



**WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL**
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui

Whanganui District Council Street Tree Strategy 2016





Whanganui District Council Street Tree Strategy June 2016

Originator:

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Strategy and Development Manager

Approved by:

Whanganui District Council on 31 May 2016

Date by which a review should be carried out:

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Executive summary

This Street Tree Strategy sets out the Whanganui District Council's aspirations for the future management of Council's street trees, and provides the basis for decision-making on street tree issues. The document stresses the important role trees play in our environment and the Council's desire for street trees to have a place in our town's future. This is reflected in the strategy's vision of a Whanganui which is "renowned nationally for its treescape".

In achieving the vision the Council is primarily faced with three main challenges: firstly, how to manage the current street trees, many of which are in poor condition; secondly, how to ensure trees remain part of future urban developments; and thirdly, how to respond to public expectations of the Council's management of trees.

In managing the current street trees the Council will strive to maintain the integrity of existing tree planting while allowing for flexibility for necessary tree removal and replacement. Where conflicts between trees and infrastructure occur alternative approaches will be investigated. Street trees are to be recognised as essential assets and an integral part of future urban development. The planned development of an Urban Streetscape Plan is seen as essential to provide guidance on future tree planting.

With respect to public expectations on Council tree management, the Council wishes to provide more effective community engagement which allows for involvement and clarity on tree decisions. The Council will seek to achieve this through guidelines for public notification and/or consultation over tree removal and replacement, partnerships with community groups, provision for community input into street tree projects and education.



Vision and principles

Vision statement

Whanganui is renowned nationally for its treescape which enhances our vibrant, cultural living environment.

Principles

The following key principles underpin this Street Tree Strategy:

- The Council wishes to emphasize the value of its street trees, and the importance placed on the role of the Council as the guardian of this tree stock.
- In its decision making Council places a high value on the benefits of trees to the community as a whole rather than costs/benefits to private individuals.
- The Council strives to maintain the integrity of Whanganui's treescape for future generations while allowing flexibility for necessary tree removal and replacement.

Introduction


This Street Tree Strategy aims to provide clear direction for the short and long-term management of Council's street trees. The strategy sets the Council's goals for the planting, promotion, maintenance and protection of our street trees, and creates a framework for decision-making and resource allocation. This document does not cover trees on parks as these are largely managed in accordance with specific management plans.

This document replaces the Tree Policy adopted in 2008. This policy aims to address gaps within the existing policy, such as how street trees should be dealt with in redevelopment situations, and provides greater opportunities for community input.

The Whanganui District Council considers trees to be significant and valuable assets to the district. Whanganui's trees add hugely to the look and feel of the locality and is one of the strong points of positive difference for Whanganui.

The presence of high quality well-managed trees can enhance the appearance of both urban and rural environments and it is well documented that trees in our streets and parks have a bearing on people's quality of life. Trees also make a positive impact on the environment through providing shade and shelter, seasonal colour and aesthetic value. In addition, trees can aid climate control, provide ecological diversity, stabilise land, provide food, attract and support bird life and mitigate noise and air pollution.

Trees also have an important role to play from an urban design perspective. They are used to frame views, provide a focal point, enhance and soften hard landscapes and reflect local identity. Trees can also affect driver behaviour by



‘calming’ or ‘slowing’ traffic down. There is well documented evidence that a good streetscape enhanced by trees has a notable positive impact on property values.

The landscaped environment, and trees in particular, plays an important part in the earth’s water and carbon cycles – and landscaped areas can be utilised through urban design to achieve results supporting our environment. Stormwater management in particular can make use of planted areas to provide soakage, water usage and slow down the run-off created by hard-surfaces in the urban environment.

This strategy takes into account financial constraints placed on the Council and is consistent with agreed levels of funding in the Council’s Annual Plan.

History of Whanganui street tree planting

The origins of Whanganui’s urban street tree plantings were in the 1880s during the term of Mayor James Laird. James Laird persuaded the then Borough Council to embark on a policy of planting street berms with London Plane trees. In the 21st Century this legacy provides a significant backbone of Plane trees linking the central city of Whanganui to St John’s Hill, the riverbanks and a number of suburbs, including Whanganui East and Gonville.

In 1897 the Council planted Oak trees along a section of Heads Road to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Jubilee. In 1902 an avenue of Oaks were planted in Halswell Street. These plantings are predominantly still intact and are now over 100 years old.

Between 1910 and 1940 some 160,000 trees were planted throughout Whanganui’s reserves and streets. Much of Virginia Lake, Kowhai Park, Matipo Park and the Whanganui River bank were planted between 1912 and 1921 under the guidance of The Beautifying Society. Although records are not complete, selected streets in Gonville, St Johns Hill, Aramoho and Whanganui East were planted between 1928 and 1936.

It was recorded in 1938 by a well-known New Zealand horticulturalist that the James McGregor Park was destined to become one of the most interesting tree and plant areas and the most complete botanical park in the Dominion.¹ It was also recorded in the same year that massive Phoenix palms from the Canary Islands grow happily in Whanganui with the tapering dark Norfolk Island pines and the swamp cypresses.

In the early days of 1954 it was recorded that Whanganui’s reputation was known as the ‘City of Beautiful Trees’. It was documented that the city’s old oaks and flame-crested flowering gums were long familiar to visitors from many

¹ NZ Free Lance October 6, 1954 pg 34



places. Our parks were endowed with beautiful trees, both native varieties and those from far corners of the world.

In addition to street plantings, new park landscapes have been developed over the last two decades - the most significant being the vast collection of trees at the Bason Botanical Reserve.

This history of street tree planting has been continued by successive Council's through the decades and it is the cumulative result of these plantings that create the Whanganui of today.

What we have today

Many of the trees mentioned above are still alive and are now highly valued by the Council and the community. A small number of these trees are protected within the Whanganui District Plan to ensure they are retained for as long as is practicable. Unfortunately, many of the older street trees are in poor condition and are in need of urgent renewal in the short to medium term.

The District also has a number of commemorative trees which have been planted to commemorate specific people or events.

For a number of years the Council has been undertaking replacement planting of street trees which are dead, diseased and dying.

Central city

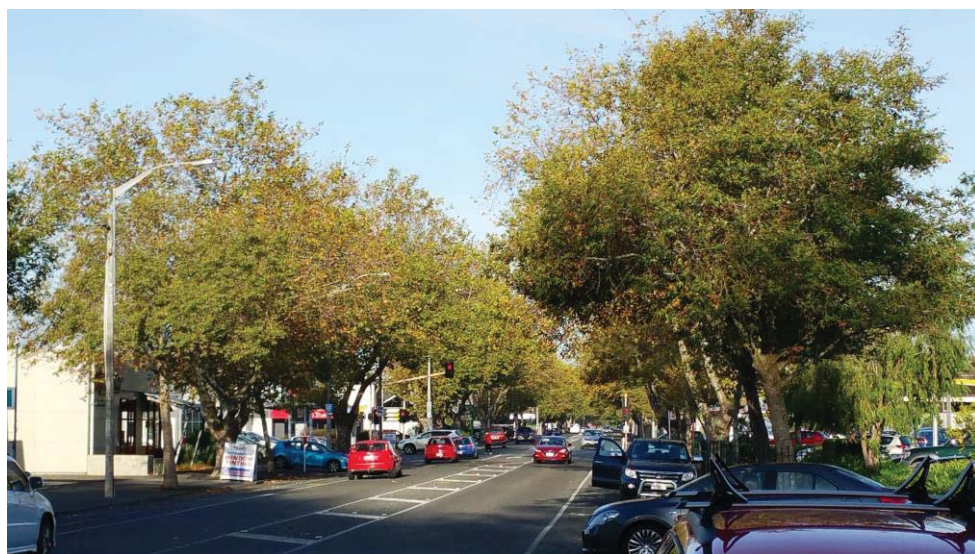
Management of street trees within the town centre differs from the suburbs largely due to the greater confines and changing nature of this built environment. London Plane Trees have been used extensively in the inner city of Whanganui, contributing significantly to the streetscape and softening the impact of built structures. London Plane trees are large and dominant with characteristic bark which peels leaving a camouflaged pattern. This hardy species has proven that it can cope well in Whanganui's streets. These trees currently line both sides of Whanganui's main street and several side streets.

The Council acknowledges that the London Plane trees are a special feature of our district which creates an 'avenue feel' and links to early European settlement.

The previous 2008 Tree Policy stated that the Council would retain the London Plane as the dominant species for the central city; however, the Council also recognised that retaining all London Planes in the central city was not possible. This was for a number of reasons, including size, disease and damage to infrastructure. London Planes require more regular replacement in the central city given their rounded, wide spreading form and the quick growing nature of



these trees. The policy required removal and replacement after approximately 10 years to avoid major damage to infrastructure.



²

Upper Victoria Avenue, Whanganui 2106

Beyond the central city there is a diverse collection of tree species in our streets and parks which have a relationship to the character of the area in which they are planted.

Trees are public assets, and as such needs to be managed during their full lifecycle in line with best asset management practices.

Why we need a strategy

The purpose of this strategy is to provide guidance to enable a consistent and transparent approach to street tree management for Council staff, residents and councillors.

Scope of strategy

This strategy sets the vision for Council's street trees and provides goals and objectives which help to guide and support long term decision making on the planting, maintenance, protection and removal of street trees. The focus of this document is on trees rather than shrubs and gardens.

This Strategy is principally confined to Council street trees. Trees in Council premier parks and reserves have their own management plans and aspects of this Strategy will be incorporated into the review of the Management Plans. (*Refer Table 2*)

² Whanganui District Council Photo Collection 2016

Strategy context

Council has developed a new strategic plan with community involvement. Entitled “Whanganui: Leading Edge”, it sets the strategic framework through which we will seek to shape our community and achieve defined outcomes. It has formed the foundation for the 10 Year Plan 2015-2025 and sets out strategic objectives and actions which will occur in that planning period.

Whanganui: Leading Edge Strategy 2015

WHANGANUI
LEADING EDGE



Deeply united



Globally connected



Powered by creative smarts



Flowing with richness



Works for everyone

One key pillar of the Council’s Leading Edge Strategy is the ‘Environment’, under the banner of ‘Flowing with Richness’. This is about the ‘look and feel’ of the place - a district with beautiful, integrated design, bountiful and valued natural resources. The goal is “a district that safeguards its natural resources and provides an environment with a sense of place, identity and vitality.” Our trees are a key asset in achieving this aim by valuing and protecting them.


‘Community’, and the statement “deeply united” is another relevant part of the Council’s strategic vision. The Council realises there will be diverse opinions however, we recognise the importance of working in partnership with the community.

“Works for Everyone” – This element of the Leading Edge Strategy has direct relevance, in that the management of trees and other public infrastructure needs to happen in a coherent integrated manner to achieve an integrated outcome suitable for everyone.

Further links with other Council strategies, policies and plans are outlined in Appendix 1.

Background and challenges

There is an overwhelming desire by the Council and the community to ensure street trees have a place in our environment. Despite this, tremendous pressures are placed on trees in the urban environment which impact on their ability to survive or grow successfully.



The Council faces three principle challenges in regard to its trees. Firstly, how to manage the current street trees, many of which are in poor condition. Secondly, how to ensure trees remain part of future developments. Thirdly, how to respond to public expectations of the council's management of trees.

This Tree Strategy was developed in consultation with key community stakeholders. There are a number of challenges that have been identified which the strategy aims to address.

1.0 Street Tree Management


Public Safety

Managing the risks to public safety associated with Council's street trees

- 1.1 Branches or whole trees can fall, potentially causing injury to the public or damage to property. Trees can also limit visibility or restrict heavy vehicle movement.
- 1.2 The tree root system is roughly the size of its canopy. Consequently public safety and infrastructure effectiveness is compromised within the tree drip line. Particularly footpaths, stormwater, wastewater, water, telecommunications and power services. When utility services are compromised it can have a negative impact on levels of service such as trip hazards and blocked pipes. Therefore there is a need for a joint collaborative approach to better plan for trees as lifecycle assets that don't unduly minimise surrounding services.
- 1.3 Whanganui has an aging population many of whom have disabilities who rely on alternative modes of transport. They rely on mobility scooters, wheelchairs and other aids to mobility. Their safety is compromised by footpath defects, often caused by tree roots. Repeated community surveys have shown this issue to be a concern with pedestrians and how they rate footpath levels of service.

Management of Existing Street Trees: Managing public perceptions of Whanganui's mature tree stock diminishing

- 1.4 All street trees have a finite life and it is usually significantly less than would occur in a tree's natural environment. Many of Whanganui's street trees are in poor condition and nearing the point where tree replacements will be necessary. Retaining our mature street trees is important, however, this needs to be balanced against the health of the tree, the safety of the community and Council's ability to deliver surrounding services to acceptable and agreed levels of community service.



How to provide a level of service for tree maintenance that fits with Council's financial constraints and meets public expectations


- 1.5 The Council's arboriculture contracts set specific details of how the Council will manage its trees, including tree planting, maintenance, renewal and removal. The Council faces high maintenance costs due to the large number of mature trees, and the need to meet clearance requirements from overhead services. Historical pruning techniques (such as pollarding) have also resulted in increased costs due to the need for repeated works and sometimes removal and replacement due to the structural weakness/decay that these works have caused. Often the desired look of a tree cannot always be achieved.

Network Utilities and Overhead Power Lines
The visual amenity and health of trees is often compromised by regulatory requirements, and there are risks to the Council if these requirements are not met

- 1.6 Whanganui has many streets where mature trees are growing beneath overhead power lines. Network utilities (electricity, gas, water, wastewater and telecommunications) and the road controlling authority (Council or the New Zealand Transport Agency) have specific rights of access to and use of the road corridor which are defined in legislation. A network utility operator has the power to set reasonable conditions on other network operators to protect safe and efficient functioning of their asset. This may mean requests to prune or remove trees.
- 1.7 Recent electricity regulations require trees to have greater clearance from power lines. These regulations mean that pruning of large trees to provide clearance can affect the health and form of the trees resulting in loss of aesthetic value. There are also likely to be high maintenance costs to prune these trees on a regular basis. Failure to meet conditions of the network utility can mean the Council will be open to litigation by network operators.

Tree Planting
Opportunities to strengthen Whanganui's Character Areas may be lost by a lack of guidance on the characteristics of each area and direction on tree species

- 1.8 The 2008 Tree Policy acknowledged there was an opportunity for tree planting to recognise and reinforce the diversity of character throughout the district. Although consideration is given to the appropriateness of trees for their location, the characteristics of different areas and lists of species have not been fully developed.
- 1.9 There is a fundamental relationship between biodiversity and trees. Trees provide habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife. There is an



opportunity for Council when undertaking new street tree plantings to select the right species to be planted in the right place to support bird life, bees and insects.

Climate change may have an impact on growing conditions and future tree planting

- 1.10 By the end of the century, the Manawatu-Whanganui is projected to have about 10–45 extra days per year where maximum temperatures exceed 25°C, with larger increases in the east than in the west of the region. In Whanganui, it is likely there will be little change in average annual rainfall. Seasonal projections show winter rainfall increasing by 8 per cent in Whanganui. This means for Whanganui warmer, wetter conditions could increase the spread of pests, weeds and diseases over time.³
- 1.11 The Council may need to consider a greater range of tree species and alternative landscape design options (e.g. greater use of rain gardens). There may also be a need to be more cognisant of providing shade in public areas and streets without trees if higher temperatures are likely.

2.0 Urban development, new subdivisions and street upgrades

Insufficient guidelines exist for tree planting in new streets and street redevelopments.

- 2.1 There is a need to ensure the opportunity for integrated street plantings are sufficiently considered during subdivision or street upgrades. Poorly considered or late consideration of trees during developments can lead to insufficient space for plantings, root severance during works or loss of street trees with no replanting's.
- 2.2 In relation to street design and tree planting, the New Zealand Standard (NZS 4404) and companion document have relevant standards, which need to be adhered to as a minimum requirement. The standards include minimum separation distances and site distances for tree planting from intersections, light standards, driveways bus stops and other inbuilt infrastructure. There is scope for further requirements such as minimum planting space to ensure the trees have sufficient room to grow and allowing for alternative design options such as breaking from traditional avenue planting (e.g. Buckingham Place).

³ Ministry for the Environment Manawatu-Whanganui region on climate change <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/climate-change/how-climate-change-affects-nz/how-might-climate-change-affect-my-region/manawatu/Whanganui>



3.0 Community Engagement

How to provide more effective community engagement which allows involvement and clarity on tree decisions

- 3.1 The Council recognizes that public engagement and consultation is valuable, particularly in regard to trees which have a high profile. Clear guidelines are needed to ensure the right approach to consultation and notification is taken depending on how people are affected.

Goals and objectives

1. To identify, preserve and enhance the distinctive characteristics of Whanganui's treescape.


- 1.1 Develop criteria for assessing requests to prune or remove trees on Council owned land which reflect the Council's desire to retain trees where possible.
- 1.2 Identify character areas with selection criteria and a register of species so that each character area has its own planting theme and reflects existing distinctive plantings.
- 1.3 In selecting tree species consideration should be given to species which are appropriate to the site.
- 1.4 Consider opportunities to recreate future avenues of large mature trees where space and street design allows.
- 1.5 Continue to protect Whanganui's significant trees through the 'Protected Trees' identified in the Whanganui District Plan.
- 1.6 Provide up to date information about Whanganui's commemorative plantings and make available to the community.

2. To regularly inspect and manage public trees to the best industry standards.

- 2.1 Maintain the optimum standard of tree care and management.
- 2.2 Ensure tree contracts require arboriculture standards to be adhered to.
- 2.3 Investigate alternative approaches to dealing with conflicts between trees and infrastructure.
- 2.4 Fulfil legal obligations with regard to health and safety.
- 2.5 To consider overall financial costs to all infrastructure when managing public trees and making associated decisions.

3. To integrate trees into the future development of our urban landscape.

- 3.1 Ensure trees are seen as essential assets by requiring trees to be considered and provided for in future urban development.
- 3.2 Require developers undertaking new subdivisions to engage with Council Parks Department in the planning stages to ensure street trees are included in the design.
- 3.3 Develop an Urban Streetscape Plan which provides guidance on future tree planting.

- 
- 3.4 Engage with developers and property owners to increase awareness of the values and benefits of trees in developments.
 - 3.5 Consider alternative design options for street tree planting.

4. To appropriately consult and engage with the community on tree issues.

- 4.1 Develop guidelines for public notification and/or consultation with the community over the removal and replacement of trees (including groups of trees) where pruning and other remedial work is not possible.
- 4.2 Work in partnership with relevant community groups, businesses and organisations to promote the beauty and diversity of Whanganui's trees and unique local species.
- 4.3 Provide opportunities for community input into, involvement in, and 'ownership' of street tree projects on Council land.
- 4.4 With assistance from members of the community develop a list of "Great trees of Whanganui". This could include heritage trees, and unique trees or groups of trees in the district.
- 4.4 Prepare and make available to the public promotional material to increase awareness about Council's Tree Strategy and other relevant documents (including information about Council's responsibilities under relevant legislation).

Monitoring and evaluation

Council will actively monitor and evaluate its performance against this strategy with emphasis on monitoring compliance with the stated goals and actions.

Monitoring should consider the appropriateness of each objective and action to ensure that it promotes the stated goal and ultimately contributes to the vision identified for Council trees in Whanganui. The work the Council undertakes in implementing this Strategy should maintain the community's positive perception of public trees and raise the Council's profile as a tree manager.

To measure the success of this strategy the following will be monitored:

- Community Views - Community satisfaction with how the public trees within Whanganui are managed
- Action Plan Progress
- Issues arising from implementation of the Tree Strategy.

There is a need to schedule a review of the Tree Strategy to take into account new challenges that emerge, changes in work techniques and codes of practice, public opinion, progress of climate change etc. A major review of the Tree Strategy will therefore be planned for every five (5) years, and sooner, if required.



Action Plan

This document has a number of objectives requiring actions to be implemented by Council to bring about a desired data set, operating procedure or decision. These actions have been grouped into a list (shown in Table 1). This Action Plan clearly sets out the work required to be completed, the responsible officer and a specified timeframe for completion.

The resulting data sets and procedures from these actions will then be added to this Tree Strategy as appendices.

This Tree Strategy and associated action plan has largely been written to operate within Council's current funding constraints and operational levels of service. It is expected that any goals or actions that result in an increase in level of service or a capital purchase requiring funding over and above current budgets, will be forwarded to Council for appropriate consideration within the annual and long term planning cycles. Potentially street tree enhancement projects may be suitable for external funding grant applications on a case by case basis.

Table 1: Street Tree Strategy Action Plan

Ref. No.	Goal / Objective	Action	Outcome	Time Period	Responsible Teams	Assess Progress
1. To identify, preserve and enhance the distinctive characteristics of Whanganui's treescape.						
1.1	Review the current criteria for requests to prune or remove council trees.	To review the existing criteria used to assess requests for work and make available via the web.	Give transparency to decision making and give consistency in response.	6 months	Parks	5 yearly
1.2	Identify character areas with selection criteria and a register of species so that each character area has its own planting theme and reflects distinctive plantings.	Investigate existing character and whether soil type and exposure will allow greater species choice.	Will help to develop a plan for the future planting of the town whilst investigating possible alternatives.	Ongoing	Parks	Yearly
1.3	In selecting tree species consideration should be given to species which are appropriate to the site	Completion of action 9 will address this issue although individual planting pits may also require specific action on as case by case basis.	This will increase establishment success of plantings.	Ongoing	Parks	Yearly
1.4	Consider opportunities to recreate future avenues of large mature trees where space and street design allow.	Develop a long term planting plan that is district wide and highlights areas for regeneration that will be necessary over the next 15 years initially.	A long term view will aid financial planning and will ensure that streets are proactively managed.	Ongoing	Parks & Infrastructure	Twice Yearly.
1.4	Consider opportunities to recreate future avenues of large mature trees where space and street design allow.	Collating data relating to tree age and condition as part of routine inspection checks to project future gaps in tree cover.	An accurate picture of the quality and longevity of the trees within the district for planning purposes.	Ongoing	Parks & Infrastructure	Yearly
1.5	Continue to protect Whanganui's significant trees through the 'Protected Trees' identified in the District Plan.	In line with regulatory guidelines reassess protected trees on a 2 yearly basis inviting nominations from the public.	A solid collection of protected trees but also a flexible system that takes into account changes in tree health and the developing generation of trees.	Ongoing	Parks	Yearly
1.6	To have a Notable Tree Register from which notable trees in Whanganui can be recognised and managed.	Develop a Notable Tree Register for Council to consider, including selection criteria and how the register and trees are to be	Whanganui has a Notable Tree Register of significant trees or groups of trees.	2016/2017	Parks	2 yearly



		administered and maintained.				
1.8	Collate up to date information relating to Whanganui's commemorative plantings and make available to the community.	Use existing lists, archives, and local knowledge to create a full list of all trees known to be planting commemoratively and make available via the web.	This will ensure that the history behind these trees is not lost and will help to ensure that if lost, trees will be replaced if appropriate.	Ongoing	Parks	Yearly
2. To regularly inspect and manage public trees to the best industry standards						
2.1	Maintain the optimum standard of tree care and management within existing restrictions.	Clarify 'Standard of Works' and make available to the public, through web.	Outline the type of pruning that is carried out and will give transparency to decision making.	To identify, preserve and enhance the distinctive characteristics of Whanganui's treescape.		
2.1	Maintain the optimum standard of tree care and management within existing restrictions	Continual professional development for council staff managing tree contracts.	Staff will remain current to industry standards and developments to ensure council is leading on technical issues.	6 months	Parks	5 yearly
2.2	Ensure tree contracts adhere to arboricultural standards.	Robust auditing procedures for contractor and focus on key performance indicators.	Close attention will be paid to the quality and timeliness of works provided to the council.	12 months	Parks	Yearly
2.3	Investigate alternative approaches to dealing with conflicts between trees and infrastructure.	Reinforce relationships between infrastructure and parks teams by regular on site meetings.	Greater collaboration on projects with a focus on joint positive outcomes.	Ongoing	Parks	Yearly
2.3	Investigate alternative approaches to dealing with conflicts between trees and infrastructure	Forward plans of infrastructure to be discussed and alternative options if necessary fielded at that time.	This will avoid knee jerk actions as a result of being already starting works before consideration given to trees.	24 months	Parks	Yearly
2.4	Fulfill legal obligations with regards to health and safety.	Maintain monthly safety audits on tree contractors working on council land	Regular auditing will reinforce the council approach to safety to contractors and satisfy the council's requirement to do what is practical to minimise risk.	36 months (one cycle of tree maintenance)	Parks	Yearly
2.4	Fulfill legal obligations with regards to	Maintain monthly traffic safety audits on contractors	Regular auditing will reinforce the council approach	Every 2 years.	Planning	Every 2 years



	health and safety	working on council land.	to safety to contractors and satisfy the council's requirement to do what is practical to minimise risk.			
2.5	To integrate trees into the future development of our urban landscape	Establish agreed clear zones for placement of various infrastructure as part of a structure planning study prior to each streetscape project and prior to development of proposed Streetscape Plan.	Process for addressing the co-existence of trees and utility infrastructure during streetscape designs	12 months.	Parks	Every 5 years
3. To integrate trees into the future development of our urban landscape						
3.1	Ensure trees are seen as essential assets by requiring trees to be considered and provided for in urban development.	Raise the profile of the Parks team with the planning process and local developers.	By raising the profile, developers will know who to contact with tree enquiries and planners will know to bring development enquiries to parks at the start of a case.	12 month	Parks	Yearly
3.2	Require developers undertaking new subdivisions to engage with Parks Dept in the early planning stages to insure street trees are included in the design.	Work with the planning department to create processes which allow opportunity for early, valued, involvement by Parks in subdivisions and infill development.	Ensuring trees will be recognised as an integral part of the process. May require policy change in other areas.	12 months	Parks	
3.3	Develop and Urban Streetscape Plan which provides guidance on future tree planting	Wide scope policy that will be created to sit across tree strategy and other relevant documents to provide a collaborative approach to the wider landscape.	Provide a consistent and long term approach to the management of landscape.	24 months	Infrastructure & Parks	Yearly
3.5	Consider alternative design options for street tree planting.	Be open to central island planting, group planting, front garden planting etc to widen opportunities to plant.	With limited available spaces to plant, widening the view will ensure trees will still be able to planted in some form.	Ongoing	Infrastructure & Parks	Yearly
4. To appropriately consult and engage with the community on tree issues.						



4.1	Clarify guidelines for when public notification and/or consultation with the community over the removal and replacement of trees.	Develop existing guidelines to clearly outline when, and to what degree residents and interested parties and informed about significant works planned.	This will ensure that interested parties and those most closely affected by proposed trees works will have an opportunity to comment on and understand the reasoning behind necessary tree works.	6 months	Parks	Yearly
4.3	Provide opportunities for community input into, involvement in and 'ownership' of tree projects on council land.	Identify areas which would be suitable community project sites and invite interested parties to suggest projects to take on.	This will involve the community and help to strengthen links between council and residents and help to diversify the streetscape.	24 months	Parks	Yearly
4.4	With assistance from members of the community develop a list of 'Great Trees of Whanganui' to promote the rich history and variety here.	Invite the public to make recommendations of their favourite trees in the town with the aim of creating a walk or route through the town that takes in these special trees. This could then be made available online or at I-site.	By inviting residents to get involved it will hopefully encourage them to think of those trees that are special to them which will increase their perceived value and importance.	24 months	Parks	Yearly
4.4	Prepare and make available to the public promotional material to increase awareness about Council's Tree Strategy and other relevant documents (including information about Council's responsibilities under relevant legislation)	Develop the council's web pages relating to trees to ensure that information that is useful to public is easy to reach.	Highlighting the legislation and policy around trees will widen the understanding of the restrictions around tree management and highlight the Council's continued commitment to having trees in Whanganui.	24 months	Parks	Yearly



Relevant Policy and Plans

Whanganui District Plan - Shaping Whanganui

Under the Resource Management Act 1991, Council is required to prepare a District Plan. It reflects the views and values of the Districts community as identified through the “Shaping Whanganui” consultation. The Whanganui District Plan provides a framework to guide development in the District.

10 Year Plan 2015-2025

The purpose of this plan sets out the Council activities and budgets and provides a long term focus over 10 years. It is reviewed every three years and defines levels of service.

Solar Protection Policy 2008

The purpose of this policy is to increase solar protection by ensuring that it is an integral part of Council’s planning processes. An action in this policy is to look for opportunities to plant trees or build shade structures where required and maintain a street tree policy to ensure appropriate selection, planting and maintenance of street trees.

Economic Development Strategy 2015

This strategy clearly identifies the various areas in which we must succeed to create an environment in which families – the corner stone of successful and vibrant communities – can prosper. The success of what this may look like is that our built environment and future urban development offers a high standard of amenity. Our street trees contribute to the community’s amenities.

Whanganui Visitor Strategy 2013

The visitor industry has and continues to play an important part in the Whanganui economy. It links with and adds value to other sectors including the arts, sport and cultural events, retail, education, conservation and heritage, also providing a rationale for investing in community recreation, leisure and other district amenities. Our street trees contribute to a visitor experience of a visually appealing and attractive place.

Urban Design Action Plan 2008

The purpose of the Urban Design Action Plan is to outline Council’s urban design aspirations and commitment to promoting and delivering high quality urban design for Whanganui. It identifies urban design goals and actions for Whanganui, which will guide council staff and elected representatives to influence their future projects, policies and plans; provide clarity to investors, developers and design professionals on Council’s urban design direction; and inform the public on how urban design can contribute to improving the city’s urban structure, form and the experience of living and working in Whanganui.



Proposed Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2016

The Whanganui Town Centre Regeneration Strategy project was initiated as a result of the sectional review of the District Plan. As part of the review of the commercial zones an overarching strategy is required to provide clarity about the issues and objectives for the town centre.

- An integrated approach is needed to reconcile the multiple interests within the town centre area.
- To provide an overall plan that comprehensively balances competing interests and objectives to achieve sustainable outcomes for the community with realistic actions, priorities and timelines to achieve sustainable change across the centre, rather than ad hoc development.
- To guide Council infrastructure and resource management decision making.
- To guide re-development and strengthening of heritage buildings to harness the full potential of the commercial centre and encourage private investment.
- To determine how existing reserves, features and public places can be enhanced and better integrated with the commercial centre.
- To guide design and funding for services, infrastructure and facilities in subsequent 10 year plans to achieve the community objectives to be articulated in the strategy for short, medium and long term priority implementation.

Urban Landscape Policy 2002

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for the upgrading of the urban landscape. These guidelines may change over the years and will be reviewed when required. This policy works alongside other policies which Council has concerning parks, building and other amenities and the River and the coast landscape.

Urban Transport Strategy 2011

This strategy takes a new approach to transport planning recognising the interconnections between transport and land use and looks strategically over a 30 year period. An action in this strategy is to beautify key routes and city entrances by developing a plan for landscaping our key routes and city entrances. Whanganui street trees are an important asset to be retained or replanted when our streets are redesigned or upgraded.

30 Year Infrastructure Strategy

This strategy sets objectives for the core infrastructure services delivered by Council, and is a statutory document required by Central Government.

Criticality Assessment of Water and Drainage Assets

Studies have been completed on ascertaining the criticality of various underground infrastructure elements in its consequence of failure. Typically, tree-root infiltration would increase the likelihood of failure on these assets.

Asset Management Plans for Roading, Water and Drainage, Parks, Property

These statutory documents ultimately outline practices and proposed actions for managing the assets addressed within this strategy, and would need to be updated to reflect its objectives and outcomes.

Protected Trees

Chapter 7⁴ of the Whanganui District Plan deals with Protected Trees. Protected Trees are considered worthy of recognition and protection because of their ecological, environmental, landscape, heritage or cultural importance.

Under the District Plan Rules, where a tree is registered on the list, removal requires a resource consent. Where dieback, disease and considerable deterioration has taken place, removal of vegetation or the complete tree may occur where this assists in containing disease or acts as a safeguard to maintain safety to the public or property.



Protected Tree - *Castanea sativa* (Sweet Chestnut)
Whanganui District Council Photo Collection

The highest priority for protection of trees are older trees and those more critical to the framework e.g. those on major traffic routes or near public areas.

Legislation

Like any other tree owner, the Council must abide by the law and work in accordance with the relevant legislation. The main ones that govern or have an impact on the management of urban trees are listed below:

- Resource Management Act.
- Electricity (Hazard from Trees) Regulations 2003.
- Local Government Act 2002.
- NZS4404:2010.
- Horizons Regional Council One Plan 2014: Chapter 9 – Coastcare.
- New Zealand Government Policy on Climate Change.

⁴ Shaping Whanganui District Plan Natural Environment Chapter 10.



- The Climate Change Response Act 2002 and Ministry for the Environment Publication: NZ Framework for Adapting to Climate Change 2014.
- New Zealand Standards in Arboriculture.
- New Zealand Arboriculture Association - Best Practice Guideline Amenity Tree Pruning.
- New Zealand Arboriculture Association - Best Practice Guideline for Tree and Bush Protection on Development Sites.

Strategic Linkage - Wider Policy Context - Appendix 1

The diagram below explains the linkages between key documents and shows the strategic link to the proposed Street Tree Strategy, and how they interact with and inform each other.

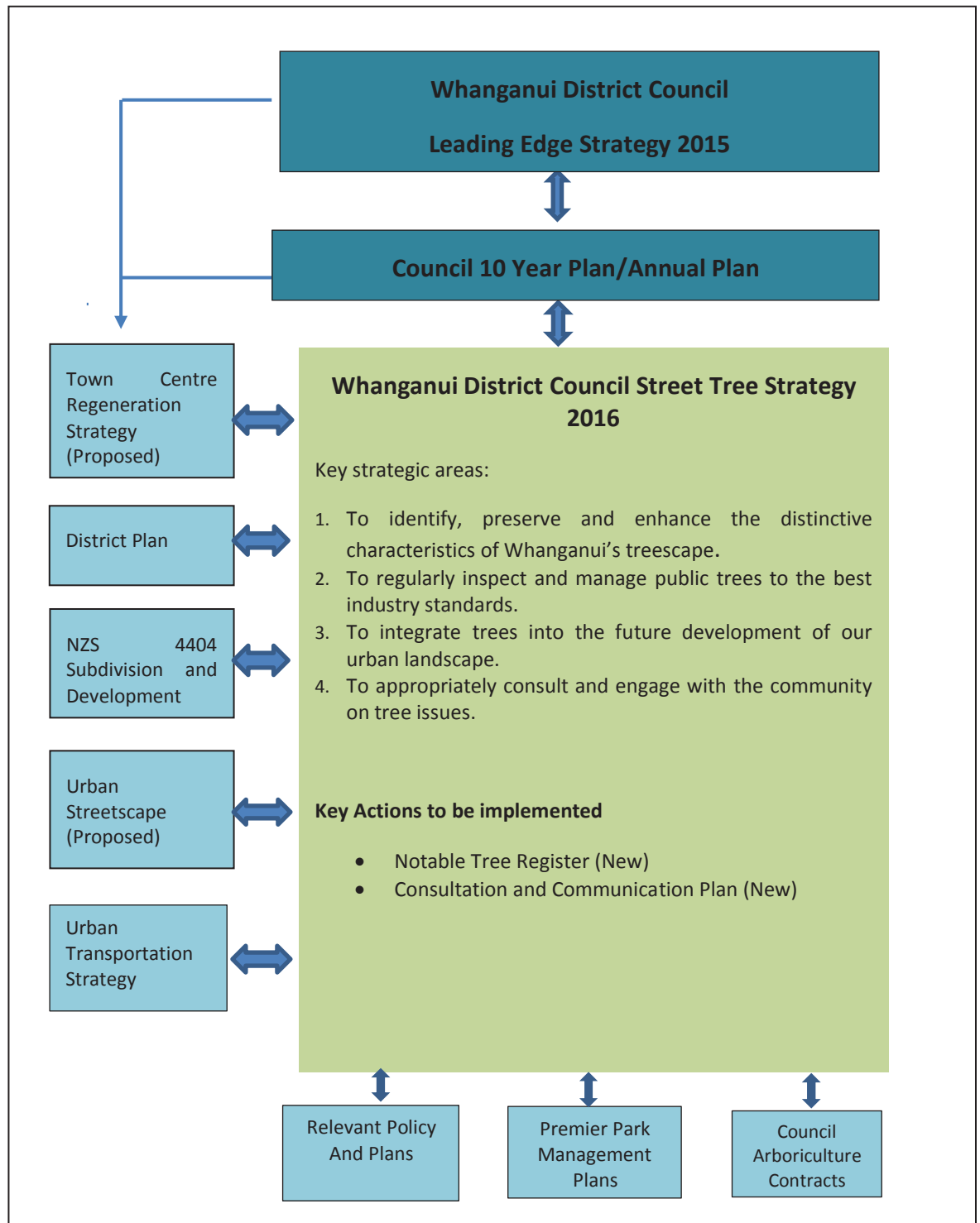




Table 2

Schedule of Parks and Reserves Management Plans & Strategies as at 2016

Castlecliff Coastal Reserve Management Plan 2005
Virginia Lake Reserve and Winter Gardens Management Plan 2009
Queens Park Reserve Management Plan 1992
Greenbelt Reserve Management Plan 1992
Kowhai Park Development Plan (North and South) 2003
Otamatea Park Reserve Management Plan 1992
Whanganui River Vegetation Management Strategy 2004 (Specie list included)
Sportsground Management Plan 1997