

17. CENTRAL CITY AVON RIVER PROJECT

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee on the proposed Avon River (Central City) Tree Replacement Programme.

Committee members will recall discussion on the Avon River at a seminar last year held to provide information on the Avon River Tree Replacement Strategy and on progress on the Avon River (Central City) Project. The proposed Avon River (Central City) Tree Replacement Programme will form a major section of the draft Avon River Strategy, which will be circulated to elected representatives by the end of 2003.

BACKGROUND

One of the most significant components of the character of the Avon river corridor is the tree structure and it has already been identified that many of the specimen trees contributing to the "Avon River Woodland" are beginning to decline. The Central City Tree Replacement Strategy (2002) compiled by staff demonstrates the large number of tree replacements that need to be planned for over the next decade to ensure the landscape character of the Avon River corridor is preserved for future generations to enjoy.

The replacement of at least 90 specimen trees from the central city river bank is a high priority over the next four years and is estimated to cost \$215,000.00. It is forecasted that the number of necessary replacement plantings will increase to approximately 161 trees in 2015 and up to 180 trees in the year 2020 or a total of more than 50 % of all trees. Proactive, sustainable management decisions are needed to prevent costly and unpleasant decision making in the future.

The attached document is a proposal for the tree replacements. The species outlined have been selected to not only reflect the current tree character but to emphasise it by limiting the number of species within each character area. Themes are also proposed reflecting the landscape character. This document requires feedback from the public before it is ratified as part of the Avon river Strategy.

THE PROPOSAL

It is proposed that two documents form the Tree Replacement Strategy.

1. A programme outlining the number of trees identified for removal and the costs and timing of removal and replacement. Which will be subject to budget provisions
2. A draft list of species suitable for planting in the different character areas along the Avon River within the Central City. The draft species list is attached to this report.

In addition to these proposals it is expected that a more pro-active maintenance programme will take place to further the life expectancy of some trees.

Tree Replacement Programme

Individual trees and their proposed replacement period appear in red on the tree maps within the survey document (Appendix 1-13). It is anticipated that the following programme will be a manageable way to fill the existing gaps and to replace any further trees requiring removal.

Some 60 potential planting sites identified during the original survey in June 2002, where trees were not replaced after storm damage etc, should now also be filled over the next four years, depending on the availability of suitable tree stock. It is not advisable to wait for trees to die completely, causing a health and safety risk, and leading to the accumulation of bigger numbers for replacement in the future.

To reduce the impact on the budget for any one year, the cost for the operation is spread over a 4-year period as follows:

Replacement/Maintenance Period: 2004/05

Total number of replacements : 45 trees of various sizes including 20 specimen not previously replaced. The operation is estimated at \$ 57,000.00

Replacement/Maintenance Period: 2005/06

Total number of replacements: 41 trees of various sizes including 20 specimen not previously replaced. The operation is estimated at \$56,000.00

Replacement Maintenance Period: 2006/07

This particular replacement period should be increased by adding trees scheduled for period 2010. It is recommended to eliminate the 2010 peak over a two year period in preparation for the even higher peak of replacements expected in 2015.

Total number of replacements: 39 trees (including 1 specimen brought forward from 2008 due to advanced decline, and 20 specimen not previously replaced.

The operation is estimated at \$62,000.00.

Replacement/Maintenance Period: 2007/08

This period would deal with the last 17 specimen considered for replacement during the 2010 period, at an estimated cost of \$ 40,000.00 including replacement plantings.

Replacement/Maintenance Period: 2008/09

From this point on, trees considered for replacement in 2015 require to be re-evaluated and programmed into a new strategy.

Costs

The removal and replacement of trees as described is estimated at a minimum of \$215,000.00 over a four year period. The price includes the necessary stump grinding operation and reinstating the holes with soil and grass, but excludes general maintenance that are required for the remaining and new trees. Spreading the impact on the budget over a four year period, makes this maintenance approach a more predictable and controlled financial option. The replacement trees will be large nursery stock or semi mature trees.

Funding

Discription		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Maj.ParksTree	Replacement	projects				
Proj.Management		15,376	14,616	15,983	15,642	15,500
Park Woodlots	Replacement	61,200	61,200	61,200	61,200	61,200
Maj.Street Repl.	Projects	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Maj.Riverb.Repl.	Projects	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Maj.Park.Tree.	Replac.Project	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000	72,000
		198,576	197,816	199,183	198,842	198,700

Re-evaluation of Strategy

A review of the whole strategy will be necessary from 2008 onwards, to allow for some planning issues to be updated. This would include the reviewing and updating of the plan and consider a possible change of priorities.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

It is proposed that public consultation on the Tree Replacement Programme and the proposed species list will be included within the draft Avon River (Central City Strategy) which will be available for comment early next year, once elected representatives have seen it.

CONCLUSION

The Tree Replacement operation is necessary to realise Central City revitalisation and Garden City objectives for the central city. Any delays will lead to the weakening of the landscape, amenity, heritage and well-being values for which the trees were originally planted.

The proposal outlined above is an approach, together with appropriate pruning will sustain the existing tree character within the central city and long-term should enhance it.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the information be received.
 2. That priorities and all programme works be reviewed to accommodate the 'Avon River Central City Tree Replacement Strategy'

Chairman's

- Recommendation:** That the above recommendation be adopted.