

6. FIREFIGHTERS RESERVE DEVELOPMENT

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1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of progress on the design and development of a new central city reserve and seek discretionary funding towards its construction.

2. CONTEXT

In October 2001 Christchurch made a bid for and succeeded in being able to host the 7th World Firefighters Games which will take place at the end of October this year. The Games are a biennial event in which around 4000 participants from 30 countries compete in 48 different sports. The Games are of special significance this time round as they are the first event after the September 11th World Trade Centre collapse and the Sydney fires.

To commemorate the Games, it is proposed that an area of Council-owned land outside the central fire station in Kilmore Street be developed and dedicated to the event as well as to pay tribute to all the firefighters who have lost their lives in the course of duty.

Funding for the project has been set aside in the 2002/03 annual plan as follows:

Parks and Waterways Unit	\$25 000
City Streets	\$10 000 (substitution)
Central City Revitalisation	\$10 000
Leisure Unit	\$10 000

The Games are to be officially opened on 26 October 2002 and a ceremony will take place dedicating the reserve to the firefighters on the same day. Staff are currently completing design details, consultation and resource consent requirements to ensure that the landscape works for Stage 1 of the development are completed at least a week before the opening event. For an event of such significance the area must be of a high standard and staff are seeking further funding through sponsorship of the project.

This report will also be placed on the agendas of three standing committees: Parks, Gardens and Waterways, Arts, Culture and Heritage, and Sustainable Transport and Utilities. Liaison has also occurred between staff and the Art in Public Places Subcommittee and the Mayoral Forum.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A new reserve will be created on existing Council-owned land to commemorate the World Firefighters Games to be held in Christchurch this year. The name proposed for the reserve is Firefighters Reserve and funding is being sought to implement Stage 1 of the project before mid-October.

4. RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

The site is zoned Conservation 3 (Waterway Conservation) Zone in the Proposed Christchurch City Plan. Presently, although the area exists as partly road and partly green space with no physical thoroughfare, part of the site is held as legal road and action has been taken to carry out the necessary road stopping procedure. The enhancement of the space is a logical development, which fits well with Central City Revitalisation objectives of promoting the Avon River corridor as an attractive recreational and cultural precinct within the central city.

As Community Boards have delegated authority to approve names of new reserves, this report seeks approval from the Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board for the name of this new reserve to be Firefighters Reserve.

5. A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposed Firefighters Reserve is located between Madras and Kilmore Streets and is bounded by the Central Firestation and the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church to the south and the Avon River and Madras and Kilmore Street bridges to the north. Presently the area is dominated by road with unmonitored car parking spaces and a number of paths. Part of the road has slumped and the path on the top of the bank is very uneven. The bank itself is quite steep and the whole site looks as if it could benefit from enhancement to highlight the river and make the space more useful for passive recreation.

Local landscape architect, Wayne Rimmer has been engaged to work with City Solutions staff to prepare the landscape concept plan. The plan (attached) encompasses the following features:

- Improvement of the paths and removal of some car parking spaces outside the Baptist Church that dominate the space
- Enhancement of the land immediately in front and to the west of the fire station
- Enhancement of the riverbank through planting and provision of sitting areas
- Location of a steel artwork which will be a focal point of the area without dominating the enhanced space.

The main objective of enhancing the area is to create a distinctive space that caters for contemplation as well as the day-to-day use of the area by firemen, commuters and recreational walkers. It is envisaged that the project will highlight the river and facilitate further enjoyment of the Avon River precinct. Significant input from local firefighters and from other neighbours has been instrumental in developing ideas for the new reserve. The main focus of the reserve will be that of reflection and to commemorate the World Firefighters Games, which in turn will commemorate all firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

An appropriate artwork is part of the plan. The artwork, which will make its own statement, will be located near the site. The arrangement and installation of the steel is being worked through with local artist, Graham Bennett.

Design implementation is to be staged to meet the mid-October deadline within a limited budget. The first stage is estimated to cost \$160 000 and will include enhancement of the riverbank, realignment of the footpath, installation of the steel artwork and enhancement of the rest of the site with new planting. Options are still being worked on for the further works and these also depend on the outcome of consultation and the road stopping process. It is proposed that further work could occur which would involve removal of part of the existing road and further levelling and planting of the site.

6. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The name "Firefighters Reserve" parallels the name World Firefighters Games, after which the reserve is named. It commemorates all firefighters who have lost their lives in the line of duty as well as highlighting the presence of the nearby central firestation. It is likely that firefighters from the station will utilise the area even more than they do now, on a casual basis as well as to carry out water displays over the Avon River.

Funding for this project will be sourced from the various asset units and external sponsors. A sponsorship package with Gold, Silver and Bronze levels of sponsorship has been put together to facilitate funding of the project. The package includes endorsement of the project by Deputy Prime Minister Jim Anderton; the Executive Director of the World Firefighters Games (Western Australia), Trevor Pateman; Acting Transalpine Fire Region Commander, Barry Shields; and Councillor Anna Crighton. Response so far to the project from potential sponsors has been very positive.

Funding from the Board to the tune of \$10 000 is sought to support the project and this will enable the Board to be named on the sponsors' board that will be located on the Madras/Kilmore Street Corner during construction of the reserve. It also includes the name of the Board on the permanent plaque at the entrance of the reserve and recognition of the Board's contribution by the Mayor at the official opening of the reserve.

7. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The Parks and Waterways Unit is in the process of undergoing consultation on the concept plan with the fire fighters at the central firestation, the Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, Chester Street West Residents' Association and other nearby residents. Preliminary discussion with these groups has occurred but formal comment is being sought in writing.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board receive the information and endorse the plan.
 2. That the legal road running through the space be stopped.
 3. That the newly enhanced space be called Firefighters Reserve.
 4. That the Board contribute \$10 000 towards the first stage of the reserve's development from its discretionary funds.

The Community Advocate comments: The Board's funding policies developed recently by the Board include a policy against funding metropolitan developments. This reserve could be viewed as substantially metropolitan. The Board may also wish to delay deciding whether to contribute funding to the reserve until after the level of sponsorship has been determined. The Board has \$23,320 remaining in its discretionary fund for the year ending 30 June 2003.

Chairman's

Recommendation: For discussion