikato have been working with the play, active recreation and sport sector to develop a co-ordinated and collaborative approach for future sport and recreation facility provision. This provides Council with a high-level strategic view of infrastructure needs for the region and the evaluation criteria to prioritise investment and ultimately make better decisions.

Matamata-Piako District Council has been a partner and important contributor in the development of the Waikato Regional Active Spaces Plan, a regional strategy for active recreation and sport facilities provision. The Strategy is an important reference point, it identifies priority needs and facility developments for Matamata-

Piako and the other districts in the region, providing a blueprint to meet future needs rather than wants.

Summary

- **First, Thank you:** Sport NZ acknowledges and thanks Council for its significant contribution to play, active recreation and sport. Thanks also for the part that it plays in the strong partnership that has long existed between Sport Waikato and Matamata-Piako Council, as evidenced by the extensive list of projects, programmes and quality opportunities that have been developed over the years.

Sport NZ **supports** the following themes proposed in the plan/proposal:

- **Walking and Cycling Connections**

Support alternative option: Continue to steadily improve walking and cycling connections, but over a longer time frame

Walking and cycling are popular recreational pursuits as well as being key active transport modes that result in increased physical activity levels. Sport NZ encourages the council to consider some ongoing investment into new and expanded connections and safety improvements.

- **Playgrounds**

Support proposal for two new playgrounds in Matamata and Te Aroha to expand play opportunities in these communities along with maintaining existing playgrounds. When there is limited ability to fund new or significantly redevelop facilities it is important to maintain and renew existing assets to enable continuity and quality of service and keep facilities fit-for purpose to meet the community's needs. We also need to consider safe and connected networks between play assets.

In considering the future play needs of our neighbourhoods, we promote the idea that play is an everywhere activity. In practice, this could lead to consideration being given to the integration of play and active recreation opportunities as part of sub-divisions, funded by development, and other low cost provision options such as natural play features in smaller open spaces.

- **Matamata Stadium**

Sport NZ acknowledges that the council is not seeking feedback on the Matamata Stadium project but wish to express our support for this project and applaud the partnership approach that has been taken. This will ensure a much more sustainable and well-used indoor-court facility into the future.

- **Sportsground developments**

Sport NZ encourages investment in new and continued renewal and upgrade to sportsfields and associated amenities across the Waikato region to improve the quantity, quality and usability. This will assist to meet current and growing demand with the Morrinsville Recreation ground being a key opportunity for investment.

- **Future projects – years 4-10**

Support consideration of future play, active recreation and sport infrastructure and the continued evidenced based planning to establish the need and viability of proposals such as Swim Zone Morrinsville, where the community has expressed a desire to upgrade the facility and open year round.

- **Fees and charges to increase to remain at 16% of revenue.**

As highlighted earlier, like local government we at Sport NZ are also not immune to the geopolitical environment and rising cost of living so we support a pragmatic and fair approach to increase fees and charges at a rate that is hopefully manageable for user groups and public admissions including family groups at pools, commensurate with the level of service provided.

About Sport New Zealand

Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) is the crown agency responsible for contributing to the wellbeing of everybody in Aotearoa New Zealand by leading an enriching and inspiring play, active recreation and sport system.

Sport NZ's vision is simple – to get **Every Body Active** in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Our role as a kaitiaki of the system focusses on lifting the physical activity levels of all those living within Aotearoa and having the greatest possible impact on wellbeing.

We achieve our outcomes by aligning our investment through partnerships, funds and programmes to our strategic priorities set out in four-year strategic plan.

Local government is uniquely placed to support play, active recreation, and sport

Local government has a unique and critical role in the play, active recreation, and sport ecosystem, providing vital community assets that are part of the fabric of our communities along with grants and opportunities that support local communities to participate in play, active recreation, and sport.

It is clear that prioritising investment in facilities, infrastructure, resources, and opportunities to encourage participation in play, active recreation, and sport can support the wellbeing of communities and the achievement of a broad range of local government priorities and outcomes. There is clear evidence about the value of play, active recreation and sport in supporting the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of our communities.

Provision of play, active recreation, and sport facilities, infrastructure, resources, and opportunities is important to a large proportion of the population.

In 2022:

- 73% of the adult population and 92% of young people (aged 5-17yrs) participated each week in play, active recreation, and sport

- 79% of adults and 63% of young people would like to be doing more play, active recreation and sport
- High deprivation, Asian and Pasifika population groups are significantly less likely to participate.¹

Research into New Zealanders' beliefs around the value of sport and active recreation in 2017 found a broad base of support for sport and active recreation and a belief in its value to New Zealand and New Zealanders. The value of sport and active recreation is seen to lie in the contributions it makes to individuals, families, communities, and the country as a whole.²

The value of investment in play, active recreation, and sport is a cost-effective investment towards local government wellbeing outcomes

International and domestic evidence clearly demonstrates that play, sport, and active recreation generate significant value for society across multiple wellbeing domains and outcomes, many of which are specifically relevant to the outcomes sought by local government:

- Recently published research from a Social Return on Investment³ study found that for every \$1 spent on play, active recreation, and sport, there is a social return of \$2.12 to New Zealand. This means that for every dollar invested in play, active recreation, and sport, the social return is more than doubled. This is a conservative figure and the actual return, especially for those currently missing out on opportunities to be active, is likely to be higher.⁴
- In 2019 participation in play, active recreation, and sport generated \$3.32 billion return in subjective wellbeing (life satisfaction and happiness) within New Zealand.⁵

Play, active recreation and sport contribute to social, economic, environment and cultural wellbeing in the following ways:

- **Social wellbeing:**
 - Development of social skills
 - Strengthened social networks
 - Bringing communities together and increasing a sense of belonging
 - Improving pride and reducing antisocial behaviours in communities
- **Economic wellbeing:**
 - Economic value generated for local communities and businesses
 - Employment of New Zealanders in the play, active recreation, and sport sector
 - Productivity gains as a result of physical activity
 - Savings for communities as a result of the volunteer workforce
 - Economic impact of major events

- **Environmental wellbeing:**
 - Creation of pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours
 - Creation of more environmentally friendly urban environments
 - Reduced emissions from active transport
 - Improved mental wellbeing from being active in natural environments
- **Cultural wellbeing:**
 - Strengthened cultural ties from participation in play, active recreation, and sport
 - Increased wellbeing from participating in culturally relevant physical activity.

Sport New Zealand has developed a resource for local government that illustrates the significant value that local government investment in the local play, active recreation, and sport system delivers. The resource can be accessed here:

<https://sportnz.org.nz/media/u41hdovx/the-value-of-play-active-recreation-and-sport-for-local-government.pdf>.

This document summarises the evidence about how play, active recreation, and sport can support the four types of wellbeing that local government is expected to deliver (social, economic, environmental, and cultural), and includes some relevant case studies from around New Zealand.

Conclusion

Sport NZ looks forward to continuing to work with the Matamata-Piako District Council and we are happy to provide whatever support we can to ensure MPDC provides for the current and future needs of Matamata-Piako to be active in the way that they choose.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and for your consideration.

Sport NZ Contacts

Should the Council seek information or clarification further to this submission, please contact:

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