

5. PROTECTED TREES

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Corporate Plan Output: Monitoring	

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee Members with information relating to the loss of notable and heritage trees listed in the City Plan.

BACKGROUND

Trees are a major part of the City's character and amenity. Volume 3 of the City Plan lists those trees in the City which are considered to have significant value worthy of protection. Trees are assessed using a number of criteria including:

- Historic significance to the community
- Scientific or botanical significance
- Cultural or spiritual significance
- Recreational significance
- Landscape significance
- Functional value
- Size or age.

A tree may be protected because of a combination of the above factors, or because it is outstanding in one. These assessment criteria and weightings are set out in Volume 3 of the City Plan (page 10/114).

The City Plan identifies two levels of protection:

1. **Heritage trees** have at least one or more of the above factors which give them metropolitan or wider significance and which makes them outstanding or unique. Any work affecting a heritage tree is a non-complying activity.
2. **Notable trees** are identified as important in neighbourhood landscapes. They may be large, old, have a high visual profile or other character, which individually or in combination, make them worthy of listing. Any work affecting a notable tree is a discretionary activity.

The City Plan notified in May 1999 identified and listed 19 trees of heritage status and 2,567 notable trees (including 19 groups of trees with an unspecified number of plants in each group). The number of trees listed is a small proportion of the total number of trees within the City (street trees alone account for over 42,000 trees) but includes those which have outstanding quality or rarity, and are consequently worthy of protection.

LOSS OF PROTECTED TREES

Since the notification of the City Plan in June 1995, 67 notable trees have been removed from the City Plan. The reasons for the removals are summarised in Table 1. Twenty six trees were removed as a result of hearing panel decisions or due to initial listing errors. Of the remaining trees, most of these were removed as a result of natural causes such as wind damage, disease or death.

Twenty-three trees were removed as a result of development pressures, and accidental or wilful damage during the four years since June 1995. This is less than one percent of the trees currently listed as having heritage or notable status in the City Plan at May 1999.

Table 1. Number of notable trees removed from the City Plan Listing by reason since June 1995		
Reason for Removal	Number of Trees	Percentage of Trees
Erratum in original City Plan listing	4	
Status of tree changed before notification of City Plan	1	
Result of hearing panel decision	22	
Natural Causes - diseased/damaged or died	29	72.5
Damaging adjacent structures	2	5
Accidental Damage resulting in death	1	2.5
Removed for construction/ development purposes	7	17.5
Illegal Removal /wilfully damaged	1	2.5
Total	40	100
Grand Total	67	

Source: Christchurch City Council Parks Unit, July 2000

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.