

MT COOK! MOBILISED

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No 4 - September 2009

Welcome to Mt Cook Mobilised. In this newsletter we update developments on supermarkets, parking and parks, and other goings-on in our suburb. Next issue Craig Stewart of Stratum Management will outline his plans to deal with the PCB toxicity problem at his proposed 25 Wright St development. Many thanks again to the Southern Cross, 39 Abel Smith St, for sponsoring the printing. Peter Cooke

SUPERMARKET ON TASMAN ST

Mt Cook Mobilised (MCM) has commented verbally, on paper and face-to-face with Council on Foodstuffs' Resource Consent application for its Tasman St development.

Foodstuffs wants to build a New World supermarket on the former BGI and YMCA site. With 147 internal car parks it will be bordered by Belfast, Rugby, Tasman (longest frontage) and Douglas Streets. The development includes 22 apartments (41 bedrooms) with 20 car parks (accessed via upper Douglas St) and two retail shops on Tasman St. MCM and local residents have reviewed the application documents, written letters and met with Council officers to argue for public notification to allow affected residents to be part of a formal review process. Despite some positive changes to original proposals (lower height, fewer apartments and car parks, no petrol station, and some green spaces), Mt Cook residents are worried about potential adverse impacts for their neighbourhood and community – particularly, traffic, pedestrian safety and parking issues.

In the application, traffic and urban design reports do not realistically

project the supermarket's real impact on existing or likely traffic flows (trucks, cars, pedestrians) or congestion in the adjacent streets. They make a comparison with 2007 pre-demolition flows, when businesses and other facilities existed on the site, not the current (lesser) flows. Council engineers are primarily interested in how traffic will impact on SH1 and Basin flows. Safety issues and the effect on immediate streets are second-level considerations.

There are difficulties with the supermarket entry and exit points. Tasman has three: a very steep car exit, between entry and exits for delivery trucks, all over a much-used pedestrian footpath. The trucks exit directly opposite Te Kaingānuī Childcare Centre. Lower Douglas gets a steep and narrow vehicle exit, with pedestrian safety issues and risks and increased congestion for drivers exiting to Adelaide. A combined car entry and exit on Rugby looks tricky for drivers

entering Basin traffic. People living and working near the supermarket face competition for parking space and noise from the delivery and removal trucks. Proposals to monitor these effects post-construction appear inadequate. We say WCC needs controls on supermarket operations.

The supermarket, with apartments above, is higher than the existing commercial premises and out of character with upper Douglas, and will also shade houses. Despite the plans generally conforming to Suburban Centre rules, we think Council must take into account the impact on residents who live on the boundary, and of cumulative developments. These include the proposed additional 'green space'

apartment blocks; the second supermarket planned for John St (at the other end of Tasman St) as well as wider traffic issues, including the high use of Bidwill St, and the Tory-Buckle intersection. Application of Suburban Centre rules without public notification risks very real impacts being ignored.

Unintended consequences: that the supermarket car park becomes a rat-run for south-bound traffic onto Adelaide, to avoid Basin Reserve congestion.

Green today, gone tomorrow. Mt Cook may never get the two green spaces. Foodstuffs is seeking developers to build apartments here. We believe WCC should take into account the need for green space and playground areas in Mt Cook.

PARKING IN MT COOK

City Council Parking Policy is up for review, and many aspects of it will affect Mt Cook drivers. Included is a review of resident and coupon parking schemes. A paper has been prepared with some proposed amendments to the schemes. The paper can be found at

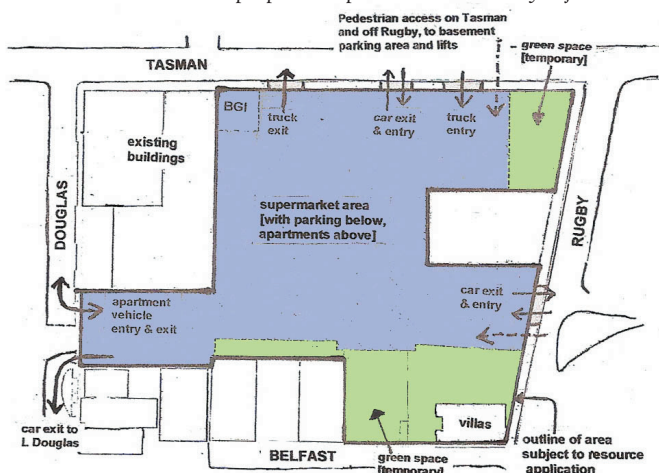
http://www.wellington.govt.nz/haveyoursay/meetings/committee/Strategy_and_Policy/2009/20Aug0915/pdf/Report_3.pdf
Resident and coupon parking is a significant issue for Mt Cook, with its tight streets and low number of off-street garages. The review will be of interest to a lot of people in Mt Cook, especially those living close to the proposed New World supermarket on Tasman/Rugby Sts. On the face of it these residents could benefit from the constraints

on permits and exemptions for residents in Suburban Centres (who would suffer the converse effects). And this raises the question of the adequacy of enforcement in these areas - which needs to be rigorous.

We seem also to have parking hot spots where parking pressures are increased by factors such as visitors. Around Massey is an example, with a lot of short stay parking by people going to lectures who gamble on returning to their car before the warden passes. Neighbours who have residents' permits phone the Council with complaints frequently. We have asked WCC for data on these situations.

Consultation period for the review is proposed as 14 September to 16 October 2009.

Vehicle movements at the proposed supermarket. Are they safe?



CIVIL DEFENCE VOLUNTEER

The new team at Wellington Emergency Management Office (WEMO) is now working together with Civil Defence, which promises better communication and higher quality workshops for volunteers.

There are proposals to create 12 Civil Defence Hubs in the more secure parts of Wellington (those less likely to flood). They will be fully set up with state of the art computer and communications equipment, operated by comprehensively trained voluntary managers. The other existing suburban centers will report to their nearest Hub to get support for welfare, supplies and communications. Our Hub may be located at the Basin Reserve clubrooms and will serve Mt Cook, Mt Victoria, Te Aro and Wellington City. Newtown may have their Hub at Newtown Park.

It is proposed that other volunteers:

- may not have to attend regular ongoing training-some induction will be necessary but thereafter it is satisfactory to remain 'on the books' and to receive periodic newsletters from the Hub or WEMO
- must be capable of basic radio operations and elementary first aid
- have a basic understanding of how the emergency communications work.

Unfortunately, the Seventh-day Adventist Church on Tasman St, which houses the local Civil Defence Center, has recently been assessed as being at risk from earthquake damage. WCC assessors say it is too much risk for it to be a Civil Defence Centre. WEMO is looking into the criteria used to assess the building but is also looking into an alternative location in the Mt Cook area. Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

CD Tip - the Grab Bag. Keep a backpack near your front door with important documents and essential items, in case you need to quickly evacuate your home.

Any suggestions welcomed!

COMMUNITY GARDENS

There has been an increasing interest in Community Gardens, which appear to fall under two different philosophies. One is closer to an allotment type where individuals have their own designated gardening area within a community of gardeners. To be a Community Garden these individual gardens cannot be for profit.

The second is a garden where community members tend a designated area whereby there are no individual plots, but the produce is shared amongst gardeners or donated to charities, Foodbank etc.

At the second Community Gardens Hui on 24 August, run by the Wellington City Council and the Sustainability Trust, we were given the following information about Community Gardens and applying to Council.

There are four different forms of tenure: Private Land, Council Housing, Parks & Gardens, and Town Belt. Private land bypasses the need for Council approval. Andy Morrison from the City Council shared with us his work in developing Community Gardens with the tenants of Council-owned housing. Amber Bill from WCC Parks & Reserves informed us of the difficulties with Town Belt gardens and the new application process and guidelines for Council-owned land, which can be accessed from www.wellington.govt.nz

At present the area that has been designated as a Community Garden within Mt Cook is on the corner of Arlington Street and Torrens Terrace. This space is currently not being gardened.

If you are interested in forming a Community Gardening group contact

mtcookmobilised@gmail.com.

If you want to attend further Hui contact Georgina Rhoades

Georgina.Rhoades@wcc.govt.nz

MEMORIAL PARK

The Minister for Arts Culture & Heritage, Hon Chris Finlayson, has established a reference group to advise him on the development of the National War Memorial Park in Buckle Street. A first meeting was held in the Minister's office on Friday 7 August. Mt Cook Mobilised was represented by Ross Tanner and Peter Cooke. Ross has been asked by the Minister to chair the Reference Group.

Organisations represented at the meeting included the Ministry for Culture & Heritage, the National War Memorial Advisory Council, RNZRSA national headquarters, Mt Cook School, the Wellington Tenth Trust and the Wellington Sculpture Trust. It is likely that representatives from the City Council, the NZ Transport Agency and Massey University will be invited to attend future meetings.

The meeting opened with brief statements from each organisation on their interest in the project, and then a presentation by the Ministry on the recommended design of the park, as well as the expected process from approval to construction. MCM stated that it supported the park concept wholeheartedly, but had concerns about the congestion that would inevitably follow the closure of Buckle St for events.

Participants expressed their thanks to the Minister for the invitation to participate in the process and gave general endorsement to the concept of a War Memorial Park (though the Minister said this name is likely to change). There was strong emphasis on enabling the park to be utilised by day-to-day users and people from the local community, as well as to retain and enhance the heritage values of Mt Cook.

The launch early in September of the 'Capital Vision' concept will bring further attention to the park.

PAPAWAI RESERVE

On attending my first Papawai Reserve working bee [Brent Cherry writes], I thought I must have been in the wrong place. I'd walked up the alleyway at the end of Papawai Terrace and was faced with this weed and rubbish filled stream that ran parallel to a motley grey concrete wall. But out of the gloom I could see a bunch of cheerful and welcoming volunteers orchestrated by Susan Cook.

There have been regular working bees. We began with weeding and rubbish clearing, followed by the Council felling and mulching a number of large exotic trees. The Council also installed a new culvert. Unfortunately the small stream entered the culvert via a vertical pipe, which prevented fish from swimming up the culvert into the stream. After discussion with the Council, Frank Cook and the fish expert, Frances Forsyth, a fish ladder is to be installed. This will run underground from the bottom of the vertical pipe to 5 metres up the stream. [This has since been installed.]

Frances Forsyth is seeking \$2000 to send a deceased fish (or parts thereof) to Australia, to test if these fish are migrating from the harbour at Waitangi Park up the subterranean pipe system (creating a world record).

We have planted 250 natives, supplied by the council plus numerous extras donated by volunteers, all suitable for this riparian environment. We have barrowed and spread mulch and have transformed this area into something to be truly proud of.

We have more work to do, to replant after the fish ladder is installed, to tend saplings and to continue weeding and removing blackberry.

Thanks to the Friends of Owihio Stream for their donation of 100 plants.

If you want to be involved email mtcookmobilised@gmail.com.



IAN MCKINNON

Councillors spend much time at meetings (would Wellington survive without meetings?!) but more satisfying is being out and about, assisting where possible.

I was pleased to be able to organise a meeting at Council for interested parties to discuss issues concerning the proposed supermarket and also to arrange for some residents of Wright St to meet with the developer of the proposed town houses, and am grateful for the involvement of the MCM at these meetings.

Further, I was at Mt Cook School when the new curriculum was launched and used that opportunity to discuss with the Board Chair (and report back to Officers) the concern with children crossing the Tasman - Buckle Street intersection. The ceremony itself was really lovely – a real credit to the school and children.

Resident Permits is a matter recently discussed. These were introduced in the 1980s and are now to be reviewed. There was acceptance that off-street parking was not desirable if one wished to preserve the character of an area. However, permits are now readily available to people even with off-street parks. The results of the review, which go out for consultation, give weighting to Resident Permits against Coupon Parking but not unnecessarily.

As corrected in the media, those with Residents Permits currently are able to continue to hold them even if off-street parking is possible. It won't be so easy for others.

Do contact me at anytime on this or any other matter

<ian.mckinnon@wcc.govt.nz>



STEPHANIE COOK

So is it over, or not? Yes I could be talking about swine flu, but I am actually talking about the recession although interestingly, swine flu has in some ways added to the recession. As far as applications to the City Council grants scheme go, clearly we have a long way to go before we can say things are getting better. The Grants are under even more pressure than usual as other funders struggle to assist because of low returns on their investments. Sponsorship is also tighter than ever.

Unlike many other local authorities I am proud to say that Wellington City Council has recognised the importance of the organisations we fund and has not cut back on its funding. Some councils have significantly cut their funding eg Christchurch about \$100K and another has cut all funding to its local orchestra. At a time like this, such funding cuts are very short sighted. Many of the organisations we support through grants are even more important during a recession, such as food banks, drop in centres and places such as the Night Shelter. And, of course, any cuts to our Arts sector would significantly impact on our place as Cultural Capital and on our economy.

We are also seeing an increase in the number of volunteers, as those who have lost their jobs, or who feel they could benefit from broadening their CV or who just want to help are getting involved.

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IONA PANNETT

As always, there is a lot going on in Mt Cook. For starters, I know parking is an important issue for some Mt Cook and other inner city residents. The Council has listened and will be consulting on the resident and coupon schemes from mid-September. The consultation document will recommend giving priority to residents over commuters in residential areas, and the future growth of residents in Adelaide Road is alluded to as a potential issue.

I know also that the proposal to build a new supermarket in Tasman Street without any public input is also of concern. At the time of writing, councillors and the community are waiting to hear if the application will be approved or not. It is my view that it is important that the community have some real input into this proposal, but Council officers must decide in accordance with law and our District Plan whether the proposal should be notified. I would hope that we will have a decision soon on this matter.

At the time of writing the New Zealand Transport Agency had committed to giving \$5m of taxpayer money to do investigation and design work on the Basin Reserve fly-over. Interestingly, the project has now risen \$20m from its original costings of \$27m in 2006. This is all to move traffic a few seconds faster to the Mt Victoria tunnel and Buckle Street. Fortunately, all is not lost with money not given for construction so the campaign to stop it will continue.

Iona Pannett - 384-3382 or 021-227-8509 or at <iona.

KEEPING SAFE

Residents recently received a notice from the Community Police about break-ins and burglaries in this area. As some of these were in the early hours of the morning, while people were asleep, we need reminders of basic precautions:

- Lock outside doors and windows at night
- Keep a light on in the house if you feel unsafe
- Call the police if you see anyone acting suspiciously
- Report all break-ins – even if nothing is taken

Living closer to town, with many people walking through our neighbourhood, it is important to develop friendly community relationships – and to watch out for each other.

Our supportive MP Grant Robertson mingles with 'Mini Cookies'



FLY OVER THE BASIN RESERVE?

Several MCM members attended 'Round About the Basin', the seminar on 8 August hosted by the Wellington Civic Trust. Roading and traffic issues in the Basin and Mt Vic tunnel were the focus, but these are impacted by other proposals such as Adelaide Road developments, Memorial Park and the Tasman St supermarket.

A great line-up of people spoke in-

cluding MCM's own Carol Comber. She outlined MCM policy which is to have the congestion at the basin resolved. Urban designers, historians, cricket people, city and regional councillors and planners, NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) and residents' groups also spoke.

Traffic congestion is a problem because the basin is:

- a bottleneck on SH1-to-airport

- the major access to the hospital and proposed Cobham Park

- a local road which many of us walk daily to school or work.

To many, there is folly in spending millions on options for private vehicles without a commitment to public transport options. The case for light rail in Wellington was well put, and a lot of discussion about when this would seriously get onto planning agendas for Wellington. At present the authorities aim to

improve train and bus services – saying expense excludes light rail for the moment.

NZTA and the councils plan to consults us between now and February 2010, and then choose a preferred option by mid 2010, for completion by 2015. They have decided that options for duplicating the Mt Victoria tunnel (either at the existing route or the Pirie Street bus tunnel) will be considered as a further stage, assessed once the Basin's upgraded has started.

Despite proposed consultation, it sounded like only a flyover is on the books. This would be along the northern side of the Basin (not over the top).

At the end of the seminar the NZTA and councillors were clearly requested to commit to and develop a comprehensive engagement process with all concerned parties as soon as possible.



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Wellington Scottish Athletic Clubrooms
Salisbury Tce, Prince of Wales Park

- 15th September
- 19th October

Venue to be confirmed:

- 17th November
- 21st December

We have a toy box, but bikes welcome.

For more info ring Julia 385 1782 or Kirsty 384 8369



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