

## 7. SHOWGATE RESERVE TREES

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| <b>Officer responsible</b><br>Parks Manager                              | <b>Author</b><br>Roger Cave, Acting Community Advocate |
| Corporate Plan Output: Riccarton/Wigram Community Board Vol 1 3.1 Text 6 |  |

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to remove a number of poplar trees from Showgate Reserve.

### BACKGROUND

On 15 February 2000, the Parks Unit received a petition, signed by 25 residents of Murfitt Place and Showgate Avenue, requesting the removal of the one poplar tree adjacent to 2 Murfitt Place. The residents' main area of concern with the existing tree is the sticky yellow substance which is exuded by the buds of the tree in spring and summer.

Residents expressed concern that the substance cannot be removed from carpets and floor coverings once tracked into their homes on the soles of shoes. Also, the substance can not be removed from the paintwork of cars without leaving some marking, and is difficult to remove from pets.

The tree has been recently pruned to reduce the overhang above the property. However, this has not solved the problem as the substance is blown by high winds onto the adjacent and nearby properties.

The Parks Unit has also received a formal request for other poplar trees adjacent to neighbouring properties to be removed for the same reasons.

A landscape plan, which was circulated for public comment in August 1994, indicated that once the new plantings in the reserve became established, thinning out of the existing poplar trees (removal of 30%) would take place. With this in mind the Parks Unit considered that the removal of approximately one third of the trees could help to alleviate the problems being encountered by the residents.

A letter box drop was undertaken on 24 February 2000 asking the residents to indicate whether or not they supported the removal of approximately one-third of the poplar trees. Comments on the proposal were also sought.

A total of 84 submissions were returned. Some submissions returned included more than one-person e.g. husband and wife, so the response per resident was:

76 residents supported the removal of one-third of the poplar trees.

40 residents wanted the trees retained.

A petition was also received from 50 local residents expressing their concern and opposition to the suggested removal of existing trees in the Showgate Reserve.

The poplar trees on Showgate Reserve are *Populus Nigra* - Black Poplar. These trees produce a yellow, sticky substance on the buds which is blown onto adjacent properties and as the residents stated in their correspondence, stains property and fixtures as well as being difficult to remove once it has dried (on car paintwork).

These trees are a major landscape feature of the reserve and as they are in a healthy and stable condition would ordinarily be retained. However, as the residents' complaints relate to an actual problem which will not diminish with time, the Parks Unit recommended that the five trees indicated on the attached plan be removed and that replacement planting be carried out. Also, that the future of the remaining trees adjacent to property boundaries be reviewed in a further five years' time once the replacement trees are established.

The tree closest to the transmission lines, which are on the north side of the reserve, has been reported to the Parks Unit as a defect (could contact the high voltage lines) by Transpower's vegetation contractor, and the Council is now obligated to allow the tree to be pruned or removed, at Transpower's cost.

#### **COMMUNITY BOARD DELIBERATIONS**

All those residents who had responded to the letter box drop were invited to the Board's Environmental Committee to discuss this issue.

Only five residents took up the invitation and addressed the Committee.

The organiser of the petition seeking the retention of all the trees, Mr I Bartram, commented on the (apparent) discrepancy of the submission response numbers, the catchment drop initiated by the Parks Unit, and of the desire to retain the trees, being a feature of the streetscape.

The other speakers spoke in support of removing the trees. Issues of damage to vehicles, the interior of houses (being effected by the yellow sticky buds) and the need to tidy up the fall of buds were discussed.

The Committee agreed with a suggestion (from Councillor Keast) that the Parks Unit should be involved in the assessing of residential subdivision schemes, when lodged with Council, where similar situations as that raised today, can be identified and resolved.

Whilst the Committee was supportive of the officer's recommendations, it considered that a three year review period (rather than five year) was more appropriate.

A submission was also received from the local Residents' Association.

The above report was considered by the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board at its meeting 3 May 2000. The Board decided to refer the report to this Committee with the following recommendation.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the trees as shown on the plan be removed and be replaced with a more suitable species.
  2. That the trees, which remain on the property boundaries, be reviewed in a further three years as to their retention.

#### **Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** For discussion.