
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

CHARLES PLIMMER BEQUEST FORWARD PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for projects to be funded from the Charles Plimmer Bequest (Plimmer Bequest) over the next two financial years and to recommend a process for identifying future projects from 2012 onwards.

2. Executive Summary

The aim of the forward programme for the Plimmer Bequest funding is to provide a clear direction to the Council on how to spend the Plimmer Bequest Funds.

Plimmer Bequest funding can only be spent on project ideas that meet the criteria of the deed. The deed specifies that the bequest is to be spent on beautifying the bays, beaches and reserves including picnic and recreation areas around Wellington by planting trees, shrubs and other beautification works.

In June 2001, Council approved the process for administering the Plimmer Bequest. This process involved for the first time inviting suggestions from the public. In 2005 following public submissions, 98 project ideas were received, ranging from park and beach upgrades to new infrastructural type projects. Officers followed an assessment process which resulted in nine short listed project ideas. In February 2006 Council approved two projects, Scorching Bay Beach beautification and Central Park upgrade.

In December 2008 Council approved a further project, Te Raekaihau Point restoration and asked that existing ideas be revaluated in light of the priorities in the 2009 – 2012 Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) prior to making a decision on further projects.

Council officers have carried out this revaluation and propose that two projects be funded from the Plimmer Bequest: Point Dorset/Breaker Bay Restoration and CBD beautification (linked to the Rugby World Cup).

It has been 5 years since new project ideas were identified for Plimmer Funding. Officers recommend that the Council consults on new project ideas during the 2012 – 2022 Long-Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP).

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receives the information.*
2. *Recommends that Council:*
 - (a) *Agree up to \$75,000 of the Charles Plimmer Bequest be spent on CBD Beautification in 2010/2011.*
 - (b) *Agree up to \$400,000 of the Charles Plimmer Bequest be spent on the Point Dorset/Breaker Bay Restoration between 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.*
 - (c) *Consults on future project ideas to be funded by the Charles Plimmer Bequest during the 2012 – 2022 Long-Term Council Community Plan.*

4. Background

4.1 Plimmer Bequest Fund

Charles Plimmer bequeathed the income from his residual estate to the Wellington City Council for the benefit of the citizens of Wellington. This has been held in a trust fund since 1980 and is known as the Charles Plimmer Bequest (Plimmer Bequest). The use of the Plimmer Bequest is governed by the terms of the Bequest of Charles Plimmer, provided in Appendix A. It is to be spent on beautifying the bays, beaches and reserves including picnic and recreation areas around Wellington by planting trees and shrubs and other beautification works.

In June 2001, Council approved the process for administering the Plimmer Bequest. This process involved compiling a list of project ideas from previously listed projects, requests by external parties, elected member and officer input and suggestions from the public.

Projects are assessed against the Bequest Deed and must

- Be primarily aimed at beautification of a beach, recreational or picnic area, especially through tree planting
- Be one-off projects rather than on-going operational projects
- Be within the geographical 'limits' set in the bequest
- on publicly accessible land.
- Maximise the use of the fund, and may not receive Council funding and
- Focus on furthering Council's strategic direction.

4.2 The Plimmer Bequest Five Year Forward Programme

Following public consultation in 2005, 98 project ideas were received, ranging from park and beach upgrades, track improvements, and ideas for new facilities such as a new children's discovery garden, an environmental clock, sculptures, and other art works. 43 project ideas were eligible for Plimmer Bequest funding.

The 43 ideas were then clustered according to their location. For example, the seven project ideas relating to the improvement of Lyall Bay were clustered as one project. This resulted in 26 clustered project ideas, which were then assessed and a short list of nine project ideas was established. The nine short listed projects were:

- Children's Discovery Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden
- Scorching Bay Beach beautification
- Shorland Park upgrade
- Central Park Upgrade
- Improving Lyall Bay Beachfront
- Cog Park/ Hataitai Beach Upgrade
- Upgrading five suburban Parks
- Organic Teaching/Demonstration Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden
- Owhiro Bay Quarry Carpark upgrade.

In February 2006, Council approved a five year forward programme for the Plimmer Bequest, and agreed to fund the Scorching Bay Beach beautification and Central Park upgrade in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

In December 2008 Council approved an additional project, Te Raekaihau restoration to be completed in the 2009/2010 financial year. As part of the forward programme, officers were to report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee in 2009/2010 with potential projects to be funded by the Plimmer Bequest in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

5. Discussion

5.1 Review project list

Officers reviewed the original project list including the previous short listed projects and came up with an updated list after removing projects that:

- Were already funded or completed
- Were conceptual and could not be evaluated
- Contained large components not eligible for Plimmer funding (see Appendix B)

The updated list is:

- The Teaching Garden (amalgamation of children's discovery garden and organic teaching garden)
- Shorland Park Integration (Stage 2)
- Upgrade of Johnsonville Memorial Park (five suburban parks project)
- Point Dorset/Breaker Bay restoration
- Newlands Community Park upgrade (five suburban parks project)
- Porirua Cycleway and Walkway
- Birdwood Reserve Restoration

The projects were then scored against the following merit criteria,

- Project is compatible with Council's strategic direction and three year priorities
- Project is compatible with District Plan zoning, including heritage and cultural values
- Project is low risk
- Project is high profile, will result in tangible community benefits and accessible to a wide range of users
- Project is innovative

These criteria were modified from those used previously to better identify projects that fitted with Council's strategic direction and combined some criteria that overlapped. See Appendix C.

5.2 Short listed project ideas

The scores for each project are shown in appendix D. The eligible project ideas that scored 65 and above were short listed. The short listed projects are:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • Point Dorset/Breaker Bay restoration | 74.2% |
| • 5 Parks in Tawa - Porirua Walkway and Cycleway | 73% |
| • The Teaching Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden | 67.2% |

All short listed project ideas fit with the Plimmer Bequest eligibility criteria. The next step is to decide which of the short listed project ideas would maximise the use of the Plimmer Bequest fund (i.e. used for large projects which otherwise may not have received Council funding), and focuses on furthering Council's strategic direction.

Point Dorset/ Breaker Bay restoration:

The area comprises

- Point Dorset Recreation Reserve vested in the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (PNBST) in August 2009 with the Council as the Administering Authority under the Reserves Act 1977, and

- Council owned reserve land between Point Dorset Recreation Reserve and Breaker Bay Road. See Appendix E.

The Council and the PNBST will shortly sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding future management of this reserve. The first stage will be the preparation of a management plan as required by the Reserves Act 1977. This will involve consultation with the public over future management of the area including restoration of the coastal habitats and recreational use of the land.

The plan will include a master plan for the restoration and development of the area. This may include:

- Stabilising and protecting the cultural heritage of the area
- Upgrading and developing the track network to provide for a range of users.
- Links with the Great Harbour Way
- Restoring the coastal edge and habitats
- Developing a lookout experience on the ridgeline
- Improving areas for picnicking and passive recreation
- Stabilising the historic gun emplacements



Photo Point Dorset from Breaker Bay

Estimated project costs: These will not be known until completion of the master plan but an estimate of the likely scope of works as listed above plus a comparison with similar coastal upgrades mean that a maximum of \$400,000 will be required. Up to \$20,000 will be required in the 2010 2011 financial year for preparation of the master plan with the balance in the 2011 2012 financial year. Estimated annual operating expenditure (excluding depreciation) will be

\$3000 per annum for track maintenance and ongoing ecological restoration following project completion.

Summary: Project that fits well with the Plimmer Bequest, but needs further development and consultation as part of the management plan development. Some of the elements may not be eligible for Plimmer Bequest funding. The work can start in 2011/2012 once the management plan has been completed.

Five parks in Tawa (Porirua cycleway and walkway):

This 6km pedestrian route between Willowbank Park and Linden Park in Tawa will improve links across the valley and between schools, retirement villages, Tawa centre and other community facilities.

The route links five parks on the valley floor: Willowbank, Taylor, Duncan, Grasslees and Linden. The proposal involves upgrading and beautifying each park and constructing the walkway and cycleway as it passes through each park. The parts of the route not in these parks would need to be constructed using separate Council and/or NZTA funding.



Photo Willowbank Park

Estimated capital costs:	\$850,000
Estimated annual operating expenditure (excluding depreciation):	\$5,000

Summary: The project will upgrade 5 key parks within Tawa at the same time as building the Walkway and Cycleway as it passes through the parks. The work is consistent with the upgrades proposed in the Northern Reserves Management Plan. The cycleway and walkway is one of the key initiatives in the Open Space Access Plan. Not all work may be eligible for funding, for instance major stream

crossings. The project can stand alone but to gain maximum benefits should be built in conjunction with the other sections of the walkway and cycleway given the increased usage and profile of the parks that will result.

A recent assessment of the economic feasibility of the Walkway and Cycleway has been carried out by Opus in accordance with the NZTA Economic Evaluation Manual. Based on the results of the analysis the project has sufficient benefit to be moved forward to the next phase of funding. However with the release of the Government Policy Statement (GPS) for Transport that places higher emphasis on roads of national significance (RoNS) it is unclear whether this will reduce the priority for walking and cycling.

Given the uncertainty of funding the major sections of the cycleway and walkway it is recommended that Plimmer Bequest Funding not be approved for the project at this stage but be considered as part of an overall funding package for the walkway and cycleway in future.

The Teaching Garden, Wellington Botanic Garden:

The proposed garden is located in the centre of the Botanic Garden over a terraced area of 1500m² above the nursery and between the children's play area and the Treehouse Education and Interpretive centre.

Project Description:

With the redevelopment of the Botanic Garden nursery, 1500m² of land will become available for an alternative use. The proximity to the children's playground, the main downhill route through the garden, the nursery and the Treehouse provides a unique opportunity for the development of a teaching garden, using principles of organic horticulture, to tell stories about plants, demonstrate their cultivation and uses and to illustrate the interconnectiveness of all things.

The garden would be fully fenced and would have a building suitable for practical activities for a minimum of one class of approximately 36 primary school children. The garden would have a range of interactive elements to assist with interpretation and understanding of our environment and our place in it.

It will be a demonstration garden of horticulture for the home garden and will teach principles of plants and plant growth to children in stimulating and challenging ways. It will cater for families and visitors to the garden through demonstrations, workshops and interactive media and will display plants used by other cultures.

Estimated capital costs:	\$800,000
Estimated annual operating expenditure (excluding depreciation):	\$50,000
(1fte plus associated operating costs)	

Summary: Innovative project that will add a new activity role to the Botanic Garden. Contingent on increased operational funding for an additional staff member. This is not consistent with Council funding priorities in the Long-Term Council Community Plan that identify a staffing reduction within the Garden.

5.3 Additional Project - CBD Beautification

Officers have assessed an additional project against the criteria for the Plimmer Bequest. This project has come out of an audit of the CBD by officers as part of preparations for the Rugby World Cup 2011 (RWC 2011). This project will fund the beautification sections of the CBD in time for the RWC 2011 and will focus on:

- Upgrading and improving key green spaces and median strips within the CBD. This will primarily be legacy planting of trees and permanent herbaceous and shrub plantings.
- The focus will be on highly visible and busy pedestrian routes within the CBD including the Railway Station, Lambton Quay, and Post Office Square,
- The work will compliment current Urban Design Initiatives including the planned upgrade of Midland Park

The proposal was not one of those originally proposed in 2006 but is linked to the enhancement of green spaces (Appendix B, no 14). It does however need to be completed by mid 2011 to present Wellington at its best for RWC 2011. This is a unique opportunity to add value to the visitor experience whilst providing a legacy for the city. The project fits within the general criteria for the bequest and fits with the 3 year strategic priorities in the Economic Development Strategy.

Estimated 2010/11 operating costs: \$75,000

This will be a one off project with no increase in ongoing operating costs.

5.4 Recommended forward programme 2010 - 2012

The Point Dorset/Breaker Bay Restoration scores most highly, has low risk and can be completed without other funding

The project idea fit with the deed criteria, contributes to achieving multiple strategic outcomes, and maximises the use of the fund. It will have a high impact, be highly visible and is needed to restore a coastal site with important heritage and recreational values.

The CBD Beautification was not scored against other projects but provides a one off opportunity that has to be completed by mid 2011.

Delivering these projects is achievable over the next two years. They fit with and complement, existing Council activities.

5.5 Future Projects

When the final project is completed in 2012 it will be five years since new ideas have been sought from the public, elected members and officers. It would be appropriate at that time to carry out a further public consultation exercise for new ideas as well as revaluating existing ideas if still relevant.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

All of the projects assessed (apart from the CBD Beautification) were from ideas received as part of a public engagement exercise in 2005. The final plan for the Point Dorset/Breaker Bay restoration will be subject to consultation as part of the development of a management plan for the area. Support for the proposal has been received from the owners of the land, the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust (Appendix G).

5.7 Financial Considerations

The Charles Plimmer Bequest is administered by the Public Trust. Until December 2007 the Council received 75% of the net income derived from the fund. The remaining 25% was retained by the Public Trust to be added to the capital. The amount distributed to the Council between 2003 and 2008 averaged \$300,000 per annum. Since 2008 the Public Trust has retained and invested all the net income until required by Council.

The Public Trust currently holds almost \$800,000 of undistributed income available to fund projects. It is forecast that \$1.2 million will be available by December 2011.

5.8 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

The Port Dorset Restoration project involves the restoration of coastal ecosystems and walkway development. The impacts of sea level rise will be considered during this planning.

5.9 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

Future projects to be funded by the Charles Plimmer Bequest will be considered as part of the consultation for the 2012 – 2022 Long-Term Council Community Plan.

6. Conclusion

Given the terms of the bequest deed, there will be an element of interpretation and judgement in deciding how the funds are spent. Officers believe that they have followed a consistent and transparent selection process.

The recommended two year forward programme provides the Committee with a clear direction on how to spend the Plimmer bequest funds.

The project is best fit with the bequest deed, adds to furthering Council's strategic outcomes, complements existing Council activities and will restore an important coastal reserve.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The process for selecting projects that can be funded by the Plimmer Bequest has considered strategic fit and outcomes as one of its major criteria. The proposed projects all align with the three year priorities in the LTCCP.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The projects are being funded from the Charles Plimmer Bequest. Funding for these projects will be identified in the LTCCP.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

All Treaty of Waitangi considerations have been taken into account during the selection process.

4) Decision-Making

A transparent decision making process has been followed. Given the nature of the Plimmer Bequest Deed, there has been a high level of officer judgement and professional opinion.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

A public consultation/submission process has been followed for the original list, where the public had an opportunity to submit possible project ideas. The Plimmer Family have been advised of the proposals.

b) Consultation with Maori

Discussions with the owners of the land, the Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust indicate their support for the restoration of the area. Ngati toa have also been consulted and support the proposals.

6) Legal Implications

We can only approve projects that fit within the criteria of the Plimmer Bequest Deed.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The process for assessing projects was approved by the Council in June 2001.