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Corporate Plan Output: Parks Plans and Policy Statements	

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Committee on proposed changes to the operation of the Toast Rack Tour Vehicle at the Botanic Gardens.

BACKGROUND

The Toast Rack Tour Vehicle has operated at the Botanic Gardens since the mid 1970s, providing a service to customers, where, for a fee, a tour of the grounds has been given and a commentary on aspects of the gardens provided.

Since its inception, the operation has been linked to the Gardens Restaurant, where as part of the former lease, it was a requirement for the lessee to operate the vehicle and provide a driver for the commentary.

Over the years, it has been a popular service, serving the needs of a variety of customers including those with limited time, people with limited mobility and visitors wanting to obtain a general overview before embarking upon a detailed inspection of parts of the gardens.

INFORMATION CENTRE

This facility has been established since 1988 and since that time has steadily expanded its functions in providing for the educational needs of customers. As the education focus of the gardens has been strengthened, it has been increasingly apparent that the tour vehicle operation should be linked to the Information Centre, rather than to the Gardens Restaurant.

GARDENS RESTAURANT

At the time of the recent lease preparation for the Gardens Restaurant, the tour vehicle was clearly separated from the operation, in order that the focus of that catering facility could be better aligned.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Documents have been prepared, detailing a 'Request for Proposals' and this included a specification of basic requirements.

Advertising was done through the Christchurch Press and one proposal was received through the Council tender box on 22 September 1999 from Christchurch Tramway Ltd.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE PROPOSAL

1. The proposal meets all the requirements in the specification.
2. Christchurch Tramway and the Toast Rack tour vehicle offer a synergy which would complement each operation.
3. Christchurch Tramway have staff who are competent and have the ability to be good ambassadors for Christchurch and the Gardens.
4. The company has comprehensive marketing channels which are complementary to the Toast Rack Tour vehicle visitor market.
5. Most staff of the company are keen gardeners who would quickly adapt to the horticultural commentary.
6. It will provide the opportunity to offer a combination tour of the Christchurch Tram and Toast Rack Tour Vehicle.
7. A full teaching resource can be provided which will have input by a qualified teacher.
8. The Tramway and Toast Rack Tour vehicle package will provide a diverse range of products that will meet the demands of the free and independent traveller, groups, conference and cruise ship markets.

FINANCIAL

Christchurch Tramway Ltd has proposed a fixed base rental of \$7,500 per annum, paid to the Council, monthly in advance. Costs to the Parks Unit for the rental of the vehicle from Plant and Building Services for the 1999/2000 financial year are \$7,080.

Public liability insurance will be effected and maintained throughout the three year term of the lease for \$1 million.

DISCUSSION

The proposal from Christchurch Tramway Ltd, has an exciting potential in attracting increased visitors to the Botanic Gardens. The company has the professional, administrative and marketing expertise to give the Toast Rack tour vehicle operation the energy it requires. While the difference between cost to the Parks Unit and rental proposed is not great, the service is primarily a customer service to enhance the visitor experience.

Recommendation: That the tender price of \$7,500 per annum for the Toast Rack Tour vehicle lease within the Botanic Gardens, from Christchurch Tramway Ltd be accepted.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.