

4. REVISED DRAFT CITYWIDE PLANTING STRATEGY

Officer responsible General Manager and Acting Planning Manager, Ian Hay	Author Liz Briggs, Policy Leader, Open Space and Water, DDI 941-8641
---	--

The purpose of this report is to:

- (a) Seek approval from the Committee for the content of the revised Draft Citywide Planting Strategy
- (b) To confirm the type and timing of consultation required.

BACKGROUND

A Draft Citywide Planting Strategy was produced in September 2000 by the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit. It was formulated following input from two seminars with a wide range of staff in the Council and two seminars with the former Environment Committee and Parks and Recreation Committee.

There was a recognised need for this Strategy because:

- (a) Planting is an essential component of the city's environment and Garden City image, and therefore requires rational planning and decision-making.
- (b) The Council invests significant resources in planting establishment and management, but without sufficient overall co-ordination and integration
- (c) A strategy would help implement some of the objectives and policies of the proposed City Plan, and provide a framework and guidance for the planting component of other Council plans and initiatives.
- (d) A strategy would provide the mechanism to allow differing and occasionally conflicting viewpoints and priorities to be reconciled.
- (e) The Strategy would identify the Council's long-term vision and objectives for planting in public open spaces of the city.

The strategy was defined in the 2000 document as:

"A set of policies with a clear process and plan, which will provide a framework for planting design on public land throughout the city"

STATUS OF THE DRAFT 2000 STRATEGY

Following the presentation of the Draft Citywide Planting Strategy at a joint Parks and Recreation and Environment Committee Seminar on the 9th October 2000, submissions were requested from staff and councillors by the end of November 2000. There are several issues still left to resolve, including:

- (a) The choice of the most "appropriate" planting for parts of the city's open space. This is a highly controversial subject, with the "native" versus "exotic" species debate presenting a constant challenge.
- (b) The Draft 2000 Strategy attracted a large number of submissions with wide-ranging views, which require careful and balanced consideration.
- (c) Staff roles and responsibilities have changed over the past three years. This has resulted in the need for issues and solutions to be revisited in order to be aligned with the present structure and policies.

Taking the above into account, it is now appropriate to work towards a finalised document.

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO THE DRAFT 2000 STRATEGY

A large number of submissions were received from staff in the:

- Parks and Waterways Unit
- City Solutions
- Urban Design and Heritage Team

along with submissions from:

- The Garden City Sub-Committee
- Members of the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee

These submissions were analysed, and the suggested key changes to the Draft are presented in Attachment A, entitled "Key Changes To Citywide Planting Strategy as Suggested Through Submissions".

Some of the key points raised through the submissions were:

- (a) The need to find an appropriate method to implement the policies and principles in the Strategy.
- (b) The need to identify and incorporate linkages between the Strategy and other strategic documents and plans in the Council, such as the Waterways Asset Management Strategy, Parks Management Plans and Concept Plans for "icon" and heritage parks, the Neighbourhood Improvement Plan programme and the planting programme for City Streets.
- (c) The need to reflect the true balance and spectrum of planting between exotics and natives, while maintaining the "right plant for the right place" philosophy.
- (d) Once the content of the Strategy had been agreed, and the Draft revised, consultation should be carried out both within the organisation and with key stakeholders, including Tangata Whenua and the Community Boards.

AGREED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT 2000 STRATEGY

A Seminar of the Parks, Gardens and Waterways Committee was held on Monday 22nd April 2002, to consider the submissions as outlined in Attachment A. The main changes now being presented to the Committee in the revised Draft, are an incorporation of the "key changes" relating to the "structure" and "content" as agreed at the Seminar, and stated in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Attachment A.

A copy of the revised Draft will be made available to committee members prior to the meeting.

The revised Draft will be presented at the Committee meeting, with the main changes highlighted. The revised "contents" sheet is included as Attachment B, with any additional sections highlighted in grey.

The recommended main changes in the revised Draft are:

- (a) The suggested design process for "how to choose the right plant for the right place" has been moved into an Appendix entitled "Best Practice Guide for Designers", along with formats for a brief and process checklist, and suggested lists of appropriate plantings for parts of the city (taken from existing Council documents). This part of the Strategy will be used for internal purposes, and reviewed by staff as part of recommendation 3 of this report.
- (b) New sections have been added that illustrate other Council initiatives which have links with the Citywide Planting Strategy, and require integration with the Strategy and with each other to ensure the planting philosophy is reflected in decision-making (see Attachment B; Sections 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, 3.2)
- (c) The explanation and development of the Strategy has been further expanded to clarify the rationale (see Sections 3.9, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.9.3, 3.9.4 and 4.0 of Attachment B]

THE DESIGN PROCESS – HOW TO PUT THE RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE

The Citywide Planting Strategy is a framework and philosophy to guide the planting practice in the Council's public open spaces. However, the principles will be implemented through a series of other council and community initiatives, as illustrated in the revised Draft. Also, in order to ensure that the agreed outcomes are achieved on the ground, it is important that the "designers" of the planting plans are given the appropriate brief, resources and time, including methods for integrating design initiatives across the organisation.

RECOMMENDED CONSULTATION PROCESS:

It is recommended that, once the committee has agreed on the content and format of the Strategy, that the document be circulated for submissions over a six week period to the following groups and key stakeholders:

External

- New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects
- Central City Mayoral Forum
- Christchurch Beautifying Association
- Urban Landscapes Group
- Civic Trust
- Friends of the Botanic Gardens
- Canterbury Horticultural Society
- Environment Canterbury
- General Public

Internal

- Garden City Subcommittee
- Community Boards
- Greenspace Unit
- City Transport Unit
- City Solutions
- Communications and Consultation

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Parks, Garden and Waterways Committee recommend approval of the revised content of the Citywide Planting Strategy.
 2. That the committee approve the consultation process outlined above.
 3. That an agreed design process for determining planting in public spaces be developed and implemented by the appropriate senior managers in the City Environment Group and Strategic Development Group.

Chairman's

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