

8. PARKLANDS YOUTH RECREATION NEEDS

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The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress in clarifying and addressing the identified youth recreation needs in Parklands and to seek approval for proposed uses of Board Project funding allocated in 2003/04 to Parklands community projects.

BACKGROUND

After ongoing consultation in Parklands, the Report on the Parklands Youth Consultation Process (April 2002) again highlighted the recommendations from the Youth Recreation Needs Survey (April 2000) (Appendix I). At its meeting on 27 May 2002, the Board endorsed the recommendations arising from the community consultation. Following on from this the youth and community-agreed direction of a youth café was seen as the priority for implementation. The Board decided to support a 12-month trial for a smoke-free youth café for the 10-15 years' age range at the former Baptist church hall on Queenspark Drive (just down from the Parklands Community Centre), subject to consultation with neighbouring residents and any resource consent requirements.

A working party of local people, youth workers and Council staff was then formed to look into a trial youth café proposal and related issues such as what would go into a youth café, where a café could be located and the management of such a café. Kay Addei from the working party will be in attendance at the Board meeting to answer any questions on the working party's behalf.

In February 2003 at the project funding round, future financial support was sought for a possible youth café project. Also at this time the possibility of a partnership with the Parklands Library was brought forward by Board members. Subsequently the Board decided, subject to further information on the plans for the Library and community aspirations for a youth café, to allocate \$10,000 from its 2003/04 Project funding towards the youth café proposal or another youth facility in conjunction with the planned Parklands Library.

ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN BY WORKING PARTY

The community/staff working party found that the youth café concept and location required further assessment, given that:

- The definition and understanding of what a youth café is and what it offers differed not only amongst members of the working party but almost all of those approached for comment and/or information.
- Since the original research findings were reported, two local youth groups had been formed and were popularly supported by youth of the area - the Parklands Baptist Youth Group and Energisers (run under the umbrella of the Parklands Residents' Association Youth Trust). The extent to which these new groups may impact on youth needs needed to be assessed.
- As the former Baptist church building had been identified as a place for a trial youth café and also as the premises for the Parklands Library the possible incorporation of a youth café within the Parklands Library had to be considered further.

In order to clarify these issues it became apparent to the working party that understanding what the youth of the area wanted in a youth café was necessary and could identify community aspirations for a youth cafe. To this end the Energisers group was approached to see if the working party could conduct a survey of the youth at the group's upcoming community disco. As a result of this collaboration a free community dance/disco was held for year 7 and 8 youth. The disco was widely publicised through the Parklands Residents' Association newsletter, posters in the community and notices in local school newsletters.

From the disco, 119 usable surveys were received. Of the 119 surveyed, 107 were aged 11 or 12 years with ten youths over 12 years and two under 11 years. This is the median age group identified in the previous research as having the need for a youth café. Additionally most youth in attendance came from the Parklands/Queenspark area and so the information from the consultation was very useful in reflecting the youth needs of the target group accurately.

The results of the community disco survey are attached (Appendix II) and a report on the event itself is included in the term two report received by the Board from the Parklands Youth Trust.

The results from this survey gave the working party a clear direction from the youth of the area. From a youth café the youth wanted to have somewhere to go, to enjoy music – live bands and D.J.'s, dancing, sports activities and food. The top four choices for location were the Parklands Community Centre, in a mall, at school and in a park. The preferred length of time for a venue being open was for around four hours at any one time. The most popular days and times identified for these activities were Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays.

What the youth would *like to do* goes beyond traditional youth café activities of hanging out with friends and included playing sport and going to the movies. While a lot of the youth currently do play sport, many did not indicate in the survey that they spend time with friends or go to the movies. Additionally nearly half (44) wanted events put on in the area.

From the previous consultation and the disco survey in June 2003 the needs and direction of a youth café concept defined by youth (as interpreted by the working party) were determined as:

Somewhere to hang out with friends that offered music, sports, food, movies and events. Open for four hours on a Friday evening and on Saturdays and Sundays.

As a movie complex is currently being built at the Palms Mall in Shirley closer than other facilities and both the Energisers and Baptist Youth groups (who have provided movie screenings for youth previously) have indicated that they could look at doing so again, the movie need is not being considered further at this time.

OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING THIS NEED

Using the above definition/direction the working party considered the “youth café” concept in terms of premises. Consideration was given to two options - a dedicated facility for a youth café and partial use of premises. The following possibilities were considered within these options.

A Dedicated Facility

Further investigation, particularly of the former Baptist church hall, highlighted the following:

- Resource consent – requirements, cost and time frame (staff advised a notified consent would be necessary for any youth café, on a trial basis or more permanent).
- Time constraints given the time frame for the library project – construction is due to start in autumn 2004.
- High cost of establishing a working youth café (previously presented to the Board for Project funding 2003 \$42,607) .
- The lack of community ownership for a dedicated youth café.
- Preferred hours and days identified by youth for a youth café would mean under utilisation of the facility. (For four hours at any one time on Saturdays, Sundays and most of all, Friday evenings.)

At this time, given the information received by the working party on these issues, particularly youth and community aspirations, a venue specifically for a youth café venture would not be recommended by the working party. This would also seem prudent given the experience of other recent youth venues and the dynamic nature of youth trends. Any youth venue would need to be flexible to respond quickly and change its image frequently to meet constantly changing youth trends. The youth venue ZEAL in Wellington is an example of a youth venue starting successfully but not being able to respond to changes in trends and continue attracting youth.

A Shared Facility – With Whom and Where?

The working party agreed that existing facilities could be developed as recognised youth use/youth focus venues but need not be exclusively for youth. The main consideration when considering existing venues was the services/activities identified by the youth as being needed in a “youth café” and those currently participated in.

Based on the disco survey results of what was wanted and where, the Parklands Community Centre, the future Parklands Library Building and the current premises of the Parklands Baptist Community Church are the three “facilities” to be investigated further. The working party is meeting with major stakeholders involved in each instance to assess any possible collaboration. At this stage those specifically asked for comment are the Parklands and Queenspark Residents' Associations, Parklands Youth Trust and Parklands Baptist Community Church, and other active community individuals have also made comments. Both the Parklands Youth Trust and Parklands Baptist Community Church have been very positive and interested in pursuing discussions.

Parklands Community Centre

The Community Centre was identified by the youth themselves as their first specific choice of where they would like to have a youth café, as well as being opposite a mall and built on a park (preferred choices one and four). The Community Centre already has community input from the identified youth age group, hosting the Parklands Sports Equipment Library, Energisers youth group, Parklands United Sports Club and a potential feeder group by way of Pegasus Toy Library members.

Some of the hours specified by youth could be currently accommodated in the Community Centre given the current usage. Individuals of the Parklands United Sports Club have indicated an interest in making the Club premises available. The Community Centre sports hall can be used for dance parties, mobile performance cafés and sports activities and the meeting room is a suitable “hang out” space.

The Energisers group hopes to extend its programme with assistance and support from the Community Board and Service Centre staff. Among possibilities are joint ventures with other youth organisations, a second programme on Friday nights for a different age group, and additional programmes on Saturday or Sunday.

Parklands Baptist Community Church

The Church occupies the former Queenspark mall venue. One business still operates from the mall and it is opposite a park and just down from a school. The Church has just introduced a new youth drop in programme on Friday nights called “The Store”, with lots of activities such as foosball, playstation, karaoke, DVD’s and pool. The age group the programme is hoped to attract are 11 years and upwards. The Church has indicated an interest in expanding this and is looking at long-term options to provide all age groups with somewhere to go. The main concern is growing too fast for the venue and volunteers.

The Church has also been investigating for some time now the possibility of setting up a café, which would be used weekly by craft groups, local businesses using their venue, Sunday congregations and have a youth focus on Friday evenings. The Church would like to explore a café venture with support from the Community Board and Service Centre staff and the possibility of joint ventures with other youth organisations.

Future Parklands Library

The space expected to be occupied by the Parklands Library is next to a mall and not far from a park and the development of the Library provides opportunity for youth needs to be considered in the building. The vision presented by the library team to the Board and Community and Leisure Committee indicated that at times space would be made available for youth and other user groups in the Library.

From the youth survey results, the top choices for activities in a youth café, being music, DJ’s, discos, sport and food were not considered by the working party to be realistically compatible with core library services. Additionally the space available for the entire Library is limited and youth needs and activities would probably not be able to be accommodated to the extent the youth required.

The working party’s preferred direction for addressing youth needs in relation to the Parklands Library would be for youth services better suited to library expertise and without major disruption to perceived community wishes for the Library. At this stage this may include homework support, access to technology and other youth needs as they arise. The library team have indicated that they are keen to have input from youth as to their needs in the Parklands Library and this has also been considered by the working party (refer below to “Further Directions Of Working Party”, numbers 2 and 3). The working party will not be investigating a joint youth café venture with the Parklands Library any further at this time, but rather will focus on other youth needs they may meet.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF WORKING PARTY

The working party considers that the community and youth aspirations in Parklands for a “youth café” is a concept that has been identified by the youth both now and previously in the recommendations of the Youth Recreation Needs Survey. These needs can be met through supporting local youth organisations in developing youth events, regular programmes and ongoing part-time youth focus ventures in established venues. The positives of this approach are numerous and far reaching, including no duplication of services or funding of duplicated services, community buy-in, established youth management and workers, community collaboration and networking, youth involvement/identity and meeting a variety of identified youth needs.

With this in mind the following directions are being undertaken by the working party, which it is optimistic will lead towards fulfilling the original recommendations of the Youth Recreation Needs Survey:

1. The working party is continuing negotiations with established and recognised community and youth organisations in Parklands to ascertain their interest in being involved in the development of further youth projects in the area. The organisations involved have been identified by the working party's investigations with a view to sourcing a local group(s) to assume the management of the projects. Currently these include Parklands Youth Trust, Parklands Residents' Association, Queenspark Residents' Association, Parklands Baptist Community Church, and Parklands United Sports Club. This will be expanded to include other stakeholders as identified; for example, schools.
2. The working party will look into the establishment of a youth committee or similar (in consultation with local interested community youth organisations identified in direction one above) and form one if appropriate. The purpose of the youth committee would be for consulting on youth issues, events and needs in the Parklands area. Initial consultation is expected to be on youth events in the area and youth needs in relation to the Parklands Library.
3. The working party will keep the library team apprised of youth developments in the area to provide youth information and consultation possibilities. This is with a view to meet youth needs in terms of the development of the Parklands Library and meeting other youth needs within the Library once built.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the 2003/04 Board Project funding of \$10,000 allocated to Parklands Community Projects be made available to achieve community youth aspirations through:
 - Providing ongoing special events to youth in the Parklands area.
 - Developing regular programmes for youth utilising the Parklands Community Centre and other facilities in Parklands.
 - Establishing a youth committee in the area.
 2. That the funding allocation be expended under the joint discretion of the Community Recreation Adviser, Community Development Adviser, Community Advocate and a Community Board representative.

Chairpersons

- Recommendations:**
1. That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.
 2. That the Parklands youth working party continue to liaise with the library team in the development of youth programmes and youth-friendly facilities for the new Parklands Library.
 3. That the working party be asked to invite Carmen Hammond to participate.