



Waitoetoe Reserve Development Plan Community Engagement Results

Palmerston North City Council would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to this community engagement document:

- Ben Koch (Manawatū Rugby Union)
- Brad Cassidy (Sport Manawatū)
- Chris Whaiapu (Ngāti Hineaute Hāpu Authority)
- David Black
- Don And Heather Scott (Waitoetoe Community)
- Heather Knox (Palmy Rocks and Palmy Dirty Thirty)
- Heike Schiele (Environment Network Manawatū)
- Helen Griffin (Dogs walkers and Socialisation)
- Iola Haggerty (Friends of Waitoetoe Park)
- Jude Stephenson (CCS Disability Action)
- Kate Boyle (Dog Agility and Socialisation)
- Keith Joblin (Manawatū Forest and Bird Association and Waitoetoe Community)
- Kenneth Bidlake (Manawatū Mountain Bike Club)
- Neil Mickelson (Horizons Regional Council)
- Paul Joseph (Horizons Regional Council)
- Rachel Keedwell (Waitoetoe Community)
- Riverdale School (School Council and Communications Team)
- Russell Poole (Green Corridors)
- Sam Chambers (New Zealand Police, Palmerston North Dog Unit)
- Stephen Stannard (Bike Manawatū)
- Todd Palenski
- Zulfiqar Butt (Palmerston North Muslim Association)

Contents

Introduction: planning direction	4
Introduction: process	5
Focus Group 1: dog walkers/agility/socialisation	6
Conclusion	8
Focus Group 2: environmental and biodiversity	9
Conclusion	10
Focus Group 3: active sport and recreation	11
Conclusion	11
Focus group 4: community recreation	12
Conclusion	12
Focus Groups: overall results/highlights	13
Waitoetoe Park Community Picnic: ideas board	13
The Ideas Board Results	13
Conclusion	15
Riverdale School – Waitoetoe Park workshop	16
Rangitāne O Manawatū	17
Public Engagement: who did we talk to?	18
Ethnicity	18
How old were people that responded to the public engagement?	19
How did people let us know what they think?	20
How did people let us know what they think - Social Media?	20
Values	21
What values are important to people at this park?	21
Ideas for Development at Waitoetoe Park	22
What would you like to see more of at this park?	22
Development – breakdowns	23
Nature/wilderness/landscaping - breakdown	24
Play area - breakdown	25
Family and socialisation - breakdown	26
Dog socialisation and play - breakdown	27
Water/river - breakdown	28
Sports - breakdown	29
Conclusion	30

Introduction: planning direction

Why are we creating a Development Plan for Waitoetoe Park?

The Manawatū River Framework, River Environments 8.1 directs officers to develop a Waitoetoe Park Reserve Development Plan, as part of the development of the overall Manawatū River area. This development plan sits strategically within that wider framework.

Council purchased the old Allied Concrete Works land and Councillors directed officers to consult with the public on how that land should be developed. The development plan will also encompass that instruction.

There have also been a number of programmes that have come about through the PNCC 10 Year Plan (listed below). In order to avoid confusion, the Waitoetoe Park Development Plan will bring all of these currently disparate activities and existing direction together into a single, focused plan for this area.

These will form the basis of any future planning going forward.

Apart from the river wide Actions in the Manawatū River Framework, these specific actions related to Waitoetoe Park should act as a baseline to any public engagement and planning activity:

1. Under 8.1 River Environments: Prepare a Reserve Development Plan for Waitoetoe Park that builds on the natural amenity values of Waitoetoe Park and ensure it develops as a natural play space.
2. 2016 Council report that directed officers to: develop a plan for the new parcel purchased from Allied Concrete Works.
3. Council Programme 568: Design and construction of a new riverside access from Maxwell's Line to the beach and swimming hole at/opposite the confluence of the Turitea Stream and Manawatū River. Assumed to: include sealing the existing unused access, and its extension and upgrade plus a car park and some minor associated facilities such as fencing, picnic table, rubbish bin and minor landscaping.
4. Programme 1244 funds public engagement on use of site and the wider area surrounding it. Development to incorporate the outcome of engagement (10 Year Plan 2015-25).
5. Fundamental Considerations Specific to Waitoetoe Park (8.1 Manawatū River Framework)

The following are generic actions to be considered with regard to the overall Manawatū riverside area:

1. Improve way-finding to and around Waitoetoe Park.
2. Create an off-road connection between the Mangaone Stream and the Manawatū River.
3. The confluence of major tributaries should look to be rehabilitated as key ecological and recreational corridors.
4. A shared path from the Linton Army Camp.
5. Current industrial use adjacent to the river should be transformed into parkland, with recreational links established to connect the land uses.

General Considerations

In addition we must consider:

1. Iwi relationship to this area.
2. Ways for Rangitāne to express their culture and history in the park (Maori Community Strategy 2012).
3. Early and extensive public engagement to inform planning (Community Engagement Strategy 2013).
4. Connecting the river to the surrounds.
5. Programme 52 Manawatū Riverside Framework: implementation budgets to begin 2017/18: prioritisation given to:
 - a. Waitoetoe Park Development Plan.
 - b. Identification of suitable space for dog park, picnic areas, games and natural play areas (along entire river).

Introduction: process

Community engagement will take place across a variety of levels: Councillors, key stakeholders and the general public (primarily local to the park).

In order to engage key stakeholders, Council held focus groups. Given the large number of stakeholders with interests in Waitoetoe Park officers decided to hold four focus groups. The focus groups were as follows:

1. Dog Walkers/Agility/Socialisation
2. Environment and Biodiversity
3. Active Sport and Recreation
4. Community Recreation

In reaching the general interested public, officers are:

1. Holding a Community Picnic and Rock Painting Day (given that both Dad's Day Out and Awesome Awapuni were canceled due to weather), on December 3.
2. Mail box survey drops, Community Picnic and Rock Painting Day invites and an explanation flyer (Flyer drop-off zone extends to College Street from the park and along to the end of Dittmer Drive).
3. Facebook and PNCC website.
4. On-site user surveys (over a 2 week period).
5. Survey and flyers in Awapuni Library (including a library talk with locals).
6. Brainstorming workshop with the Riverdale School Student Council and Communications Team.

This report currently contains the results from the four focus groups. Once public consultation is complete, a final report will be developed.

Focus Group 1: dog walkers/agility/socialisation

Participants: Lorna Johnson (Veterinarian), Kate Boyle (dog agility), Helen Griffin (dog agility and walking), lola Haggerty (Friends of Waitoetoe Park and dog walker), Sam Chambers (Palmerston North Police Dog Unit), Jason Pilkington (PNCC).

Session 1: Values – what values do you believe are important to this specific park?

1. River access, kept dog-off-leash, water and river access.
2. Amenity values (information, mobility and accessibility, secure areas for dogs, dedicated dog training areas for elderly and people with disability that cannot walk/run with their dogs, shade).
3. Different spaces and areas for walking/playing/socialisation, wilderness, not a desert – (bumps and mounds and grass and bush), free run access, open space, interesting for dogs, trees.

Session 2: Strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for this area as a dog walking/play/socialisation area.

Table 1: Dog socialisation area SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Size – nice big area.	Far out of town.	Space to put new things.
Can have an enclosed area within wider park without disturbing others.	Not a fully fenced area.	Different areas for different activities can be achieved.
Existing popular dog area.	Isolated, might feel a little dangerous.	Lots of diversity for dogs.
Distance to neighbours.		Fenced area has to be appropriate.
Social community area already.		Natural agility.
River access.		
Fun paths.		

Session 3: Suitability of Waitoetoe Park as a dog park area. Working on a score of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest and most suitable) for some specific dog park criteria.

Table 2: Dog socialisation criteria scoring

Criteria	Score
Distance to neighbours.	9
Size: minimum of 3000m2.	10
Existing dog walking and socialisation area.	10
Parking/Amenity/Accessibility.	6
Useable in its current state.	8
Environmental suitability.	9
Security.	7
TOTAL	59
Total Possible	70

Result: 59 out of a possible 70. Therefore the Focus Group determined that the site is highly suitable for the activity proposed.

Session 4: What requirements would a dog park in this area need to be successful?

1. Drinking fountains (for people and dogs)
2. Seating and shade
3. Toilet access
4. Flood protection built into the design
5. Bag dispensers (doggy doo bags)
6. Play equipment and stuff to do for dogs/owners
7. Accessibility
8. Socialisation areas for dogs and people
9. Open space to run and play
10. Rules and signage
11. Puppy area
12. Might require big dog/small dog separation
13. Might require some electricity
14. No fenced corners
15. Safe play equipment
16. Info on clubs/educational opportunities for dog owners
17. Rubbish bins

Conclusion

In general this focus group desired to ensure that this area maintains its rugged wilderness feel, continues to increase biodiversity and wildlife, and remains a natural, open and playful space. The fenced dog agility/socialisation area must therefore harmonize with these features throughout the design process. It was agreed that a working party would be established when design is imminent.

Focus Group 2: environmental and biodiversity

Participants: Neil Mickelson (Horizons Regional Council), Dave Charnley (PNCC), Rachel Keedwell, Heather and Don Scott (Waitoetoe Reserve Community), Lola Haggarty (Friends of Waitoetoe Park), Russell Poole (Green Corridors), Heike Schiele (Environment Network Manawatu), Keith Joblin (Waitoetoe Park user and Forest and Bird), Todd Palenski, David Black, Jason Pilkington (PNCC).

The attendees were split into two working groups, and both groups worked through location-specific activities.

Session 1: Values – what are the core values at the heart of this park?

Group 1: Wilderness area, not sanitised/manicured, outdoor classroom/play area, natural learning, freedom to do what you want, park doesn't need any other things, natural play space, biodiversity, river access, size of the area. Not right next to roads/out of the way, increasing wildlife, botanical reserve, open space, Bill's Bush and the Rata are great, open grassy areas, birds increasing. Social leisure area, caring community, community asset, community groups involved (dog walkers, flax weavers), accessible area, part of the bigger picture.

Group 2: Natural values, connectivity to the river, unique, oasis, wilderness, openness, forest, exploring and safe, enquiry learning, size and scale, flexible for users, opportunity to connect with others and nature, sense of excitement, anticipation of experience, natural and socially enduring space, place of retreat, ephemeral experiences, adaptable to community development, build in community development/resilience.

In general both groups tended to favour values that pointed to three key areas: wilderness and natural play area, biodiversity and naturalness and community spirit. The groups tended to fuse around these three key areas.

Session 2: What's working well at this park?

Group 1: Nature/culture relationship, freedom to express, juxtaposition of activities, building of relationships (organisations, each other, stakeholders), volunteers, community spirit, adventure, community backyard feel, recreation opportunities (fishing, dogs, bikes, sports, frisbee, swimming, dog swimming), isolation/access, dog friendly destination, outdoor classroom, open space, adventure.

Group 2: Open spaces, access, good connection to Rangitāne, schools and kindy's use it, working days at the park, dog friendly, tracks work well, sharing spaces, plenty of interest in park from funders, making things work without a lot of money, well used local area, multi-use space, seed source, social life of the park (people meet and talk daily), people travel to this park, be yourself, support from both Councils, wider community networks already there, increase in native planting and birds.

In general what most groups identified as working well tended to centre upon the local community being a part of this space. Local community involvement, working days, physical works, social gatherings etc. were considered essential to all that works well in this park.

Session 3 – what improvements could be made at this park?

Group 1: Reducing willow, opening up views of the river, improve safety for swimming, wayfinding/signage (clear primacy of information, express sense of place, web-based), dedicated mountain bike areas, access, strengthen city biking network, opportunity for private enterprise (coffee carts, ice cream stalls, etc), substantial area of contiguous regeneration, retain sense of place, build in natural management process, food trees, connect to a wider recreation network (racecourse, Mt Cleese, Mangaone), predator control, development of wetland (Dunne Block), managed vehicles, allied concrete site for dog agility space, water for plantings, furnishings, manage rubbish, Neil M playing bass!

Group 2: Higher standard of service for mowing, integrated areas for biodiversity and recreation, create wetlands (Dunne Block), planned management, health and safety notices (signage), water fountains, spraying notification board, more bins, wayfinding and signage, consistency of signage, coordinated activity, planting plan, dedicated rest/socialisation areas, river access improved, managed but not too much, better monitoring of standard works, more doggie bins.

In general both groups wanted the status quo slightly more coordinated and wanted any development kept to a minimum.

Conclusion

The Focus Group desired to maintain this area as a natural wilderness area dedicated to natural play, education and a place where kids/adults could experience the wild outdoors on the doorstep of the city. Management and development would therefore be minimal, and would need to be designed in such a way as to compliment the wild, rough river surroundings. Any development should be secondary to maintaining the wilderness area.



Focus Group 3: active sport and recreation

Participants: Brad Cassidy (Sport Manawatū), Aaron Philips (PNCC), Stephen Stannard (Bike Manawatū), Kenneth Bidlake (Waitoetoe Park user and Manawatū Mountain Bike Club); Jason Pilkington (PNCC) Paul Joseph (Horizons Regional Council), Ben Koch (Manawatū Rugby Union).

Session 1 values: what are the core values of this park?

Quiet, close to a large body of residents, river access and beach, native bush, community planting, links to bike paths, sheltered from wind, health and exercise, destination of choice, potential attraction for Palmerston North, large open areas, accessible to young ones, car parking space and accessible, biodiversity and planting, peace and quiet, green spaces and trees, quality sports surfaces.

Session 2: what's working well at this park?

Access to the public, multi-use area, great playing field, great place to walk or ride mountain bikes, wildlife appreciation (birds, fishing, animals), riding bikes, swimming and cliff jumping, seems safe, no hoons, close to town but seems "far away", trees withstand flows of floods, public building stuff down there, not too over developed, wilderness and kids play and building.

Session 3: what improvements could be made at this park?

Improved access to fishing spots, signage for trails and advertising, off-road sealed cycling circuit, cycle pump track, BBQ's, more toilets and useable for events, access to power/electricity, more planting in such a way that safety and sight lines are maintained in the area, more off road tracks, historical info on progress of the site, mountain bike skills track running along sealed pathway, improved river access and swimming spot, life preserver and flying fox, high ropes course in the pines, bridges for tracks, signage, bins, better access (use of tracks for improved weed control, resurface to make more tracks all weather), better security to stop cars driving on berms, increased car-parking, changing rooms – need to do something, wave beam in river, permanent bikes skills features (double as fitness stations for walkers), triathlon events space.

Conclusion

In general there was a desire for greater access to the area, ensure and maintain the "wilderness" side of this location on the city fringe and provide more active sport and recreation opportunities. Along with the other focus groups the "community" aspect of this area and the activities in it were considered highly desirable. This should remain an area where the community have areas to build tracks, make skills areas, plant out and enjoy the natural, wild side of nature.

Focus group 4: community recreation

Attendees: Heather Knox (Palmy Rocks and Palmy Dirty 30), Zulfiqar Butt (PN Muslim Association), Jude Stephenson (CCS Disability Action), Jeff Baker (PNCC), Jason Pilkington (PNCC).

Session 1: What values do you hold for this park?

Not manicured, kid's building things, feeling ownership through involvement, accessibility for all to participate, fun for free (non-commercial), place-making, community ownership, wilderness area, freedom to make things, adventurous – feels out of town, messy biodiversity, central but fringe.

Session 2: What is working well at this park?

Riverside pathway extension, public engagement opportunities, wilderness feel to the park, no restricted access or entry, beach and river access, manicured area for the kindy-supervised kids, pine trees, tracks and big rocks/quarry left-overs, frogs and wildlife, intensity of activity and plenty of people – feels safe, mountain bike and BMX tracks.

Session 3: What improvements could we make at this park?

More trees for climbing, water facility for dogs, make it more accessible for all activities, need a “natural play” area, be creative when planting trees, split areas into activity areas (signage), better surface – sealed areas, more activity for children, signage and wayfinding improvements, create natural wetlands and frog area, locate kids play space where they have to walk through the wilderness to get to it – not easy to find.

Conclusion

In general the attendees desire the “wilderness” feel of this area to remain as it is. All activities should revolve around the community, be naturally designed so that we don't lose the “rugged” feel of the place and be accessible to a wide variety of users.

Focus Groups: overall results/highlights

There were some significant agreements that were clear across all four focus groups. In particular, all groups highly valued the rugged, wilderness aspect of Waitoetoe Park. The fact that the park exists on the city fringe, offering a taste of the wild in a relatively central setting was highly attractive.

This rugged wilderness aspect played out in a number of ways:

1. Play spaces and tracks/mountain bike skills equipment should be developed as “natural” play spaces that encourage adventure in the wild, discovery learning and an element of physical and mental challenge.
2. Any dog park/socialisation area must maintain and add to the ruggedness and naturalness of the space when design occurs.
3. The area is (and further could be) a key biodiversity/natural area within the city and this aspect should be enhanced and overarch all future design and development at this park, including the development of natural wetlands.
4. Access (and accessibility) to the river and the park is a key component of any development in this area.
5. Community spirit and the work that the community have achieved in this area should be enhanced and encouraged. The park should therefore not be over designed by Council.
6. In addition, activity areas need to be identified in the development plan so as to lessen conflict caused by diverse groups engaging in community activity at this park.



Waitoetoe Park Community Picnic: ideas board

The community picnic included water slides, rock painting/hiding, music and food. It was held on Saturday December 3rd 2016. During the course of the day there was a constant stream of people attending the event. There was approximately 100 people at the event throughout the course of the day.

The Ideas Board was combined with the PNCC "Let's Talk" van and was run by Councillors, from both PNCC and Horizons in a team effort over the course of the day.

The Ideas Board Results

Table 3: Waitoetoe Park community picnic - big board results

What do you like about this park?	What would make this park even better?
Lizard friendly – rocks and hiding places	Leave/develop part of it as natural playground – not traditional playground
Inspirational gardens to show diversity in the city	Fountain
Deep mulch gardens for fungi	Replace some willows with natives
Bee friendly natives	Natural playground
Explanatory signs by plants	Kids playground
Good shade	Toilet
Nice and quiet	Water fountain (dogs and people)
Bike trails	Toilet block by river
Swimming in the river	Mountain bike park
Accessible and large open green space	Flower meadow
Big trees and open grass areas	Water fountains
Bird friendly plantings with explanatory signage	Lockable tap
Great place to relax	Educational signage
Mountain bike tracks	Tree hut
Throwing stones in the river	High tree hut
Good place to run dogs freely	Leave it natural
Nature and natural space	Keep it well mowed

What do you like about this park?	What would make this park even better?
More community picnic events	Hydro slide
Park is perfect for young adventurers	Better parking
Trees, river access, grass and bike paths	Natural playground
Great walking and biking tracks	Better signage
It's cool and refreshing	Trails for cycling
BMX tracks	History board about Bill Renghau
Big natural tree swing	Manage wasps
Wilderness, not too over developed	Signage by river
Great place to walk and run	More community events
Great for family walks	Rock face along river

Conclusion

The results for the Ideas Board are not significantly different from the ideas generated by the Focus Groups, in that there is significant desire for the natural wilderness side of the park to remain the defining feature of whatever development occurs. This is evidenced by the strong bio-diversity and nature themes coming through from what people currently enjoy about the park.

Further additions that were most sought were basic amenity, playground for children that retains the natural adventure side of the park and development of the bike tracks.

Riverdale School – Waitoetoe Park workshop

Council officers met with the Riverdale School Communications Team and the School Council. A workshop was held in which the two teams worked together to answer two questions:

1. What do you value most about Waitoetoe Park?
2. How could we make WaitoetoePark even better?

The table below shows the responses to these questions, worked through by both teams.

Table 4: Riverdale School workshop results

What do you value most about Waitoetoe Park?	How could we make Waitoetoe Park even better?
Great for running and cross-country	More bike trails
Trails	A flying fox
Birds and wildlife	Fort and natural play area
Water fun at the river	Benches, picnic tables and BBQ's
Open space	Large rocks to climb on (natural huge rock piles)
Wild areas and bush	Sliding under things (logs and tunnels)
Community involvement in the park	Abseiling/climbing area
	Toilets
	Sculptures

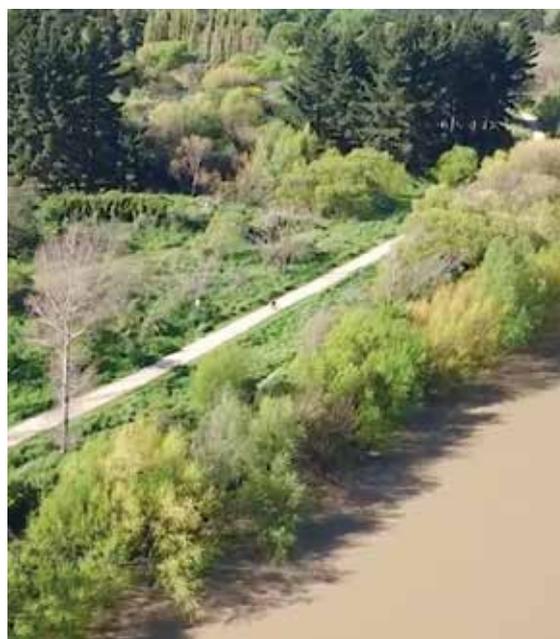
The table above describes both what the young people value and want to see more of at this park. Interestingly, the natural wilderness themes and natural playground, which comes through strongly from other stakeholders and the public, remains important to the younger generation. Riverdale School however provide the engagement results with significantly more detail regarding what a natural playground might look like.

Rangitāne O Manawatū

Rangitāne have a special interest in Waitoetoe Park, given that the park is also the site of the Ahimāte Pa. Ngāti Hineaute Hapū Authority expressed a desire for recognition of the Ahimāte Pa site, and their ancestral connections to the park, through interpretive signage and Pou. They also believe there is opportunity to incorporate traditional Rangitāne design work into some of the natural playground equipment.

Rangitāne have also expressed the desire to rename the park Ahimāte Park, in recognition of a dominant Pā site at this location.

Ngāti Hineaute also had some concerns regarding any dedicated area or “park” for dog activity, and that this activity should be kept outside the Ahimāte Pa site proper and be moved into an area that falls between both the Ahimāte Pa site and the Rangitāne Pa site further south. Given that there was traditional dog ownership at the Te Kuripaka Pa site on the opposite bank of the river, Rangitāne expressed the desire to recognise this tradition utilising both design and signage at any dedicated dog area.



Public Engagement: who did we talk to?

Ethnicity

The ethnic makeup of the public engagement at Waitoetoe Park is described in the graph below. The ethnicity of those engaged in consultation is juxtaposed with the ethnicity of Palmerston North, as a whole.

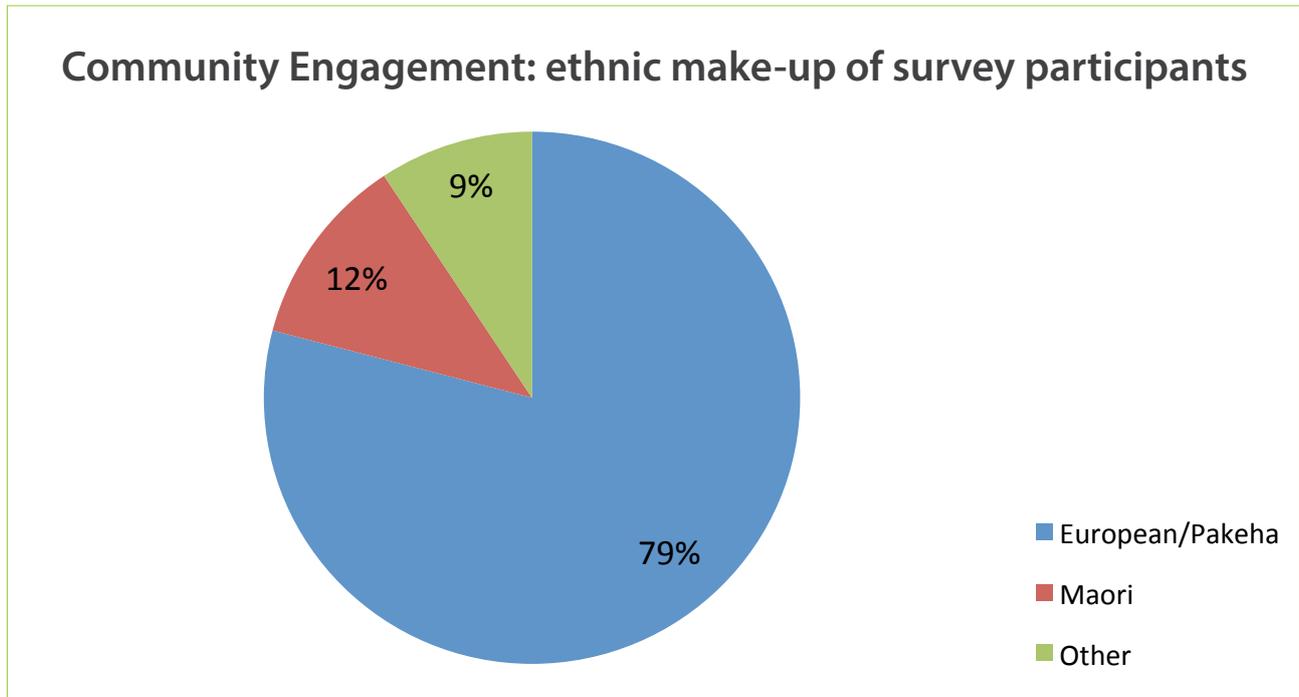


Figure 1: Community engagement ethnicity

A total of 86 people surveyed completed the section on ethnicity. The bulk of those surveyed described themselves as European/Pakeha (79%). 12% of those surveyed described themselves as Maori, and 9% as "other".

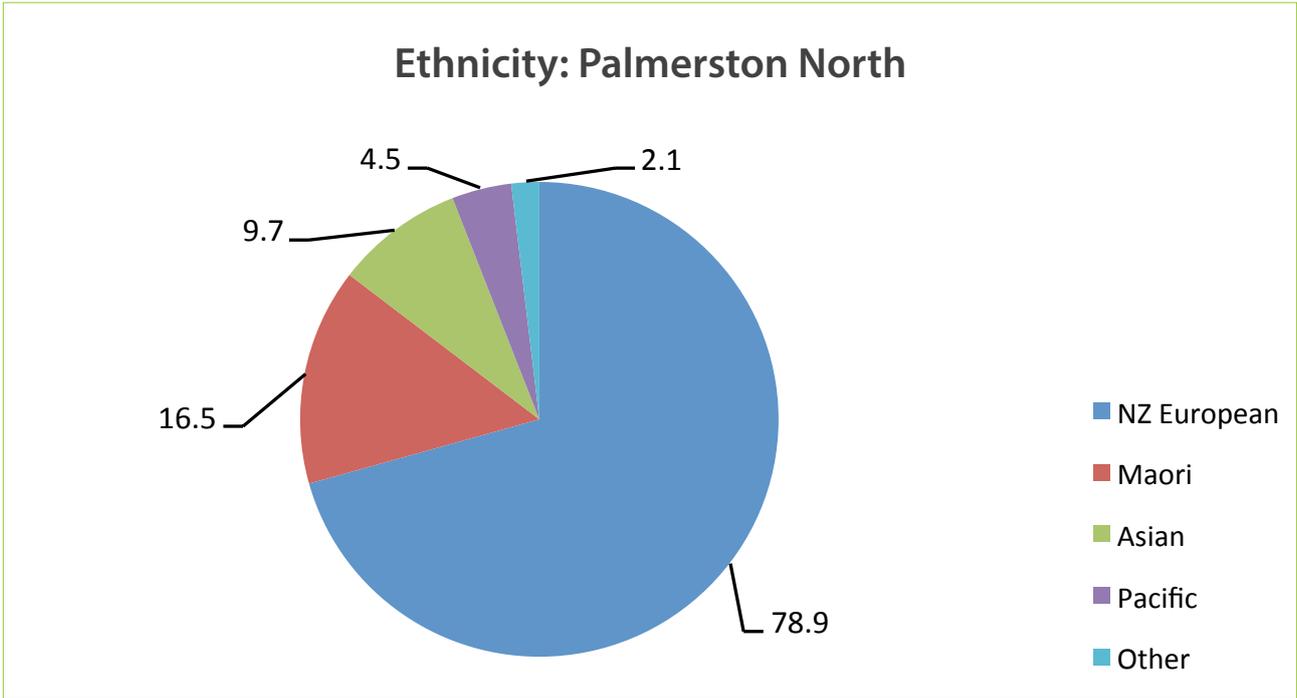


Figure 2: Palmerston North ethnicity

Representation on the surveys from the European/Pakeha ethnicity compares favourably with the general ethnic makeup of Palmerston North. Maori are under-represented by 4.5% when compared to the city as a whole. The “other” group, and particularly the Asian population, are also under represented when compared to the city ethnicity statistics.

Council officers, when approaching key stakeholders, have taken comments separately from the Muslim sector, the Chinese community and the Indian sector in order to attempt to offset any lack of representation. Given this park has a high level of significance to Rangitāne, officers have also worked with local Iwi separately in order to receive their views on this key space. This is recorded under a separate heading in this document.

How old were people that responded to the public engagement?

The median age of survey respondents was 44, while the median age of Palmerston North residents is 33.8 years. This is explained by the fact that survey respondents tended to be older, and there were no survey responses received from those under the age of 14.¹ For this reason officers approached the local school, and had an ideas board at the Waitoetoe Community Picnic. The board tended to better elicit the comments and ideas of a younger age group. Therefore while the median age is higher than one might expect, in reality the engagement process used ensured a wide range of ages provided responses.

¹ No one under the age of 14 was approached to complete a survey. This is consistent with survey health and safety methodology.

How did people let us know what they think?

A number of engagement tools were used so that Council could hear from a broad range of people. A total of 304 responses were received through traditional means, such as surveys, email and on-site activity days. The graph below describes the dispersion of responses received from the various engagement methods.

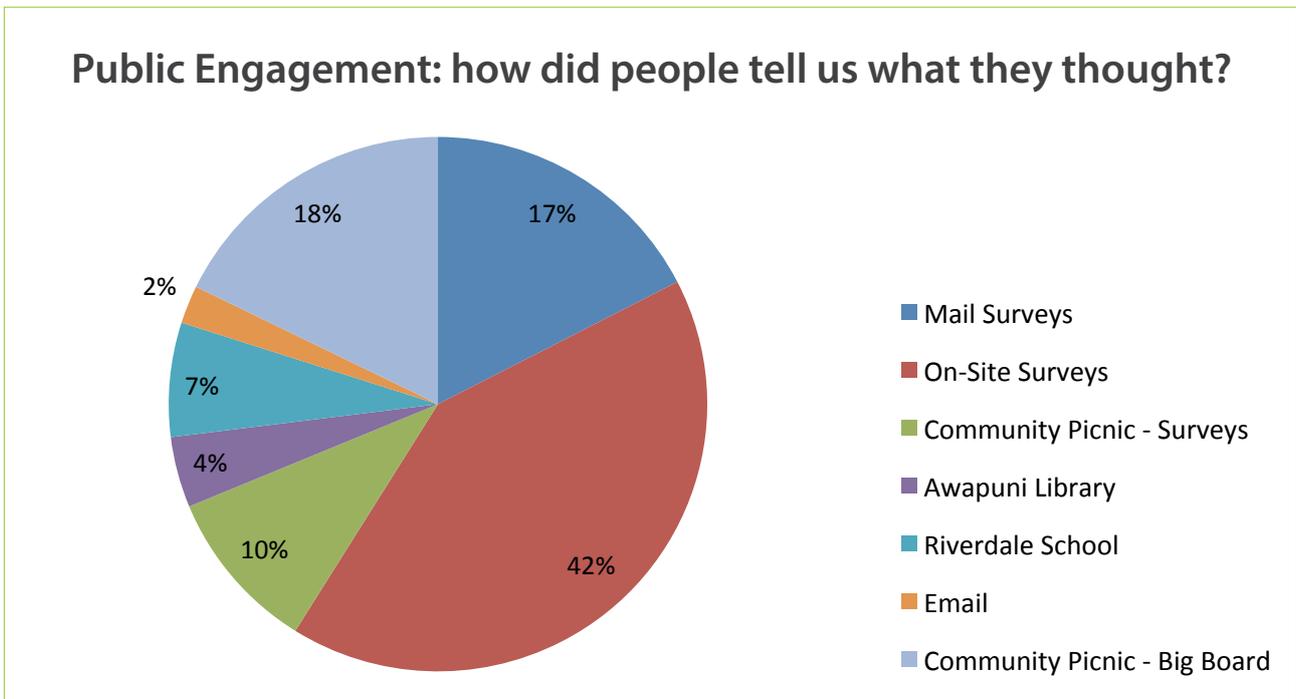


Figure 3: engagement methods

In general, the community engagement for this park is evenly spread, and portrays a high level of specifically local interest in this park. Waitoetoe Park community engagement received a substantial portion of responses from local mailbox drops. Surveys were sent out to the local Awapuni Community, from the park up to College Street, and across to the eastern end of Dittmer Drive. 17% of total responses were received in this way. 18% of responses came from the community picnic big board and a further 10% from community picnic surveys. The high local interest in this park is also reflected in the percentage of responses received from the Awapuni Library, at 4% of the total responses, and 7% from Riverdale School.

How did people let us know what they think - Social Media?

Council received 12 comments on Waitoetoe Park via Facebook. Comments were primarily related to how great the park is and how much people appreciate it. People on social media generally desire that the park remain a “wilderness area”.

Officers had a drone fly-over and video footage of Waitoetoe Park created to aid with consultation. This was made primarily because of the somewhat unknown nature of this park at the “city fringe”, and was placed on Facebook. The footage received 1,251 views and was viewed for a total of 578 minutes. On the Facebook 4,434 people were reached and there were 119 reactions, comments and shares.

On Twitter Waitoetoe Park received 222 “impressions” and a total of 3 “engagements”. There were 66 views of the video through Youtube and the park received 2,948 views on EventFinda.

Values

What values are important to people at this park?

At a fundamental level values give us a broad view of what people cherish about a place. Values at Waitoetoe Park tend to align nicely with the strategic work completed in the development of the Manawatū River Framework. This is not surprising. The values that people hold for Waitoetoe Park are described in the graph below.

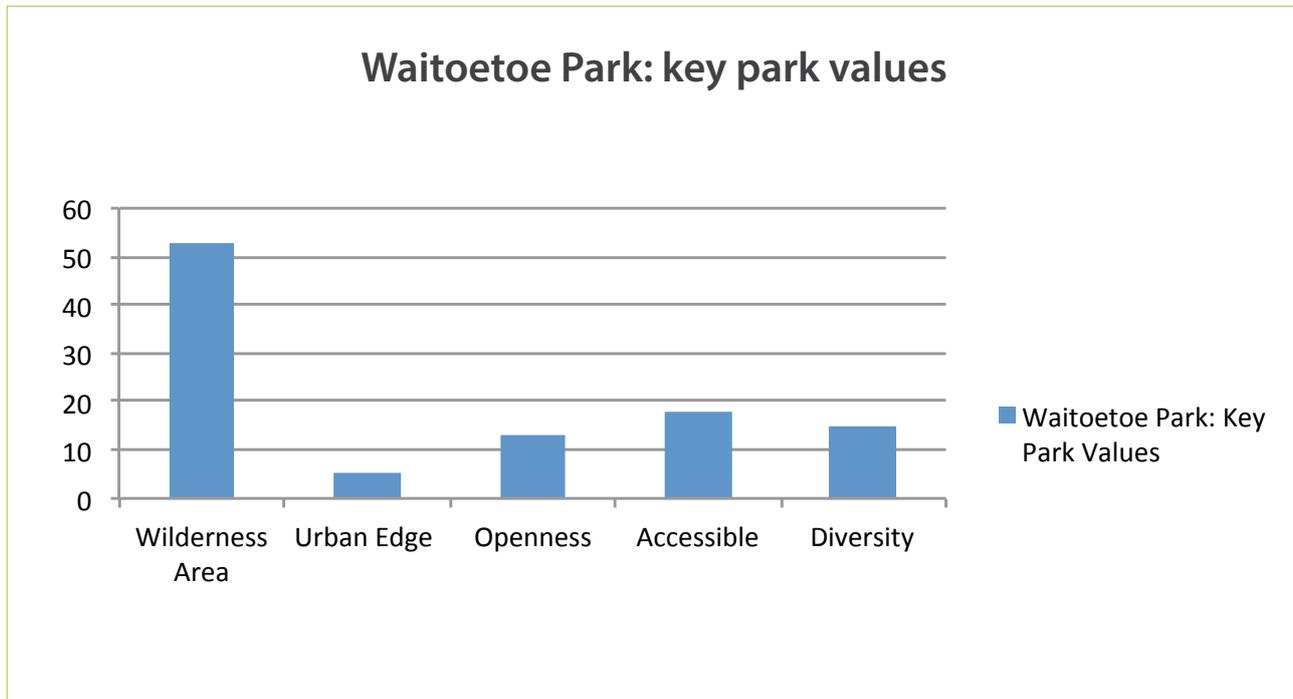


Figure 4: key values

Respondents were asked to number a set of values from 1 to 5, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important. What people value at Waitoetoe Park is unambiguous – that Waitoetoe Park is a “wilderness area”² This was the key value that emerged from key stakeholder Focus Groups, Riverdale School, the public surveys (both mail drop and on-site) and the Community Picnic.

² Wilderness area was primarily described by respondents as both natural and rugged, or untouched, wild, offering a sense of natural adventure and risk.

Ideas for Development at Waitoetoe Park

What would you like to see more of at this park?

People responding to surveys were also asked what they would like to see more of at Waitoetoe Park. The graph below describes the 2 main areas of interest.

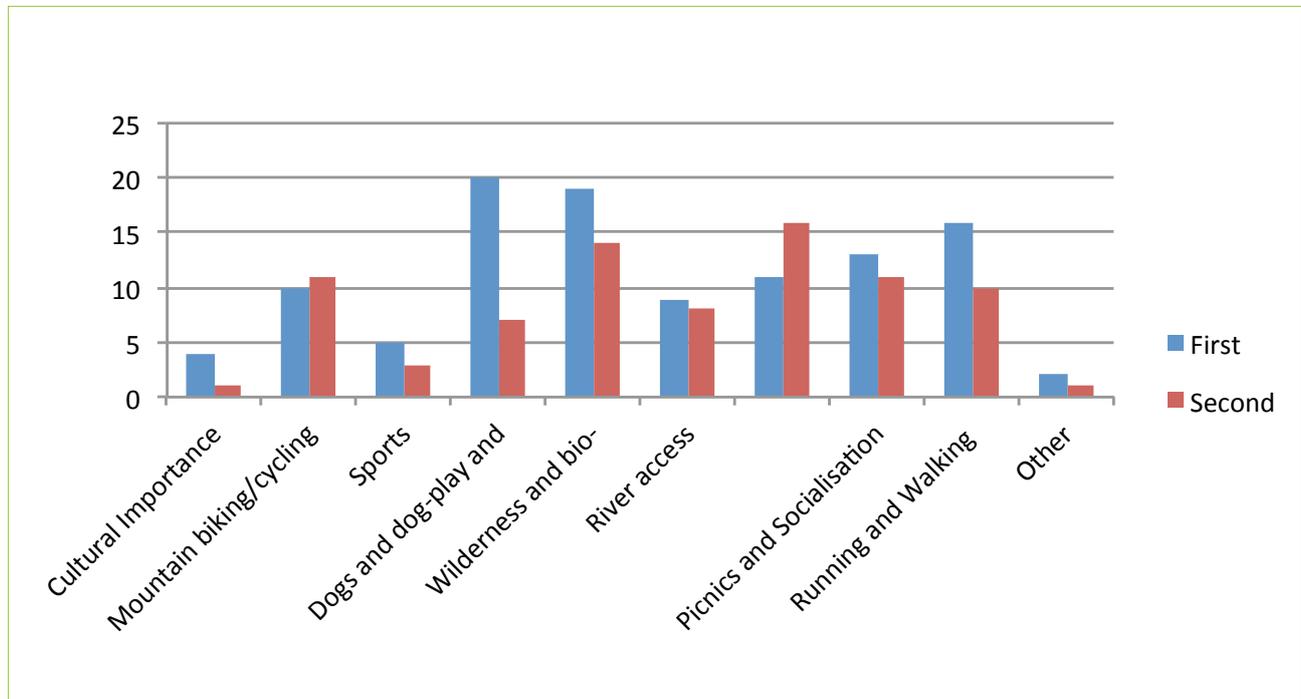


Figure 5: what people would like to see more of – activity by category

Respondents were asked to order 9 activities that they would like to see more of at Waitoetoe Park. The 9 activity areas (plus an “other”) are:

1. Cultural Importance (of park and river, flax and weaving, etc.)
2. Mountain biking/cycling – informal tracks, training and skills based activities, cycling loop.
3. Sports – sports fields, training, etc.
4. Dogs and dog-play and socialisation areas – dog park, dog-off leash area, socialisation for people with dogs, dog play, dog owner adventure.
5. Wilderness and bio-diversity – wetlands, native flora and fauna, educational planting, discovery learning, frogs and bird nesting, etc.
6. River access – better defined access and wayfaring within the river environment, swimming holes, connected river, better water access points and fishing.
7. Natural wilderness and play – informal play, digging and building, maintain/develop “wild west” feel, hiding and natural exploring.
8. Picnics and socialisation – family picnics, lazy open spaces, BBQ’s, etc.
9. Running and walking – natural setting running and walking, adventure walking, bird watching.
10. Other

These activity areas were gleaned from the values and actions inherent within the Manawatū River Framework, and were utilised as a baseline to ensure consistency of information and management of expectations.

The graph shows that dogs and dog-play is the most important activity people wanted to see improved at this park. This was followed very closely by the wilderness and bio-diversity activity. Wilderness and bio-diversity also received a high portion of those seeing this activity as second most important. Running and walking and Natural wilderness and play received the next highest for first and second choices, with picnics and socialisation also having a solid number of one's and two's.

Development – breakdowns

Respondents were also asked to elaborate on these choices, if they desired. The breakdowns that stood out in these comments are as follows:

- Natural/Wilderness/Landscaping
- Play area
- Family and socialisation
- Water/River
- Dog Play and Socialisation
- Sports

The graph below shows the number of responses to each of the above activities.

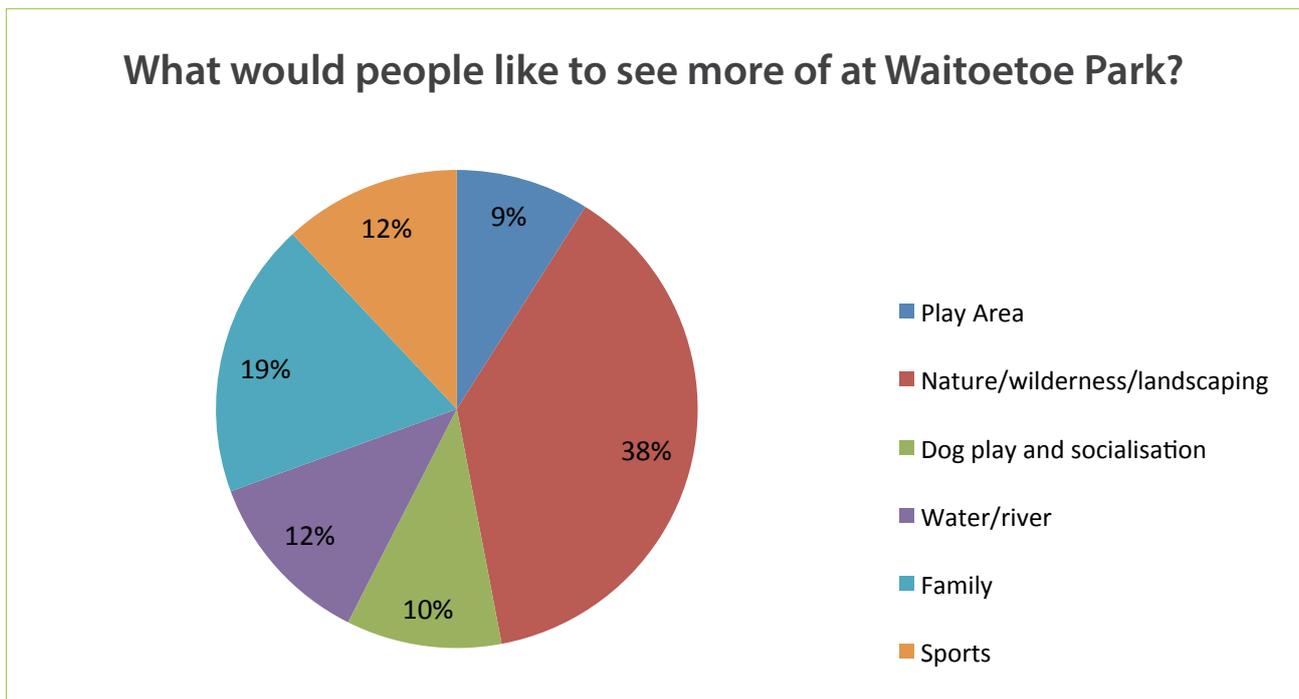


Figure 6: what people would like to see more of - comments

Nature and landscaping received the highest number of responses (38%), but was also a somewhat diverse category. Family received the next highest number of responses (19%) with the other 4 activities following on with similar levels of response.

Nature/wilderness/landscaping - breakdown

This comment received the highest number next to it, with 51 people elaborating on this area. The graph below describes the breakdown of this activity.

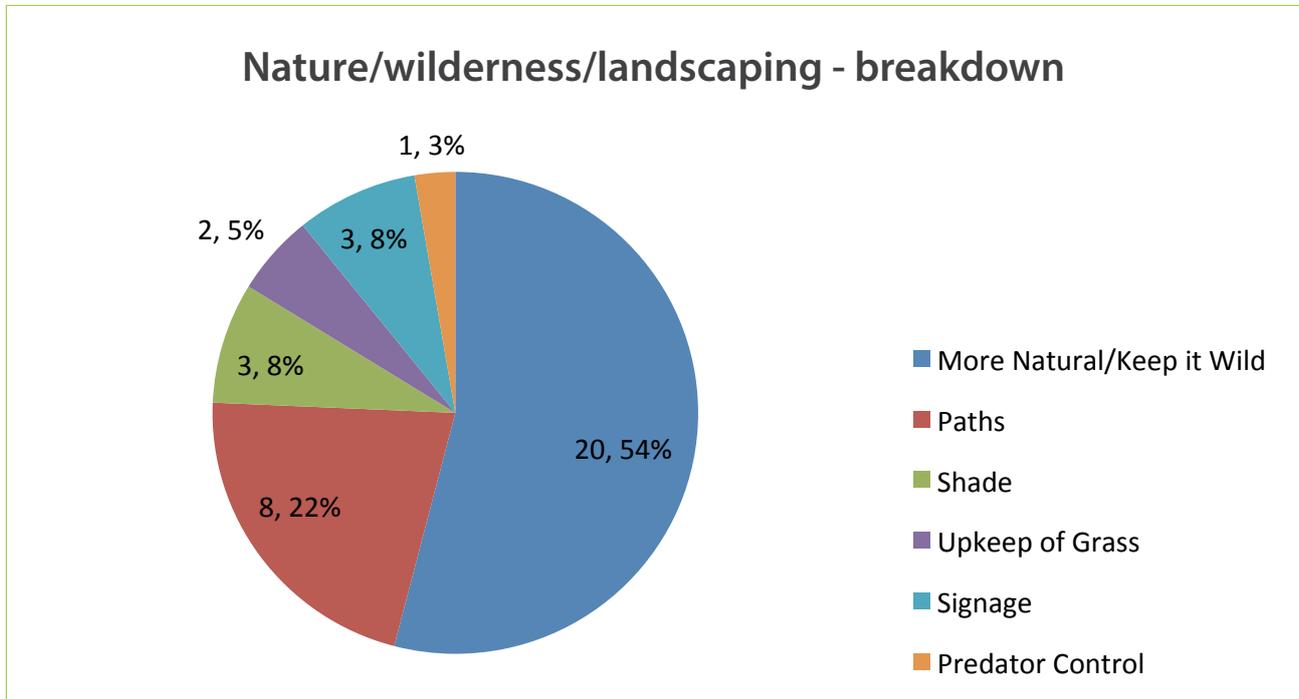


Figure 7: Nature/wilderness/landscaping breakdown

Interestingly 54% of respondents to this activity desired the park to either be left mostly as it is (with minimal development) or desired the park more “wild”. However, most respondents of this kind wanted some form of minimal development, such as picnic tables, better paths, etc. 22% of respondents wanted better paths, trails or trail maintenance. These were by far the most significant responses under this activity.

Play area - breakdown

12 respondents desired some form of play area. The graph below describes this breakdown. With Riverdale School numbers however, the total for this area of improvement is 19.

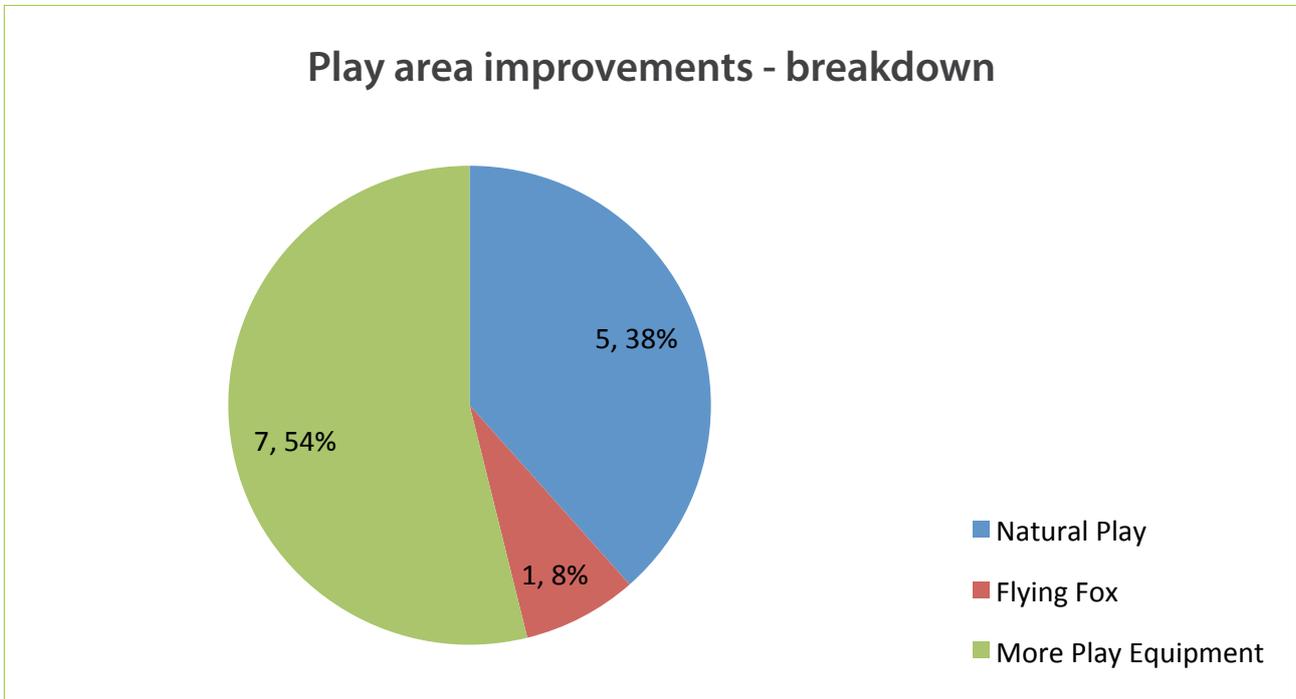


Figure 8: Play area improvements breakdown

In general, respondents to this activity wanted more and “natural/adventure” play equipment at the park. This was also a key component of the Riverdale School workshop and can be seen in those results. Forts, logs and trees to climb and things to crawl through were all key components of this activity.

Unsurprisingly, this type of play equipment also coincides with the key value for this area: retention of the wilderness area.

Family and socialisation - breakdown

25 people responded with comments regarding the further development of the family and socialisation elements of this park. The graph below describes the breakdown of these views.

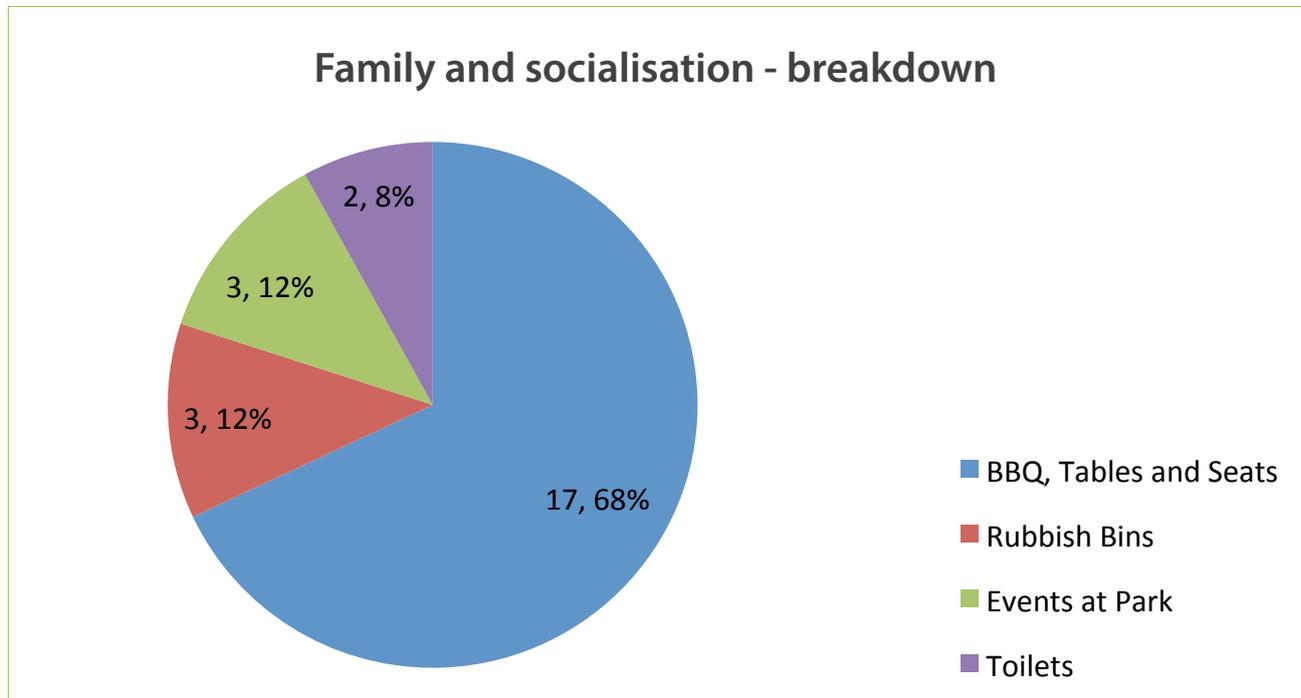


Figure 9: Family and socialisation breakdown

The dominant response in the breakdowns of this activity were for more picnic tables, BBQ's and seating. Picnic areas set into the natural wilderness was popular these for many people.

Dog socialisation and play - breakdown

12 people responded specifically to this in the breakdown. Dog people that responded were clear and focused regarding their desires for development at this park, as can be seen in the breakdown graph below.

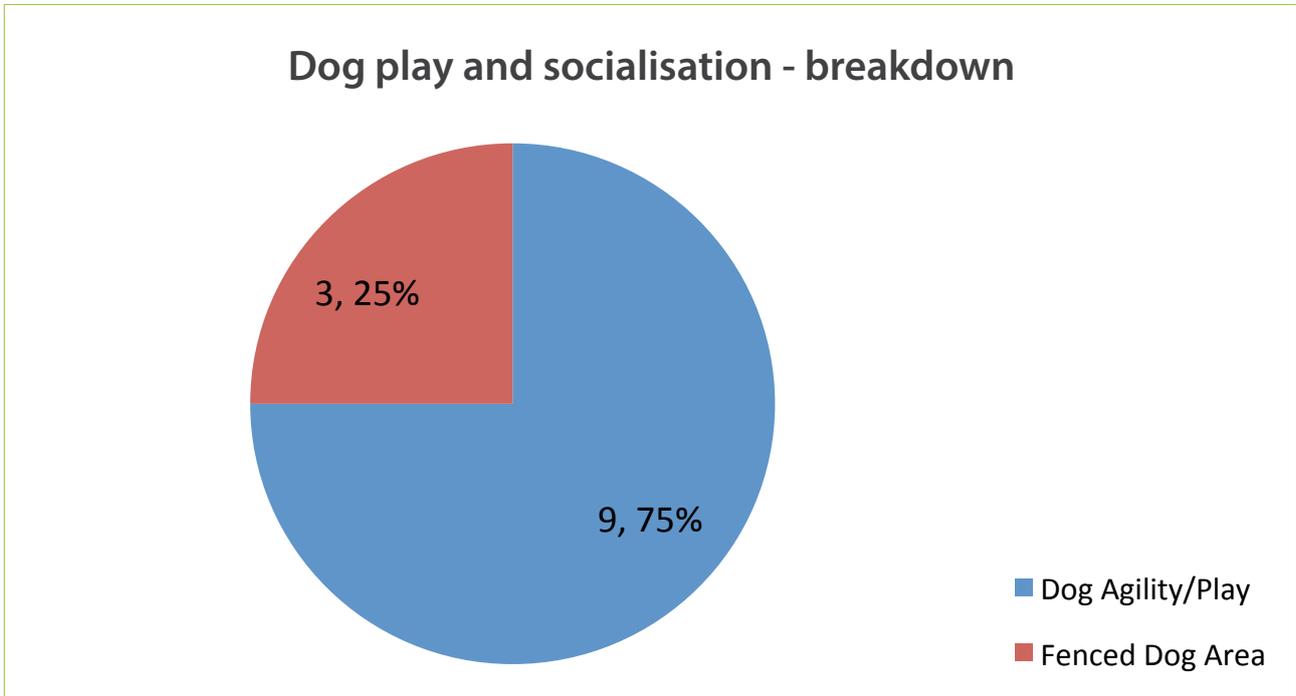


Figure 10: Dog play and socialisation breakdown

The bulk of respondents desired some dog agility/play/socialisation equipment, while a quarter of respondents desired this to also be fenced. Given that this activity was highly popular as an initial choice, and that the activity is so focused, it is likely that people responding to this activity did not feel the need to write comments regarding this activity further in the comments box provided on the questionnaire.

Water/river - breakdown

16 people responded to the breakdown regarding river/swimming/water activities. The graph below describes the results of the breakdown.

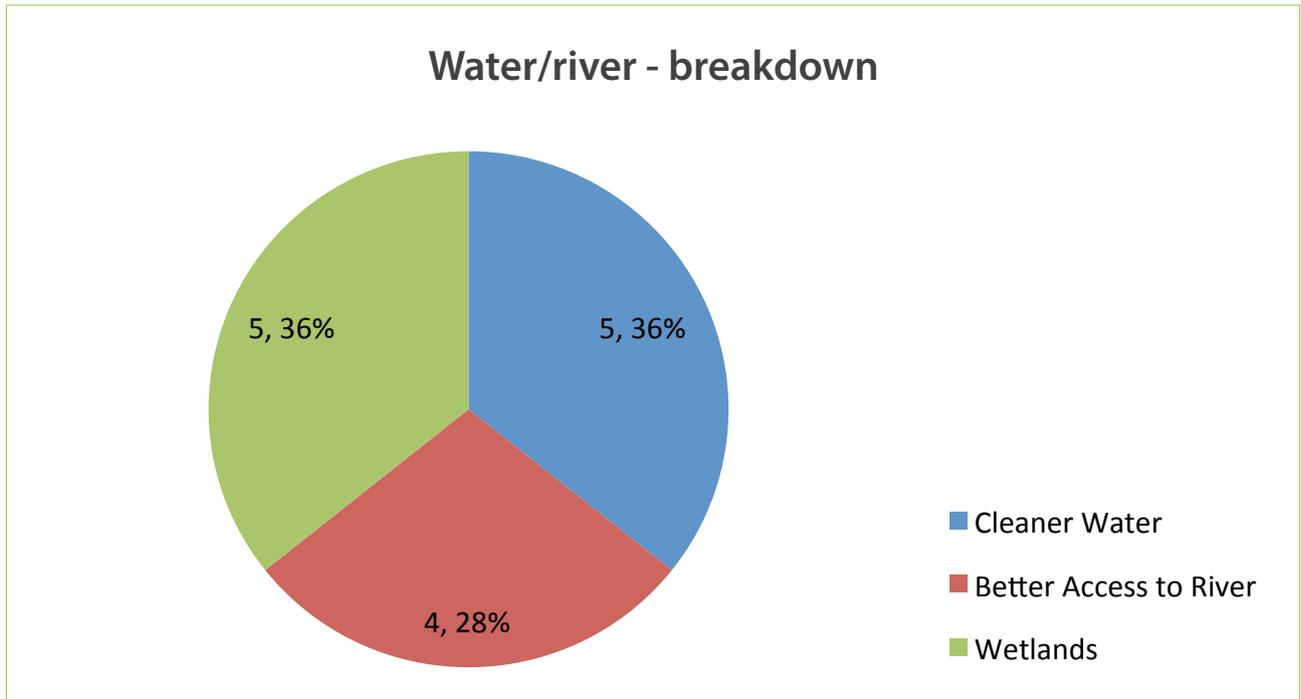


Figure 11: Water/river breakdown

People equally desired to see improvements to river access, water quality and the development of natural wetlands on the new Allied Concrete block, closest to the river.

Sports - breakdown

14 people provided elaborations in the comments box on this choice of activity. The graph below describes their comments.

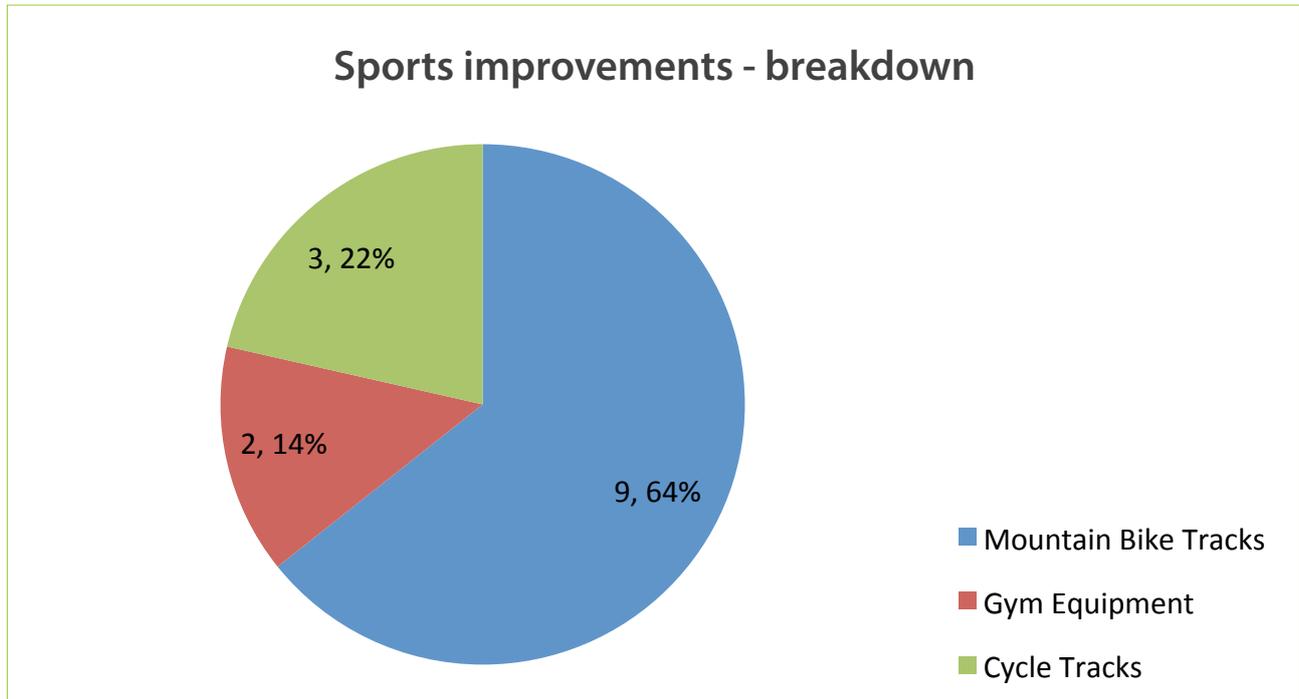


Figure 12: Sports improvements breakdown

The bulk of respondents wanted to see improvements to the mountain bike tracks and to see the tracks extended. Submissions also mentioned a dedicated skills area for young mountain-bikers closer to the entrance of the park. The mountain-biking activity also included 2 responses regarding improvements to the BMX tracks in the pine trees.

Two people requested outdoor gym equipment at this park. This request is also apparent at other parks across the city and may reflect a general trend towards people wanting to work out on equipment in parks at this point in time. It should also be noted that the Manawatū River Framework directs us to develop outdoor exercise equipment along the river (8.2 River Environments: Urban, bullet 13).

Conclusion

Key findings are as follows:

1. Waitoetoe Park should be maintained as an urban fringe wilderness area, and all design and development should take a “light touch” approach to the existing area.
2. The existing wilderness (weeds, etc) should be gradually replaced with native planting in order to (a) maintain and improve the “wilderness area” and (b) increase bio-diversity and native wildlife in the area.
3. The local community that has developed a “guardianship” role at this reserve should be empowered to continue in this through the development plan.
4. Rangitāne have a special connection to this particular area, and this needs to be maintained and uplifted through a collaborative design/planning process and physical recognition through design features.
5. Existing river access/beach plans (closer parking areas) remain in play (including upgrades of entrance, etc).
6. Low level, appropriately designed developments could be adopted as follows:
 - Natural playground.
 - Dedicated dog training/socialisation area.
 - Areas where local mountain-biking/BMX should be encouraged and supported.
 - Wetlands on the Dunne Block to be signalled for future development.
 - Community planting plans to work to re-institute bio-diversity while retaining wilderness (including but not limited to flower garden areas, bee plantings and edible trees).
 - Physical recognition of Rangitāne connection to this site (developed cooperatively with Rangitāne)

