

4. HEATHCOTE RIVER ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Board of the commencement of asset management planning for the Heathcote River.

SYNOPSIS

The Parks and Waterways Unit needs to commence its Heathcote River Asset Management Plan in order to deal with the imminent need for tree replacement in a manner that integrates with planning for flood management, river bank stabilisation, recreation and streetscape. As a first stage, planning is proposed for the Colombo Street to Hansens Park reach.

CONTEXT

In 1999 the Council adopted the Waterways and Wetlands Natural Asset Management Strategy. The Strategy is a framework, both conceptual and financial, for protection and restoration of the City's waterway and wetland assets. The Strategy requires the development of asset management plans for each of fourteen project areas and this is to be done in conjunction with stakeholders (neighbours, tangata whenua, recreational groups, etc).

RIVER CONDITION

When the river and adjoining roads were surveyed in the 19th century the effects of later urbanisation were probably not understood and consequently a rather narrow river corridor was created. The river is still under size for the degree of catchment development and is prone to flooding.

A Christchurch Drainage Board Scheme VB (1985) proposed a combination of channel widening and retention basins to reduce flood risk. Scheme VB was rejected by the Council in the late 1980s for environmental reasons. Scheme VB is succeeded by the Heathcote River Floodplain Management Plan which proposes a range of measures including retention basins, house raising and planning measures (plus the 1986 Woolston Cut) for flood mitigation. However, the flooding potential in the middle river remains an issue and any increase in the channel capacity – if it can be achieved without detriment to the river zone – will be valuable.

One of the consequences of the narrow river channel is that the banks are steep and are therefore prone to slumping. This can impede water flow and in some cases destabilise roads.

TREE CONDITION

Quite a number of trees along the river have either been felled without replacement or are in poor condition. Since consideration and rejection of Scheme VB and adoption of the Heathcote River Floodplain Management Plan a tree replacement plan has been deferred pending integration with channel planning. Other plans such as the Beckenham Neighbourhood Improvement Plan and Spreydon/Heathcote Leisure Parks & Waterways Study have been produced in the meantime and will need to be incorporated in future planning.

Parks and Waterways arboriculturalists advise that there is an increasingly pressing need to plan for tree renewal and replacement.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of an asset management plan will be to develop an agreement about how Council assets represented in the river, trees, streets, paths and green space can be soundly managed while also meeting the needs and wishes of the local community.

The Parks and Waterways Unit proposes to engage with the community through a team comprised of arboricultural, recreation, roading and river engineering representatives. Co-ordination with community groups would be undertaken by the Parks and Waterways Area Advocate, Ann Liggett.

The team recommends starting with the section between Colombo Street and Hansens Park. This section is fairly homogeneous, has the highest proportion of old street trees and encompasses the areas with flooding problems. It is thus a good choice for the initial stage of the asset management plan.

NATURAL + PEOPLE + ECONOMIC STEP ASSESSMENT

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓0*	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use	✓	Aiming to use natural bank stabilisation methods where possible
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	0	
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓✓	Provide habitat in river plantings
N4	People needs met fairly and efficiently	NA	NA - See People Step + Economic Step
The People Step			
P1	Basic needs met	0	
P2	Full potential developed	0	
P3	Social capital enhanced	0	
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓	Tangata whenua will participate in planning. Tangata whenua sites to be recognised.
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓	Community informed and participating in planning
The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources	✓	Seeks to integrate management of several assets
E2	Job rich local economy	0	
E3	Financial sustainability	✓	Integrates environmental restoration with asset renewal

Staff

Recommendation: That the information be received.