



# **MISSION BAY/KOHIMARAMA COMMUNITY CENTRE AND PARK**

*'Uniting Our Community Together'*

This is a proposal to repurpose the Mission Bay Bowling Club land and buildings, and to establish it as the Mission Bay/Kohimarama Community Centre and the Mission Bay Community Park and Gardens.

## COMMUNITY PROPOSAL

1 February 2021

### INTRODUCTION

With the closure of the Mission Bay Bowling Club, a valuable community asset is now available to be repurposed. Opportunities like this, where the Council already owns an asset, are rare, and it is important that this opportunity to create a sustainable asset and meet the needs now prevailing in our community is not lost.

Currently there is no community centre in Mission Bay or Kohimarama and there is a real need for this facility. Neighbouring community centres in St. Heliers and Orakei are largely fully booked and we now have community groups with no venue or meeting place to carry out their activities. Local community groups are also faced with the prospect of having to pay very high rental fees if there is a need to hold a public meeting, (e.g. MBKRA was obliged to pay \$1600 to hire the Selwyn Theatre for a public meeting of approx. 200 community members). Costs like this are not sustainable by small community groups.

With the current construction of multiple apartment-blocks underway and the planned intensification of Mission Bay, we need all the green space we can get to support the needs of a much larger population, a population which will increasingly be living in apartments and on small lots with limited access to green space. There will be very limited options to add to community green space in the future in a developed environment and so it is imperative that we hold on to this viable piece of community land that we have, repurpose it, and meet the community need that currently exists – and a need that will magnify over future years.

The only public park in Mission Bay that is suitable to use by all members/abilities within our community is Selwyn Reserve. This reserve suffers from over-crowding, particularly in summer months, as it serves as a tourist destination and a destination for people from all over Auckland. This results with it not providing suitable/available facilities for elderly, disabled, small children or local community members to use. Selwyn Reserve can also be very exposed. There is no other suitable alternative to Selwyn Reserve in Mission Bay currently.

We would like to stress there is a very viable community demand for the facilities that this property offers and the Bowling Club land and buildings would suitably accommodate the community needs that are very apparent. Our local community fully supports the retention of this land as a public green space and community centre, and is not supportive of its sale and alternative development.

It is also pertinent that the land was originally gifted to the Council specifically as a green space for community recreational purposes. We consider an alternative development would

be disrespectful of the original intent of the gift, and outrageous when there is such a need present now in our community for premises and land such as this.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to present a proposal to the Orakei Local Board for the permanent utilisation of the land and buildings at 6a Nihill Crescent and 9 Tagalad Road, Mission Bay, for the recreational use of local Eastern Suburbs residents. The land is currently zoned Open Space Recreational and it is our intention that the land continues to be provided to the community for that utilisation.

The former bowling club buildings are in good overall condition and will require little initial investment to bring them back to a serviceable condition. No alteration to the outward appearance of the buildings is required. This would mean there will be no impact on neighbours caused by a change in the zoning of the land. The site is flat and ideal for a local community park and gardens which will provide long term pleasure for a wide range of groups and ages across the local community.

Mission Bay and Kohimarama have recently been subjected to considerable population intensification under the new unitary plan with little consideration of where the new residents will be able to spend their recreational time. This proposal is designed to help address this issue.

The goal for the completed project is to provide a facility managed by the community that can be used by a broad section of local residents expressly for both indoor and outdoor recreation.

## OUR INTENTION

- To preserve this land as a 'permanent green space for community use' for the wellbeing of the current and future residents in our community.
- To meet the needs of our community and provide facilities that are in short supply or not provided currently.
- To establish the Mission Bay/Kohimarama Community Centre and the Mission Bay Community Park/Gardens with kiosk.
- To provide a community meeting place that caters for predominantly local recreational activities.
- To align these facilities with the three main objectives of the Orakei Local Board 2020-2023 Plan.
- To address, in part, the effects of a climate emergency declared by Auckland Council.
- To mitigate, in part, the effects of intensification.
- The new centre will utilise all of the former Mission Bay Bowling Club facilities and no other buildings or land will be required.
- A Community Charitable Trust would be formed to manage and maintain the facility in perpetuity.

## **OUR PROPOSAL**

We believe our proposal is viable and creates a substantial ongoing community benefit that will cater for the current and future needs of our community. The land and buildings from the former bowling club will be reutilised to provide a local community centre and park for the use of residents of Auckland's eastern suburbs. Any alternative disposition of this most valuable piece of land will further reduce the already depleted green space recreational assets available to our Eastern suburb communities.

The new community centre will provide a venue for local group meetings which are in very short supply in the Eastern suburbs of Auckland. The building will be hired out to local clubs and sports groups to provide facilities for community meetings, sports and hobbies. The land will be developed into a park and community garden to provide passive enjoyment for all members of our community, especially elderly members.

The development of the second smaller building into a park kiosk would provide a social experience for all, and in return would contribute to the community centre and park's revenue stream.

We propose three main zones for the open green space:

- An open lawn space for picnics, BBQs, young children to play on and community exercise groups.
- A garden zone, planted to provide attractive areas for wandering, sitting and a destination.
- A toddlers' play area, a loop path for ride-on toys, shade and seating area for parents.

The largest building, intended as the community centre providing space for a wide range of meetings and activity groups, currently caters for up to 180 people. The second building includes outside toilets to support park users and there is also potential to provide kiosk refreshments for park users from this second building. These buildings are in a very sound condition being constructed of brick and tile and their interiors are also in a very good state.

## **TARGET USERS**

Our community has a large unmet demand for a quiet, low intensity park in this area. Selwyn Reserve is the largest reserve in Mission Bay and is a fantastic asset. It is largely an active park however, catering to a wide range of activities, and for large groups of people from all over Auckland. It can be very exposed to the wind also. It frequently has vigorous activities such as triathlons, touch rugby or soccer games on the main areas, not to mention regular loud music and drums, which give this park an unmistakable character, but preclude it providing for those that are looking for a quiet sheltered space.

We propose creating a small, sheltered, enclosed neighbourhood park catering for more passive activities. This would be the low intensity counterpoint to Selwyn Reserve. It would be designed to provide a small-scale neighbourhood relaxation experience to a wide range of age groups, including:

- Elderly people looking for a quiet contemplative and social experience. We propose gardens with walking paths, shade and seating areas. There is already a desire for this from many retirement villages located nearby – they have expressed their

enthusiastic support to use these gardens as a destination for their residents, to pursue interactive gardening activities, exercise and community groups.

- Young children and their parents. We propose a small play area, coupled with a loop path around the perimeter for ride-on toys. The design would encourage safe interaction between the young children and the elderly.
- Families and couples. We propose a grassed area for BBQs and picnics to act as an outdoor living space for locals in apartments or small sites without adequate outdoor space.
- Disabled. Because the site and both its accessways are flat, it is suitable for disabled community members to use.
- Small local primary schools wanting a school nature outing or small hall venue.
- Community Groups. There is a serious shortage of venues for small groups to meet in Mission Bay and Kohimarama, and the existing buildings would support a range of indoor activities and meetings, i.e. act as a much-needed community centre.

## SUITABILITY OF SITE

This site is ideal for the purpose proposed.

- It is relatively small, making it well suited as a true local park.
- It is flat, ideal for mobility challenged people, and well suited for BBQs and picnics.
- It is sheltered. As a park primarily intended for sitting and quieter activities for all ages and abilities, shelter is critical. It would provide a viable alternative when Selwyn Reserve is exposed.
- It is enclosed. All of the retirement villages in the extended have expressed enthusiasm for an enclosed garden where they could safely bring residents and not lose them!
- It is perfectly located, right in the centre of what is already one of the most intensive parts of Mission Bay and which is expected to substantially intensify over coming years.
- It already has several buildings of a sound standard. The largest building is suitable for a range of meetings of up to 180 people, and community activities.
- The second building has separate toilet facilities which could service park visitors without opening the main building, and would also be most suitable fitted out as a community park kiosk.
- It has considerable parking already provided and has good on and off-street parking for organised visitors such as retirement village mini-vans. (16 plus parks on site, 32 angle parks by the Nihill Crescent entrance, and a 7-9 car parking bay by the Tagalad Road entrance). As it is centrally located it can be accessed by many on foot.
- It is well suited to use by the disabled community.
- Passive surveillance already exists as this site is completely overlooked by the surrounding houses, which has been effective for many decades past.
- Noise and lighting issues would not be a problem for neighbours as the park and buildings would continue to be locked off at night.
- It has the unanimous support of all the adjacent residents.

## **LEGAL**

A trust similar to others operational locally for community assets would be formed to administer and manage the centre. The trust would have full responsibility for maintaining the relationship with the Auckland City Council, the Orakei Local Board, all N.Z. Government Departments, all local neighbours, residents and businesses.

The trust will have six trustees from the local community. Parties represented on the trust could be the Orakei Local Board, the Mission Bay Kohimarama Residents Assoc., a neighbours' representative, a Local Aged Community representative and invited local community representatives from interested users of the facility.

It would be the trusts responsibility to control all rights and responsibilities of the facility including all operational revenues and outgoings.

This legal model is currently operational for the Terry Jarvis Centre for the Remuera Parnell Sports Community Charitable Trust at 32 Shore Road, Remuera.

## **FINANCIAL**

The trust would be a stand-alone financial entity subject to all regulations prescribed by the Auckland City Council, the Orakei Local Board, the N.Z. Government, and the N.Z. Charities Commission.

Operational funding would be secured by the trust through rental of the facilities, applications to Community Trust Funding Bodies, advertising for local participants and donations from local stakeholders.

A draft three-year cash forecast is attached, but no work would commence until approval by the Trustees and Orakei Local Board. These figures are subject to compliance costs and finalised quoted work costs, but give a rough idea at this preliminary stage. It is also anticipated (but not included) that there will be an approach to the A.S.B. for substantial funding toward development costs as this community project should fit within the criteria for a community grant. Interest has also been expressed for local business advertising.

The trust would be operated on a positive cash balance basis with no financial commitment permitted without 100% of the required funding available prior to the making of the commitment.

## **DEVELOPMENT STAGES**

Stage One: The initial renovations that would be required to upgrade the main building (intended as the community centre) would be undertaken when funding is secured.

Stage Two: The park paths, gardens, seating, colonnade, planting, lighting/security and dual entrance upgrades will be undertaken when funding is secured.

Stage Three: The men's and women's external toilet doors on the second building will be modified to provide park users better access to these already existing facilities. The central part of this building will be outfitted as a park kiosk to contribute to the running costs of the centre and park. The tiny-tots area will be developed.

A website would be developed within stage one to communicate with a new security system. A code will be issued by the website to prequalified users so that the centre can be unlocked by the user on receipt of a computer-generated code. This would allow the operational facility to work without the need of a booking administrator. This model is currently operational for the Terry Jarvis Centre in Remuera and has been working effectively for over 10 years. Alternatively, community volunteers could be involved in some of the day-to-day activities and running of the centre.

Funding bodies would be approached to provide the necessary capital for the first three stages over the years one to three in line with the cash forecast attached.

## **REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

As the facility would be used for community recreation purposes, it is contemplated that no change would be needed to the open space zoning. A planning assessment would be undertaken to confirm if a resource consent would be required. It is anticipated that the current land zoning would be appropriate for this activity.

An environmental effects assessment would be commissioned from a local town planning consultant to ensure the impact of changes to the land utilisation are minor.

## **EXPECTED USERS**

The community centre and park would provide a venue for a variety of sports, hobby and community groups. The following community organisations have expressed a desire to use these facilities:

- Residents Association Meetings
- Lions
- Rotary
- Probus
- Floral art Classes
- Dance Classes
- Ballet Classes
- Piano lessons
- U3A Classes
- Self Defence
- Menz Shed/craft work and model building
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Pilates
- Zumba
- Mothers and babies

- Grace Joel walking group
- Grace Joel gardening group
- Grace Joel Retirement Village Tours
- Eastcliffe Retirement Village Tours
- Bupa Meadowbank Retirement Village Tours
- Local Primary School garden visits
- Tamaki Drive Protection Society Meetings
- Mahjong
- Scrabble
- Bridge
- Bolivia
- Mission Bay Garden Society
- St. Heliers Garden Society
- Meadowbank Garden Society
- Community meetings
- Possible polling booth facilities

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

We see an opportunity for this to be a true community asset with much greater engagement from the local community. The new facility will provide a top-quality local venue for residents of all ages to enjoy social interaction and will provide the local Mission Bay and Kohimarama community with a venue to bring the community together and enjoy the benefits gained from recreational activity.

Establishing the Mission Bay Community Park and Garden facilities will also provide the opportunity to link other community groups together, thus providing mutual benefit to both groups. For example, the Menz Shed has expressed an interest in developing structures for this park such as outdoor seating; Grace Joel has expressed an interest of having a small section of garden that some of their active residents can plant and maintain, as just two examples.

It is also important to note there is a large ageing population within the Eastern Suburbs and activities/facilities for this large section of our community are limited. Many who wish to participate in hobby groups, interest groups, exercise groups or social groups do not have a venue for their activities, which this would address. Discussions with local retirement villages, such as Grace Joel, Eastcliffe and Bupa Meadowbank highlighted their strong desire to use our proposed facilities for community groups, activities, exercise, social interaction, outings, involvement in the development of the gardens and garden tours. Coupled with this, there are Remuera Gardens, St. Vincents Metlifecare, St. Andrews Village and Edmund Hillary Retirement Villages in the immediate area, and there are three new retirement villages planned for Kohimarama Road, St. Johns Road and St. Heliers so the expected patronage of our aged community members will continue to increase.

As trees, gardens and backyards are replaced with intensive dwellings, a community greenspace, a community meeting place and community activities will be more sort after and the value of such a community greenspace will be immeasurable.

## PROGRAMME

The proposers are approaching the Orakei Local Board with this concept in response to a request for a proposal by Auckland City Council and Orakei Local Board. If the Orakei Local Board and Auckland City Council confirm they are prepared to accept this proposal, a Community Charitable Trust would be formed and any necessary council regulatory requirements would be applied for.

Concurrent with the consent process, formal plans would be finalised including a Strategic Plan, a Financial Plan, a Three-Year Cash Forecast and an Annual Budget.

The fund-raising process would then commence to raise the capital for the renovations and start up operational expenditure. It is expected that the Trust would raise the funding necessary and will operate on a cash-positive basis.

On securing the funding and all necessary council permits the project development stages would commence.

## ORAKEI LOCAL BOARD PLAN

The Orakei Local Board Plan 2020-2023, adopted 5 Nov 2020, outlines the objectives for the next three years. Our proposed development of a community centre, community park and gardens with kiosk fully addresses the top three objectives:

1. Our communities are connected, engaged and resilient.
2. Our land ..... environment is protected, restored and enhanced.
3. All parks and open space areas are attractive and well-used places for both active and passive recreation.

## CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARED BY COUNCIL

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency. It is our understanding that this requires that every proposal must now be assessed for its impact on the climate. If the land on this site is retained and developed as a park and gardens, it will provide a positive impact, in part, compensating for the massive loss of trees, gardens and backyards that is occurring (and will continue to occur) with the infill development throughout our community and the Eastern Bays. Retaining this green space will provide many health and well-being benefits for the community and apartment dwellers such as cleaner air and an area to exercise, socialise or relax. If Auckland Council are serious about mitigating the effects of a climate emergency, then this proposal needs serious consideration and support.

## CONCLUSION

This a very logical proposal. The buildings already exist and are in a sound condition. They are set out in a suitable format ready to go. The land is currently in mown grass and would take little effort to create a small garden area with the retention of a large grass area. Carparking is already in place. The site is already maintained by the Council and security is provided by Council. We envisage a relatively low intensity development with the initial requirements primarily being establishing paths, lawn and gardens, plus some superficial maintenance of the buildings. The site would continue to be locked off at night on the same basis as for other parks and carparks in the area, requiring a minimal increase to the scope of that work.

There is a very real need for our proposed facilities of a community centre and an all-abilities park and gardens in this area. Our proposal can be run by a community charitable trust to manage and maintain the facility in perpetuity.

In return for this investment, Mission Bay and the wider community gets a community asset that will be a real legacy for decades to come, and some of the current and future needs of our community will also be met.

The large public support and need for the retention and repurposing of this green space and its buildings should be of prime consideration. Therefore, we ask the Orakei Local Board for your support with this important and much needed community proposal.

### Summary of Attachments:

- Parking and Site Location
- Passive Surveillance Provided by Neighbours
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed Layout of Centre, Park, Gardens and Kiosk
- Elevations of Buildings, Park and Gardens
- Proposed Kiosk/External Park Toilets Second Building
- Colonnade and Loop Path Eastern End
- Example of how Aged Community want to be involved