

1. FINAL PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS ON THE COASTAL PARKS STRATEGY

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The purpose of this report is to present a summary of submissions on the Coastal Parks Strategy 2000-2010 and to make recommendations for amendments to that strategy.

SUMMARY

A total of 77 submissions were received on the Coastal Parks Strategy. A copy of the strategy is tabled.

By far the most important role Coast Care was seen to play was in protecting, enhancing and restoring the ecology of our coastline. In addition to this, there was strong support for planting and habitat enhancement, weed control and improving water quality (a related issue, although not within the responsibilities of Coast Care). Sand management was seen to be very important, and imperative for the sandy coast of Pegasus Bay. Many commented that maintenance was still an issue, including rubbish collection and dog control. More picnic areas, some with facilities such as barbecues, showers and drinking fountains, were popular requested developments. More walkways along the coast and linking of natural areas were considered to be important projects for many. Further enhancement of pedestrian access to the beach from car parks and roads was considered to be important, with the need for better wheelchair access.

The proposed surf reef received positive comment and there was interest in investigating the idea further. Some thought the concept could be extended to other beach parks along the coastline. The current budget allocation was seen as insufficient, and the coastal environment was seen as neglected in terms of resources allocated.

There was strong support for Coast Care and the work it does along the coast, and agreement with the vision spelled out in the strategy document for continued enhancement of the coastal environment. The relationship that has built up between Coast Care and the public was seen as very important. There was an expression of interest for increased involvement with the community, particularly in a practical sense. Nearly all submitters thought work should continue, and that the draft ten-year programme should be implemented. Most of the proposed projects were supported, with priority showing for some projects over others. Completion of landscape plans and projects that had been started was seen as a clear priority.

TOP PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR THE WHOLE COASTAL AREA

The following is a summary of all the comments received. Ecological enhancement received the strongest support, planting was next most supported project, and so on down the list. Although education received the least support, it was still an element of the programme that was thought to be very important. It is not possible here to present all comments and suggestions.

Ecological protection, enhancement and restoration

The most important aspect of the programme was considered to be the enhancement, protection and restoration of ecological values in the coastal environment. Comments supporting related activities, such as native planting, weed and pest control, penguin (and other marine birds') protection, together with protecting the natural scenic values, made up the majority of submissions.

There was significant support for planting, as this will enhance wildlife habitat and scenic values. Weed and pest control were also considered to be very important, with particular references made to rabbits, ferrets and boneseed. Water quality was a concern, in reference to Avon Heathcote estuary output (and sewerage treatment), outflow from stormwater pipes and leachate from the landfill in Bottle Lake.

Planting

There was strong support for native planting, as the major component. However, there was a desire for a variety of exotics and natives to be used as feature trees, shade trees and amenity plants. It was thought more trees were needed around picnic areas, along roadsides and walkways and to enhance developed areas such as car parks and surf clubs.

Sand Management

Continued sand management was considered a top priority project, particularly in Areas One and Two (Brooklands Spit to Southshore Spit). This included recontouring/regrading, sandbinder planting and fencing. Good sand management was considered essential when developing the back dune environment, adding assets that need protection, such as plants, picnic areas and walkways.

A few submitters saw a need to revisit the allowable dune height given in the resource consent. These submissions generally suggested a lower dune, particularly in the North Beach area.

Complete Projects

There were many that would like to see projects completed. Of particular note were Sumner promenade extension, New Brighton landscaping, North Beach landscaping and Broad Park. The general opinion was that resources needed to be allocated to completing existing unfinished projects first.

Artificial Surf Reef

There was a lot of interest in the development of a surf reef in Sumner Bay. Many comments were supportive of further investigation, and one submission included 88 signatures from those supporting the proposal. There were a number of comments expressing concern, recommending that the idea be thoroughly investigated, and a few who thought it would add another artificial structure to an already too artificial beach. There were a number of submitters who suggested the idea could be extended to other beach parks, especially North Beach and New Brighton.

Maintenance and rubbish collection

Many sought an increase in the regular collecting and disposal of rubbish. There were suggestions for more rubbish bins and wardens to collect rubbish or police problematic areas. General maintenance was not regular enough for some, with comments related to a number of activities such as plant maintenance and roadside maintenance. Vandalism was perceived as a problem, and a greater response was requested.

Dog control

A number of submitters felt that enforcement of the dog control bylaws needed to be improved. Some thought improved signs would help, others requested more policing of dog-free areas. Dog droppings were also seen as an on-going problem that needed addressing.

Walkways and Pedestrian Access

Walkway developments linking natural areas and loop walks were seen as important. Access to the beach was seen as a priority, with a number of comments on the need for better wheelchair access.

Picnic areas

Walkways should include more picnic areas. There was support for installed barbecues, showers and drinking fountains near high use picnic areas/car parks and surf clubs. More shade trees were also desired.

Signs and education

A number of respondents considered there was a need for more signs depicting interpretative and walkway information. More coastal education was desired, to encourage better care and respect for the environment.

Top Priority Projects by Area

Area One

(Brooklands Spit south to Bottle Lake Beach Parks)

1. Enhance, protect and restore the ecological values, particularly for Brooklands Spit as it has an important interface with the lagoon. This includes weed and pest control and planting.

2. Develop more picnic opportunities. The suggestion was made that this area could be developed to provide for a lot more people, therefore reducing the pressure down the coast.
3. Develop better walkway links between Bottle Lake and Brooklands in conjunction with informative signs.
4. Address concerns over the landfill area, leachates and contamination of high natural values in the coastal area.

Area Two

(Waimairi south to the Spit Beach Parks)

1. A great number of submissions were received for this area and the top priority project was seen to be sand management (recontouring, planting and fencing). Many saw the connection between good sand management resulting in an improved back dune environment, which enables planting, walkways and picnic areas.
2. Planting for ecological enhancement and shade.
3. Maintenance, rubbish collection and dog control.
4. Projects need to be completed. Of particular importance were central New Brighton landscaping, roadside enhancement, the Spit landscaping, Broad Park landscaping and North Beach car park and buildings.
5. Picnic areas with shade, some with water, barbecue, wash-down facilities.
6. Walkways and links developed, with good signs.

Area Three

(Sumner, Scarborough, Taylors Mistake and Godley Head Beach Parks)

Sumner/Scarborough

1. The top priority project in Sumner was to proceed with investigations into the artificial surf reef, and to create a high tide beach.
2. Complete the projects which have been started, especially the promenade extension/upgrade and Cave Rock landscaping.
3. Improve the quality of visitor assets, including pedestrian access and providing for wheelchairs, to enhance the area and make it more aesthetically pleasing. Safe pedestrian access along the coast from Shag Rock to the Surf Club needed to be provided.
4. Maintenance, rubbish collection and dog control.

Taylors Mistake

1. Protect and enhance ecological values with a focus on weed and pest control and planting.
2. Give priority to completion of projects, such as landscaping around the surf club and the car park of particular note were providing a shower and a drinking fountain.
3. Develop a playground.
4. Improve signs.

Godley Head

1. Protecting and enhancing ecological values, in particular the penguin colony. Some conflict as to whether there should be a commercial aspect to the penguin colony.
2. Upgrading of the Godley Head walkway entrance was a top priority project.
3. Signs depicting track and interpretative information was also a priority.
4. Planting in gullies and weed and pest control.

Budget allocation

Submissions were strongly in favour of completing the draft programme set out in the Coastal Parks Strategy. The budget was seen as insufficient, and there was a call for more funds to be allocated.

Of 77 submissions, 41 thought more funds were required to enable effective management of the coastal resource so it could be developed for use in a safe and sustainable way. Eleven thought sufficient funds were currently allocated.

For Coast Care to complete the draft ten-year programme set out in the Coastal Parks Strategy, a further one million dollars is required.

COMMUNITY BOARD COMMENT

The strategy was considered by the Burwood/Pegasus, Hagley/Ferrymead and Shirley/Papanui Community Boards at their February meetings.

The Burwood/Pegasus Community Board endorsed all the recommendations except number 7. The Board's alternative recommendation is, "That a report be requested on the artificial reef proposal and the cost of a feasibility study for New Brighton."

The Hagley/Ferrymead Community Board supported the staff recommendations subject to the following amendments:

Recommendation 1: Delete in last line "dependent on", insert "subject to".

Recommendation 4: Delete all the words after the word prioritized in line 4 and insert "taking into account submissions received".

Recommendation 6: Delete this recommendation and replace it with "That a funding programme be developed over the ten-year period of the strategy, 2000-2010".

Recommendation 7: Delete the word "adopt" in line 1 and replace it with "develop".

The Shirley/Papanui Community Board supported the staff recommendation.

PRESENTATIONS TO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Two submitters, Dr Harry Evison and the Southshore Ratepayers' Association, addressed the Committee in support of their submissions on the strategy.

Dr Evison sought the allocation of funds within the Coast Care budget to address erosion problems in the following areas:

- The cliff top below Taylors Mistake Road
- Whitewash Head cliff top near Smuggler's Cove and Giant's Nose
- The cliff face opposite Shag rock

Dr Evison also submitted that introduced vegetation needed to be replaced by native species that are better able to hold the clay (loess) subsoil.

Dr Evison tabled photographs in support of his submission.

Mrs Patricia Urch and Mr Michael Trousselot addressed the Committee on behalf of the Southshore Ratepayers' Association and expressed their opposition to the proposed extension to the Estuary Walkway between Caspian and Tern Streets, on security, privacy and fire risk grounds. The deputation requested that further discussion take place between the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board and the local residents on this issue.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the vision statement shown in the Coastal Parks Strategy Document be adopted as the thrust of coastal development over the next ten years, and that the draft ten year programme, set out in the Coastal Parks Strategy document be adopted, dependent on budget allocation.

Note: It is clear the people of Christchurch are most concerned that the ecological values of the coastal environment are protected enhanced and restored. To this end all projects should be given consideration as to their impacts on the ecology. It is recommended that high value ecological areas/assets are identified and given consideration as to the level of protection, enhancement or restoration they warrant. The programme identifies nearly all other top priority projects and issues raised through submissions.

2. (a) That a comprehensive planting programme be adopted, which includes a backbone of native plantings along the coast as ecological enhancement.
- (b) That, in addition to this, a number of shade, feature tree and amenity plantings be planned for users and scenic enhancement, using a mix of native and exotic species where appropriate.
- (c) That a good weed and pest control programme be implemented to protect new plants and establish bird and invertebrate communities, supported by planting.
- (d) That Norfolk pines be planted adjacent to the Taylors' Mistake car park.

Note: A comprehensive planting programme has been undertaken by Coast Care over the last five years. It is pleasing that this is well-supported as it does consume a portion of the annual budget. Much of the work done goes unnoticed, since plants are small and not yet showing very much over marram grass. However, as the next five years unfold these seedlings will show much more, and will start to change the ecological habitat.

3. That sand management policies be retained. This includes recontouring, planting (using a mix of exotic and native species) and fencing.

Note: The positive feedback regarding sand management is seen as a sign that education has been successful. An understanding of coastal processes and the techniques used to protect the dunes has been achieved. The need for recontouring will decline as better dune management reduces sand movement. Planting of sandbinders is still a core activity in terms of sand management. More native sandbinders will be used, as stock becomes available. Fences are seen as a necessary evil, and offer good protection for our fragile dunes.

4. (a) That there be an emphasis on quality in project planning and development and that those projects which are incomplete, be completed, as a priority over starting new projects.
- (b) That projects be prioritized according to submissions received and according to budget constraints.

Note: The current budget will not be sufficient to cover the costs of completing all incomplete projects. There is a need to seek increased funding from the Council. However, for each management area, there has been an indication given through submissions of the most important projects. These will be completed first. Although there may be budget constraints, yet it is possible to ensure projects can be completed, and to a good standard within a budget limit.

5. That a better rubbish collection system be found.

Note: Although the number of rubbish receptacles has increased, there is an on-going problem. Whether they need more regular emptying or perhaps more people on the ground collecting from the beach needs identifying, and the appropriate management applied.

6. That an increased funding allocation of \$100,000 be sought through the Annual Plan process over the ten-year period of the strategy, 2000-2010.

Note: There will always be a limit to the resources allocated to enhancement of the coast. It is for the community, with Coast Care, to decide how these resources should be utilized. However, the current projected ten year budget of \$1,900,000 is insufficient to achieve what the community desires. The priorities shown for ecological enhancement, planting and sand management will deplete the existing budget significantly. The result will be that completion of projects will be delayed or postponed. An extra \$1,000,000 over ten years, or \$100,000 per year, will enable significantly more to be done, and over a shorter period.

7. That Coast Care assist in forming an interest group to investigate the artificial reef proposal.
8. That the dog control section be informed of submissions received, and that it be suggested they find a better enforcement procedure.
9. That further discussions take place between the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board and local residents on the extension to the Estuary Walkway between Caspian and Tern Streets, and that the Community Board report back to the Parks and Recreation Committee on the outcome of this consultation.