

## 5. CANBERRA RESERVE LANDSCAPE PLAN

<b>General Manager responsible:</b>	General Manager, City Environment
<b>Officer responsible:</b>	Greenspace Manager
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### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval to implement the Canberra Reserve landscape plan.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Canberra Reserve is a small local park at the end of Canberra Place, which has some junior play equipment, seats and an area of open space. The trees in the park provide shelter and shade for park users and have significant amenity value. The original planting layout was along the boundaries of the reserve, in an alternate planting of Ash and Birch trees. This pattern has been broken by removal of one of the Birches.
3. There are a number of tree management and maintenance issues which need to be addressed in Canberra Reserve. These are essential health and safety issues (one Birch and one Ash have been identified as defective) and issues of nuisance and reactive work. The plan is therefore to address these issues, whilst maintaining the amenity and use of this small local reserve for the public.
4. The objectives for the Canberra Reserve landscape plan are:
  - To undertake a tree assessment in Canberra Reserve
  - To remove any unhealthy trees
  - To develop a tree replacement strategy and landscape plan for Canberra Reserve.
5. The Project Team developed a landscape plan to meet these objectives. Key features of the plan included the:
  - Removal of four Silver Birch trees and one Ash tree
  - Addition of two medium sized pink flowered Chestnut trees
  - Addition of two small sized flowering Cherry trees
  - Addition of taller shrubs and low landscaping at the northern corners of the reserve.
6. In May 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 100 stakeholders. This pamphlet included a summary of the project, an initial concept plan (refer attachment 1), and a feedback form. The consultation received a 30% response rate (thirty responses). Community feedback was generally positive and there were three opponents to the proposal (one would like a proposed tree relocated; one considers that the project is a waste of money; and one considers Chestnut trees to be inappropriate).
7. The consultation outcome and Project Team responses are summarised in attachment 2. The key issues identified relate to:
  - Support for design of park to preserve the open space (as this is used for ball games)
  - Support for the removal of the Silver Birch trees
  - Comments about species selection:
    - Use of Chestnut trees – potential for nuts to be thrown by children, considered poisonous, considered to damage machinery
    - Desire for smaller trees
    - Desire for non-flowering trees
    - Suggest Conifers, Kahikateas, native trees, *Paulownia tomentosa*
    - Concern at shading of an adjacent property.

8. The initial concept has been amended in response to community feedback and the preferred option is attached as attachment 3. This option best satisfies the aims and objectives of the project and has good community support. Implementation of the landscape plan is scheduled for July 2006.
9. There were two options considered for the upgrade to Canberra Reserve:
  - (a) Tree replacement and landscape plan.
  - (b) Status quo – no change to the park.
10. The preferred option, (a) implementation of a tree replacement and landscape plan, best satisfies the aims and objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation.

#### **FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

11. The proposed \$7,500 upgrade to Canberra Reserve is programmed in the Greenspace Unit's capital budget, for implementation over the 2006/2007 financial year.
12. None of the trees in Canberra Reserve are protected under the City Plan.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve the plan shown in attachment 3 (amended June 2006), in order to proceed to the implementation of the Canberra Reserve landscape plan.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION**

That the officer's recommendation be adopted.

## BACKGROUND ON CANBERRA RESERVE LANDSCAPE PLAN

13. Canberra Reserve is a small local park at the end of Canberra Place, which has some junior play equipment, seats and an area of open space. The trees in the park provide shelter and shade for park users and have significant amenity value. The original planting layout was along the boundaries of the reserve, in an alternate planting of Ash and Birch trees. This pattern has been broken by removal of one of the Birches.
14. There are a number of tree management and maintenance issues which need to be addressed in Canberra Reserve. These are essential health and safety issues (one Birch and one Ash have been identified as defective) and issues of nuisance and reactive work. The plan is therefore to address these issues, whilst maintaining the amenity and use of this small local reserve for the public.
15. The objectives for the Canberra Reserve landscape plan are:
  - To undertake a tree assessment in Canberra Reserve
  - To remove any unhealthy trees
  - To develop a tree replacement strategy and landscape plan for Canberra Reserve.
16. As the Birch trees are the large and 'pioneering' tree cover, it is proposed to remove the remaining Birch and leave a framework of the Ash as perimeter planting. The defective Ash will also be removed. This is a small reserve, which provides limited space in which to replace the five trees that will be removed. The replacement trees will be located to improve the general amenity of the reserve, maintain the perimeter planting approach, and to enhance the visual appeal of the reserve's entrances.
17. The Project Team developed a landscape plan to meet these objectives, which included:
  - Removal of four Silver Birch trees and one Ash tree (as these have been identified as either unhealthy specimens or as providing a nuisance to adjoining neighbours)
  - Addition of two medium sized (12-15m) pink flowered Chestnut trees
  - Addition of two small sized (8m) flowering Cherry trees
  - Addition of taller shrubs and low landscaping at the northern corners of the reserve.
18. In May 2006 a publicity pamphlet was distributed to approximately 100 stakeholders. This pamphlet included a summary of the project, an initial concept plan (refer attachment 1), and a feedback form. A signboard was also erected in the park. The consultation received a 30% response rate (thirty responses). Community feedback was generally positive and there were three opponents to the proposal (one would like a proposed tree relocated; one considers that the project is a waste of money; and one considers Chestnut trees to be inappropriate).
19. The consultation outcome and Project Team responses are summarised in attachment 2. The key issues identified relate to:
  - Support for design of park to preserve the open space (as this is used for ball games)
  - Support for the removal of the Silver Birch trees
  - Comments about species selection:
    - Use of Chestnut trees – potential for nuts to be thrown by children, considered poisonous, considered to damage machinery
    - Desire for smaller trees
    - Desire for non-flowering trees
    - Suggest Conifers, Kahikatea, native trees, *Paulownia tomentosa*
    - Concern at shading of an adjacent property.

20. The Project Team considered the feedback from this consultation and revised the concept plan in the following way:
- On the northern boundary, the proposed Chestnut will be located approximately 6m from boundary, to maximise the open space of the reserve
  - The proposed Chestnut tree on the eastern boundary will be replaced by two small trees (flowering Cherries)
  - On the southern boundary, the proposed flowering Cherry near the Main North Road entrance will be relocated eastwards to prevent the shading of the living area of 28A Canberra Reserve. The exact location will be determined in conjunction with the landowner at the time of planting.
  - The proposed landscaping on the north west corner of the park will not be installed
  - The proposed landscaping on the north east corner of the park has been amended to better accommodate mowers and to maximise the open space of the reserve.
21. Consultation feedback also sought an upgrade to playground and improved maintenance of the alleyway that links Main North Road and Canberra Reserve. These requests have been noted and forwarded to appropriate staff to action.
22. In terms of tree selection, it is the recommendation of the Project Team to use the pink flowering Chestnut tree as part of this design, despite the negative comments this received. However, the number of these trees has been reduced from two to one, in response to consultation feedback. The advantage of using the Chestnut is that they are a very robust tree, suitable for use in open space play areas. They also offer good shade and shelter and deciduous, allowing maximum light in the winter. They are an attractive medium sized flowering tree that complements the existing framework of Ash trees in this reserve. Chestnut trees have been used elsewhere around the city and it has been found that the Chestnuts are quite soft and rot away over time. We acknowledge that children may find the chestnuts fascinating and this is one of the benefits of drawing nature into the city.
23. The Project Team have been in discussions with the landowner at 28A Canberra Place regarding the trees on this property (and 28 Canberra Place) that bound the reserve. Some of these trees are overgrown and overhang the pathway that runs between Main North Road and Canberra Place. If the adjacent landowners are amenable these trees could be removed in conjunction with this project.
24. The amended concept plan is included as attachment 3. This plan best satisfies the aims and objectives of the project and has a good degree of community support. Implementation of the landscape plan is scheduled to begin in July 2006.

#### **OPTIONS**

25. There were two options considered for the upgrade to Craighead Reserve:
- (a) Tree replacement and landscape plan. This option addresses the tree maintenance and management issues that have been identified.
  - (b) Status quo – no change to the park. The option does not address the tree maintenance and management issues that have been identified. Unhealthy trees would ultimately degrade further and may require urgent attention in the future.

#### **PREFERRED OPTION**

26. The preferred option, (a) the tree replacement and landscape plan, is included as attachment 3. This option best satisfies the aims and objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation.