


6. AVON RIVER SAFETY PROJECT



General Manager responsible:	General Manager Community Services, DDI 941-8534
Officer responsible:	Recreation and Sports Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of the report is to inform the Board on the progress of the impending improvements to the Kerr's Reach and Owles Terrace launching areas to improve safety for non-powered water craft users.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Avon River Safety Project was initiated, following regular concerns being expressed to the Council from the rowing groups and other users of the Kerr's Reach rowing facility regarding safety and overcrowding. The Council agreed to spend \$600,000 on capital upgrading works and funding was allocated for the 2005/06 financial year.
3. The key result of this project will be to reduce congestion at the Kerr's Reach launching site and improve access to and from the water for the wide range of water craft and users of this stretch of Avon River. This area will become safer for users with there being less conflict between the differing types of usage and the limited space available. To achieve this it is also proposed to improve the facilities at the Owles Terrace launching site which will alleviate demand at Kerr's Reach.
4. As part of the overall concept, improvements are also proposed to the car parking area to provide sufficient car parks for all users of the Porritt Park area including hockey. The Recreation and Sports Unit and Greenspace Unit are contributing additional funds to achieve the overall outcomes.
5. There are four separate components to this project as follows:
 - Installation of pontoons and river bank improvements at Kerr's Reach (**Attachments 1 and 2**).
 - Improvement to the launching ramp at Owles Terrace.
 - Signage and education of river users.
 - Upgrading of car parking at Kerr's Reach/Porritt Park (**Attachment 1**).

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

6. Project estimates are:

	Amount
1. Pontoons and Riverbank Construction Work - Kerr's Reach	\$385,000
2. Owles Terrace Launching Ramp Improvements	\$95,000
3. Signage and Education	\$10,000
4. Car Park Improvements	280,000
Total	\$770,000

This is being funded from the following allocations:

	Amount
1. Project Funds - allocated 2005/06 Annual Plan	\$600,000
2. Recreation and Sports Capital Programme - Outdoor Stadia 2005/06 Annual Plan	\$90,000
3. Greenspace Unit - Porritt Park Car Park Improvements 2006/07 Capital Programme	\$80,000
Total	\$770,000

The installation of the pontoons at Kerr's Reach has been granted resource consent and tendering of the main contract is due to be advertised in the near future.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Avon River Safety Project update report be received.

BACKGROUND ON AVON RIVER SAFETY PROJECT

7. The allocation of funding for this project was as a consequence of Council being unable to overcome inherent difficulties with the Lake Isaac Flat Water Rowing Facility being proposed by the Lake Isaac Trust. At a Council seminar in March 2005 alternative options were presented to Council which included upgrading works such as pontoons and improved signage and access at Kerr's Reach and Owles Terrace. This resulted in a sum of \$600,000 being adopted as part of the 2005/06 Annual Plan. Since that time a project team of Council staff have further investigated those proposals and following consultation with river users and other Porritt Park users the following items were supported as part of the overall project:

(a) **Installation of Pontoons and Riverbank Improvements at Kerr's Reach**

The installation of pontoons and by excavating a portion of the embankment in the Kerr's Reach will provide two benefits, (1) a much wider area available for launching and taking out the canoes and rowing skiffs, and (2) the introduction of the pontoons provide for low and high tide entry at the same point, therefore impact on the useable river width is minimised.

(b) **Improvement to the Launching Ramp at Owles Terrace**

This work will specifically improve the launching area for the Waka Ama craft however these improvements should also make the facility more attractive to casual users and dragon boats. It is also proposed to install a section of pontoon at this location.

(c) **Signage and Education**

It is proposed to install new signage at Kerr's Reach, Owles Terrace and at strategic places along the river which will advise users of the "rules" that apply to this area of water and to be vigilant and careful in the use of this recreation facility.

(d) **Upgrading of Car Parking at Kerr's Reach/Porritt Park**

There have been concerns expressed for many years regarding problems with car parking at Porritt Park and also during major event days at Kerr's Reach. A new landscape plan of the park has been completed which has identified extending the car parking area at Kerr's Reach to accommodate water sport users in the summer and hockey users in the winter. By relocating the main entrance of the Porritt Park hockey facility via the Kerr's Reach entranceway will reduce parking conflict along Avonside Drive for local residents. The landscape plan removes the linking road between the existing hockey car park and the rowing car park and will only allow overflow parking on the grassed areas during the summer months or for one-off events.

(e) **Consultation**

The bulk of the consultation has been held directly with the river users, with the rowing and canoe clubs being consulted from the early stages of the project. The Canterbury Rowing Association supported the proposal at their recent AGM. Separate consultation with the Waka Ama group regarding improvements at Owles Terrace has also taken place. Fish and Game New Zealand have also been contacted in relation to the project as well as residents opposite Kerr's Reach and in Avonside Drive opposite Porritt Park. Canterbury Hockey Association has also been advised of the proposal to reduce access to the grassed area and provide parking for Porritt Park on the western boundary of the hockey facility. Part of this new parking will be provided within the existing leased area of the Porritt Park hockey facility.

OPTIONS

8. The options for the waterways portion of this project were presented to the Council seminar in March 2005 with all components being supported. For the provision of additional car parking, there were four concept plans prepared, all of which encroached on the park area currently used for overflow parking. These concepts were rejected in favour of utilising the grassed area within the hockey leased area to provide the extra parks - shifting the focus of parking away from the current entrance and using the Kerr's Reach entrance. This provides dual benefit for hockey as well as rowing, having the least impact on the grassed areas and enabling the removal of the sealed access road between the two entranceways.