

7. MONTCLARE RESERVE PLAYGROUND RENEWAL

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	Transport and Greenspace Manager
Author:	Mary Hay, Parks and Waterways Area Advocate

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board to proceed to detailed design and construction of the Montclare Reserve playground upgrade proposal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Montclare Reserve is a small local purpose reserve that is designed to meet the needs of the immediate neighbourhood. The existing playground does not comply with playground safety standards and needs to be replaced with new play equipment.
3. In December 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to the local community and stakeholders (refer **Attachment 1**). There was a high degree of community engagement in this project (a 35% response rate), which was largely supportive of the proposal. The summary of consultation issues and project team responses are outlined in **Attachment 2**.
4. The main requests made by submitters were for:
 - Amendments to the choice of play equipment, in particular for retention of the fort and for more challenging equipment.
 - Request for more seating and another rubbish bin
5. The initial concept has been amended in response to community feedback and the preferred option is included as **Attachment 3**. This option best satisfies the objectives of the project, has good community support and is consistent with the funding allocated in the Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).
6. On 26 February 2007 the project team's recommended option, was presented to the Environment Committee. The Committee considered the report and the views of a number of members of the local community, who expressed their opposition to the proposal. This opposition was based on a preference for the retention of the existing fort or replacement with more challenging play equipment. The Committee's recommendation was:

"That the Board agrees that the report lie on the table until a site visit of the reserve playground has been undertaken and request that staff provide information on the current status of the fort and the changes that would be required in order for the fort to meet the required playground safety standards."
7. On 26 March 2007, the project team gave a seminar to the Environment Committee that outlined why the current fort needs to be removed and advised the Board that staff are investigating the feasibility of an option that includes a new fort. These investigations included discussions with the park's neighbours, who would be asked to provide neighbours' approval for a fort option
8. On 23 April, the Environment Committee heard the concerns about a replacement fort from one of the park's neighbours. The project team provided the committee with a seminar about the possible options and advised that a replacement fort option is not supported by the project team, due to the effects on the adjoining neighbour, access issues, visual effects and budget limitations. The committee agreed that they would reconsider the staff report that was presented on 26 February, which recommends a junior playground.
9. The implementation of this project is currently scheduled for August 2007.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

10. The funding for the proposed upgrade to Montclare Reserve has been set aside in the LTCCP under "Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways – Local Projects – Playgrounds and Recreational Facilities" (refer page 84 LTCCP).

11. The funds are programmed in the Capital Programme Unit's budget, for construction over the 2006/07 financial year. Specifically:

2006/07	\$4,000	Montclare Reserve (Playground Renewal)
2007/08	\$40,000	Montclare Reserve (Playground Renewal)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approves the landscape plan (LP204901) in **Attachment 3** in order to proceed to detailed design and implementation of the concept for the upgrade of the Montclare Reserve playground.

BACKGROUND ON THE MONTCLARE RESERVE PLAYGROUND UPGRADE PROPOSAL

12. Montclare Reserve is a small local park, which is designed to meet the needs of the immediate neighbourhood. The existing playground does not comply with current playground safety standards and needs to be removed. It is not feasible to bring it up to standard. It is proposed to replace and enhance the playground equipment and retain the current location.

13. Preliminary research helped to inform the project objectives, which were to:

- To remove the existing equipment.
- To provide some new and interesting equipment that meets the local communities needs within the available funds.
- To build playground consistent with NZ Playground Standards.
- Improve accessibility for people with disabilities.
- Provide equipment for young children and, where possible, older children.
- To ensure that the playground is visually appealing.

14. The Project Team developed a concept to meet these objectives, which included the following:

- Junior slide.
- Double swing set.
- Spica or Double Rocker (community to select preference).
- Bear Rocker or Junior Skater (community to select preference).
- Low landscaping and small trees around playground.
- Park bench near playground.

15. In December 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 130 residences and key stakeholders. This pamphlet included a summary of the concept and an initial concept plan (refer **Attachment 1**), and a feedback form. The project team sought feedback from the community about whether the concept was supported, about a choice of play options and also sought general comment about the proposal.

16. The consultation received a 35% response rate (45 responses). Community feedback was generally positive. The consultation outcome and project team responses are summarised in **Attachment 2**. Opposition to the proposal was indicated by three submitters, who did not support the removal of the fort, did not consider that the proposal provided challenging equipment for older children and didn't consider the proposal allows enough room for cricket.

17. In terms of the choice of play equipment there was a clear preference for the Double Rocker and Junior Skater.

18. The main requests made by submitters were for:

- Amendments to the choice of play equipment, in particular for retention of the fort and for more challenging equipment.
- Request for more seating and another rubbish bin.

19. The project team considered the feedback from consultation and revised the concept plan to include the following:
 - A larger play unit that includes a dual slide (1.5m high), an Abseil Climber and a Tic Tac Toe.
 - An additional swing seat for older children.
 - A picnic table will be installed adjacent to the playground (instead of the proposed park bench).
 - A reduction of 'small trees' in all plant beds (especially along the boundary).
20. While the consultation indicated that the community would prefer some more challenging play item, one of the objectives of this project was to 'Provide equipment for young children and, where possible, older children'. This objective was formed on the basis that the city's small 'pocket parks' are intended to cater for young children that live locally. As children get older and more confident they can travel to more challenging playgrounds.
21. There are a number of playgrounds in this area that cater for older children and have many of the requested facilities. Annandale Park, Avonhead School, Ferrier Park, Ray Blank Park and Upper Riccarton Domain are all within 1km of Montclare Reserve. Rather than duplicate the play equipment in reserves across the city it is considered prudent to focus on younger users in the small local reserves. Notwithstanding this, the project team has amended the concept to include as much more challenging play equipment as possible without impinging on the needs of young children.
22. On 26 February 2007 the project team's recommended option, was presented to the Environment Committee. The Committee considered the report and the views of a number of members of the local community, who expressed their opposition to the proposal. This opposition was based on a preference for the retention of the existing fort or replacement with more challenging play equipment. The Committee's recommendation was:

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24. On 23 April, the Environment Committee heard the concerns about a replacement fort from one of the park's neighbours. The project team provided the committee with a seminar about the possible options and advised that a replacement fort option is not supported by the project team, due to the effects on the adjoining neighbour, access issues, visual effects and budget limitations. The committee agreed that they would reconsider the staff report that was presented on 26 February, which recommends a junior playground.

OPTIONS

25. As part of the consultation, the community was provided with options for play equipment (see **Attachment 1**). The project team selected the play items with the greatest number of 'votes' as it was considered that this best reflected community views. These were the Double Rocker and Junior Skater.

PREFERRED OPTION

26. The recommended option best satisfies the objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation, which supports the development of this reserve. The upgraded playground and surrounds will help to foster community cohesion.
27. This option is consistent with the:
 - LTCCP 2006-2016.
 - Parks and Open Spaces Activity Management Plan.
 - Parks and Waterways Access policy.

28. This option has primary alignment with the following Community Outcomes:

- *“We value leisure time and recognise that the arts, sports, and other recreational activities contribute to our economy, identity, health and well being”*; and
- *“Christchurch has a vibrant centre, attractive neighbourhoods and well-designed transport networks. Our lifestyles and heritage are enhanced by our urban environment.”*