

Report on submissions presented to the Henderson-Massey Local Board on 4 December 2018 for the Harbourview-Orangihina Park Masterplan

1. Background

On 4 December 2018, the local board held a hearing for submissions on the draft Harbourview-Orangihina Park Masterplan (HOPM). This report summarises points made by submitters at the hearing, together with the local board's deliberations and amendments to be made to the draft HOPM before it is adopted.

Note that the background to the draft HOPM and hearing is described in the report to the local board for that hearing being CP2018/23031 dated 4 December 2018.

The local board considered the 258 written submissions; and heard from 14 submitters; including a representative from Grey Power whose submission was accepted as a late submission.

After considering the views of submitters, the local board recommends amendments to the HOPM as set out in Attachment A.

The most significant amendments include the following:

- Removal of portions of the lower terrace boardwalks including a birdhide;
- Recognition of the need for a restoration plan across the park, but focusing on the significant ecological areas and stream areas;
- Combining the proposed bird roosting islands into one island, and relocating the indicative location towards the water's edge;
- Removing the proposed pedestrian pathway alongside the marae access road together with the proposed trees within the southern paddocks.
- Amending the plan to note that connections and circulation to and within the marae and any planting around the interface between the park and the marae will be determined during the detailed design phase of marae planning;
- Before implementation of the plan, making clearer the need to assess location and environmental impact of measures such as restoring the wetland, investigating the bird roosting island and stabilizing and enhancing the brickworks;
- Removal of the fitness trail.

An analysis of survey responses, and themes from written submissions was included in Attachments E and F of the report for the 4 December hearing and is not repeated here. Refer to attachments CP2018/23557 and CP2018/23558 for the 4 December 2018 report for further detail.

The key themes from written submissions included:

- Strong support for the many measures to enhance and improve ecological outcomes on the park;
- Good to strong support for measures aimed at engaging and educating the public on park values such as providing interpretive information on park values and providing access to the wetland areas;
- Varying levels of support for measures associated with people enjoying the park including strong support for additional park furniture; good support for specimen trees; and support for a play trail, muted by mixed views on providing a playground;
- Good support to improve pedestrian/cycle connections into the park and around the upper terrace;

- Support for the open, natural qualities of the park and keeping development levels low;
- Lower prioritisation of proposals relating to making changes to the heritage features such as access into the gun emplacements or to the brickworks; and creating bird watching shelters; and
- Concerns about the impacts of improvements on birds and wildlife.

2. Summary of evidence presented at the hearing

2.1 Bike Te Atatu (BTA) (Melanie Dixon)

Ms Dixon spoke on behalf of Bike Te Atatu, a community group looking to get more people walking and cycling. Ms Dixon noted daily average bike counts of 285 in the area. Bike Te Atatu generally supported aspects of the plan encouraging active modes of transport; especially connections to Danica Esplanade (the 'missing link'), the village and bollards along Gloria Ave – noting need to work with Auckland Transport to resolve access across Te Atatu Road from Gloria Ave. The potential Te Whau pathway connection was also noted as exciting.

Ms Dixon supported some of the recommended amendments put forward by staff but requested that the design principle related to carparking be changed to 'restricting' carparking in recognition of the need to promote other non-car- based modes of transport. When questioned about access to the village through the gun emplacements, she stated general support for improvements.

2.2 Community Waitakere (CW) (Chris Burton)

Mr Burton briefly outlined Community Waitakere's role in community development and referenced the importance of ecological values at Harbourview as detailed in a report by Bio researchers titled 'Waitakere City Lowland Area and Escarpment, Harbourview' dated 1996. When questioned, Mr Burton suggested that birdlife has increased since the time of the report and noted the recent discovery of the matuku at the park. He suggested that the focus of restoration in the park should be in the Significant Ecological Area.

Mr Burton spoke to points in his submission emphasising the importance of applying the council's landowner approval process to ensure appropriate biodiversity expertise is applied to planting in the area (noting a restoration plan has recently been commissioned). He emphasised the importance of including the community and young people in park restoration efforts, to provide opportunities to connect with the environment, and cited project Twin Streams as an example of a programme that has yielded long term environmental gains.

When asked about protection of birdlife in the pony club area, he noted that the club occasionally lays down mulch which was popular with dotterels; and he noted that protection of bird roosting in this area (including fencing off dogs) was more appropriate than in the lower terrace. A bird roosting area island in that lower area would be threatened by climate change and create maintenance issues.

When asked if he thought boardwalks would disturb wildlife, he noted that any disturbance was not justified and noted the wetland in the northern area in particular was a rare ecosystem. Access through unformed exploration was better in his opinion. In regard to dogs – he noted that dogs off-leash were problematic.

2.3 Gerald Rowan

Mr Rowan spoke as a long-term resident of the area and noted his background in the Department of Conservation (DoC) as a regional manager. He noted that the HOPM was

light on policies; but supported the process undertaken to create the masterplan noting its alignment with Reserve Act processes.

Mr Rowan supported the direction of the plan in particular the pedestrian link shown on the draft HOPM around the south end of the reserve.

However, he questioned the basis for the amount of land in the pony club lease area noting this should be based on needs rather than desires. He also noted inadequate maintenance of the area by the club.

Regarding the marae, he noted his support for a community marae and DoC's work supporting marae. He noted the need for a clear, transparent process for this.

Mr Rowan also commented on the need to withstand the future pressures of an intensifying city (such as providing sportsfields) on the park's upper terraces.

He supported protection of the entire lower terrace as a protected area and noted, when asked, that DoC typically provide boardwalks through such areas given people walk through such areas anyway. However, fewer boardwalks is better as long as some walkway is provided. Mr Rowan also noted, when asked, that ponies – while non-indigenous species – can be provided for where aligned with the class of reserve (such as a recreation reserve).

2.4 Grey Power (GP) (Martin Marinovich)

Mr Marinovich advocated for the original plan for Harbourview as the 'People's Park' and discussed the targeted rate paid by Waitakere resident over a number of years for the park. He noted the original intent was for a park like Cornwall Park in a hundred years; and stated his disappointment that no trees had been planted within the park in the last two decades.

2.5 Diane Taylor

Ms Taylor noted her involvement in volunteer planting of the foreshore of the park and advocated the importance of protecting wildlife; noting concerns that providing access to the brickworks, birdhides and provision of boardwalks might adversely affect birds e.g. through human activity, cycling noise on boardwalks, dogs)

Ms Taylor suggested recycling bins at McCormicks cottage and a toilet; and more information boards. She supported green walkways (not concrete) around the pony club land if that wouldn't impact on birds. Ms Taylor supports a café at the brick villa though noted concerns around parking. In her view, less is more when it comes to Harbourview-Orangihina Park.

When questioned about access into the gun emplacements, she noted they had never been open and had no recommendation for their use.

2.6 Birds New Zealand (BNZ) (Trina Smith)

Ms Smith outlined her role as the Birds New Zealand representative on the Community Reference Group, as an ecologist/botanist and part time teacher into the Landscape Architecture programmes at Unitec, as the Birds New Zealand Librarian, and a committee member of the Auckland branch of Birds NZ. She noted she has personally conducted wader counts at the park for the last three years. Ms Smith spoke to a powerpoint presentation.

Her presentation noted the at-risk status of many birds found on the park; and provided information on resident and migratory birds. Ms Smith outlined in particular the importance of the high tide roosting area on the southern paddocks for wader birds, including the pressures on such birds.

Her presentation noted the limited number of higher elevation spring-tide roost sites in the Harbourview-Orangihina Park area and outlined roosting requirements for such birds including a large open space to allow a flock safety in numbers; clear lines of sight, free from disturbance, close to foraging areas and allowing for night-time darkness.

Ms Smith recommended a 100m buffer zone based on research for breeding dotterels; and showed a map of the 'current undisturbed core' of roosting area on the southern paddocks; compared with a map of the reduced roosting area based on park improvements (southern walkway connection, marae and accessway) as shown on Revision E of the draft HOPM. In her personal observations (and those of group members), birds don't occupy land close to the cliff-top pathway.

Ms Smith made a number of wide-ranging recommendations including matters related to the Dog Management Bylaw, the Unitary Plan, operational matters such as bird surveys and protection strategies, and restricting timing of events. She also recommended:

- Protecting the shorebirds in perpetuity (grazing/mowing) including referring to the upper terrace roosting area as the 'urban shorebird high tide roost';
- not providing an extra entranceway to the park and no further parking along the marae access road;
- removal of the cliff-top pathway connection in the south to the Te Atatū Rd footpath especially if dogs are allowed;
- removing connection to the Te Whau pathway or restricting access to pedestrians and recreational cyclists (not commuters); and
- minimal artificial lights (make birds feel unsafe and disrupt their flight patterns; though she defers to experts on specific recommendations)

Ms Smith noted that tall shrubbery or trees may harbour predators; and that nighttime predation, including from cats from across Te Atatu Rd, is problematic.

In regard to the ponies, Ms Smith noted the birds have become habituated to the ponies. The critical aspect of the pony occupation was the fenced boundary, demarcating the area and stopping people and dogs accessing the area. She would not like to see this pony club area reduced.

2.7 Forest & Bird Motu Manawa Restoration Group (FBMMRG) (Kent Xie)

Mr Xie presented through Skype noting the background and vision of the group; the 300 strong followers of FBMMRG and their activities on the park as per his written submission.

Mr Xie ran through the recommendations of FBMMRG as stated in his written submission relating to the whole of the park, and the upper and lower Pleistocene terraces and scarp zone.

He further noted the adverse impact of global warming on the wetland area and recommended planting and minimal park infrastructure. In response to a question related to the protections of Pollen and Traherne Islands, Mr Xie noted he would like the birds at Harbourview-Orangihina Park to be protected as a sanctuary and have the same legal protections as those Islands. This included protection of the upper terrace roosting area. Mr Xie also noted grazing of the upper terraces or careful mowing would support that roosting area.

2.8 Friends of Harbourview (FOH) (Michael Coote)

Mr Coote also presented by Skype and was invited to take his submission as read.

He noted that environmental values were supreme on the park and the importance of a similar maintenance regime of the upper roosting area if the pony club was to move.

Mr Coote noted concerns about the proposed boardwalk access to the lower terrace, unless dogs are prohibited from that area. He also discussed benefits of open, low vegetation for bird protection.

He supported restoration of the brickworks area in a similar manner to Limeburners Bay noting the need to stabilize the area if trees are removed.

Mr Coote supported connections to Te Atatū south although expressed concern about the impact of a pathway in the bird roosting area and marae interface on birdlife.

He further spoke to his concerns around the Community Reference Group process (to create the draft plan) including an objection to the use of the word 'kaitiaki' in the plan. When asked whether he considers himself a kaitiaki (guardian) over the space, he noted that he did not see himself as a decision-maker for the park.

When questioned about FOH written's submission proposing use of the brick villa as a museum, he noted the important thing was that it be open to the public and allowing for school groups and learning was an important aspect.

In regard to whether mowing would be detrimental to the roost area, he suggested it could damage existing birdlife, so grazing is preferable. Mowing would be the least preferred method of maintaining the roosting area.

2.9 John Fawcett

Mr Fawcett thought the masterplan was attractive and relatively sensible; but questioned its focus on humans rather than non-human species. He noted his concern related to sea level rise and resulting loss of bird habitat.

While the fences around the pony area separated two invasive species, he supported that provision as it was the last line of defence for the birds. He advocated that the park not be viewed as a series of zones, but that it be treated holistically.

Regarding the next phases of work following approval of a masterplan, he questioned decisions already made and the need for integrity in the decision-making processes.

2.10 Gary Osborne and Jim Wood

Mr Osborne appeared with Mr Wood to present. Mr Osborne provided a written copy of a prepared statement in which he spoke of the People's Park aspiration of Waitakere ratepayers for the park 20 years ago; 'devoid of buildings similar to Cornwall Park'. He also outlined consultation outcomes for the proposed marae.

Mr Osborne wishes to honour the 2003 adopted plan and sought a referendum on this matter.

Mr Wood also spoke of the protection of the park land two decades ago and sought to speak further on the marae provision. As marae provision is out of scope, further discussion on that was curtailed.

2.11 Elizabeth Grimmer

Ms Grimmer spoke of the history of the TARA submission on the People's Park, noting that plan was widely consulted. She noted her support that the park become a regional park in order to protect it from development and advised she had been fighting 29 years to save the land.

Ms Grimmer supported the inclusion of the brick villa within the masterplan for the park but expressed concern about a residential future for that land. She supports a future as an Information Centre although has concerns around carparking if that were the case.

She referred to her advocacy that a naval memorial be installed at the gun emplacements. She also requested that an Environment Court decision of 2007 related to the park be included in the masterplan.

Ms Grimmer did not support the proposed vehicle entrance to the marae shown in the draft HOPM; instead suggesting it be opposite Titoki Street (being the existing access to the Fulton Hogan depot).

Ms Grimmer supported low planting eco-sourced from the local area. She also sought the removal of the pittosporum trees planted to screen the works depot and spoke of her experiences in seeking to have those removed. She also seeks reinstatement of Area 'B' of the land leased to the pony club during the work depot occupation.

In regard to a play area, she does not support this at Harbourview-Orangihina Park since it represents loss of green space and would be better suited at Jack Pringle Park.

Ms Grimmer also sought to understand the status of the 2003 plan. Tania Utley – Auckland Council Service and Asset Specialist project managing the masterplan - clarified that the 2003 Harbourview-Orangihina Park Open Space Management Plan (HOOSMP) was still in effect; however, the masterplan would replace the concept plan that was developed with the Management Plan.

2.12 Ian Wood

Spoke about destination play provision noting other local parks as being more appropriate.

He noted issues with sea level rise and seeking appropriate expertise on this.

Mr Wood reflected on the process to create the plan noting the agreement of the community reference group on the ecological values of the reserve; and supporting provision of the horses which have been there for the past 70 years.

He spoke of the need to plan the area holistically noting for example the impact of street lights on the birds in the park. He spoke of support to drop the 'Harbourview' from the name of the park.

Dog access and predation by cats and dogs is also of concern to Mr Wood; boardwalks may therefore be a highway for predation. He recommended a precautionary approach – not doing everything at once until the environment is protected.

Mr Wood seeks a harmonious interface of the marae with the park – not large trees or structures. He noted the need for clarification on the Dog Management Bylaw areas within the park. He supports toilets at the Gloria Ave shops rather than within the park.

Mr Wood supports bird hides and protection of birds on the upper and lower terraces; and the location of marae accessway to be from Titoki Street though happy with whichever is practical.

2.13 Derek Reeve

Mr Reeve spoke about the name of the park and expressed concern that no development occurs on the park in the future. He supports protecting views across the park and supports ecological protection and enhancement including of lower and upper terraces.

Mr Reeve noted concerns about temporary commercial use of the park by fitness instructors such as occurs at nearby parks.