

8. SEAFIELD PARK TREE REMOVAL

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Corporate Plan Output:	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the proposal to remove a small group of pine trees on Seafield Park adjacent to the boundary of Seafield Park Subdivision.

BACKGROUND

Seafield Park is one of our large conservation reserves adjoining Brooklands Lagoon and includes some large tracts of land heading back towards Lower Styx Road, much of which is relatively undeveloped. The reserve is bounded on its western edge, in part, by the Seafield Park Sub-division.

The owner of one of the sections recently contacted the Parks & Waterways Unit concerned about a small group of pine trees growing near the boundary and the potential detrimental effect they will have on the future development of his property.

SPECIES AND SITE SUITABILITY

The existing pine trees are located 1.5m off the eastern property boundary, and although they are relatively small at present, if left to fully mature, will have the potential to significantly encroach upon the owners property.

The trees were obviously planted at a time when the boundary was simply an adjoining rural block. Given that it is now a residential boundary, we would not consider *Pinus radiata* to be a suitable species to plant within 1.5 metres from a neighbours residential boundary. We would not contemplate planting *Pinus radiata* in any future landscape development along this boundary.

The trees are still relatively young and their removal will not have a significant impact on the overall appearance of the area. In addition, another mature pine tree approximately 60m away on a mutual boundary has been identified as a safety hazard due to a large area of decay in the main trunk and it is proposed to remove this tree at the same time as the other trees.

COST SHARE PROPOSAL

The section owner has offered to contribute towards the removal of the 5 pine trees adjoining his section, and for subsequent shrub replacement. The Parks and Waterways Unit believes this is a fair and reasonable response and proposes to take up the owners offer.

There is a landscape plan already completed for this section of Seafield Park and a budget allocation for revegetation in 2002/2003. It is proposed that the removal of the trees adjacent to the owners section be funded wholly by him, with Parks & Waterways undertaking removal of the diseased pine and replanting as per budget plan.

CONCLUSION

The Parks and Waterways Manager has delegated authority to remove trees that are dead, diseased or dangerous as part of routine maintenance of our parks and open spaces. Requests to remove healthy trees are normally reported to Community Boards for a decision where the trees are considered to be significant or are making a valuable contribution to a wider landscape component. Although the smaller pines are all healthy trees at this stage, their removal is still considered to be more operational due to their smaller size.

Removal of smaller healthy trees on our parks from time to time as part of routine maintenance is not uncommon. It is often necessary to thin out plantings to make way for the development and growth of adjacent trees. We also do this on occasions as part of our risk management and assessment which is appropriate in the case of these smaller pine trees.

The owner would be legally entitled to remove any branches or roots that encroached the vertical line of his boundary. Given the potential size of these trees at maturity, this could result in the trees developing a one sided and unbalanced crown, visually unattractive with a higher susceptibility to failure from uneven weight distribution and anchorage.

Accordingly the Parks and Waterways Unit will be taking up the owners offer and removing the aforementioned trees prior to replanting the boundary with more suitable species.

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairpersons

Recommendation: That the trees be removed and the owners contribute to the cost of suitable trees as part of a landscape plan.