



Recreational use of A F Thomas Park

Consultation Document

20 October 2025 – 23 November 2025

What this consultation is about

A F Thomas Park is about to enter a new chapter, one shaped by the unique Wairau environment and its communities. After years of repeated and increasingly severe and devastating floods, the park will serve a vital new purpose by helping protect homes and essential services from future flood risk. Just as importantly, it holds extraordinary potential as a shared space where everyone in the community can play, connect, and thrive for generations to come. This consultation is your invitation to help design a legacy park that will reflect the unique values, culture and aspirations of the communities in Wairau.

The Auckland Anniversary floods in 2023 caused widespread damage across Tāmaki Makaurau and Wairau was one of the hardest-hit areas, where lives were tragically lost and many people are still living with the impacts.

Auckland Council has spent a significant amount of time looking at different ways to reduce flood risk to protect this community. After detailed flood modelling and careful consideration of a wide range of options, the Council has approved plans to transform part of A F Thomas Park into a wetland and dry flood storage area. This major upgrade, jointly funded by Auckland Council and central government will allow the park to capture and hold stormwater during heavy rain events to reduce flood risk for more than 150 homes, three aged care homes, and maintain access to key infrastructure like North Shore Hospital, supermarkets and local schools.

A once in a generation opportunity to shape how we live and play on the North Shore.

Because of these important stormwater works; there will be changes to how the park can be used for recreation. The land around the new wetland will still be available for activities like walking, cycling, and sporting activities when it's dry, and there will be new open spaces and planted areas for enjoying nature as well within the wetland.

The Wairau community has a rare and exciting opportunity to help shape the future of A F Thomas Park, in its new chapter as both a vital flood storage wetland and multi-use park supporting recreation, connection and community wellbeing. This is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a resilient, welcoming and multi-faceted open space that will serve the community for lifetimes to come.

Golf has a long history on this site, and many golf users would like to see golf activities remain at the park. Golf will be considered as part of this consultation and community views will help guide future decisions on what future golfing provisions in the park might look like.

The Kaipātiki Local Board wants to hear from Aucklanders and the local community about what kinds of recreation and open space options should be included to ensure the park continues to meet the community's needs now and into the future.

Why change now?

The impact of floods, climate change and urban growth.

Recent storms and the 2023 Anniversary Floods tragically highlighted the need for better flood protection in the Wairau catchment. Many households and community assets remain vulnerable. Council's detailed planning identified A F Thomas Park as a critical place to capture and safely release stormwater, protecting more than 150 homes, access to North Shore Hospital, supermarkets and schools.

At the same time, rapid population growth and evolving recreational needs mean council and the Kaipātiki Local Board are seeking to ensure this large area benefits as many people as possible, through improved access, better connectivity and a diversity of open space uses.

How Blue-Green Networks Build Resilience and Recreation.

Blue-Green Networks – Working with nature to improve flood resilience.

A F Thomas Park's transformation isn't just about flood storage.

It will become part of a blue-green network, a modern approach involving connected wetlands, parks and waterways. These features slow, clean and store floodwater while boosting urban biodiversity and creating beautiful spaces for recreation, exercise, community events and relaxation.

Stage 1: Building the foundation for a flood resilient Wairau

A F Thomas Park will be redeveloped to form the cornerstone of the blue-green network. The wetland reduces flooding risk by acting as a natural sponge to capture and hold excess water during heavy rain events, gradually releasing water and reducing pressure on surrounding areas.

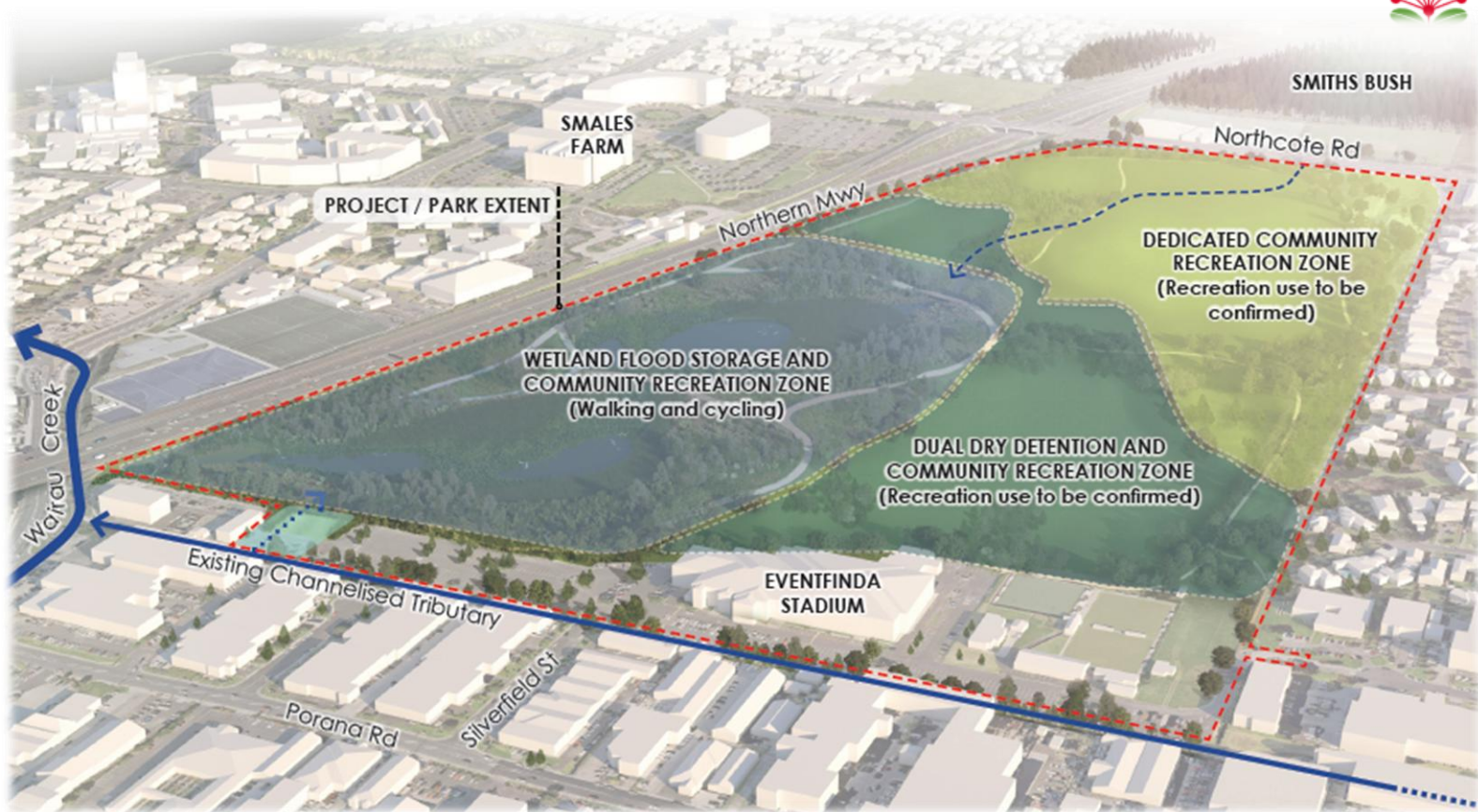
Key Benefits of Blue-Green Networks:

- **Significantly reduce local flood risk**
- **Restore wetlands and wetland habitats**
- **Cooler, greener and more attractive neighbourhoods**
- **More walking, cycling and play opportunities**
- **Enhance mental and physical wellbeing**
- **Spaces for education, art and community gatherings.**

The park will be able to be used for recreation most of the time, incorporating walking and other activities. This presents a unique opportunity to reimagine the use of the land to accommodate long-term environmental, open space and recreation needs.

Construction of the wetland is expected to commence in 2027.

By carefully planning the design and construction, we can also reduce costs by preparing the land for future recreational use at the same time as the wetland and dry detention areas are built.



Stage 2: Strengthening Flood Resilience and Connections

Stage 2 of the proposed blue-green network will focus on several key initiatives in Milford and Tōtara Vale using land being acquired as part of the Category 3 buyout programme.

This will include improving overland flow, stream widening and daylighting to enhance natural flow and some minor upgrades will be made to existing detention facilities.

Stage 3 Making more space for water in Wairau

Stage 3 will include further creek widening and daylighting along Wairau Road, giving water more space to move through the catchment.

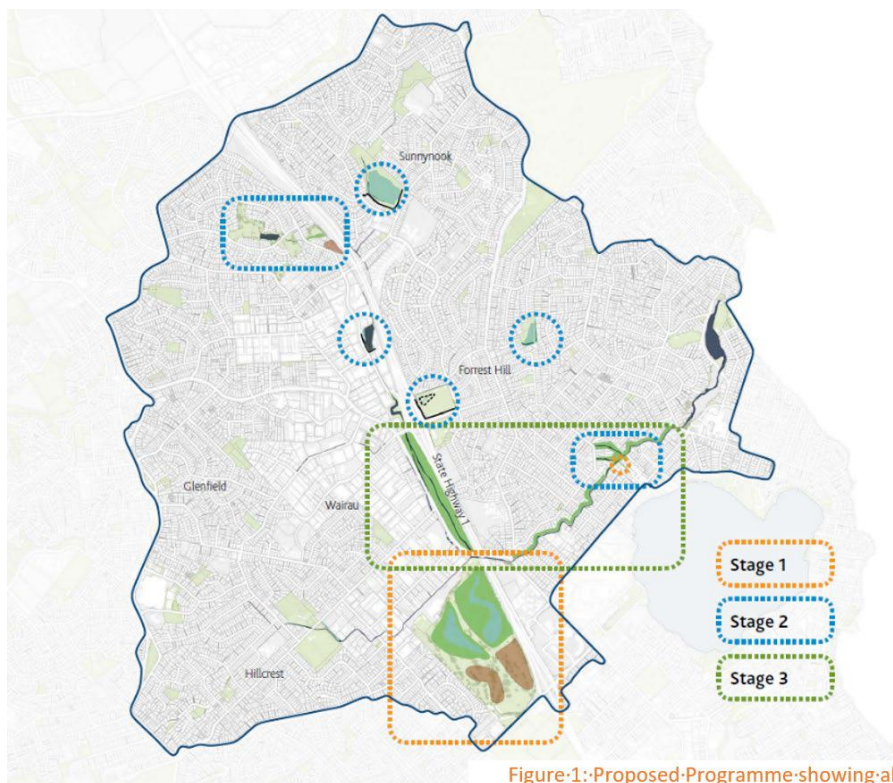


Figure 1: Proposed Programme showing all stages

Wairau Blue-Green Network Stages 1-3

Ngā Wairau

Auckland Council has been working closely with local iwi from the outset of the Wairau Flood Resilience Project. Te Kawerau ā Maki and Ngāti Paoa have shared both their traditional knowledge and their aspirations for the future of Wairau, guiding a long-term, intergenerational approach to restoring the health of the waters, the land, and the people.

As part of this partnership, Mana Whenua have gifted the name **Ngā Wairau** to the project. The name translates as “abundant waters” or “the net of a hundred waters”, referring to the vast, net-like catchment that once supported significant wetlands and mahinga kai on the valley floor.

An associated whakataukī, **Waihō mā te wai e rere ki tōna taunga**, reflects the essence of wai (water) and the importance of allowing water to flow where it naturally should.

Guided by iwi and our taiao (natural environment), the waters can once again find their path, the land can heal, and our communities can thrive. In doing so, the abundant waters of Ngā Wairau hold the potential to regenerate and restore mauri, the life force and vitality of this place.

What we are asking for feedback on

Consultation options for the future development of A F Thomas Park have been identified with Kaipātiki Local Board through a combination of current usage, statutory requirements, and a comprehensive needs analysis. The Local Board invites your feedback on:



Retaining golf (with various possible configurations).



A blend of golf and broader recreation within an integrated park



Creating new recreation open spaces and recreation facilities

Images examples of potential scenarios only.

Your input will help shape a space that reflects community priorities and supports diverse recreational opportunities.

Parallel to the consultation, a Golf Needs Assessment and an Open Space Provision Assessment are being undertaken to provide detailed insights into existing service levels and gaps in the Wairau catchment and North Shore area. These assessments will be presented alongside community feedback to the Kaipātiki Local Board, aiding them to make a well-informed, future proof decision about the park's use. A Deliberative Forum including a representative panel of members of the community will also come together to identify possible options and deliberate on the priorities. These will form the basis of a recommendations report that the Local Board can use to inform and support their decision making.

Funding for future recreational outcomes

As this project has being necessitated due to urgent flood resilience needs, there is currently no dedicated council funding set aside for major new recreational facilities. To deliver these in future, we would need to plan for funding through future budgets or explore alternative funding options. Delivery would likely be staged over time as funding allows.

Possible funding sources include:

- Local board budgets for new facilities and improvements.
- Council-wide budgets for projects such as sports field development.
- Investment from community groups or leaseholders who may want to develop and operate facilities on the site.
- Council and partner grants that support sport and recreation projects run by community or third-party providers.
- Council’s “Delivering Differently” programme, which supports partnership approaches to provide recreation opportunities.
- Contributions from charitable or philanthropic organisations.
- Income that could be generated from leases, naming rights, or similar commercial arrangements.
- Targeted rates or user fees.

The Story of A F Thomas Park

A F Thomas Park is steeped in local history. Originally a wetland and floodplain, it was first converted into a private golf course in 1912 and later acquired by North Shore City Council in the 1950s to serve community needs. Over the decades, it has hosted golf, archery, bowling and various recreational pursuits. The North Shore Events Centre, now known as Eventfinda Stadium was opened in September 1992.



A F Thomas Park is named after Arthur ‘Fred’ Thomas, a prominent North Shore lawyer and politician who served as Mayor of Takapuna from 1965 to 1986 and played a crucial leadership role in the formation of North Shore City. Fred Thomas was known for his outspoken approach and strong opinions on urban development. He championed the idea that Takapuna and the North Shore should remain great places to live, prioritising green space and community wellbeing. The park was renamed in his honour in 1971, acknowledging his commitment to protecting civic land for public use.

A F Thomas Park Today

The 44 -hectare A F Thomas Park currently serves a range of sports and recreational activities. Primarily it is the site of the Takapuna Golf Course which features an 18-hole (71 stroke) public golf course, a double storey 48 bay driving range, practice putting green and a clubhouse. The course is valued for its accessibility, offering affordable golf to families and casual players.

The park also hosts the following community sports clubs and facilities:

Sunnybrae Bowling Club: The park hosts the Sunnybrae Bowling Club, which provides lawn bowl facilities for both competitive and social bowlers.

Shore Archery Club: The archery club at A F Thomas Park offers facilities for both beginners and competitive archers. The club hosts regular training sessions and local competitions supporting youth development and club membership.

Eventfinda Stadium: Directly adjacent to the park is Eventfinda Stadium, a major indoor sports and events venue with a seating capacity of 5,000. The stadium regularly hosts sporting events, community festivals, concerts and large gatherings. Annually, Eventfinda Stadium draws over 400,000 Users/visitors with more than 60-70 major commercial sporting and community events held each year as well as 60,000 people that play basketball, gymnastics or trampolining and other after school activities on site.

The current Eventfinda Stadium was severely damaged in the Anniversary Weekend floods with over \$4 million in repairs and upgrades required and the facility forced to close for several months to undertake restoration works. The stadium remains at risk of future flooding due to its location in the floodplain.

These organisations will not be directly impacted by the planned flood resilience works but as they are part of the wider park they are included in the scope of this consultation. Any future land use change would need to go through the respective leasing process for each organisation.

Community Design: Shaping a Park for Everyone

With up to 30 hectares available for re-imagining, A F Thomas Park can support a unique mix of recreation and resilience. What is created will depend on community priorities which is why consultation is being held before final decisions are made. Every voice can help to shape the park's future.

Golf can remain part of the park if supported by the community. Any major long-term option will require secure, sustainable agreements and funding plans.

Golf options for A F Thomas

A public 18-hole (71 stroke) golf course has operated in A F Thomas Park since the 1960s. It also offers a double storey 48 bay driving range and putting green. The site is valued for its accessibility, offering affordable golf to families and casual players.

While the majority of golfers are experienced players, there is a drive to offer more accessible options for beginners, young people, and women to broaden participation and reflect Auckland's diverse communities.

Beginner and intermediate level golf courses in Auckland are designed to be approachable and enjoyable, providing options for a broad range of people with different needs, abilities, and time constraints.

9-hole full-length courses cater to people who want a shorter game due to limited time or are less experienced.

Though less common, 12-hole layouts (sometimes found as variations or flexible routing at larger clubs) are attractive for players seeking an intermediate-length round.

There are two private golf courses on Auckland Council land in close proximity to Takapuna Golf Course. Waitemata (8km) and Pupuke (5km).

If golf activities are the preferred option, the board would seek a commercial partnership to develop these facilities in A F Thomas Park. For fixed recreation facilities like this, a long-term lease would be required to ensure feasibility for both the operator and council. This means that any decision will have a lasting impact, so we encourage you to carefully consider your preferences when providing feedback.

Types of golf that could be accommodated in the space include:

Option	Key Features	Ideal for
18-hole Par 3/beginner intermediate Course	Typically have mostly par 3 holes with possibly shorter par-4s with less hazards. Design emphasis is on faster pace of play, enjoyment and accessibility.	Beginners, casual golfers or those with time pressures. Those looking for a more social, relaxed game.
12-hole Course	Fast play, reduced time and space requirements.	Novices and young players. Strategically challenging holes for more experienced players. Those wanting quality shorter games.
9-hole or Short Course	Mix par 3 and par 4 can include separate tees for different levels.	Beginners, those looking for faster rounds, targeted practice and social engagement, lower costs/green fees.
Multi-functional Facility	Short-game practice area / putting green, pitch and putt course, indoor golf simulators etc.	All skill levels, widely accessible, practice and enjoyment focus.
Driving Range	Possibility of a driving range to be retained with all golf options.	All skill levels, widely accessible, practice and enjoyment focus.

Open Space and Recreation options

The future of urban parks is shaped by rapidly changing community needs and growing recognition of the vital role that public open spaces play in resilient, liveable cities. As urban populations become more diverse, dense and mobile the demand for flexible, multi-purpose parks that support a wide spectrum of recreational and cultural activities has never been greater. People now seek parks not only for traditional sports, but also for informal activities like walking, cycling, nature play, fitness trails, events, quiet contemplation and connections with heritage and nature.

The most successful parks of the future will be inclusive, easily accessible, and able to adapt to changing lifestyles, new forms of play and the health and wellbeing needs of all ages, cultures and abilities, while also providing critical spaces for biodiversity, climate mitigation and connection to nature.

Type of Development	Description/Examples	Key Features/Benefits
Nature play areas	Uses natural materials and variable terrain encouraging unstructured, imaginative play.	Engage children, promote creativity and physical activity
Playgrounds	Climbing structures, flying-fox, slides, swings	Engage children, promote physical activity
Walking and cycling tracks	Tracks for walking, running, cycling	Encourage fitness, outdoor activity
BMX pump track / skate park / other wheeled play	Tracks designed for juniors and cyclists, skateboarders, scooters, roller skating	Specialised cycling recreation
Sports fields and courts	For informal and organised sports such as tennis, football, basketball, rugby, netball, cricket. Indoors or outdoors.	Support various sports and social sports activities
Open space / picnic areas	Social spaces for social gatherings with views over wetlands or green corridors. Spaces for informal sport.	Encourage social interaction, relaxation
Event venue and festival space	Spaces for community markets, festivals	Support community gatherings and cultural events
Art installations, Māori storytelling spaces and cultural markers	Creates unique visual identities ranging from sculptures and murals to interactive installations, reflecting local stories and history.	Contributes to sense of place, celebrates community identity. Creates destinations within parks, boosting visitation and social connection.
Outdoor fitness zones	Equipment areas for exercise and wellness activities like yoga, tai chi, cross fit	Promote health and wellness in outdoor settings
Dog exercise and agility areas	Specially designed zones to allow dogs to play, socialise and exercise safely off leash	Provides safe contained space for dogs without disturbing other park users. Strengthens community connections, promotes physical and mental health for pets and people.

Type of Development	Description/Examples	Key Features/Benefits
Educational and interpretation areas	Areas to support learning and connection with local history, environmental processes and ecological features. Signage explaining wetland ecology, stormwater functions built into discovery trails.	Provides educational opportunities for all ages. Connects people to the place they live in and fosters community pride and identity.
Multi-use informal sports lawns and recreation fields	Open flexible green spaces designed to accommodate a variety of unstructured and organised activities e.g frisbee, volleyball, tai chi, group exercise.	Provides a versatile space where people of all ages and abilities can gather, play or relax according to their interests. Is easily adapted seasonally, requires minimal fixed infrastructure. Ensures open space is welcoming and inclusive.
All ages fitness stations or outdoor gyms	Outdoor gym equipment spaced along trails to encourage physical activity.	Provides all weather access to strength, cardio, and flexibility training for the whole community, eliminating common barriers like gym fees or transport.
Shared space for social connection	Unique public spaces that foster cultural artistic expression and creativity. A park that serves as a vibrant space for community gatherings and events. May include open plazas, amphitheatres, outdoor seating areas, pop-up spaces.	Strengthens neighbourhood bonds and belonging by bringing community together. Enhances passive recreation by offering comfortable places to relax and enjoy the natural landscape. Adaptable to seasonal needs.
Space for organised sports or clubs	Dedicated park zones that support formal sports leagues, training sessions, competitions and club activities such as Archery and Lawn bowls. May include bookable sports fields and courts with lighting.	High quality venues for organised teams, often accessible to schools or for wider casual use when not booked, maximising the use of public green space. Enables partnerships and co-investment from sports organisations to enhance facility quality and programming.

Parks are central to the identity and community life of the Kaipātiki Local Board area.

Consultation on A F Thomas Park's future recreational use is both best practice and a legal requirement, ensuring the decision-making process is robust, democratic and responsive to changing community needs.

The Kaipātiki Local Board is tasked under the Local Government Act to represent community interests in decision-making, especially as the North Shore grows and diversifies. The 10-year Kaipātiki Local Parks Management Plan and the Open Space Network Plan both prioritise inclusive engagement and highlight A F Thomas Park as a key site for expanded recreation, improved access and investment shaped by community feedback. This robust process ensures park planning supports wellbeing, identity, activity and access for all, and empowers representative, community-driven decisions.

How to have your say

This public consultation will run from **Monday 20 October 2025 to 11.59pm Sunday November 23, 2025** to gain your feedback on what you envision for the future of A F Thomas Park.

You can do this online, in writing or by attending a feedback session.

Share your views on the future of A F Thomas Park

There are a number of ways you can share your views with us on the options for A F Thomas Park.

- **Written and online feedback**

Provide your feedback online through the council's AK Have Your Say website (**akhaveyoursay.nz/afthomas**), or by filling out a feedback form available at **Glenfield Library or Takapuna Library** or at **any of our AK Have Your Say Events**.

- **In Person Feedback**

Visit the team at one of our events during the consultation period. All details including dates, times and locations, can be found online at **akhaveyoursay.nz/afthomas**

- **Online information session**

To register for this online session, please visit **akhaveyoursay.nz/afthomas**

- **Translations**

A summary of the consultation paper and feedback form are available in Te Reo, NZ Sign Language video, Simplified Chinese, Mandarin, and Korean at **akhaveyoursay.nz/afthomas**. Printed copies are available from Glenfield or Takapuna Libraries.