

9. HOLLISS RESERVE

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The purpose of this report is to request the Board to adopt the recommendations of the Holliss Reserve Sub Committee (minutes attached) and approve the finalised landscape plan for the redevelopment of Holliss Reserve including the provision and siting of a basketball half-court facility.

Background

Board members may recall that initial consultation regarding the redevelopment of Holliss Reserve was carried out in April 2000. Due to strong feeling in the community both for and against the half basketball court and several other issues being raised, further consultation by way of a letterbox drop questionnaire was sent out in March 2001.

Results from the March 2001 letterbox drop

A total of 197 households responded to the letterbox drop.

Half basketball court

Support half basketball court – OPTION A	70
Support half basketball court – OPTION B	23
Do not support half basketball court	88

New fort and slide

Support new fort and slide	182
Do not support new fort and slide	6

Grass or tussock on the mound

Grass	36
Tussock	27

Change of alignment to the footpath

Support the change of the path alignment	143
Do not support the change to the path alignment	19

Other landscape features

Support new planting in the reserve	164
Do not support planting in the reserve	18

Support the removal of the old concrete wall and seats	130
Do not support the removal of the old concrete wall and seats	20

Residents response

Overall, the plan was very well received by the local community, with strong support for the landscape enhancement, new fort and slide and pathway improvements/realignment to the reserve. Feedback in relation to these aspects of the plan gave a clear indication of local residents' preferences and the Sub Committee resolved to adopt these aspects of the plan at the 3 May 2001 meeting. While there was considerable support for the fort and slide, path realignment, and landscape features, some residents expressed concerns in relation to the half basketball court.

Feedback in relation to the half basketball court indicated that the community's support or opposition to the proposal was more evenly divided. The Holliss Reserve Sub Committee requested the Parks and Waterways Advocate to further analyse the results and identify the key areas of concern and to reconvene the meeting when the information was available.

Analysing Feedback

The Sub Committee also looked at a comparison of the results received from both consultation letters regarding the half basketball court.

Comparison of Results from both lots of consultation

Support the half basketball court

Responded yes first and second time	30
Responded no first time and yes second time	2
Responded first time but not the second	65
Responded second time only	74

Oppose the half basketball court

Responded yes first time and no second time	11
Responded no both times	25
Responded first time only	25
Responded second time only	46

A map of the circulation area where the questionnaire was distributed was produced showing the locations of the properties that supported or opposed the proposal. Many of the respondents opposing the half court gave similar reasons for their concerns about the proposed half court. The table below lists the reasons for opposition to the proposal along with the numbers for each reason.

REASON	NUMBER
Park more for smaller children, family park, quiet passive reserve	24
Would encourage youth into the area	22
Young people cause graffiti, trash the place, bad language, abuse the area	14
Support full court	6
Noisy	6
Wouldn't feel safe with youth in the reserve	5
Park does not need more concrete	3
Too close to houses	3
Enough schools in the area for children to go to use	3
Older children do not mix well with younger children	3
Size of reserve not suitable for this type of sport	1
Could get hit by balls	1

The Sub Committee gave considerable time and thought to assess the main reasons residents gave for opposing the basketball half court.

The majority of the reasons can be grouped into one general area and the main issue seems to be that the facility will attract children and young people into the area and the perception that this may create potential problems with them using the reserve with an adverse impact on other park users. Some members of the community see the reserve as a place for young children and families and the presence of youth may compromise this.

Monitoring Group

The Sub Committee suggested the formation of a monitoring group consisting of local residents, children and young people, Parks and Waterways Advocate and an elected member(s) to assess the first 12 months of operation of the half court. This would be an effective way forward in addressing the views of residents who either supported or opposed the proposal.

This particular approach worked very successfully when establishing a skateboard facility at St Albans Park a few years ago when a number of residents in that area expressed very similar concerns to those being raised by residents in the Holliss Reserve area.

In the unlikely event that the facility created major issues or problems that could not be resolved by other means then the pole and backboard could simply be removed and the hard surface area used for other activities such as hop scotch etc.

Residents who responded to the earlier or latest consultation material will be given the opportunity to become part of the monitoring group, to assess and assist with the successful operation and establishment of the half court. Ideally, we would like the monitoring group to consist of a balance of residents who either supported or opposed the half court as well as one or two young people from the area. The Parks and Waterways Area Advocate at Beckenham Service Centre will co-ordinate liaison with the monitoring group and report regular updates back to the Board.

A letter will be sent back to all respondents from both series of consultation informing them of the finalised plan and inviting them to register an interest in becoming part of the monitoring group. The information will also be placed on the Council web site as well as on a notice board in the park, which will include a copy of the plan.

The Sub Committee resolved that Option A was the best location for the half court as it gave the greatest separation from the pond.

Summary

The Parks and Waterways Unit is very conscious that casual recreation opportunities for children and young people in our parks has been fairly limited in the past, once they have outgrown the more traditional playground equipment. The Parks and Waterways Unit has been proactively trying to redress this imbalance in recent years with the provision of facilities such as basketball half courts and skateboard areas which are particularly targeted at young people 13 years and older.

There are many very successful modules currently operating around the city providing an immense amount of enjoyment for children, young people and adults. Unfortunately it seems to be that only the negative aspects tend to get highlighted and reported on which understandably can lead to the public perception that these facilities create problems. Such facilities are vitally important and provide significant benefits to the community as a whole through having children and young people channelling their energies into constructive recreational activities on our parks.

Children and young people are an important and vibrant part of our community, and the Parks and Waterways Unit is committed to providing recreational facilities and opportunities for the entire cross section of the community. Locating these facilities in areas where a wide cross section of the community regularly frequent is essential to ensure the smooth and effective operation and integration of these facilities on our parks.

Children and young people need to be given equal consideration and embraced as a valued part of our community when designing and developing our reserves, and not viewed as some potentially troublesome group of park users requiring segregation from the rest of the community.

There are no other Council owned facilities for children and young people in the immediate area, the closest being the skate bowl at Waltham Park and the new development of tennis courts at Centennial Park. The Parks and Waterways Unit supports the installation of a half basketball court on Holliss Reserve at site "A" as shown on the attached concept plan.

Research undertaken two years ago of children aged 10 to 14 years showed a need for recreational facilities which is in line with the Council's Children and Youth Strategy and Policy, and the Council's commitment to inclusiveness of all members of our community.

Robin Moore, Christchurch City Council Youth Advocate, will also be present at the meeting to answer any questions relating to the Council's Children and Youth Strategy and Policy, and the Council's commitment to inclusiveness of all members of our community.

Recommendation:

That the Board approve the redevelopment plan for Holliss Reserve for the installation of the new slide and fort, path realignment, new planting, and the removal of the concrete wall and seats, subject to the following conditions:

1. The Parks and Waterways Unit be asked to install a drinking fountain near the new entrance.
2. That option A be confirmed as the preferred site for the basketball half court.
3. That a monitoring group consisting of local residents, young people, elected member(s) and the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate be established.
4. That an explanatory letter be sent to all respondents outlining the Board's decision and inviting residents to register an interest in becoming part of the monitoring group.
5. That the Holliss Reserve Sub Committee review the operation of the basketball half court after 12 months and if there are significant concerns, consider the future of the pole and backboard.
6. That the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate be the contact person for all concerns and that contact details be provided to all respondents.
7. Monitoring by Parks and Waterways Unit and reporting back to the Holliss Reserve Sub Committee and the Board every three months or earlier, if there are significant concerns.