

28/06/2018

Notice of Motion: Newmarket Land Access

Rob Thomas, Elected Member, Waitemātā Local Board, Auckland Council

Resolution

- 1. The Waitemātā Local Board request Auckland Council staff to investigate options for accessing the land being released under the Newmarket Viaduct to support the provision of a playspace to meet the unmet need of 8,000 school age children in Newmarket, and present back options to the Waitemātā Local Board.*
- 2. That the Waitemātā Local Board refer this NOM to the Governing Body for information.*

Background

Newmarket has one of the highest concentrations of school age children in New Zealand and there are currently no active recreational opportunities available.

The Waitemātā Local Board Plan includes a key initiative to provide places where young people can engage and socialise, such as creating a Newmarket playspace.

High-level conversations have occurred between the Transport Agency and Auckland Council staff over the last three years around the potential opportunity to lease land for the purpose of a playspace. The Transport Agency has now declared part of the Newmarket landholding, bound by Broadway, Mahuru Crescent and St Marks Road, surplus to requirements and are required to prepare the land for disposal, with the remainder of the land to follow.

There is now an opportunity for the council to register their interest in the land.

The Need

Recent delinquent behavior in Newmarket's Station Square has seen drug use and abuse behavior towards local residents, retailers and shoppers. Recently two girls were suspended from school for such behavior. The Newmarket Business Association continues to report anti-behavioral problems to the Police and local schools.

Every school day around 8,000 children descend into Newmarket from:

- Auckland Boys Grammar School - 2,560 students
- Epsom Girls Grammar School - 2,200 students
- Diocesan School for Girls - 1,422 students
- St Peter's College - 1,200 students
- Parnell ACG - 696 students
- Dilworth School for Boys - 350 students
- Kings College - 50+ students on the train

There is an unmet need for things for young people to do in Newmarket including active informal recreation opportunities.

Increase in Demand

Newmarket has experienced a significant population growth in less than a decade from 1,578 residents in 2006 to 2,961 in 2013 (Statistics NZ). Newmarket is currently experiencing further population growth with significant investment into new apartments near the Newmarket motorway viaduct, educational facilities at The University of Auckland's new Engineering Campus on Khyber Pass and massive retail with the Westfield Development well underway.

Lack of Public Open Space

When the Newmarket Viaduct Master Plan was developed it identified a lack of public open space in Newmarket and the opportunity to utilise land in and around the Viaduct. The master planning activity analysed potential sites across Newmarket for new public open space and concluded that the Newmarket Viaduct had the opportunity for two potential sites for Auckland Council to acquire land and/or arrange pepper-corn lease requirements. The window of opportunity still exists today but that window is starting to narrow.

Alternative Locations

The master planning exercise for the Newmarket Viaduct looked at a number of alternative locations in Newmarket for new public open space but concluded the viaduct to be the best opportunity. A meeting in early 2018 with the Newmarket Business Association, YMCA, Local Board Member Rob Thomas and Local MP David Seymour in Newmarket run a review of potential locations under a number of criteria and identified that the Viaduct Harbour land was still the best option.

Supporting Strategic Plans

A number of regional, national and international documents support greater informal active recreational opportunities for young people and this is an opportunity to engage with Auckland's largest concentration of school age children in one location:

- The Children & Young People Report commissioned by Auckland Council identified a lack of informal recreational opportunities for young people across Auckland.
- The Healthy Auckland Together Plan developed by Auckland Council in conjunction with Auckland's District Health Boards identified that communities should change their environments to create more active recreational environments for young people to reduce childhood obesity.
- The Young People Plan by Sport New Zealand outlines that children should be encouraged to play and the significant benefits that it brings to self-directed creativity and innovation, social and emotional connection and improving resilience.
- The Childhood Obesity Plan developed by the Ministry of Health promotes playing sports, increase in physical activity and sports in education.
- The United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC), ratified by New Zealand in 1993, defines universal principles and standards for the status

and treatment of children worldwide. Article 31 of UNCROC affirms children's right to play.

- The Ministry of Health's physical activity guidelines for children and young people [aged 5 to 17] and for under-fives recognise the importance of play in ensuring young people are active and helping them develop socially, emotionally and cognitively.
- The Newmarket Business Association has also incorporated the Newmarket project into its Business Planning to ensure essential services for Young People are provided to the current and growing population.

Waitematā Local Board Response

In 2013, the New Zealand Transport Agency proposed Auckland Council lease land at Clovernook Road, Newmarket or acquire land at Mahuru Street, Newmarket for open space purposes. The NZTA Clovernook Road site cannot be built on because of NZTA's requirement to service Newmarket Viaduct.

In 2014, the Waitematā Local Board committed \$4k to investigate a design to build a youth-based playspace under the unused Newmarket Viaduct and to start conversations between NZTA and Auckland Council. The playspace design draft concept was built in modular form so that it could be rolled away when NZTA need access to service the bridge.

In May 2015 the Waitematā Local Board received a confidential report on the proposed lease of land for open space in Newmarket and the local board requested officers to continue investigating location and funding options for an informal sports and recreational facility. The resolution is attached as **Attachment C**.

The Waitematā Youth Collective has supported the project to date and the Newmarket Business Association has now included it as a key strategic project in their Business Plan.

With the assistance of the newly elected Local MP David Seymour, the design was presented to the, at the time, Minister of Transport Simon Bridges who in principle supports the idea. The idea was also endorsed by the then Minister of Youth Affairs and current local MP Nikki Kaye.

To fund the Newmarket Playspace development the Waitematā Local Board could look to partially fund and seek sponsorship through commercial partners similar to Grey Lynn Park Pump Track \$150k and the SPARK basketball court in Victoria Park \$300k. The local board planned to seek NZTA to lease the land on a peppercorn basis similar to land leased at the Auckland Harbour Bridge, Alan Wood Reserve and Avondale Racecourse on NZTA land to ensure future servicing of assets could be achieved.

Auckland Council Response

To date Auckland Council has had limited engagement with NZTA over the land under the Newmarket Viaduct. Departments within Auckland Council have informed Waitematā Local Board members that there is a lack of resourcing and skills to negotiate this land on behalf of the Waitematā Local Board. The purpose of this

resolution is to instruct Auckland Council to act in haste to ensure this opportunity is not lost for the community of Newmarket.



Rob Thomas
Waitematā Local Board Member

Attached

Attachment B - Newmarket Playspace presentation

Attachment C - **Confidential** May 2015 Resolution WTM/2015/1

Elected Member Contact

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