

Proposal and Management Plan for Community Garden, Matai Road Reserve, Raumati

By the Matai Community Garden Group 26-2-2015

The Gavin/Matai/Fincham Road 'Greener Neighbourhood' is an informal grouping of 26 households working with the Council to strengthen our community and reduce our ecological footprint. From this the Matai Community Garden Group has been formed to help fulfil the shared objective of creating a community garden on the Matai Road Reserve. The site of the proposed garden within the reserve is indicated in the attached map and appended photographs.

This proposal has been developed with the input of the Council's Green Gardener.

Purpose and objective: To grow food together, by making a place for neighbours to meet, learn about gardening and develop supportive relationships, to strengthen our neighbourhood and become more sustainable.

Benefits of the garden: Community building, education, improved nutrition. Produce from the garden would be allocated with the following priority order:

- a. Active members of the group (contributing time to the garden)
- b. Non-active members of the group
- c. Local charities e.g. food bank
- d. Neighbours in the immediate area who are not members

Garden type: Crops will be chosen for low maintenance needs- e.g sunflowers, native spinach, potatoes, pumpkins, kamokamo, cherry tomatoes, beans, corn (summer), broad beans, silverbeet, rhubarb and lupins (winter). Once established, there will not be a lot of watering needed – the garden will be heavily mulched to retain moisture.

The garden will be managed in an organic fashion with techniques such as companion planting to control pests. Weeds will be removed from site initially until suitable treatment methods e.g. a biodigester can be set up.

Access and security: There is good access to the site, it is sheltered and tucked away while retaining good visibility from the road, which helps with vandalism prevention. The site is near to a children's playground which is

well used, although the corner of the park where the garden is proposed is not. Two of our members (Scott Bowater and Yvonne van Leeuwen) live at the property that backs on to the reserve and have an access gate directly to the garden site. Tools and materials can be kept there securely behind the fence.

Consultation: All neighbours to the park have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposal. See their confirmation attached. The Arts Centre committee informed us they had no problem with our plan, so long as they could access their fire door on the south side of building (see photographs).

Skills: There are skilled gardeners and composters within the group, as well as builders and plumbers. The group will be able to bring tools their own tools to working bees.

Education: There will be water wise education workshops at the garden, e.g. composting, mulching, efficient irrigation, with a rain barrel installation planned, directly into the Arts Centre downpipe on south corner (see photo). The group will work with council to run these workshops.

Management: We have formed a not-for-profit community group with written terms of reference, an organizing committee, and a bank account with joint signatories. These structures, arranged in the usual fashion for such groups, will be the means to address any conflict that may arise and to make decisions affecting the community garden. A 'training officer' will be appointed to handle inductions of new members and they will have a written document outlining necessary information. The group will arrange regular working bees to ensure the site is kept tidy.

Signage: This will be established at the site to explain the purpose of the garden, what has been planted, how to contact the management committee. A community notice board has already been set up by the Gavin/Matai/Fincham Road Greener Neighbourhoods group at a nearby property and can be used to advertise upcoming community garden events.

Noise and Odour: Noise disturbance is unlikely given the activities proposed and the times they will be undertaken. Aerobic composting techniques will be used that will avoid odours.

Funding: A community board grant of \$500 is being sought for establishment costs. Once permission to establish the garden has been

obtained, the committee will invite interested neighbours to pay an annual membership fee to help fund the garden's establishment and thereafter cover the modest annual costs including the \$170 annual fee to Council for use of the reserve.

Implementation and development: The group would like to start off small this autumn, with two raised beds of 5x3 sqm each approximately, to be built in the far south corner of the park. Over the following years the extent of the garden development will slowly increase to occupy the whole 180 sqm site indicated.

The first garden bed would be planted initially with winter greens and/or filler crops such as lupins.

The bulk of this work will be done in a day-long working bee. The timing of this will depend on the license being issued, but ideally it will be carried out this autumn.

A composting area will also be established once required to make soil for the garden beds from free materials such as grass clippings, tree mulch and seaweed. In time additional raised beds would be built. Any areas within the garden not easily mown will have grass suppressed with mulch/bark chip or carpet. An outer edge to the garden that can be easily mown will be maintained. Seating, a shed for tools, garden art and a low fence are also possible as future developments.

Water supply: Water will be obtained from a nearby property with the permission of the owners. A formal ongoing arrangement will be sought. This is likely to involve installation of a check meter on the outlet to the garden so the supply-owner can be reimbursed for the volume of water used by the garden group.

Estimated budget:

- Annual fee for use of the reserve \$170
- Two raised garden beds 5 x 3 x 0.3m high
 - colour steel strips (off cuts) or fence palings,
 - short posts 100 x 100,
 - top edge 150 x 50 planks: \$310
- Pockets of compost for planting into: \$50 for trailer load of compost
- Seedlings: Free from community or \$50 from Awapuni.
- Straw for mulching: \$20

- Check meter installation on water supply: \$100 for materials (labour free)
- Beds to be filled with no-dig layers of lupin, leaves, seaweed, tree mulch, grass clippings, manure etc: materials free
- Corner area to be laid with old carpet: free from carpet layers
- Materials for signs including paints: free from neighbours

Total \$700 incl GST

These costs will be met from a Community Board Grant and membership fees. If costs exceed this estimate, additional fundraising activities will be carried out.

Primary contacts:

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Management plan checklist (from community gardens policy)

The standard Community Garden Management Plan which should include:	
o Organisational structure and meeting requirements	check
o Horticultural methods	check
o Mowing and maintenance	check
o Weed and pest control	check
o Composting	check
o Safety, security and vandalism	check
o Structure and storage	check
o Aesthetics and tidiness	check
o Signage	check
o Noise and odour	check

Appendix: Photographs



Picture 1: Proposed location



Picture 2: Arts Centre Fire Door



Picture 3: 2x adjacent downpipes – potential water supply via rainbarrels



Picture 4: Proposed location: view towards Matai Road.



Picture 5: Gavin/Matai/Fincham neighbours by community noticeboard



Picture 6: Gavin/Matai/Fincham neighbours discussing biodigesters and weed control



Picture 7: Gavin/Matai/Fincham neighbours checking out proposed community garden site.