

## 9. DRAFT GENERAL POLICY FOR SIGNS AND ADVERTISING ON PARKS

RR 10061

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The purpose of this report is to consider a draft policy for signs and advertising on parks. The policy has been developed following requests from a commercial advertiser and a sports club to display advertising signage on recreation reserves under City Council control. The draft policy is contained in section 6 of this report.

### 1. BACKGROUND

The current signs, advertising and sponsorship code of practice allows for certain signage on reserves but not commercial signs advertising a product, service or business.

It is therefore considered timely to move the general policy for signs and advertising on parks from the code of practice to a full Council Policy subject to seeking the views of the community and stakeholders such as sports clubs and sporting associations.

Protection and enhancement of the amenity values and visual qualities of the City's public parks, rivers and natural areas are important considerations for the Garden City image.

The City Plan recognises the need to control outdoor advertising according to the sensitivity of the area in which it may be visible. Open space zones and conservation areas have criteria to lessen the visual intrusion and impact on these amenity spaces.

### 2. PERMANENT PARKS SIGNAGE STANDARDS

Standards covering signs and advertising are contained in the new City Plan.

In residential and recreation areas especially limitations are placed on signs in respect of their size, the structures to which they may be affixed, the sites on which they may be displayed and their general content.

Generally, for reserves, signs are limited to providing the name, character, purposes and recreational uses along with locations and other details of the reserve or facilities thereon. Club names may be displayed on the club buildings.

The Parks Signs Manual sets criteria for identification signs on reserves from the larger routed timber naming signs to the smaller combined naming and Bylaw type signage.

All signage is subject to a user-friendly requirement to ensure parks users are informed and educated and the information is clear and conveyed in a positive manner.

More recently larger interpretation signage has been employed to display maps and items of interest such as ecological, historical and conservation values.

### **Use of Permanent Signs on Parks**

Council parks currently contain 750 wooden routed identification and small metal identification and Bylaw signs.

As laid down in the signs manual which covers design standards and use criteria, permanent signs are provided by the Parks Unit to:

- a. Identify and name the park.
- b. Establish an image for the park.
- c. Control activities within the park.
- d. Provide recreational information.
- e. Direct people to facilities and points of interest.
- f. Prohibit dangerous activities.
- g. Warn people of hazards.
- h. Name the controlling authority and apply the City Council brand.
- i. Promote activities.
- j. Provide educational, botanical and historical information/interpretation.
- k. Provide plant identification.

Strict criteria to park amenity design guidelines are set to ensure a corporate image and recreation symbols meet the New Zealand and International Signage Standards.

The Reserves Act authorises the Council to erect and provide signage as outlined above. Under the new City Plan (Section 1/7) permanent signs are permitted and may be considered as outdoor advertising.

Currently club names are not displayed on any permanent park signs. However, some clubs, especially those whose facilities are sited back from the park entrance and not visible from the street, have expressed concerns that visitors cannot locate their building. It may be appropriate (from a customer perspective) to display the club name on a simple reflective street type of sign.

### **3. TEMPORARY ADVERTISING SIGNAGE STANDARDS**

Signs advertising coming events on reserves are permitted for limited periods prior to the event. These signs must relate to events that are to take place on that particular park and must be removed immediately afterwards.

The Reserves Act 1977 permits the display of signs on reserves subject to such signs being necessary to enable the public to obtain the benefit and enjoyment of the reserve or for the convenience of the persons using the reserve.

To allow temporary signage on reserves with frontage to busy roads, such as Hagley Park, for general city events not on parks or events at other parks would not be in keeping with the Reserves Act 1977.

The development standards in the City Plan for signs in Open Space zones 2, 3, 3A, 3B, 3C, and 3D zones allow for a total maximum area of outdoor advertisements per site of 3m<sup>2</sup>. However this may be exceeded if the park has road frontage of more than 40m (larger district sports parks) with the advertisement area being calculated at 2m<sup>2</sup> for every 40m of road frontage.

The above is provisional on the area of any single outdoor advertisement being 3m<sup>2</sup>.

Resource consents can also be applied for with variations to these standards.

For Conservation and Open Space 1 Zone the total maximum area of outdoor advertisements per site shall be 2m<sup>2</sup> except that the maximum area of any single outdoor advertisement shall be 1m<sup>2</sup>.

Normally the signs may be erected a month in advance of the event but must be removed immediately after. The City Plan permits the display of temporary advertisements for up to 12 weeks. To avoid signage pollution of the City's Green Space, the Parks Manager would request that events organisers shorten the period to four weeks prior to the event.

#### **4. SIGNAGE FOR SPONSORSHIP**

Sponsorship is a very important means of assisting with the provision and development of facilities and services, including those associated with recreation and reserves. This is an area where the Parks Unit included performance criteria in the Annual Plan to actively pursue.

Fundamentally sponsorship is an agreement whereby a party undertakes to supply goods services or funds in exchange for some kind of benefit.

Over the years various commercial and non-commercial organisations have sponsored Council undertakings in particular recreation/entertainment events, but also (to a lesser extent) permanent type facilities.

The securing of sponsorship requires knowledge and skills in a number of areas. For example it is important that the proposal is thoroughly researched, total costs of the project and the amount sought from the potential sponsor are identified, the benefits to the sponsor including the market level are identified, and that the proposal is put in writing and presented in a professional manner.

In some instances the initial approach might come from the sponsoring organisation that wishes to be associated with a particular Council project, service or activity, with an offer of cash or kind in exchange for appropriate recognition.

The content, nature and extent of acknowledgment is a key element of any sponsorship arrangement and these aspects need to be fully understood and agreed to by all parties before finalising an agreement. Forms of acknowledgment commonly used and which could be appropriate for reserves include the following:

- **Sign Boards and Plaques**

Small signs and plaques may be used to acknowledge the sponsoring organisation and to briefly describe the nature of support given for the particular project. Provided the signs are not obtrusive, are well designed and sensitively placed they can be used effectively without detracting from the environment. This form of acknowledgment is especially suitable for physical works such as children's playgrounds, park furniture and buildings and special garden features.

Signboards can also be useful for one-off static displays e.g. promotional and educational activities.

- **Name Association**

This is suitable for one-off events and also ongoing programmes where the sponsoring organisation's name is associated with the event or programme through media publicity, acknowledgment or brochures, fliers and the like, together with the use of company products where feasible to do so.

- **Naming Rights**

The granting of naming rights (to a commercial enterprise) may be viewed by some as simply an extension of name association.

It appears that the granting of naming rights for stadia and similar facilities has over the years found general acceptance. Whether the same would be true of all recreational/amenity areas e.g. public gardens and reserves may be another matter. To date, in Christchurch at least, naming rights have only been tested within parks, the Blue Bird Oval Garden within Edmonds Factory Gardens being an example.

In all cases of sponsorship an essential and basic rule should be that all visual components, together with other terms and conditions to be agreed upon are acceptable to the Council, not in conflict with existing policy, unlikely to offend public taste and will not compromise generally accepted professional standards.

- **Permanent Club Sponsorship Signage**

The current practice is to allow some permanent sponsor's signage within **enclosed lease** areas only on parks. These signs are not visible **outside** the facility and are subject to approval by the Council in terms of suitability for the venue or facility. This current practice protects the visual amenity value of our parks as laid down by the City Plan.

Therefore the existing Code of Practice allowing permanent advertising in **enclosed lease** areas only and not visible from the park or surrounding environs should remain.

A few clubs have tried to display permanent sponsors advertising on the outside of their club buildings. Also some clubs with open mesh type fences do have some signage that is visible from the park.

As the above types of advertising devalues the visual landscape amenity of the park they should not be allowed.

Clubs with open mesh type fences may be able to display some sponsorship advertising if the sign is internally focused, is mounted low so as not to block the visibility across the facility and has Council approval.

5. **PERMANENT COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING SIGNAGE**

Recently an applicant requested approval to erect general advertising signs on a park which did not relate to facilities or a sports club. On other occasions clubs with buildings near main thoroughfares have requested the right to place commercial advertisements on their buildings in return for an annual fee.

Legal advice on whether it is lawful for permanent advertising signs to be erected on a park or building on a leased area clearly indicated that Council does **not** have the legal power to grant a lease or licence to a company to erect a general advertising sign on land held as recreation reserve.

Under Section 54 of the Reserves Act 1977 commercial advertising is **not** considered necessary to enable the public to obtain the benefit and enjoyment of the reserve. In fact commercial advertising would devalue the landscape amenity value of the park.

6. **DRAFT GENERAL POLICY FOR SIGNS AND ADVERTISING ON PARKS**

**Permanent Parks Signage Standards**

- (a) Permanent signage on parks shall meet the design standards and use criteria as laid down in the Parks Signs Manual.

- (b) All signs shall be sited in a position functionally and visually appropriate to the park as part of a landscape plan or sited by a landscape architect.
- (c) Signs shall be user-friendly with international pictograms being used for Bylaws and other interpretative information where practicable.
- (d) All signs shall carry the Christchurch City Council logo.
- (e) For reserve activities, signs shall indicate the activities only, not club names – the latter shall be attached to appropriate buildings only and be subject to approval by the Council. Directional signs to clubrooms shall be in the form of a simple street type sign erected at the entrance to the park.
- (f) Information/interpretative and educational signage shall have a consistency in design layout and construction, the use of strong visual material, appropriate strategic placement and carry the Christchurch City Council brand. Standards will be developed as part of the Parks Unit Communication Strategy.

### **Temporary Advertising Signage Standards**

- (a) Temporary advertising signage may be erected to advertise coming events on that particular park.
- (b) In terms of size, these signs shall comply with the City Plan Standards relating to Conservation and Open Space Zones.
- (c) Signs may be erected up to four weeks prior to the event and must be removed immediately afterwards. This is to avoid signage pollution on the city's green space.
- (d) Advertising banners may be erected on the day of the event and in conformity with City Plan Standard 10.3 shall not exceed 4m in height.

### **Sponsorship Signage Standards**

- (a) Temporary advertising signs from sponsors shall be allowed on reserves during the course of events and must comply with the temporary advertising signage standards.
- (b) In the case of sponsorship for specific facilities, e.g. children's playgrounds, small discreet signs or plaques may be used. These would typically be 30cm x 20cm in size, and made of permanent materials.

- (c) In the case of name association for events, projects or ongoing programmes where the sponsoring organisation's name is associated with that event or programme, signage to carry the sponsor's brand along with the Christchurch City Council brand.
- (d) Naming rights for stadia and similar facilities must have Council approval and each case will be considered individually.
- (e) Permanent advertising to be permitted within enclosed lease areas only and not be visible from outside the facility unless they are any of the above types of signs.
- (f) Permanent sponsorship signage will not be allowed to be affixed to the outside of buildings or fences where it can be viewed from the park, or street.
- (g) For clubs with open mesh type fences sponsorship advertising may be displayed if it is internally focused, set low to the ground, is not visible to the park, and has Council approval.

#### **Permanent Commercial Advertising Signage Standards**

Permanent commercial advertising that is general of nature and is not considered necessary to enable the public to obtain the benefit and enjoyment of the reserve as described in section 54 of the Reserves Act 1977 will **not** be allowed.

**Recommendation:** That the draft General Policy for Signs and Advertising on Parks detailed in Section 6 of the above report be released for comment particularly to stakeholders such as sponsors, sports clubs, sports associations and Community Boards.

#### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.