

12. LIVING STREETS - THE NEXT STEPS

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of progress and to seek clarification on the way forward with respect to the Living Streets project.

BOARD PRESENTATIONS

A Living Streets presentation has been made to all Community Boards. The feedback has been positive with the most frequently asked question being “*when can we have a living street in our area?*” Peverel Street

Members will be aware that we opened our first Living Street on Tuesday 22 May. Overall this was a success. There was a good turnout of staff, elected members and residents. Feedback has been very positive. Media coverage was less than desirable at a regional level but locally it was well covered. Following the opening we went on to enter Peverel Street in the Creative Places Award 2001 run by Creative NZ. It was announced on 16 July that the project won the “Urban and Landscape Design” category. The award was presented to Christchurch City Council delegates at the Local Government New Zealand Conference in Wellington. Some publicity material has been produced by Creative New Zealand. This material has been distributed to all Local Authorities nationwide.

SHOWPIECE PROJECTS

We have five showpiece projects scheduled for completion this financial year. These are Harvey Terrace, Mathers Road, Geraldine Street, Aynsley Terrace and Creyke Road. Creyke Road is a minor arterial and Aynsley Terrace is a collector road with the remaining three being local roads. It is important to also add in either Papanui Road or Main Road as examples of Living Streets where no funding has been directly allocated. With these we look at legislative changes such as 40 kph zones, explore external funding opportunities and perhaps focus on “beginnings and endings” similar to some of the “main street” projects. Whilst this list does appear reasonably large I suspect not all will come to fruition as Living Streets. This is expanded on this later in this report.

MULTI-DISCIPLINED TEAMS

Peverel Street reinforced the notion that a multi-disciplined team would produce a higher quality result in the planning and implementation stages. The need to combine expertise in all phases of the project will be an integral component of the showpiece projects.

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

There are a multitude of tasks that need to be pursued in the quest to achieve our mission of “*Creating living streets and a living city where a variety of road environments support and encourage a greater range of community and street activity*”. A list is attached which is by no means exhaustive but fittingly highlights the extent of the task ahead.

Establishing our priorities is fundamental in ensuring that initiatives are progressed strategically and that resources are focussed accordingly. We simply do not have the resources or a strong foundation at this point to be spreading ourselves over a wide area.

While Living Streets is still in its infancy, our focus should be with the “showpiece” projects. Getting these completed and “into the market place” provides continuous momentum, publicity and discussion. Perhaps equally important; knowledge. Currently we have little to judge what works and what doesn’t, what are the limitations and what are the areas of greatest development opportunity. The planning and implementation of the diverse range of showpiece projects will provide us with the knowledge, hence ability to refine our processes leading to a sound foundation upon which we will build.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Living Streets charter provides a five phased process for community collaboration. The phases are quite broad eg “All Ears Listening”, “Did We Hear You Right” etc and will be refined and adapted through each project with a view to developing a Living streets planning process. It is proposed to use the current “Planning Process for Capital Works” developed by Lucas Sikiotis as the initial model (copy attached).

KEY RESULT AREAS

Prior to his departure, Lucas Sikiotis wrote a memorandum containing his thoughts on progressing Living Streets. In this memo it was felt that the learning from Peverel Street combined with what we know to date would contribute towards a review of the 10 KRAs to reveal which are the most significant in terms of developing action plans for their achievement. It is difficult to see significant progress being made directly in this area in the near future. Emphasis should be given to the development of the showpiece projects and associated planning processes with a view of progressively reviewing the KRAs as more knowledge is obtained. In essence many of the initiatives under each KRA will be given consideration as part of the planning for each project leading to progressive review. It may, in fact, be premature to appoint leaders of each Key Result Area at a time when the City Streets Unit is undergoing an efficiency review. It is perhaps an opportune time to consider the role of Living Streets and the future leaders of the Key Result Areas within the context of the review process.

REINFORCING THE PRINCIPLES

In some respects it has been a little disappointing at how the public and even our own staff have interpreted "Living Streets". To some extent launching Peverel Street as our first Living Street has compounded this problem. Generally there is a tendency for people to associate Living Streets with the infrastructure and the embellishments eg water features in Peverel Street, and to overlook the fact that these are merely part of the foundation for creating a Living Street. In hindsight the publicity audiovisual does not adequately deliver this message either. The misconception is an easy trap to fall into and as leaders we need to keep referring back to the principles underpinning the Living Streets Charter on a regular basis for clarifying and refocussing our thoughts. It is vitally important that we proclaim that Living Streets cannot succeed by physical works alone. The design should facilitate the improved living experience and provide a platform for community interaction. The process must start at a community level where participation and ownership can be nurtured. To this end we are faced with a difficult challenge. We must succeed with a living street where very low cost minor works and subtle changes are made. The Main Street showpiece projects where there is no funding at present will provide the opportunities to explore how exactly this can be achieved.

It is important to consider that whilst we have identified a list of showpiece projects, this is a list of streets with potential only. It won't be until we are able to gauge the level of commitment and "buyin" from the stakeholders that we are able to say, "yes this could succeed". Stakeholders will need to be exposed to the principles of Living Streets and gain an appreciation of what we are trying to achieve. Without the commitment from stakeholders we will not have the vital ingredient and we should move on to more fertile ground.

FUNDING

This is an area of particular concern. You will note that the most of the proposed showpiece projects are linked to the kerb and channel renewal program. The funding for these projects is currently limited to this renewal only. As it is, the provision does not extend to any significant embellishments. Our experience with Peverel Street suggests that an additional 15%-20% is required to create an environment that would set the stage for activities that enhance quality of life. This is not to say that we should be relying on extra funding only as a means to create these environments. However fundamentally, we need to accept that in many cases this will be a reality and we need to be mindful of this. We are exploring ways in which we can reduce the cost of kerb and channel renewal and have recently trialed a "swale" system that negated the need for channelling but the comparative cost was, in fact higher. We are continually looking at cost effectiveness as a critical component of design. The showpiece projects must be given every opportunity to succeed and this extends to the budget provision. The current timeframe does not allow us the privilege of indepth exploration into significant cost saving measures that may not be achieved. The budget provision ideally should include a "Living

Streets" component of 15-20% or a lumpsum provision could be made to enable completion of the showpiece projects. The lump sum provision would be in the order of \$415,000 for the present year and \$491,000 covering the remaining three years (see spreadsheet attached). Following the completion of the showpiece projects we will be better placed to analysis the extent of additional funding required to continue the implementation of living streets. Given the current climate, the source of this provision must come from within established budgets and should not be limited to City Streets. The benefits associated with Living Streets traverses unit boundaries with particular relevance to the Parks and Waterways Unit.

PENNY COOMBS (THE PEOPLE FOR PLACES AND SPACES)

Penny Coombs will be visiting us again on 7-10 August. It is important that we use her time wisely and to the best advantage. Penny has been briefed concerning our progress and our thoughts about where we are heading. Penny agrees that it is important that we spend sometime refocussing and re-enforcing the Living Streets principles with staff and elected members. From here we both agree that we need to confirm our priorities and develop initiatives and actions that will build on one another in a strategic sense. She refers to "*picking short term winners*" and as mentioned the "showpiece" projects provide the best opportunity to achieve this.

CONCLUSION

We have started well but we need to maintain the momentum. We have identified the need to re-enforce the principles underpinning the charter to achieve cohesion. There is a need to confirm our priorities and develop initiatives and actions that will build on one another in a strategic sense. To this end advancement of the showpiece projects will provide the best building blocks through a learning experience that will lead to a progressive review of the Key Result Areas and ultimately the appointment of leaders of each KRA. To increase the potential for showpiece projects to succeed additional funding is required.

The above report was considered by the Living Streets Subcommittee at its meeting on 1 August 2001 and the recommendations of the Subcommittee are as adopted by the City Services Committee.

- Recommendation:**
1. That planning and development of the showpiece projects be confirmed as the leading priority.
 2. That Penny Coombs be used for some reinforcement/refocussing sessions as part of her next visit.
 3. That an additional sum of \$250,000 per annum, for the next five years, be made available from the civic and community portion of the capital endowment fund income.
 4. That funding from the existing Living Streets budget be used and that funding from the Parks and Waterways Unit and the Policy Directorate for NIPs be regarded as available for some degree for this work.
 5. That a 40 km neighbourhood be proposed as a trial for the Charleston neighbourhood and be discussed with the LTSA and relevant Council units.