

7. MAIN ROADS AMENITY PLANTING - CITY TO SUMNER - REDCLIFFS SCHOOL FRONTAGE

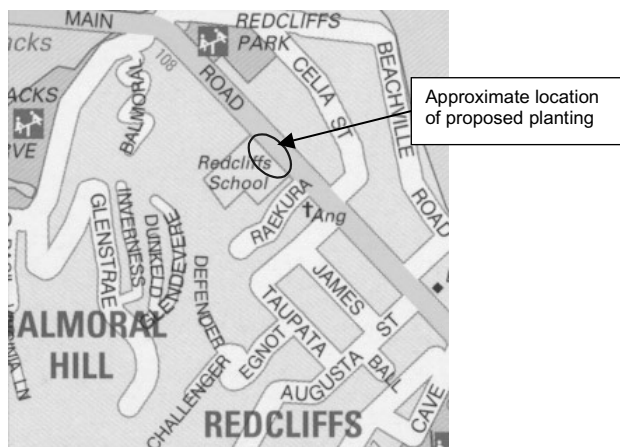
General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
Officer responsible:	Transport and City Streets Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the outcome of the planning and consultation undertaken in relation to the proposed amenity planting at Redcliffs School (as part of the Main Roads Amenity Planting project - City to Sumner route), and to seek Board approval to proceed with the planting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Main Roads Amenity Planting project was initiated by the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee (STU) at the start of the 2002/03 financial year by placing \$75,000 per year on the City Streets capital programme. The purpose of the project is to increase the level of amenity planting along arterial roads.
3. Council officers considered a series of options to initiate the work for this project, and recommended to STU in April 2003 a proposal to develop a full route concept along Ferry Road and Main Road which the STU committee accepted. A full report on the status of the City to Sumner planting project will be presented to the Board within six weeks. In summary though, a number of locations have been identified as potential areas for amenity planting improvements along the City to Sumner route, not all of which have been practical for planting, due to limited space, view obstructions, and/or underground wiring.
4. One option investigated to counter the limited space and berm areas within the road reserve along this route has been opportunities to work with private landowners in order to implement plantings along the roadside. The Redcliffs School Main Road frontage has been identified as one such opportunity.
6. The proposed location of the Redcliffs School planting is shown below:



7. The Redcliffs School proposal involves planting Norfolk Pines along the Main Road frontage of Redcliffs School. The planting will be on school property, owned by the Ministry of Education. The proposal involves removing the existing trees along the school frontage and replacing them with Norfolk Pines (see attachments 1 and 2).
8. Redcliffs School is enthusiastic and supportive of the proposal. Adjacent residents and property owners have been informed of the proposal, and no significant issues have been raised.
9. In order to avoid a “de-nuding” effect, it is proposed that trees that are already approximately 4 metres high are planted. Photographs of the trees (see attachment 3), as are images that provide an artist’s impression of the trees once mature (see attachment 1).
10. The trees are now available, and planting is planned for later this year outside normal school hours to minimise disruption to the school.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

11. The estimated total cost for this project is \$20,000 inclusive of all consultation, design and project management.
12. The Main Roads Amenity Planting project is part of the Transport and City Streets Capital Programme, and the Ferrymead to Sumner element of the project is programmed for completion in the 2005 year. The 2005/06 budget for Main Roads Amenity Planting is approximately \$150,000. Design costs were provided in the 2004/05 budget.
13. There are some minor legal implications of the proposed Redcliffs School planting, as the trees will be planted on Ministry of Education property, rather than Council property. Agreement with the Redcliffs School Board of Trustees has been reached on the following terms:
 - Christchurch City Council is responsible for:
 - felling and removal of existing trees, including subsurface stumps
 - conditioning of soil prior to replanting
 - ordering and purchasing of Norfolk Pines
 - planting of Norfolk Pines
 - maintenance of Norfolk Pines as required for the first two years following planting
 - Redcliffs School is responsible for:
 - regularly watering the Norfolk Pines as required to keep them healthy
 - long-term maintenance of the Norfolk Pines beyond the first two years

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the plan for planting Norfolk Pines along the frontage of Redcliffs School for implementation.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the recommendation be adopted.

BACKGROUND ON MAIN ROADS AMENITY PLANTING PROJECT - REDCLIFFS SCHOOL

14. The Main Roads Amenity Planting project was initiated by the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee at the start of the 2002/03 financial year by placing \$75,000 per year on the City Streets capital programme (under the New Construction category). The purpose of the project was to arrange for more planting of street trees along arterial roads.
15. Since that time, investigations have been undertaken to identify locations with potential for amenity planting improvements along the City to Sumner route. However, there are limited opportunities for street trees within the road reserve due to a lack of space and berm areas. Therefore, Council staff have investigated opportunities to implement planting on private land along the roadside. The Redcliffs School Main Road frontage was identified as one such opportunity.

OPTIONS

16. At the Redcliffs School site, several options were considered, including:
 - maintaining the status quo
 - planting Pohutukawa
 - planting Norfolk Pines

PREFERRED OPTION

17. The preferred option is the planting of Norfolk Pines along the Main Road frontage of Redcliffs School, Redcliffs. Norfolk Pines will also be planted along the frontage of the section adjoining the school immediately to the northwest. This section has recently been acquired by the school and developed for use as a car park and playing fields.
18. The Pines will be evenly spaced along the school frontage, and planted at a similar distance from the school's roadside boundary as the existing trees. In order to avoid a "de-nuding" effect, it is proposed that trees that are already approximately 4 metres high are planted. Trees of this size are not always readily available, however in this instance Council staff have been able to source trees from the North Island. Photographs of the existing trees that are to be removed (attachment 2), the trees to be planted (attachment 3), and images that provide an artist's impression of the trees once mature (attachment 1) are appended.
19. In choosing Norfolk Pines as the preferred species to plant, consideration was also given to using Pohutukawas, which are often used near the coast when there is little space, or there are issues with blocking people's views. However in this case, there is not an issue with views, as all of the properties above the school are atop a high rock face, well above the height that the pines will ever reach. Further, Pohutukawa are a relatively slow growing tree (particularly this far south), and given that the project involves the removal of some quite large existing trees, it was considered important that they be replaced with trees with considerable stature. Norfolk Pines are a tree that is often associated with the coast, they will grow to a good size in the Sumner/Redcliffs area, and they are reasonably hardy to local conditions. In addition, they will link in with the existing Norfolk Pines in Sumner and on the route to Sumner, helping to reinforce their impact and providing a consistent "look" along the route. The School also indicated that Norfolk Pines are favourable as they do not "bush up" around the base, allowing good visibility into the school grounds, which is beneficial in terms of security of the school property, particularly during holiday periods.

Consultation on the Preferred Option

20. The planting proposal was outlined to the Redcliffs School Board of Trustees at a meeting on 18 November 2004, along with a presentation of artists' impressions of the proposed Pines. The Board of Trustees responded enthusiastically to the proposal.
21. In December 2004, agreement was reached between the Council and the Board of Trustees for the planting of the Pines on the following basis:

Christchurch City Council will be responsible for:

- felling and removal of existing trees, including subsurface stumps
- conditioning of soil prior to planting
- ordering and purchasing the Norfolk Pines
- planting the Norfolk Pines
- maintenance of the Pines as required for the first two years following planting until the trees are established

Redcliffs School Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- regularly watering the Norfolk Pines, especially during the summer months of the first two years
 - long-term maintenance of the trees beyond the first two years
22. The only issue that was raised by the Board of Trustees related to watering of the trees. The Board was concerned that the watering requirements of the trees, particularly in the first two years may push the school into an excess water situation. It is unclear at this stage whether this will or will not become an issue, however it was agreed that if it does, Council will discuss the options available to mitigate the situation with the School at the time. Options might include installation of a separate water meter at the Council's expense for water used to irrigate the trees; or calculation of the flow required for the trees and subtraction of this from the school's water account.
 23. Given that the proposed planting will not be on Council owned land and the landowner is supportive of the proposal, consultation was undertaken with adjoining residents and property owners on an "inform only" basis. The Board was advised of this proposed consultation by memo dated 17 March 2005. An information leaflet explaining the proposal and the proposed timeframe for the planting, and providing a Council staff contact for questions, was sent to residents and property owners at adjacent properties (39 to 59, 128, and 142 Main Road) and to the Redcliffs Residents' Association in April 2005.
 24. Two responses from residents were received. One was supportive of the removal of the Poplars at the southern end of the school frontage and the replacement with Norfolk Pines. The other expressed a preference for South Island Kowhai.
 25. The project team gave consideration to the use of South Island Kowhai, but it was felt that this species would not have the same stature, or impact from the road as the Norfolk Pines, or provide the same thematic link with existing Norfolk Pines in Sumner and along the City to Sumner route. However, the Norfolk Pines will be planted approximately 12 metres apart, and therefore there may be space to plant Kowhai between them if this was something that the school supported. The resident with the preference for Kowhai was referred to the school to determine the school's position in this regard. No further response in this regard has been received.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

26. The preferred option is the planting of Norfolk Pines along the Main Road frontage of Redcliffs School, Redcliffs.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Enhances the amenity of the immediate area and the City to Sumner route through implementation of trees along the roadway that have consistent form and stature, and link into other trees along the route, contributing to a "theme". Enhances the amenity of the area through the removal of existing mixed species and form trees. Provide greenspace and shade benefits to the school pupils, and security benefits to the school due to the nature of the foliage.	Some residents / road users may prefer alternative species.
Cultural	May provide a link to the coast for some residents / road users.	Maori may prefer the use of indigenous species.
Environmental	Maintains and enhances the amenity values and biodiversity of the area.	Do not contribute to the indigenous biodiversity of the area.
Economic	Norfolk Pines are relatively hardy to local conditions and therefore maintenance costs are likely to be relatively low. Agreement with school limits Council's maintenance responsibilities to the first two years.	Some maintenance costs may arise in the first two years. In the event of the trees have very high water demand, this could lead to some minor expenditure by the Council, as per agreement with the school.
<p>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: Primary alignment with community outcome a city with a sustainable natural environment. Also contributes to a city of healthy and active people, a cultural and fun city, and a liveable city.</p> <p>Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities: No or little impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities.</p> <p>Effects on Maori: No specific effects on Maori, although Maori may prefer the use of indigenous species.</p> <p>Consistency with existing Council policies: Proposal is not inconsistent with the policy on tree planting in streets, as it is outside the road reserve.</p> <p>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Redcliffs School Board of Trustees are enthusiastic and supportive of the proposal and have agreed to the proposed planting on the school's land. Board is also supportive of Norfolk Pines as they provide good visibility into the school grounds in terms of security outside school hours.</p> <p>Adjoining residents and property owners have been advised of the proposal on an "inform" basis, given that the planting is occurring on private land. Two residents have contacted staff in response. One wishes to see the existing poplars at the southern end of the school frontage removed and replaced with the Norfolk Pines. The other expressed a preference for South Island Kowhai.</p> <p>Other relevant matters: Nil</p>		

Maintain The Status Quo (If Not Preferred Option)

27. The status quo option involves the retention of the existing trees along the school frontage and no amenity planting in this area, as there is no available space within the road reserve.

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Retains trees within the school grounds and along the roadway, contributing to the amenity of the area and the City to Sumner route.	Amenity value of existing trees is not optimal, as they consist of trees of mixed species, form and health, and do not contribute to a consistent "theme" along the City to Sumner route.
Cultural	Nil	Nil
Environmental	Retains trees within the school grounds and along the roadway, contributing to the amenity and biodiversity of the area and the City to Sumner route.	Some existing trees are deciduous and leaves can contribute to winter stormwater problems in the immediate area.
Economic	No Council expenditure required.	Nil.

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:

Retention of the status quo is neutral in terms of achievement of community outcomes, although the status quo does involve retaining some trees, so this will contribute to a city with a sustainable natural environment.

Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities:

Nil or minimal impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities.

Effects on Maori:

No impacts on Maori.

Consistency with existing Council policies:

Retention of the status quo would not be inconsistent with existing Council policies.

Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest:

Neither the school nor any residents have expressed a preference for the retention of the existing trees. The school has expressed a preference for the removal of the existing trees, which are of mixed species, form and health. An adjoining resident has expressed support for the removal of the poplars at the southern end of the school frontage.

Other relevant matters:

Nil