

## 6. BOTANIC GARDENS

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The purpose of this report is to update the Parks Gardens and Waterways Committee on progress with the Botanic Gardens masterplanning project.

### BACKGROUND

A thorough site analysis has been completed identifying the present physical situation in the Botanic Gardens. This was presented in a Council and Hagley Ferrymead Community Board joint seminar meeting on 17 November 2003.

This seminar has subsequently been presented to the Friends of the Botanic Gardens and the Botanic Gardens Staff.

The intent of this seminar was to inform audiences about the size, scale, complexity and condition of the Botanic Gardens asset, and what physical issues were either present, or foreseen to become significant in the near future.

Recommendations were then sought on the process to be followed in order that some of the more pressing issues could be physically addressed in the near future. This resulted in a funding application being made to the Annual Plan Subcommittee on 23 February 2004.

The Subcommittee recommended that funding be made available for a tree replacement programme, compilation of a GIS plant records database, labelling of plants, greenhouse redevelopment programme, Armagh Street entry and staff accommodation building, and associated fees and expenses to further define the scope of work for these items.

Some amendments were made to the submission, including the deletion of funding for the Display Greenhouses upgrades. The Annual Plan Subcommittee's recommendations were passed at the Christchurch City Council meeting on 18/03/04.

### SCOPE

The scope of this project includes the following components :

- Botanic Gardens masterplanning
- Botanic Gardens & Hagley Park Management Plan reviews
- Tree replacement programme
- GIS / electronic plant database
- Labelling and interpretation of specimens and collections
- New staff and visitor facility

The following Botanic Gardens projects have previously been approved :

- Automated irrigation of entire site – budgeted 04/05 - 08/09
- New toilet facility – budgeted 06/07 - 07/08

Future potential projects are also proposed to include :

- Ordering of collections, and path networks
- A Display Greenhouse extension to house existing collections in storage
- Redevelopment of Armstrong Lawn to reflect Museum Refurbishment & altered circulation patterns
- Rolleston Ave Piazza concept
- Improved interface of CDHB grounds to Botanic Gardens
- Bank and water enhancements between the Armagh Street carpark and Victoria Lake

A proposed budget for Botanic Gardens is attached.

## CONSULTATION

Since the planning project has been given priority by Council we have focused on completing the initial public consultation programme, in order that detailed briefs and schematic designs may then be prepared for the included projects.

Opinions Market Research have now carried out three rounds of Auditing and Quantitative Assessments of Botanic Gardens clients, in the Spring, Summer and Autumn seasons. Approximately 1900 Botanic Gardens users have been surveyed. The Winter survey still remains to be completed.

The objective of this surveying is to form a reference point for the understanding of Botanic Gardens users, in a statistically valid and reproducible manner.

A Qualitative Survey is presently underway and due for completion in July. This focuses on the needs and opinions of particular user groups. Groups being surveyed include :

- Christchurch residents who currently visit
- Christchurch residents who do not currently visit (have not visited for 5+ years)
- Visitors to Christchurch who have visited the Gardens
- Visitors to Christchurch who have not visited the Gardens
- School groups (Teachers)
- Maori Community
- Tour group operators

A separate study is being undertaken on Asian users of the Gardens in association with Lincoln University.

More specialist interest groups are intended to be consulted in detail, but priority is being given to identifying the needs and opinions of the 95% of daily Botanic Gardens occupants.

In addition to this the Botanical Services Manager, Operational Manager and Project Team are discussing staff and operational needs for the built facilities in the Gardens.

The objective of the consultation exercise is to fully understand the immediate and future needs of the people who use, work or support the Botanic Gardens. The results of this, coupled with the Site Analysis, will give us a complete picture on which to base the briefs for design.

## COMMUNICATION

A Project Control Group has been formed in order to co-ordinate the projects. This comprises :

Greenspace Unit Manger - Anne Greenup  
Communications Co-ordinator - Michele Hider  
Project Manager - Mark Noonan  
Botanical Services Operations Manager – Jeremy Hawker  
Curator Botanic Gardens – David Given  
Architect – Crispin Schurr

The Communication Team have been instructed to prepare a Communication Strategy for the complete project. The strategy will be presented to Council for approval.

## PROGRAMME

Critical to the success of the project is the preparation of a detailed design brief that reflects the needs of the community. The next quarter will see the conclusion of public consultation, the interpretation of user needs and the preparation of this brief.

It is proposed that the brief be brought back to this Committee for approval.

### Staff

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

### Chairman's

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