

Information Pack

Proposed Amendment to Victoria Domain Reserves Management Plan - provisions specifically regarding the use of Memorial Park for vehicle and boat trailer parking.

Introduction

1. In June 2021, the Marlborough District Council (Council) adopted the new Victoria Domain Reserves Management Plan (Plan) after a comprehensive public consultation process. The Plan deals with several different parcels of land, including Victoria Domain, Endeavour Park, Shelly Beach, Bobs Bay and Memorial Park. The total land area is approximately 222 hectares.
2. Memorial Park is primarily used for informal recreational use and includes an area of flat green space of approximately 1.6 hectares. Memorial Park is located 100 metres from the Picton Marina launching ramp.
3. In the past users of the Picton Marina boat ramp facility have parked their vehicles and boat trailers on Memorial Park when Port Marlborough New Zealand Limited (Port Marlborough) parking facilities were fully occupied. During these times, the parking has been undertaken in an ad-hoc and uncontrolled manner.
4. The new Plan allocated an area within Memorial Park for temporary parking, and this is shown in Appendix 5 of the Plan (see Attachment 1 of this document). This use of this area for temporary parking is enabled specifically through Policy 6.2.10 of the Plan.
5. During the 2021-2022 Christmas period the demand for vehicle and trailer parking exceeded the available parking area causing impacts on the surrounding area. A high number of vehicles and trailers were parked on public streets, across footpaths and close to intersections near the Picton Marina boat launching ramp.
6. This resulted in a number of traffic safety issues for the wider community along with a number of complaints to Council, Port Marlborough and the Picton Police over the Christmas and New Year period 2021-2022.

Interim Solution

7. In January 2022, Council arranged a meeting with Port Marlborough staff and the Picton Police seeking solutions to the parking supply and traffic safety issues before the next busy boating period in Easter 2022.
8. The proposed solution was to:
 - Increase the vehicle and trailer parking area available on Memorial Park.
 - Line-mark the proposed parking area (with chalk paint) so that ad-hoc parking was discouraged.
 - Proactively manage and administer vehicle and trailer parking so that the most efficient use of the available space was achieved.

9. The above solution was put in place for the Easter period and was successful in catering for all of the parking demand over the Easter period. Favourable feedback of the improved management of this situation/area was received by both Port Marlborough and the Council over this time.
10. This solution was viewed as a potential remedy for the future to avoid the traffic safety matters that arose in the peak of last summer season around the Picton Marina and as a consequence, a change would be required to the Plan to provide for this. Despite the Plan only being adopted last year, Section 41 (4) of the Reserves Act 1977 provides for management plans to be kept under continuous review, so that it is responsive to changing circumstances or increased knowledge. In this case increased use of marina facilities for boating has resulted in an increased demand for related parking.

Proposed Change to the Plan

11. For this option to be an ongoing solution the following change is proposed to the Plan:
 - Amend Appendix 5 to increase the area of green space available for temporary parking as shown in Appendix 2 to this document.

Assessment of Provisions of the Plan

12. An assessment of the proposed change against provisions of the Plan follows. Because the proposed change to the Plan involves an extension to the area already available for parking, the assessment only considers the effects of the additional space to be made available. In addition, while Port Marlborough is the main user of the temporary parking area for parking associated with operation of Picton Marina and is the reason why a change is being proposed, the use of the temporary parking area is not limited to them. For example, the Park is also used for parking associated with boating regattas including Waka ama that occur from Shelly Beach.
13. Objective 3.2 requires that "*Free and open access to the Reserves is generally provided*" and 3.6(d) enables access to be restricted if an event or activity requires access to be restricted. In addition, Policy 6.2.10 specifically provides for the use of Memorial Park for temporary parking so this is not a new activity to Memorial Park.
14. The proposed change to Appendix 5 does not conflict with these provisions of the Plan. What is proposed is that a larger area of space can be used for temporary parking.
15. There is already public access for biking and walking on the northern side of Memorial Park along the Marina-to-Marina Track. To provide for public access around the eastern side of the Park, a 5-metre clear space around the south-side perimeter adjacent to the Hampden Street Stream will ensure that walking and biking access is not obstructed. This will mean direct access is available for recreational activities on the remaining green space at Memorial Park. Provision for this accessway is shown in Appendix 2.
16. While the whole of Memorial Park will not be available for recreational use all of the time, the public will still be able to access parts of the Park and access will remain available around the north and south sides. In addition, when the Park is used for other events (often associated with boating activities such as regattas) public access is restricted during these times.
17. There are specific policies applicable to Memorial Park in the current Plan from 3.27 to 3.30. Both 3.27 and 3.30 are relevant to this proposed change. These policies state:
 - 3.27 *Maintain Memorial Park largely as an area of green open space for informal recreational use.*
 - 3.30 *Prohibit vehicles on the grassed open space areas unless for:*
 - (a) *maintenance activities;*
 - (b) *environmental enhancement;*
 - (c) *authorised activities or events; or*
 - (d) *through occupation agreements*

18. With regard to 3.27 the proposed extension of the parking area does not change the intent of the policy – the area is still maintained as an area of green open space and no built facilities or hardstand areas are proposed.
19. For Policy 3.30 vehicles are prohibited on the grassed surface of the park unless in the circumstances prescribed. The use of the Park by Port Marlborough is to be the subject of an occupation agreement as provided for by the policy. This will ensure that use of Memorial Park as intended by the Plan also meets the requirements of the Reserves Act 1977. (This approach is further supported by Objective 6.6.1 and Policy 6.6.2.)
20. Objective 6.4.1 seeks to ensure that “*Activities do not adversely affect recreational use and enjoyment of the Reserves or on cultural matters, ecological health or amenity values.*”. A supporting policy (6.4.5) requires consideration of a number of matters in allowing an activity within the Plan area as follows:

	Criteria	Assessment
(a)	Whether the proposed use is consistent with the primary recreation purpose of the Reserves.	The proposed use is considered consistent with the primary recreation purpose of the Memorial Park in that the parking is associated with recreational activity and already occurs on part of the Park.
(b)	Does the proposed use impact on the use or enjoyment of the Reserves by other users.	The proposed extension of area in Appendix 1 for parking will impact on the use or enjoyment of Memorial Park for other users to some extent. However, establishing more effective and efficient management of the area as occurred through Easter of 2022 will help to ensure any impacts are minimised. In addition, the occupation agreement to be entered into with Port Marlborough will establish the circumstances and the way use of the temporary parking area can occur.
(c)	Whether the proposal will enhance public benefit and enjoyment.	There will be some loss of public benefit and enjoyment of Memorial Park with a larger area being used for parking. However, this is offset to some extent by the public benefit gained by not having large number of vehicles and boat trailers using roadside parking, which caused traffic safety problems over the last summer period.
(d)	Is there a demonstrated demand for the proposal and will it duplicate other facilities in the vicinity.	There has been a demonstrated need for temporary parking on Memorial Park with an apparent increase in boating activity. There are no facilities in the vicinity that would be duplicated by the proposed increase in space for parking on Memorial Park.
(e)	Whether public access is restricted or may otherwise be affected by the proposal.	There may be some restrictions from time to time on public access around and through the Park when it is being used for parking. However, as indicated earlier in this assessment access on the northern is not affected by this proposal while on the southern side of the Park an accessway free from vehicles is to be maintained – see Appendix 2.
(f)	Does the proposal adversely affect cultural matters, ecological values or amenity values.	It is not considered there will be any adverse effect on ecological values, given the area is grassed and no change to that is proposed. Amenity values may be affected for some in the community including nearby residents, although the extended area for parking is not considered to further detract significantly from what is already provided for by the Plan.
(g)	Whether there will be a visual or audible intrusion in the Reserves environment that	Similar comments as for (f) apply to this criterion. In terms of audible intrusion, the additional noise from vehicles arriving and leaving is not considered to be significantly greater than is already provided for by the Plan.

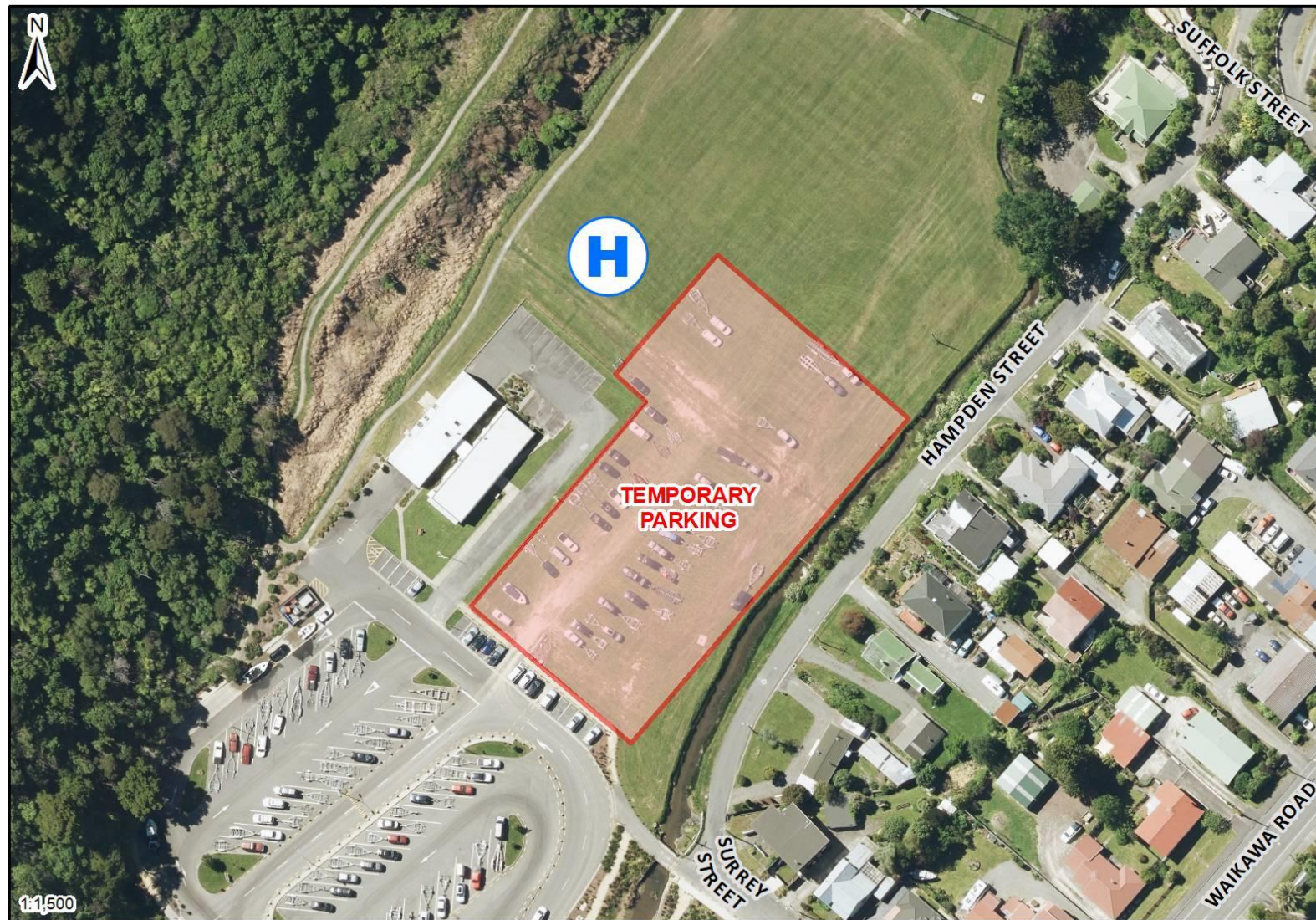
	may detract from amenity values.	
(h)	There will be no increased cost to the Council for maintenance unless approved by the Council.	There may be some minor increased costs for maintenance after temporary parking activity ceases, however this is not considered to be significant.
(i)	The proposal can be accommodated in terms of access, parking, services, support facilities and future expansion, if considered likely.	The proposed expansion of the temporary parking area will be accommodated with no change to access points, services or support facilities. Future expansion of the temporary parking on Memorial Park is not considered appropriate to ensure there is always space available for informal recreational activities.
(j)	Whether alternative locations for the proposal have been investigated.	There are no other large open areas near Picton Marina able to be used for the parking of those using the marina launching ramp. However, Port Marlborough are investigating the option for longer term parking on land towards the rear of Waikawa Marina. While this is several kilometres away, it is not uncommon for all parking associated with an activity not to be located immediately on site e.g. airport car parks.

21. During the review process undertaken for the current Plan there were both supporting and opposing submissions to the use of Memorial Park for parking activity. The decision to include Appendix 5 and supporting policies recognised the use of the Park for temporary parking as an appropriate activity.
22. The proposed change will increase the extent of area able to be used by approximately 40%. Over half of Memorial Parks open space area will still be available for informal recreation on the Park when the temporary parking area is occupied. Overall the Council considers after completing the review for use of Memorial Park, that the proposed change in paragraph 11 of this document is consistent with the provisions of the Plan.

Other Matters

23. While Section 41 of the Reserves Act normally requires a two round submission process, in circumstances where a comprehensive review is not being undertaken there is some flexibility in the process. Section 41(5A) of the Act enables the Council to not undertake the first submission round if it considers that written suggestions would not materially assist in preparing changes to the plan. This is a very singular issue with only one change to the Plan proposed. Additionally, there is already awareness of the issue within the community. Therefore, the Council has resolved to only have one round of submissions for this process.
24. All of those that submitted to the Draft Victoria Domain Reserves Management Plan will be informed of the proposed change and advised they can make a submission to this proposed change.

Appendix 1 – Appendix 5 from current Victoria Domain Reserves Management Plan



Appendix 2 – Proposed change to Appendix 5 of Victoria Domain Reserves Management Plan

