

### 35. ATTLEE CRESCENT – STREET TREES

<b>Officer responsible</b> Parks Manager	<b>Author</b> Rod Whearty Area Parks Officer Craig Taylor Projects Planting Co-ordinator Brian Boddy Area Engineer
Corporate Plan Output: Street Tree Maintenance and Felling Citywide	

The purpose of this report is to provide information and seek comment on the proposed course of action for dealing with the fruiting plum trees in Attlee Crescent. The matter was discussed at the Fendalton/Waimairi Community Board meeting of 2 May 2000 and the report considered by the Board is set out below:

#### **BACKGROUND**

*Board members may recall an article in the Saturday 5 February 2000 edition of The Press showing a photograph of 3 residents in Attlee Crescent expressing concerns about the amount of plums littering the pavement and street. The Council subsequently received a petition signed by 14 residents requesting the removal of the trees.*

#### **RESIDENTS VIEWS**

*The Parks Unit wrote to all Attlee Crescent residents after receiving the petition to determine individual resident's views on the matter. There was a mediocre response to the original letter with less than half of the Attlee Crescent residents responding by the closing date.*

*A second letter was sent out specifically to properties that had not responded to the original letter. At the conclusion of the consultation process the Parks Unit had received a response from 30 of the 38 properties in Attlee Crescent indicating their preferred option, with the following results. (See summary of comments from residents below)*

- 20 Favoured replacing the existing trees with a more suitable species*
- 10 Favoured retaining the existing trees.*

#### **OPTIONS**

*Two options for dealing with this issue are listed in more detail below. The following options are not in any order of priority.*

##### **Option 1.**

***Remove the existing trees in one operation and replace them with a more suitable species.***

*With this option the trees would be replaced with standard grade street trees.*

<i>Cost</i>	
<i>Felling, stump removal and reinstatement (22 trees)</i>	<i>3,800</i>
<i>22 trees @ \$100 per tree</i>	<i><u>2,200</u></i>
	<i><u>\$6,000</u></i>

**Option 2.**

***Retention of all healthy trees and increased frequency of street sweeping to remove fruit.***

*Apart from three trees, which are past their prime and in decline, the majority of trees in the street are in a sound and healthy condition. Other than the problems associated with fruit fall there is no justification for their removal. Some residents have commented that they actually harvest and use the fruit.*

*The problems with fruit fall only occurs over a relatively short period from approximately mid November to the end of February, although there may be minor seasonal variations from year to year.*

*Attlee Crescent is currently on a 6 weekly street sweeping cycle. This option would increase the frequency of street sweeping in Attlee Crescent over the period of fruit fall.*

*The estimated **increased** cost of this work over the time the fruit is normally falling depends on the frequency of sweeping.*

*The table below shows the additional cost to increase the frequency of street sweeping in Attlee Crescent over the period of fruit fall.*

<i>3 weekly cycle</i>	<i>\$150 per annum</i>
<i>2 weekly cycle</i>	<i>\$300 per annum</i>
<i>Weekly cycles</i>	<i>\$750 per annum</i>

*It is important to note that this only provides for the sweeping of the carriageway, kerb and channel and does not cover the pavements. This will require some co-operation from the residents to sweep fruit from the footpath and berm area into the channel. The estimated cost for the Council to sweep the pavement if the residents were not prepared to sweep the footpaths and berms would be approximately \$175 per time.*

*There are 175 other streets in the city with fruiting plum trees, however the Council does not receive complaints from many of them at the present time. It is unlikely that residents in all of these streets would request this option. However if for example 50% were to request the same sweeping standard then the cost to the Council would multiply by the number of streets (e.g.  $88 \times \$300 = \$26,400$  per annum).*

*The Parks Unit is well aware of the problems relating to fruiting trees and has been addressing the problem through natural attrition for some time. Tree species that give problems are being replaced with a non-fruiting variety of the same or similar species when they become diseased or die, however for some residents this process may not be fast enough.*

**CONCLUSION**

*Given the differing effects and costs of the two options, the Parks and City Streets Units preferred option is to increase the street sweeping in Attlee Crescent to a two weekly cycle over the fruit fall season, and to retain all street trees in Attlee Crescent except the three trees identified as being in poor condition. These trees would be replaced with a non-fruiting tree of the same species. The remainder of the trees will be replaced as they reach the end of their useful life which could be a further 10-15 years minimum.*

*Recommendation: That the flowering plum trees in Attlee Crescent be retained subject to the following conditions:*

- 1. The existing healthy trees are retained for the remainder of their serviceable life.*
- 2. The existing street trees are replaced with a non-fruiting tree of the same species when they become diseased or die.*
- 3. Attlee Crescent's channels and carriageway be swept on a two weekly cycle during the fruiting season.*
- 4. That the above measures be reviewed in April 2001*
- 5. That the residents be informed of the above outcomes.*

**ATTLEE STREET RESIDENTS COMMENTS**

*This is a food for animals and humans and they look very pretty when in blossom down our street. I know that they are very messy, as we have three different plum trees in our backyard. But there are lots of different foods made from plums and nearly everyone would eat some kind of plum. So would you please consider why they are there, every tree is messy in Autumn or when branches break or something so we say that they should stay its just a little bit of a mess in Summer. Thank you.*

*Our household is very strongly in favour of retaining the plum trees for these reasons:  
The trees produce a magnificent display of blossoms in spring  
The trees provide a pleasant and cooling feeling during the heat of summer.  
Trees are living things – they should only be cut down if they are a risk to people and property.*

*The fruit can be picked before it falls and used for eating/jam.  
The 'problem' of unsightliness is over-stated; we have never had a problem with wasps in our house/property (In fact never seen any) and one can walk around the worst patches of squashed fruit. We never had the option of signing/not signing the petition. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. There is no positive side to keeping these old existing untidy trees, causing extra workload for residents with rooting plums sticking to footwear which does not clean off easily. Also sticking to the underside of car mudguards and mudflaps. As I am hacked off with continually cleaning out my motormower after cutting the grass roadside verge with its rooting sticky plums the grass will now be left for Council to cut whenever it desires.*

9. 5. 2000

- 4 -

*Definitely remove the plum trees. Just too much work when plums start getting ripe and also brings too many flies around the house and on the road. Thank you.*

*A new resident here and was dismayed at the state of the footpath when walking.*

*Crab apple tree outside No 8 also a problem. There are also ornamental trees with little yellow fruit which become a problem re near driveway No 8. The pavement edge is also needing attention at garden edge and road edge where grass is taking over. It would be a shame to see these plum trees go, as my Nana and Granddad lived down this street when I was growing up. As my cousins and I loved eating them and I still do. But I have not got a plum tree outside my gate so I can understand the residents view. I don't think I could stand sweeping the path everyday maybe if more people got out and picked them to make jam etc they could stay.*

*A more suitable tree is preferred. Rid us of fruit trees good idea. We haven't been approached with any petition for chopping down the plum trees, but wouldn't and don't support such a heinous action. Butchering the trees is completely unnecessary, and epitomises a narrow-minded and short-sighted citizenry. Come spring, the same residents who complain of smelly plums now, will be mourning the absence of pleasant smelling blossoms. The plums fall for only a few weeks of the year. And if people are to lazy to wipe their feet on the grassy verge, on a door mat then the tree is not to blame for that. Replacing the trees with a (supposedly) more suitable species is a waste of time, effort, and the infamous "taxpayers" money. New trees also take several years to reach any size, thereby depriving the street of greenery in a longer term.*

*We were told when the trees were planted that they did not bear fruit. The mess and the mess and smell is horrible, they attract the flies and wasps. While walking on the footpath the mess on your shoes is not nice at all.*

*Not all residents sign because plum trees all only in half through Crescent. PS Flowers last for one week. Plums make a horrible mess for months! Best trees for replacement would be small size evergreen trees eg: Small Kowhai or small acacia and others. The main cause of the problem is the neglect by Council's street cleaning section. For a major part of the year street cleaning is not required but during fruiting season regular visits are essential and should not need a petition before anything is done. Neglect upset people. If they are to be removed this should not be done until new trees have been planted in between the existing ones and have established themselves. The sooner the better. The tree roots are growing through the footpath in three places outside my gate. I can't mow the berms for plum stones.*

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** To be provided.