

11. PROPOSED CELLPHONE FACILITY IN BOTTLE LAKE FOREST

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The purpose of this report is to seek a recommendation from the Board to the Parks and Recreation Committee regarding the proposed establishment of a Base Transceiver Station in Bottle Lake Plantation.

INTRODUCTION

Cellphone coverage in the Parklands area is poor. Vodafone (NZ) Limited have, for several years, been investigating the possibility of building a cellphone repeater station in the Parklands area to provide better cellphone coverage to the area. The preferred site is in the area bounded by QEII to the east, Burwood Hospital to the west, and Bottle Lake Plantation to the north.

THE PROPOSAL

Vodafone are proposing to establish a Base Transceiver Station (BTS) within the southern portion of Bottle Lake Forest Park (see attached map). The Christchurch City Council owns the land. The Selwyn Plantation Board owns the forest trees.

The proposed site will consist of an area of land approximately 12m x 8m (96 square metres) upon which will be placed a 20m high urban monopole mast (with flush mounted antennae plus a 300mm microwave dish to link to the existing network). At the base of the mast will be an equipment shelter 2.5m x 2.5m x 2.4m which, along with the mast, will be enclosed in a security fenced compound.

Vodafone has assessed a mast with a backdrop to the forest as the most visually acceptable option particularly with the slimline monopole mast with flush mounted panels. The proposed mast will provide mobile phone coverage to the Parklands/Burwood and North Beach area.

The siting of a BTS upon the proposed site will markedly increase the cellphone coverage in this area. See the attached before and after cellphone coverage maps (*pages 31-33*)

THE SITE

The site that has been selected by Vodafone is located approximately 200m north of Rothesay Rd and residential housing (*see attached map, page 34*). The BTS will be adjacent to an established road in the forest. Vodafone confirms that it is willing to site the BTS beside the road in the plantation to suit the mutual needs of the Council and the Selwyn Plantation Board. The road that is closest to the proposed site has a sewage line placed under it.

Vodafone require 24-hour access to the proposed site for servicing requirements. Easements will need to be created for the laying of underground cables (electricity and telephone) to the site for the term of the lease.

Other potential sites

The Council policy for the siting of cellphone transceiver stations which was ratified on the 30 September 1995 (*see attachment page 35-36*) states that when siting these stations, they should be sited in a commercial zone in the first instance. If the siting of the station in a commercial zone is not possible the Council may look at permitting establishment upon a reserve or park, subject to (a) the minimisation of health effects through strategic siting, and (b) meeting environmental standards as contained in the City Plan. The siting of these stations upon Council reserves is preferable to the siting of them amongst private residences.

Vodafone and its predecessor Bellsouth have been looking for a site to improve mobile phone coverage in the Parklands area since 1996. Eight property owners have been approached and a further 15 sites have been investigated in an attempt to find a suitable site for the cellphone facility. Sites that have been considered include:

- QEII Stadium
- Burwood Hospital
- Waimairi Beach Golf Club
- Redemptorist Monastery
- Parklands Tavern
- Rawhiti Domain
- Beach Road Energy Centre
- Landfill Site

The reasons these sites have been deemed unsuitable are varied but include:

- Poor coverage predictions
- Residential area concerns
- Close proximity to schools
- Lessor reluctance
- Properties in transition of sale and purchase

Forestry Implications

Selwyn Plantation Board are comfortable with Vodafone's siting proposal as long as it does not impinge on their use of the land for forestry purposes. The site that Vodafone have chosen is in a clearfelled area, which will be cleared and replanted this winter. Within 20 years, the tree height will be greater than the tower. The site requires a clear line of sight. Vodafone are aware that once the trees reach a height of approximately 18m the site may no longer be viable. They do, however, see value in occupying the site until this time. The Chief Executive of the Selwyn Plantation Board sees value in any proposal that will increase the reliability of communications in the area.

Forestry Licence

It will be necessary to give notice to the licensee, the Selwyn Plantation Board, which owns the trees in Bottle Lake Forest Park, that the Council wishes to resume occupation of 96 square metres of Bottle Lake Forest Park. This is in accordance with the terms and conditions as set out in the licence agreement. More specifically, the notice must be given in accordance with sections 3.2 (b) and (d) having regard to section 3.3 of the licence agreement.

Fire Risk and Vandalism

Vandalism is a problem in Bottle Lake Forest Park. There is a risk of vandalism to the equipment, however the security fence should minimise this risk.

Vodafone are aware of the implications of the Rural Fires Act and have comprehensive insurance in place for all of its BTS's throughout the country. Vodafone acknowledges that access to the site may be restricted during periods of high fire risk and that access to the forest will be restricted to vehicles with spark arresters only.

It will be necessary to include a clause in the lease agreement which indemnifies the Council against any actions that Vodafone NZ Ltd, their agents, contractors, and insurers may wish to bring against the Council with regard to any damage caused to their equipment by fire or any other activity caused by the Council.

Electro-Magnetic Radiation (EMR)

In terms of the proposed site in the Bottle Lake Forest, the emission of EMR would be minimal and localised. The Christchurch District plan currently refers to the old New Zealand standard NZS 6609.1:1990 Part 1, which has a non-occupational EMR exposure limit of 2 watts per square metre. This applies to any location where a member of the public can reasonably enter.

The current New Zealand standard is NZS 2772.1:1999 which has a non-occupational exposure limit of 4.5 watts per square metre. This is consistent with the international guidelines produced by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

EMR greater than 2 watts per square metre covers an area of no more than 11 metres distance from the mast and no more than two metres from the top of the mast. In other words, in order to be exposed to this level of EMR a person would need to be within 11 metres of the mast and at a height of 18.5 metres above the ground. Outside this area it is regarded as safe for the general public to frequent. As Vodafone proposes to build a 20 metre mast it is extremely unlikely that any member of the public will be exposed to any levels approaching the Council standard.

OTHER FOREST USERS AND LOCAL RESIDENTS

A 1992/93 survey of users of Bottle Lake Forest Park found that people came to the forest to "get away from it all". The contentious issue of BTS sites may be viewed as contradictory to the recreational nature of the Forest Park and the feeling of remoteness.

As cellphone sites can be an emotive issue, it is important that neighbouring residents be consulted about the proposal in accordance with the Council's seeking community views policy.

THE LEASE

Negotiations for a commercial lease would be made with the Property Unit in conjunction with the Parks Unit. Vodafone confirms that a non-exclusive agreement would be acceptable. Vodafone would be required to meet all costs associated with establishing the BTS. The lease would be subject to resource consent.

The lease would also be subject to the following conditions imposed by Council:

1. The satisfactory outcome of the public consultation process.
2. Vodafone (NZ) Limited to obtain all necessary resource and building consents before any development commences upon the site.
3. The applicant is to submit a colour scheme for the building and mast for the Parks Manager's approval prior to commencing work upon the site.
4. The lease terms being negotiated by the Property Manager in consultation with the Team Leader (Consents) taking into account the commercial nature of the applicant's proposal.
5. That an easement be created for the laying of underground cables (electricity and telephone) to the site for the duration of the lease period.
6. All costs associated with the development and subsequent maintenance of the associated buildings and structures upon the site be paid for by Vodafone (NZ) Limited.
7. The leased/construction area being maintained by Vodafone (NZ) Limited in a safe and tidy condition at all times.
8. The contractor is to show proof of having obtained \$1 million public liability insurance to the Team Leader Consents before commencing work upon the site.
9. Before any tenders are let or work commences upon the site, discussions are to be held with the Parks Manager's designate, Ranger – Bottle Lake, to ascertain the Council's requirements through the development phase of the construction of the facility.
10. A bond of \$2,000 is to be paid by Vodafone (NZ) Limited or successful principal contractor to the Christchurch City Council, Area Parks Officer Linwood, before work commences upon the site. The bond, less any expenses incurred by the Council, will be refunded to the payee upon the completion of the work.
11. Vodafone (NZ) Limited is to indemnify the Council against any actions that Vodafone (NZ) Limited, their agents, contractors and insurers may wish to bring against the Council with regard to any damage caused to their equipment by fire or any other action by Council.

- Recommendation:**
1. The Board recommend to the Parks and Recreation Committee that subject to the satisfactory outcome of the consultation process that Council leases approximately 96 square metres of Bottle Lake Forest Park to Vodafone (NZ) Limited upon which to construct a Base Transmitter Station pursuant to section 572 (3) of the local Government Act for a period of six years plus two rights of renewal, plus two years less one day subject to conditions 1-11 outlined above.
 2. That Council give notice to the Selwyn Plantation Board in accordance with sections 3.2 (b) and (d) of the licence agreement with the Christchurch City Council of its wish to resume occupation of 96 square metres of Bottle Lake Forest Park.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the outcomes of public consultation be reported back to the Board before a decision is made.