

7. CITY BEDDING SCHEMES

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to compare the costs associated with the standard bedding scheme as against the provision of an instant flower scheme.

THE PRESENT BEDDING SCHEME

The Council's present approach to providing bedding for the city's gardens is to plant two bedding schemes per year. The spring bedding is planted March/April and runs through to September/October with the majority of the flowering finishing at Labour Weekend. The summer bedding scheme is planted in October/November and flowers from Christmas through to the end of March.



Central City Bedding – Victoria

There has been little change to the present policy over the years. It has provided the city with two flower displays both falling during high visitor periods, eg Labour Weekend and the holiday period after Christmas and for other floral activities in February and March.

In preparation the beds are composted once a year, are easy to prepare and plant and require a limited amount of general horticultural maintenance. Such schemes require a degree of planting skill other than marking out.

Based on a standard bed (Tuam Street) of 480 plants (twice a year), the plant costs at .13c per plant equates to \$124.80.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO POTTED COLOUR OR INSTANT FLOWER BEDDING SCHEMES

This method of bedding is not currently practiced by the Council for its spring or summer bedding schemes. It consists of purchasing bedding plants already flowering in containers.

Its main purpose is to provide instant colour and does away with the growth period prior to flowering.



However, such a scheme requires a completely different approach in that there would need to be four plantings per year to maintain a consistent floral display. These plantings would need to take place February, April, August and November. Plants are purchased from the grower in 1 litre pots, in flower. Using Tuam Street plot (480 plants) (four times a year) at a unit cost of \$1.49, the cost would be in the vicinity of \$2,860.00. This may vary a little depending upon the main theme plants used in the scheme.

What becomes a real additional operational cost is that handling costs and planting from containers requires greater care and attention, as well as transportation. We would estimate approximately double the planting cost over the present scheme, not taking into account the need for additional fertiliser and site preparation. It would also be expensive to maintain a back-up supply in case of vandalism, as the same sized flowering plants would be needed if the flower bed was to look consistent.

The Parks Unit currently produces 216,520 (2002/03) bedding plants within the city at an average cost of .13c per plant, a total cost for plants only of \$28,148.00. The cost of an alternative scheme with approximately 433,040 plants at an average cost of \$1.49 would equate to \$645,230.00. This figure does not include the additional cost of seed purchase, horticultural management or technical requirements in planning additional schemes.

I would also suggest that should there be changes to the present bedding scheme this would require the services of an additional person to plan, manage and supervise the floral bedding operation.

CURRENT POLICY

The present financial provision for the City Bedding is found within the Parks and Waterways Operational Outputs – Environmental, Garden and Heritage Parks. A sum of \$43,900 is provided within the Botanic Gardens Nursery and Conservatories sub output for the purchase of seed planning and propagation of bedding plants. This provision also includes Botanic Gardens and Mona Vale. The unit's present purpose and description is to "provide and maintain spring and summer bedding displays each year throughout the city:.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The plants for the present bedding schemes are purchased at a cost of .13c per plant and a change in the method of planting to producing plants in flower would increase the cost per plant to \$1.49.

There would also be additional operational cost for which there is no budget provision and the overall budget for plants only would increase from \$28,148.00 to an estimated \$645,230.00 should container grown flowering bedding plants be preferred to our present bedding production of plants in trays.

NATURAL + PEOPLE + ECONOMIC STEP ASSESSMENT

#	CONDITION:	Meets condition ✓✓0*	HOW IT HELPS MEET CONDITION:
The Natural Step			
N1	Reduce non-renewable resource use		Labour intensive, non renewable resource being replanted.
N2	Eliminate emission of harmful substances	0	No real effect on emission.
N3	Protect and restore biodiversity and ecosystems	✓	Part of green space system.
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	✓✓	Enhances well-being and creative expression.
P3	Social capital enhanced	✓✓	Enhances green open space systems.
P4	Culture and identity protected	✓✓	Garden City identity.
P5	Governance and participatory democracy strengthened	✓	People expect to see floral displays as part of services provided.
The Economic Step			
E1	Effective and efficient use of all resources		High costs to produce colour in city.
E2	Job rich local economy	✓	Provides work and training horticulture industry.
E3	Financial sustainability	✓✓	Provision of tourism experience for city visitors.

Staff

Recommendation For information.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That staff review and report on the current policy and practice applicable to the purchase, growing and planting of annuals within the four avenues.

The report to outline:

- the types of annuals used and their locations
- funding
- suggestions for change including acquisition of plants and their landscape use
- the opportunities to work with the Christchurch Beautifying Association.