Open Spaces Strategy

We want your thoughts on our proposed Council strategy for managing open spaces in Ashburton District for the next ten years

Key dates

- 15 April consultation period begins.
- 15 May, 5pm consultation closes.
- 25 May Hearing of submissions.
- 12 - 29 June Draft Strategy amended.
- 30 June Council adopts the Open Spaces Strategy.

Background

The Ashburton District Council owns and manages approximately 442 hectares of open space. This includes parks, reserves, sports grounds, domains, riversides, beaches and lakes.

As a council, it is our responsibility to maintain these open spaces so residents and visitors can enjoy and benefit from using them for years to come. The 2016-2026 Open Spaces Strategy details our actions over the next 10 years to ensure open space is provided in a way that meets the needs of the community, responds to changes in the environment and enhances our natural environment.

The Open Spaces Strategy replaces our Neighbourhood Open Spaces Strategy 2002 that applied only to the Ashburton township and which has subsequently been affected by a series of residential re-zonings since it was adopted 14 years ago.

While primary responsibility for implementing the Open Spaces Strategy lies with the Council, community commitment to support its efforts is important to ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of our open spaces. Some of the actions outlined in the Open Spaces Strategy will happen within a year, while others are long-term goals. The way in which we manage our open spaces; from responding to changes in the district’s demographics, to developing new facilities and working with partnerships and enhancing existing areas, impacts us and future generations. If you are a resident (a homeowner or renting a property) or a business owner, these proposals for our open spaces are important for you to know about and comment on.

This is your opportunity to let us know if you do or do not agree with recommendations for managing our open spaces over the coming decade. We also want to find out if you have other ideas about how we manage and develop our open spaces that can potentially be integrated into the Strategy.

Council is committed to delivering an efficient and effective open spaces management strategy for the Ashburton district and this document will be the blueprint for it to achieve this goal in a cost-effective manner.

A copy of the Draft Open Spaces Strategy is available at ashburtondc.govt.nz
What is open space and why is it important?

Open spaces are areas of land or natural water that offer unrestricted access to the public for the purpose of amenity, recreation or enjoyment for people in the district. This excludes buildings, swimming pools, and public conveniences that may be located in open space areas. These open spaces contribute to our quality of life because they:

- provide opportunities for sport, recreation, and experiencing nature;
- add to the amenity, character and identity of our neighbourhood;
- provide areas to meet, play and socialize with other members of the community;
- protect our history and provide areas to celebrate our heritage and culture;
- maintain and improve ecosystems;
- provide economic benefits by encouraging people to live in and visit our communities;
- providing for our mental and spiritual wellbeing.

Important Values

To achieve this vision, the Council has taken into account Tangata Whenua values, particularly kaitiakitanga – guardianship and conservation of the environment. In developing the Open Spaces Strategy, the Council also integrated biodiversity principles, factored in the impact of climate change as well as demographic changes to the community and urban growth.

Council’s vision for Open Spaces

Our vision is that the open spaces of the Ashburton District contribute towards the beauty and enjoyment of the area for residents and visitors alike.

Guiding principles

The following four principles will guide the management and provision of open spaces in the district.

- **Equitable** distribution and funding
- **Efficient** management and provision throughout the district
- **Effective** meeting of community needs
- **Enhancement** of the district and environment through the provision of an attractive community environment and improved recreational opportunities

Objectives

A series of actions will enable the council to achieve the objectives in the Open Spaces Strategy. They are prioritised under the following headings:

- **High** – implemented within 1 year
- **Medium** – implemented within 2-5 years
- **Long Term** – implemented within 10 years
- **Ongoing** – normal part of the Council’s work programme
Proposed key actions in the Open Spaces Strategy include:

1. Review current information regarding the location, nature and other use of current open space provided by the Council and other agencies.
2. Map residential areas greater than 400m from open space areas.
3. Review of all playground and sport surfaces across the district to determine both the standard of surfaces, its adequacy and potential efficiencies in their maintenance and provision.
4. Consult with the Ministry of Education and school representatives to discuss potential cycleway and walkway linkages.
5. Promote and encourage the use and availability of open spaces in areas of the district for specific events.
6. Develop a plan that provides for the enhancement of connections with waterways and conservation land.

In addition to the ongoing management of open spaces, a number of special projects also merit consideration because of their potential to benefit the community by significantly enhancing the district’s open space experiences. This does not mean that they will necessarily be led by Council, but it is recognised that the district’s open spaces could play an important role in their development.

These include: cycleways, waterways, the Tinwald Domain, Mill Creek, Ashburton Recreational Park, Ashburton Second Urban River Bridge, Chinese Settlement, EA Networks Sports Centre, Ashburton Domain and Gardens and Lake Hood.
Your contribution does make a difference

The Council’s vision to provide open spaces that contribute to the beauty and enjoyment of the area for residents and visitors alike will have an incredibly positive impact on our way of life for years to come.

Most people already make use of and enjoy the wonderful variety of places and spaces that the Council administers. To improve and enhance what we already have and make it relevant for our ever-changing community we need your input and feedback. Now is the time to tell us whether what we plan to do for and with our open spaces in the next decade are the right things. We want to make sure no one misses their chance to have a say in making Ashburton a great place to play and live.

Community groups – your contribution is also important to us to ensure we are doing the right thing for the community. Your input on our goals and objectives means we can be assured we support what you are doing in keeping our citizens active, engaged and connected to the open spaces in the Ashburton District.

What will the proposed new initiatives cost?

The cost of the actions proposed in the draft Open Spaces Strategy can be achieved within the amounts budgeted for in the Council’s Long Term Plan that outlines the proposed rates needed to fund the various projects. More details can be found in the draft Open Spaces Strategy at ashburton.govt.nz