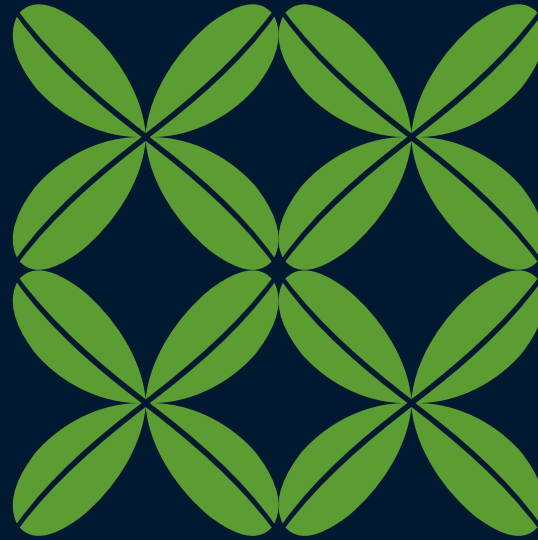
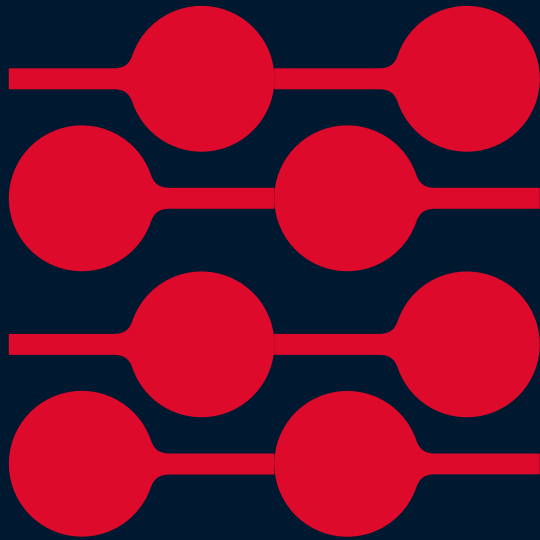




Windmill Park Draft Concept Plan

Consultation information pack

June 2023



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Introduction

We're seeking your views on the draft concept plan for Windmill Park from Thursday 15 June to Sunday 16 July 2023.

This information pack outlines what is proposed in the draft concept plan and how these ideas respond to suggestions the community made last year.

What is a concept plan?

A concept plan is a long-term picture to guide future development. Concept plans are developed in response to community needs and wider strategic goals. Implementing the concept plan takes many years as money is available.

Context

Windmill Park is a special park in Maungawhau/Mt Eden, important to many people.

The park is home to:

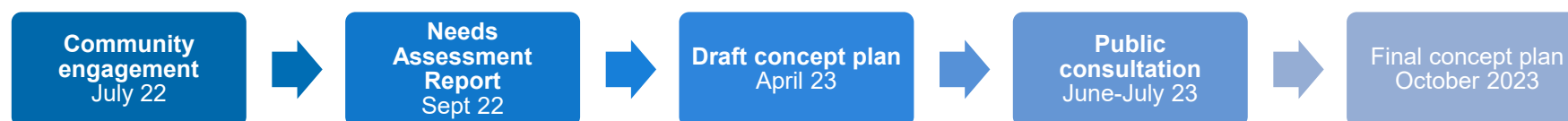
- 15 netball courts used throughout the year by Auckland Netball.
- 12 tennis courts used in summer by Tennis Auckland and the tennis community.
- Two artificial cricket pitches used in summer by Auckland Cricket and other cricket groups.
- A half-court basketball court, pétanque terrain, barbeque, off-leash dog walking area and open green space.

In 2016 a fire destroyed the grandstand and in 2021 one of the buildings was demolished as it was no longer safe to occupy. This paved the way to think about what should be done with the leftover spaces. Other ideas included some covered courts, a playground, bike facilities and other recreation facilities.

In 2022, Auckland Council staff started a plan for Windmill Park to provide a clear vision for the future development of the park as funding is available. For a multi-functional park of this size, the plan will ensure it is fit for purpose according to the different needs of our growing population and to be able to withstand environmental impacts.

Last year we asked the community how they use Windmill Park and what they thought about the potential development ideas. We had a tremendous response with over 300 people providing input. This feedback plus other analysis helped us develop the draft concept plan for Windmill Park.

Timeline for developing the concept plan



What are our priorities for Windmill Park?

We developed three objectives to guide the future development of Windmill Park.

These objectives were developed based on what we heard from the community and the needs assessment report and were shaped by input from the Albert-Eden Local Board and our iwi mana whenua partners: Te Ākitai Waiohū and Te Pakukirikiri.

Protect and enhance views of the maunga

The highest priority is to protect the viewshafts of Maungawhau and Maungakiekie from multiple vantage points in Windmill Park. Where possible, opportunities to enhance and expose new viewshafts should be explored.



Figure 1: Maungawhau viewshaft

Balance between structured sport and informal recreation

It is important Windmill Park's improvements are balanced equitably to provide for structured sport and informal recreation. Increased and diverse activities at Windmill Park is a priority, however additional use or functions that could impact community needs to be considered.



Figure 2: Netball/futsal courts looking towards BBQ area

Protect green open space, cultural and historical values

It is critical the green open space, natural areas, geological and archaeological features within Windmill Park are protected. And where appropriate, enhance both the cultural and historical interpretation, and environmental outcomes that Windmill Park can deliver.



Figure 3: Escarpment area with basalt rock terracing

What is special about Windmill Park?

Windmill Park is special for many reasons, and we need to think about all these aspects in the concept plan.

Unique characteristics of Windmill Park to be considered include cultural narratives highlighted by iwi, and an outline of the park's history was provided by Epsom Eden District Historical Society.

Views of Maungawhau & volcanic geology

Windmill Park is visually dominated by the imposing weight of Maungawhau, and the remnants of the lava flow from the maunga serve to remind us of Mataaoho: The mythological vulcan deity.



Figure 4: Viewshaft of Maungawhau from courts

Glimpses of Maungakiekie

The distinctive silhouette of Maungakiekie – a contemporary obelisk is visible to the southwest of Windmill Park.



Figure 5: Viewshaft of Maungakiekie from existing pétanque area during winter

Wai (fresh water)

Wai (fresh water), food and shelter are the three prerequisites for survival and hence settlement. Volcanic action has precipitated the formation of overlapping aquifers across the central isthmus and therefore, managing water is very important.

Archaeological middens

Throughout the lava flow are archaeological middens. Middens contain food remains such as shellfish shells and household objects. These historical remnants give us insight into what people ate and how they lived in the past.



Figure 6: Middens hidden through lava escarpment extents

The windmill

Windmill Park was part of a 20-acre block purchased by Epsom Road Board in 1882 and originally called 'The Green'.

The park's namesake came from the windmill constructed in 1843 and stood on the crest of the hill for over a hundred years.

It was operational until the 1860s and was demolished in 1952/53 when it was deemed unsafe. The rocks from the windmill were used for boundary walls lining St Andrew's Road which remain to this day.

In the 1930s relief workers levelled the area using material from the hill above to create 12 courts which opened in 1931.

Flattening and filling in of the lake produced the playing field area.



Figure 7: The Epsom Mill, built in 1850

A place for sport

For close to 90 years, Windmill Park has been a place for sport, particularly netball, tennis, and cricket. Windmill Park was the venue for the 1975 World Netball Championship. The sport facilities are well used and important to retain.



Figure 8: 1975 Netball World Championships at Windmill Park

Valued for recreation and open space

Windmill Park is great for informal recreation and it is part of a rare selection of high-valued green open spaces that break up Maungawhau/Mt Eden's urban landscape, which also includes Nicholson Park, Melville Park and University of Auckland / Auckland Normal Intermediate grounds.



Figure 9: Whau tree

Local growth

The area around Windmill Park is forecast to grow by another 20,000 people over the next 30 years. Growth in the neighbourhood instigates the need to plan for the community and prioritise residents' access to open space for health and wellbeing.

What we heard from the community

In July 2022, we asked the community how they used Windmill Park and what they thought about the potential ideas for the future.

We had a tremendous response with:

- 283 people completed the online survey,
- we spoke to 32 people at the park open-day,
- two written submissions were received,
- we spoke to six different groups interested in Windmill Park.

Your feedback in summary

- Windmill Park is well used and highly valued for sport and recreation.
- Important to find a balance between protecting everything special about the park and make improvements enabling more people to enjoy the park, especially as the local area grows.
- Most people thought Windmill Park facilities are of good quality, except for the toilets and seating.
- Respondents had the most to say about carparking, with key issues raised about number of carparks, safety concerns and impact of carparking on neighbours.
- There is support for a range of potential improvements including:
 - providing some shelter from the wind, rain and sun and introducing a cover for some courts,
 - introducing some play opportunities for children and families,
 - installing a water fountain and providing better toilets, seating and planting,
 - providing some historical interpretation of the park.

For all the details, download the full Windmill Park draft concept plan and the associated needs assessment document at www.akhaveyoursay.govt.nz/windmillpark

In the following pages, we look at possible improvements for Windmill Park and explain why some ideas are included in the draft concept plan and some are not.

Toilet and building Improvements are underway.

The new pavilion at Windmill Park opens November 2023. Improvements include:

- New unisex toilets
- First aid room
- New kiosk space
- Upper floor for meetings and administration



Windmill Road netball building refurbishment proposed elevation

Shelter and covered courts

What we heard

- Provision of shelter is vital to provide protection from rain, wind and sun.
- A few covered courts were supported by many court users.
- Covered courts will help increase sport participation at Windmill Park.

What are the challenges?

- Covered courts are not recommended for Windmill Park's concept plan.
- These would need to be 9 metres high to be fit for purpose for tennis and netball.
- We explored different covered court options, however all options impact the views of Maungawhau, contradicting a key objective for Windmill Park to retain the special views of the maunga.
- Introducing covered courts is likely to increase the use of Windmill Park. We are concerned the park cannot accommodate more intense use, as this will impact on carparking.
- For these reasons, we are not proposing covered courts at Windmill Park.

Figure 11: Covered Courts are not recommended for Windmill Park

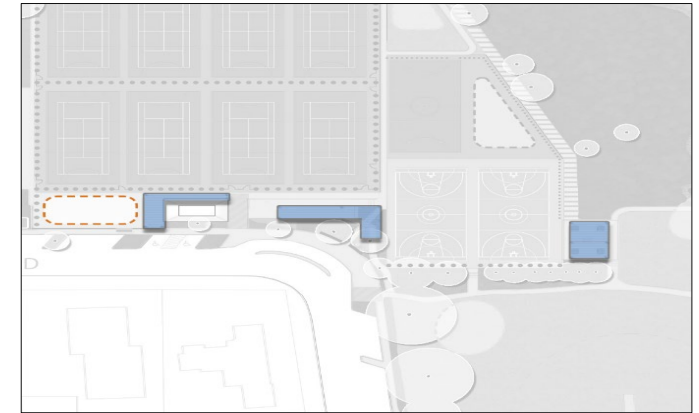
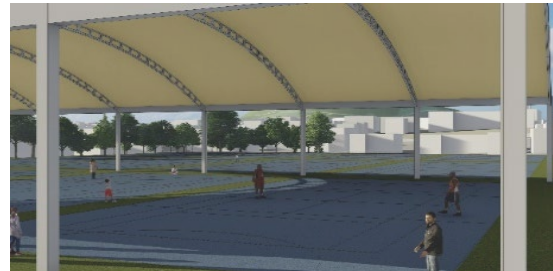
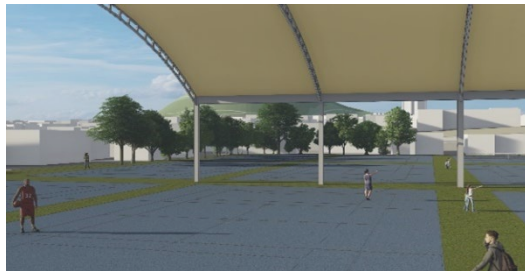


Figure 10: Draft Concept Plan - Shelter opportunities (shaded in blue) includes in around the pavilion and park seating areas adjacent the sport facilities



What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- New covered seating area adjacent to the courts will provide shelter from rain and sun for court users and spectators.
- A sheltered space for warm-ups or programmes can be provided in a new covered activity area adjacent to the pavilion.
- New covered pavilion next to the green space with BBQs and tables to provide another space to shelter from rain and sun for park users.
- All three of these smaller covered spaces will be around four to five metres high and therefore have no or limited impact on views of the maunga.
- We know covered courts are still important and will investigate other sites identified in the Albert-Eden Indoor & Covered Court Study 2021.

Carparking and pathways

What we heard

- Park users would like to see better carparking and access to Windmill Park, ideally more carparking.
- Some park users are concerned about the safety of the drop-off zone.
- Neighbours would like to see more management and control of the carparking to minimise impact on residential properties.
- Across all respondents, there was no support to remove green space or court space to create a dedicated carpark for Windmill Park.
- There was support for improving pathways to support dog-walking and walking for pleasure.
- Some feedback indicated interest in providing a circumference route around Windmill Park.
- There was some interest in pathways for biking, scootering or bike play.

What are the challenges?

- It is not possible to create more carparks without encroaching into the green or court space, therefore a new carpark is not possible.
- There is limited capacity to increase the on-street carparking without impacting safety and vehicle access to housing.
- Any new pathways in Windmill Park need to be safe and not impact on other facilities and users.
- We need to make sure pathways do not invite people to use the sensitive hill area where archaeological middens are located.

What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- A new formal entrance at St Andrew's Road and pathway around the green space to the court area. This is expected to make the surrounding road-side carparks easier to use and quicker to walk to the courts.
- A dedicated bike/scooter parking area to support alternative modes of transport to the park.
- Improve the drop-off zone to make it safer to drop off participants.
- Potential pathway which goes around the netball courts, connecting the front and rear areas. There could be distance markers to create a walking loop which could also be used as a warm-up track.
- Creating a new pathway between the two court sections that connects to the play area and proposed terraced seating for the rear area of the park.
- Retain the pathway to and through the upper area of the park for off-leash dog-walking and walking for pleasure.
- Incorporate a mini bike-skill path under the pine trees to create another play opportunity.
- Work with user groups to encourage active modes of transport and develop strategies to ensure the road-side carparking is managed more effectively.

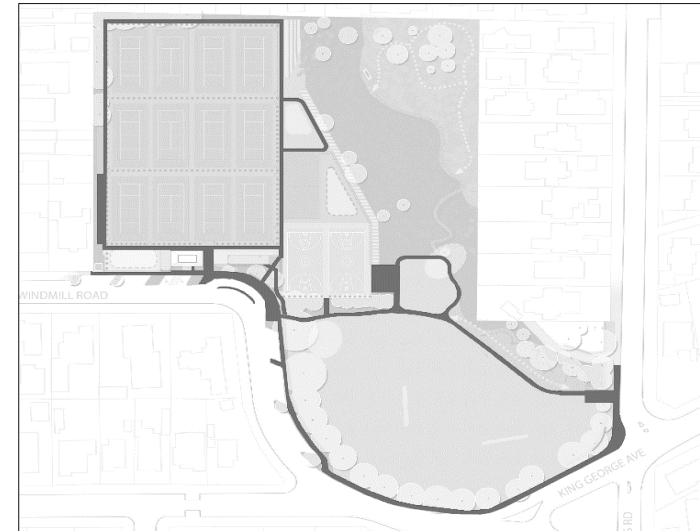


Figure 12: Draft Concept Plan - pathway connections

Sport facilities

What we heard

- Most people agree it is important to retain netball, tennis, cricket, and basketball facilities at Windmill Park.
- Cricket users would like to see better quality cricket pitches.
- Basketball users would like full-sized basketball courts with fencing and lighting.
- Some respondents would like a beach volleyball sand court at Windmill Park.
- There was limited support to retain the pétanque terrain.
- Most users would like improvements to toilets and buildings to support sport use.

What are the challenges?

- There is no capacity to introduce more sport use or facilities at Windmill Park, due to constraints like carparking and the size of the park.
- We need to make sure sport facilities are multi-purpose to maximise the benefits and use of the spaces.
- There were several submitters who requested the development of an outdoor sand volleyball court. It was concluded there was not enough space for another sport and introducing another facility would exacerbate the carparking issues and the balance between formal and informal provision.

What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- Keep the 12 netball/tennis courts.
- Expand the court area slightly on the western side to create a dedicated tennis net storage.
- Keep three netball courts on the side court area but remark two courts as full-sized basketball/netball courts.
- Keep two junior cricket pitches and plan for future surface improvements, when budget allows.
- The new Pavilion (under construction) will provide new unisex toilets, changing space and indoor space.

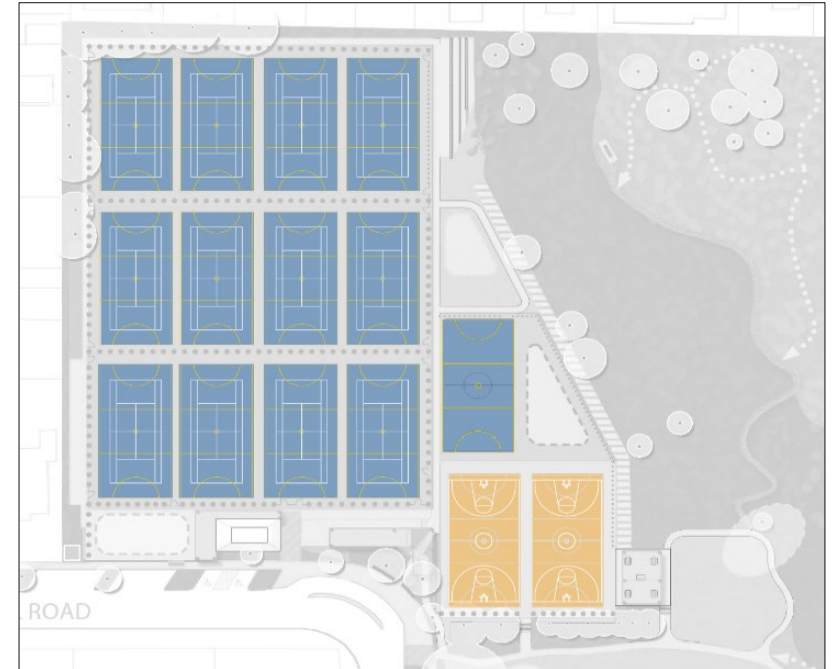


Figure 13: Draft Concept Plan - Multi use court space (netball, basketball, futsal)

Play and recreation opportunities

What we heard

- We received mixed views on the development of a playground with a third of respondents saying it was high importance, a third average importance and a third regarded it as low importance.
- There was support for more informal recreation use of Windmill Park for families and children.

What are the challenges?

- There is limited space across Windmill Park to introduce new facilities.
- Existing spaces need to be used more effectively.
- We need to be mindful of other playgrounds located close by and the need to create varied facilities within Windmill Park.
- We need to ensure a balance of hard facilities and green open space.

What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- We've identified three areas for small scale play opportunities instead of one large traditional playground. These play areas could be designed to suit the landscape settings and offer a wide range of play experiences. There are also opportunities to include colour, sculpture and cultural interpretation as part of the design.
- One area where the previous half-courts were located with the potential to use some of the hill area.
- The space where the current pétanque court is located.
- An area adjacent to the netball courts in the currently un-used space.
- Natural play opportunities under the pine trees adjacent to the green open-space.

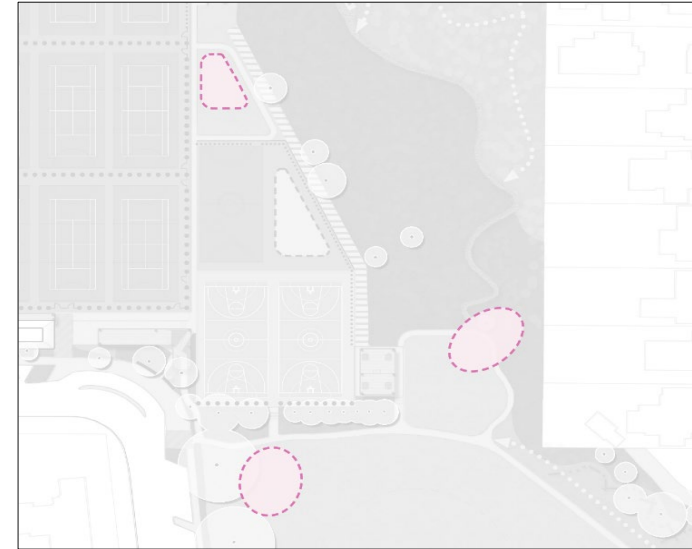


Figure 14: Draft Concept Plan – Proposed play nodes



Figure 15: Distributed and Nature Play Elements

Trees and planting

What we heard

- Most people value the trees and the picturesque feel they provide but the dropping leaves are a problem in autumn.
- There is support for improved planting along the boundary and upper area of the park.
- Support for more natural stormwater management to improve the resilience of the park.

What are the challenges?

- It is important to retain trees in the park as these contribute to climate resilience, reinforce the natural character of the park and provide much needed shade and shelter.
- There is a need to introduce more native planting and manage exotic pest and decorative species to build greater biodiversity and resilience.
- There are some weed tree species and trees which have reached their expiry which will need to be considered for removal.
- It is important to ensure large trees are safe.
- Careful plant selection is required to minimise the ongoing maintenance costs.



Figure 16: Draft Concept Plan - Planting strategy

What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- Retain most of the trees on the park except for the unsafe trees or weed species.
- Trim and/or remove some of the trees around the rear courts to reduce the shadow and leaf dropping onto the courts.
- Create a native meadow on the upper area, using lower growing native shrubs and grasses. This will keep the openness of the area, retain walking paths, improve stormwater management and minimise the need to mow the upper area, reducing maintenance costs.
- Create a natural stormwater swale at the base of the hill to improve natural stormwater management and park resilience.

Park amenities and valuing history

What we heard

- Strong support to install a water fountain, bike racks and better seating in the park.
- There is an appetite to retain the BBQ and picnic area.
- More informal green space is supported.
- No support for adult fitness equipment or retaining the pétanque area.
- Improvements to ensure the park is accessible for everyone to use.
- Positive feedback to provide interpretation on the park's name and history.
- Important to protect the archaeological middens located in hill area.

What is proposed in the draft concept plan?

- The new pavilion building (under construction) will have a water fountain.
- Incorporate interpretation of the park's history and name into the new park pavilion.
- Create a new covered BBQ and picnic area adjacent to the courts and green open-space.
- A new grass area is created for informal recreation, where the previous half-courts were located.
- New shelter and seating area adjacent to the courts will provide shelter from the rain and sun for court users and spectators.
- Reinstate and improve the old terraced seating adjacent to the rear courts to increase spectator areas. This will provide a connection to the potential play area.
- Modify the height of fencing around the courts to provide a more open feeling, but only use lower fences where high fences are not needed to contain balls.
- Protect the lava flow and middens through more planting and signage on the hill to prevent walking and cycling in this area.
- Incorporate interpretation at key locations throughout the park to highlight aspects of significant cultural significance to iwi and mana whenua.



Figure 17: Draft Concept Plan – amenities strategy

Draft concept plan



What happens next?

We are seeking community feedback on the draft concept plan from Thursday 15 June to Sunday 16 July 2023.

You can provide feedback by:

- Completing the online feedback form at akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/windmill-park
- Talking with us at the open day on 24 June 2023
- If you would like to speak with someone directly email windmillpark@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Public feedback will be taken into consideration and we will update the concept plan accordingly.

The final concept plan will be presented to Albert-Eden Local Board for approval in September 2023.

If approved, the concept plan will be implemented over several years when funding becomes available. However, some improvements are already underway, such as the new pavilion which is due to be completed in November 2023.

