

Community and Recreational Facilities



To help lower future rates and keep services sustainable, Council is reviewing whether services should stay the same, change, be reduced or stop.

Community and Recreational Facilities provides services and facilities the community relies on and uses regularly which help make Ruapehu a great place to live, work and play. **It includes our public pools, parks, reserves, sports fields, public toilets, litter bins, playgrounds, walkways, recreational cycle trails, cemeteries and community halls.**

Like all Council services, these facilities cost money. Council must balance the level of service the community wants against what ratepayers can afford. Maintaining more facilities, or maintaining them to a higher standard, means higher rates. Reducing services saves money but changes what is available in our towns.

The following questions set out the options Council is considering and ask for your feedback on where that balance should sit.

Public Toilets

Council currently maintains and services 24 toilet blocks across the district. Several toilet facilities were constructed using government funding to support visitor growth and tourism. While the construction costs were externally funded, ongoing cleaning, maintenance and replacement costs are now funded by local ratepayers.

Many councils have been reviewing their toilet networks, acknowledging that the cost to provide, maintain and service public toilets is considerable.

Options to reduce costs include closing toilets where nearby alternatives exist, closing seasonal facilities during low-demand periods, reviewing low-use toilets, and exploring user charges at selected high-use visitor sites. Any toilets that remain open will continue to be cleaned and maintained to an appropriate standard.

Closing or reducing access

1. Would you support closing selected public toilets during the winter or lower visitor periods? Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

2. Would you support closing some public toilets where another public toilet or a suitable private facility (such as a service station) is available nearby? Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

3. Would you support closing public toilets that receive very little use? Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

User pays

4. Would you support user-pays charges at selected high-use locations if this helped reduce costs to ratepayers? Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Parks, Reserves, Berms and Sports Fields

Council maintains parks, reserves, sports fields, playgrounds and roadside berms across the district. These spaces support sport, recreation and community events, provide places for people to relax and play, and help keep our towns looking tidy and welcoming.



Maintaining these areas is becoming more expensive. Like many councils across New Zealand, Ruapehu is facing rising mowing and maintenance costs, putting increasing pressure on rates.

Many councils are responding by mowing less often or applying different levels of service depending on how an area is used. High-use areas, such as sports fields and key parks, continue to be maintained more frequently, while lower-use reserves and berms are mown less often.

Council is considering similar options. Reducing mowing in lower-priority areas could help keep rates more affordable, but it would mean some areas look less tidy and, in some cases, residents may need to maintain their own berms.

Roadside berms

5. Would you support Council focusing roadside berm mowing on high-visibility and high-use areas, with less frequent mowing in other locations?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Parks and Reserves

6. Would you support reducing mowing on selected parks and reserves or where public use is low?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Sports fields

Council currently maintains all sports fields to a similar standard, regardless of how often they are used.

7. Would you support maintaining sports fields based on how frequently they are used?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Underused reserves or sports fields

Some reserves or sports fields receive little or no organised recreational use but still require ongoing maintenance.

8. What level of service should reserves or sports fields that have little or no recreational use receive?

- ☐ Continue maintaining them at current levels
- ☐ Maintain them at a lower level of service
- ☐ Repurpose them for other community uses
- ☐ Review whether they are still required for Council purposes
- ☐ Unsure

Taumarunui Community Halls

Council owns and manages two community halls in Taumarunui:

- Taumarunui War Memorial Hall
- Miriama Community Centre

These facilities provide indoor spaces for community events, meetings, classes, celebrations, and other activities. They can also be used during emergencies. Council is responsible for maintaining these buildings, keeping them safe, and making sure they remain available for community use.

Why is Council reviewing these facilities?

The **Taumarunui War Memorial Hall** has been identified needs significant investment to strengthen and modernise. Council has been considering the future of the hall for several years and previous consultation showed the community held a range of views about the best way forward.

The **Miriama Community Centre** became a Council-owned facility after the Cosmopolitan Club experienced financial difficulties. It was intended to provide an alternative community venue if upgrading the War Memorial Hall was too expensive.

Council is now reviewing what community facilities Taumarunui needs in the future and how they can best meet community needs while remaining affordable for ratepayers.

9. The Taumarunui War Memorial Hall and the Miriama Community Centre need significant investment to stay open. Should Council invest in upgrading these halls?

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| ☐ Yes – invest in both | ☐ Community Centre only |
| ☐ Yes – invest in the Taumarunui War Memorial Hall only | ☐ No |
| ☐ Yes – invest in the Miriama | ☐ Unsure |

10. Do you think Taumarunui needs two community halls?

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| ☐ Yes | ☐ No – Taumarunui does <u>not</u> need a hall |
| ☐ No – Taumarunui only needs <u>one</u> hall | ☐ Unsure |

11. What is most important when planning the future of community halls in Taumarunui?

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| ☐ Providing modern, fit-for-purpose facilities | ☐ Preserving local history and identity |
| ☐ Keeping costs affordable for ratepayers | ☐ A balance of these factors |

12. Should Council explore alternative ownership, management, or operating models for community halls to reduce costs while maintaining community access?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Swimming Pools

Council owns and provides three seasonal swimming pools in Taumarunui, Ohakune and Raetihi. The Taumarunui and Ohakune pools are outdoor facilities, while the Raetihi pool is an indoor heated facility. These aging facilities require more maintenance than current budgets can support.

Taumarunui also has a separate, year-round, wheelchair accessible, indoor pool beside the high school, owned and operated by a community trust. Council supports this facility with an annual grant of \$38,500 and has previously contributed funding towards major improvements because of the important year-round service it provides to the community.

Like many councils across New Zealand, Ruapehu is facing increasing costs to maintain and replace ageing pool facilities. At the same time, communities are seeking investment in upgraded aquatic facilities and enhanced visitor experiences.

Council wants to understand what level of swimming pool service the community wants in the future and how future investment should be prioritised.

13. Do you think Council currently provides the right level of swimming pool services across the district?

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| ☐ Yes |
| ☐ No – Council should invest more in swimming pool facilities |
| ☐ No – Council should reduce investment in swimming pool facilities |
| ☐ Unsure |

14. If significant investment is required in the future, what should Council prioritise?

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| ☐ Maintaining all existing pools |
| ☐ Upgrading the most-used pools |
| ☐ Developing fewer, higher-quality aquatic facilities |
| ☐ Minimising costs and limiting future investment |
| ☐ Unsure |

15. Should Council look at whether future spending on aquatic facilities in the Ohakune-Raetihi area should be focused on one facility that meets community needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐



16. Should Council look at whether future spending on aquatic facilities in the Taumarunui area should be focused on one facility that meets community needs?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

17. If Council can no longer afford to own and operate all swimming pool facilities, which would you prefer?

- ☐ Transfer ownership or operation of some pools to community organisations or other providers
- ☐ Reduce the number of Council-owned pools
- ☐ Unsure

Walking and Cycling Trails

Ruapehu has an extensive network of recreational walking and cycling trails, including sections of the Mountains to Sea – Ngā Ara Tūhono and Timber Trail Great Rides, as well as local shared paths.

The network provides recreation opportunities for residents, supports health and wellbeing, and attracts visitors who contribute to the local economy. Many trails were built with central government funding, reducing construction costs for ratepayers.

However, Council is responsible for ongoing maintenance, including trail surfaces, bridges, signage, vegetation control, and weather-related repairs. As the network grows, so do these costs, which are largely funded by local ratepayers. Council must balance the recreational and economic benefits of the trail network with the long-term costs of maintaining it alongside other essential services and infrastructure.

18. What approach should Council take for the cycleway network?

- ☐ Keep things as they are
- ☐ Invest more to improve trail condition and resilience.
- ☐ Invest less and accept a lower level of maintenance.

19. Should Council continue seeking funding for new cycleway projects if ongoing maintenance funding is not guaranteed?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

20. Should the Council collect rates to finance the future replacement of trails at the end of their lifespan, or depend on obtaining external funding when replacement becomes necessary? If external funding cannot be secured, the facilities might have to be shut down.

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

Other Feedback

21. Do you have any other feedback about Community and Recreational Facilities?

22. Where do you live?

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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Taumarunui | ☐ Ohura | ☐ Ongarue |
| ☐ Owhango | ☐ Waimarino | ☐ Rangataua |
| ☐ Ohakune | ☐ Raetihi | ☐ Waouru |
| ☐ Other | | |