

3. CENTENNIAL PARK – REMOVAL OF TREES

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the need to remove two poplar trees, one cypress and one willow at Centennial Park, and to gain approval for the removal.

BACKGROUND

In 2000 a landscape plan was prepared for Centennial Park that identified future development works for the park. Over the past few years, as funding has become available, projects identified on the plan have been implemented, including the beach volleyball area, irrigation of main sports fields area and the new playground. The Greenspace Unit has funding available this year to landscape the park's entrances from Sparks Road.

THE LANDSCAPE PLAN

The primary purpose for the plan is to create a usable space in which people will feel safe. The design has been prepared to provide good sight lines down to the river, while also enabling access to the water's edge (refer attached plan). The proposed plant types have been chosen to blend into the adjacent Te Kura Kaupapa Maori School grounds.

CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Landscape plan. The Te Kura Kaupapa Maori School, the local residents' groups and local residents have seen this plan. No negative comments have been received.

PROPOSED WORK

The proposed landscape plan affects the first 30 metres of the walkway into the reserve. Most of the trees along the walkway are willows and require some maintenance pruning to remove deadwood, remedy defects and clear footpaths and sight lines along the riverbank.

The proposed tree removal affects the entrances (refer attached photographs). The landscaper feels this is an excellent opportunity to open up these entrances.

The following observations are made by the arborist on trees at the entrance to the park:

1. Two populus spp.

There are two Populus spp. (Cottonwood poplar) at the beginning of the walkway, which require removal (refer attached photographs). The trees are situated 15 metres into the walkway off Sparks Road, beside the School boundary fence. The trees were originally planted to create a screen for the former Works shingle pile. The tree screening consists of a mixture of poplars and cypress with other shrubs and vegetation.

The poplar trees need to be removed because they are not good specimens. One poplar tree has poor upper canopy structure, while the other tree has stress growth in the trunk tissue and is growing at an angle. Although fairly large, they are not fully mature, and it is anticipated that they will become problem trees requiring more costly maintenance and removal later.

At present the trees do not present a health and safety problem. However, because of the new landscaping being undertaken this year, it is an opportune time to remove the trees.

2. Cypress

At the beginning of the walkway there is a Cypress spp. tree (see attached photograph). The tree is the most dominant in the group, having a large canopy spread. Consideration has been given to retention of the tree, but its branch structure shows some defects. Given the proximity of the tree to footpaths and road, maintenance could be costly and ongoing. Therefore, removal of the cypress will open up the end of the walkway, giving better views into the park, thus making the park entrances safer.

Note: there is a smaller cypress tree adjacent, which shows better form but is slightly misplaced. It may be feasible to retain this by transplanting to a better location within the park.

3. Willow

The willow tree is located at the beginning of the walkway and close to the road bridge and river. It will require pruning to alleviate its growth, particularly over footpath and road, and probably has a limited lifespan given its condition.

As the tree gets older it will cause some problems due to its location in relation to the road, footpath, and river and park footpath, and hence maintenance could become costly and ongoing.

At this stage the landscape plan proposes the removal of the tree as part of upgrading the road frontage and park entrance.

SUMMARY

The development of Centennial Park is ongoing. There will be more landscaping occurring over the next few years as funding becomes available. There has been much positive response to improvements already undertaken from residents and visitors using Pioneer Stadium and Centennial Park. The tree removal and proposed landscape work at the Sparks Road entrance will further enhance the safe use and visual amenity of the park.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Board approve the removal of the two poplars located 15 metres into the walkway of Centennial Park, off Sparks Road..
 2. That the Board approve the removal of the cypress tree situated at the beginning of the walkway at Centennial Park.
 3. That the Board approve the removal of the willow tree at the beginning of the walkway and close to the road bridge and river at Centennial Park.

Chairperson's

Comment: For discussion. I would encourage Board members to undertake a site visit prior to the Board meeting.