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Report no: HCC2017/5/259

## **105 Western Hutt Road - Proposal to Change Reserve Classification and Lease to New Zealand Response Team 18 for Civil Defence Purposes**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to consider a proposal to change the reserve classification of the property at 105 Western Hutt Road to enable the property to be used for a community purpose.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) notes that New Zealand Response Team 18, in looking for a suitable site to relocate, is seeking Council approval to lease part of the property at 105 Western Hutt Road;
- (ii) notes that this is a reserve property which will need to have its Scenic Reserve classification changed if it is to be used for this purpose;
- (iii) agrees to publicly notify a proposal to change the reserve classification of the property situated at 105 Western Hutt Road, being at the entrance to Percy Scenic Reserve, from Scenic Reserve to Local Purpose Reserve (Community Buildings) on the basis that the property does not have reserve values consistent with a Scenic Reserve and that it would be more suited for community uses as a base for Civil Defence purposes; and
- (iv) agrees in principle, subject to the change in classification, to leasing a part of the property at 105 Western Hutt Road to New Zealand Response Team 18.

## Background

2. The property at 105 Western Hutt Road is at the entrance to Percy Scenic Reserve, located between Dowse Drive and State Highway 2, at the Dowse Interchange. Its legal description is Section 20-24 Survey Office Plan 426962. The property is owned by the Crown with Hutt City Council holding a control and management appointment. A plan of the property is attached as Appendix 1. The area shaded blue is that part of the property proposed to be leased.
3. The State Highway 2 upgrade, including the development of the Dowse Interchange and the reconfigured entrance to Percy Scenic Reserve, completed in 2008, left much of the property at 205 Western Hutt Road isolated from the balance of the Reserve. The old Percy Scenic Reserve custodian's house was relocated to the property but required significant investment to make suitable for use and was eventually removed from the property, as it was uneconomic to upgrade. No other suitable use associated with the reserve was identified.
4. The property is just less than half a hectare in size with a portion extending over the internal reserve road off Dowse Drive. The main part of the property is sealed and is fenced on three sides.
5. Council has recently received a formal request from New Zealand Response Team 18 (NZ-RT18) to establish a base at the property for Civil Defence purposes. NZ-RT18 has had to vacate its current limited storage space at the Pavilion and has acquired a large shipping container as a temporary measure to store its equipment.
6. NZ-RT18 has assessed the property as being suitable for its purposes, noting that it is out of the tsunami and liquefaction zones, is an elevated site which will enable visual assessment of parts of the valley floor and would provide quick access all along the valley floor, being adjacent to SH2. It is also close to Fire and Emergency New Zealand's secondary command site in Maungaraki.
7. NZ-RT18 would construct a 3 bay garage for storage purposes and as a second stage, build training and office space with kitchen and bathroom facilities, which would act as a secondary Emergency Operations Centre should the primary Centre be unable to be used. A copy of NZ-RT18's request is attached as Appendix 2.
8. In order for the property to be used for this purpose, a change in reserve classification is required.

## Discussion

9. The Scenic Reserve classification of this property is inappropriate given its physical nature and location. This classification is for the purpose of either:
  - a. protecting and preserving suitable areas possessing qualities of scenic interest, beauty or natural features; or

- b. providing suitable areas which by development and the introduction of flora will become of scenic interest or beauty.

The property has no such qualities and is not used in support of other nearby properties which do meet the classification requirements. The property is almost completely sealed with very little vegetation on it.

- 10. The property has sat idle for the best part of 10 years and without a change in classification will likely continue to remain unused. The application from NZ-RT18 has prompted this proposed change in classification.
- 11. The use of part of the property as a Civil Defence base is supported. The site has been assessed as highly suitable for this purpose in terms of its location and its geography. There will be no impact on Percy Scenic Reserve.

### **Options**

- 12. Council is being requested to agree to publicly notify the proposal. It can opt not to do so, if it considers that a change in classification is not supported.

### **Consultation**

- 13. Council is required, under the Reserves Act 1977, to publicly notify the proposal to change the reserve classification. Any objections to the proposal will be considered by Council at a future meeting.
- 14. Iwi groups will also be notified of the proposal, as will the Western Ward Community Panel.

### **Legal Considerations**

- 15. Section 24 of the Reserves Act 1977 sets out the process for changing the classification of a reserve. This process includes public notification of the proposal, consideration of objections and the forwarding of the Council resolution and objections to the Commissioner at the Department of Conservation for ratification.
- 16. Section 61 of the Reserves Act 1977 enables Council, as the administering body, to lease a local purpose reserve for any purpose specified in the reserves classification. The purpose sought in the sub-classification of Community Buildings is suitable for use as a Civil Defence response base.

### **Financial Considerations**

- 17. The cost of notifying the proposal will be met from existing budgets. There are no other financial considerations at this time.

### **Other Considerations**

- 18. In making this recommendation, officers have given careful consideration to the purpose of local government in section 10 of the Local Government Act 2002. Officers believe that this recommendation falls within the purpose of local government in that it considers the future community use of reserve land that it manages on behalf of the Crown. It does this in a way that is cost-effective as it will result in land currently underutilised being put to an appropriate community use.

**Appendices**

No.	Title	Page
1	NZRT18 Lease Area 105 Western Hutt Road.	
2	NZ-RT18 Proposal to Lease 105 Western Hutt Road	

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