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Corporate Plan Output: Waterways and Wetlands Restoration Protection (9.3.40 and 9.3.45)	

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the process that will be used for obtaining community views on the Styx River in order to assist in its sustainable management.

The Christchurch City Council recognises the importance of community input into the decision-making process when it adopted the policy ‘Seeking Community Views’ on 17 December 1997. It states in this document that seeking community views occurs as an input to decision-making, not after a decision has been made.

The Water Services Unit in accordance with the proposed Waterways and Wetlands Asset Management Strategy, now manages the city’s waterways and wetlands for a range of values: recreation, landscape, ecology, cultural, heritage and drainage. These values are achieved through the Councils funding of two main activities: protection and restoration. Obtaining community views is an important part of the process in recognising these values.

The Unit needs a long-term strategy for the Styx River in order to guide its future activity in this area. This river is an important landscape feature within the northern part of the city. It originates in the vicinity of Nunweek Park and then flows north-east until it reaches the sea at Brooklands. Most of the river occurs within the Papanui Ward but a small portion occurs within the Waimairi Ward and it borders the Burwood Ward. It is anticipated that the strategy will be one of the unit’s ‘visionary projects’ arising from the city’s Open Space Strategy that is currently under development.

The Styx River will come under increasing threat from urban expansion and the development of lifestyle blocks as the city expands and land uses change. It is therefore important that the Council supported by the community develop a long term vision for this important waterway. This approach will enable community values to be highlighted and avoid development occurring in an ad hoc way.

Obviously Community Service Centres and Boards have a vital relationship with their communities. The Unit would like to take advantage of these relationships in order to obtain quality input into the process of seeking community views. Informal discussions have been initiated with the community boards in the area and a small working party has been established to organise and develop the consultation process.

The process that has been developed is as follows

1. ‘Styx River Happening’ at Spencer Park on Sunday 14 March 1998, 10 am – 4 pm
 - Partnership building
 - Displays, speakers, activities
 - Sharing of information
 - Family Day
2. Workshop – three weeks later
 - Identification of community values

- Identification of issues and opportunities
3. Focus Groups
 - Discussions with small groups of people with specific interests.
 4. Feedback Workshop
 - Feedback on the draft version of community views
 5. Styx River Management Strategy
 - Development of the Styx River Management Strategy incorporating community views with existing policies and the results of other expert investigations.
 - Consultation with the community.

Organisational details of the Styx River Happening have been finalised. The organisation of the following events will be dependent on the outcomes of the previous events.

- Recommendations:**
1. That the Community Board support the process of seeking community views on the Styx River.
 2. That the Community Board contribute towards the cost of the Styx River Happening.
 3. That the Community Board appoint at least one representative on the working party for seeking community views on the Styx River.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the foregoing recommendations be adopted and that the remaining \$600 of the Board's 1998/99 discretionary funds be allocated to the 'Styx River Happening'.