

4. AVONHEAD PARK CHANGING PAVILION EXTENSION AND CAR PARK ALTERATION – PLAN APPROVAL

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to approve the plan for extending the existing changing facility on Avonhead Park following consultation with the local community and sports user groups. In addition to this the report also seeks approval for a plan to reconfigure the internal layout of the existing car park on Avonhead Park to provide increased capacity and functionality.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Board members will recall that the concept plan for extending the existing changing pavilion on Avonhead Park was presented to the Works Traffic and Environment Committee on Monday 28 August 2006, prior to carrying out consultation with the local community.
3. The plan was circulated to approximately 40 residential properties with boundaries fronting onto that part of Avonhead Park along with organised sports groups currently using the existing facility.
The circulation area was relatively small for the following reasons.
 - (a) The project is simply extending an existing facility already present on the park.
 - (b) The area of the proposed works is some distance from the nearest property and considered to have very little or no additional impact on existing patterns of use.
 - (c) Only three properties in this area of the park can actually see the building due to the presence of existing fences and shrub borders, therefore visual impact is also very low.
4. There was a small but positive response from the local community with a total of eight individuals and one sports group returning the comment form providing feedback on the proposed plan (See attached comments). The relatively low response rate was not unexpected given the nature of the proposed work and the reasons outlined under point 6 of this report.
5. In recognition of the residents feedback, the City Environment Group does not propose any changes to the original building plan that was circulated to local residents (see attached plan). The request from the Baseball Association for access to toilet facilities for their proposed events in December/January can be accommodated while still achieving completion of the development for the coming winter sports season.
6. The peak activity of organised sport on Avonhead Park currently occurs during the winter months and is already at maximum capacity with all available sports fields in use during this time. Therefore the new changing facilities will not increase the level of activity on the park, but simply provide additional and improved facilities for the existing users.
7. One issue that has arisen in recent years as a result of the increased use by organised sport is car parking in some of the surrounding streets, particularly where there is a pedestrian access way into the park. Some residents had recently requested the Transport and Greenspace Unit to implement parking restrictions to address their concerns. While this was not directly related to the pavilion extension, the City Environment Group took the opportunity to investigate the issue in conjunction with this project.
8. The existing car park is currently unmarked and the informal parking that currently occurs does not make maximum use of the available area. In addition to this the current lay out and design of the car park does not sit comfortably with the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design), being heavily planted with a number of restricted and compromised sight lines. Board members will recall looking at this car park on our recent CPTED tour on 16 August 2006 where we highlighted the challenges of managing and maintaining these areas.

9. Staff have developed two options for providing additional car parks on Avonhead Park (See attached plan). Option one is our preferred option. Option one provides an alternative design and layout that would significantly increase the capacity of the existing car park, while at the same time addressing the issues related to CPTED. The proposed design does not extend the physical dimensions of the existing car park but simply maximises the efficient use of the current available area and achieves approximately 90 additional car parking spaces.
10. The City Environment Group is currently carrying out further design detail to more accurately identify the final cost of implementing the alternative design. While this work was not part of the Changing Pavilion consultation, staff believe there is merit in carrying out this work given the significant benefits in car park capacity and CPTED outcomes. Depending on the final estimated cost, funding for the project will be either accommodated within existing budget provision or provided for in future years through the LTCCP process at the appropriate time.
11. Staff do not propose any further consultation in relation to the car park alterations at this stage on the basis that we are simply reconfiguring the internal lay out of an existing facility and the external dimensions of the car park will remain unchanged.
12. We would not anticipate any objections or resistance from the local community to the car park alterations given that this work would be seen as a positive response to their concerns about "on-street" parking associated with sporting activities occurring on the park.
13. In addition to this, further monitoring of the situation will be undertaken during the winter sports season, which is currently the peak use period for the park. This will help determine whether parking in surrounding streets is due to a capacity issue with the existing car park, or simply a matter of convenience whereby the street site provides a closer access point to the field being played on.
14. Any further action required as a result of the investigation, such as parking restrictions in surrounding streets would be addressed through a subsequent report back to the Board at the appropriate time.
15. 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. Transport and Greenspace staff have advised residents with parking concerns of the proposed changes to the car park.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

16. The City Environment Groups 5-year Capital Works Programme has funding available in the current 2006/07 financial year to undertake the extension of the changing facility and proposed car park alterations on Avonhead Park. Funding for the projects has been detailed specifically or more generically in previous years Annual Plans and the current LTCCP that has been approved by the Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Approve the plan for extending the changing pavilion on Avonhead Park and the City Environment Group commence work on implementing the construction programme.
2. Approve Option 1 of the attached plan for alterations to the lay out of the existing car park at Avonhead Park and the City Environment Group implement the project when budget provision is available.
3. That the Transport and Greenspace Unit undertake a monitoring programme during the 2007 winter sports season to determine the extent of casual parking in surrounding streets, and that the outcome of the monitoring along with any recommended control measures be reported back to the Board.