

PROPOSAL FOR AN INDOOR MULTI USE EQUESTRIAN FACILITY AT CANTERBURY PARK PLUS ASSOCIATED HORSE GRAZING AND RIDE-OUT ACCESS FOR CHRISTCHURCH RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

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Corporate Plan Output: Lease Applications	

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for Christchurch Riding for the Disabled (RDA) to lease a site on the recently acquired A & P show grounds, to erect a indoor arena adjacent to the A&P stables.

INTRODUCTION

It will be recalled that the Council purchased 89ha of "Canterbury Agricultural Park" for the A&P Association in March this year. This purchase has increased the total Council reserve size to 126 ha. The planning process for the site is underway with many ideas and applications being received from the public. The Parks and Waterways Unit is preparing a display in a tent at this years show to present the various applications and design option for this important new park, workshops will also be held with key partners such as the A&P Association and exhibitors.

While other applications are being held over until this years show and planning workshops, RDA 's lease application is being promoted as an exception. They compliment both the A&P Show function with a large clear span building suitable for a range of displays and exhibits and have two commercial bloodstock company's interested in utilising the building for their sales. I addition the association of horse riding with the new park is considered to be a sound objective complimenting the existing outdoor arena, stables and cross country course.

Riding for the Disabled (RDA) is an association of volunteers who fund, provide facilities and organise therapeutic riding programs for people of all ages with a wide range of physical, intellectual and mental disabilities.

In 1997 the Christchurch Group of RDA identified a need to expand its facilities, which could not be done at its present site. A Lotto funded feasibility study quantified the demand for therapeutic riding in Christchurch and identified the criteria for relocation and expansion of its facilities. Since 1997 the committee has looked at several relocation options but the option that best satisfies the criteria is at Canterbury Park.

CRITERIA IDENTIFIED FOR RELOCATION

- The facility must be easily accessible for riders and helpers
- There must be a minimum of 10 ha of grazing land for up to 14 horses.
- Secure tenure either a long term lease of 20 years or ownership.
- Covered arena for all weather activity.
- The facilities especially the indoor area needs to be available for income generation by hiring out.
- The facilities need to be visible to the public and to sponsors.
- There must be a reasonable rural outlook and area for riding out.
- Security of the horses and the facility is an important consideration.

DEMAND

On average Christchurch RDA receives three (3) calls per week from individuals or groups wanting to enrol riders in our programs. The waiting list has been closed at 40 individuals and five (5) groups listed. For people with disabilities having a stimulating, animal-oriented rural type activity within the city is a huge attraction. Many of our rider families have time and financial constraints to consider so for them proximity is a big consideration. Volunteer helpers are also attracted to riding for disabled groups as they not only assist but gain many of the benefits the riders do of keeping fit and gaining new skills. A survey of our volunteer helpers shows a wide ranger of people from those on a benefit, people new to the city, students, semi-retired and retired and school students doing projects etc. An indoor area to be able to operate in all weather and a safe ride-out area would greatly enhance the groups activities.

MULTI-USE

At present Christchurch RDA operates during school time (four blocks of 10 weeks) five days a week with 72 regular riders coming a week plus short term extra groups. The committee of 12 coordinates fund raising, training, medical consents, horses and the six instructors. To help with the therapeutic riding sessions, feed and care for the horses 80 extra volunteers a week come to RDA. Although we expect to increase our operating hours with expansion, the arenas will often be available for other groups during weekends, school holidays, after school and evenings. A large indoor arena (size yet to be finalised but could be up to 40m x 80m) plus 40 m x 20 m outdoor arena would mean that several groups or individuals could be utilising the space concurrently. RDA sessions are generally run in a small area to provide security and safety for the riders.

WHY CANTERBURY PARK?

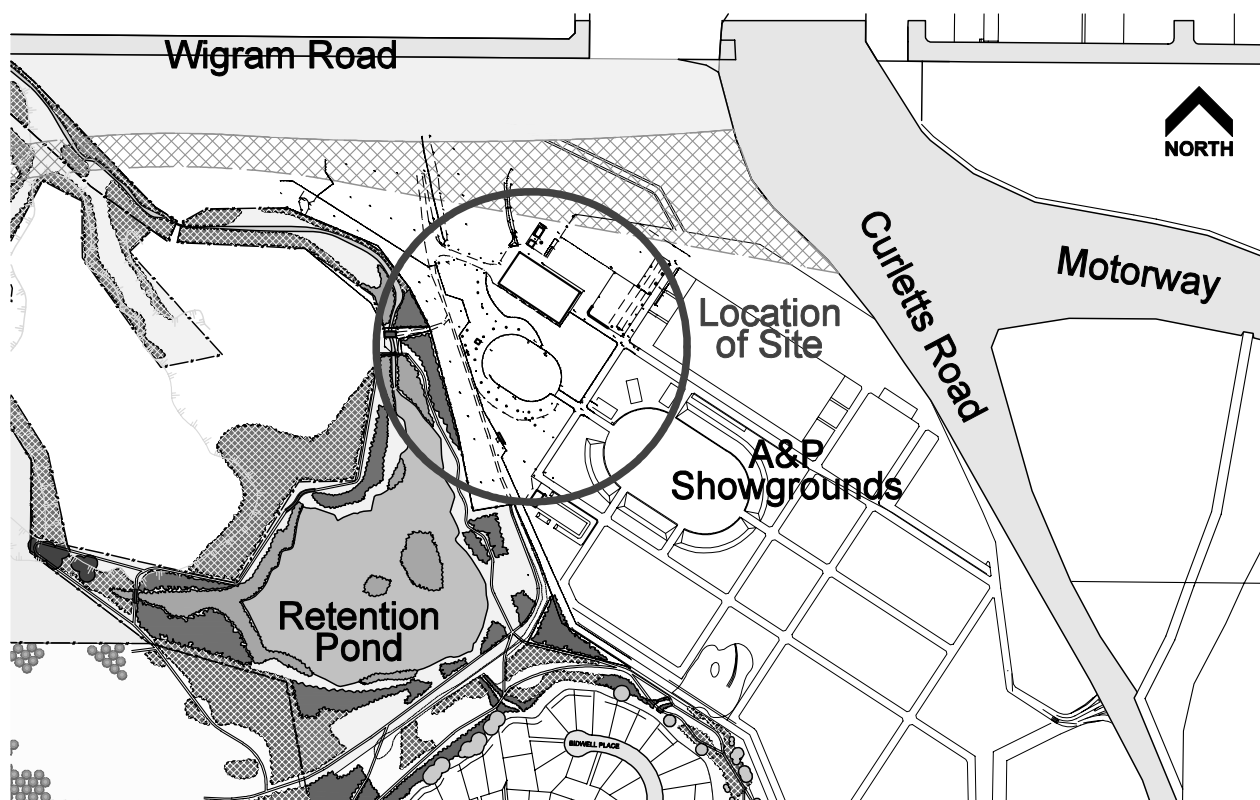
A survey of main equestrian groups (dressage, show-jumping, pony clubs, riding groups, polo – by the Christchurch RDA committee showed that siting the facilities and proposed indoor arena at Canterbury Park would be of enormous benefit to these equestrian groups as well as Christchurch RDA. Canterbury A & P Association would use it for the November show and two commercial horse racing groups have also indicated they would use the facility for yearling sales. The profile of RDA would be raised for fund-raising and sponsorship plus volunteer helpers. More people would see the benefits of a therapeutic riding program attracting equestrian and therapy expertise to the organisation.

Eighty volunteers a week would walk the RDA riders and horses through the park. A much needed indoor riding facility and associated Canterbury A & P stables plus good parking would be readily accessible to many different equestrian groups in the Canterbury area.

PROPOSED LEASE AREA

The proposed location of the new indoor arena is beside the Issac Arena and existing stables (still owned by the A&P Association). While a range of site options have been considered they are all in this general area as the all facilities need to be linked operationally, see plan.

It is likely that a notified resource consent will be required and this will provide an opportunity for public comment on the proposed building. This is likely to overlap with the Show and consultation planned for the remaining park area. Council approval is sought to enable RDA to proceed with their detailed planning.



CONCLUSION

While planning for the whole 126ha site need careful consideration, the RDA lease application is considered to be so complimentary to existing facilities .

Developing the A & P area for multi-use equestrian activities would give the sports Dressage, Show Jumping and Pony Clubs etc a home in the city similar to other sports such as soccer and rugby etc.

Last but not least, people with disabilities would not only be able partake in an excellent therapy program but be able to share an outdoor park by being taken through the park on horse back.

Recommendation: That Christchurch Riding for the Disabled application to lease approximately 4000m² adjacent to the Issac Arena in Canterbury Park be approved subject to a resource consent being granted.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the officer's recommendation be adopted.

