

11. LINWOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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The purpose of this report is to present a development plan for Linwood Park to the Board and to seek approval to start work immediately on some of the proposed developments.

CONTEXT

The Community Advocate reported to the Board in July 2001 on the Linwood Park consultation process with the recommendation that the process continue and a development plan be prepared.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A development plan for Linwood Park has been prepared with community input to meet the needs and aspirations of current park users and the wider community. The plan aims to improve safety and aesthetics of the park and to encourage greater community use.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

- Parks and Waterways Access Policy
- Recreation and Sport Policy
- Youth Policy
- Childrens Policy
- Older Persons Policy
- Seeking Community Views
- Social Wellbeing Policy
- Community Policy

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

A development plan (attached) has been prepared for Linwood Park to cater for the various community needs that have been identified through a lengthy and thorough community engagement and consultation process. The aim of the development plan is to improve safety and aesthetics and to encourage increased use of the park. The development plan is a long term one, and some features, such as the waterway development, may not happen for many years yet.

While final comments on the plan are still to be received from the community, in order to meet this year's financial commitments it is proposed to start work immediately on some of the items that have already received widespread community support, namely;

- Fitness trail around the park that caters for all ages
- Seal path adjacent to nursery
- Seal path at Aldwins Road entrance
- Upgrade the rose garden
- Change fencing alongside the tennis courts in consultation with the tennis club to a more open style of fencing to improve views into the park
- Lighting upgrade of path adjacent to the drain, and the path from Mackworth St to the school

\$70 000 remains this financial year to begin implementation of the plan. In 2003/04 \$53 500 has been allocated to irrigation replacement and \$50 000 to reserve development. In 2004/05 \$50 000 has been tagged for reserve development and \$45 000 for recreation facilities.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There is competition for use of Linwood Park and there has been conflict amongst users in the past. It is important to think of the park as a whole and its benefit to the community, and to avoid focussing on particular issues and the needs of only some of the park users.

A major concern that has arisen in the past is the behaviour of some park users. This is part of a wider social issue for which there is no simple solution. The development plan will not solve the problem but will result in a safer environment that encourages wider community use of the park.

In terms of the environmental impacts, the development plan offers opportunities to make better use of a reserve, and to increase environmental values especially through naturalisation of the waterway.

The main benefits of the development plan will be of a social nature through improved recreation opportunities and development of a community asset for events and activities. The park will play a role in developing a sense of community identity and focus.

Economically, the capital input required will be offset by the increased community use and benefits to be gained from that. Also, it is hoped that in the long term there will be a decrease in graffiti and vandalism in the park.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

Research and consultation around Linwood Park has occurred in various forms over a long period of time and has been thorough. The findings were reported to a workshop in November 2002 to which all key stakeholders were invited. At this workshop, people put forward their own vision for the park. The combined visions are summarised in the following statements.

Linwood Park has the potential to be a friendly, inviting, safe space to bring all our diverse communities and families together. It has the potential to be a park for everyone, a jewel in the crown, a tranquil environment, our taonga. Linwood Park has the potential to provide top recreational facilities, excellent sports grounds, the best skate park and an exciting sporting venue for all ages. Linwood Park has the potential to inspire, delight, refresh, stimulate, and relax. It's more than a location, it's a destination.

It was agreed at the workshop that a development plan be prepared for the park that increases the recreation opportunities in the park, addresses identified safety issues, and improves the visual appearance. Common themes from the research and consultation that were to be incorporated into the plan were:

- The park is a valuable community asset though it is not well known by everyone and has a bad image amongst some people. However, it is central and offers a wide range of recreation and sport opportunities. It needs better promotion to increase awareness of what is available and to improve its image.
- There is a need for more park furniture and amenities such as seating, picnic and BBQ facilities, toilets, artwork, and drinking fountains.
- There is a need to increase the play and recreation opportunities for all ages, e.g. play equipment for toddlers, a fitness trail for all ages, more community events, more challenging play equipment.
- Graffiti and vandalism are ongoing concerns that need to be addressed.
- Improved landscaping and a general upgrade of the park would help to enhance its image.
- Entrances need to be upgraded and made more welcoming.
- Incidents of anti social behaviour are of concern and there is a need for continued monitoring.
- The skate park is well used and in huge demand. More space is required to reduce overcrowding and to cater for beginners. Safety issues such as the drop offs at the end of the ramps must be fixed. The appearance of the skate park also needs to be improved with landscaping and maintenance. Conflict between skate park users and other park users requires ongoing monitoring. A few people suggested removing the skate park.
- Lighting of some routes through the park needs to be upgraded.
- The rugby league shed and the toilet block are unattractive and require enhancement. Toilets are desirable close to Linwood Ave.
- The mural wall is supported by some people but not by others.
- Improved signage is needed to indicate features, entries and exits, and also to promote the park and its activities.
- Proposed future upgrading of the waterway is well supported.
- Inadequate car parking is an issue for some people.
- The relationship with neighbouring properties needs to be considered in any proposed developments.

The development plan has not yet been circulated in the community, but as it is based on the community input, it is expected to be well supported.

CONCLUSION

The development plan takes a holistic approach to the park, its role and benefits to the community. It has been prepared with community input and reflects the needs and aspirations of the parks users and wider community. It meets the Council's objectives and policies.

Staff

Recommendation:

1. That the draft development plan be supported.
2. That final comments from the community be reported to the Board before final approval is given.
3. That work begin on the features that have already received widespread support from the community as outlined in the report.

Chairperson's

Recommendation:

That the recommendation be adopted.