

2. PURCHASE OF LAND FOR STYX ESPLANADE RESERVE – 43 CROFTON ROAD

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The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the purchase of 511 square metres of land adjacent to the Styx River where it will form part of the Styx River green corridor and the Styx Source to Sea Walkway.

The report was considered by the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board at its meeting on 8 June 2004. The Board supports the proposed land purchase.

LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF LAND UNDER CONSIDERATION

The proposed land purchase is located adjacent to the Styx River between Harewood Road and Sawyers Arms Road. Existing reserves are located upstream and downstream of the proposed land purchase. The acquisition of this land will provide an important link in a walkway and ecological corridor along this stretch of the Styx River.

The total parcel of land under consideration covers an area of 1,721 square metres (1,210 square metres being the reserve contribution from the subdivision with the balance 511 square metres being the area to be purchased). It is dominated by a dry swale, known as the Styx River, and several large trees. Residential development will occur along its eastern boundary. The land to the west is zoned rural and consists of a large open paddock. Waterway restoration has occurred both upstream and downstream of the site.

LEGISLATIVE AND MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

The Styx River is managed in accordance with the proposed City Plan, the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy and the Styx Vision 2000-2040.

(i) **Christchurch City Plan**

Policy 2.2.10 of the proposed City Plan¹ recognises the range of values associated with river margins. It states –

That provision for the protection of conservation values, recreational opportunities and public access to and along the margins of rivers and the coast be achieved through esplanade reserves, esplanade strips and access strips, in locations and of a width appropriate to the nature of the waterway and its adjoining land use.

The area under consideration is zoned Conservation 3 in the proposed City Plan.

(ii) **Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy**

A values based approach underpins the Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy', a requirement of the Local Government Act 2002. The city's waterways and wetlands, including the Styx River, are assessed and managed for ecological, drainage, historical, cultural, recreational and drainage values.

(iii) **Styx Vision 2000 – 2040 Planning for the Future**

The Christchurch City Council has worked closely with the community, experts and other organisations in the development of a 40 year vision for the waterways and wetlands associated with the Styx catchment. The vision is consistent with the proposed City Plan and the Waterways and Wetlands Asset management Strategy and consists of the following -

Vision 1 To achieve a "Viable Springfed River Ecosystem" to complement the other representative protected ecosystems of Christchurch such as the Port Hills, Travis Wetlands and the Coastline.

Vision 2 To create a "Source to Sea Experience" through the development of an Urban National Reserve.

¹ Christchurch City Plan, Volume Two, Page 2/11

Vision 3 To develop a Living Laboratory that focuses on both learning and research as envisioned by Dr Leonard Cockayne

Vision 4 To establish "The Styx" as a place to be through maintaining and enhancing the special character and identity of the area.

Vision 5 To foster partnerships through raising the quality of relationships as we move forward together.

This purchase will enable the Council to recognise and build on the policies and visions identified above.

BACKGROUND

An area of rural land located between Harewood Road, Sawyers Arms Road and Crofton Road was rezoned residential and conservation as part of the City Plan process. This land had several landowners and each owner has since or is in the process of developing their block of land for residential purposes. At the time of development the Christchurch City Council is acquiring land for reserve purposes adjacent to the Styx River. Once development is completed a continuous stretch of river corridor and walkway will occur along this stretch of the Styx River. Development to the north and south of this block has already occurred.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed subdivision is shown in the attached plan. It consists of 8 residential allotments and a reserve associated with the Styx River. The total area to be vested as reserve is 1721 square metres and varies in width from 38 metres at its widest end down to 15 metres in the middle. The reserve incorporates more than an 80 metre stretch of the Styx River. Access to the reserve will be via existing reserves upstream and downstream of the proposed reserve.

The proposed reserve will be developed in a similar manner to that which has already occurred along this stretch of the Styx River corridor. The existing walkway will be linked along the western bank of the Styx River, banks regraded where appropriate and existing large healthy trees retained. A swale to improve stormwater quality prior to entering the Styx River, a subdivision requirement, will be incorporated along the eastern edge of the reserve.

PROPERTY DETAILS

Unfortunately the area of land zoned for conservation purposes in the proposed City Plan, cannot be completely acquired through reserve contribution and stormwater treatment purposes. The owner has therefore agreed to sell at rural rates to the Council, the extra 511 square metres of land so that this stretch of the Styx River corridor can also come into public ownership.

Refer to the public excluded report in this agenda for more specific financial details.

Funds have been allocated in the 2004/2005 Annual Plan for this purchase.

Committee

Recommendation: That the Council approve the purchase of 511 square metres of land adjacent to the Styx River from the Hack Family Trust on the terms described in the public excluded section of the Committee's report. This will complete this stretch of the Styx River green corridor and the Source to Sea Walkway.