

An aerial photograph of Hugh Sinclair Park in Wainuiomata, Wellington. The image shows a large grassy area with several playgrounds, a basketball court, and a tennis court. A residential area with many houses is visible in the upper right. A road with cars is at the bottom. A white masterplan overlay is drawn on the park, showing paths and boundaries. The text 'Hugh Sinclair Park Masterplan' is in the top left, 'Final - 24.06.25' is below it, and 'WAINUIOMATA, WELLINGTON.' is in the bottom left.

Hugh Sinclair Park Masterplan

Final - 24.06.25

WAINUIOMATA, WELLINGTON.

Prepared by Blac Ltd for Hutt City Council



Introduction_

This document outlines a transformative masterplan for Hugh Sinclair Park (and a connected portion of Frederick Wise Park) in Wainuiomata. This project is part of the broader Wainuiomata Town Centre Upgrade, and it aims to enhance the park’s functionality, accessibility, and integration with the surrounding community. The masterplan responds to key priorities, including:

- Enhancing recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.
- Addressing poorly functioning site drainage.
- Strengthening ecological and cultural values, ensuring a sustainable and meaningful landscape.
- Creating a safe, vibrant, inclusive public space that fosters community connection and engagement.

By reimagining Hugh Sinclair Park, this project supports Wainuiomata’s long-term vision, ensuring the park remains a cherished and valuable asset for both residents and visitors for generations to come.

The following opportunities and constraints have been identified prior to engagement and have informed the proposal:

Issues:

1. **Poor Layout and Connectivity:** Limits accessibility and user experience.
2. **Drainage and Contour Problems:** Requires upgrades to improve useability and prevent waterlogging.
3. **Aging Play Equipment:** Needs replacement or significant upgrades to meet safety and engagement standards.
4. **Furniture and Signage:** Inconsistent and ageing.
5. **Outdated Skate Park:** Lacks modern features, and has potential safety concerns and low user engagement.
6. **Stormwater Management Challenges:** Need for improved solutions such as wetlands and swales.
7. **Ecology:** The park is largely grassed with exotic trees. Native ecology can improve the environment and experience.
8. **BMX track:** The space is isolated without proper connectivity for successful use. Poor upkeep.
9. **Bridge:** Narrow with ageing ballustrades. No formalised drop off/connection to Frederick Wise Park.
10. **Drains:** Lack maintenance with weeds, rubbish and sediment issues.
11. **Residential Edges:** Provides passive surveillance but the interfaces and connections to the park could be improved.
12. **Motorbikes:** The park lacks measures to control access from people on motorcycles - resulting in unsocial behaviour.

Opportunities:

- **Integration with the Wainuiomata Cycleway:** Enhancing connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians.
- **New and Upgraded Play Areas:** Creating engaging, accessible, and inclusive play spaces.
- **Outdoor Fitness Equipment:** Promoting health and well-being through accessible fitness stations.
- **Improved Accessways:** Enhancing circulation and ease of movement within the park.
- **Furnishings and Shelter Upgrades:** Providing better comfort and useability for visitors.
- **BMX Area:** Revitalising the former BMX track into a modern attraction with additional features.
- **Improved BBQ or new Hangi Facility:** Encouraging social and community gatherings.
- **Diversify Play:** Provide spaces for activities such as chess, table tennis, outdoor lawn games and traditional Māori games.
- **Cultural Enhancements:** Integrating local identity and heritage to the park’s design.
- **Parking:** Plan for increased parking for all abilities to support use of the park during peak periods.



Cultural Foundation_

In collaboration with Kāhui mana whenua and Joshua Ambler (Kaupapa Maori Design Officer for the Hutt City Council), the following information has been prepared as a cultural foundation to inform the Hugh Sinclair Park masterplan and redevelopment. The guiding principles embed tikanga Māori and reflect the values and aspirations of mana whenua in the design and future use of the park. These principles, narratives, and stories will inspire and underpin the next stages of detailed design. They have and will guide decisions around material selection, spatial layout, planting, interpretation, and public art—ensuring that the park reflects and respects the cultural identity of this whenua.

Mana Whenua of Wainuiomata

Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, including the iwi of Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāti Mutunga, and Ngā Ruahine, are mana whenua for Wainuiomata. Their ancestral connections to the land, water, and skies are deeply embedded in the identity and history of this rohe.

Hugh Sinclair Park lies within a wider cultural landscape known to mana whenua as Te Whata Kai o Māui – the elevated storehouse of Māui – a name that acknowledges the abundance of resources and cultural richness in the Wainuiomata valley.

Cultural Narrative: Te Whata Kai o Māui

The land we now know as Wainuiomata is understood through the narrative of Te Whata Kai o Māui, which recalls the abundant resources gifted to the area through atua and ancestral actions. This story is rooted in the atua-driven shaping of the landscape and the sacred fires of occupation lit by Te Kāhui Mounga. The land was once rich, dense with sound, and spiritually alive—an untouched storehouse of sustenance, knowledge, and identity.

This understanding connects the whenua (land) with the atua (spiritual beings), and reflects the obligation of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) carried by mana whenua.

Key Tupua: Ngake and Whātaimai

The guardians of the harbour, Ngake and Whātaimai, are tupua whose spiritual and physical journeys helped shape the wider Wellington landscape. These ancient beings gave rise to rivers, landforms, and connections to the sea.

Their legacy lives on in the natural geography and informs cultural design through concepts such as movement and transformation (currents, land uplift, waterways), spiritual presence in landscape (wairua), and dual pathways—physical and metaphysical.



Mana Whenua Design Principles

Makaurangi

Design should reflect the cultural memory of the land—embedding local narratives, place names, and ancestral presence in spatial form.

Spaces should evoke a sense of peace and spiritual resonance, connecting people to the land and its deeper meanings.

Design must recognise the intergenerational links between people, place, and environment—tracing connections across time.

Kaitiakitanga

The environment is to be protected and enhanced. Planting, water systems, and access should support ecological health and reflect our role as caretakers.

The life force of the place—its water, trees, animals, and people—should be nurtured through design that supports vitality and balance.

Connect the park’s land and water to the wider cultural and ecological landscape—through pathways, views, and planting.

Manaakitanga

Public space must be welcoming, equitable, and inclusive for all ages and abilities—spaces of generosity, support, and community connection.

Community Aspirations_

On 26 March 2025, officers from the Hutt City Council met with the Wainuiomata Community Group to discuss the issues and aspirations for Hugh Sinclair Park and how the masterplan could address those. A Facebook post was also made on the same date, reaching out for ideas for the redevelopment of the park. Below is a summary of the feedback recieved.

Key Feedback

Key User Groups Identified:

- Residents of new housing and retirement villages
- Town centre visitors and workers
- Local schools and students (commuting through or engaged in the park)
- Families attending community events
- General community members and those needing accessibility features

Challenges Identified:

Accessibility and Mobility:

- Difficulty accessing park/playground from the carpark
- Inadequate walkways for elderly and mobility-impaired users

Facilities and Infrastructure:

- Poor condition of existing playground and skatepark/BMX track
- Drainage issues causing standing water on pathways
- Lack of shaded/covered seating areas and gazebos
- Under-utilised BBQ area due to poor park aesthetics
- Insufficient and poorly located bike racks
- Inadequate parking provision

Safety and Security:

- Concerns about motorcycles on paths and BMX track
- Need to review bollards and fencing for security
- Lighting issues

Suggestions and Requests:

New Features Desired:

- Splashpad (noted as a popular online request)
- Accessibility swing
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Open space for gazebos
- More seating and covered areas

Planting and Environment:

- Preference for native species (e.g. Totara) rather than exotic species - in order to attract birdlife. Totara planting was specifically mentioned.
- Less focus on drainage-only upgrades

Cultural Integration:

- Incorporate Pou structures, iwi stories, legends, and local history
- Kai time cooking (hāngī/indigenous food preparation) as a cultural feature








Masterplan: Structure_







The following outlines the key structure and proposed initiatives to address challenges and maximise opportunities within the park. These interventions are grouped into four focus areas: Environmental, Circulation and Safety, Recreation, and Amenities.

Key/Focus Areas





Environmental:

-  Retain trees and plant new trees.
-  Buffer/bank stability/amenity planting. Remove weeds.
-  Drainage/lowland/streamside planting.
-  Waterpath and drainage points.
-  Adjusted or new mounding.





Circulation and Safety:

-  Path connections.
-  Potential connections.
-  Road realignment to facilitate stormwater path and improve access to retention basin and BMX area.
-  Bridge amendments/upgrade.
-  Boardwalks over drainage/lowland planting.
-  Tree and pole lighting. CCTV where appropriate on poles.

Recreation:

-  Destination play space with exercise features. Connect and upgrade playground including surfaces.
-  Upgrade/expansion to skate park.
-  Mixed-use games area (traditional Māori games, pétanque, table tennis, chess etc.)
-  BMX site improvements to be considered in future work.

Amenities:

-  Upgraded/new shelters and furnishings.
-  Future parking areas for increased capacity.
-  Streamside timber platforms.
-  Culturally inspired art/sculpture.



The Masterplan_

The following outlines the vision for the redevelopment of Hugh Sinclair Park. The key interventions that form the masterplan are grouped into four strategic focus areas, which are explained in more detail on the following pages.

Key/Focus Areas

Environmental:

- 1 Retain trees and plant new trees.
- 2 Low to medium buffer/bank stability/amenity planting. Remove weeds.
- 3 Drainage/lowland/streamside planting.
- 4 Regrading swales/defining waterpath and drainage points.
- 5 Turf repair, aeration/drainage improvement and overseeding.
- 6 Adjusted or new mounding.

Circulation and Safety:

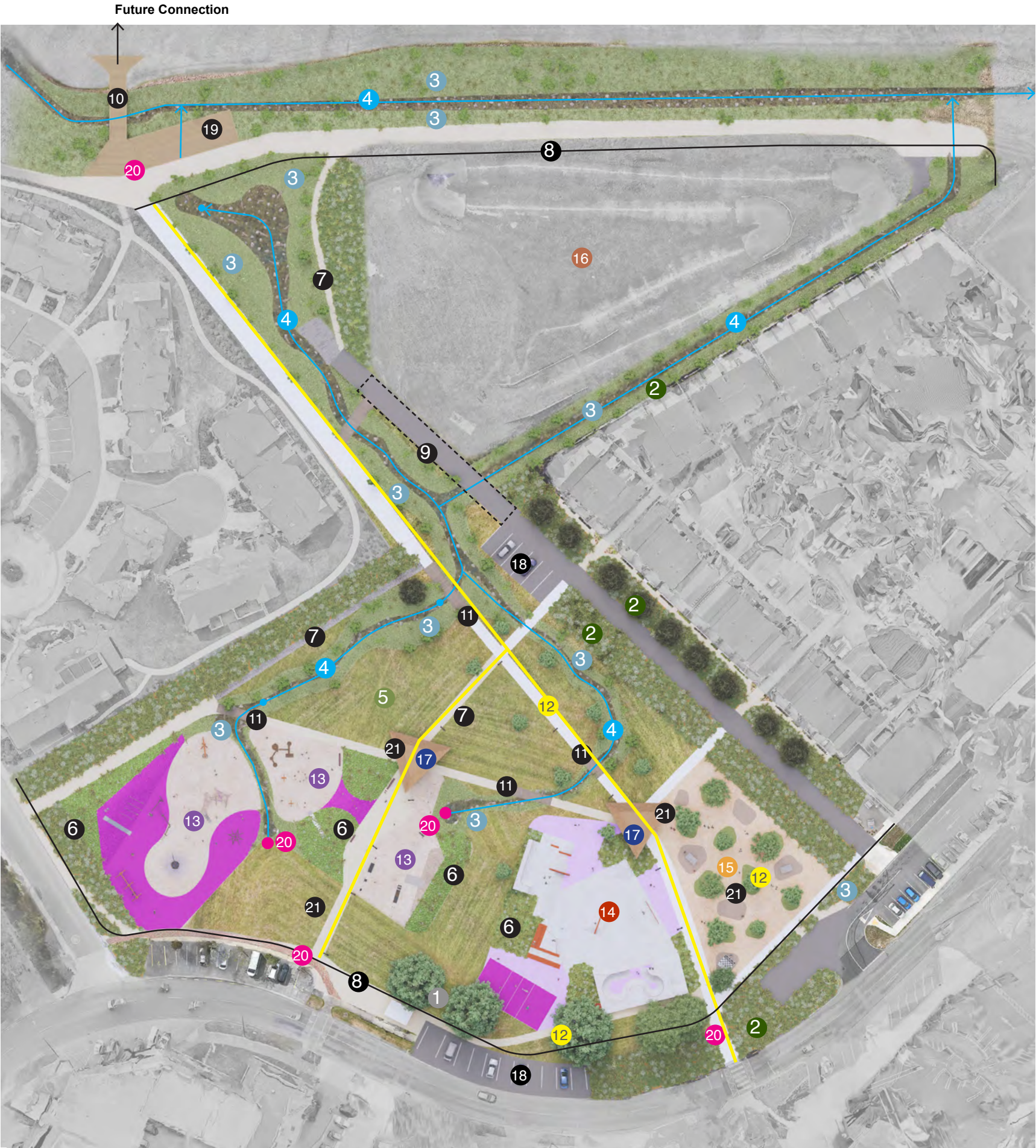
- 7 Formal and informal path connections.
- 8 Low barriers (timber post and rail, wide planted areas or low walls).
- 9 Road realignment to facilitate daylighted water path and improve access.
- 10 Bridge amendments/upgrade.
- 11 Boardwalks over drainage/lowland planting.
- 12 Tree and pole lighting. CCTV where appropriate on poles.

Recreation:

- 13 Destination play space with exercise features.
- 14 Upgrade/expansion to skate park and volley ball/ multi-use court.
- 15 Mixed-use games area (traditional Māori games, pétanque, table tennis, chess etc.)
- 16 BMX site to be considered in future work.

Amenities:

- 17 Shelters and furnishings.
- 18 Future parking areas.
- 19 North-facing streamside timber platforms.
- 20 Culturally inspired art/sculpture.
- 21 New furnishings (seating, tables, bike stands, BBQs, water fountain etc.)



Masterplan: The Vision_

The masterplan for Hugh Sinclair Park envisions a vibrant, connected, and environmentally resilient space that enhances recreation and community life. Ecological restoration will include tree retention and planting, buffer planting for bank stability and to improve residential interfaces, improved drainage, and lowland planting to support biodiversity and water management.

Improved circulation and safety will feature new pathways, bridge upgrades, boardwalks, and enhanced lighting, ensuring accessibility and security. A revitalised recreation area will include a destination play space, an expanded skate park and a mixed-use games area for diverse activities.

New amenities such as shelters, seating, streamside platforms, and culturally inspired sculptures will create inviting gathering spaces. This transformation will ensure Hugh Sinclair Park remains a thriving, inclusive, and valued community asset for generations to come.



Masterplan: Focus Areas_

Amenities:

New shelters and furnishings will enhance comfort and useability, with future parking areas planned for better access. Streamside timber platforms will provide scenic gathering spaces, while culturally inspired art and sculptures will celebrate the site’s identity and heritage.

Recreation:

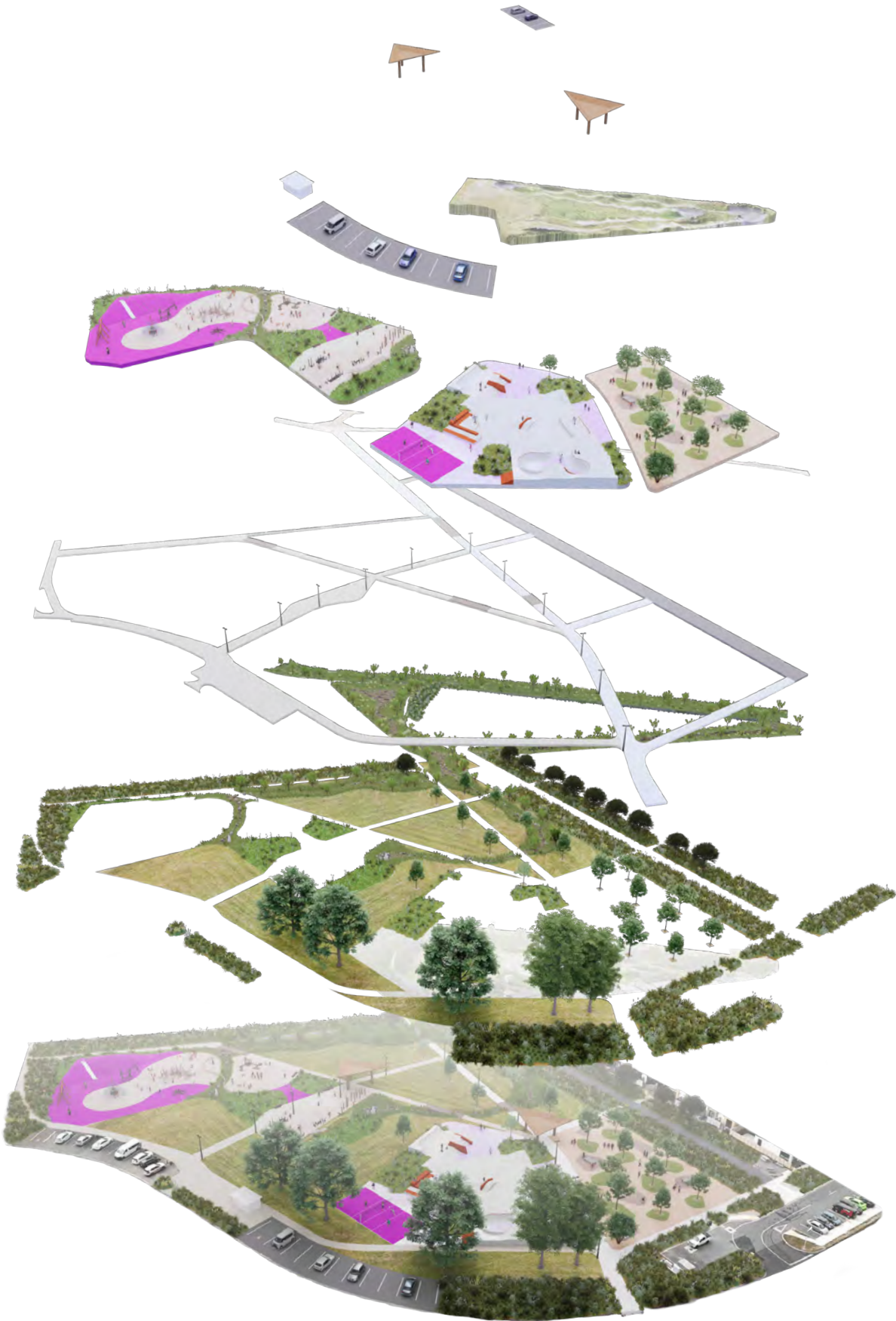
A destination play space will be developed, connecting to an upgraded playground with improved surfaces. The skate park will be expanded, and a mixed-use games area will be introduced, incorporating traditional Māori games, pétanque, table tennis, and chess. The BMX area and its future will be subject to further investigation.

Circulation and Safety:

Improving connectivity and safety is a key focus, with altered, new, and upgraded path connections, an informal stream crossing, and bridge enhancements. Road changes will improve access, while boardwalks will allow movement over drainage areas. Tree and pole lighting will enhance visibility, with CCTV installed where appropriate to improve security.

Environmental:

The masterplan prioritises ecological enhancement by retaining and planting new trees, improving bank stability and residential edge conditions with buffer planting, and removing invasive weeds. Reuse of land for drainage and lowland planting will support water management and ecology, while water paths and drainage points will be introduced for better flow. The landscape will be shaped with terracing, retaining walls, and adjusted mounding to enhance both function and aesthetics.

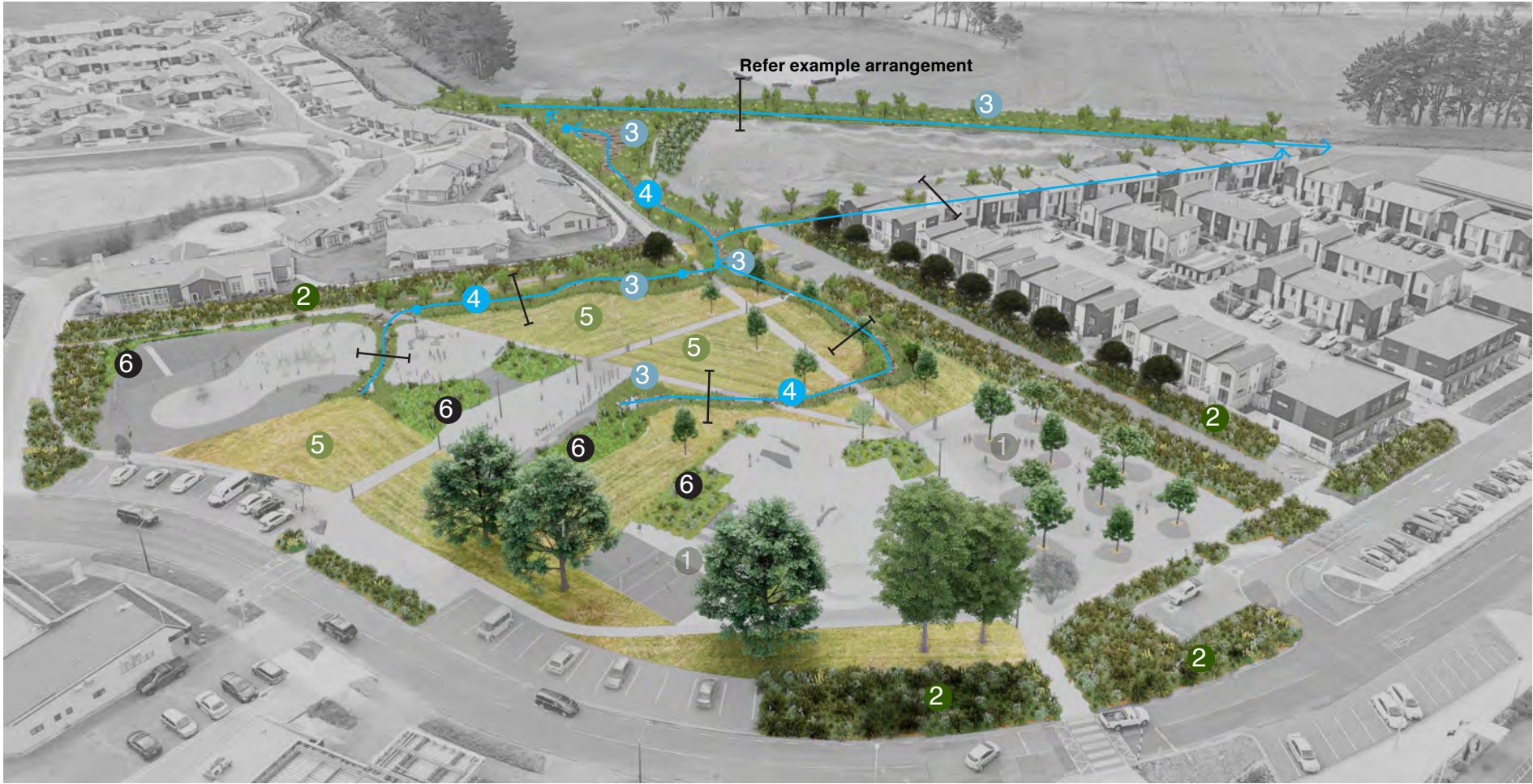


Focus Area_Environmental

The masterplan prioritises ecological enhancement by retaining existing trees and planting new trees, improving bank stability and residential edge conditions with buffer planting, and removing invasive weeds. Reuse of land for drainage and lowland planting will support water management and ecology, while water paths and drainage points will be introduced for better flow. The landscape will be shaped and adjusted with mounding to enhance both function and aesthetics.

Key:

- 1 Retain trees and plant new native trees.
- 2 Buffer/bank stability/amenity planting. Remove weeds.
- 3 Drainage/lowland/streamside planting.
- 4 Waterpath and drainage points.
- 5 Turf repair, aeration/drainage improvement and overseed.
- 6 Adjusted or new mounding.



1 Retain trees and plant new native ones



2 Buffer/bank stability/amenity planting. Refer to pages 12-13 for amenity planting.

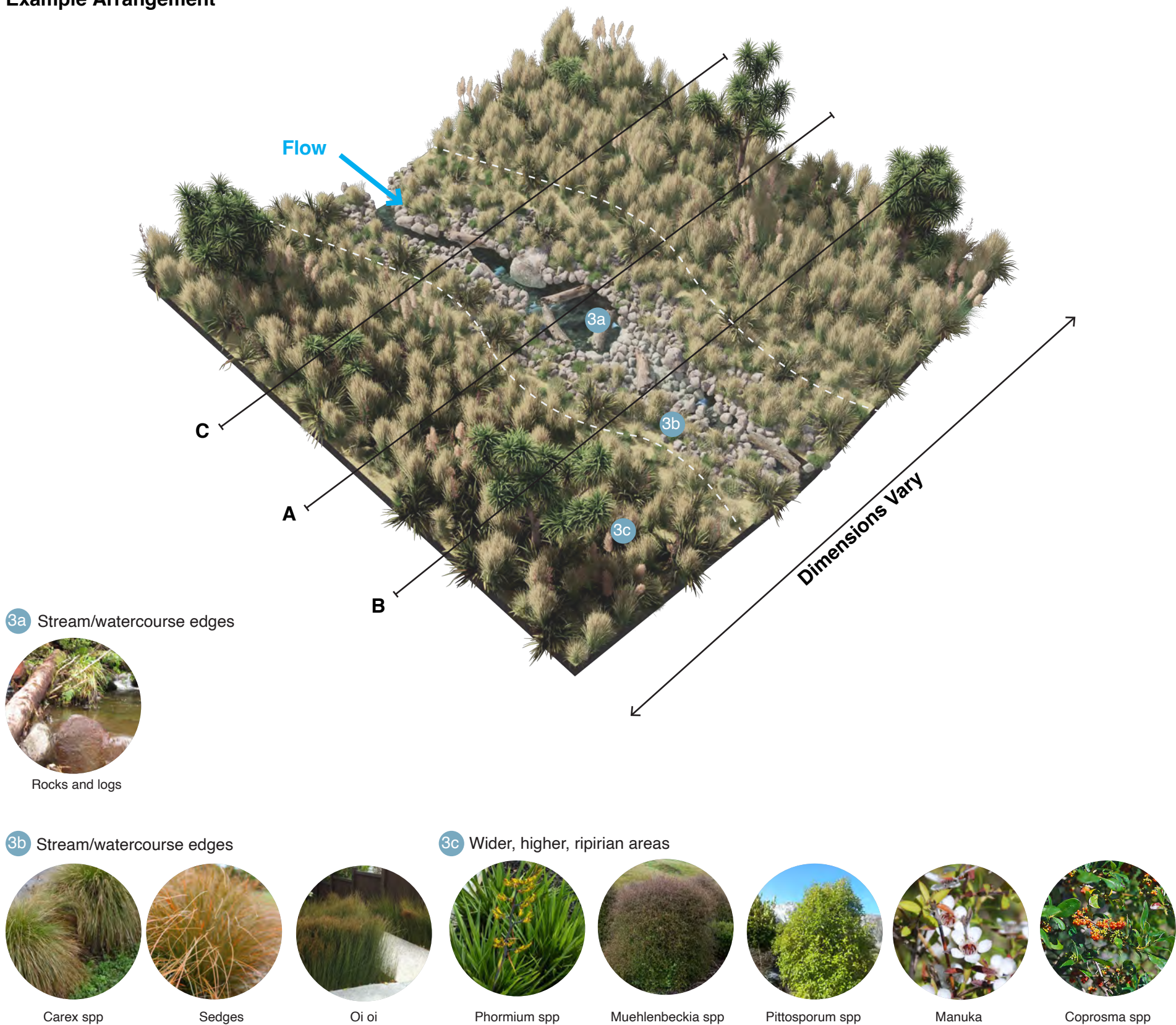
6 Planted mounds



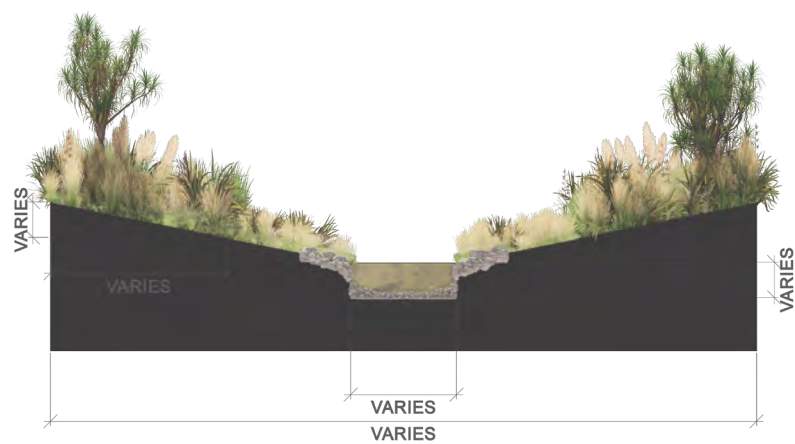
5 Turf repair, aeration/drainage improvement and overseed.



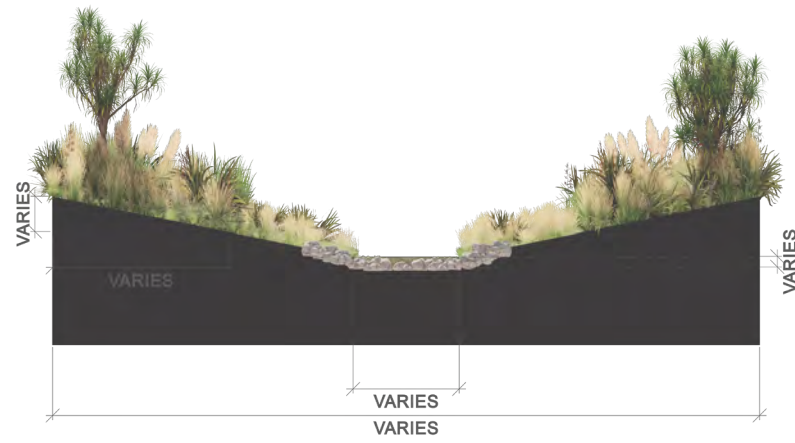
Example Arrangement



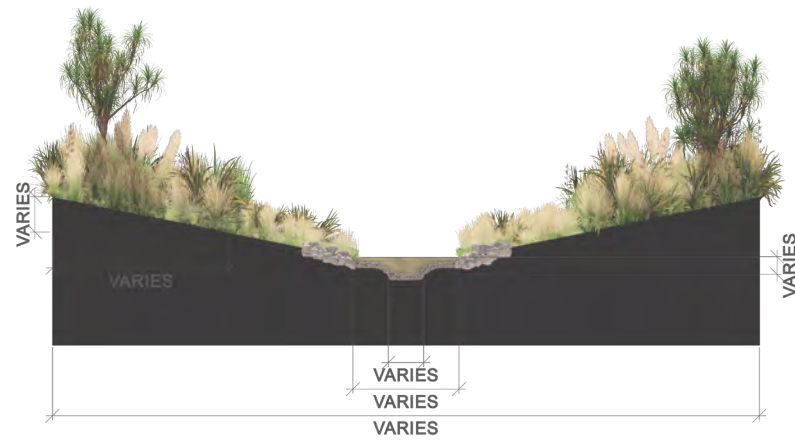
Typical Cross Section A: Pool



Typical Cross Section B: Riffle or Dry Channels



Typical Cross Section C: Run



2 Examples of amenity planting.



2 Buffer/bank stability/amenity planting.



Ribbonwood



Tawhiwhi



Rewarewa



Button fern



Red Beech



Wandering iris



Puriri



Akeake



Koromiko



Sand coprosma



Puawhananga



Totara



NZ iris



Rengarenga



Hen and chickens fern



New Zealand lilac



Creeping fuchsia



Horoeaka



Small-leaved hebe



Panakenake



Libertia grandiflora



Lobelia angulata



Cabbage Tree



Mountain Flax



Phormium 'Emerald Gem'



Coprosma Taiko



Phormium 'Surfer Green'



Turuturu



Mingimingi



Parahebe 'Snow Cap'



Oioi



Coprosma 'Dark Cloud'

Focus Area_Circulation and Safety

Improving connectivity and safety is a key focus, with altered, new, and upgraded path connections and bridge enhancements. A realignment to the road will allow for a daylight swale connection and improve access into this area of the site, while boardwalks will allow movement over drainage areas. Tree and pole lighting will enhance visibility, with CCTV installed where appropriate to improve security.

Key

- 7 New path or shared connections.
- 8 Low barriers (timber post and rail, wide planted areas or low walls)
- 9 Road realignment.
- 10 Bridge amendments/upgrade.
- 11 Boardwalks over drainage/lowland planting.
- 12 Path down lighting and tree uplighting. CCTV.

7 Brushed concrete with cultural patterning and inground signage



8 Low barriers (timber post and rail, wide planted areas or low walls)

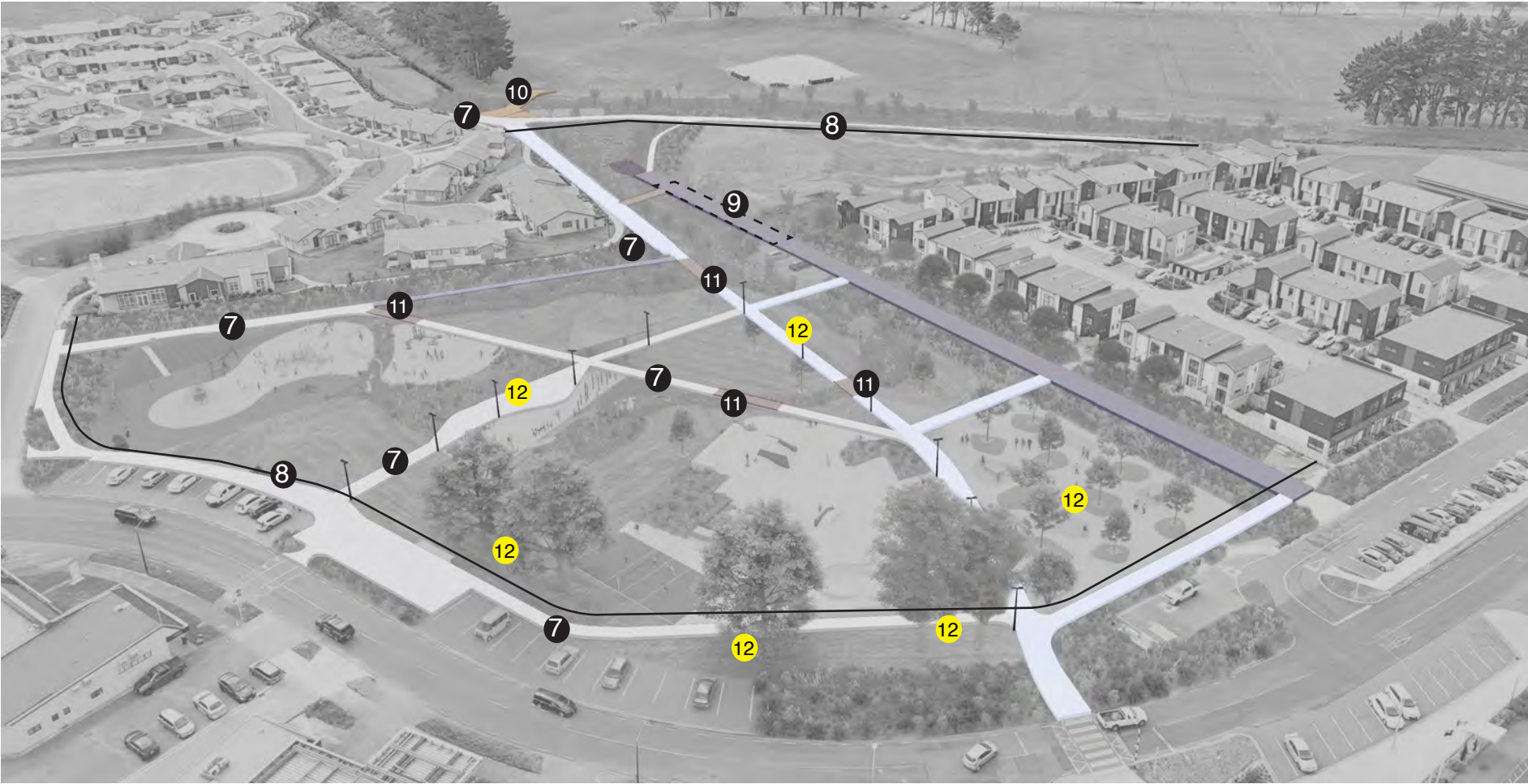
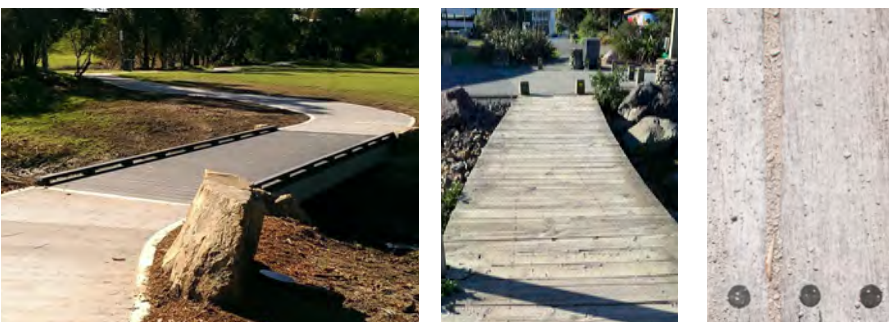


9 Road realignment



— Current alignment ← Connected stormwater

11 Timber crossings



10 Bridge amendments/upgrade



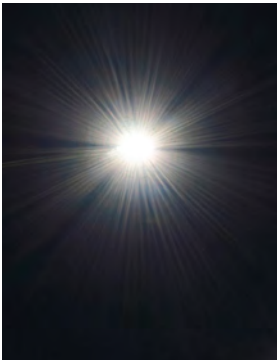
Credit: Boffa Miskell



12 Path down lighting and tree uplighting.



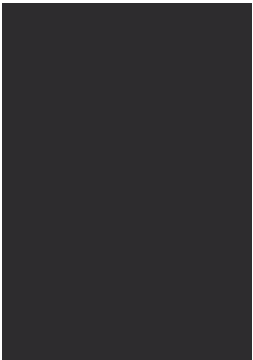
3000k Lighting colour



LED



Pole colour - Matte Black



Tree uplight



Focus Area_Recreation

A destination play space will be developed, connecting to an upgraded playground with improved surfaces. The skate park will be expanded, and a mixed-use games area will be introduced, incorporating traditional Māori games, pétanque, table tennis, and chess. The BMX area and its future will be subject to further investigation.

Key

- 13 Destination play space with exercise features.
- 14 Upgrade/expansion to skate park and volley ball/ multi-use court.
- 15 Mixed-use games area (traditional Māori games, pétanque, table tennis, chess etc.)
- 16 BMX site to be considered in future work.

Surfaces

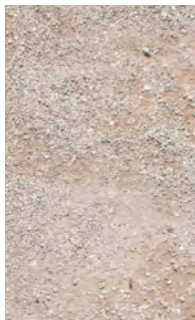
Resurfaced concrete



Coloured concrete



Engineered hoggin



Softfall - rubber pour surface and padded faux lawn



Safety bark surface



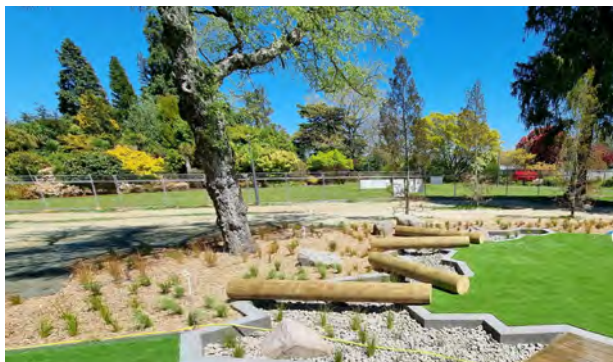
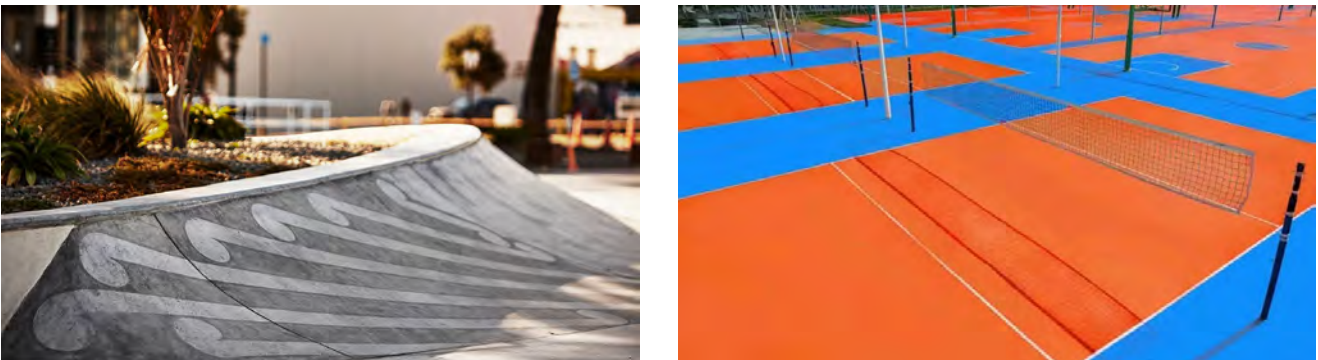
15 Mixed-use games areas



13 Natural play and exercise equipment with a focus on using timber, rocks, galvanised steel and rope-based features with cultural elements.



14 Upgrade/expansion to skate park with cultural elements and proposed volleyball/ multi-use court.



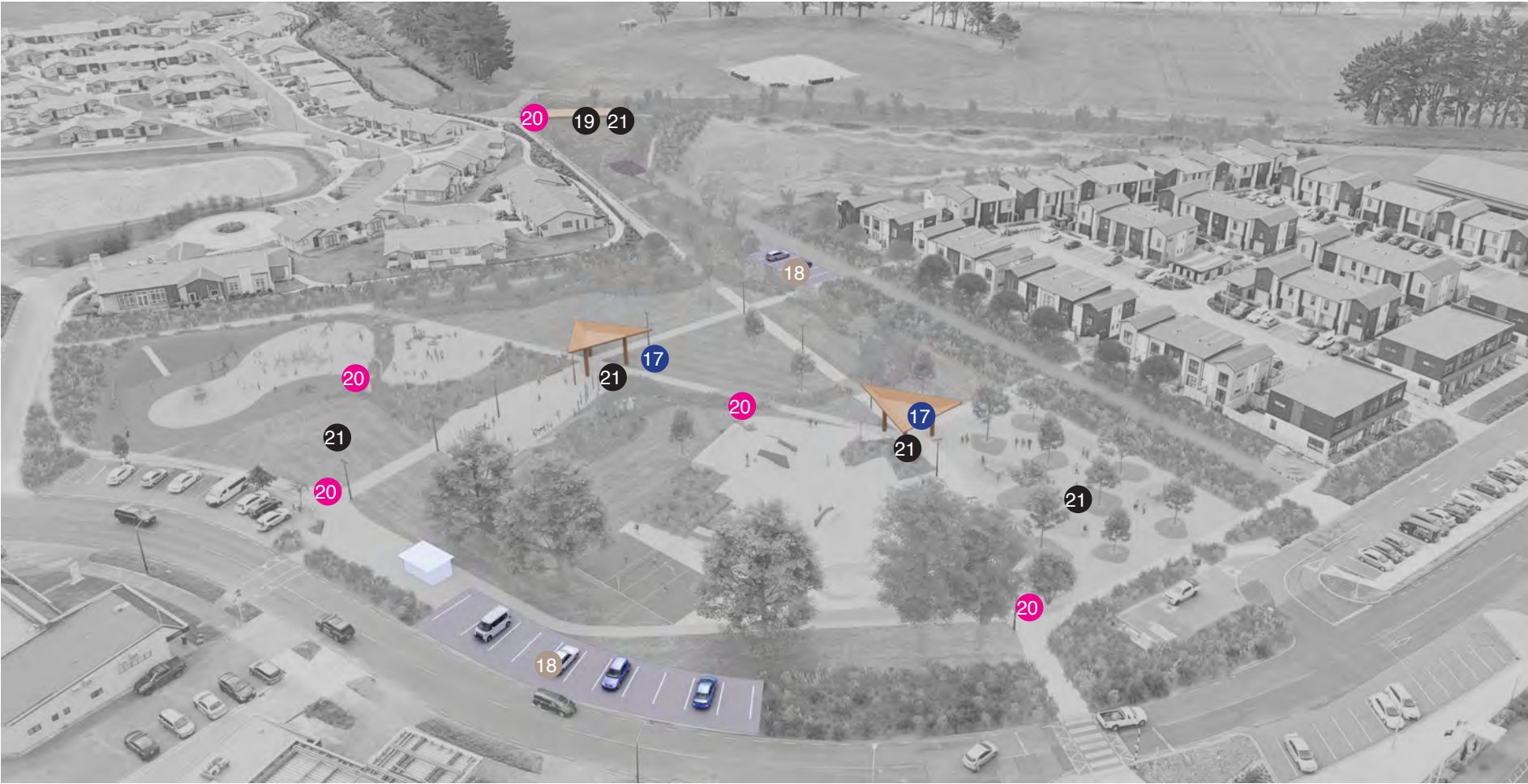
Focus Area_Amenities

New shelters and furnishings will enhance comfort and useability, with future parking areas planned for better access. Streamside timber platforms will provide scenic gathering spaces, while culturally inspired Māori art and sculptures will celebrate the site’s identity and heritage.

Key

- 17 Shelters
- 18 Parking areas.
- 19 Streamside timber platforms.
- 20 Gateway culturally inspired art/sculpture.
- 21 New furnishings (seating, tables, bike stands, BBQs, water fountain etc.)

17 Shelter Examples



19 Streamside platform to crossing

20 Gateway culturally inspired art/sculpture examples



21 New furnishings (seating, tables, bike stands, BBQs, water fountain etc.)



Reclaimed materials available for repurpose



Furniture examples





Appendix 1: Draft Masterplan Consultation

„Help Shape the Future of Hugh Sinclair Park“

Hugh Sinclair Park Draft Masterplan was issued for feedback via the Council’s website during May–June 2025 under the banner of “Help Shape the Future of Hugh Sinclair Park”. Below summarises the key information received. The full summary reports can be obtained from Council.

Engagement Snapshot

- 95 survey respondents
- 92% live in Lower Hutt
- 88 respondents live in Wainuiomata
- Mix of regular users, parents with tamariki, and retirees
- Majority between 25-44 years
- Predominantly NZ European, followed by Māori, Samoan, and Cook Islands Māori

How the Park is Used

- Most people use the park weekly or occasionally
- Very few never visit, suggesting high community connection

Sentiment on the Draft Plan

- Most gave a score of 3 or 4 (out of 5)
- 18% gave the highest rating (5)
- A small group rated it low, mostly due to cost or insufficient features

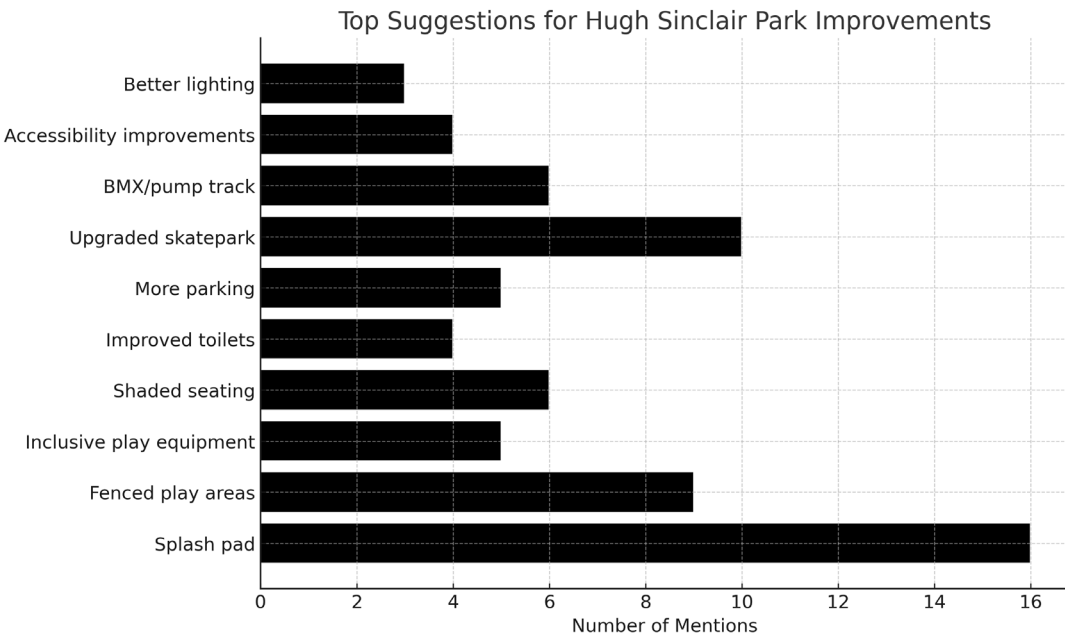
What People Liked

- Upgraded playgrounds for a range of ages
- Skatepark renewal and support for BMX and pump tracks
- BBQ stations and picnic spots
- Improved drainage, paths and lighting
- Inclusion of natural play and local identity

Suggestions for Improvement

- Add a splash pad or water play area
- Fencing around play zones for child safety
- Improve accessibility (e.g. for prams and mobility needs)
- Include shaded seating and drinking fountains
- Upgrade or ensure public toilets

- Add inclusive play equipment (e.g. wheelchair swing)
- Provide more parking, especially near BMX/skatepark



Sample Comments

- "A splash pad would be amazing. It'd mean we don't have to travel to Porirua."
- "Make sure there is fencing. It's stressful with multiple kids and no boundaries."
- "Great to see a skatepark upgrade. Just make sure the right builders are used."
- "Please think about safety at night. More lighting will help."
- "There should be more to do for under-5s."

Summary

The community supports the upgrade and sees it as a long-overdue improvement. Most want more investment in inclusive, active, and family-friendly infrastructure. Requests were practical and centred around safety, shade, water play, and a desire to create a fun and welcoming hub for all ages.

BLAC.

Ngamotu/
Taranaki

Wellington/
Te Whanganui-a-Tara

BLAC - Brad Landscape Architecture Collective is a landscape architecture studio that collaborates with registered architects, engineers, planners, ecologists, and design professionals.

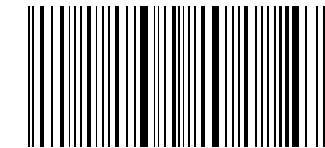


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