

## 19. RIDGEVIEW RESERVE LANDSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Unit Manager, Transport and Greenspace
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to approve the landscape concept plan for the development of Ridgeview Reserve following consultation with the local community.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The development of Ridgeview Reserve as a new reserve is scheduled in the Capital Works Programme for 2007/08.
3. The reserve was vested to the Council as part of The Ridge subdivision near the top of Mount Pleasant Road and is currently undeveloped.
4. The proposed landscape concept plan was distributed to approximately 70 households, including absentee property owners, in the vicinity of the reserve, along with a number of identified key stakeholder groups. A total of nine comment forms were returned, along with one telephone response. However, we received a positive response from those who did respond, with all indicating their support, and some providing additional feedback on the proposal (**attachment 1**).
5. In recognition of this feedback, the Transport and Greenspace Unit proposes that this proposal be approved and implemented (refer to **attachment 2**).
6. Two respondents have raised questions about the proposed native shrub plantings. It is not generally the Council's practice to specify planting design to species level in a landscape concept plan, but rather to suggest a general concept, for example, native plantings, and seek community feedback before proceeding to detailed planting plans.
7. It is proposed to plant a variety of native species that are suitable for the natural environmental conditions, and are also of high food value to support birdlife. The sight lines and views of individual properties will also be taken into account in the selection of species of an appropriate growth habit and height.
8. The final list of suitable plant species will be determined in conjunction with the Council's botanist, but typical species may include five-finger, cabbage trees, flax, kowhai, and totara.
9. One of the key objectives of the proposal is to retain and enhance the natural character of this site in keeping with the surrounding tussock grasslands and rocky outcrops of the Port Hills. However the planting of some suitable dry-land shrub species is being considered for amongst the tussock grass areas.
10. There are opposing views from two submitters on the retention or removal of the exotic trees at the base of the reserve close to Mount Pleasant Road, in particular the poplars. The submitter in favour of their retention has suggested that these provide an element of vertical scale, frame views and emphasise the change of the seasons. It is the view of staff that the exotic trees are not in keeping with the character of the natural environment of this reserve and of the nearby John Britten and Drayton Reserves. One submitter has also suggested that the pines below the road provide significant wind protection to the subdivision above and should be preserved for that reason. Council staff note that these trees appear to be on private property.
11. One submitter has expressed concern that the proposed walking path may be too steep in the areas behind the seat, and from the stream up to Clearview Lane. It was noted on the original concept plan that the path alignment may change slightly according to contours. The exact gradients of the path, and consequently its final alignment, will not be known until detailed surveys have been undertaken.

12. While the Council's *Parks and Waterways Access Policy (2002)* provides for inclusive use of parks by people with disabilities, older people and caregivers with young children, it also acknowledges that there may be circumstances where parks may not be fully accessible, for example, where construction of an accessible path on a steep hillside is required. Every effort will be made during the alignment and construction of the path to ensure that it is as accessible as possible, but it may not be fully accessible due to the steep topography of the site.
13. Construction of a walking track through this reserve will link John Britten Reserve with Mount Pleasant Road and in the longer term contribute to recreational track linkages throughout the area. There are currently alternative access routes around the streets of the subdivision.
14. One respondent has expressed the need for a playground in Ridgeview Reserve to provide for the increasing number of families with young children in the area. Currently the closest playground is at Old School Reserve some distance down Mount Pleasant Road.
15. The site is primarily a gully that drains stormwater from the John Britten Reserve above, discharging this to Mount Pleasant Road. Its steep topography, and general environmental conditions, are the major determining factors in what form of development can reasonably be achieved here.
16. It is the view of staff that there is currently no suitable flat area in the reserve for the installation of a playground. Although there is a small area close to the end of Clearview Lane that is more level than the rest of the reserve, staff believe that there is insufficient flat space here to install play equipment in compliance with the New Zealand Standard NZS 5828:2004 *Playground equipment and surfacing* in accordance with Council policy. There is also insufficient space to comply with the minimum setback distance from neighbours required under the provisions of the Christchurch City Plan.
17. Major earthworks at considerable cost would be required to create a flat area of any useable size. These would be likely to interfere with the best alignment of the walking path from the end of Clearview Lane. In addition, if any retaining walls were greater than one metre in height, safety fencing would be required. Retaining walls would also be required to contain the soft-fall material. This material would need to be rubber under-surfacing as bark would not be retained in this wind-swept environment. These requirements would all incur considerable additional costs. However the site would still be very limited in terms of the number and type of play equipment pieces that could be installed.
18. The reserve is situated in a recent subdivision off the upper part of Mount Pleasant Road which is somewhat geographically separated from the nearest houses. Currently there are a total of only five completed dwellings in the subdivision, with approximately 15 occupied residences in the adjoining Semaphore Close and Signal Hill Road, and a small number of existing dwellings along Mount Pleasant Road. It is considered likely that only children within the immediate vicinity of the reserve would access any play area installed there.
19. As this immediate area is not yet fully developed, Census 2006 demographic information is limited. The census mesh block in which this reserve is located currently extends over a very wide area of the Port Hills due to the relatively low population. However data from a total of four mesh blocks, including those extending in a northerly direction from the reserve, reveals that the total population of this area was 321 people. There were 24 children aged under five years, and 39 children aged 5-14 years, a total of 63 children in all. Hence there is currently insufficient demographic information available on the residents of the immediate neighbourhood to conclusively demonstrate the demand for a playground at this time. In addition there are only a total of around 70 properties within The Ridge subdivision, Semaphore Close and Signal Hill Road boundaries.
20. Overall, it is the view of staff that, in addition to there being no funding currently allocated for a playground, there is insufficient flat land, and insufficient demographic information, to support the installation of a playground in Ridgeview Reserve at this time. The current LTCCP undertakes to provide >4 playgrounds per 1000 children until 2008/09 with a target of five playgrounds per 1000 children from 2009/10 onwards. Current planning by the Asset and Network Planning Unit will be identifying the future need for playground development on a spatial basis city-wide.

21. Council staff are investigating other more suitable alternative locations for a playground in this area should future population growth support this, and funding be secured.
22. One submitter has requested that the new plantings be adequately maintained noting that few of the many trees planted in earlier years have survived. The origin of these trees is unclear as the Council has not undertaken any plantings in this reserve to date. On completion of the development works, the reserve will be placed under the Transport and Greenspace Unit maintenance contracts. There are specified levels of service that set the required maintenance standards to be adhered to within all parks across the city.
23. The footpath and traffic issues on Mount Pleasant Road raised by one submitter have been referred to the appropriate Council staff for further investigation.
24. All respondents who provided contact details have been sent a final letter of reply thanking them for their input. The letter has also informed respondents that the final amended plan would be presented to the Board for approval. Details of the meeting were provided so that any interested people could attend.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

25. The current Greenspace Capital Works Programme has funding to undertake the development of Ridgeview Reserve (as a new reserve) with \$50,000 available in the current 2007/08 financial year.

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

26. As above.

#### **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

27. No resource or building consent requirements have been identified. No other legal issues have been identified.

#### **Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?**

28. No legal implications have been identified.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS**

29. The proposed development aligns with the LTCCP as follows:

##### **Parks, open spaces and waterways - page 123**

- (a) Safety – by ensuring our Parks, open spaces and waterways are healthy and safe places.
- (b) Recreation – By offering a range of active and passive recreation and leisure opportunities.
- (c) Health – By providing areas for people to engage in healthy activities.
- (d) Community – By providing welcoming areas for communities to gather and interact.
- (e) Governance – By involving people in decision-making about parks, open spaces and waterways.
- (f) City Development - By providing inviting, pleasant and well cared-for environments.

### **Provision of recreational facilities – page 125**

- (a) Measures and targets -
- (b) Area of urban park per 1,000 population.
- (c) % of urban residences within 400 metres of a park.
- (d) Customer satisfaction with appearance of parks and with range of recreational opportunities available within parks.
- (e) Resident's satisfaction with the appearance of waterways and wetlands.

### **Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2006-16 LTCCP?**

30. This project supports a level of service in the LTCCP as follows:

- (a) Area of urban park per 1,000 population.
- (b) Percentage of urban residences within 400 metres of a park.
- (c) Customer satisfaction with appearance of parks and with range of recreational opportunities available within parks.
- (d) Resident's satisfaction with the appearance of waterways and wetlands.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES**

31. This project has primary alignment with the following Council strategies and policies:

- (a) Safer Christchurch Strategy
- (b) Parks and Waterways Access Policy
- (c) Environmental Policy Statement
- (d) Physical Recreation and Sport Strategy

### **Do the recommendations align with the Council's strategies?**

32. As above.

### **CONSULTATION FULFILMENT**

33. Consultation was undertaken with the local community and absentee property owners on the proposed landscape concept plan for the reserve.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Board approve the proposed Ridgeview Reserve landscape concept plan.
- (b) The City Environment and Capital Programme Groups commence the construction programme.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the staff recommendation be adopted.