

2. BISHOPDALE/YMCA RELOCATION

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The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the status of this project, the issues over the siting of the YMCA facility and how the Council might assist with the relocation.

BACKGROUND

In 2000 the YMCA approached the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board regarding a proposal to relocate from its outgrown and outmoded Greers Road site to co-locate on Council land. The principle for the co-location at Bishopdale was supported by the Board. The YMCA is already on site at Bishopdale through its management of the Council's Bishopdale Community Centre. The opportunity to link with a programme for the future upgrading of the Council's existing facilities also offered additional benefits.

Studies of the proposal were initiated and support in principle was given by the Board for the development of a concept providing for the construction of a multi-use facility at Bishopdale, to provide facilities for both the YMCA and enhanced Council facilities.

Presentations were made to the former Pools and Stadia Subcommittee and the Community and Leisure Committee, where the initiative was deferred pending the outcome of the "Major Facilities Study".

More recently the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board decided it would be helpful to initiate an updated scoping study and the development of a concept plan. This work was carried out on a shared cost arrangement with the YMCA. The initial scoping study which was based around the use of part of the existing car park at Bishopdale identified some significant difficulties. In light of this, it was considered appropriate to consider other siting options.

A report was presented to the Strategy and Finance Committee in June 2003 and the following resolutions were passed by the Council:

1. *That further evaluation of the concept for the development of a multi-use facility at Bishopdale be endorsed.*
2. *That a preferred option for the location of the Stage 1 development be reported back to the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board and the Community and Leisure Committee and the Property and Major Projects Committee within the next few months.*
3. *That the above report include details of any long term lease which could be offered to the YMCA, and details of any Council responsibilities for work associated with the concept overall.*

Subsequent to these resolutions, Council staff undertook the process of identifying what were the potential options for accommodating the YMCA in relocating to Bishopdale. A number of options were identified. An assessment of the planning issues associated with each site is attached.

In addition to the planning work, Council staff made a presentation to the YMCA Board. The purpose of this was to present the Board with a clear picture of all the options and the issues associated with them. In addition to the options of using Council-owned land, the option of the YMCA purchasing some land was discussed.

OPTIONS

The following is a summary of the options considered for relocating the YMCA to Bishopdale. These options are identified in the attachments.

- (a) Use part of the existing Recreation Reserve (Bishopdale Park) for the new building. Issues associated with this option:
 - reclassification of part of Recreation Reserve required
 - no support from Parks Unit owing to loss of green space and loss of vista

- (b) Use part of the existing south car park (currently zoned Road Reserve) for the new building. Issues associated with this option:
 - road stopping required, as car park is still legal road (this could be a lengthy, time consuming process)
 - significant objection from other retailers
- (c) Use the existing Local Purpose Reserve for the new building. Issues associated with this option:
 - significant objection likely from adjacent subdivision development (prior to the YMCA acquiring this land, a private developer had received subdivision approval for the creation of 13 residential lots)
 - major issues associated with building on Local Purpose Reserve
- (d) Do a land swap with part of the car park and the Local Purpose Reserve and locate the building partly on reserve and partly on car park. Issues associated with this option:
 - road stopping required
 - major issues associated with building on Local Purpose Reserve
 - need to incorporate existing crèche into development or find new location, meaning added cost to the project for the YMCA
- (e) Review other large buildings in the Bishopdale centre for potential refurbishment. Issues associated with this option:
 - currently no other buildings are available
 - refurbishment can often lead to significant added cost
- (f) YMCA to purchase some land and build on their own site. Issues associated with this option:
 - YMCA will need to provide car parking for the development
 - YMCA faces additional cost to provide new facility

CURRENT SITUATION

The YMCA is committed to vacating its current facility in Greers Road by December 2004. This places significant pressure on them to have resolved a new location and have a new facility in place. As a result of these pressures and the difficulties associated with any of the Council land options, the YMCA has pursued the option of obtaining its own piece of land.

The YMCA has purchased the plot of land that was the matter of a subdivision – option (f) as described above (refer to the attached map for location). The result of this decision is that the YMCA will be looking to build its new facility on its own land. The YMCA is currently developing concept drawings for the facility.

The YMCA has had discussions with adjoining property owners. They have indicated that in principle they approve of the proposed development. Final agreements cannot be given until plans have been produced and a resource consent application made.

BENEFITS FOR COUNCIL

The decision by the YMCA to purchase its own land and relocate to Bishopdale has some significant benefits for the Council. These are:

- (a) The provision of a major facility in the north-west area of the city. The Council has recognised through its review of major facilities that there is a need for a major facility in this area. The Council does not have any funding allocated to meet this need within the next 10 years. The decision by the YMCA to build a facility will assist the Council in achieving this need.
- (b) A new facility such as the YMCA will help the process of revitalisation for the Bishopdale area. It has long been recognised by the Council that there is a need for this revitalisation to happen. The Council as a major stakeholder in the area will benefit from this initiative.

FURTHER COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

The opportunity exists for the Council to pursue a strategic partnership with a major provider of leisure activities. Given the commitment from the YMCA to having a facility in Bishopdale, it would be appropriate for the Council to look at how it might assist the YMCA. During discussions at the Strategy and Finance Committee meeting on 16 June the opportunity for a partnership with the YMCA was strongly endorsed.

A number of options exist for the Council to assist. The options for Council assistance are as follows:

- (a) The Council to make the existing Local Purpose Reserve available for parking. This will provide parking at the frontage to the new facility. It will help in meeting the requirement to provide additional parking for the new facility, avoid compromising parking for other existing users at the shopping centre and thus work towards meeting the requirements for a resource consent.
- (b) The Council to actively work with the YMCA in the development of a design for the new facility. The purpose for this is to provide the YMCA with sufficient technical assistance to facilitate the granting of a resource consent. Note – the owner of adjacent property on the northern boundary has already indicated he would not object to any development as suggested by the YMCA.
- (c) The Council, via the grants to community organisations process, assists towards the cost of the facility on the basis that, given the size of the facility, its functionality falls into the major facility category.

SUMMARY

This project has been under consideration for a number of years. The YMCA initially approached the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board on the basis of the Council finding a suitable location for a new facility. The Council has indicated support for the concept of a strategic partnership with the YMCA through the Community Board and the Strategy and Finance Committee.

Significant progress has been made in recent months in identifying options for the location of the facility. An excellent result has been achieved with the YMCA taking the initiative to purchase some land to make this project happen.

In order to continue along the path of a strategic partnership with a major provider of leisure facilities, the Council can provide assistance in bringing this project to fruition by providing parking, a grant and by having key Council staff continue to work with the YMCA as they develop their plans and a resource consent submission.

The Community Advocate, Fendalton comments:

“Clearly the initiative on the part of the YMCA in acquiring its own land has presented the means by which the relocation from Greers Road to Bishopdale can more easily be achieved. Difficulties surrounding the use of the existing Council owned land were likely to represent, at best, a difficult and time consuming process for the consents required.”

Given that the YMCA has undertaken the initiative to ensure the relocation of its activities to its preferred location (Bishopdale) it is considered important that the Council provide appropriate assistance in partnership arrangement strongly supported by the provisions of the new Local Government Act.

Subject to the Council's endorsement of the principles of the foregoing report, the opportunity should next be taken to address the wider issue of the Council's involvement as a stakeholder in the overall Bishopdale Mall site. Of importance here is to recognise that the Council owns the car parking and the pedestrian areas within the mall in addition to the existing Community Centre, the Public Library, the creche, and the public toilets. It is also relevant that the Council provides significant support through partnerships with the Community Police, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and the Plunket at Bishopdale.

The successful development of the YMCA's transferred activities to Bishopdale should signal an opportunity for a review of the overall Council stakeholding at Bishopdale. This is a task which could be undertaken by the Property Unit and the Urban Development Team.”

A report was tabled from the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board endorsing the recommendations contained within the Property Manager's report.

Recommendation: That the Council:

1. Approve in principle the transfer of the existing Local Purpose Reserve identified as Lot 2, DP 26629, to car parking while still allowing for the retention of the existing Plunket rooms on the site.
2. Recommend to the Community and Leisure Committee that it give consideration to a grant to the YMCA to assist it with development of the facility.
3. Approve the ongoing involvement of Council staff in assisting the YMCA with the development of its plans and resource consent application.
4. That subject to the successful transfer of the YMCA's recreational activities to Bishopdale, the opportunity be taken to review the overall Council stakeholding at Bishopdale.