

7. SOUTH NEW BRIGHTON MOTOR CAMP/DOMAIN TREE PLANTING

Officer responsible Parks and Waterways Manager	Author Robyn Croucher - Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, DDI 941-5314 Walter Fielding-Cotterell - City Arborist, DDI 941-8630
---	--

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the results from the public consultation process for the proposed tree planting plan at the South New Brighton Motor Camp and adjacent domain area.

BACKGROUND

The proposed South New Brighton Motor Camp and adjacent domain planting plan was tabled at the Board's meeting on 12 May 2003 with the recommendation that the plan be circulated to local residents for their comment and feedback.

Some of the notable features of the proposed plan were to:

- Reduce future tree hazard risk around the motor camp by retaining the 35 metre wide buffer zone.
- Replant the majority of clear felled land (outside the buffer zone) in a mixture of tall growing pines and macrocarpa tree species.
- Establish a band of small/medium scale trees and native shrub plantings immediately around the motor camp boundary.
- Plant a variety of larger tree species south of the motor camp and to the east and west of the playing fields.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

A draft plan outlining the proposed tree species was circulated, inviting returns by prepaid envelope, to 1,700 households in the neighbourhood of South New Brighton and Southshore, as well as to the South New Brighton Residents' Association, Southshore Ratepayers' Association, South New Brighton Primary School, South New Brighton Motor Camp, South New Brighton Lawn Tennis Club, Pegasus Scout Group and Horizons Day Options Trust. Consultation packs were also made available at the domain, and the New Brighton Library, and were circulated to Board members.

An open evening held at the South New Brighton Community Centre between 7.00 and 9.30 pm on Tuesday 27 May 2003, hosted by Parks and Waterways staff involved in preparing the plan, attracted approximately 30 people. Representatives from local residents' groups and several Board members were also in attendance.

Overall, the consultation process drew a fairly positive response from the local community, with many of the returns thanking the Council for the opportunity to have a say on the replanting proposal. Residents of Malta Crescent and Halsey Street received a second mail out partway through the consultation period, prompted by residents' concerns that not all houses along the two streets had received their original copy.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

A total of 274 completed comment forms have been received, a response rate of 16%. Residents were asked to indicate their acceptance/non-acceptance of the plan, their preferred tree species option and were given the option to comment. The results are listed below. Figures in parentheses refer to the number of respondents who commented on that particular point.

1. Feedback on the proposed landscape plan

- 89% Accept the proposed plan (244)
- 11% Do not accept the proposed plan (30)

Main reasons given for opposing the plan were:

- Concern over maintenance (8)
- Dissatisfaction with native plant ability to provide adequate (wind) shelter to the motor camp and domain area (5)
- A perception that taller trees encourage visibility and help deter possible stranger danger (2)
- Questions related to specific plant species survival (2)

2. Feedback on the tree species list¹

- 13.9% Would like to see more pine and macrocarpa tree species (38)
- 58.8% Would like to see a mixture of pines, macrocarpa and other native/exotic tree and shrub species (161)
- 27.3% Would like to see fewer pine and macrocarpa tree species with more native/exotic tree and shrub species (75)

¹ Percentage scores are made up of those who accept and do not accept the plan.

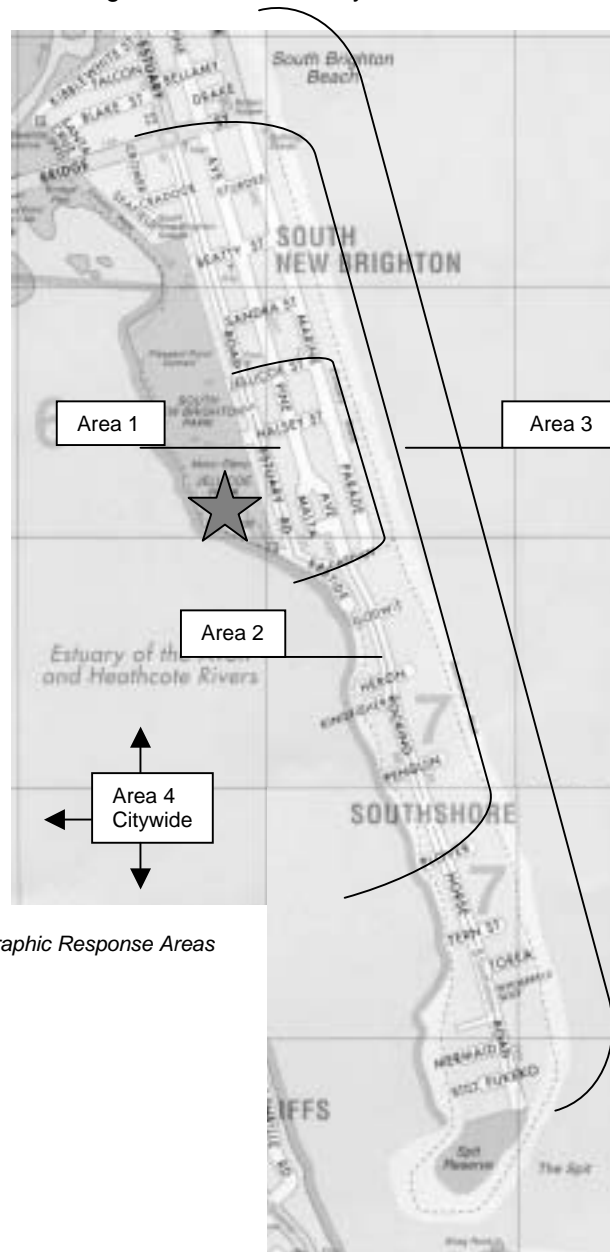
The middle category, a mixture of pines, macrocarpa and other native/exotic tree and shrub species, reflects the current species list of the proposed plan.

While the majority of people chose not to fill out the comments section a number of respondents did comment on the plan and tree species list. These have been abridged, grouped by common themes and trends, and listed in the attachment (but not ranked in any priority order). Two issues [(1) Ongoing Maintenance and (2) Management of New and Existing Plantings] raised from the consultation process have been noted by the Parks and Waterways Unit as needing clarification and are discussed later in this report.

To assist in the analysis, all respondents have been placed into four locality groups which may express different views about the proposed plan. Respondents within each area have been grouped accordingly. The results (shown as percentages) in Table 1 below indicate the sum of grouped votes as divided by the sum of total votes for that area. Map 1 depicts the geographic boundaries of each response area.

Response Areas

- Area 1 Respondents immediately adjacent to the project area. This includes all residents bounded by Jellicoe Street, Marine Parade, Caspian Street and Ebbside Street.
- Area 2 Respondents from the greater South New Brighton and Southshore area, bounded to the north by Bridge Street, and to the south by Plover Street.
- Area 3 Respondents from the wider New Brighton/Southshore community.
- Area 4 Respondents visiting from across the City.



Map 1 - Geographic Response Areas

	Accept	Do not accept	More pine and macrocarpa tree species	Mixture of pine, macrocarpa, native and exotic tree species	Fewer pine and macrocarpa, with more native/exotic tree species
Area 1	75%	25%	33.3%	50%	17%
Area 2	91.5%	8.5%	11.1%	57.3%	31.6%
Area 3	97%	3%	5.9%	60.3%	35.3%
Area 4	90%	10%	0%	65%	35%

Table 1 - Respondents' Geographic Position versus Planting Preference

Feedback indicates the opinions are fairly well distributed with a majority from each area accepting the plan. The results indicate that for respondents further away from the campground the demand for pines and macrocarpas decreases, whilst demand for a mixture of pine, macrocarpa and exotic/native tree species or for fewer pine and macrocarpa tree species with more native/exotic tree species increases. This trend is probably attributed to the perception by those closer to the motor camp and domain area that pine and macrocarpa trees provide greater amounts of shelter than native/exotic tree species.

DISCUSSION

In light of the information received it is apparent the results are clear, and give a good basis to proceed with the plan. However, some minor amendments to the plan and plant species list have been made to reflect better the views of the community.

PLAN AMENDMENTS

1. There were a significant number of requests to augment the number of native plantings both within the motor camp and the adjacent domain area. These wishes will be met by increasing native species numbers by 19% and adding the following; totara, five finger, kanuka and tuapata to the plant species list.
2. Some residents commented on enhancing bird food and habitat sources by increasing the amount of "bird friendly" trees in the area. The list of native tree species has now been slightly altered to include more plants that have significant wildlife value.
3. A couple of residents remarked on the untidiness of strawberry trees during the fruiting season. Their numbers are now reduced from 33 to 17, and those remaining will be planted away from camping and walking areas.
4. Concern was expressed about toe toe and flax species in and around motor camp, and the associated "cutting" dangers presented to passers by. The plants have now been relocated to inside the 35 metre wide buffer zone, away from the motor camp interface.
5. Pohutukawa has been being removed from the plant species list amid concern on its ability to survive frosts typical to the project area.

ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Ongoing Maintenance

The Parks and Waterways Unit is confident the maintenance of new plantings in the area can be kept to a high standard by following a series of maintenance specifications set out in the Christchurch City Council (2000) report - Construction Standard Specifications Part 7 section (14). Section (14) - 'Landscaping Maintenance Procedures and Horticultural Operations' covers procedures necessary to ensure optimum plant growing conditions and normal/healthy landscape establishment.

As part of the maintenance procedures set out in this report, a progress statement to the Parks and Waterways Area Maintenance Contractor will be requested from the contractor at the end of every month. In addition to this, plant conditions will be monitored by a City Council Landscape Architect to ensure the work has been carried out as to the agreed standard.

2. Management of New and Existing Plantings - City Arborist Comments

Existing Tree Species

The existing conifer plantation trees will be managed mostly to preserve the natural woodland character of the plantation trees, except those that are dead, diseased and dangerous will be removed as/when they occur. The existing plantation trees are now too old for selective thinning to result in any significant benefits in terms of good crown development, improved sheltering effect, root development, thick girth growth or visual appearance.

Such thinning at this stage of their life will only serve to increase significantly the risk of wind-throw which is already high. Broken branches will be removed and those that are structurally suspect will be removed or pruned for safety reasons, and also to reduce the severe damage that can be caused to trees when large branches break.

It has been suggested that all dead branches on the pines and macrocarpas be removed. However, this sort of pruning on the conifers, such as the park's plantation trees (most of which only have live foliage at the very tops) would give them a very formal, pole-like, artificial appearance in contrast to the intrinsically natural ambience of the park.

New Plantings

New conifer plantings in the plantation areas will be managed so that the trees are thinned as they grow to ensure they develop adequate root systems to provide stability in winds, sustain live branch growth on the lower parts of the trunk, to maximise wind protection, and to develop sturdy trunks able to withstand strong wind forces. Trees grown in this way will also have greater individual visual appeal in contrast to many of the existing trees. Dead, broken or structurally suspect branches will also be removed or remedially pruned as they occur.

Specimen Trees

Specimen trees will be pruned in accordance with the requirements of each individual tree's health, growth habit, structure and stability. This will also maximise the appearance and general amenity value of the trees.

Native Plantings

Native plantings will on the whole be allowed to grow and develop naturally with pruning or felling of ageing plants largely confined to situations relating to public health or safety.

All pruning will be carried out by competent arborists to a minimum standard of Australian Standard 4373-1996.

CONCLUSION

The concept for South New Brighton Domain Motor Camp and adjacent domain area aims to reflect the views of the community and has been refined in response to community feedback. The local residents and the Parks and Waterways Unit are keen to see replanting commence during the current planting season.

Staff

- Recommendations:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That the Board approve the amended South New Brighton Motor Camp and adjacent domain landscape proposal, and support its implementation.

Chairperson's

- Recommendation:** That the abovementioned recommendations be adopted.