

A Community Vision for Cummings Park

Stage 1: Initial Community Consultation

February 2017



Foreword

Cummings Park, a Wellington City Council reserve, lies in the heart of Ngaio. Yet, partly because of its lack of visibility from the road, it remains unknown to many residents.

The Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association considers Cummings Park a Ngaio treasure. But we believe it is also a community asset with much undeveloped potential. Because of this we are undertaking a process of engaging with the Ngaio community to develop a vision of what Cummings Park might be, and a plan on working towards fulfilling the vision.

The first step in this process was a workshop held in October 2015 to generate ideas and gauge community preferences about future possibilities for Cummings Park. This document is the report on the outcomes of that workshop. It provides a huge repository of ideas from which, with continuing community consultation, a vision and plans can be created. We are now planning the next steps in this process.

Many people have contributed in helping us with the workshop and producing this report. In particular I wish to thank local residents Ralph Johns and Andrew Burns who brought their professional expertise to running the workshop. Ralph deserves special mention for first suggesting the project to the Association and then offering to lead the workshop.

Analysing and then writing up the workshop outcomes, including the more than 300 individual comments recorded, was a large task. Our secretary John White did the bulk of this. Julia Williams, a former chairperson of the Association, provided invaluable help, particularly with the data analysis.

This report shows that there is much widespread agreement about some aspects of Cummings Park. In particular, workshop participants appreciated and looked forward to enhancement of the natural environment within the Park, including trees and bush, the stream and the growing native birdlife. But there were other areas where participants disagreed, sometimes strongly. Much work lies ahead in working through the issues and towards a widely-shared community vision.



Robyn Radomski
Chairperson



Contents

Executive summary	4
Introduction	6
A history of Cummings Park	6
Background to developing a vision for Cummings Park	7
The 2015 Workshop and its outcomes	8
Introduction	8
Method	8
Results	10
Attendees	10
Comments received	10
Themes and sub-themes	11
Theme 1: Location	13
Theme 2: Character	13
Theme 3: Ecology	15
Theme 4: Usability	17
Theme 5: Play areas and facilities	21
Theme 6: Dogs and the dog exercise area	22
Theme 7: Safety	24
Theme 8: Maintenance	25
Theme 9: Land layout	26
Theme 10: Next steps following the workshop	26
Discussion	27
How representative of Ngaio residents were the workshop attendees?	27
The location and character of Cummings Park (Themes 1 and 2)	27
The ecology of Cummings Park (Theme 3)	28
Usability (Theme 4)	39
Play areas and facilities (Theme 5)	30
Dogs and the dog exercise area (Theme 6)	31
Safety (Theme 7)	31
Maintenance (Theme 8)	32
Land layout (Theme 9)	32
Actions that could follow the workshop (Theme 10)	32
Some conclusions	32

Executive Summary

This report summarises the outcomes of a community workshop held in 2015 as the first step in developing a vision for Cummings Park, the Wellington City Council reserve below the Ngaio Village shops and running north from the library.

What we now know as Cummings Park was created as part of the original surveying of the Ngaio area in the nineteenth century. The Park became much as it is now with changes made in the mid-1990s. The children's playground was revamped and the current equipment was installed the Council, which also designated the main grassed area as a Dog Exercise Area (DEA) in response to representations from a number of residents. In 1996 the car park adjacent to the DEA was opened for public use and asphalted. This made the Park more accessible and led to an increase in the use of the DEA. Little has changed since then.

In May 2015 a local resident and landscape architect expressed interest in assisting the Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association (NCDRA) develop a vision for Cummings Park. The Association agreed, and commenced planning for an initial workshop to begin engagement with the community. This was held in the Ngaio Town hall in October 2015. The purpose was to generate ideas and gauge community preferences about future possibilities for Cummings Park as the first step in developing a community vision.

The 2015 workshop was attended by about 45 people, the great majority of whom were Ngaio residents. Attendees wrote post-it notes under four headings: likes, dislikes, enhancements and intelligence. There were 323 comments available for analysis from post-it notes, and a further 30 from three persons who emailed in their comments. 'Likes' exceeded 'dislikes' by 113 to 93, while 97 'enhancements' were suggested.

Comments were assigned to one of ten 'themes': location, character, ecology, usability, play areas, the Dog Exercise Area, safety, maintenance, land layout, and next steps following the workshop. Some of the themes were further divided into sub-themes.

A total of nine comments of which eight were 'likes' were made concerning the **location** of Cummings Park. Attendees were positive about its central location and connections to local streets.

There were numerous comments on the general **character** of Cummings Park, most of which were 'likes'. Most of these referred to some aspect of the natural environment present in the Park. "In touch with nature and birdlife in an urban environment" was typical of the tenor of many comments. Not everyone had a favourable view of the Park's character, however, as reflected in a comment that it felt "too enclosed, secluded, unsafe".

The **ecology** of Cummings Park also attracted a large number of comments, with most being 'likes'. Specific features that attendees liked included trees and bush, the Korimako Stream, and birdlife. In the case of the stream there were also negative comments relating to water quality and safety.

Comments on the **usability** of Cummings Park tended to be more negative than positive. It was seen by some as shady, overgrown, dingy and damp, and as trying to fit too much into a small space. Opinion was divided over the Park's accessibility, and several comments related to poor entrance signage. Tracks within the park were appreciated, and several further tracks were suggested as enhancements.

The current **play area** was disliked more than it was liked. Both lack of winter sun and summer shade were mentioned, as was the lack of facilities for older children. Suggested enhancements included upgrading the playground or relocating it within Cummings Park.

The theme attracting most comments was **the Dog Exercise Area (DEA)**. Significant numbers of workshop attendees were on either side of supporting the status quo regarding the DEA or making substantial change including delisting it as a DEA. Reasons for liking the DEA included that it was a social gathering place or social hub for people and dogs, there was a community of dog owners, and it was good for disabled dog owners and friends. Reasons for disliking it included that it was not the best use of the only flat, sunny area in Cummings Park, that getting children from the carpark to the playground involved walking through the DEA, and that the easiest access to the Park for the less mobile was through the DEA. There were a number of 'enhancements' suggested relating to dogs and the DEA, most of which involved separating dogs from people who did not wish to interact with them. Finally, under 'intelligence' were a number of comments both for and against the use of the nearby DEA in Chelmsford Park as an alternative to that in Cummings Park.

Safety was not a primary focus of the workshop but a number of comments were made relating to it, particularly use of the park at night, and dangers posed by the stream. Other comments pointed to areas where attendees thought that **maintenance** could be improved.

There was substantial dissatisfaction with the **layout** of Cummings Park. The existence of private land in the centre of the Park was disliked, as was, for some, the use of the main grassed area as a DEA.

In conclusion, there was substantial agreement that the character of Cummings Park rested primarily on the natural environment. Attendees commenting on its character and ecology wanted this maintained and enhanced, with an emphasis on native vegetation, improving water quality in the stream, and attracting native birds. The major division of opinion occurred over the future of the Dog Exercise Area (DEA). Play spaces and facilities were also an issue over which opinion was divided. Achieving greater consensus on these two issues will provide a challenge in developing a community vision for Cummings Park.

Introduction

This is a report on a workshop held in October 2015 to develop a community vision for Cummings Park in Ngaio. The workshop aimed to generate ideas and gauge community preferences about future possibilities for Cummings Park as the first step in developing a community vision.

The report begins with a short history of Cummings Park, followed by the background to the idea of developing a vision, including preparations for the workshop. This is followed by a report on the workshop itself. This proceeds by describing the methods used and results, followed by a discussion of the results and some general conclusions.

A history of Cummings Park

What we now know as Cummings Park was originally called the Ngaio Reserve. It was created when the original surveying of the area was done in the nineteenth century. Surveyors evidently saw the location of the village and the Ngaio Reserve as the topological focal point of the area. Other reserves were also designated, often in places that were clearly unsuitable for the construction of houses.

The main source of information on the history of the Cummings Park is the WCC Archives which contain a file on the Park going back nearly a century. Most of the documents on the file are correspondence from the then Ngaio Progressive Association which was formed in the early 1920s to promote the interests of the suburb. The records show that the Association was assiduous in its efforts to develop the Park and enhance its usefulness for residents. It is clear that at that time the Park was highly valued for its recreational possibilities. This was reflected in an early letter to the Council in which the Park was referred to as “a breathing place for the people of Ngaio”. Proposals included the purchase of the section that which is now occupied a gardening business. It is obvious from the correspondence that the Association experienced much frustration in obtaining satisfaction from the Council over this issue.

Around 1945 the Association proposed that the Reserve should be renamed Cummings Park after Sid Cummings, the long-standing Chairman of the Association who had been tireless in promoting improvements to it. The Council agreed. This provoked a strong objection from a descendant of John Chew, the builder of Chew Cottage, adjacent to the Park and then still occupied by Chew’s daughter. He viewed Mr Cummings and the Association as complicit in the Council’s acquisition of the strip of land owned by the Chew family between Ottawa Road and the Park, now occupied by houses and the petrol station.

In the 1950s the Council proposed that Chew Cottage should be moved onto Cummings Park, presumably to make way for a new house. The Association objected

strongly, partly in the basis that the Cottage was of negligible value and interest! The Council desisted and the main area of the Park was preserved as an open space.

There is little on the file after from after the 1950s. In the mid-1990s the Council designated the main flat area of the Park as a Dog Exercise Area (DEA) in response to representations from a number of residents. At that time the Park had no vehicle access, and for some years the area was only lightly used for dog exercising.

Around 1996 the Ngaio Progressive Association was reconvened after a period in recess. One of its first priorities was to make improvements to the Park as it had been rather neglected. With the approval of the Council the Association undertook a number of improvements. It planted trees on the bare eastern bank below the service station; removed rubbish from the area to the left of the entrance from the car park and planted it with some uncommon native plants; encouraged the Wellington Sculpture Trust to donate a sculpture for installation in the Park; and built the macrocarpa seat near the car park entrance.

Around this time the Council replaced the old wooden bridge with a new attractive concrete structure and installed the attractive stone pillars at the entrance. The transformation of the Park from a rather uninteresting space was well underway.

In 2000 and the following year the Association organised two summer community picnics that were very successful. The first was to celebrate the installation of the sculpture that was unveiled by Dr Ian Prior, the chairman of the Wellington Sculpture Trust.

In the mid-1990s, following representations from the Association and Plunket, the old children's playground was revamped and the current equipment was installed.

Around 1996 the current car park was opened for public use and asphalted. This made the Park more accessible and led to a sharp increase in the use of the DEA.


Background to developing a vision for Cummings Park

In May 2015 local resident Ralph Johns expressed interest in assisting the Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association (NCDRA) in developing a vision for Cummings Park. Ralph was a landscape architect and urban planner who had led design teams working on major public projects throughout New Zealand.

Ralph attended a NCDRA committee meeting in August 2015 where he spoke about engaging the community to develop a plan for Cummings Park which would include running a workshop to hear and discuss issues and opportunities. He had approached Andrew Burns, an urban designer who was also a local resident. Andrew had agreed to work with him on this process. The meeting decided to form a planning group comprising Ralph, Andrew and two committee members to work on the details.

During September the planning group agreed on Saturday 31 October as the workshop date and developed a publicity plan. Ralph and Andrew collaborated in planning the running of the workshop. In October they discussed the workshop with Wellington City Council managers.

Figure 1: Leaflet delivered to all Ngaio households advertising the workshop



Leaflet text about Cummings Park

The Ngaio Crofton Downs Residents Association is seeking input from the community to develop a vision for Cummings Park in the centre of Ngaio.

The first step is a workshop in the Ngaio Town Hall between 2pm and 4pm on Saturday 31 October. The aim is to generate ideas and gauge community preferences about future possibilities for Cummings Park prior to preparing a draft vision.

Currently the park contains a playground, a picnic lawn and areas of regenerating native bush. The Korimako stream runs through the park, as does the national Te Araroa walkway.

We believe Cummings Park has to potential to meet the needs of our community by better providing for a range of informal recreation activities for all age groups.

A community vision would strengthen the ability of local residents to effectively engage in partnership with the Wellington City Council on issues relating to the park's future.

The workshop will be facilitated by local residents who work professionally in landscape architecture and urban design. It will start with a short presentation at 2pm which sets the context for the project. A series of facilitated group discussions will follow.

You are encouraged to stay from the beginning if you can, but otherwise we hope you will drop in and let us know your views about Cummings Park, or email them to us at ngaiopa@gmail.com.

We welcome all those with an interest in developing community aspirations for the present and future of Cummings Park to attend.

A significant effort was made to publicise the workshop to all Ngaio residents, including a leaflet distributed to all Ngaio households (Figure 1). Posters were placed

in a number of local businesses, signs were erected in and around Cummings Park, both Ngaio and Crofton Downs schools included an advertisement in their newsletters, local preschool groups were advised, and an advertisement was placed in the Independent Herald.

The 2015 workshop and its outcomes

Introduction

The report below describes only the conduct and outcomes of the workshop held on from 2pm to 4pm on 31 October 2015 in the Ngaio Town Hall. The background to the workshop is described above.

Method

The workshop began with briefings from Ralph Johns (local resident and landscape architect), Andrew Burns (local resident and urban designer) and Amber Bill (Open Space and Parks Manager, WCC).

Ralph made a presentation using slides (see Appendix 1), key points from which were:

- Cummings Park was listed in the WCC Suburban Reserves Management Plan 2015 as a neighbourhood (community) park.
- Ngaio was noteworthy for the size of its under 15 population. In 2013 24.5% of Ngaio residents were under 15, compared with 17.3% for Wellington City and 20.4% for New Zealand.
- Cummings Park was centrally located within Ngaio, close to the Ngaio village, Town Hall, library and school. With four entry points it was readily accessible.
- It contained a playground and dog exercise area.
- Cummings Park had strong ecological values, including a fine totara, native bush, and habitat for native fauna including eels in the stream.

Following the briefing attendees were divided into six groups, each at its own table. A1 paper, pens and post-it stickers were provided at each table. The groups were all given the same task, to discuss and record comments on four aspects about Cummings Park – ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘enhancements’ and ‘intelligence’. The last of these gave attendees the opportunity to record information about the park that might not be well known.

Each post-it note was recorded as a separate comment. All comments were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, then sorted into themes and sub-themes by two coders,

each of whom checked the other's work. The themes and sub-themes were further refined during the process of writing up the results.

Results

Attendees

The attendance form was completed by 36 people. Of these 30 were from Ngaio, three from Khandallah and two from Crofton Downs. The only attendee not from Ngaio or a neighbouring suburb was Councillor Andy Foster, a city councillor for the ward containing Ngaio.

It was observed that not all attendees completed the attendance form. It was estimated that about 45 would have attended at some point, with a few not staying for the duration of the workshop.

Three persons unable to attend the workshop sent written comments by email.

Comments recorded

A total of 359 comments were recorded. Following the discarding of six duplicates (identical comments from the same table) there remained 323 provided by workshop attendees and 30 from the three persons who emailed their comments (see Table 1).

Assignment to one of 'likes', 'dislikes', 'enhancements' and 'intelligence' was as recorded from the A1 sheets from each of the six tables. Comments from the workshop where the table was not known and those from emails were placed into 'likes', 'dislikes', 'enhancements' and 'intelligence' during the coding process.

'Likes' exceeded 'dislikes' by 113 to 93, while 97 'enhancements' were suggested. 'Intelligence' (50 comments) did not always work as intended, with a number of attendees seeking rather than providing information.

Table 1: Comments provided by table and from other sources

Source	Likes	Dislikes	Enhancements	Intelligence	Total
Table 1	19	17	24	6	66
Table 2	17	17	20	3	57
Table 3	18	12	10	11	51
Table 4	12	12	12	10	46
Table 5	10	18	4	6	38
Table 6	15	13	13	6	47
Table not known	9	0	6	3	18
Emails	13	4	8	5	30
Total	113	93	97	50	353

Themes and sub-themes

With eight exceptions, each comment was assigned to one or more of the themes and sub-themes in Table 2. These exceptions were not used further as were either meaningless to the coders, did not refer to Cummings Park, or were questions listed under 'intelligence' that did not appear to convey information that could be coded under any of the themes.

Table 2 records 449 comments (96 more than in Table 1) because some comments were coded to more than one theme or sub-theme.

A number of factors relating to the methods used mean that little should be read into exact numbers 'likes' or 'dislikes' relating to particular themes or sub-themes. Reasons include that some comments came from tables rather than individuals, some attendees may have made multiple comments on some features, and discussion at particular tables may have stimulated comments that individuals would not otherwise have made.

Table 2: Themes and sub-themes

Theme	Sub-theme		Total
Theme 1: Location			9
Theme 2: Character	General	28	
	Heritage	10	
	Te Araroa	6	
	Art works	7	
	Library and Town Hall	5	
	Train	2	
	Total	58	58
Theme 3: Ecology	General	6	
	Trees/bush	31	
	Stream	28	
	Birds	6	
	Pests	4	
	Total	75	75
Theme 4: Usability	General	19	
	Access/entrances	22	
	Entrance signage	8	
	Other signage	16	
	Seats	11	
	Picnics	6	
	Tracks	12	
	Noise	4	
	Toilets	3	
	Total	101	101
Theme 5: Play areas			44
Theme 6: Dog Exercise Area			72
Theme 7: Safety	Lighting	12	
	Other	21	
	Total	33	33
Theme 8: Maintenance			31
Theme 9: Land layout			24
Theme 10: Next steps following the workshop			2
	Grand total		449

Theme 1: Location

A total of nine comments of which eight were 'likes' were made concerning the location of Cummings Park. Attendees were positive about its central location and connections to local streets.

Reasons for liking the location included:

- central, in the 'heart' of the village (five comments)
- proximity to the library
- the playground is close to kindergarten and within walking distance.

There was one suggested 'enhancement' relating to the location, that Cummings Park be designated as Ngaio's 'civic square' for public events.

Theme 2: Character

There were numerous comments on the general character of Cummings Park, most of which were 'likes'. As well, comments were made about many other aspects of the Park relating to its character. Some of these – including trees, the stream and tracks – are reported under other themes below. Other aspects of the Park's character that did not fit elsewhere – heritage, the Te Araroa walking way passing through it, art works and the adjacent train track, library and town hall – are included under the current theme.

In all, 58 comments were coded as referring to some aspect of the character of Cummings Park.

General character

Cummings Park had an appealing character for many. There were 17 'likes' including:

- 'green space' (three comments)
- natural feel /not over manicured / slightly rough rather than over-maintained (three comments)
- beauty, peacefulness, serenity
- sights, sounds and smells from the natural environment
- "sense of community with others" including those eating lunch and using the playground (three comments)
- in touch with nature and bird life in an urban environment
- walking tracks in a natural environment and away from the traffic
- summer shade and winter sun; in places sunny and sheltered
- safe (two comments)
- great for kids.

The eight 'dislikes' included:

- “feels too enclosed, secluded, unsafe” / “not visible from the road and enclosed feel”
- “doesn’t feel like a picnic park – too shady, grass too long, no tables”
- shady and overgrown (three mentions of “shady” in all)
- grey and dreary
- under-developed, not a good place to hang around.

The three suggested ‘enhancements’ relating to character were developing a ‘village’ green feel with market days and more opportunity for picnicking, creating “a unique feature (i.e. theme/brand)”, and opening up the area.

Heritage

Four comments were ‘likes’ of aspects of the history and heritage of Cummings Park. The mill and its dam, the totara tree and nearby Chew Cottage were mentioned.

Two comments called for ‘enhancements’, both wanting interpretive signage. One of these wanted an investigation of the mill dam.

Intelligence about the history and heritage was provided in four comments. This included information that it was possible that traces of an old mill race remain, and that signage relating to the Park’s history was poor.

The Te Araroa trail

The main track through Cummings Park – from the library to Awarua Street – forms part of the national Te Araroa trail running the length of the country. This was ‘liked’ in two comments. Another two comments ‘disliked’ the lack of signage relating to Te Araroa. A further two comments under ‘intelligence’ noted that the trail passed through Cummings Park.

Art works

The sculpture was ‘liked’ in one comment, with “artwork” ‘ liked’ in another. There were three ‘dislikes’ of the sculpture, two of which thought there needed to be more than one. More were needed because the single sculpture “doesn’t harmonise”.

Two comments noted ‘enhancements’. One wanted more public art, and the other referred to the annual Mt Eden Arts Day in a small park that could be considered for Cummings Park.

The Cummings Park Library and Town Hall

Five comments were made about the Cummings Park Library and the Town Hall. All came from the same table, and probably (given their similarity) from either one or two persons. The Library and physical activities in the Town Hall were ‘liked’, and

information acknowledging the children who made the tiles outside the Library was suggested.

It appears that for at least one workshop attendee the Library and Town Hall were considered part of Cummings Park, and therefore an aspect of its character.

The train

The train was 'liked' in one comment, and a view of the railway in another.

Theme 3: Ecology

The ecology of Cummings Park attracted a large number of comments. Six were general comments, referring to two or more ecological aspects. The remainder referred to just one aspect of the ecology: 29 to trees and bush, 28 to the stream, six to birds and four to pests.

In all, 75 comments were coded as referring to some aspect of the ecology of Cummings Park.

General ecology

Six comments were categorised as referring to the ecology of Cummings Park in general. Five were 'likes', and referred to two aspects from among the trees and bush, the stream, and birds. One of these referred to the stream, birdlife and ecology in general as forming ecosystems and a natural oasis in an urban area. The one 'intelligence' comment noted that Cummings Park contained a unique ecosystem.

Trees and bush

Most of those commenting on the trees and bush 'liked' the existing native vegetation in Cummings Park, with some aspect of the trees and/or bush 'liked' in 17 comments. Three of these comments referred to the totara specimen in the Dog Exercise Area, while another mentioned regenerating totara forest. A further four referred specifically to tree plantings, including that the planting next to the carpark was "great".

Other reasons for 'liking' the trees and bush included:

- the combination of green open space with trees and the children's play area
- the vegetation mix including native and exotic, together with seasonal change including summer shade and winter sun.

There were two comments about the trees and bush under 'dislikes':

- some planting such as a large kauri is a risk to nearby properties
- the only part of the Park with shade trees is the Dog Exercise Area.

Among the seven 'enhancements' suggested were:

- fruit trees (two comments)
- more planting in the future
- making more of the sun and light by removing some trees
- adding more mixed vegetation to the local bush including specimen trees
- more signage – labelling for notable trees.

The five comments provided as 'intelligence' included:

- totara and other native regeneration is occurring
- specimen trees are present
- the Dog Exercise Area is quite shaded by trees
- the bush is being restored by a resident on an on-going basis.

The Korimako stream

A substantial number of workshop attendees commented on the Korimako stream that flows through Cummings Park. Opinions were mixed. Some attendees appreciated the ecological aspects of the stream, and others were concerned about stream health. Some wanted greater access to the water while others perceived the stream as a safety risk and wished to have it fenced off from the playground.

There were ten responses 'liking' the stream although some simply commented 'stream' with no further detail. Comments included:

- love the stream – access, beauty, peacefulness
- flowing water (two comments)
- kids like the stream
- the stream is great for kids and dogs alike.

Six comments were made 'disliking' the stream, including:

- dislike quality of the stream water
- lack of life in the stream; sterile (two comments)
- dislike dogs entering the stream and destroying stream banks
- stream banks are hazardous
- the stream needs fencing from the play area.

Suggested 'enhancements' relating to the stream included:

- making it easier for dogs to go down to stream and drink
- increased maintenance and protection for the stream
- stepping stones down the stream
- fencing the playground off from stream so it is safe for children.

Finally, seven comments were made under the 'Intelligence' heading. Some of these were quite detailed. Points made included:

- the stream can flow very fast and can be unsafe
- traces of paint are frequently seen in the stream
- a number of smaller streams meet in Cummings Park
- the stream walls/banks are deteriorating
- flax should be planted upstream, and wire fences installed to keep the stock out of an important water source
- the stream is fed from way up above Awarua Street and up Bells track towards the Crows Nest and grazed areas in the Outer Green Belt
- in times of emergency this stream will probably be used as a water source – so it's important for it to be clean
- cleaning upstream up will improve the stream quality
- there are quite a number of fish species in this stream.

Birds

There were six comments relating to birds in Cummings Park. The two 'likes' welcomed the return of native birds, with kaka and kereru mentioned. Nest boxes and bigger trees were suggested as an 'enhancement'. Three 'intelligence' comments were made, including that bellbirds and kaka have just arrived, and a reference to "native bird corridors". One attendee questioned how breeding by new arrivals such as kaka will be protected.

Pests

Three 'dislikes' referred to pests: mosquitoes, sandflies and rats. A fourth comment informed that "rats seem to dwell here".

Theme 4: Usability

The extent to which Cummings Park is currently usable was the subject of many comments. There were 19 comments relating to the usability of the Park in general. Specific aspects relating to usability reported below are access and entrances (22 comments), entrance signage (8), other signage (16), seats (11), picnics (6), tracks (12), noise (4) and toilets (3). As well, other comments on usability are reported under other themes, in particular play areas and the Dog Exercise Area.

In all, 101 comments were coded as referring to some aspect of the usability of Cummings Park reported under this theme.

General usability

Six 'likes' were coded as referring to the general usability of Cummings Park. These included:

- flat, usable land – unique in Ngaio
- used for a range of purposes – children (the playground), dogs, families
- sheltered.

The list of 'dislikes' relating to general usability was longer (10 comments in all), including:

- shady, overgrown, dingy, damp (four comments)
- under-developed – not a good place to hang around
- slopes made some parts 'virtually unusable'
- trying to fit lots of activities into a small space
- the DEA occupied the most extensive nearly-flat area for children to play
- sharing between dogs and people didn't work well.

A comment under 'intelligence' noted that Cummings Park is part of a series of parks in the area. From another table came a suggested 'enhancement': to have better integration with other parks to allow teen, child and dog areas in different parks.

Access and entrances

Access into and within Cummings Park was 'liked' more than 'disliked'. There were ten comments 'liking' aspects of the access and entrances, including:

- easy access to and from central Ngaio
- multiple access points so you can walk 'through' the park
- entrances are 'easy'
- easy paths without steps
- access for parking
- the playground is close to the kindergarten.

The five 'dislikes' included :

- there was a lack of attractive and visible access
- access was 'poor'
- access for the less mobile was difficult except through the Dog Exercise Area
- limited access along the stream.

Seven 'enhancements' were suggested to improve access and entrances, including:

- making the entrances nicer and more obvious (two comments)
- making access easy for less mobile residents

- there was potential to create an accessible native reserve for disabled people/elderly/injured/those with prams to enjoy – the park was ‘most inaccessible’ for this at present
- WCC buying the Allworks land for better access, or making a track along the stream
- “access from carpark past kindy to playground”.

Entrance signage

Of the 8 comments relating to entrance signage, six were ‘dislikes’. These included:

- not visible from the road (two comments)
- no obvious entrance
- lack of signage at entrances
- “it’s a secret – would be better if more obvious”
- “I lived in Ngaio for more than 2 years before I discovered it”.

Suggested ‘enhancements’ were improving entrance signage and making the park visible.

Other signage

Of the 16 comments relating to signage other than that at entrances, nine were ‘enhancements’. These included:

- provide interpretation signage – heritage, history, natural
- label notable trees
- provide more information about Te Araroa
- put signage relating to the Dog Exercise Area on the other side of the bridge (two comments)
- provide walking track information outside the library as a brochure
- provide information about the tiles outside the library made by children.

‘Intelligence’ provided in four comments included that there was poor signposting on the park history and vegetation, and to the play area.

The sign by the library of Ngaio walks and history was ‘liked’, while lack of signage was ‘disliked’ with the Te Araroa walkway given as an example. A further comment ‘liked’ Te Araroa but questioned where it went, presumably as a plea for signage.

Seats

There was only one comment ‘liking’ any aspect of the seating, with this referring to a “V-shaped seat”. Another ‘like’ was seeing people sit in the park having lunch. The two ‘dislikes’ were “not many places to sit” and “unclean seats – dirty/lichen”.

Three 'enhancements' called for more seating. This included seating in both the Dog Exercise Area (DEA) and elsewhere, particularly in other than the DEA. and "more seats to see stream or to watch children/dogs". 'Intelligence' provided was that many seats are poorly sited and not used, and that more seats might be required other than those facing the river and from which children or dogs can't be seen.

Picnics

Picnics were referred to in six comments. Four of these were from the same table, with complaints that there was nowhere to picnic, it "doesn't feel like a picnic park – too shady, grass too long, no tables", and that picnic tables, including in dog free areas, were needed.

'Enhancements' suggested at other tables were BBQ facilities, and a call for "a village green – picnics and market days".

Tracks

Tracks within Cummings Park were 'liked' in four comments:

- "walking tracks in a natural environment and an escape from the traffic"
- the main track connects from the library to Awarua Street
- easy paths without steps
- bush walks.

The only 'dislike' was limited access along the stream.

Seven 'enhancements' relating to tracks were suggested:

- a track from the bridge to the main track near the library (three comments, one of which noted that this could be built by the community with WCC support)
- "walkway of nice smell, trees and seat in the middle"
- "tracks down stream from Collingwood St by public toilet behind hall"
- "bush track from toilets ... to Awarua St + extend path to horse trough"
- "create an 'eco' walk through all Ngaio's treasures – Cummings, Heke, Orleans, Trelissick, Odell etc."

Noise

Noise was 'disliked' in four comments:

- industrial noise from the landscape business (three comments)
- train and vehicle noise.

Toilets

The only comments on toilets came from one person via an email. For this person the toilets did not feel safe or clean, particularly for children, and needed to be modernised. It is presumed that these comments refer to the public toilets next to the Town Hall entrance.

Theme 5: Play areas and facilities

Forty-four comments were coded as referring to play areas and play facilities.

There were nine 'likes', eight of which referred the playground. Apart from "close to kindy and within walking distance" and "seeing young families using the playground" these did not include reasons. The remaining 'like' was "space for kids – family friendly".

The list of 'dislikes' (16) was more extensive, and included:

- the playground was dark/dingy/shaded/no winter sun (four comments)
- no shade in the playground (two comments)
- play area was on sloping land (two comments)
- the playground is a "poor visibility area"
- the bark chips in the playground are hard for small children to crawl on
- lacks space for ball play and more challenging structures for older children
- lack of cool climbing things for older children
- "stream needs fencing near play area"
- safety issues in the playground – octopus?
- need to walk through the Dog Exercise Area to get children from the carpark to the playground
- "dog poo in the play area – on occasions"

Eighteen suggestions were made relating to 'enhancements' for play areas and facilities. These included:

- relocate the playground within Cummings Park (two comments, one of which was to swap the playground and the Dog Exercise Area)
- develop/improve/upgrade/modernise the playground (three comments)
- playground needs to cater for more age groups
- integrate with other parks to cater for children and teens in different parks
- fence playground off from stream to make it safe for children
- secure the Dog Exercise Area to make the playground safer
- build a children's slide on the slope to the west of the bridge
- better play equipment for older children
- ghost pirate ship (child)

- basketball (?) court that could also be used as turf for hockey, football etc.
- BMX jumps / rugby things / football goals / permanent cones for football
- locked cupboard with sports equipment for multiple owners.

The one piece of ‘intelligence’ provided was that signposting to the playground was poor.

The range of views on play areas and facilities recorded from the workshop was probably influenced by the age structure of those attending. Organisers were disappointed by the apparently low number of younger parents.

Theme 6: Dogs and the Dog Exercise Area

The existence of a Dog Exercise Area (DEA) in Cummings Park has been a contentious issue, and appeared from some comments to be the primary focus for some attendees. Further, prior to the workshop splitting into groups at tables, an attendee stated that use of the area for dogs had detrimentally affected the Scouts who could no longer use it for their activities. This probably increased the salience of the DEA as an issue for other attendees. These factors may help explain why dogs and DEA was the received a large number (72) of comments. All these comments either referred directly to some aspect of the DEA or related in some way to the DEA.

It is clear that significant numbers of workshop attendees generally supported the status quo regarding the DEA, while significant numbers wanted substantial change. There was at least one ‘dislike’ comment from all six tables, and at least one ‘like’ comment from five of the six. All three emails from people unable to attend the workshop mentioned the DEA, with two liking it and the other disliking it.

For the record, in total there were 17 ‘like’ comments and 23 ‘dislike’ comments. Some of the ‘dislike’ comments, such as drainage problems, did not necessarily imply a dislike of the DEA in general. As was pointed out above (under “Comments recorded”), there are some good reasons why very little should be read into the balance in numbers between ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’.

Reasons for liking the DEA included:

- a social gathering place or social hub for people and dogs
- there was a community of dog owners
- easily accessed, safe and sheltered
- good for disabled dog owners and friends
- dog friendly – most dogs there have “a great chilled out time”
- dog-poo bags and bins available
- improved surface because of matting
- easy for dogs to go down to the stream and drink
- the stream is great for kids and dogs alike.

Reasons for disliking the DEA included:

- not the best use of the only flat, sunny area in Cummings Park (similar comments from four tables and one email)
- need to walk through the DEA to get kids from the carpark to the playground
- access to the park for the less mobile is difficult except via the DEA
- not comfortable using the DEA with children because of dogs
- being jumped on by dogs when passing through the DEA
- dog owners don't always clean up after their dogs
- no physical barrier to stop off-leash dogs entering other areas of the park
- dogs intrude over the bridge into other park spaces
- dogs enter the stream and destroy stream banks
- dogs damage the turf
- lack of compliance of the DEA with council standards.

There were 18 suggested 'enhancements' relating to dogs and the DEA including:

- fencing the DEA / securing it / keeping it separate from the rest of the park (four similar comments)
- self-closing gates to help segregate the DEA
- swapping the locations of the DEA and playground (three similar comments)
- time zones during the day for dogs and other activities
- provide dog-poo bags and/or improve disposal facilities (two similar comments)
- better integration with other parks with teen, child and dog areas in different parks
- improving Chelmsford Park as a DEA and converting the Cummings Park DEA into a grassed area for families.

Finally, a further 14 comments were made under the 'Intelligence' heading. These included:

- now Chelmsford Park is a DEA this changes the need or leaves no need for a DEA in Cummings Park (two similar comments)
- Chelmsford Park is not a good alternative – fencing issue and small size
- Chelmsford Park would be an excellent alternative if fencing better
- DEA is muddy in winter (two similar comments)
- DEA massively used by dog owners
- There is a Sunday dog class, which may have implications for WCC revenue and other uses of the area
- The DEA is not consistent with some WCC standards.

Theme 7: Safety

Safety was not a primary focus of the workshop but a number of comments were made relating to it, particularly use of the park at night, and dangers posed by the stream. Many comments drew attention to features that could be addressed through *Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED)*, a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour through design of public spaces and places.

A number of comments referred to lighting in Cummings Park. Most of these relate to CPTED. These are addressed first, followed by other comments relating to safety.

Lighting and safety

Twelve comments were made about lighting in Cummings Park. There was a general consensus that the lack of lighting made the park feel unsafe at night, and that improved lighting would make the park safer and more secure, particularly along the main path from the Town Hall/Library to Awarua Street.

All five 'dislikes' regarding lighting referred to a lack of lighting. Three of these related this to concerns about security or safety.

Seven 'enhancements' were suggested, all wanting the addition of some form of lighting. Comments included:

- lighting for safety and security (three comments)
- "enhanced lighting along main path from Town hall to Awarua Street"
- "amber LED lighting on main path".

Other aspects of safety

Twenty-one comments were coded as referring to aspects of Cummings Park relating to safety. Of these 15 were 'dislikes', including:

- not visible from the road – feels enclosed, secluded, unsafe (three comments)
- playground is in a poor visibility area
- 'drinking teenagers / drinking (no security – cameras?) / "safety – could feel trapped if teenagers there drinking" (three comments from three different tables)
- have to walk through Dog Exercise Area (DEA) to get children from carpark to playground / dislike being jumped on by dogs when passing through the DEA (two comments from the same table)
- "dog-kiddie combination – poor"
- no gates for children's areas
- safety issues in the playground – octopus?
- hazardous stream banks / stream needs fencing near play area (two comments from the same table)
- some planting is a risk to nearby properties, e.g. kauri.

Three pieces of 'intelligence' relating to safety were supplied:

- teenage hangout – they can't be seen
- safety issue – the stream can flow very fast
- cattle foul the headwaters of the stream – important that it be clean as it will probably be used as a water source in times of emergency.

Three 'enhancements' were suggested, all arising from concerns raised above:

- make the park visible
- create a place where teenagers can hang out safely
- fence the playground off from the stream so it's safe for children.

Theme 8: Maintenance

There were six 'likes' relating to maintenance, including:

- a green space that was well maintained and not "over manicured" (three comments from the same table)
- "there are rubbish bins so that there's never any litter"
- dog-poo bins and bags are available
- the surface of the Dog Exercise Area is much improved with matting / the matting means that even if there's been plenty of rain the ground doesn't get muddy (two comments, one from the workshop and one by email)

The nine 'dislikes' were:

- parts are damp, overgrown
- "insufficient maintenance of grass on both sides of bridge with many bare patches (grass grubs/porina?)"
- unclean seats – dirty and lichen
- "poor surface – poor drainage leads to pitting [making hollows]"
- "dog damage to turf – needs more rolling"
- drainage malfunction at the Dog Exercise Area
- lack of bins – litter
- dog owners who don't clean up after their dogs
- some planting is a risk to nearby properties, e.g. kauri.

The 12 comments made under 'intelligence' included:

- tenants/residents put rubbish into park bins (two comments, different tables)
- some littering although not bad – sometimes bins are full
- stream walls deteriorating
- drain on path is often blocked
- Dog Exercise Area is muddy in winter – needs better drainage
- rats appear to be present

- “there are a lot of not-so-good plants ... that need to be eliminated including onion weed which is bad for dogs”
- the bush downstream hasn’t been touched since planting and needs weeding
- there are a number of fish species in the stream – cleaning upstream will make a difference
- Dog Exercise Area is muddy in winter (two comments).

One reference to maintenance was included under ‘enhancements’: “look after the stream”.

Theme 9: Land layout

There was substantial dissatisfaction with the layout of Cummings Park, with not even one ‘like’.

The seven comments ‘disliking’ aspects of the park layout included:

- the private house in middle [Allworks?] gets in way of park potential
- uncertainty over the future development of Allworks site
- Allworks vehicles passing through and parking in carpark
- the Dog Exercise Area (DEA) is not the best use of what is the most useful space in the park
- the damaged ground in the DEA should be swapped for other land
- The DEA uses up the best and sunniest part of the park.

The 17 suggested ‘enhancements’ relating to the land layout included:

- WCC obtain any extra land available for the park and redesign it properly
- WCC obtain Allworks site (two comments – different tables)
- swap the areas used for the DEA and playground (three comments)
- move the playground
- put a café in middle of park where private land is
- develop a “village green” for picnics and market days
- include a petanque pitch, flower garden, community garden, garden for the blind (four comments from the same table, each suggesting one of these)
- BMX jumps.

Theme 10: Next steps following the workshop

Two suggestions were made about how to build on discussions in the workshop:

- fund raising to put these ideas in place
- “Friends of Cummings Park” group to work on improvements with WCC support.

Discussion

The purpose of the workshop was to collect the views of a good representation of Ngaio residents on what they thought about Cummings Park. This included what they liked or disliked about the park, enhancements they would like to see, and any 'intelligence' about the park that they thought might help inform discussion.

After considering the extent to which attendees at the workshop could be considered representative of Ngaio residents, the results for each theme are summarised and discussed.

How representative of Ngaio residents were the workshop attendees?

The workshop was widely publicised, including through social media, signs erected around Cummings Park, an advertisement in a local newspaper, and a leaflet delivered to every household in Ngaio. The 36 who signed the attendance register and the ten or so others who attended at some stage was considered by the organisers as a quite good response from local residents, given that they were giving up two hours of a Saturday afternoon.

No demographic information was collected from those attending. While several children came, younger parents seemed to be under-represented, and older residents over-represented. This outcome would not be unexpected on a Saturday afternoon. Such under- or over-representation of age-groups relative to Ngaio's population means that the spread and number of comments may not be completely representative of Ngaio residents as a whole.

The location and character of Cummings Park (Themes 1 and 2)

The location of Cummings Park came through strongly as one of its strengths. The nine comments relating to its location all painted the same picture – Cummings Park is centrally located within Ngaio in the 'heart' of the Ngaio village. In keeping with this, one workshop attendee suggested that it be designated as Ngaio's 'civic square' for public events.

Cummings Park was also appealing to many because of its character, with general comments 'liking' it outnumbering 'dislikes' by more than two to one. The main theme for those liking its character related to the natural environment. It was a 'green space' with a natural feel, providing sights, sounds and smells from the natural environment. For some it felt safe, and great for kids. For those 'disliking' the general character, on the other hand, it was shady, grey, dreary and under-developed.

Other features relating to character, outside ecology that is treated below as a separate theme, received little mention. Heritage values associated with Cummings Park appealed to some, with mentions of the mill and its dam, the totara tree, and the adjoining Chew Cottage. There were calls for better interpretive signage of

heritage features. The same pattern emerged for the Te Araroa trail. The fact that it passed through Cummings Park was liked, but better signage was wanted.

The sculpture near the bridge attracted mixed views, with three 'dislike' comments and only one 'like'. There was some support for adding to it because the single sculpture "doesn't harmonise".

It was interesting that there were comments about the Library and Town Hall within the context of a workshop about Cummings Park, although just from the one table. For one person, at least, these appear to be an aspect of the park's character, as was the train for another attendee.

The ecology of Cummings Park (Theme 3)

Support for the natural environment as the main defining feature of Cummings Park's character was strongly endorsed in many of the 75 comments on its ecology. The stream, birdlife and other aspects of the ecology formed, for one attendee, a natural oasis in an urban area.

Aspects of the trees and bush in Cummings Park were 'liked' in 17 comments and 'disliked' in two. The large totara in the Dog Exercise Area and tree plantings featured among 'likes'. Native vegetation was generally preferred, although two attendees wanted fruit trees, and another liked the vegetation mix including native and exotic. There was a suggestion that some trees needed to be removed to make more of the sun and light.

The Korimako stream flowing through the park was 'liked' more than 'disliked'. One attendee loved the stream for its accessibility, beauty and peacefulness. The flowing water also appealed. Water quality was the main reason for disliking some aspect of the stream, followed about concerns about the banks including their safety. The seven suggested 'enhancements' focussed on both water quality and safety.

The six comments about birds were all positive about the return of native birds to the park, with kaka, kereru and bellbirds (korimako) mentioned. There was concern about their protection.

Finally, the presence of pests – rats, mosquitoes and sandflies, was noted in comments.

In conclusion, there was strong support for the continuance and enhancement of the current vegetation in Cummings Park, particularly the native trees and bush. This fitted well with the welcomed return of native birds and steps need to encourage this further. No one suggested the replacement of any section of bush or trees to create space for other purposes.

Usability (Theme 4)

The many comments (more than 100) about aspects of the usability of Cummings Park provide a rich source of material for use when considering its future direction. While the relatively flat land used for a range of purposes was appreciated by some, most comments relating to usability were negative. Four comments, for example, referred to the park as shady, overgrown, dingy or damp.

The occupation of the most extensive area for children's play by the Dog Exercise Area was disliked in one comment, as was trying to fit many activities into a small space in another. One attendee made a suggestion that would address these concerns: better integration with other parks to allow teen, child and dog areas in different parks.

Those commenting on access and entrances were generally positive, referring to the multiple accesses, easy access from central Ngaio, and easy paths without steps. There were, however, a number of concerns and suggested enhancements. It was noted that access for the less mobile was difficult except from the carpark and through the Dog Exercise Area, and that there was potential to create an accessible native reserve for the disabled/elderly/injured and those with prams to enjoy.

All eight comments on entrance signage were either critical or suggested improvements. Several comments referred to the lack of visibility of the park, including "it's a secret – would be better if more obvious" and "I lived in Ngaio for more than 2 years before I discovered it".

There were 16 comments on signage other than at entrances, only one of which was positive. Most suggested improvements to signage and other information about Cummings Park. This included interpretive signage about heritage and natural features (including labelling notable trees), and more information about the Te Araroa trail.

Several attendees commented on seating, with most wanting more. One comment noted that many seats were poorly sited and not used, and that more seats might be required other than those facing the river and from which children or dogs couldn't be seen.

There were few comments about the suitability of Cummings Park for picnics, These were generally negative, with a lack of tables the main complaint. BBQ facilities were suggested, as was a "village green" suitable for picnics and market days. Four of the six comments came from the same table (and therefore possibly from only one person), so there was little support overall for the establishment of more formalised picnic areas.

Current tracks within Cummings Park were appreciated when mentioned in comments. Several new tracks were proposed, most commonly one along the west side of the stream from near the Dog Exercise Area in the direction of the library. It was suggested that this could be built by the community with WCC support. Two attendees suggested a track running from behind the Collingwood Street toilets

beneath the railway line towards Awarua Street. Another suggestion was an 'eco' walk taking in Cummings Park and other reserves within Ngaio.

There was some negative comment about noise, particularly from the landscape business in the middle of the park.

Only one person commented on toilets with a complaint that these (presumably those next to the Town Hall entrance on Collingwood Street) needed better maintenance and modernisation. There was no comment about the lack of toilets within Cummings Park itself, perhaps indicating that most park users were happy to walk to Collingwood Street if need be.

To conclude, there was a wide range of comments of various aspects of Cummings Park relating to its usability. Some people liked the range of purposes for which the park was used, while others thought it tried to do too much in a limited space. Access was generally regarded as good, although the need to pass through the Dog Exercise Area from the carpark was seen undesirable for the less mobile. Entrance signage was widely regarded as inadequate. Improvements to signage and information provision regarding other aspects of the park were also wanted. A lack of seating and picnic facilities received some comment, but there seemed to be little support for more formalised picnic areas. Current tracks were appreciated, and there were calls for more to be built. Industrial noise annoyed some, but neither this nor the lack of toilets in Cummings Park itself seemed to have much, if any, impact on use of the park.

Play areas and facilities (Theme 5)

Play areas and facilities in Cummings Park were 'disliked' in nearly twice as many comments as they were 'liked'. Complaints about the playground itself included that it was dark, dingy and shaded, with no winter sun. Others, on the other hand complained that it lacked shade. Other comments noted safety issues with the playground, and a lack of space and facilities for older children. Those 'liking' the playground tended not to give reasons.

There was many suggestions for enhancing play areas and facilities. These included relocating the playground within Cummings Park, developing it to cater for more age groups, and addressing safety issues. A number of suggestions were made about providing play equipment and facilities for older children, some of which (e.g. BMX jumps, rugby and football facilities) would require a change in use for other parts of the park.

The range of views on play areas and facilities recorded from the workshop was possibly influenced by the age structure of those attending. Organisers were disappointed by the apparently low number of younger parents.

Dogs and the Dog Exercise Area (Theme 6)

All that was said about dogs in the 72 comments at the workshop related either directly or indirectly to the Dog Exercise Area (DEA). From the comments made it is clear that there were a significant number of people who strongly supported the DEA and its retention in Cummings Park, and a significant number who disliked the DEA. Some of these called for it to be delisted, with dogs remaining on leash in all parts of the park.

Those 'liking' the DEA noted that it was a social hub for people and dogs, with a community of dog owners who used it. It was easily accessed, safe and sheltered, and was suitable for disabled dog owners and friends.

The most common argument made by those 'disliking' the DEA argued that it was not the best of the only sunny, relatively flat area in Cummings Park. They also noted that park users, including children, needed to pass through the DEA if entering the park from the carpark. There were also concerns about off-leash dogs entering other areas of the park. Owners not always cleaning up after their dogs was another complaint, as was damage by dogs to the turf and stream banks.

A number of suggestions were made to mitigate reported problems with the DEA, most of which involved either fencing it, swapping it with the playground or delisting it entirely. Several comments suggested that the DEA at Chelmsford Park provided adequately for dog exercise, or could be improved so it did so. One comment took the opposite view, stating that Chelmsford Park was small and had a fencing issue.

The future of the DEA is a significant issue, with all suggested resolutions – retaining the status quo, fencing the DEA, swapping it with the playground, or delisting it along with improvements to Chelmsford Park – unlikely to be acceptable to some of those who attended the workshop, as well as to other Ngaio residents.

Safety (Theme 7)

Lighting was the most commonly raised safety issue for Cummings Park. A number of workshop attendees commented that lighting in the park could improve safety and security, particularly along the main track from the library to Awarua Street. It is doubtful, however, that safety experts applying CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) principles would agree that such lighting would improve safety. It could have the opposite effect by encouraging more people into the park at night.

Other safety concerns raised included a lack of visibility of Cummings Park from the road (feels enclosed, secluded, unsafe), teenagers drinking in the park, dogs (when passing through the Dog Exercise Area), the unfenced stream and water quality.

Maintenance (Theme 8)

Most comments on maintenance were concerns about problems that were seen as being in need of attention from Wellington City Council (WCC), such as drainage issues, turf damage, over-full rubbish bins, and weeding. WCC would have been pleased, however, with comments from one table that described Cummings Park as a green space that was well maintained and not “over-manicured”.

Land layout (Theme 9)

Substantial dissatisfaction with the current use of space in Cummings Park was evident from the workshop. The main complaint was that the space occupied by the Dog Exercise Area (DEA) could be put to better use. There were suggestions to swap the DEA and the playground, and to delist Cummings Park as a DEA while making any improvements required to the DEA at the nearby Chelmsford Park. As was noted in the discussion of Theme 6, however, there was also substantial support for retaining the DEA in its current location.

Support for the WCC obtaining the site currently occupied by a landscape business and protruding into Cummings Park was also widely expressed. More generally, one attendee wanted WCC to look for any opportunities to acquire more land in general.

There was support in a small number of comments for enhancements that would require finding the necessary space. These included a community garden, a flower garden and a garden for the blind.

Actions that could follow the workshop (Theme 10)

Two comments were made at the workshop about how some of the ideas discussed there might be implemented. One was to undertake fund raising. The other was to create a “Friends of Cummings Park” group to work on improvements to the park with Council support.

Some conclusions

The workshop provided some clear indications about widely-held community views relevant to the future of Cummings Park. But it also revealed several divisions which have large implications for the directions that might be taken in developing a vision.

There was substantial agreement, and virtually no opposition, that the character of Cummings Park rested primarily on the natural environment. Attendees commenting on its character and ecology wanted this maintained and enhanced, with an emphasis on native vegetation, improving water quality in the stream, and attracting native birds. There was little support for the development of formal gardens or picnic areas. As one attendee noted, a feature of the park was that it was not “over-manicured”.

Other themes or sub-themes where there was general agreement from those commenting included the central location of Cummings Park within Ngaio, the multiple and relatively easy means of accessing the park, its invisibility (it was easy not to notice it was there from within the Ngaio village) and the related need for better entrance signage. There was also support for the Wellington City Council to acquire further land to add to the park if the opportunity arose. This applied particularly to the land currently occupied by a landscape business.

The major division of opinion occurred over the future of the Dog Exercise Area (DEA). There was strong support from some at the workshop for its retention, but also for it to be delisted, with the Chelmsford Park DEA improved if this was required to make it a better alternative. There were also suggestions that the locations of the DEA and playground within Cummings Park be swapped. This is not, however, feasible for a number of reasons including the fact that the playground area is too small for a DEA.

Play spaces and facilities were also an issue over which opinion was divided. There were a number of comments about the lack of facilities for older children, while others suggested that Cummings Park was too small to expand the activities within it. Some of those in this camp thought it better for local parks to specialise, with older children catered for elsewhere. This issue is related to the future of the DEA. The space it occupies was mentioned by some as an area that could accommodate a wider range of play activities and facilities.

These conclusions are intended to draw attention to some of the major points arising from the workshop that will require substantial attention in developing a vision for Cummings Park. But as the results and discussion of themes and sub-themes above shows, there was much more community feedback provided at the workshop than just these points that will be of value in developing a vision.