



One Tree Hill College, recipient of the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund, 2022

Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund

Guidelines for the 2025/2026 contestable funding round

December 2024



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About the fund

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund (SRFIF) was established to support the development of sport and active recreation facilities that create opportunities for Aucklanders to get active.

Auckland Council recognises the important role that non-council facilities play in serving Auckland's sport and recreation sector.

The Long-term Plan 2024 - 2034 (LTP) allocated \$150 million over 10 years, with an additional \$35 million of funding over three years (FY26-FY28), making a total SRFIF budget of \$185 million.

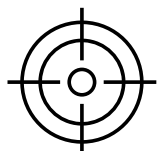
The fund provides grant investment in non-council facility projects to:

- address sport and recreation infrastructure shortfalls.
- respond to changing participation preferences.
- deliver value-for-money by leveraging third-party investment.
- get more Aucklanders more active more often.

There are two funding processes within the SRFIF:

Targeted process:

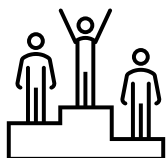
To facilitate high-priority projects



- By invitation
- Case-by-case assessment
- Council is proactive

Contestable process:

To ensure breadth of access to funding for community-led facility projects



- By application
- Competitive assessment
- Council is reactive

The [Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund Framework FY 2026 - FY 2028](#) provides overarching guidance for the administration of both the contestable and targeted processes of the fund.

These guidelines are for the **contestable process** of the SRFIF in financial year 2025/2026.

Auckland Council policy context

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund Framework is informed by the following Auckland Council policy and strategy documents:

The [Auckland Plan 2050](#) Belonging and Participation outcome, Focus Area 7: Recognise the value of arts, culture, sport and recreation to quality of life.

The 'Infrastructure' priority in the [Auckland Sport and Recreation Strategic Action Plan 2014-2024](#) (ASARSAP), notably initiative 7.2: Provide quality fit-for-purpose facilities at regional, sub-regional and local levels for informal recreation and sport.

The [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039](#) (IAPISIP) which sets out the council's objectives and investment approach for sport.

Previous investment and leverage

Since its establishment in 2019, the SRFIF has allocated more than \$57 million to support 79 sports and recreation projects across Auckland.

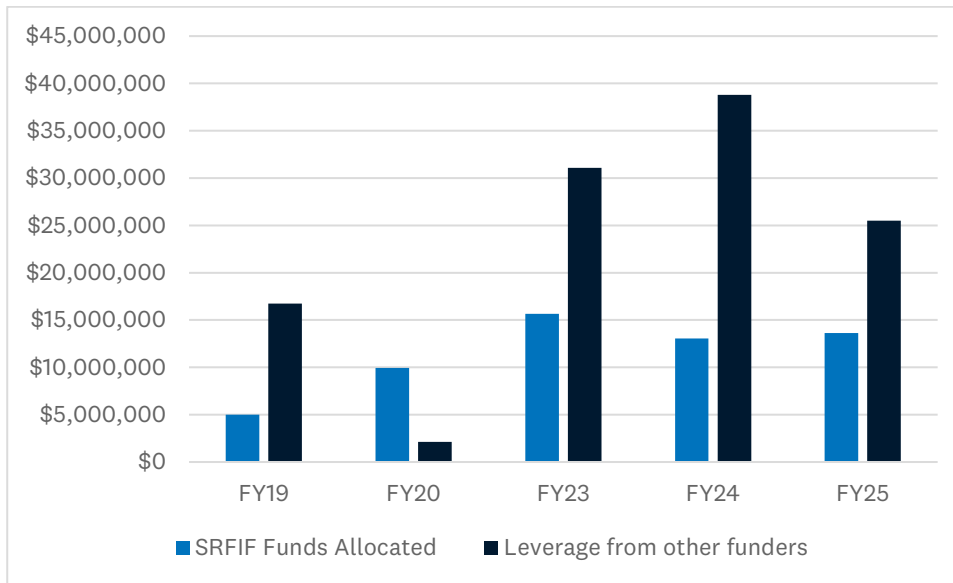
In previous funding rounds, the SRFIF allocated the following sums:

- [2018/19](#) – \$5,000,000
- [2019/20](#) – \$9,933,940
- [2021/22 and 2022/23](#) – \$15,668,800
- [2023/24](#) – \$13,040,000
- [2024/25](#) – \$13,636,178

The allocation of council funds frequently empowers grant recipients to raise additional funds from third-party funders to meet their total project costs. To date, grants from SRFIF have contributed an average of 33 per cent of the total project costs for recipients.

Attracting third-party funds remains a key focus of the SRFIF. All projects are expected to leverage additional sources of funding and use the SRFIF as a part-funder for the total project costs, often as 'cornerstone funding'.

SRFIF funds allocated vs funding from other sources:



Future funding rounds

The contestable funding round will open on Tuesday 18 February 2025. Grant decisions will be confirmed in July 2025 (2025/2026 financial year allocation).

The allocated LTP budget includes the additional \$35 million over financial years (FY) 2026-2028

Current budgets indicate the following amounts available:

- 2025/26 – **\$23.8M** (confirmed funding currently available in this round)
- 2026/27 – \$24.1M*
- 2027/28 – \$29.3M*

**Provisional budgets – subject to annual budget confirmation*

These budgets are for both the targeted process and the contestable process. The targeted process allocation will happen first, with the remaining funds available for the contestable process. The targeted allocation is expected to vary from year to year based on the circumstances of projects. The intent is to allocate approximately 70% of the available budget to the targeted process. The final amount available in the contestable funding round for FY26 will be confirmed in mid-February 2025.

Who can apply to the fund?

Eligibility for the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund will be guided by the [Community Grant Policy Guidelines](#).

The following groups may be eligible to apply to the Fund:

- Community groups with a sport and/or recreation focus, e.g. sports clubs, community facility trusts.
- National or regional sport and recreation organisations.
- Iwi, schools, universities or religious organisations (wanting to provide community access to their sport and recreation facilities).
- Commercial entities may apply for grants in certain circumstances (including where partnership investment can be leveraged and community participation outcomes are significant).

Not eligible for this fund

- Facilities with no community sport and/or active recreation benefit.
- High performance or early childhood facilities (unless that component of the project is paid for by another funder and/or is complimentary to community access outcomes and financial sustainability).
- Facility maintenance or staff costs.
- Events or programming costs.
- Retrospective funding of projects.
- Applications to undertake needs assessments.
- Debt repayment.
- Auckland Council and/or Council Controlled Organisations applying for council-owned assets.

Applications from groups using council-owned assets

The SRFIF is primarily intended to support the development of non-council-owned facilities. However, given the diverse ownership models of existing sport and recreation infrastructure, council may also consider applications from organisations requesting upgrades or extensions to council-owned assets they use. These assets might include sports fields, pools, outdoor and indoor courts, water access facilities, and other recreational infrastructure.

The merits of those applications will be considered using the same funding priority lens as applications for non-council assets (as set out below) with a particular focus on: the impact on identified facility network gaps; addressing inequity in provision; opportunities for facility partnerships; availability of other council funding sources; and the absence of funding leverage.

How to apply to the fund

These guidelines are for the contestable portion of the Sport and Recreation Facilities Investment Fund. You must submit an application that will be assessed against the criteria in these guidelines. The decision to award a grant will be made by Auckland Council's Community Committee.

All application information must be submitted through Smartygrants – council's online grants portal. Links to the application forms will be available on the [Sport and Recreation Facility Investment Fund](#) webpage on the council website.

Provisional timeline

Stage	Date
Applications open	18 Feb 2025, 9:00 am
Applications close	18 Mar 2025, 11:59 pm
Processing, analysis, and feedback (staff led)	Mar-Apr 2025
Shortlisted applicants notified. Unsuccessful applicants informed.	24 Apr 2025
Site visits and request further information (if required)	Apr - May 2025
Mana Whenua and local board engagement (staff led) *	May 2025
Independent Assessment Panel materials circulated	May 2025
Independent Assessment Panel review meeting and recommendations	Jun 2025
Final analysis and recommendations (staff led)	Jun 2025
Governing body committee workshop (feedback on recommendations) *	9 Jul 2025
Governing body committee business meeting (funding decision) *	29 Jul 2025
Funding agreements developed with grant recipients (staff led)	Aug - Oct 2025

* Subject to mana whenua and governing body meeting schedules

Assessing applications and funding decisions

Sport and recreation facilities come in different shapes and sizes, for different codes and from all corners of the Auckland region. The SRFIF receives applications for projects that vary greatly in scale, cost, code, location, etc. and an assessment approach is required that is fair, transparent and rigorous for all of them.

All applications will be assessed for eligibility (page 6), alignment to the funding priorities (page 8 to 11), and achievability (page 11).

After processing and analysing each application, projects identified as high priority projects will be shortlisted. All unsuccessful applicants will be informed that they will not be progressing in this round. Where possible, council staff will try to advise groups who do not proceed where their application needs further development. The last section in these guidelines details alternative funding opportunities that groups may wish to explore.
















Shortlisted applications will then be reviewed by an independent assessment panel (comprised of experienced and knowledgeable sports sector experts).




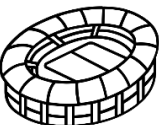
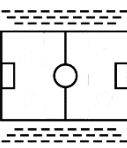
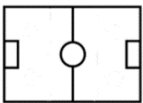
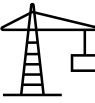





Final recommendations are then presented to the Community Committee for funding allocation decisions.




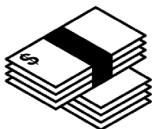




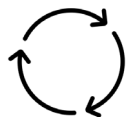
Funding priorities

The fund applies a wide range of criteria to accommodate potential applications for the wide range of sport and recreation facilities required to serve Auckland communities. The intention is to ensure Auckland Council investment provides for the greatest number of people possible and meets the changing needs of the community. Investment will support a basic level of provision of fit-for-purpose sport and recreation facilities to support community sport and recreation.

Multiple criteria will be considered to allow for a diverse range of projects to present themselves for SRFIF investment. It is expected that projects will present a mix of high medium and low-priority characteristics, but successful applications will need to align with multiple high-priority criteria within the tables below:

People and community priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Communities of greatest need Communities who have limited capability to access social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population. 	Communities of some need Communities who are able to access some social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population. 	Communities of least need Communities who can readily access social and economic resources and opportunities compared to the general population. 
Strong benefit to Māori Projects led by Māori, strongly supported by Māori and/or develop facilities that will help Māori be more active. 	Some Māori outcomes Projects that develop facilities that will help Māori be more active. 	No specific benefit to Māori Projects that develop facilities that deliver no specific benefit to Māori activity levels. 
Inactive communities Projects that will have a significant impact on insufficiently active communities (low participation in sport and recreation), including, but not limited to, high deprivation communities, females, tamariki and rangatahi, disability groups. 	Insufficiently active communities Projects that will have a moderate impact on inactive/low-participant communities. 	Highly active communities Projects serving highly active communities that have a limited impact on inactive/low-participant communities. 
High participation High participation sports or emerging sports with high growth potential. 	Medium participation Medium participation sports or emerging sports with medium growth potential. 	Low participation Low participation sports or emerging sports with low growth potential. 
Partnerships Projects involving partnerships between community groups with evidence of significant participation impact. 	Single use Investment in single code or single use facilities with evidence of significant participation impact. 	Limited access Investment in projects that deliver private benefits or have minimal participation impact. 

Infrastructure priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Core infrastructure Indoor facilities, courts, fields, playing surfaces, structures and lighting that is central to sport and recreation participation. 	Ancillary infrastructure Toilets, changing rooms, equipment storage and carparking that enables safe and sanitary access for participants and spectators. 	Incidental infrastructure Such as clubrooms and administration facilities that is not required for sports participation but exist for social and management purposes. 
Regional infrastructure Regional facilities offer specialised community sport and active recreation facilities serving the entire Auckland region. Usually, large facilities with sufficient capacity to serve regional demand. 	Sub-regional infrastructure Sub-regional facilities serve a significant number of users from a catchment of 10km or more. Often well-known destination facilities in their area, and/or are the only facility of their type in the area. 	Local infrastructure Facilities that are primarily used by users within a catchment of 10km. 
Construction Applicants seeking funding for the capital development stage of their project. (Funding Gateway 3) 	Design and consent Applicants seeking funding for the design and consent stage of their project. (Funding Gateway 2) 	Investigation and analysis Applicants seeking funding for the investigation (e.g. feasibility or business case) stage of a project. (Funding Gateway 1) 
Sustainable and low impact project Project has put in place several ambitious measures to prevent or reduce impacts on climate and the environment across the whole lifecycle of the project. The potential adverse effects of the project are likely to be mostly mitigated. 	Sustainability of the project could be improved Measures to prevent or reduce impacts on climate and the environment do not cover all key areas of impact (or are not proportionate to the size of the impact) and the project would still result in potential adverse effects on the environment. 	Poor environmental performance Project has not considered their impact on climate and the environment or there are limited or no mitigations in place. 

Strategic and financial priorities		
HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
Strong strategic alignment Projects that have been prioritised in key national or regional strategies (e.g. local board plans, sport facility plans, TMSRFPP, etc.) 	Some strategic alignment Projects that are able to demonstrate significant potential impact where a key national or regional strategy does not exist. 	Little/no strategic alignment Projects that are not considered to be a priority in key regional strategies (e.g. local board plans, sport facility plans, etc.) 
Significant leverage Partnership projects able to leverage over two dollars for every dollar requested, allowing more of the facilities Auckland needs to be built more quickly. $> 2 : 1$	Moderate leverage Partnership projects able to leverage over one dollar for every dollar requested from this council Fund, allowing more of the facilities Auckland needs to be built more quickly. $> 1 : 1$	Low leverage Partnership projects able to leverage less than one dollar for every dollar requested from this council Fund. $< 1 : 1$
Large scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of more than \$2,000,000. 	Medium scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of more than \$500,000. 	Small scale Facility development projects with a total capital cost of less than \$500,000. 
No subsidy Projects requiring no ongoing operational funding from council. 	Start-up subsidy Projects requiring some operational funding or start-up funding from council. 	Ongoing subsidy Projects requiring significant ongoing operational funding from council. 

Achievability

All projects will be assessed on their achievability – that is, the genuine likelihood of completion and delivery of the intended benefits to the community within a reasonable timeframe. This assessment is based on capability of the applicant relative to the project, realistic fundraising plan and construction costs, a viable operating model and ensuring the facility is fit-for-purpose.

Funding Gateways

There are **three funding gateways** (shown in the diagram below) for the Sport & Recreation Facility Investment Fund. These entry points are aligned with the key fundraising stages community groups have to navigate when planning and developing a sport and recreation facility.

- Funding Gateway 1: Investigation and analysis
- Funding Gateway 2: Design and consent
- Funding Gateway 3: Construction

Applicants will generally only receive funding from **one** gateway in any given funding round, unless council in its sole discretion considers there are exceptional circumstances.

Note: The deliverables listed in the diagram below are at times interchangeable (e.g. between needs, feasibility and business case) depending on the complexity of the project and project brief deliverables requested. The approach below is an overview of good practice but each project and its approach will be considered on its individual merits.

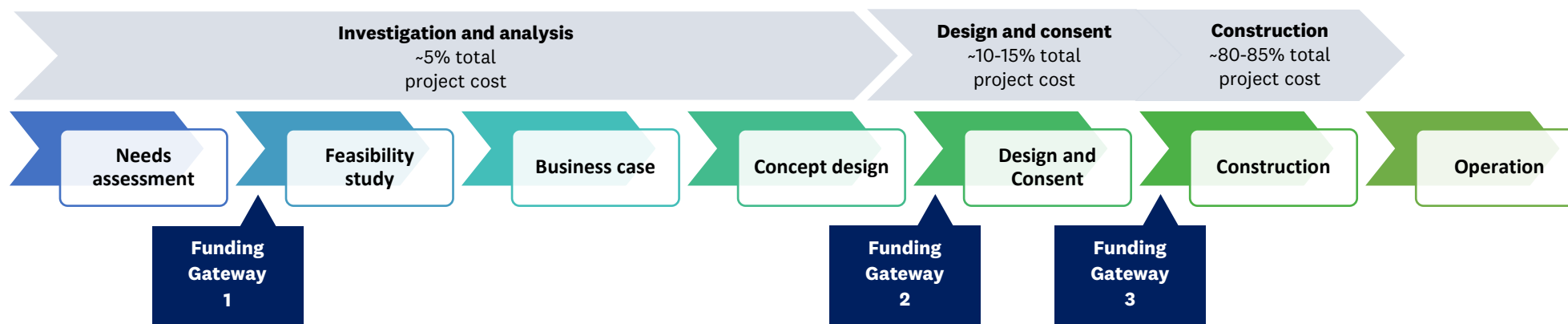
Different questions will be asked at each funding gateway to gauge good-practice facility planning and design. The breadth and depth of information required will be proportional to the overall level of council investment (funding, land and other inputs).

Examples:

- **Core** Infrastructure: An organisation looking to develop/extend a network of mountain bike tracks may not need detailed designs as tracks are developed around key environmental features and changing gradients during track construction. Track length is typically proportional to the budget available so can be amended accordingly. However, the applicant would need to demonstrate need, regional priorities, provide a trail map detailing track grade/difficulty, ensure track signage is included in the budget, confirm how the asset will be maintained over time and confirm that landowner approval and tenure is in place.
- **Ancillary** Infrastructure: An organisation looking to expand its changing room provision to better meet female participation and growth requirements would not need a formal business case as the space does not generate income. However, the applicant would need to demonstrate strong need, regional priorities, an achievable capital development plan and a sustainable operating model, that shows how they will cover asset maintenance costs.

Sport & Recreation Facility Investment Fund – Funding Gateways

Useful reference: Sport New Zealand's [Community sport and recreation facility development guide](#)



Needs assessment

- Identify the current supply of facilities (proximity, function and capacity)
- Define the catchment area, population characteristics and growth trends
- Define the gap in facility provision
- Identify the current, projected and priority needs
- Identify options to meet the priority needs (e.g. shared space, redevelopment, new facility)
- Refine the objectives of the facility
- Define likely roles and responsibilities with stakeholders/partners
- Identify location options from a strategic perspective

Feasibility study

- Refine and assess the technical requirements, costs, SWOT, ROI, timeframes, resources required, partners, governance and management models and risks
- Assess location options if applicable
- Assess relevant planning rules and regulations
- Develop schedule of spaces for the facility design brief
- Prepare a initial concept design(s) including preliminary costing (QS)
- Prepare an achievable fundraising plan
- Confirm vision, objectives and facility purpose
- Define the scope of the business case/business model
- Set principles for design of the facility that address technical and functional requirements

Business case

- Define the ownership, governance, management and operating models
- Specify catchment, target market, occupancy and pricing models
- Generate an operational income and expenditure model over a 10-year period
- Identify and mitigate any ownership, financial, construction and ongoing operational risks
- Set principles for design of the facility that address functionality, user experience, access and financial and environmental sustainability

Concept design

- Concept design refined in response to feasibility and business case findings
- Concept design sufficient to inform permissions processes, e.g. land-owner approval, resource consent
- Updated preliminary costing (QS)

Design and consent

- Confirmation of tenure (e.g. ownership, lease or agreement to lease) and landowner permission.
- Obtain planning/regulatory consents (e.g. local board landowner approval, resource consent and building consent)
- Confirmation of technical requirements to inform detailed design including (e.g. geotechnical, structural, durability/lifespan, acoustic, access, plant, energy and environmental objectives, etc.)
- Detailed design – construction drawings with all necessary engineering input
- Obtain building consent for detailed design
- Confirm project management approach, construction budget, fundraising and procurement plans, project programme, key project milestones and risks

Construction

- Complete fundraising including contingency
- Procure construction contract
- Complete conditions for drawdown of grant funding
- Undertake construction
- Obtain Code Compliance Certificate
- Develop asset management plan

Gateway eligibility requirements

All applications will need to provide evidence to confirm they are ready and eligible to enter the gateway they are applying to.

For all funding gateways:

- The applicant is a formally constituted organisation with a recognised **legal structure**.
- The proposed facility delivers a **community** sport and/or active recreation outcome.
- A needs assessment has been completed that outlines a demonstrable **need** for the proposed facility (see what should be in a needs assessment in the diagram above).
- The funding request is for the purpose of **facility** planning or development.
- The proposed funding model to deliver **this stage** of the project is achievable.
- A project funding plan that includes estimated total project cost, cost per stage (e.g. per gateway), funds already spent on your project, funds committed/secured, pending applications, potential funding sources.

Funding Gateway 1 – Investigation and analysis:

- A project brief that clearly defines the requirements of this stage of the project, from which consultants can submit a proposal
- Minimum of two quotes from sport and recreation consultants detailing their methodology, previous experience/expertise and cost to carry out the work.

Funding Gateway 2 – Design and consent:

- A feasibility study that indicates the proposed facility development project is realistically achievable, including a clear fundraising plan that shows how you will fund **this stage** of the project **and** the construction stage.
- A business case that indicates you have a viable operating model for the proposed facility
- A concept design that has been tested against the feasibility study and business case and is still fit-for-purpose (i.e. meets identified needs) and is achievable and operationally viable.
- An overview of construction approaches considered and your preferred option
- Ownership of the proposed facility has been confirmed
- Minimum of two quotes from planning consultants for all resource consent costs
- Minimum of two quotes from architects and other consultants (e.g. engineers) for all detailed design and building consent fees.

Please note – Pre-application planning guidance is available if you're planning a facility development that may need a resource consent or permit. Early discussions with Auckland Council's planning team will help you make informed decisions about your application and avoid unnecessary processing delays. For simple enquiries, the Council Planning Team offer up to 15 minutes of [free assistance](#) at service centres or over the phone, where you can speak to an expert about your project.

Funding Gateway 3 – Construction:

- A feasibility study, business case, and concept design indicating a viable and fit-for-purpose facility development project
- Evidence of long-term tenure has been secured for the land where the proposed facility will be located (e.g. ownership of the land or a lease (or agreement to lease) for an adequate term)
- Evidence that relevant consents are in place, including landowner approval, resource consent (if required)
- The following excerpts from detailed design: location plan, floor plan and elevations
- An up-to-date quantity survey or at least **three** construction quotes
- An up-to-date project funding plan
- A clear project plan or procurement strategy that outlines how the project will be governed and constructed and how risks will be managed.

Information required

Different questions will be asked for each funding gateway, and information required will be proportional to the level of council investment.

The application looks to capture the following information about your project:

- general information about your organisation
- project description, including work completed to date; how the proposed facility will meet identified needs and deliver the intended outcomes
- project need
- facility capacity and use
- strategic alignment
- inactive communities
- Māori outcomes
- partnerships
- environmental sustainability
- project location and tenure (if appropriate)
- which funding gateway you are applying through
- evidence of progress on your project to date
- applicant's financial position
- project funding plan detailing how total project cost is intended to be funded
- resources you require to deliver **this stage** of your project
- a quote or quantity surveyors report
- project timeline for **this stage** of your project.

Assessment approach

Investment Principles

Scoring of potential projects against the SRFIF priority outcome criteria is weighted according to the investment principles outlined in [Increasing Aucklanders' Participation in Sport: Investment Plan 2019-2039](#):

- Equity (40 per cent of assessment): ensures equity of outcomes across the population regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status or location.
- Outcome-focused (30 per cent of assessment): there is a clear 'line of sight' between the investment and the outcomes it delivers.
- Financial sustainability (20 per cent of assessment): projects need to be financially viable and affordable for the public.
- Accountability (10 per cent of assessment): investment should be efficient, effective, transparent and consistent.

Additional criteria will apply where it is relevant to the stage of development of your project. E.g.

- Achievability: construction costs and the fundraising plan are realistic and achievable in terms of commitment from non-council partnership funding sources.
- Capability: the applicant has a project team with the necessary skills and experience to ensure council's investment is used effectively.
- Fit-for-purpose: the design of the proposed facility meets best-practice design standards to mitigate ongoing operational costs and deliver desired activity outcomes.
- Landowner support: the applicant should provide written evidence of the landowner's support for the project or funding application. Where the landowner is Auckland Council it will be sufficient to provide a formal [land-owner approval](#), local board resolution, or local board letter of support.
- Strategic alignment: The [Tāmaki Makaurau Sport and Recreation Facility Priority Plan](#) outlines priorities across current sport and recreation facility projects. This plan as well as Local Board Plans, Local Board Sport and Active Recreation Facility Plans, and Auckland Regional Code Facility Plans, will be used to help inform decisions on capital investment.

Please note – Auckland Council reserves the right to share submitted proposals and/or key information with other appropriate sport sector investors and organisations as part of its grant analysis process.

If your application is successful

Funding agreement

Following a funding resolution by the relevant Governing Body committee, council staff will work with grant recipients to develop funding agreements. Funding agreement terms will likely consider project dependencies, including but not limited to:

Contract	Gateway	Notes/Terms
Auckland Council Funding Agreement	1	Business case funding will be released upon receipt of the feasibility study indicating a realistically achievable project.
	2	Detailed design and building consent funding will not be released until tenure is established, and both landowner approval and resource consent have been obtained.
Auckland Council Development Funding Agreement (DFA)	3	Drawdown of construction funds will not commence until the project is fully funded for 100% of the total build cost, plus a 10% contingency.

Access to grant subject to terms and conditions

Auckland Council has some requirements that differ from other grant funders. Our funding agreement templates include terms and conditions which control access to the grant funds. As these conditions may affect a project's timing and achievability, we recommend that applicants become familiar with them and factor them into project planning as early as possible. Key financial conditions are summarised below for example:

- Grants are not subject to GST.
- Grants are not paid by lump sums in advance.
- Grant payments are made against costs incurred.
- To commence drawdown, a project must:
 - have funding for 100% of the total cost (of the current stage), plus a 10% contingency
 - (DFA only) have a shortfall guarantee.
- A 10% retention amount is withheld from the grant until completion conditions are met.

Please note – Copies of council's Funding Agreement templates are available. Please contact the Sport and Recreation team at sportandrecreation@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to get a copy.

Changes to project scope or cost

Funding allocations (grants) are made based on information supplied in the application, including cost and funding details. Should a grant recipient subsequently reduce the scope or cost of its project in such a way that significantly increases the percentage of council's contribution to the total cost, council reserves the right to reassess and reapportion its funding to the project accordingly.

Other grants and investments

In addition to the Sport & Recreation Facility Investment Fund, Auckland Council has allocated \$1 billion over the next ten years to sport and recreation investment and provides a variety of support to sport organisations through various grants and leases for council land and buildings.

The Sport & Recreation Facilities Investment Fund is one of **three** regional sport and recreation grant programmes made available by Auckland Council. The grants collectively cover facility development, facility operations and programme delivery. The other two grants are:

- [Sport & Recreation Facilities Operating Grant](#) – This grant provides operational funding to sub-regional and regional facilities that increase Aucklanders participation in sport and recreation.
- [Sport & Recreation Regional Programme Grant](#) – This grant provides operational funding for a range of regional programmes that encourage Aucklanders to be more active, more often.

Groups looking to deliver projects that are ineligible for a SRFIF grant, or have been unsuccessful with previous SRFIF applications, may be able to seek funding through [Local Board Grants](#) or [multi-board grants](#).

Alternatively (particularly for grants over \$10,000) groups can contact their local board and seek a timeslot to present a deputation about their project. Local Boards may consider requests to allocate annual discretionary budget. Please note local board budget planning starts in January and is confirmed in June each year, ready for the start of the financial year on 1st July.

Sport New Zealand run a range of [targeted grant programmes](#) throughout the year such as Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa, Disability Inclusion Fund and Young Women's Activation Fund.

Sport New Zealand also have an external [funding portal](#) that is a good source of information to apply for philanthropic and class four gaming funding.

Getting in touch

Contact sportandrecreation@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz to discuss your proposal with a Sport and Recreation Lead.

