

# Parks



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*Of the average annual bill for each Christchurch ratepayer, which is around \$750, \$93.95 or just over 12 per cent, is currently spent on maintaining and developing the City's parks.*

**Parks play an important part in the image** of Christchurch and in the quality of life for its residents.

Nearly 5,000 hectares of the City is parkland, consisting of 83 urban sports parks, 450 neighbourhood parks, 33 garden parks, 61 natural heritage and regional parks and 11 cemeteries. However, due to the complex nature of this asset it is difficult to measure the benefit of parks. From the Botanical Gardens to the multitude of sports fields throughout the City; from small neighbourhood playgrounds to the many recreational activities which take place in Hagley Park, Christchurch would certainly be a far poorer City without its abundance of parks. Looking after and enhancing these parks, by planting trees, keeping the gardens, mowing the grass and maintaining features such as toilets, pavilions, paddling pools, park furniture, car parks, paths and bridges, represents the majority of annual investment made by the City in this asset.

# Service Options

**There are 11 areas of service** to consider in determining what standard of parks Christchurch people wish to pay for. These are:—

## Turf

Caring for the 760 hectares of grass in Christchurch parks currently accounts for \$18.70 of the average individual rates bill. Maintaining a greater variation in grass length and lowering the standard of turf quality would reduce this amount to \$16.70. Improving the standard of the parks through increased mowing, irrigation and re-sowing would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on turf maintenance to \$20.70 every year. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* is to continue at the current level, with the addition of three hectares per year of irrigation for dry areas around Christchurch, costing a total of \$19.30 per year.

## Urban Sports Grounds

To provide for organised sports, one per cent of the City's 263 playing fields are currently renewed and upgraded every year and to cater for City growth two new urban sports parks are created annually. Along with maintenance, this accounts for \$6.40 of the average individual annual rates bill. To maintain these sports fields in a usable condition, at Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* it is estimated that the yearly rate of renewal would need to increase to 1.5 per cent, which would raise the cost to the average ratepayer to \$7.10. To cater for increased population growth, twice as many new sports fields are required to be constructed every year, which would further increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on urban sports parks to \$7.70.

### Service: Turf

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$16.70</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$18.70</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$20.70</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$19.30</b>

### Service: Urban Sports Grounds

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$6.40</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$6.40</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$7.70</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$7.10</b>



## Gardens

Planting and maintaining the 75 hectares of gardens in Christchurch parks currently accounts for \$14.60 of the average individual rates bill. Reducing the standard of the City's gardens by planting less and reducing maintenance would cut this amount to \$13.80. Councils *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* is to apply a more consistent standard of maintenance across the gardens and upgrade them for shelter and safety. This would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on the City's gardens to \$15.20 every year. To further enhance the gardens by increasing planting in high profile areas will increase this amount to \$15.30.

## Trees

Maintaining the City's stock of trees currently entails establishing 2,500 new trees, removing dangerous trees and planting 20 new streets with trees every year. This accounts for \$8.80 of the average individual annual rates bill. Reducing the number of streets planted by half would cut this amount to \$8.30 per annum. Increasing the rate of tree planting on reserves by 30 per cent, renewing and replacing woods and plantations over the next ten years and doubling the rate of street tree planting would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on trees to \$11.50 every year. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* is to maintain the existing service, while replacing the aging woodlots and avenue trees at an annual cost of \$9.65 to each ratepayer.

## Natural Areas

Certain areas and features of Christchurch have important conservation and ecological benefit. The Christchurch City Council has a role in maintaining and protecting these as part of the City's natural heritage. Including picnic grounds, beaches, forests and parts of the Port Hills, 61 parks fall into this category, amounting to 3370 hectares. Maintaining and developing these areas and undertaking the current Coast Care programme,

scheduled to run until 2001, costs around \$13.70 of the average individual annual rates bill. Council supports this, with the addition of further funding for maintenance of Coast Care work, increasing the cost to the average ratepayer to \$17. A further option is to continue Coast Care, to develop recent acquisitions such as the 112 hectare Travis wetland and maintain and develop future areas of conservation value on the Port Hills and Canterbury Plains. This option would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on maintaining and developing the City's natural areas to \$18.50 each year.

## Toilets

At present two to three public toilets in Christchurch parks are replaced each year, with two new toilets built on new reserves. Along with maintenance, this programme accounts for around \$6.20 of the average annual rates bill. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* would speed up the rate of renewal by replacing all the older style toilets to maintain the serviceability of the asset at an average annual cost to the ratepayer of \$6.80. Upgrading the newer toilets to meet building code standards, improving cleaning standards and building new toilets as pavilions with new sports grounds would further increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on toilets in parks to \$8.30 every year.

## Playgrounds

Six to eight of the 261 playgrounds in Christchurch parks are currently renewed every year, while on average a further eight new playgrounds are established. Maintaining existing playgrounds and

### Service: Gardens

Lowest possible:	\$13.80
Current Spend:	\$14.60
Premium:	\$15.30
Minimum acceptable:	\$15.20

### Service: Trees

Lowest possible:	\$8.30
Current Spend:	\$8.80
Premium:	\$11.50
Minimum acceptable:	\$9.65

### Service: Natural Areas

Lowest possible:	\$13.70
Current Spend:	\$13.70
Premium:	\$18.50
Minimum acceptable:	\$17

### Service: Toilets

Lowest possible:	\$6.20
Current Spend:	\$6.20
Premium:	\$8.30
Minimum acceptable:	\$6.80

### Service: Playgrounds

Lowest possible:	\$5.80
Current Spend:	\$5.80
Premium:	\$9.50
Minimum acceptable:	\$7.80



building new ones currently costs the average individual ratepayer \$5.80 each year. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* would increase the renewal programme to a level that would sustain the asset in an acceptable condition and provide six district playgrounds and facilities for teenagers, which would increase this cost to \$7.80 per annum. Further improving the service by building a greater number of playgrounds and by providing new district playgrounds and teenage recreational facilities would raise the amount spent on playgrounds by the average ratepayer to \$9.50 every year.

## Sealed Surfaces

There are currently 22.7 hectares of car parks and 98 km of pathways serving Christchurch parks, of which 17.8 hectares and 68 km respectively are sealed. The car parks are resealed on a 50 year programme while 1.8 km of new paths are built every year. This accounts for \$4 of the average individual annual rates bill. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* would reduce the installation rate but reseat the car parks more frequently at a rate of every 16 years, and maintain pathways in a serviceable condition by resurfacing them at the faster rate of every 20 years while resurfacing the gravel paths. This would increase this amount to \$4.30 per annum. Improving the car parks and pathways to a higher standard, using chip-seal, asphaltic concrete and unit pavers where appropriate would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on upgrading pathways and car parks in the City's parks to \$7 every year.

## Furniture

Providing seats, lighting, litter bins, barriers and picnic furniture in new and existing parks and reserves costs the average ratepayer around \$5.80 per annum. Cutting all further furniture installation would reduce this figure to \$5.65. Building more furniture of a higher quality through a faster rate of installation and additional maintenance would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on furniture in the parks to \$6.20 every year.

## Structures

There is currently no renewal programme for footbridges, jetties and other small structures in Christchurch parks. Remedial work of this kind is carried out when safety checks reveal that it is necessary, accounting for \$1.20 of the average individual rates bill. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* proposes a renewal programme to replace these structures which would increase the amount spent by the average ratepayer on this service to \$1.50 every year.

## Land Acquisition

Buying land to develop into new parks currently costs the average ratepayer around \$11.20 cents every year. A reduction in the current purchase programme to a level which will ensure there are a minimum of four hectares of open space for every 1,000 people in Christchurch would cut this cost to \$7.80 cents each year. Purchasing land at a faster rate for neighbourhood parks, sports grounds, park road frontages, new cemeteries, and natural areas on the Port Hills and the Canterbury Plains would increase this amount to \$26.50 every year. Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* would continue the current programme, while purchasing additional neighbourhood reserves, wetland areas and district parks and allowing for the future purchase of land for cemeteries at an annual cost of \$15 to each ratepayer.

## Service: Sealed Surfaces

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$1.55</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$1.55</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$1.70</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$1.60</b>

## Service: Furniture

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$5.65</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$5.80</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$6.20</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$5.80</b>

## Service: Structures

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$1.20</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$1.20</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$1.50</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$1.50</b>

## Service: Land Acquisition

<b>Lowest possible:</b>	<b>\$7.80</b>
<b>Current Spend:</b>	<b>\$11.20</b>
<b>Premium:</b>	<b>\$26.50</b>
<b>Minimum acceptable:</b>	<b>\$15</b>



### Summary

Maintaining and enhancing Christchurch parks currently costs the average ratepayer around **\$93.95** every year.

To provide a service at a lower standard, with all the possible savings identified, would reduce this amount to **\$87.10**.

To make all the improvements suggested above would raise this amount to **\$127.40**.

To provide a service consistent with the Council's *Minimum Acceptable Service Standard* would cost **\$106.75**.

### Summary of the costs of Parks

Lowest Possible...	\$87.10
Current...	\$93.95
Premium...	\$127.40
Minimum acceptable service...	\$106.75

## ***What do you think?***

If you wish to make a submission on the 1998 Annual Plan, these are some of the questions you might like to consider:

- How do you regard the recreational, economic and ecological benefits of the parks of Christchurch? How much do they contribute to the City's well-being, values and standard of lifestyle?
- Does the City require more parks? If so, who needs them most and what sorts of recreation should these parks provide?
- In providing services at all Christchurch parks, what should be the priorities for the Christchurch City Council — gardens, sports facilities, toilets, playgrounds, park furniture, car parking?
- Are you prepared to pay higher rates to improve the service in any of these areas? If so, which one or which ones?
- Would you rather pay less in rates for a lower standard of service?
- Are you content that the present service at the present cost is about right?

**Please fill in and return the submission form at the rear of this book to make your views known on the maintenance and development of the City's parks.**

**Christchurch parks play an important role in the image of the City — for residents and for visitors. They provide green open spaces for relaxation and exercise, facilities for sports teams to play and practise, conservation habitat to bring nature into the City and playgrounds for families to enjoy.**

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### **Contact**

If you would like further information on the service options and the cost implications facing Christchurch in relation to parks, please contact

**Mark Rykers** on

**371 1640.**