

Officer responsible Parks Manager	Author Property Services Officer, Bill Morgan Parks Planning Officer, Kelvin McMillan
Corporate Plan Output: New Assets – Reserve Purchases	

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Accept the gifting of 41.127 ha of land adjoining the Cass Peak Scenic Reserve from Turning Point 2000 as a millennium project for addition to the Summit Road and Crater Rim Reserves.
2. To jointly acquire with Turning Point 2000 a further 10.934 ha of land adjoining the Summit Road and adjacent to the above property as a scenic reserve.

BACKGROUND

Turning Point 2000 on behalf of its Port Hills Advisory Group approached the Council earlier this year to determine if it would accept as a gift 41.127 ha of regenerated forest adjoining Cass Peak which it was seeking to acquire from the Living Springs Trust as a scenic reserve for addition to the Crater Rim Walkway.

In considering this question and following an inspection of the property by Council officers the Living Springs Trust was approached by the Council to determine whether it would consider selling an additional 10.9341 ha adjoining the Summit Road and through which the Crater Rim Walkway extends. The area does, however, provide the farm with an important grazing block and subject to preserving its rights to graze the area under an appropriate licence the Trust expressed a willingness to sell the adjoining area to the joint parties. The respective areas are depicted on the attached plan and are marked “A” and “B” with area “B” being the additional land sought.

PARKS CONTEXT

The property fits within the Crater Rim Native Forest Park part of the Port Hills Regional Park Acquisition Strategy which was adopted by the Council in April 1999. The property will adjoin Cass Peak Scenic Reserve, Kennedys Bush Scenic Reserve with the Summit Road Society’s bush covenant area and the Otahuna property recently purchased by the Council and Selwyn District Council. Strategically the property is very important in not only linking the above reserves but also creating a virtually continuous park above the Summit Road between the Hoon Hay Valley and Coopers Knob, a distance of appropriately 3.8km.

ECOLOGICAL QUALITIES

Approximately 38 ha of the 52 ha property is regenerating native bush. The balance is tussock land, with most of the tussock situated between Cass Peak and Coopers Knob Scenic Reserve. This is the last relatively continuous area of tussock land on the south western area of the Port Hills. If fenced off large portions of the property will continue to revert to native forest with no effort required from the owners with the exception of noxious animal control.

SCENIC AND RECREATION

This area of the Port Hills offers outstanding scenic qualities in a remote rural setting. Views up the harbour and across the plains are outstanding. The Crater Rim Walkway runs through the entire length of property. This is the major recreation walking route along this section of the hills.

MANAGEMENT

Management of the property will be minimal with Turning Point 2000 intending to pay for the boundary fencing as part of the gifting. The only on-going cost associated with the property will be track maintenance and noxious animal control.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

The Council's share of the cost of purchasing the property will be funded from the strategic reserves purchase vote.

PROPERTY DETAILS

- Owners:** Living Springs Trust
- Legal Description:** 52.0611 ha being all of the land comprised and described in Certificate of Titles 387/255, 535/56 and 23B/333.
- Valuation:** At the time the Council was approached by Turning Point 2000 they had already negotiated the purchase of area "A" at a price of \$50,000 plus GST. In considering the acquisition of the adjoining 10.9341 ha depicted as parcel "B" on the attached plan, the Council Officers based their assessment on the property recently acquired from Gibraltar Forestry Limited together with the land acquired for the addition to Kennedys Bush Scenic Reserve and offered the Trust a sum of \$21,900 plus GST of which the Council's share is \$10,950 plus GST. The total purchase price equates to \$1,381 per ha which compares favourably with recent purchases on the Port Hills which range between \$2,000-\$4,000 per ha.
- Settlement Details:** Although the land is to be gifted to the Council for the purposes of transfer the properties will be acquired directly from the Trust by the Council. The total purchase price is \$71,900 plus GST of which the Council's share will be \$10,950 plus GST, the balance of the purchase price being met by Turning Point 2000. It should be noted that Turning Point 2000 applied to the Nature Heritage Fund for a grant towards the purchase and this has been secured, conditional upon the land being gazetted as a scenic reserve and vested in the Christchurch City Council under the Reserves Act 1977. As indicated above parcel "B" is currently farmed by the Living Springs Trust and in agreeing to the sale of the area the trust wish to secure grazing rights over the land and the sale is conditional upon these being granted.

Recommendation:

1. That the gift of the 41.127 ha from Turning Point 2000 to the Christchurch City Council as a scenic reserve be accepted.
2. That the purchase of the additional 10.9341 ha (area “B”) be approved on the basis of the Council contributing the sum of \$10,950 plus GST from the parks strategic reserves purchase vote, with the balance being funded by Turning Point 2000 and gifted to the Council as a scenic reserve.
3. That the agreement be conditional upon and subject to an appropriate grazing licence being granted to the Living Springs Trust over area “B” on terms and conditions to be negotiated to the satisfaction of the Parks Manager and Property Manager.
4. That Turning Point 2000 be thanked for their kind and generous gift to the city.
5. That an appropriate plaque acknowledging the generosity of Turning Point 2000 be installed on the reserve.