

6. POPLAR TREES – LESLIE PARK

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The purpose of this report is to present a recommendation from the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board on the future of the Poplar trees on the Foremans Road frontage of Leslie Park.

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years the Parks Unit has received ongoing complaints about the Poplar trees. The complaints have been about the volume of leaves, problems with shading and generally the health of the trees.

The Parks Unit has assessed the trees and reports that approximately half of the trees are in poor health and of poor form. This is primarily as a result of the trees being planted too closely together and a lack of initial maintenance. As a number of the trees need to be removed for health and safety reasons, it is considered timely to consider the long term plan of the Foremans Road frontage to the park.

OPTIONS

It is considered that the best option long term would be to remove the poplar trees and replace them with a more suitable species, planted in positions which will allow the trees to grow to maturity without adversely affecting each other's form and health. One option would be to remove the trees in two stages, giving the new trees a time to become established. A second option would be to remove all of the poplar trees and landscape the Foremans Road frontage in one operation. (Note: With either option the existing cedar trees, which are directly behind the poplars would remain.)

A letterbox drop was completed in early October asking residents to consider the two options and seeking their comments.

We received 44 submissions.

Thirty-eight households supported option 1, which was for all the Poplar trees to be removed and replaced with smaller deciduous trees and shrub borders.

Seven households supported option 2, which was for the trees with poor form and health to be removed at this time and replaced with smaller deciduous trees.

There are four residential properties facing the poplar trees, three households support the trees remaining and one household supports the removal. The adjacent neighbours support the removal of the trees.

It is important to consider that at present the trees do offer a visual softening to the area. The poplars also offer some protection for residents, as a windbreak and also preventing residents from looking straight through the park to Main South Road. The trees may also reduce the sound of the traffic.

Even though the majority of residents would prefer all of the trees to be removed at one time, it may be prudent to reduce the number over time, allowing the new planting some shelter and a chance to become established. This should reduce visual impact, which would be caused by the removal of the trees in one operation.

- Recommendation:**
1. That option two, i.e. the removal of the trees with poor form and health be accepted at this time and that replacement planting with smaller deciduous trees be carried out in the autumn.
 2. That the staged removal of the remaining trees be carried out at a later date once the replacements become established.

The above report was considered by the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board on 26 November 1999. The Board supported the officer's recommendation.

Deputy Chairman's

Recommendation: That the above recommendation be adopted.