

5. WESTGROVE RESERVE – PLAYGROUND AND LANDSCAPING REDEVELOPMENT

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the proposed redevelopment plan for Westgrove Reserve, prior to the plan being circulated for final public comment.

BACKGROUND

Westgrove Reserve is a small neighbourhood park, seen as a safe area that is widely used by the local community. It currently has a playground aimed at the under ten year old children, and large sections of open space used by older children for free play and ball sports. The Parks and Waterways Unit identified Westgrove Reserve as an area requiring upgrading, mainly due to the non-compliance of some of the playground structures (New Zealand Standard Specification NZS 5828 parts I, II and III). Areas of playground under-surfacing were also recognised as non-compliant with the Draft Playground Standards, with the all weather and disabled approaches noted as not fulfilling the Parks and Waterways Units' access policy.

PROPOSAL

As mentioned above, Westgrove Reserve play equipment was identified as needing improvement and was added to the capital budget some years ago. The allocation of \$25,000 within the Parks and Waterways Budget gave the opportunity of reassessing the reserves existing features, and developing a plan in conjunction with the community which satisfies future park requirements. The main features of the proposed plan include adding an all-weather path to the playground, new seating, and extending the playground to allow for new equipment including a slide, swing, spring toys and a climbing wall. There will also be new planting around park boundaries and at the park frontage, which will be a colourful mix of natives and exotics.

The plan and a planting list are **attached**.

CONSULTATION

A public information leaflet (PIL) showing a concept plan of Westgrove Reserve was distributed to the community for comment. As a small, local recreation area, Westgrove Reserves' natural community boundaries led to an information circulation of approximately 250. In addition, the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate and Landscape Architect met a number of locals on site to establish how they would like the reserve developed, prior to a final development plan being issued. Despite the poor return rate of fewer than 5% on the concept plan, the residents at the site meeting were enthusiastic about the overall redevelopment concept and put forward a number of new suggestions.

Key features of the feedback received both from the public meeting and PIL response included:

- Adding to existing seating with large, accessible picnic tables.
- The new path aligned parallel with the road in order to reduce the risk of children losing control biking/skating down the slope and culminating on the road.
- The large open areas retained for touch rugby and cricket activities.
- New planting areas around park boundaries to soften fence lines.
- Existing cricket block moved further into the park to maximise play space.
- Trees under the high tension power cables to be removed.
- Some trees on the northern park boundary to be removed/transplanted.

All respondents to the initial plan, including those at the site meeting, will be advised of the revised plan via mail.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Parks and Waterways Unit anticipate that siting and construction of the play equipment will commence sometime in late March/early April 2003. Construction time for the new facility is expected to be approximately 4 weeks. The proposed landscaping may occur in stages from this time or as budget allows.

CONCLUSION

The redevelopment plan for Westgrove Reserve seeks to re-establish the area as an attractive and safe environment, catering for family groups, which supports resident's expectations for the reserve. Feedback from the community has been very supportive, with any concerns dealt with positively for an effective compromise. The new play equipment and redesigned free-play areas provide new interest in the reserve and should prove to be a community asset.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board support the aforementioned redevelopment plan for Westgrove Reserve, and approve the distribution for further comment.

Chairman's

Recommendation: The above recommendation be adopted.