

## 20. ST ALBANS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



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Corporate Plan Output: Environmental Improvement Plans	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the community response to the draft St Albans Neighbourhood Plan, to discuss the concept of the “Golden Suburb”, and finalize the contents of the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the Community Board’s recommendation to release the draft St Albans Neighbourhood Plan to the public, the Plan was placed at 5 locations for viewing, and advertised in the local newspapers and on notice boards throughout St Albans and Shirley.

While there was some interest in viewing the Neighbourhood Plan, only one response was received during the period from 22 May to 7 June 2000. It is felt that there has been ample opportunity for the community to participate in the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan process if they had wanted to and it is time to put the Plan into effect and instigate some action.

Following the deputation to the Board on 31 May 2000 from Peggy Kelly and Douceline Wardle to promote the concept of the “Golden Suburb” for St Albans, it is felt that the concept should be further pursued. However, there are a number of matters that should be considered prior to the endorsement of such a concept and subsequent incorporation into the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan. They are as follows:

1. It must have the support of the St Albans community.
2. If the concept is applied to public property, such as in streets, the effect of the amenity of those streets should be assessed in the context of the existing process for choosing street trees. This process includes consultation with property owners preferences as to the species and location of the street trees.
3. Kowhai (*Sophora spp*) is one of the primary plants being promoted. The Parks Unit is wary of planting Kowhai near playgrounds, crèches and schools because of the noxious nature of the pods that it produces. Additionally the pollen of the Kowhai flower can be a cause of hay fever and be a problem to asthma sufferers. Widespread planting may accentuate these problems in the community. Care should be taken in locating these trees.
4. The Parks Unit is averse to planting monocultures or limiting tree species, particularly in streets, because of the possibility of trees becoming diseased and the entire planting having to be removed, such as was the case with Dutch Elm disease in England and the USA.
5. It is up to individual property owners to decide what they wish to plant in their own gardens.

It may be that rather than a blanket “Golden Suburb” concept being introduced, a strategic plan highlighting areas in St Albans for golden plantings could be drawn up for public areas, to accentuate the area without dominating it, pinpointing areas of interest such as the St Albans Creek and entryways into the suburb. This would have the effect of identifying the area while allowing for personal and public choice. This plan, and a list identifying plants with golden foliage and flowers, could then be incorporated into the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the concept of the “Golden Suburb” be given further consideration as to the associated effects of such a concept, and the investigation of a strategic planting plan be undertaken.
  2. That consideration is given to incorporating a modified “Golden Suburb” concept into the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan.
  3. That the St Albans Neighbourhood Plan be accepted with these additions.

**Chairperson’s**

**Recommendation:** That the officer’s recommendation be adopted and the information be referred back to the Friends of the Packe Street park.