

MySuva Park Fieldtrip

Interview with Mr Uma Chand – Works Manager Suva City Council

Question 1) Background to the project, the thinking that informed it, and the vision. What was the thinking with regard to the shoreline, drainage, mangroves and natural trees.

Answer: Council had realized for the inhabitants of Suva for Natural Development. This site was very ideal and had the features such as open space, mangroves, swimming and enjoying leisure time. As such SCC decided to turn the unused barren land to a Natural Park.

Question 2) The planning process – what did it look like. Who was involved. Were any studies done? While planning minimum structural development was considered to retain the maximum natural environment.

Answer: Councils various sections were involved such as Engineering Designs, Health Finance and Administration. No major studies were done as we did not infringe into natural environment however some academic institution such USP did some minor water sampling test. Government Authorities like Depart of Environment and Forestry were overseeing the development.



Question 3) How was funding and support secured?

Answer: The project was funded internally through Councils Capital Project with special commitment made by the Special Administrator.

Question 4) The kinds of ecosystems that are connected with the park (mangroves, seawater lake, mudflats, marine, freshwater).

Answer: The kinds ecosystems connected with the parks includes mangroves – habitats for sea species, salt water lake

also sea species, mudflats, marine and freshwater.

Question 5) The services that the ecosystems are providing to the development – how they are adding value.

Answer: The natural ecosystem has been retained during the development to add value to the project, example mangroves are providing habitat for birds and Marine species, lake is retained with marine species.

Question 6) Actions taken to enhance these ecosystem services (e.g. mangrove plantings).

Answer: The involvement of cooperate sponsoring such as DHL, Vodafone, Government agencies, Department of Environment, Lands Department and Fiji Correction Services (FCS) for planting of mangroves. Retention of natural salt water lake. Diversion of storm water drains to lake. Circulation of sea water through weir into the lake. We also have the system of recycling organic waste back into flower gardens and park landscape area. The salt water lake is the habitat and breeding grounds for marine life.





Question 7) The role of these ecosystems and the park in relation to climate change adaptation (e.g. shoreline protection, keeping the sea away from infrastructure, reducing the wind, providing shelter and habitat for various animals, birds and plants, a natural sink or soak area for floodwater).

Answer: Shoreline protection – rockling. Retaining large mangrove - act as shelter for birds and natural shading to public. Lake retention act as a basin for run offs

Question 8) Benefits of the development to the community – social value, educational value, cultural value, health benefit, etc.

Answer:

- Brings communities together at a conducive spot of all cultural background. Reduces life style disease and address NCD
- Introduced recycling bin for citizens to practise recycling
- We also provided park facilities, upper class facilities with very minimum charges
- Health & fitness walkway with outdoor exercise stations to combat NCD's
- Important venue to host event for Capital city and national importance
- Educational values module for school field trips
- Buildings constructed in harmony with the environment
- Provides a location to host function and gathering at all levels from small birthday parties to cooperate business functions

Question 9) Challenges in doing a development like this and lessons learned – advice to others wanting to do something similar.

Answer: Many challenges are faced and lessons have been learnt. It is note that general public lack Civic pride.

- Damages to properties and littering
- Damage to user pay facilities
- Lack of sewerage connection
- Wet weather – delaying the target timeline
- Facilities are being enjoyed by almost whole of Viti Levu however it was considered in the planning
- Slow process of approval lease for expansion of the park
- Foreshore development is polluted by floating debris – rivers, streams and passing ships
- Turbulence seas affecting the built rock lining being experienced now
- Exploring possibility of harvesting stormwater for park use for public convenience use and enhancing use of solar lights for the gardens lights and decorative lights
- Possibility of introducing a small information booth for locals and tourist.



Note: The Park construction commenced in January 2013 and was officially opened on 7th November 2013. Actual cost of the project was around M\$1.4. (DES please confirm) The construction works were carried out internally by Council workers which included design team, construction team, landscaping, electrical, plumbers, welders, turfing and signs.