

9. RICHMOND PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is:
 - (a) To seek the approval of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board to proceed to detailed design and construction/ implementation of the Richmond Park Development Plan; and
 - (b) To obtain the Board's approval to lease by way of a variation part of the Shirley Bowling Club site to the Shirley Tennis Club.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Richmond Park is a sport park that has its main access off Woodchester Street. The park provides for lower grade cricket and rugby, with Shirley Tennis Club and Shirley Bowling Club having facilities adjacent to the main park site, adjacent to Woodchester Street. Historically the use of these facilities has resulted in a large parking demand and the informal onsite parking results in a potential traffic/pedestrian conflict.
3. Access is also taken from Medway Street and Poulton Street. There is Council housing adjacent to the Poulton Street access. Marian College borders the park to the north and east, with foot and cycle traffic crossing the park to access the college, and other local schools (Shirley Intermediate and Shirley Boys High). Council previously purchased a Medway Street property to create better access through the park and to improve visibility into the previously under-utilised southern section of the park.
4. There are two parks nearby, Petrie Park and Sullivan Park, but these are small local parks. In addition to supporting organised sport, Richmond Park has a small play structure catering for younger children on the park which is well used by the neighbourhood. There are also opportunities for passive recreation, such as walking and informal games.
5. The Bowling Club no longer needs its second bowling green and are prepared to surrender part of its lease. The Tennis Club have indicated that they would accept a variation to their lease to include the former Bowling Club land so that they can construct two new competition standard tennis courts.
6. In 2003, a concept plan that considered the changing needs of the bowling and tennis clubs was developed and released for public comment. The key features of the plan were:
 - Construction of 34 car parks inside the Woodchester Street entrance;
 - Development of the Medway Street entrance for pedestrian/cycle access;
 - Redevelopment of the southern section of the park for passive recreation and upgrade of the drinking fountain near the children's playground;
 - Planting of additional trees alongside the cricket pavilion.
7. The community raised some concerns with the above proposal. It was thought that there may be a conflict between cars and pedestrians and also that proposed car park was too close to the cricket oval. Other issues about the use of the southern part of the park were also raised. The proposal was reconsidered by Council's Greenspace Planning team.
8. In 2006 a Capital Programme project team was formed. In response to planning investigations, the team developed the following objectives for the project:
 - Provide formalised on site parking in Richmond Park that meets the needs of the resident sports clubs;
 - Reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles on site;
 - To plan for the additional space to be provided by the removal of one bowling green;
 - To respond to the tennis club's request for two new courts;

- To address tree maintenance issues in the park;
 - Consider the needs of the non-sports club users of the park;
 - Allow for informal sports and enhance passive recreational opportunities;
 - Enhance the amenity of the park and its entrances.
9. A traffic engineer assessed the site and developed a design for onsite parking that uses a drop off zone to maximise parking. The main car park is located inside the Woodchester Street entrance, clear of the cricket oval. Overflow parking will continue to be available in the southern section of the park, when necessary. This plan allows for the creation of the necessary onsite parking and for two new tennis courts.
 10. An Arborist assessed the trees in Richmond Park and identified a number that are in decline and need to be removed or monitored for possible removal. In the southern section of the park seven trees have been noted for removal and three to be monitored for possible removal in the future. Species include Liquidamber, Chestnut, Ginkgo, Ash, Prunus, Euonymus and Lime. In the northern section of the park five trees have been noted for removal and six to be monitored for possible removal in the future. Species include Oak, Sorbus, Pittosporum, and Sycamore. All the proposed tree removals at Richmond Park result from their poor condition.
 11. A concept plan, based on the project objectives, the engineer's and Arborist's assessments and the needs of the four sports clubs that use the park, was developed and released for public comment.
 12. The project team developed a concept to meet these objectives, which included the following:
 - Construction of 11 car parks and a drop off zone (6 spaces) inside the Woodchester Street entrance. Retention of informal overflow parking for approx. 30 cars (fenced off);
 - Development of the Medway Street entrance for pedestrian/cycle access;
 - Redevelopment of the southern section of the park for a small amount of passive recreation;
 - New drinking fountain and seating area near the children's playground;
 - Planting of additional trees throughout the park;
 - Removal of trees that are in poor condition.
 13. The proposed upgrade requires the removal of a block wall and two park benches to accommodate the on site car parking.
 14. In February/March 2007 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 700 residences and key stakeholders (refer attachment 1). This pamphlet included a summary of the concept, an initial concept plan and a feedback form. The project team sought feedback from the community to see whether the proposal was generally supported. A meeting with the residents of Woodchester Street was subsequently arranged. This provided the project team with the opportunity to answer questions about the proposal and hear concerns about the traffic and parking issues that were raised by the residents.
 15. The consultation received a 14% response rate (101 responses). Community feedback was generally very positive. Of the 101 submissions, there was 95% support for the proposal. One submitter opposed the proposal but did not make comment. One submitter supported part of the proposal but did not support the path to Medway Street, the parking or the tree removal. The consultation outcome and project team responses are summarised in attachment 2.
 16. The main requests made by submitters were for:
 - More seats and tables;
 - An upgrade to the playground;
 - Requests for lighting on paths and in carpark;
 - Amendments to landscaping;
 - Rationale for the tree removal (only supported if removal was necessary).
 17. Other key issues identified by submitters relate to:
 - Traffic volume and speed on Woodchester Street;
 - Parking demand on Woodchester Street;
 - Perceived lack of safety of the Medway St/ Woodchester St intersection;

18. The project team considered the feedback from consultation and revised the concept plan in the following way:
- Additional planting, adjacent to 27 Medway Street – to provide a buffer;
 - Removal of two proposed trees and relocation of two proposed trees, adjacent to 43 Medway Street – to ensure clear views into the park;
 - Additional picnic table, in the southern section of the park – as per resident request;
 - Additional play item – a Spica – to accommodate the needs of older children;
 - Tidy-up of existing playground with replacement of panels and paint – as per resident request;
 - Additional seating near playground – to the east and two the west with bench seat near oval – to accommodate socialising for parents;
 - Relocation of proposed tree next to picnic table, adjacent to 21 Woodchester St – as per resident request;
 - Relocation of proposed lime, north of the playground – to move away from neighbouring property;
 - Additional seat at northern section of park – as per resident request;
 - Removal of two proposed trees, adjacent to the proposed cricket club extension – to allow space for cricket players to warm up;
 - Adjustment to the carpark design - to improve access to cycle racks and to move the carpark further from the cricket oval. This has resulted in a reduction in the size of the drop off area, from approximately six cars to three cars;
 - Additional seat near car park – to accommodate people waiting to be picked up.
19. The request for lighting was considered however paths inside parks are not generally lit unless there is not a safe alternative route on the surrounding roads. Lighting the park's paths gives the impression that the route is safe at night which may not be the case. These paths are designed for daytime use. Lighting is not proposed for the car park area at this stage. It will be locked at night unless the clubs leave it open for a function, in which case there will be lots of people around to provide passive surveillance. Lighting could be considered at a later if the tennis club considers that it is necessary
20. The tree work only involves the removal of trees that have been identified by the Arborist as being in decline. Replacement trees species are listed on the development plan. One tree is proposed for the north-eastern corner of the reserve but none are proposed for directly behind the tennis courts. The removal of the trees in the north-eastern corner of the reserve is supported by the adjacent neighbour.
21. The residents of Woodchester Street have sought action on a number of issues that pertain to their street. They have concerns about the speed and volume of traffic and a perceived lack of safety with the Medway Street intersection. The residents have been referred to the Network Operations and Traffic Systems Team Leader to investigate further.
22. The recommended concept plan is included as attachment 3. The Richmond Park Development Plan is will be implemented over three financial years. The footpaths, park furniture, fencing, tree removal and the landscape plan are scheduled for June-September 2007. The construction of the car parking is subject to the tennis club carrying out their work, to allow access to the site. Once the Shirley Tennis club has constructed the new tennis courts the car park can be constructed. This is expected to be completed by early 2009.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. The funding from council is being provided from the Transport and Greenspace Capital Programme. Specifically:
- 2006/07 \$49,000 Richmond Park –Reserves Development
 - 2006/07 \$5,000 Richmond Park – Major Park Tree Replacement Projects
 - 2007/08 \$10,000 Richmond Park – Major Park Tree Replacement Projects
 - 2007/08 \$65,000 Richmond Park –Reserves Development
 - 2008/09 \$70,000 Richmond Park –Reserves Development

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2006-16 LTCCP budgets?

24. Yes. Funding is provided from within the Transport and Greenspace Capital Programme in the 2006-16 LTCCP.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

25. There are Right of Way issues affecting this Reserve. Dialogue and negotiations are being undertaken with adjoining land owners to resolve these restraints.
26. The Council has granted a number of leases to Sports and Community Groups permitting the establishment of Recreational Activities on Richmond Park. These are:
 - The Richmond Cricket Club was established at this site with a lease to the Richmond Working Men's Club. The Board, in early 2006, granted the Richmond Working Men's Club a new lease over Richmond Park for an 11 year term including two 11 year rights of renewal.
 - The Shirley Bowling Club have been granted a renewable lease effective from the 1st April 1986 for terms of 21 years with perpetual rights of renewal. The area is not specified in the lease however it is clearly defined on a plan attached to the lease.
 - The area occupied by the Shirley Tennis Club is not specified however it is clearly defined in a plan attached to the lease. The club have been granted a 21 year lease from the 1st October 1984 with a right of renewal for a further 21 year term. Lease renewal negotiations with the club are currently being held in abeyance until the outcomes of the consultative process is known.
27. It has been the Council's policy over a number of years that where perpetually renewable leases are requested to be varied to renegotiate the terms and conditions of any lease. The intention is to bring leases within the intent and current provisions of the Reserves Act 1977.
28. Both the Shirley Tennis Club and Shirley Bowling Club hold leases over the Reserve. These are able, with Board approval and following public notification, to be varied with the consent of all parties.
29. The Shirley/Papanui Community Board has delegated authority to approve variations to the leases.
30. Any variations to the existing leases will require the approval of the Minister of Conservation.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

31. **LTCCP 2006-2016**
Parks, Open Spaces and Waterways – Page 123

Recreation – By offering a range of active and passive recreation and leisure opportunities
Health – By providing areas for people to engage in healthy activities

Recreation and Leisure – Page 131

Recreation – By encouraging more people to participate in leisure, physical and sporting activities

32. Parks and Open Spaces Activity Management Plan

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

33. Social Wellbeing and Youth Strategy and Safer Parks Policy

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

34. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the local community via a letterbox drop and comment form to the local community and a meeting with residents at the bowling club.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Shirley/Papanui Community Board:

- (a) Approves the plan in attachment 3 in order to proceed to detailed design and construction/ implementation of the Richmond Park Development Plan; and
- (b) Accept the surrender of the lease over the number 2 bowling green from the Shirley Bowling Club and that their existing lease be renegotiated accordingly to align with the current provisions of the Reserves Act 1977; and
- (c) Approve a lease over the surrendered bowling green to the Shirley Tennis Club by way of a variation to their existing lease being subject to:
 - (i) Public notification under the Reserves Act 1977 and no sustainable objections being received.
 - (ii) The approval of the Department of Conservation being obtained.
 - (iii) The applicants meeting all costs associated with the granting of the new lease.
 - (iv) The Corporate Support and Transport and Greenspace Unit Managers be given delegated authority to negotiate and agree the annual rental.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the staff recommendation be adopted