

Suva City Council parks planning

[00:10] - Jasneel Singh

When I started at Suva City Council, we had data on parks and the location of parks but it was held in different departments.

For example, the Finance Department held the legal description, the unimproved capital value of the parks, and all this information related to finance. And the Health Department had information about the location of the park and the maintenance of the park, but there was no linkage of data within the departments.

So when I started doing this park mapping, what I did I took the records from the Finance Department, the legal description of the park, the unimproved capital value and all this information, and the location of the parks from the Health Department, and I linked it into one system using the GIS.

So now we have a complete list of all the parks with the attributes attached to it. For example, the location, the name of the park, the topography of the park, the facilities present, the level of frequency (frequency of usage), the maintenance program and all these things are now linked in a spatial GIS program, which also shows the location distribution of all the parks according to the four categories which we have used: the destination parks, the neighbourhood parks, suburbs and pocket parks.

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So when we did the mapping of the categories of the parks, what we realised by the use of GIS, is that most of the parks, pocket and neighbourhood parks were concentrated in the highly populated area, and the destination parks were all along the coast.

So that allowed us to visualise the information and get the information out to make our program on how we can do the development of the parks, according to the categories.

[02:03]

In agreeing, with us agreeing, and classifying the parks into four categories, we had a lengthy discussion with the Auckland Council and then we realised that most of the categories, the attributes which can be linked to our usage of parks.

So, we sat down and we discussed and we divided all the parks according to whatever category we think they were suited for.

And then we used, what can I say, some factors in them, selecting the park for the pilot projects. So some of the factors which we took in was the park category representation.

For the pilot project, we accepted parks which tend to represent all the four categories which we have; has to be a destination park, pocket, suburb and neighbourhood.

Why we took in the four categories of parks is that this pilot should form a precedence for future development. For example, we are doing a plan for destination park, this plan should form the guide of future development of destination parks, same as for all the categories.

[03:22]

Another factor which we took in was with the population density. The population around the, in proximity of the parks, with the development of the parks will give a positive usage towards the community level.

We used use observation also because some of the parks, we have to develop parks which are being used more frequently by the people. It's no use developing a park which has no, like very minimal usage.

[03:51]

So we use also that factor, accessibility was also taken into account. Some of the parks which are located in Suva can be accessed, but it's quite a distance from the main road.

So we took in parks which are, like near the road, easily accessible to people, and people will find it easier to travel to, rather than going to a park which is a bit isolated.

So the spatial distribution to the park, what we did is in Suva we have five wards. So for this pilot project, we want the people to know that we are working on something for the community, so we distributed the parks all over the city for the pilot project.

So we use the spatial distribution also.

[04:40]

Secondary factor which we took in was the safety.

Safety of the parks in terms of high volume of traffic, the location we selected which do not fall on a main trunk road. For example it's a small street or the safety concentration was also taken into account.

And the location. The location in the sense that it should be visible to the people, the general public.

In the GIS we ran a query program.

We used the parks geodatabase, and first within the query was usage observation and whatever data we got. We use the topography, in that we wanted to select parks which are relatively flat for the pilot projects, and then we used the selection of facilities.

The parks facilities and whatever condition they are, and whatever the result that we got we combined with the location.

The location, it has to be spread all over the wards. And then we go to the final selection of the parks. And out of that final selection we got about eight parks.

These eight parks are spread all over the city. It is representative of all the categories which we have selected, and the usage observation of all the parks are high use so that whatever we do, it will be a benefit to the council also.

And this will form, like for the future, this will form like a master plan for us. For example, for development of our neighbourhood park, the kind of development that you do for this particular park for this pilot project will be used for future development of the neighbourhood parks, other neighbourhood parks.

[06.31]

We also took into account this crime prevention through environmental design. So we are working on designing parks which are safe for everyone. There's a low risk of crime.

And also, like people when they use the park, they should feel like they are safe. So we are using also this crime prevention through environmental design concept and trying to integrate much more community level participation into our development of parks.

So this is how GIS was used to select the parks for the pilot projects and the information we used from our GIS system.

[07:11] - Tevita Tadu

From whatever information that was being gathered from our GIS officer, Mr Jasneel, then we were able to identify nine parks and at the moment we are prioritising on nine parks, and we have done some assessment just mainly on the topography, the facilities that's been available, the other features, like the street furniture, whether it's any bins or seats, is it available within these parks.

So we have done our selections and from the planning part we had submitted it to our Special Administrator's Board. We have presented to them as a pilot project at the moment, because funding is an issue at the moment, because at the moment there's a clash between parks development as well as our stormwater drainage development as well.

Because in Suva, it's a very wet area. So we've been facing a lot of stormwater drainage issues. In that case as well, we've been preparing a stormwater drainage master plan as well.

So that's why we just select nine parks as the pilot project just so that we can initiate the works that we've been involved in the Auckland City Council.

For the parks that has been just classified as parks, open space, that was from our point of view, from the design. We are working in the design section. So in the design section, mainly we just classify as a park. So in the park, everything to whether it's a playground. But for classification, there was no classification before. Like for pocket park, suburban and neighbourhood parks, so there was no classification.

At the moment we're working on two of our major projects. One is Sukuna Park. Sukuna Park, it's like a square centre in Suva, the city.

So one is Sukuna Park and the other one is Thurston Garden. It's a botanical garden.

For the Sukuna Park, we're currently still working on the concept because we've been since there's no landscape architects within our Council so we had to tender out for design documentation of these parks.

We're planning by next month, we have to get some confirmations on the final concept because it's also, there's a part of historical history on these parks. Some of the existing features, like the monuments, the water features, it has been there during the colonial times, because there was some discussions on whether to remove it or just maintain it.

So in that case, we planning to do public consultations, in regards to these features.

[10:39]

The other park, it's Thurston Garden. For that one we had a meeting last week.

Last week, there was a meeting with the planners, architects, engineers, surveyors, just to get input, because there's some issues that we've been facing within the park. Mainly of flooding, since it's on the shore line.

During high tide, there's flooding issue there. So whether to raise the levels like the surveyors recommend for a hydrology report, there needs to be some hydrology assessment to determine the height of the ground level, the design level.

So those are some of the things that we had to take note from our site, and we'll be again, reports of these discussions with our Special Administrators Board and whatever they decide then we'll move on from there.