Purpose of the Hamilton Gardens Review

Hamilton City Council is undertaking a strategic review of a number of its activities and facilities to ensure they are meeting current needs. A similar exercise will soon be underway for Hamilton City Libraries and Waikato Museum.

Hamilton Gardens is classified as a park. Under the Reserves Act (1977), parks are required to have a Management Plan prepared in consultation with the community and periodically reviewed. The last review of the Hamilton Gardens Plan was in 2000.

Development of Hamilton Gardens to date has been very successful, but one aspect to consider is whether the city could take greater advantage of this success. This might be in the form of further promotion, revenue generation, attracting events to the city or encouraging city visitors to stay longer.

It is often suggested the development of Hamilton Gardens should be sped up, or the gardens in the central enclosed area should at least be finished. This raises challenges around priorities and how any such development might be resourced.
Review Process

26 June
The Hamilton community is advised of Council’s intention to review the Management Plan for Hamilton Gardens. This is done through various channels including public notices, City News, press releases, social media and newsletters.

14 July
A public open day is held at Hamilton Gardens to promote informed feedback.

26 July
The first opportunity to make a written submission closes and the feedback is then considered by the Council Working Group.

17 September
A Draft Management Plan is completed and considered by Council’s ‘Strategy and Policy Committee’.

28 September
The Draft Management Plan for Hamilton Gardens is advertised for public comment.

29 November
The second opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Management Plan closes.

Early February
People who have made submissions have an opportunity to speak to their submission to a council subcommittee.

By 28 February
Council finalises the Management Plan, which is forwarded to the Minister of Conservation for approval as the new Operative Management Plan.
The Hamilton Gardens Concept

To promote an understanding of the context, meaning and history of gardens. Hamilton Gardens is planned as a ‘conceptual garden’ and this type of garden now appears to have become a major international trend. Conceptual gardens are defined as gardens that seek to portray an idea or concept, rather than providing just a landscape design solution or plant collections.

The concept for Hamilton Gardens is similar to that of a modern gallery or museum. For example the concept of the Guggenheim is to ‘promote an understanding of the context meaning of art’.

No other garden in the world appears to have this particular theme and one of the reasons for its success is that it can appeal to diverse interests, not just an interest in plants. Providing the designs have historic integrity, the story of gardens reflects the story of civilisations, their arts, beliefs and lifestyles. You can be transported into a 16th century garden of a Renaissance prince or a Mughal emperor and around every corner there is something completely different. This story of gardens transcends the centuries and the globe.

The thirty two existing and proposed gardens are arranged in five garden collections each addressing a different aspect of the overall theme.
A: Paradise Garden Collection

A collection of gardens representing some of the most significant small enclosed garden design traditions. ‘Paradise’ is derived from the Persian word *pairidaeza* meaning ‘enclosed garden’. The gardens representing different cultures and historic periods have each evolved for a different purpose.

A:1 Chinese Scholar’s Garden
An interpretation of the 10th – 12th Century Sung Dynasty gardens that were designed as natural worlds of imagination and surprise. (Existing)

A:2 Japanese Garden of Contemplation
An example of the 14th – 16th Century Muromachi Period garden designed for quiet contemplation, meditation and study. (Existing)

A:3 English Flower Garden
An example of the English 19th Century Arts and Crafts gardens designed as a setting for plant collections and planned seasonal colour compositions. (Existing)

A:4 Modernist Garden
A late 20th Century garden designed for outdoor living with a design form influenced by modern art movements. (Existing)

A:5 Italian Renaissance Garden
An interpretation of a 15th-16th Century Renaissance garden in which the owner sought to rationalise, control and improve upon nature. (Existing)

A:6 Indian Char Bagh Garden
An interpretation of a 16th-17th Century symbolic four-quartered Islamic garden built by the Mughal aristocracy as an escape from a harsh dry environment. (Existing)
B: Landscape Garden Collection

Through history changing attitudes and philosophies about the natural landscape have been reflected in the different interpretations of an idealised landscape. Attitudes ranging from veneration and domination to the conservation and restoration are reflected in different kinds of garden.

B:1 Bussaco Woodland
A tranquil and natural looking woodland with isolated viewing areas for contemplation, in the tradition common to many cultures from the 3rd to 12th Centuries. (Substantially complete)

B:2 Hamilton East Park Cemetery
An example of the cemeteries influenced by the late 19th /early 20th Park Cemetery Movement that sought to improve community behaviour with improved environmental conditions. (Existing)

B:3 Echo Bank Bush
An area of remnant indigenous flora maintained in the 20th Century conservation tradition. (Existing but requiring access decking)

B:4 Valley Walk
A landscape garden in the 20th Century Naturalistic/Aesthetic style using indigenous Waikato plants to recreate a semi natural looking environment. (Half of the area fully developed)

B:5 Hillside Lawn
An example of landscape restoration from industrial use; in this case an old city rubbish dump. (Existing)

B:6 Baroque Formal Garden
A classic 17th /18th Century French Baroque garden which projected the owner’s power and wealth. (Proposed)
C: Productive Garden Collection

Gardens representing different forms of productive gardening ranging from early agriculture and estate kitchen gardens to modern sustainable gardening.

C:1 Herb Garden
A garden displaying plants for culinary, cosmetic, perfume and medicinal purposes. (Existing)

C:2 Kitchen Garden
Based on the traditional 18th/19th Century European kitchen gardens, this garden displays a range of vegetables and small fruits maintained by WINTEC students and staff. (Existing)

C:3 Sustainable Backyard
Small enclosed garden demonstrating principles of sustainable food production on a backyard scale. (Existing)

C:4 Te Parapara
A garden demonstrating traditional Maori horticulture, with particular reference to the gardens and traditions along the local Waikato riverbanks in pre-European times. (Existing)

C:5 Ancient Egyptian Garden
The recreation of a 2000BC Egyptian garden representing one of the very first decorative garden traditions of the ancient world. (Proposed)
D: Fantasy Garden Collection

Gardens representing the different genres of garden fantasy that transcend cultures and have inspired most innovations in garden design. They include references to mythical gardens, other cultures and climates, elements of mysticism and surrealism and gardens that provide a setting for fantasy events and artwork.

D:1 Chinoiserie Garden
A garden incorporating elements of Chinoiserie design, which was a fashionable and fanciful European interpretation of Oriental design in the late 18th and 19th Century. (Existing)

D:2 Tropical Garden
A common garden fantasy is to use plants from other climatic regions, such as a tropical-looking garden growing in the temperate Waikato climate. (Under development)

D:3 Surrealist Garden
A garden that explores the mysterious world of fantasy and the subconscious mind with distortions of scale and surreal garden features. (Under development)

D:4 Tudor Garden
An interpretation of a 16th Century English Renaissance garden decorated with knot gardens and fantasy beasts. (Under development)

D:5 Concept Garden
A 21st Century garden that seeks to portray a single idea rather than a design solution in a manner similar to conceptual art. (Proposed)

D:6 Picturesque Garden
An artificially created wild natural landscape with artificial historic features representing the 18th Century Picturesque garden tradition often associated with the Romantic Period. (Proposed)

D:7 Garden Party Lawn
Recreation of the early 19th Century New Zealand garden described in Katherine Mansfield’s fictional story ‘The Garden Party’. (Proposed)

D:8 Theatre Garden
A 18th /19th Century German or Austrian Rocco /Baroque garden which provided a dramatic theatrical setting and the garden equivalent of classical music. (Proposed)

D:9 Medieval Garden
An example of a 13th Century European courtyard garden based, as many were, on the famous poem ‘Roman de la Rose’. (Proposed)
E: Cultivar Garden Collection

A collection of gardens that tell the story of well-known garden plants selected and bred for the garden. This includes the stories of the plant collectors, breeders and speculators.

E:1  Rogers Rose Garden
Several rose collections telling the story of the history and development of the modern rose from species to the latest hybrids. (Existing)

E:2  Rhododendron Lawn
A selection of species and cultivars focusing on the plant hunters and subsequent development of azalea and rhododendron. (Existing)

E:3  Hammond Camellia Garden
A garden showing the range of Camellia from species to a diversity of modern cultivars. (Existing)

E:4  Victorian Flower Garden
A garden featuring tender plants selected and grown for their tropical colour and utilized in bedding and display houses in the 19th Century Gardenesque tradition. (Existing)

E:5  New Zealand Cultivar Garden
A garden displaying New Zealand plants selected and bred for foliage colour. (Proposed)

E:6  Dutch Renaissance Garden
A 17th Century Dutch renaissance garden telling the story of the golden age of plant importation and speculation. (Proposed)
A: Paradise Garden Collection
A collection of gardens representing significant enclosed garden traditions.

A:1 Chinese Scholar's Garden
A:2 Japanese Garden of Contemplation
A:3 English Flower Garden
A:4 Modernist Garden
A:5 Italian Renaissance Garden
A:6 Indian Char Bagh Garden

B: Landscape Garden Collection
Collection representing different historic philosophical interpretations of an idealised landscape.

B:1 Bussaco Woodland
B:2 Hamilton East Park Cemetery
B:3 Echo Bank Bush
B:4 Valley Walk
B:5 Hillside Lawn
B:6 Baroque Formal Garden

C: Productive Garden Collection
Gardens representing some different forms of productive gardening.

C:1 Herb Garden
C:2 Kitchen Garden
C:3 Sustainable Backyard
C:4 Te Parapara
C:5 Ancient Egyptian Garden

D: Fantasy Garden Collection
Gardens representing the different forms of garden fantasy.

D:1 Chinoiserie Garden
D:2 Tropical Garden
D:3 Surrealist Garden
D:4 Tudor Garden
D:5 Concept Garden
D:6 Picturesque Garden
D:7 Garden Party Lawn
D:8 Theatre Garden
D:9 Medieval Garden

E: Cultivar Garden Collection
Gardens that tell the story of well-known plants selected and bred for the garden.

E:1 Rogers Rose Garden
E:2 Rhododendron Lawn
E:3 Hammond Camellia Garden
E:4 Victorian Flower Garden
E:5 New Zealand Cultivar Garden
E:6 Dutch Renaissance Garden

CP = Car Parks
Our Garden Heritage

Gardens have always reflected changing philosophies, artistic and architectural movements, different religious beliefs, available technology and social structures. So the thirty two proposed gardens within Hamilton Gardens will tell the story of civilization in a unique way.
Theatre of the Illusion

There are many aspects of Hamilton Gardens designed to engage the imagination of adults and children.

In different gardens you might imagine yourself as a Renaissance prince, Mughal emperor, Chinese Scholar or that you’re having tea with the vicar in an ‘English Flower Garden’. The stories of ‘A Hundred and One Nights’ were told in an’ Indian Char Bagh Garden’ rather like ours. In the ‘Tropical Garden’ or Display Houses you might even feel that you are in a luxuriant tropical setting. Increasingly corporate and concert organisers are theming their event to these garden settings.

The proposed ‘Garden Party Lawn’, ‘Medieval Garden’ and ‘Egyptian Garden’ are based on very famous gardens that have only ever existed in stories, poems and artwork. There can be a fine line between serious garden and tasteless theme park but it wouldn’t be out of place for the ‘Picturesque Garden’ to have a resident hermit (weekends only).

Recently several well know Hamilton families each sponsored a mythical beast for the Tudor Garden and mythical bronze lions are to be donated for the Chinese Scholar’s Garden. The Friends of Hamilton Gardens are currently sponsoring the bronze sculptures of Mad Hatter and White Rabbit for the ‘Time Court’.

There are several mysterious doors around different gardens including one being sponsored by the Friends that leads into a hillside and there will be another door 6 metres high. It is proposed to make these doors and those who might be living behind them the subject of a very scary children’s guide book.

The proposed Surrealist Garden (pictured) will have everything in it five times the normal size so you’ll probably feel as if you’re 30 cm high. Some of the flowers will talk to each other and out of the corner of your eye you may just notice that one of the mysterious, giant topiary figures has moved.
The Current Fantasy Garden Development Programme

Development of the three of the Fantasy Gardens is well underway. The costs to complete them is included in Council’s Ten Year Plan with support from the Hamilton Gardens Development Trust who are raising sponsorship to cover the full cost.

**Tropical Garden**
The structure of this garden is substantially completed with work still required on the vertical gardens, the pond and completion of the planting. Council and the Development Trust have $80,000 in hand to complete this garden this financial year and hope to open it early in 2014.

**Tudor Garden**
$240,000 is still required to complete the pavilion, pergola and the Elizabethan Wall. It is hoped to open this garden in 2015.

**Surrealist Garden**
While a start has been made on this garden most of the work is still ahead and estimated to cost $560,000. At present it is hoped to open this garden in 2017.
Costs to Complete the Central Enclosed Gardens

**Garden Party Lawn**
A recreation of the early 19th Century New Zealand garden described in Katherine Mansfield’s fictional story 'The Garden Party'.
$800,000

**Concept Garden** – (New Zealand Landscape)
A 21st Century garden that seeks to portray a single idea rather than a design solution in a manner similar to conceptual art.
$250,000

**Medieval Garden**
An example of a 13th Century European courtyard garden based, as many were, on the famous poem ‘Roman de la Rose’.
$650,000

**Picturesque Garden**
An artificially created wild landscape with artificial historic features representing the 18th Century Picturesque garden tradition often associated with the Romantic Period.
$600,000

**Rococo Theatre Garden**
A 18th /19th Century German or Austrian Rococo/Baroque garden which provided a dramatic theatrical setting and the garden equivalent of classical music.
$900,000

**Ancient Egyptian Garden**
The recreation of a 2,000 BC Egyptian Garden representing one of the very first decorative garden traditions in the ancient world.
$600,000

Estimated total cost of remaining development in the Enclosed Sector
$3,800,000
Projects Currently Underway at Hamilton Gardens

Tropical-looking plant collections
The fantasy of having a tropical, luxuriant and abundant looking garden in a climate with cold winters presents an interesting challenge. Apart from careful plant selection a frost protection system has been installed.

Ultrasound in the Chinese Garden
An ultrasonic system is being installed to kill algae that are making the Chinese pond water cloudy. The sound waves are completely safe for humans, fish and plants, but break down algal and biofilm cell walls.

Vertical wall design
The new Tropical Garden will include vertical gardens full of plants like ferns, bromeliads and orchids to give a lush tropical appearance. The vertical gardens will mostly consist of specialised panels connected to a drip irrigation system.

Preparing to build a trial Tron
The Surrealist Garden is in the early stages of development and one of the first challenges will be to create a prototype of the giant topiary figures, called Trons, that may occasionally move and twitch. This is likely to be done with donated materials and a Saturday working bee.

Hansen Asset Management System
As the Gardens become more complex, a more robust asset management system is required to improve strategic planning, capturing data, ensuring data integrity, assist with budget management and improve response rates to issues as they arise.

HaGIS
A ‘Hamilton Gardens Information System’ is being developed for staff recording information about every garden. This includes; design intention, as built plans, maintenance standards, specialist maintenance requirements, the history of the garden and technical information.

Time Court Sculptures
The Friends of Hamilton Gardens are sponsoring a new set of bronze sculptures by artist Anneke Bester. They will depict the Mad Hatter and White Rabbit based on the original illustrations for Alice in Wonderland with references to the surrounding Fantasy Gardens.

New Zealand’s Garden Route
Tour packages are being developed for a USA based Tour Company called Collette Vacations. These will involve the tour being based in Hamilton with a package of events in Hamilton Gardens including; wine tasting, cooking demonstration and guided tour. In previous years they’ve been based in Rotorua.

From dry hire to inclusive packages
Historically the Pavilion has been available for dry hire (space only). The Business Development team are putting together a range of commissionable packages which include: catering, equipment and theming to meet a range of client requirements and budgets.
Interface with the River

A number of projects are proposed to increase Hamilton Gardens interface with the river.

- The ‘Waikato River Explorer’ has encountered problems with the existing jetty which is in need of substantial replacement. A new jetty has been proposed below the Renaissance Pavilion providing direct access into the heart of Hamilton Gardens. The estimated costs of this are:
  - Stage one - Jetty pontoon, ramp and stairs $195,000
  - Stage two – lower terrace, Venetian poles etc $55,000

- There is an opportunity to promote river trips along with a guided tour of Hamilton Gardens and refreshments as a total tourist package. This will have sufficient value to provide an attractive commission structure for tour companies.

There are six riverside gardens still to be developed or completed.
- Lawn Court (Between the Sustainable Garden and Tudor Garden)
- Tudor Garden
- Concept Garden (NZ Landscape)
- Picturesque Garden
- Theatre Garden
- Echo Bank Bush (decks to provide access to the steep cliffs)

As views of the river are opened up it will be important to maintain a planting screen on the opposite river bank and attractive views from the river.

- A pedestrian bridge has been proposed over the river to provide access to the reserve land on the opposite side. This is probably a longer term project.

- Eventually the river walk will continue south above Echo Bank Bush and below the proposed Expressway to link up with the existing Hammond Park walkway and future Riverlea Gully walkway.
Projects that have been proposed for Hamilton Gardens

Mobile Interpretation
A suggestion has been made that mobile apps are developed for multi-language tours, with appropriate music and images possibly using GPS to trigger each destination.

Audiovisual Theatre
There is the potential to develop a small audio visual theatre in the Italian Renaissance pavilion at an estimated cost of $76,000. This could provide a great introduction to the history and concept of Hamilton Gardens for those arriving by tour boat. It could also be used for school groups.

Tour Group Packages
There is a proposal to develop commissionable packages including high quality tours of Hamilton Gardens and meal options possibly in association with other destinations such as the Waikato Museum. Themed tours could be marketed; for example a Maori culture tour.

Garden Themed Playground
An enlarged playground is proposed on the Governors’ Lawn with a garden theme. For example: swings hung below a pergola, giant flowers and a turf maze. A new toilet is eventually proposed nearby to serve that area of the park.

Garden Kitchen
A ‘Garden Kitchen’ has been proposed on the enclosed lawn adjacent to the Kitchen Garden. Cooking demonstrations could involve celebrity chefs harvesting vegetables and herbs on their way to the ‘Garden Kitchen’. A ‘Master Chef’ programme could require contestants to cook a meal appropriate to a selected garden.

Exclusive use of the Gardens for Corporate Functions
There is the potential for exclusive use of gardens for corporate or conference events like dinners and cocktail functions. The scope of this is limited by the Reserves Act (1977).

Hamilton Gardens Institute
Someone has suggested a ‘Hamilton Gardens Institute’ as the national centre of Amenity Horticulture, combining the horticulture, botany and garden history units of WINTEC and Waikato University with Hamilton Gardens.

School Education Programmes
There has been a long standing proposal to develop a diverse range of educational units for Hamilton Gardens in manner similar to those used at Hamilton Zoo and Waikato Museum.

Plant sales via QR Codes
Most people buy plants at garden centres without knowing what they will eventually look like. It has been suggested that plant labels include a QR code that allows people to look up a lot more information and even order the plant on line.
Above: the Hamilton Gardens site as it was in 1966. The southern part of the site was a ‘sand mine’, where river sand for municipal works was sourced. Also visible are a go-kart track and netball courts.

Hamilton Gardens Timeline

1907 Bateson’s Nursery established on the present nursery site.
1951 Bateson’s Nursery becomes the Municipal Nursery.
1960 Roadside area is opened as Hamilton Gardens with an opening ceremony held on July 24.
1970 The Rogers Rose Garden is opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
1971 World Rose Convention held in Hamilton.
1982 Camellia Garden completed.
1983 Wintec (then called Waikato Polytech) establishes a Horticultural Education Centre at Hamilton Gardens.
1989 The Hamilton Gardens Pavilion and the English Flower Garden are completed.
1991 The Egyptian figures make the news across the world.
1993 Suffrage Pavilion completed to mark Suffrage centennial.
1994 Piazza completed.
1997 Modernist Garden opened.
1998 First Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival held.
2000 Italian Renaissance Garden opened.
2001 First annual Pacific Rose Bowl Festival and NZ Rose of the Year Trial. The Sustainable Backyard opened.
2002 Russian Bell and French Rose Garden completed.
2005 Indian Char Bagh Garden opened.
2009 A rose named Hamilton Gardens cultivated by Dr. Sam McGredy, is released.
2010 Te Parapara opened.
Major fundraising groups to have supported Hamilton Gardens

Friends of Hamilton Gardens – Have supported many projects, large and small, around Hamilton Gardens. Members of the Friends have also attended the Information Centre 263 days a year over the last 20 years.

Chinese Garden Trust – Raised funds to develop the Chinese Scholar’s Garden.

Garden World Trust – Organisers of the large Gardenworld Festivals at Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens Building Trust – Raised funds to build the Hamilton Gardens Pavilion.

Hamilton Gardens Development Trust – Currently raising funds to develop the three Fantasy Gardens.

Hamilton Gardens Entertainment Trust – Organised the annual Turtle Lake Concert and raised funds for HG.

Hamilton Garden Summer Festival Foundation – Run the annual Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival.

Indian Char Bagh Garden Trust – Support for development of the Indian Char Bagh Garden

Italian Renaissance Garden Trust – Fundraising for the development of the Italian Renaissance Garden

Japanese Garden Trust – Raised practically all of the funds required to develop the Japanese Garden of Contemplation.

Kathleen Braithwaite (Ex Hamilton Mayoress) – Sponsor of the English Flower Garden

Modernist Garden Trust – Funds raised for the Modernist Garden.

Muriel House – Sponsorship of the Ancestral Walk

Pacific Rose Bowl Trust – Organise the annual Pacific Rose Bowl Festival.

Rose Garden Committee – Substantial redevelopment of the Rogers Rose Garden

Russian Bell Tower Trust – Raised funds to build the Russian Bell Tower

Te Parapara Garden Trust – Raised funds to build the Te Parapara Garden.

Waikato Camellia Society – Support for the development of the Camellia Garden.

Waikato Garden Festival Trust – Festivals and fundraising.


Waikato Rose Society – Support for the development of the Rogers Rose Garden.
Hamilton Gardens as an Events Venue

Most of the events held in Hamilton Gardens are not open to the public, but the following are regular public events.

ANZAC Concert
Bonsai Show
Bottle and Collectable Show
Caged Bird Show
Cat Shows
Chrysanthemum Show
Creative Fibre Exhibition
Daffodil Shows
Dahlia Shows
Doll and Teddy Bear Show
Dutch Festival
Hamilton Antique Fair
Hamilton Gardens Arts Festival
Hispanic Spring Festival
Italian Festival
Karate Competitions
Lily Shows
Model Boat Regatta
Model Railroaders’ Expo
Natural Health Expos
Orchid Shows
Pacific Rose Bowl Festival
Pipe Band Competitions
Pumpkin Festival
Quilt Makers Expo
Rose Shows
Salvation Army Christmas Concert
Scarecrow Festival
Spring Orchid Show
Stations of the Cross
Textile Art Show
Tree Crops Plan Sale
Tulip Festival
Waikato Maths Competition
Waikato Rose Show
Waikato Science Fair
Wedding Expo
Did you know?

During the 1960’s the Hamilton Gardens site was a sand pit and the city dump.

That Hamilton Gardens costs $18.50 per year for each Hamilton resident.

There are about 800,000 visitors to Hamilton Gardens each year.

The Hamilton Gardens Nursery produces plants that are used throughout the city and sells some to other local councils.

Hamilton Gardens was officially opened in 1960 although most development at Hamilton Gardens has occurred since 1980.

The Rogers Rose Garden has been recognised as one of the world class rose gardens.

The total value added to the local economy from visitors to Hamilton Gardens is $8.9 million and it generates $22 million in economic activity (2007 figures).

Economic benefits to the city economy can be increased if city visitors can be occupied for four hours encouraging them to stay overnight.

Over the last 30 years sponsorship, subsidies and voluntary work to support the development of Hamilton Gardens has been worth about $5 million.

Friends of Hamilton Gardens volunteers attend the Information Centre 363 days a year.

There are over 570 significant events held at Hamilton Gardens each year.

Seventeen gardeners maintain Hamilton Gardens.