

10. WARREN PARK PLAYGROUND RENEWAL

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment Group DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	Transport and Greenspace Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - (a) Seek the approval of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board to proceed to detailed design and construction of the Warren Park playground; and
 - (b) Seek funding from the 2007/08 Riccarton/Wigram Board Initiatives Fund for a half ball court with a seat.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Warren Park is a large sports park in Hornby. The park is bounded by Wilmers Road and Oakley Crescent, which is the primary access to the park and the childrens' playground/fort structure. The Awatea Stream flows along the north eastern boundary and the remainder of the park accommodates sports fields for organised sports like soccer, cricket and softball.
3. The existing playground does not cater to preschool/early school children or teenagers, which contributes to the deficit of playgrounds & recreational opportunities for youth in South Hornby. Funding is now available for an upgrade to this playground. In order to comply with current playground safety standards and Council's access policy, the playground would need to be upgraded. Positive aspects of the playground and its location are:
 - Some parts of structure can be retained.
 - The site has good casual surveillance from adjacent houses and roads.
 - There are established trees near to the playground.
 - The nearby Awatea Stream is identified by the local community as important environmental/play asset.
4. The project team considered the feedback that was provided by the community in the 2003 Riccarton/Wigram Parks and Waterways Leisure Survey, which included:
 - Appreciate its size, trees, ducks, playground (with a good slide).
 - Play equipment has caused physical injuries to children.
 - Needs to be safe & easy access.
 - School pupils think its a good location for a skate park.
 - A lack of discovery play for children, Awatea Stream (an asset).
 - Vandalism to park assets, toilets and buildings.
5. In addition to this the project team undertook a survey of local residents (September 2006) to ascertain community concerns and aspirations about the proposed playground renewal. This revealed that the community would welcome new equipment in the park that catered for a diversity of ages. It also indicated the following preferred play items:
 - Climbing walls.
 - Basketball half court.
 - Small swing set and seesaw for little kids.
 - Swings and slides for a mixture of ages.
6. The planning work informed the project objectives, which were:
 - To assess the existing structure and upgrade or remove it, as required.
 - To consult with the local community and park users and create a play space that caters to their diverse needs.
 - Add additional play facilities that cater for a wider range of children.
 - to create a well designed safe play space that fits into the surrounding environment by making use of some of the parks important natural play assets

- to ensure the playground complies with the NZ safety standards
 - improve accessibility to the playground
 - to create a unique play space for the local area.
7. The project team developed a concept to meet these objectives, which included the following:
- Junior and senior swings, fantail, low balance beam triangle, climbing posts & nets, tyre swing, supernova, flying fox, slide and boulder hopping trail.
 - The coloured 'spots' flush with lawn provide for jumping and hopping. These will also highlight ecological themes and encourage imaginative play.
 - A red koru 'snake', leads kids and adults through the playground and provides play opportunities for people with limited mobility.
 - Landscaping, tree removals (due to poor condition or location) and seating.
 - Half ball court (*currently unfunded*).
 - Improved access and play opportunities in Awatea Stream (*currently unfunded*).
8. This concept plan was developed to: appeal to a wide range of children, retain as much of the existing structure as possible, respond to resident's requests (e.g. broad age range, discovery play), be creative and incorporate ecological values.
9. In August 2007 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 750 residences and key stakeholders (refer **Attachment 1**). This pamphlet included a summary of the concept, initial concept plans and a feedback form. The project team sought feedback from the community to see whether the proposal was generally supported.
10. The consultation received a 5% response rate (34 responses). Community feedback was generally very positive.
- 29 submitters (85%) responded "YES – I support the proposal".
 - 1 submitter (3%) responded "NO – I do not support the proposal" (due to the proposed tree removals, poor tree care and the cost of tree removals and playground design).
 - 4 submitters (12%) neither supported or opposed the proposal.
11. The key issues identified by submitters relate to:
- Security/ vandalism (5 submitters)
 - Opposition to the proposed tree removals (4 submitters)
 - Request for lighting to be included in the plan (2 submitters)
12. The full schedule of consultation feedback and project team responses is included in **Attachment 2**.
13. An arborist has assessed the site and provided the following comment:
14. The trees identified in the concept plan fall into two areas:
- Principally the trees in the immediate vicinity of the proposed playground, namely two eucalypts, have been identified as relatively poor specimens (to the surrounding trees) and their removal would facilitate the successful installation of the playground. It is important to note that any construction within close proximity to trees, in particular mature trees, has the potential for adverse effect upon tree health. Conversely, if there is any concern regarding the tree(s) condition relative to an introduced 'target' then assessment must consider this. In this case, the (2) eucalypts were assessed as a potential health and safety issue in regard to the proposal and it is therefore recommended that they be removed as part of the project. The peripheral eucalypt, poplar and cedar were also assessed as part of the project scoping exercise and identified as poor specimens requiring removal. The overall impact of these (5) tree removals is assessed as having no more than a minor impact on the landscape and use of site.
 - The other area considered is the upgrading of the Awatea Stream. Although this is not directly part of the playground project, it has been assessed due to its close proximity and potential to improve the general landscape and environmental features of this part of Warren Park. The twenty one trees (20 cypress and 1 poplar) have been assessed as poor specimens which are no longer suited and sustainable in this site given the

proposed work required for the stream. The removal of the trees will open up the landscape to create a safer play area and encourage access to the stream with replacement planting mitigating for any loss of amenity value.

15. This proposal includes long term plans to enhance this stretch of the Awatea Stream with native riparian planting and an open section, in the vicinity of the playground that can be used as imaginative 'discovery play' for older children. This work will ultimately provide a much more accessible waterway with gently sloping river banks that can provide environmental and recreational opportunities in the park. This work will be finalised as funding allows with some work, such as removal of some trees along waterway and some slope enhancement, proceeding this year.
16. 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. The proposed paths are designed for daytime use.
17. In terms of the security issues, the project team acknowledge that there is always a chance of attracting undesirable behaviour into an area. However, in terms of park management it has been found that attracting more people to an area and incorporating Crime Prevention through Environment Design principles into the design, serves as a deterrent to antisocial/illegal activities.
18. The proposal for the half ball court, which was included in this proposed upgrade to the Warren Park playground, was opposed by one anonymous submitter. It was implicitly supported by the remaining 82% of respondents that registered support for the proposal. The feedback included two comments that relate directly to the proposed half ball court. One sought that this facility be prioritised and one submitter opposed it. They provided the following comments:
 - (a) *"Many teenagers prefer team involvement hence the half ball court would be of more interest rather than senior swings and flying fox. Perhaps some funds could be switched over to this facility instead of all the others"; vs*
 - (b) *"Support all except half ball court. As so little monitoring discrete area, concern over graffiti already. I suspect it will increase with half ball court/skate ramps etc. Ref: Jellie Park and recent newspaper article".*
19. As noted above, the existing playground does not cater to teenagers and the project team's initial survey (September 2006) received requests for a facility of this type. This type of facility has been well supported in the consultation and would address an identified deficit of recreational opportunities of teenagers in this area.
20. There is not currently any funding allocated to a half ball court at Warren Park. However, prior to proceeding to public consultation, staff presented this concept to the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board at a seminar in July 2007. At this time the Board were supportive of the proposal to install a half ball court and, depending on the outcome of community consultation, expressed a willingness to consider funding this. Based on these comments and the outcome of consultation, the project team are formally seeking \$27,000 from the Board for a half court with a seat.
21. No amendments to the concept plan were required as a result of consultation.
22. The recommended concept plans are included as **Attachments 3 and 4**. The Warren Park playground concept plan will be implemented in October 2007 to February 2008 and the landscaping will be completed in April 2008, in the autumn planting season. Implementation of the waterway and half ball court will proceed as funding allows.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. The funding from council is being provided from the Transport and Greenspace Capital Programme. Specifically:

2007/08	\$80,000	Warren Park - Playground Renewals
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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. Nil.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

26. **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.

27. **Recreation and Leisure – Page 131**

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

28. **Parks and Open Spaces Activity Management Plan**

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

29. Social Wellbeing and Youth Strategy and Safer Parks Policy.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

30. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with the local community via a letterbox drop/comment form being distributed to the surrounding area and key stakeholders. A temporary signboard was also erected in the park.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board:

- (a) Approves the plans in Attachments 3 and 4 in order to proceed to detailed design and construction of the Warren Park playground renewal project; and
- (b) Allocates \$27,000 from the 2007/08 Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Initiatives Fund to the Capital Programme Unit (2007/08 Warren Park Playground project) for the installation in Warren Park of a half ball court with a seat.