



## Australasian Management Challenge

### 2017 Pre Challenge Task – Summary Report

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# Summary Report



## Subject Matter:

Aspen Reserve – Engagement Project

## To:

CEO and Executive Leadership Team

## From:

BlueSky Tauranga

## Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the feedback received from the community on the future of Aspen Reserve, the process undertaken to obtain community feedback and propose a way forward for the Aspen Reserve project.

## Background

2. As you are aware, Tauranga City Council is undergoing a revitalisation of the city centre through the Heart of the City project. Aspen Reserve is a small section of open space located on the corner of McLean Streets and Willow Street in the Tauranga city centre. Due to development occurring directly adjacent to the reserve, an opportunity has arisen to obtain community feedback on the future use of Aspen Reserve.
3. After discussions with senior managers and members of the Executive Leadership team, it was agreed to develop an engagement project for Aspen Reserve. The future of Aspen Reserve is a current community issue, and supports wider consideration of the Tauranga spatial framework. The future of Aspen Reserve is also a key part of the Heart of the City programme.
4. A community engagement project was developed for Aspen Reserve under the wider Heart of the City programme with the following goal: the community are informed, inspired and engaged in projects that create a vibrant, safe and successful city centre. This community engagement is the first step towards developing a design brief for the potential enhancement of Aspen Reserve.

## Discussion

5. BlueSky Tauranga, in consultation with Tauranga City Council Senior Management, determined that a full engagement exercise would be required to gather meaningful and informative feedback for any future development options. As a result of this decision the following engagement activities were planned and undertaken:

- Two open days at Aspen Reserve, facilitated by BlueSky Tauranga on 9 and 10 February 2017
  - Feedback forms available at the open day and at Council reception
  - Gathering feedback via the Tauranga City Council website - 'have your say' section
  - Encouraging the community to add messages on the Tauranga City Council Facebook page
  - Contributing to local newspaper articles to inform the community about this issue
  - Flier drop to local businesses and properties surrounding Aspen Reserve
  - Direct engagement with key stakeholders:
    - Police - public safety concerns
    - Iwi - cultural considerations
    - Downtown Tauranga – local business representative group
    - Brunel Construction - neighbouring developer
    - Tauranga Moana Nightshelter Trust – social impact
    - Priority 1 - local economic development organisation
    - Businesses surrounding Aspen Reserve, including Beca
6. During the two open days at Aspen Reserve feedback on future options for the space were sought by asking the community “How would you like to use Aspen Reserve in the Future?”. In order to attract a large number of those interested in Aspen Reserve, these open days were held over two consecutive days offering free coffee, cake, and an opportunity to chat with Tauranga City Councillors. We also tried to demonstrate possible uses for the reserve by having live music, beanbags and chairs for people to relax. The following is a copy of the feedback cards developed by BlueSky Tauranga:



7. Over 170 feedback cards were received over the two open days. This result was three times more than anticipated when developing the engagement objectives at the beginning of the project. We also received feedback through the Tauranga City Council Facebook page, the 'have your say' section of the Council website and responses to local newspaper articles.

8. Several interviews were undertaken with specific stakeholders including Priority 1, Downtown Tauranga, a representative for Ngai Tamarawaho, Beca, Tauranga Police, Brunel Construction (neighbouring development), a Historian at Tauranga City Council, and several city centre residents and workers. A short video show casing these interviews and summarising our feedback can be found here: <https://youtu.be/tvGP15uR9OQ>.
9. From the feedback received the following key themes were identified regarding how the community would like to use Aspen Reserve in the future:
  - A place to relax (57%)
  - Maintaining it as a green space in our city centre (38%)
  - Area for events (30%)
  - Learn about and appreciate the history of the site (11%)
  - Develop for commercial use (9%)
  - Ensure it is accessible for all the community (6%)
  - Develop gardens in the reserve (5%)
10. From the feedback received the following design considerations were identified:
  - Provide seating (44%)
  - Provide shade (34%)
  - Develop a space for concerts / build a stage (16%)
  - Natural amphitheatre style (16%)
  - Include art and culture (15%)
  - Develop a space for outdoor movies (9%)
11. The feedback received indicated that the community would like to see Aspen Reserve used for not just relaxation but also events. We heard from people that the future use of Aspen Reserve is to maintain a green space while also utilising the natural amphitheatre for events and quiet space. This feedback shows that in any design brief developed for Aspen Reserve it would be important to incorporate a mixed-use component.

## Next Steps

12. BlueSky Tauranga recommends the following next steps:
  - a) Provide feedback to the community on the outcome of the engagement project through our social media channels and Tauranga City Council website.
  - b) Present to the City Transformation team with the recommendation that the Heart of the City Technical Advisory Group utilise the themes and design considerations to develop a design brief for Aspen Reserve to ensure alignment with other City Centre projects.
  - c) Provide our learnings on engagement into the continued development of an engagement framework for Tauranga City Council.