

9. RAY BLANK PARK PLAYGROUND UPGRADE - PLAN APPROVAL

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| General Manager responsible: | General Manager City Environment , Jane Parfitt DDI 941-8656 |
| Officer responsible: | Michael Aitken Manager Transport & Greenspace DDI 941 6287 |
| Author: | Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, Rod Whearty |

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board’s approval to the plan for upgrading the existing playground facility on Ray Blank Park following consultation with the local community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Board members will recall that the concept plan for upgrading the existing playground on Ray Blank Park was presented to the Works Traffic and Environment Committee on Monday 25 September 2006, prior to carrying out consultation with the local community.
3. The plan was circulated to approximately 320 residential properties within the general catchment area of Ray Blank Park. There was a very good response from the local community with a total of seventy three (73) individual residents returning the comment form providing feedback on the proposed plan (See attached comments). Overall the response from the local community was positive and supportive of the proposed plan.
4. The consultation plan gave residents a choice of two options in relation to three separate items of play equipment and requested respondents to indicate their preferred option in respect to each group. The total numbers for each item do not add up to 73 (total number of responses) because some respondents did not indicate a preference in all or some of these categories. The table below shows the results of the residents feedback in relation to these items.

| Item A | |
|---------------|----|
| Spinner Bowl | 22 |
| Junior Spica | 45 |

| Item B | |
|---------------|----|
| Junior Rocker | 45 |
| Stinger | 23 |

| Item C | |
|---------------|----|
| Roctopus | 36 |
| Comet | 30 |

5. There were a number of comments suggesting that the playground proposal appeared to be largely targeted at the younger age group and that it would be nice to see some provision for older children as well (see feedback). Staff would concur with this view and propose some minor amendments to better accommodate this potential group of users. A number also mentioned disappointment at the removal of the large slide, however this is unavoidable as it no longer complies with the current playground safety standard.
6. In recognition of the residents feedback, the City Environment Group proposes to make a number of minor changes to the original plan (see attached plan). The proposed changes will provide additional play opportunities for a wider range of age groups, which is what many of the respondents requested. The changes are listed below.

Proposed Changes

- (a) Confirm the Spica, Junior Rocker and Roctopus as the preferred items as indicated by the Residents feedback.
- (b) Upgrading the Junior Spica and Junior Slide to standard sizes. This will provide for the older age group but will still be able to be used by the younger age group as well.

- (c) The location of the Spica and Junior Rocker have been reversed to improve functionality as a result of upgrading to the larger sized Spica.
 - (d) Magnolia specimen trees on the perimeter of the playground to introduce colour and shade to the play area.
7. In a further effort to respond to the need for recreational facilities for the older age group, the City Environment Group proposes to programme a basketball half court on Ray Blank Park as part of the future Capital Works Programme. This will be done through the LTCCP process. Funding is likely to be some years out and further consultation as to the location would be undertaken at the appropriate time. The Maidstone Road frontage is the most likely location as there is an available area within the park that provides adequate boundary separation from existing sports fields and neighbouring properties. In addition to this the half court would be on a major route to the university and late teens/young adults are a key user group of these facilities.
8. All respondents have been sent a final reply letter thanking them for their input, including an A3 colour copy of the finalised plan. The letter informed respondents that the plan would be presented to the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board for approval. Details of the meeting (Time, date, venue etc) were also provided so that any interested people could attend.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

9. The City Environment Groups 5-year Capital Works Programme has funding available in the current 2006/07 financial year to undertake the upgrade of the playground on Ray Blank Park. Funding for the project has been detailed specifically or more generically in previous years Annual Plans and the current LTCCP that has been approved by Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) It is recommended that the Board approve the attached plan for upgrading the existing playground on Ray Blank Park and the City Environment Group commence work on implementing the construction programme.
- (b) That the City Environment Group look at providing a hard court facility on Ray Blank Park in future years Capital Works Programme and that funding and timing for the facility be decided through the normal LTCCP process.