

13. BEXLEY RESERVE DEVELOPMENTS

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The purpose of this report is to update the Board on progress with planning for Bexley Reserve and to present a concept plan for short-term capital works proposed for the 2003/04 and 2004/05 financial years.

CONTEXT OF REPORT

Funding programmed for this financial year has contributed to consultation, design and a range of improvements around the front Pages Road area of the reserve. Agreement was reached through recent consultation that capital funding for this financial year should be spent on development of the front picnic area and continuation of the front entranceway project. It is also proposed to use the 2004/05 capital works funds to create a dog park between the proposed picnic area and sports field.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An overall landscape concept plan for Bexley Reserve was developed in consultation with key interest groups and the neighbouring community in response to the Management Plan 1992, the Green Edge proposal and the aspirations of the user groups. It identifies appropriate activities for different areas, and plantings used to define spaces and provide shelter. Although this concept will continue to be evolved, some areas are ready to take shape now. A top priority identified for this financial year is to complete the Pages Road entrance project and to establish the front picnic area. Other projects which have been identified for future staging include development of walking/running tracks, Knight's Pond restoration and entranceway plantings at alternative points leading into the reserve. These elements, and others, will be implemented as funds become available.

RELEVANT CURRENT POLICY

Dog Control Policy.
Environmental Design - Park Design and Management Plans.
Safer Parks Policy.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

Over the past two years efforts have concentrated on redesigning the front Pages Road entrance area to the reserve. A copy of the proposed final concept plan is attached.

Key features of the plan include:

1. **Completion of Pages Road entranceway and creation of front picnic area**
 - Installing a key lock barrier arm gate to discourage people taking vehicles into the reserve after hours.
 - Planting native shrubs behind front entrance wall.
 - Mounting park signage at front entranceway and key points within the reserve.
 - Removal of front fenceline and installation of post and cable fencing.
 - Planting 'drifts' of medium to tall native shrubs to enhance and add texture to the area.
 - Providing picnic tables and seating.
 - Planting groups of trees to create sheltered areas from the prevailing north-easterly winds.

2. **Creation of dog park**
 - Installation of a fenceline to separate the dog park from the front picnic area and existing sports field.
 - Establishing a range of opportunities for dogs to play:
 - Dog agility equipment.
 - Water trough.
 - Trail area.
 - Providing seating and picnic tables.
 - Retaining an open area for general play.
 - Enhancing and creating shelter within the park by planting groundcover plants and areas of coastal bush.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Bexley Reserve is an important site which requires significant rehabilitation. It services a community with a vision and high aspirations for the role it can play in the Bexley area. Considerable funding (additional to that already programmed) will be required to realise the potential of the reserve, and consideration needs to be given to how this may be sourced.

CONSULTATION

A draft plan outlining the proposed developments was circulated, inviting returns by prepaid envelope, to 488 households in the neighbourhood of Bexley, as well as to the Bexley Residents' Association, the North Avon BMX Club, the New Brighton Football Association and neighbouring businesses. Consultation packs were also made available at the Shirley Service Centre and the New Brighton Library.

The Parks and Waterways Area Advocate met with the Bexley Residents' Association in September 2003 to discuss and seek feedback on the staging/details of capital projects within the reserve. The Area Advocate also met with the President of the North Avon BMX Club to discuss the overall proposal and to receive feedback on signage needed to service the BMX facility. Previous discussions with the New Brighton Football Club, about park signage, have been incorporated into the plan.

Overall, the consultation process drew an overwhelmingly positive response from the local community.

Results

A total of 158 comment forms and one phone call have been received. Residents were asked to indicate their acceptance/non-acceptance of the plan, and were encouraged to add their comments. The results are listed below. Figures in parentheses refer to raw numbers and indicate the number of respondents who drew upon that particular point.

Feedback on the proposal:

97.5%	Accept the proposed plan	(154)
2.5%	Do not accept the proposed plan	(4)

Main reasons for opposing the plan were:

- Concern over future dog park maintenance issues (1).
- Dissatisfaction with the provision of adequate wind shelter (3).
- Belief that the dog park needs to be bigger (2).
- Concern that Knight's Pond future wildlife values could be compromised by the close proximity of a proposed dog park (2).

While the majority of people chose not to fill out the comments section, a number of respondents did choose to make suggestions on the proposed landscape developments. Main themes include:

1. Dog park - restrict access to picnic area.
2. Knights Pond - potential to incorporate this into the picnic area.
3. Picnic area - include barbecue, additional picnic tables and seating.
4. Landscaping - more trees are needed to provide adequate shelter from the easterly.
5. Front barrier arm gates - ensure they get locked at night.

Input was sought from City Council's Park Ranger and Dog Control staff regarding points one and two. If funds are available, additional landscaping, seats and picnic tables will be considered for installation.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Greenspace Unit anticipates that the entranceway and picnic area development will commence sometime in March/April, with the landscape planting due to take place during the 2004 planting season. Installation of the dog park will take place during the 2004/05 financial year.

CONCLUSION

The concept for Bexley Reserve has been developed in conjunction with a review of the Management Plan and input from local residents and stakeholder groups. The redevelopment plan seeks to re-establish the area as an attractive reserve that caters for a wide range of persons using the reserve. The proposed development will provide new appeal and should prove to be a community asset.

Staff

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Board support the implementation in the current financial year, and completion, of the front Pages Road entranceway and picnic area for Bexley Reserve.
 3. That the Board support implementation of the Bexley Reserve dog park in the 2004/05 financial year.
 4. That the Board support accessing external sponsorship for the dog agility equipment.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.