

19. 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 enable the Board to comment upon an application from the Christchurch Riding for the Disabled (CRDA) to lease approximately 6,300m² of the recently acquired Canterbury Park (formerly the A&P showgrounds site) prior to the report going to the Parks Gardens and Waterways Committee for approval. Part of the leased area will be used to construct an 80 metre by 50 metre (4,000m²) indoor arena with the remaining area adjacent to the A&P stables being divided up into a number of smaller holding pens for the horses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Officers recommend that the Board comment favourably upon the CRDA application to the Parks and Waterways Committee. The proposed indoor arena will complement the other multi-purpose equestrian activities already present at the park, and will ensure that the park becomes the centre for equestrian activities in Christchurch. The A&P Association supports the application, it being able to use the welcomed additional facilities provided by CRDA for one month around their show week. The area to be leased to CRDA is outside the area owned by A&P and the surrounding area leased from the Council by them.

Staff are of the view that CRDA's application is complementary to the "vision" that the Parks and Waterways staff have for the site, the proposed location of the facility being logically placed, and therefore will not compromise the development of the concept plan that is in the initial stages of preparation.

This application is being placed before the Council at this time because it is necessary for CRDA to have an approved building site before external funding providers are willing to consider funding applications from CRDA seriously.

BACKGROUND AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Members will recall that the Council purchased 89ha of "Canterbury Agricultural Park" from the A&P Association in March 2001. The former A&P site had boundaries adjoining both Nga Puna Wai and Templetons Road Reserve. Purchase of the A&P site has provided a significant open space extension to the area as well as providing a continuous connection that links the two previously existing reserves. The A&P Association relinquished the bulk of its land holding, opting to retain only the stock yard and stabling areas.

The total area (including the two previously existing reserves) is approximately 145ha (358 acres), the area being bounded by the Heathcote River, Curletts Road and Wigram Road down to the boundary of the Aidenfield subdivision and land owned by Musgroves Ltd.

The Parks and Waterways Unit had a display tent on site at last year's A&P show to increase public awareness of the site and the changed land ownership status. As a result of that, the planning process for the site is now under way, with a number of ideas and applications being received from groups and organisations interested in locating to the site.

However, before proceeding too far with a number of these applications it is necessary to develop a clear understanding of the overall concept and theme for this park. Staff will present a Concept Vision for the park to the Committee, which will be working alongside staff to develop the site. Once adopted this "vision" will provide the platform for assessing the appropriateness and suitability of future applications for this unique site.

The Parks and Waterways Unit believes one of the first priorities at the initial meeting of the joint A&P Development Committee will be to confirm the development concept for the park. Most applications are being held over at this stage until the concept or theme for the park is more clearly defined. The CRDA application is complementary to the "vision" the Parks and Waterways Unit has for this site.

SPREYDON-HEATHCOTE COMMUNITY BOARD – PREVIOUS SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR CRDA

A report outlining the basic CRDA proposal was presented to the Board in September 2001. The Board's decision at that time was to support the proposal in principle, subject to resource consent being granted.

Since that time staff have been working closely with CRDA and the A&P Association to develop further the location and siting of the facility to the point where they are now in a position to make a formal lease application. The CRDA application is supported by the Parks and Waterways Unit.

PROPOSED FUNDING AND COST ESTIMATES

The CRDA estimate the cost of their project to be around \$600,000. They have already raised around 50% of this, but still need to secure a substantial amount of additional funding to undertake the development. They are currently in the process of making a number of funding applications to external funding sources. However, before these applications can be considered, the funding providers require that CRDA show that they have formal approval to establish upon the site before they will process their application. This is why the CRDA lease application is before the Council at this time.

At this stage the CRDA are working towards commencing construction of their facilities immediately following this year's A&P Show. They are confident that when they have obtained the "landowner's" approval to lease the site then they will be able to secure the necessary financial support to complete their project.

SITE SUITABILITY AND NEED

The CRDA proposal complements the existing A&P site and will also be compatible with the "Show" function that takes place upon the site each year. The proposed large clear span building that is required to carry out indoor riding will also be suitable for a range of displays and exhibits at "Show Time". The association of horse riding within the new park is considered to be a sound proposal complementing the existing outdoor arena, stables and cross-country course already established on the site.

CRDA is an association of volunteers who fund, provide facilities and organise therapeutic riding programmes for people of all ages with a wide range of physical, intellectual and mental disabilities.

In 1997 the Christchurch Group of CRDA identified a need to expand its facilities, which could not be done upon 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 existing facilities. Since 1997 the committee has looked at several relocation options, the option that best satisfies the criteria being the Canterbury Park site.

SITE CRITERIA IDENTIFIED BY CRDA

- The facility must be easily accessible for both riders and helpers.
- There must be access to grazing areas for up to 14 horses at various times.
- Secure tenure is required, being either a long-term lease of at least 20 years, or ownership.
- A covered arena is required for all weather activity.
- The facilities, especially the indoor area, need to be available for income generation by hiring out.
- The facilities need to be visible to the public and to the Association's 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 CRDA receives around three calls per week from individuals or groups wanting to enrol riders in their programmes. The waiting list has been closed at 40 individuals and five groups. For people with disabilities, having a stimulating, animal-oriented rural type activity within the city is a huge attraction.

For many of the users, their proximity to the site is a big consideration, because many of the riders' families have time and financial constraints to consider. 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 while also gaining new skills.

A survey of volunteer helpers shows a wide range of people, including those on a benefit, people new to the city, students, the semi-retired and retired, and school students undertaking projects and assisting with the CRDA programmes. An indoor area, which will enable the programmes offered to continue regardless of the weather, and a safe ride-out area will greatly enhance CRDA's activities and provide additional opportunities to those in the community with disabilities.

MULTI-USE

At present CRDA operates during the school terms (four blocks of ten weeks) five days a week, with 72 regular riders participating per week plus short-term extra groups. CRDA has a committee of 12 people who co-ordinate all aspects of the operation, including fundraising, training, medical consents, horses and the organisation of the six instructors and large number of volunteers. Eighty volunteers a week assist with the therapeutic riding sessions and feeding and caring for the horses.

Although CRDA expects to increase their operating hours during the week with the proposed expansion, the arenas will often be available for other groups to use during weekends, school holidays, after school and during the evenings. A large indoor arena, plus the adjacent outdoor arena, will mean that several groups or individuals could be utilising the space concurrently. CRDA sessions are generally held in a small area to provide security and safety for the riders.

Canterbury A&P Association would also make use of the facility at show time for exhibitors requiring covered indoor areas. The bloodstock industry has also indicated strong interest in the facility for its annual yearling sales, as they currently have to erect a number of large temporary marquees when sales are held on the site.

WHY CANTERBURY PARK?

A survey of the main equestrian groups (dressage, show-jumping, pony clubs, riding groups, polo) by the CRDA Committee showed that siting the facilities and proposed indoor arena at Canterbury Park would be of enormous benefit to all these equestrian groups as well as Christchurch CRDA. The profile of CRDA will be raised, thereby assisting with fundraising and sponsorship, while also assisting with the attraction of volunteer helpers. More people would see the benefits of the therapeutic riding programmes offered for the disabled, thereby attracting equestrian and therapy expertise to the organisation.

The 80 weekly volunteers will be able to walk the CRDA riders and horses through the park. A much needed indoor riding facility and the associated Canterbury A&P stables, plus good parking, will be readily accessible to many different equestrian groups in the Canterbury area at one location.

PROPOSED LEASE AREA

The proposed location of the new indoor arena is beside the Isaac 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 all the facilities need to be linked operationally (see plan). The site which it is proposed to lease to CRDA is outside the area owned by A&P on which the saleyards are located, and the immediate area surrounding this which is leased to the A&P Association.

This area is inside the total area that the A&P Association have an agreement to occupy for a month during the period of the show. CRDA acknowledge that A&P have rights over this area during this month (it is very likely that the CRDA facility will not be required for all of this period) and will enter into a lease agreement with the Council on this understanding.

CRDA has applied to the Council for the Resource Consent required prior to building the building, which is currently being processed as a Non-Notified Application.



CONCLUSION

While planning for the whole 145ha site needs to be carefully considered, the CRDA lease application is complementary to existing facilities and the overall vision that the Parks and Waterways Unit believes to be appropriate for this site.

Developing the A&P area for multi-use equestrian activities would give the sports of Dressage, Show Jumping and Pony Clubs, etc a central base and identity in the city similar to other sports such as soccer and rugby, etc. In addition to this, people with disabilities would not only be able to partake in the excellent therapeutic programmes offered by CRDA, but would also have the opportunity to experience an outdoor recreation environment by being taken through the park on horseback.

The site provides a wonderful opportunity to create an exciting interface between urban and rural lifestyles that is easily accessible to the people with disabilities as well as the wider community on a regular basis. The site will also provide valuable recreational opportunities for other park users to enjoy some semi-rural experiences, which they may not otherwise have access to under normal circumstances.

Staff will be recommending that CRDA's application be approved subject to conditions 1 to 12 outlined below:

1. The CRDA to obtain all necessary Resource and Building Consents before any development commences upon the site.
2. The applicant to submit a landscape plan to the Parks and Waterways Manager for approval before commencing work upon the site. The applicant is to complete the work required to complete the implementation of the plan at their cost.
3. The design, scale and appearance of the building to be approved by the Parks and Waterways Manager, or her designate, prior to the lodging of a building consent.
4. The applicant is to submit a colour scheme for the building to the Parks and Waterways Manager or her designate for approval, prior to commencing work on the site.
5. The lease terms to be negotiated by the Property Manager in consultation with the Parks and Waterways Policy and Leasing Administrator.

6. The lease/construction area to be maintained by CRDA in a safe and tidy condition at all times.
7. All costs associated with the development and subsequent maintenance of the associated buildings and structures upon the site to be the responsibility of CRDA.
8. The CRDA to lodge a copy of an Occupational Safety and Health Hazard Plan to the Parks and Waterways Policy and Leasing Administrator before commencing operations upon the site.
9. Before any tenders are let or work commences upon the site, discussions to be held with the Parks and Waterways Manager's designate, the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate (Sockburn Service Centre), to ascertain the Council's requirements through the development phase of the construction of the facility.
10. A bond of \$2,000 to be paid by the CRDA or successful principal contractor to the Christchurch City Council via the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate (Sockburn Service Centre) before work commences on the site. The bond less any expenses incurred by the Council will be refunded to the payee upon the completion of the work.
11. This approval to lapse if the development on the site has not been substantially completed within three years of final approval being obtained.
12. The lease to have a clause inserted in it that recognises that the A&P Association has exclusive rights over the CRDA's lease area during the month of the show, and that when the A&P Association use CRDA's facilities they pay a rental, as agreed between the two parties.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓-x	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use	✓✓	Promotes a recreational activity that does not use fossil fuels.
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	✓	There are no emissions of harmful substances and promotes a natural form of transport
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓	The policy will encourage more people into our parks and open spaces thereby increasing awareness and appreciation of our natural environment.
N4	People needs met fairly and efficiently	NA	NA - See <i>People Step+Economic Step</i>
The People Step			
P1	Basic needs met	✓✓	The facility will enhance recreation opportunities for those with disabilities in a safe learning environment.
P2	Full potential developed	✓✓	Increased access to open space and riding facilities has the potential to enhance people's physical and mental health.
P3	Social capital enhanced	✓✓	The facility plays an active role in creating inclusive communities and provide opportunities for volunteer input.
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓	Promotes and enhances a sense of belonging and reduces discrimination against those with disabilities
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓	The facility respects human rights and caters for people of all abilities

The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources	✓✓	Multi use facility will maximise the buildings use and provide opportunities for other user groups reducing the need for additional buildings.
E2	Job rich local economy	✓✓	Multi use of building for bloodstock sales supports the local livestock industry.
E3	Financial sustainability	✓	The policy can be adhered to within existing budgets.

Recommendation: That the Spreydon-Heathcote Community Board recommend to the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee that the Christchurch Riding for the Disabled (CRDA) application to lease approximately 6,300 square metres of Canterbury Park, on which to construct an indoor arena and adjacent holding pens, be approved pursuant to section 601 of the Local Government Act for a period of 1 day less than 20 years, subject to conditions 1 to 12 outlined above.

Chairman's Recommendation: Not seen by Chairperson.