

## 5. BANKS AVENUE/DUDLEY CREEK LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT

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| <b>General Manager responsible:</b> | General Manager City Environment                         |
| <b>Officer responsible:</b>         | Transport and Greenspace Unit Manager                    |
| <b>Authors:</b>                     | Mary Hay, DDI: 941 5410 and Abigail Smith, DDI: 941 8760 |

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval to proceed to detailed design and implementation of the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek landscape enhancement plan.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. In 2005 the Greenspace Unit undertook community consultation on bank stabilisation, tree removal and general stream enhancement of Dudley Creek in conjunction with proposed street works in Banks Avenue.
3. To date, the following works have been completed:
  - The traffic calming and kerb and channel renewal - as Banks Avenue is the boundary between the Shirley/Papanui and the Burwood/Pegasus wards this work required the approval of both Community Boards (Transport and City Streets Unit).
  - Minor bank stabilisation works (Greenspace Unit).
  - Thirty nine trees indicated as high priority removal have been removed (with the exception of a willow outside number 100 Banks Avenue, this being at the residents' request due to special circumstances) (Greenspace Unit),
4. As the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek landscape enhancement is located solely in the Shirley/Papanui ward, it only requires approval from the Shirley/Papanui Community Board. However, this report will be brought to the attention of the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board for its information, as it has been closely involved in the consultation on these projects.
5. The objective of the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek landscape enhancement plan is to develop a safe, aesthetically pleasant and sustainable environment along Banks Avenue. In order to achieve this, Council staff sought community views to aid with the development of a concept plan.
6. The consultation began with a public meeting at the Banks Avenue School on 12 April 2005, which provided an opportunity for Council staff to present options to address the bank stabilisation, tree removal and enhancement programme proposed for Dudley Creek. The residents and the school were provided with submission forms so that further discussion on the options could take place after the meeting and then written submissions could be made to the Council. The community were asked to provide comment on preferred replacement tree and plant species, views on whether the footpath should be formalised along Banks Avenue, and an indication of interest in co-ordinating bank enhancement works with the Council. The Greenspace Unit also invited Banks Avenue residents/owners/stakeholders to meet the project team on site to discuss the required works and the community's aspirations for the area.
7. Written feedback from the consultation indicated support for a wide range of tree species and a call for a mix of natives and exotics, evergreen and deciduous tree and plant species. The majority of the community supported the idea of an informal footpath. Many residents supported the offer of working with the Council as part of the bank stabilisation work.
8. As a result of the feedback received from the community, staff developed an initial concept plan for the proposed bank stabilisation and enhancement work that reflected the community's preferred tree and plant species. The concept plan included a mix of exotic and native shrubs and trees. The concept was presented to the community at a public meeting on July 19 2005, with the plan gaining wide acceptance judging by subsequent positive feedback.

9. The recommended landscape plans are included as attachment 3 (Lp 1959 1- 7) and include a mixture of native and exotic tree species but predominantly exotic species including maples, ash, elms and oak. The recommended low planting is predominantly native species that are well suited to the riparian environment. They will have a height at maturity of between 0.50 - 1.5 metres. The recommended landscape plans include a proposed plant list. A detailed planting plan will be developed once the Community Board has approved the concept. It is anticipated that the planting plan reflects community aspirations for the enhancement of Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek. It is proposed that the low planting will occur in November 2006 and replacement tree planting will proceed between May and August 2007, in the autumn/winter planting season.
10. Two options were considered for the upgrade to Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek:
  - (a) Enhancement of the riparian area.
  - (b) Status quo – no change to the park.
11. The preferred option, (a) enhancement of the riparian area, best satisfies the objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation.
12. In addition to the proposed landscape enhancement, it is proposed to upgrade the concrete headwall for Dudley Creek on the River Road and Banks Avenue corner. The work is to be undertaken as a joint project between the Transport and Greenspace Unit and Urban Renewal, Strategic Support Unit. The work will commence within the current financial year and under delegated authority.
13. The plan proposes widening the footpath at its narrowest point by up to 1.5 metres by means of a 'clip-on', cutting down the entire headwall to footpath level and replacing with a coloured steel balustrade to match the existing stretch on the opposite side of River Road, and replacing the wooden barrier along the edge of the river bank to the pedestrian crossing with a 'Warner' steel safety fence to match the new steel balustrade. To make a feature of this area, which is where Dudley Creek exits to the Avon River, the footpath will be resurfaced with cobblestones and a granite plaque 'Dudley Creek' installed in line with the treatment of other headwall sites.

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

14. The proposed upgrade to Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek is programmed in the Greenspace Unit's capital budget, for implementation over the 2006/2007 and 2007/08 financial years as follows:

|          |   |         |
|----------|---|---------|
| \$50,000 | Banks Avenue (Waterways and wetlands restoration) | 2006/07 |
| \$50,000 | Banks Avenue (Waterways and wetlands restoration) | 2007/08 |

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Shirley/Papanui Community Board:

- (a) Approves the landscape plans in Attachment 3 (Lp 1959 1-7 dated 29 August 2006), in order to proceed to detailed design and implementation of the Banks Avenue/ Dudley Creek landscape enhancement plan
- (b) Receives the information on the proposed removal of the remaining 'low' priority trees as identified on the landscape plans in Attachment 3 (Lp 1959 1- 7 dated 29 August 2006)
- (c) Receives the information on the proposed upgrade to the existing headwall over Dudley Creek at River Road and Banks Avenue

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

That the staff recommendations be adopted.

## **BACKGROUND ON BANKS AVENUE/DUDLEY CREEK LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT**

### **Banks Avenue Traffic Calming and Kerb and Channel Renewal Project**

15. The Council has completed traffic calming and kerb and channel renewal project for Banks Avenue in the 2005/2006 financial year.
16. The Greenspace Unit has been working alongside the Transport and City Streets Unit to prepare a bank maintenance and stream enhancement programme for Dudley Creek along Banks Avenue. This work has been undertaken in conjunction with ongoing tree work, which includes the staged removal of approximately 60 trees that needed to be removed for health and safety reasons (39 trees have been removed to date).

### **Banks Avenue/ Dudley Creek Landscape Enhancement Plan**

17. The objective of the Greenspace project was to develop a management strategy to develop a safe, aesthetically pleasant and sustainable environment along Banks Avenue. In order to achieve this Council staff sought community views so that a concept plan could be developed.
18. The consultation began with a public meeting at the Banks Avenue School on 12 April 2005.
19. This meeting was chaired by Yvonne Palmer, Chairperson of the Shirley/Papanui Community Board and Glenda Burt, Chairperson of the Burwood/Pegasus Community Board. The meeting provided an opportunity for the Greenspace Unit to present options to address the maintenance, stabilisation and enhancement programme proposed for Dudley Creek along Banks Avenue. A tree removal plan was presented. The issues raised at this meeting were:
  - The bank instability and planned bank work
  - The proposed landscaping (including a 'no landscaping' option)
  - The tree removal plan, which was formed from an independent tree assessment carried out in November 2004 which indicated that trees needed to be removed for health and safety reasons
  - The option to include an informal pathway.
20. At this meeting the residents and the school were provided with submission forms so that further discussion on the options could take place after the meeting and then written submissions could be made to the Council. Feedback forms were distributed to Banks Avenue residents who could not attend the meeting.
21. The community were asked to provide comment on preferred replacement tree and plant species, give their views on whether the footpath should be continued along Banks Avenue, and indicate interest in co-ordinating bank enhancement works with the Council.
22. This formal written phase of the consultation period ran until 30 April 2005. In addition to this, Council staff invited Banks Avenue residents/owners and other stakeholders to meet the project team on site for a 'landscape ramble'. The landscape ramble on Saturday 14 May 2005 provided an opportunity for staff to discuss consultation feedback with the community and gain a better understanding of the residents' aspirations for tree replanting.
23. The landscape ramble also aided the community's understanding of the need for bank stabilisation work and the proposed ongoing tree work, which included a number of trees that needed immediate removal for health and safety reasons. The majority of this tree removal work has been completed except for the lower priority work and some variations to the original plan.

24. The local residents have been made aware that the tree removals would be staged, according to priority. In total there remain 21 trees that still require removal for health and safety reasons. This work will proceed under delegated authority and affected residents will be notified as work progresses. Taking into account the removal of approximately 39 trees, there will be a total of about 60 tree removals in Banks Avenue. It is proposed to provide about the same number of replacement trees.
25. In addition, there are two trees not on the original plan presented at the April 12 meeting that now also require removal. A large cypress tree outside number 76 Banks Avenue now represents a significant health and safety risk to the public and needs removing. This is due to the failure of an adjacent tree of the same species and size during a recent storm event undermining the embankment and root plate of the remaining tree. A birch outside number 9a Banks Avenue has also suffered decline since the initial survey and should be removed.
26. The written feedback from the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek enhancement consultation is summarised in Attachment 2. General feedback was as follows:
27. **Tree Replacement Suggestions** – feedback from the community indicated support for a wide range of tree species, with approximately 40 species being specifically requested. In general, there was a call for a mix of natives, exotics, evergreens and deciduous species. There was a request for some large trees to replace mature trees that were removed. The tree planting specifications will include a selection of (approximately 60) trees at various grades from 1.5 metres to 3 metres plus in height. The trees may be open ground (bare root) or containerised and it may be possible to source transplantable stock dependent on species availability and more detailed assessment of ground conditions, ie slope, access etc. It is estimated that the largest grade tree possible to plant would be approximately 5-6 metres in height, subject to the above.
28. **Landscaping** - feedback from the community indicated support for a wide range of plant species, with approximately 30 species being specifically requested. In general, there was a call for a mix of native and exotic species.
29. **Footpath** – Formal and informal feedback indicated that an informal path was all that was required/desired by locals.
30. **Bank Stabilisation Work** – many residents supported the offer of working with the Council as part of the bank stabilisation work. All the identified 'low and medium priority' work required to stabilise the banks has been completed. Contractors have added extra material to the banks, and re-contoured where necessary.
31. The major bank stabilisation work adjacent to numbers 152, 70, and 100 Banks Avenue is currently being designed. Cost sharing arrangements are being investigated.
32. As a result of feedback received in the formal consultation and the landscape ramble, staff developed an initial concept plan that reflected the community's preferred tree and plant species. The concept plan includes a mix of exotic and native shrubs and trees as suggested by residents during consultation.
33. To present the concept plan to the community, the local community were invited to a public meeting 19 July 2005 held at Banks Avenue School. This meeting was chaired jointly by the Shirley/Papanui and the Burwood/Pegasus Community Boards.
34. The concept plan (Attachment 1 - Lp1605) was discussed at this public meeting and it was widely accepted. The tree removal and bank stabilisation plan, which has proceeded under delegated authority as an operational matter, was also discussed at this meeting and was more reluctantly received, probably due to the extent of the required tree removals. To further aid the community's understanding of the tree management plan, the high priority tree removals were marked on site so residents could look at them in their own time if they could not make the landscape ramble.

35. The initial concept plan for the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek Enhancement that was presented to the community has been amended in the following way:
- The minor bank stabilisation work has been removed from the plan as this work has been completed as an operational matter. This work has been undertaken under delegated authority.
  - The proposed informal footpath has been removed from the plan as there was a strong indication at the 19 July 2005 meeting to leave the informal path as it is so people can make their own way along the bank.
  - The proposed shrubs have been removed from the plan due to safety concerns about children using this as a route to school. Although shrubs were requested by residents, the site has been tidied up and some shrubs have been removed. According to Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, it is best to ensure that planting is low to ensure good visibility sight-lines and casual surveillance are provided, especially between the road and the existing informal footpath.
36. The recommended landscape plans, Attachment 3 (Lp 1959 1-7 dated 29 August 2006) include a plant list. Tree species include a mix of native and exotic species but is predominantly exotic species including maples, ash, elms and oak. The recommended low planting is compromised predominantly of native species that are well suited to the riparian environment. They will have a height at maturity of between 50 centimetres and 1.5 metres.
37. The detailed planting plan will be developed once the Community Board has approved the concept. It is anticipated that the planting plan will reflect community aspirations for the enhancement of Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek. It is proposed that low planting will occur in November 2006 and that replacement tree planting will proceed between May and August 2007, in the autumn/winter planting season.

#### **Proposed Upgrade to the Headwall on the corner of River Road and Banks Avenue**

38. In addition to the proposed landscape enhancement, it is proposed to upgrade the existing headwall on River Road and Banks Avenue corner. This is a joint project between the Transport and Greenspace Unit and Urban Renewal, Strategic Support Unit. The work will be undertaken within the current financial year and under delegated authority.
39. The existing footpath at this corner narrows to a point of only 1.2 metres and does not meet safety requirements. The narrowness creates a safety issue with pedestrians stepping off the kerb into the carriageway to allow others to pass, especially when faced with an oncoming pram or pushchair. This has been brought to the attention of Council officers by local residents. This is a pedestrian route to the Banks Avenue Primary School – the pedestrian crossing being only 40 metres from this point – and so usage is high, especially before and after school.
40. The existing concrete headwall at this point and the wooden safety barrier are frequently the target of graffiti attack. This was also brought to the attention of staff by a resident when on a site inspection to the area in regard to the recently consulted traffic safety work in Banks Avenue. The riverbank on the other side of River Road, immediately adjacent, received extensive enhancement work a couple of years ago and incorporates a steel balustrade.
41. The proposed work involves widening the footpath at its narrowest point by up to 1.5 metres by means of a 'clip-on', cutting down the entire headwall to footpath level and replacing with a coloured steel balustrade to match the existing stretch on the opposite side of River Road and replacing the wooden barrier along the edge of river bank to the pedestrian crossing with a 'Warner' steel safety fence to match the steel balustrade. To make a feature of this area, which is where Dudley Creek exits to the Avon River, the footpath will be resurfaced with cobblestones and a granite plaque 'Dudley Creek' installed in line with the treatment of other headwall sites.

42. This area falls within the Richmond Neighbourhood Improvement Plan Area and so is a focus area for such work. The project will be a major maintenance project that addresses a pedestrian safety issue while enhancing the experience of a natural waterway, creating a pleasant social area on a busy pedestrian route as well as deterring further graffiti – the steel fencing is more difficult to deface.
43. Refer to Attachment 4 for photographs that show the proposal - the site as it is at present, a visualisation of as it is proposed and one of the riverbank treatment opposite.

#### **OPTIONS**

44. There were two options considered for the Banks Avenue/Dudley Creek landscape enhancement:
  - (a) Enhancement of the riparian area. This option is most favoured by the community, which supports the enhancement of the riparian area, allows for improved sight-lines to be maintained to enhance personal safety; and allows for the replacement of trees that had to be removed for health and safety reasons.
  - (b) Status quo - No tree and landscape replacement work completed in the riparian area of Banks Ave. This option would not meet community expectations.

#### **PREFERRED OPTION**

45. The preferred option, (a) enhancement of the riparian area, best satisfies the objectives of the project and is consistent with feedback received through community consultation.