

ITEM NO: 14

SUBJECT: EAST LINDEN RECREATION AREA

FILE NO: F00358

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council advise East Linden residents that following investigation no suitable sites for a recreational area have been identified.*
 2. *That the Council will consider and further investigate alternative sites, should they be proposed by the Linden Citizens' Association.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to advise the Council on the outcomes of a review, carried out by Council officers, to find land for the purpose of a new park in East Linden.

The report summarises the following:

- Why recreational land in East Linden was sought and what areas were put forward;
- What research was carried out to determine the potential of each site; and
- Recommendations.

Background

East Linden is situated in the mid Mountains and is an isolated area of residential housing (approximately 70 dwellings) on the southern side of the Great Western Highway (refer Map 1) . The residential area is boarded on the northern side by the highway and is situated on steep sloping land with bushland to the south. There is currently no local park in this area.

During the 2006/07 Management Plan the residents of East Linden (through the Linden Citizens' Association) requested that the Council, review the potential of developing a park in the East Linden area. At its ordinary meeting of 20 June 2006, the Council resolved:

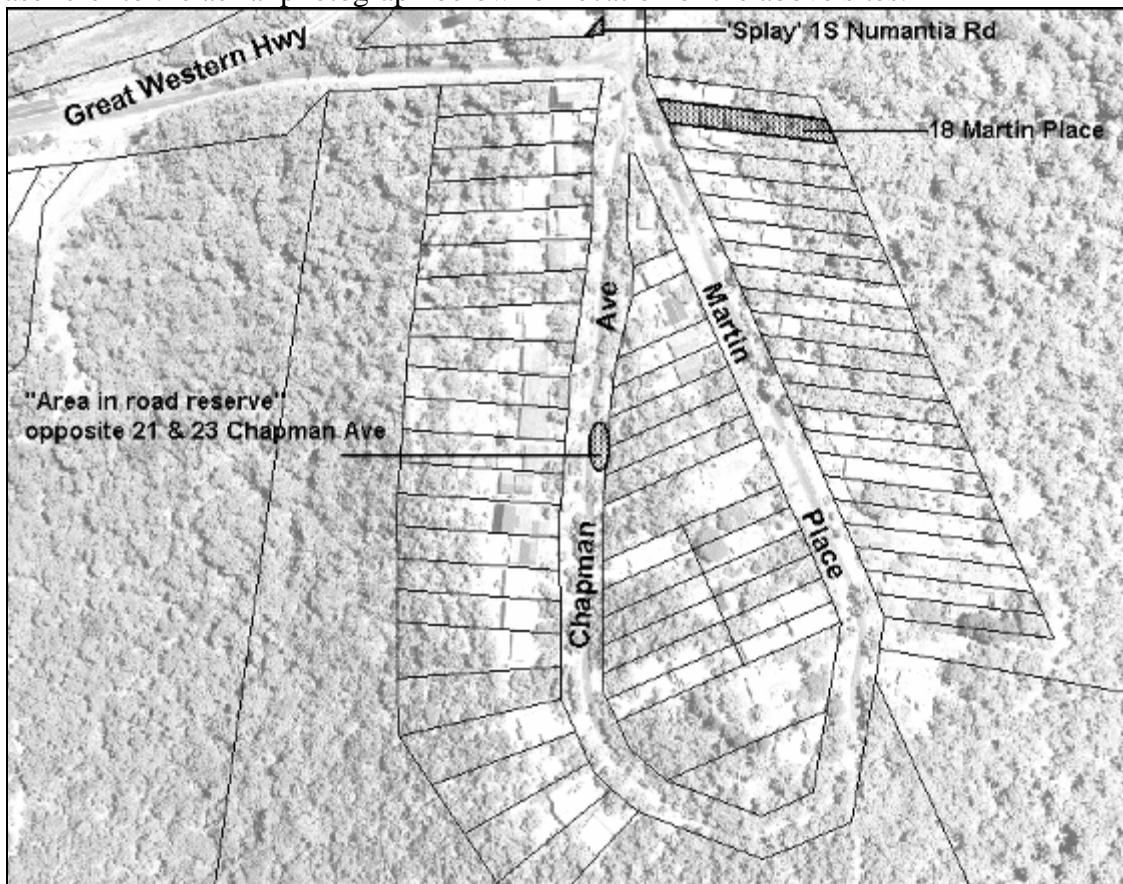
- “ 7. That the Council actively pursue options which will facilitate the provision of a park for the residents of Linden and that a report evaluating these options come to the Council at the earliest opportunity and that this be conducted in consultation with the Linden community.”*

(Minute No. 604, 20/06/2006)

The Linden Citizens' Association proposed two (2) sites and Council staff identified another potential site. The sites identified as potential recreation spaces were:

- 18 Martin Place;
- “Splay” corner 1S Numantia Road; and
- The area of road reserve opposite 21 & 23 Chapman Ave.

Please refer to the aerial photograph below for location of the above sites.



Map 1. East Linden – Potential recreation areas reviewed.

Research & outcomes of potential recreation areas

The following is a short summary of each of the abovementioned potential sites and the outcomes of the research and review carried out by the Council's Recreation Team.

‘Splay’ 1S Numantia Road

Owner: Roads & Transport Authority (forms part of intersection but has not been declared public road).

Manager: Blue Mountains City Council

Zoning: Rural B

Findings: This parcel of land is considered unsuitable due to the following reasons:

- Not owned by the Council, zoning unsuited to recreation use;
- Too small to comfortably accommodate recreation area (40m2);
- Speeding vehicles are a problem at this corner;
- Three (3) way intersection of Martin Place, Numantia Road and Chapman Avenue, is the only entry/exit point into East Linden and makes a dangerous crossing point;
- It is located on a blind corner;
- Poor visibility of the parcel of land when travelling along Martin Place and Chapman Avenue further increases the danger for children crossing; and
- Access is difficult for prams or wheelchairs.

Outcome: Unsuitable as a recreation area.

18 Martin Place

Owner: Blue Mountains City Council

Manager: Blue Mountains City Council

Zoning: Part Recreation Open Space and Part Environmental Protection Open Space.

Findings: This parcel, despite being zoned 'recreation open space', is considered unsuitable due to the following reasons:

- It is too narrow (12.3m in width);
- It is located between two (2) residential properties, each with houses. There is a potential conflict between local park activities and residential amenity, as the play equipment would be within five (5) metres of domestic living spaces;
- The flat area is approximately six (6) metres below the road, therefore it has poor surveillance opportunities from the road; and
- The site has a steep crossfall, unsuited to play space, is not practical to provide reasonable access and is situated on a protected escarpment area.

Outcome: Unsuitable as a recreation area.

Area of road reserve opposite 21 & 23 Chapman Avenue

Owner: Blue Mountains City Council as Road Authority

Manager: Blue Mountains City Council as Road Authority

Zoning: Road

Findings: This area is considered unsuitable due to the following reasons:

- Development of a park on the existing site would not be permitted under the Council's LEP, as the road takes on the zoning of the adjoining land; i.e. Living Bushland Conservation; and
- Part of the road reserve would need to be closed and reclassified as a park, however this lengthy process is considered unlikely to be supported by the Council (note: approval would also be required by the Minister for Roads, the likelihood of this approval is unknown) for the following reasons:
 - The proposed park conflicts with the need to provide sufficient road reserve for future needs such as road expansion, footpath and placement of public utilities;
 - Chapman Road is narrow with limited sight distances and no footpaths;
 - Fencing, which would be required for a park, would restrict access to the road reserve from adjoining properties;
 - A park located beside the roadway would involve traffic safety and risk assessment issues that would include the need for possible traffic calming and lighting; and
 - The potential site is long and narrow and its suitability as a local park is questionable.

Outcome: Unsuitable as a recreation area.

Recommendations

The above research has found that there are no sites identified in East Linden considered suitable as a local park. The Council will however consider alternatives and investigate sites that may be proposed in the future by the Linden Citizens' Association.

Sustainability Assessment

The recommendation to not develop a local park in the East Linden area will have the following implications to the Council:

Financial implications

N/A

Legal and risk management issues

N/A

Social implications

The East Linden community residing in approximately seventy (70) dwellings will have no local park within walking distance to their homes. The closest local parks are: Chalmers Memorial and Ticehurst Parks in Faulconbridge (approximately 1.4km to the east), Linden Park in Linden (approximately 2km to the west) and Bulls Camp in Woodford (approximately 3km to the west).

External consultation

During the course of investigating these sites the following were consulted:

- The Linden Citizens’ Association;
- A local Landscape Architect/Playground Designer and member of the East Linden Park Sub Committee;
- Interested local residents; and
- Relevant Council staff.

A Councillor and community site visit occurred on September 11, and all sites were visited.

Conclusion

The three (3) sites investigated are considered unsuitable as a local park and therefore no further investigation or works are recommended to be carried out in relation to this matter. We would however consider and investigate any alternative sites that may be proposed by the Linden Citizens' Association. The Council would also like to acknowledge the hard work and input from members of the Linden community.

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