

5. STREET TREE RENEWALS

General Manager responsible:	General Manager, City Environment
Officer responsible:	Manager Transport & Greenspace
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for a proposed three year replacement planting programme to renew a number of cherry trees within the Fendalton/Waimairi Ward.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The cherry trees in the Fendalton/Waimairi ward are in various stages of decline mainly due to the disease silver leaf. A survey conducted mid to late 2006 has identified, on a street by street basis, which trees are in the worst condition. A proposed plan has been developed to address the problem by removing and replacing on a like for like basis the cherry trees in what is considered to be the worst streets commencing in May/June 2007. This report does not cover species other than cherries and does not cover new street tree planting.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. Funding is available in the LTCCP for street tree renewals. Quotes yet to be received from contractors may alter the number of streets proposed for renewal over the next three years. The Transport and Greenspace Unit has the necessary resources to undertake and commence the replacement planting programme within the current financial year.
4. The Council has a legal obligation under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 to provide a safe environment. As trees decline the structural integrity of the tree naturally diminishes.

5. City Plan Volume 2 Section 14.3.2 Policy: "Garden City" Image Identity states –

"To acknowledge and promote the "Garden City" identity of the City by protecting, maintaining and extending planting which compliments this image."

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Approve the proposed three year replacement planting programme to remove and replace, on a like basis, those Cherry trees listed as category 4 and category 5 as outlined in section 9.
2. That the Transport and Greenspace Unit commence implementation of the replacement planting programme during the current planting season (May – September 2007).

BACKGROUND

6. The Council has been aware for some time that the cherry trees within the Fendalton/Waimairi ward have been in various stages of decline. This issue will be familiar to many Board members who will recall looking at this issue on previous tours of the Boards area. The decline of the trees can mainly be attributed to the fungal disease silver leaf.
7. Silver leaf is a fungal infection that enters trees through recently injured surfaces such as pruning cuts, broken branches, insect damage and frost cracks. The fungus produces threads which grows through the living wood killing tissues and produces a toxin which spreads upwards in the sap and causes the cells of the upper leaf surfaces to separate, giving them a silvery appearance. Other trees and plants that are affected by silver leaf include plums, other fruit trees (cherry, peach, apricot, pear and apple), many ornamentals, e.g. laburnum, poplar, Portuguese laurel, rhododendron and rose.
8. The cherry trees in Fendalton/Waimairi were planted in the 1950s with the idea of making that area the "cherry tree capital of Christchurch". Over the years cherry trees have been removed and replaced and in a number of instances removed and not replaced. Not replacing the trees has left whole streets tree-less with little street amenity or environmental improvement.
9. In 2006 a survey was commissioned to discover the extent of the problem. Each individual tree was assessed for its condition and given one of the following ratings –

Category 1	Excellent
Category 2	Very Good
Category 3	Good
Category 4	Moderate
Category 5	Poor

10. As a result of the survey it is proposed to remove and replace on a like for like basis those cherry trees that have been given Category 4 and Category 5 ratings. The proposed replacement planting programme will run over the next 3 years in the following streets -

2007	2008	2009
Armitage Street	Aintree Street	Ambleside Drive
Bethel Crescent	Chedworth Avenue	Charlcott Street
Blairdon Place	Coniston Avenue	Clifford Avenue
Carruthers Street	Cotswold Avenue	Cranbrook Avenue
Grahams Road	Glenharrow Avenue	Dunster Street
Greendale Avenue	Normandy Street	Greers Road
Hounslow Street	Oakfield Street	Gregan Crescent
Teesdale Street	Powell Crescent	Jackson Road
	Shaftesbury Street	Kendal Avenue
		Longmuir Street
		Memorial Avenue
		Vauxhall Street
		Woodbury Street
		Yardley Street

Category 3 trees will be commenced in 2012 (or earlier if required).

11. This is essentially an operational matter and considered part of routine asset management for managing and maintaining this resource. Consultation will be undertaken on a street by street basis through individual letter drops to each residence advising them which trees are to be removed and replaced and which trees will remain.
12. It is intended that this will take place in April 2007 for those streets identified for work in the current financial year and February 2008 for those streets identified for work in 07/08 financial year. A powerpoint presentation giving examples of the trees proposed to be removed will be shown at the meeting.

OPTIONS

13. a) Maintain status quo. Do not instigate a renewals plan to replace the cherry trees and improve street amenity.

This means that the cherry trees will be removed only when they die or are authorised for removal for other reasons (eg new driveways). Street amenity will continue to deteriorate as trees decline further.

- b) Instigate a renewals programme proposed in the 3 year plan to remove and replace, on a like for like basis, those cherry trees listed as Category 4 and Category 5 as outlined in number 9 of this report.

This means that over time the cherry tree asset in the Fendalton/Waimairi Ward will be improved as declining trees are replaced. Street amenity will improve.

- c) As in b) above but do not renew on a like for like basis. Use another species of tree other than cherry trees.

This means that the declining cherry trees will be replaced and street amenity will improve over time however the vegetative character that the cherry trees give to the area will change.

PREFERRED OPTION

14. Instigate a renewals programme proposed in the 3 year plan to remove and replace, on a like for like basis, those cherry trees listed as Category 4 and Category 5 as outlined in Section 9 of this report.

ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

The Preferred Option

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Street amenity improves over time.	Initial impact on street amenity as larger trees are removed and replaced with smaller trees.
Cultural	Cherry theme remains for the area. Garden City image is maintained and enhanced.	
Environmental	Mature healthy trees will provide benefits such as providing oxygen, reduced air pollutants, shade and shelter, wildlife habitats, colours, flowers,	Chance to increase native biodiversity in the area's streets is not taken.
Economic	Already provided for in the current LTCCP. Real estate values may increase.	Future maintenance requirements. If cherry trees are selected as the replacement species their life span is estimated at 15-20 years. This means that replacing these trees will be an ongoing cost.
<p>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:</p> <p>Environment "A City of people who value and protect the natural environment" Council will be seen as protecting, enhancing and restoring the street environment</p> <p>City Development "An attractive and well designed City" Council will be seen as providing attractive neighbourhoods with lifestyles enhanced by the urban environment</p> <p>Governance "A Well-Governed City" Council will be seen as utilising LTCCP funds responsibly, responding to current needs and planning for future needs for the street environment.</p> <p>Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities: Assists with delivering the LTCCP.</p> <p>Effects on Maori: None</p> <p>Consistency with existing Council policies: Consistent with Corporate Environmental Policy, Public Transport Policy, Traffic Calming Policy, Urban Renewal Policy</p> <p>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Views of residents will be taken into consideration during the consultation phase in April.</p> <p>Other relevant matters: Some residents may resist Council's attempt to renew the tree asset by removing and replacing them.</p>		

Maintain The Status Quo (If Not Preferred Option)

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social		Street amenity will continue to decline as the trees decline and are removed on a case by case basis.
Cultural		Over time the cherry theme that currently exists in the area may be lost. Garden City image may be negatively affected.
Environmental		As the trees deteriorate they become less and less environmentally effective.
Economic		Existing LTCCP funding is not being utilised for its intended purpose. Declining trees still require maintenance. Council may be viewed as throwing good money into an asset not worthy of the expenditure. Real estate values may be affected.
<p>Extent to which community outcomes are achieved: No Community Outcomes are achieved.</p> <p>Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities: Affects Council's ability to deliver the LTCCP and Community Outcomes.</p> <p>Effects on Maori: None</p> <p>Consistency with existing Council policies: Not consistent with any Council Policy.</p> <p>Views and preferences of persons affected or likely to have an interest: Views of residents will be taken into consideration during the consultation phase in April.</p> <p>Other relevant matters:</p>		

Option 3

	Benefits (current and future)	Costs (current and future)
Social	Street amenity improves over time.	Initial impact on street amenity as larger trees are removed and replaced with smaller trees.
Cultural	Garden City image is maintained and enhanced. Prospect of planting more natives into the street environment.	Area's cherry identity is lost.
Environmental	Mature healthy trees will provide benefits such as providing oxygen, reduced air pollutants, shade and shelter, wildlife habitats, colours, flowers. Increase in native biodiversity within the street environment.	
Economic	Already provided for in the current LTCCP. Real estate values may increase. Dependant on the replacement species chosen the life span of the trees will increase past 20 years therefore the trees will not require constant renewing.	Future maintenance requirements.

Extent to which community outcomes are achieved:

Environment

"A City of people who value and protect the natural environment"

Council will be seen as protecting, enhancing and restoring the street environment

City Development

"An attractive and well designed City"

Council will be seen as providing attractive neighbourhoods with lifestyles enhanced by the urban environment

Governance

"A Well-Governed City"

Council will be seen as utilising LTCCP funds responsibly, responding to current needs and planning for future needs for the street environment

Impact on Council's capacity and responsibilities:

Assists with delivering the LTCCP.

Effects on Maori:

Ability to plant more native trees into the area street environment.

Consistency with existing Council policies:

Consistent with Corporate Environmental Policy, Public Transport Policy, Traffic Calming Policy, Urban Renewal Policy

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

Views of residents will be taken into consideration during the consultation phase in April.

Other relevant matters:

Some residents may resist Council's attempt to renew the tree asset by removing and replacing them. Council may face a protracted consultation phase as residents will differ over species of trees to be planted.