

16. 'OUR CITY' PROJECT

Officer responsible Jenny May Senior Heritage Planner	Author Rae Finlay DDI 365-2411
---	--

The purpose of this report is to provide background and progress to date on the "Our City" project currently underway in the Municipal Chambers, Corner Worcester Boulevard and Oxford Terrace.

PROJECT HISTORY

The "Our City" project (previously called The Environment Centre) was initiated by the Christchurch City Council in 1995. The working name for the project has been changed to "Our City" to reduce confusion with the Christchurch Environment Centre.

The consultation and development phase of the project involved meetings, workshops, consultant's reports and finally, the preparation of the Business Case by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in October 2000. The Business Case clearly sets out the objectives of "Our City" as:

- "To provide a venue where issues and information about the city's environment and physical development can be displayed, explained and debated
- To encourage the exchange of ideas and knowledge about environmental issues and urban development between residents, interested professionals, the Council and the general public
- To provide a place where items related to the historic development of the city and other civic memorabilia (including civic gifts, heritage items, civic archives and civic awards) can be displayed and stored
- To inform and educate the city's citizens (including children) about the city's environment."

It was on the basis of the approved Business Case that funding was secured for the "Our City" project from the Christchurch City Council and the project was able to proceed..

PROJECT UPDATE

The "Our City" project is proceeding in line with the original aims and objectives.

The aim of the project is to bring together, in one accessible place in Christchurch, the public, the Christchurch City Council, Environment Canterbury, interested professionals, developers and investors, tangata whenua and community/residents groups, to present and exchange ideas and knowledge about the city and important development, planning and environmental issues.

A Management Team has been established for the implementation of the project. It comprises:

John Dryden (Chair)
Jenny May (Senior Heritage Planner, Christchurch City Council)
Kerry Everingham (Education Manager, Christchurch City Council)
Bill Binns, (Property Unit, Christchurch City Council)
John Vial, (Architect)
Rae Finlay, (Project Manager)

A Council subcommittee comprising Councillor Crighton, Councillor Corbett and Councillor Evans has also been updated on the project.

Environment Canterbury agreed last year to support the "Our City" project with \$40,000 annual contribution towards operational funding.

The Management Team has met regularly with officers of Environment Canterbury to develop exhibition concepts, specific Environment Canterbury displays and promotional material. Environment Canterbury representatives have also been involved in the two exhibition content workshops.

Rick Pearson has been appointed as the Exhibition Designer for "Our City". He is currently working on the joint ECAN/Museum project "Living Rooms".

The Management Team has had meetings with The Christchurch Environment Centre regarding the feasibility of them moving to the Municipal Chambers. Since this idea was first mooted several years ago the scale of the Christchurch Environment Centre and the Environmental Education Agency has increased dramatically. They have responded that the space available to them in Our City would not meet their needs however they are keen to link with Our City to help increase the profile of the environmental community and the Christchurch Environment Centre in a way that is smaller in scale but high in impact, by providing a permanent display area within "Our City".

The resource consent and building consent has been received for the internal work on the ground floor. The contract tender went to Fletcher Construction and internal work commenced early July.

CONSULTATION

A number of workshops have been held over the past month to develop the content for the exhibition spaces. Follow up contact and meetings have also been held with organisations and agencies that were unable to attend the workshops. Those involved to date are:

Christchurch City Council Units
Institute of Architects
Environment Canterbury
Christchurch Environment Centre
Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu
University of Canterbury, Geography and History Departments
Civic Trust
Mayoral Forum

A meeting is being held on Monday 6 August with education representatives of Units of Council to update on the "Our City" project and identify specific exhibition or consultation topics or projects that can be displayed in "Our City"

BUDGETS

As the project started later than expected carry forwards have been requested from the 2000/01 financial year. The project is proceeding on budget.

STAFFING AND ONGOING MANAGEMENT

The Job Value Statement for the "Our City" Manager has been drafted and approved by Human Resources. It is currently being job sized. The Manager will be a member of the Customer Relations Team, Operations Directorate, responsible to the Communication and Advertising Project Manager, currently Grant McSherry.

Once the "Our City" Manager is appointed a further 1.5 FTE's will be employed to cover the reception/information desk for the hours that "Our City" will be open to the public.

After the building opening in September it is proposed an Advisory Committee will be established that will include representation from the Christchurch City Council, including a Heritage Team representative, Environment Canterbury and other key partners to provide ongoing support for the "Our City" Manager.

TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION AND OPENING

The building opening is scheduled for September 2001, this includes the refurbishment of the ground floor, the completion of the lobby area and brochure/information area, display cabinets and photo murals and temporary exhibitions.

The permanent "Our City" exhibitions and the refurbishment of the 1st floor are scheduled for completion by June 2002.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The name for the project and a strap line that will explain to the public about the project is currently being worked on.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

**Chairman's
Recommendation:** Not seen by Chairman.