

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Reserves Manager
DATE: 13 February 2007
SUBJECT: Aranui Park

PURPOSE

To inform the Committee on the progress of the Reserves Subcommittee of the Coastal Garden Groups proposal for the development of Aranui Park in Mapua and seek a recommendation from the Committee on how best to proceed with this development.

BACKGROUND

The Reserves Subcommittee of the Coastal Garden Group was formed when the Mapua Reserves Management Committee dissolved. The group approached staff at Parks and Reserves regarding their interest in being involved with the reserves in the Mapua community and indicated that they were willing to carry out projects on these reserves.

The group have carried out plantings in McIndoe Reserve, Mapua Recreation Reserve where they did a lot of planning for the planting and Aranui Park again carrying out the planning for some plantings and assisting Council staff with others.

The group indicated to staff that they were interested in being involved in a major development in Aranui Park to enhance the park.

The park is currently underutilised by the community; the group believe this is in part due to the lack of attraction to the park and to poor vehicle access. The group are hoping that this proposed development would encourage people of all ages into the park with the accessway and car parking situated for full utilisation of the area.

To further this idea staff liaised with Council's Utilities Asset Manager in regards to the impact on stormwater in the area if this development went ahead.

A cadastral plan was prepared showing the levels of the park and the stormwater inlet and outlet levels.

With this information the group prepared a concept plan for their proposed development in the park.

A computerised version of the plan was prepared with the addition of walkways as suggested by the Mapua Walkways Group and an upgrade of the stormwater ditches which would enhance the stormwater flow through the park as discussed with Council's Utilities Asset Manager.

The group wrote a submission to Council for funding from the LTCCP for 2006/07 (\$25,000) and further funding for 2007/08 (\$10,000) which was granted.

The concept plan was then presented to the Mapua Community for comment (a copy of the plan is attached dated August 2006.)

Submissions were received from individuals and groups regarding the proposed development. The number of submissions received reflects the interest the community showed in the proposal (a summary of the submissions is attached and copies of full submissions are available on request.)

Most submissions were in favour of the walkways, stormwater upgrade, pond development and landscaping. However from the beginning of the consultation it was clear that the proposed accessway and associated car parking were an issue for the community.

A larger number of submissions were received in favour of the accessway and car parking as shown on the concept plan. However a number of the submissions suggested that the wishes of the Wells family when they gifted the park to the community should be taken into account.

The Wells family submission indicated that they were not in favour of vehicles in the park hence their opposition to the accessway and car parking.

Bernard Wells and family offered the area of land now known as Aranui Park to the Crown to set aside an area of land for reserve for the growing population of the area. The land was offered to the Crown rather than Waimea County Council to ensure that it was protected from subdivision. The land was accepted in 1977 by the Crown as a public domain to form part of the Mapua Domain Board to be administered under the Reserves and Domains Act 1953.

Due to changes in legislation and Council amalgamation the land now comes under Tasman District Council's administration as a Recreation Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977.

The Wells family believe that although the land was designated Recreation Reserve, Bernard wanted the area to be a nature reserve and did not use the word recreation in connection with the park.

As the park came under the administration of the Mapua Domain Board of which Bernard was a member and as he took an active role in the park he did not think it necessary to add other provisions to the offer of the land at the time it was given.

When Council were looking for sites for a playground, Skate Park and Scout Den in the Mapua area the Wells family would remind staff of the intention of the gift and

that it was for a nature reserve to be planted in natives for the preservation of New Zealand's natural heritage and peaceful enjoyment of the whole community rather than for any of the above purposes. However the issue of vehicles in the park did not arise during any of these discussions.

Currently there is no restriction to vehicles entering or moving around on the park. However due to the low use of the park there has been no conflict between vehicles and other users of the park. The wet low lying nature at the rear of the park can be an impediment at times to vehicle movement.

A Management Plan for the Mapua Reserves approved in February 1993 (written on behalf of Council by Jack Holland) under the heading Vehicles. This plan states that "vehicles including motorcycles and bicycles will not be permitted on the reserve except in any area set aside for parking."

The current Management Plan for Aranui Park (Moutere Waimea Ward Reserves Management Plan August 2000) mentions the above plan but states the plan proposed a prohibition on vehicles, horses and camping, however in relation to vehicles doesn't go on to expand the provision of "in any area set aside for parking."

COMMENT/DISCUSSION

Council staff visited the reserve and looked at a compromise option that could possibly achieve a similar result for the group but also answer some of the concerns raised by the community regarding the proposed access way and car parking.

That is to shorten the accessway so it stops on the Aranui Road side of the pond and provide four car parking spaces that would face the pond and have some view of the whole park and at the same time formalise parking outside the park on the roadside for eight parking spaces. Allow for vehicles to use the grass area between this accessway and the Church but prevent vehicle access to the rest of the park (a copy of this plan is attached dated January 2007)

This option was discussed at a meeting with the Wells family representative who have agreed with this option.

This option was then put to the following community groups:

The Reserves Subcommittee of the Coastal Garden Group who's preferred option is the original plan.

The Mapua Walkways Committee who put the options to their members and of those who responded the split was about 50/50 some in favour of the compromise and some saying no to any access way and car parking on the park. However the Committee would like the issue of the access etc resolved at this time so the whole development could proceed.

The Mapua Women's Recreation Group coordinator speaking on behalf of the group was not happy with the option of any accessway or car parking but could see some merit in leaving the issue aside until the impact of the development was determined.

Three neighbours to the park who were not in favour of the accessway and car parking were also talked to. One was in favour of the option, one would prefer the parking to be outside the park but did suggest that if the park gates were locked at night it would be considered and the third was happy for the development to go ahead with the accessway and car parking left until the impact of the development was determined.

SIGNIFICANCE

This issue is not significant under Council's significance policy.

AFFECTED PARTIES

The residents of Mapua and the wider community.

OPTIONS

1. Do nothing.
2. Carry out the proposed development of Aranui Park as per the original plan dated August 2006.
3. Carry out the proposed development of Aranui Park with the option of the altered access way and car parking as per the plan dated January 2007.
4. Carry out the proposed development of the pond, walkways, landscaping and stormwater upgrade but leave the access way and car parking issues status quo until the impact of the development is determined.
5. Prepare plans for all three options and refer back to the Community for further consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff consider that any delay in a decision on vehicle access and car parking will just prolong the concerns of the various groups with no one knowing what the final outcome will be and also when it would resurface again.

Therefore it is recommended that option three be adopted which provides limited car parking within the reserve with only a short access to the car park. This is a compromise between the various groups and is the option supported by the Wells family.

This option will:

- Provide off road parking for the unloading of children, the elderly and those with mobility issues away from Aranui Road. The quality of the path leading further into the park will be suitable for wheelchairs etc.
- Provide views of the park and plantings and invite people to carry on into the park.
- Provide an open car parking area visible to Aranui Road which should reduce any inappropriate behaviour by visitors to the park.
- Prevent vehicles getting into the rear of the park and causing damage.
- Keep the rear of the park quiet and peaceful with no vehicle (other than maintenance) movements, noise or pollution to cause concern.
- Reduce any future impact of increased usage by vehicles by limiting the car park area to four vehicles only and providing formed car parking outside the entrance to the park.

That option three to “carry out the proposed development of Aranui Park with the altered accessway and car parking as per the plan dated January 2007” be adopted.

Beryl Wilkes
Reserves Manager

http://tdctoday:82/shared_documents/meetings/council/committees_and_subcommittees/community_services_committee/reports/2007/rcs070220_report_aranui_park.doc