
SUBMISSION ON THE NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK (PUKEAHU) ENABLING BILL

1. Purpose of report

This report provides for consideration of a submission on the legislation designed to allow the construction of the National War Memorial Park by 2015.

2. Executive summary

The government has announced its commitment to construct the park in time for the centenary of the commencement of the Gallipoli landings of the First World War. It will be the centrepiece of those and Anzac Day commemorations in 2015 and future years. Its location in the nation's capital is a fitting site for such commemorations.

The Council has recognised the importance of creating a National War Memorial Park for a number of years. The park is a key platform in the *Capital City Initiative* and the *Central City Framework*.

The government's announcement includes the undergrounding of State Highway 1 in front of the park. This creates a formal park setting, adds new green space to the central city, and enhanced connections between the surrounding educational institutions and neighbourhoods with the city.

These city wide and local benefits can be reflected in the Council's commitment to the park. This is anticipated to include support for the enabling legislation, a \$5 million contribution, and ongoing maintenance of the park (noting that a service level agreement will be created once the detailed park design is complete).

The Bill provides consents and other necessary statutory authorisations and property rights to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and New Zealand Transport Agency to enable completion of the park by 2015.

Officers have reviewed the legislation and are comfortable that it will achieve its intended purpose and that safeguards are in place to manage and minimise impacts from matters that would be considered in an ordinary consenting process.

The legislation is being fast tracked to accommodate the completion deadline.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Agree that funding for Council's support for the National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) will be drawn from:*
 - *\$2 million (budgeted as part of the long term plan 2012)*
 - *\$1.9 million (application of the 2011/12 year-end underlying surplus)*
 - *\$1.1 million (to be identified through savings or recognised as a deficit at year-end 2012/13).*
3. *Agree to consider the maintenance of the park and explore funding for the Greening of Taranaki Street as part of the annual plan 2013/14.*
4. *Agree to the submission on the National War Memorial Park (Pukeahu) Enabling Bill attached as appendix one to this report.*
5. *Delegate to the Mayor and Chief Executive the authority to make any minor editorial changes to finalise the submission.*

4. Background and discussion

The government has announced its commitment to construct the National War Memorial Park by April 2015. This includes undergrounding a portion of State Highway 1 at the front of the park between Sussex and Taranaki Streets.

4.1 The enabling Bill

The government is introducing legislation to guarantee the park's completion within the timeframe. Key features of the Bill are:

- It grants resource consents, heritage authorisations, and building consents and provides the designation, conditions and processes to carry out the project.
- It removes the standard objection and appeal rights available under legislation.
- It, however, requires the Minister to establish a community forum to provide information and advice in relation to the park. A list of representative organisations (such as, Mt Cook School, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Massey University, Wellington City Council) are included in the Bill.
- It also requires the consent holder to establish a communications plan and have a dedicated communications resource during construction to ensure

the project is widely understood and that affected parties have a clear point of contact.

Council officers have reviewed the legislation and conditions of consent and are comfortable that it achieves the intended purpose of the legislation. An explanatory note on the Bill is attached in appendix two for reference.

4.2 *The legislatively timeframe*

The Bill is being fast tracked. The process sees:
Submissions close Thursday 6 September 2012
Hearings held 10 September 2012
Report back to the house 18 September 2012.

4.3 *Fit with council's policy*

The park has been proposed for a number of years. Throughout this time the Council has been committed to a partnership to create it.

The creation of the park has been a feature of the *Capital City Initiative*. This was launched by the Prime Minister and Mayor in 2009. The initiative aims to promote Wellington's capital city status through the alignment of urban design and other projects.

The park is also a feature in the *Central City Framework*. The location of the park on an elevated site and at the southern edge of the central city is ideal for an inner city park. It provides cross valley links to the Town Belt and will also offer improved amenity and a focal point for people in the surrounding neighbourhood, including the schools and university.

The park provides an enhanced setting for the existing sites of remembrance including the National War Memorial, Carillion, and Hall of Memories.

The placement of the road beneath will enhance the overall experience of the park.

4.4 *The Council's commitment*

As part of the partnership approach the Council has previously budgeted \$2 million as a contribution to the park. In recognition of the substantial investment from the government in placing a section of State Highway 1 beneath the park and the added benefits this provides to the city and park users the council contribution is now proposed to sit at \$5 million.

The council will also work with the Ministry on a service level agreement for the ongoing maintenance of the park.

It is recommended that the new funding for the park be met in two ways:

- That \$1.9 million be applied from the underlying surplus achieved in the 2011/12 year. This surplus has now been audited and can be used in this way.
- That \$1.1 million be identified through savings in the current year or recognised as a deficit at year-end.

\$2 million is currently budgeted in the long term plan.

4.5 Other related matters

The proposed submission outlines the Council's overall support for the Bill. It also includes reference to three specific items:

- i. The creation of a partnership agreement with the Ministry and NZTA to ensure the smooth implementation of the project: This agreement could cover relationships in the design process, the steps to manage and minimise disruption to transport and the local road network during construction, and other practical matters such as clear lines of communication.
- ii. Certainty of the planning status once the park is completed: The Bill covers the construction of the park. At its completion any developments would be considered under the District Plan. Officers see it as prudent to make use of the enabling legislation to set up an appropriate ongoing planning framework for the park. It is envisaged that this would be a site specific zoning (ie Open Space Memorial Park) that would be inserted in the District Plan and provide rights and safeguards in keeping with the anticipated use of the land as a memorial park.

The approach would remove the need to undertake the costly planning exercise post the park's completion. Officers could assist the Ministry in the preparation of a site specific zoning and associated package of planning provisions for inclusion in the legislation.

- iii. As a matter of completeness officers recommend that reference to the Consolidated Bylaw be incorporated in to the list of relevant legislation where authorisations may be required and that can be granted by way of Order in Council during the development process, if necessary.

The development of an enhanced Memorial Park presents an opportunity to reconsider the introduction of processional route along Taranaki Street. This initiative is identified in the *Central City Framework*. Its establishment would embed not only the formal route but also define east Te Aro block (with a green border on four sides) and provide a clear inner city connection from the waterfront to Memorial Park.

Officers recommend that the design of this be explored ahead of consideration in the annual plan for 2013/14.

5. Conclusion

The legislation to enable the creation of the National War Memorial Park has been drafted. It provides a streamlined process to guarantee the park will be constructed in central Wellington by 2015 in time for the commemorations of the centenary of the commencement of the Gallipoli landings of the First World War.

A draft submission in support of the legislation is provided for the committee's consideration.