

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Gary Clark, Transportation Manager

REFERENCE: T532-2

SUBJECT: **Central Richmond Project – RCN10-12-02**

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the project is to inform the Council of progress to date with the Central Business District (CBD) development plan for Richmond.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Central Richmond project is a cross-departmental task led by Gary Clark. The main departmental sponsors are Steve Markham and Lloyd Kennedy with Sarah Downs managing the project.
- 2.2 To date the project team has run some pre-consultation workshops and stalls. The feedback from the displays in the Richmond Mall, the library and the Richmond offices has largely been positive.
- 2.3 The main priorities that have been identified include (in order of popularity):
- Develop the landscaping and make it unique.
 - Build wider footpaths and extend the Sundial Square theme.
 - Upgrade shop frontages and add character to the buildings.
 - Have an interactive, focal place for the community. Make Richmond family and people oriented.
 - Free and convenient parking.
 - A cinema in the town centre (this was deemed a great idea by the police as it would be a way of creating capable guardians in the town centre at night).
 - Have green, open areas to sit and enjoy with consideration to the microclimates that exist within the town centre.
 - Develop a cafe culture, where people can sit on the footpaths and enjoy their surroundings.
 - Make Richmond inviting and welcoming as well as modern, vibrant and cosmopolitan.
 - Stop sandwich boards and other footpath obstacles from being used.
 - The car park sprawl was disliked, so it was thought a multi-storey car park would be preferable.
 - Develop the water theme throughout the town centre.
 - Make Richmond a destination for art and culture.
 - Keep Richmond compact.

- 2.4 These priorities along with numerous others have been collated and will be used at the urban design stage of the project.
- 2.5 Further consultation has also taken place with Richmond Unlimited. Again, whilst more wary about the implications of the project, retailers and landlords were receptive to ideas on change within the CBD.
- 2.6 The Transportation delegates on the project team have recently put together a programme of work using existing budget to do some upgrade work on streetscaping on Queen Street. This will include nine new bins which will replace the old R60's and the wooden slat bins which are in poor disrepair. Old style benches will also be replaced with ones similar to those in Sundial Square. Quotes have also been sought to add legs on the cantilever style benches in Sundial Square. This is to improve the standard of those benches for people with disabilities as they are presently a trip hazard to people with visual impairments. It is hoped that this work will be carried out over the summer months. All the new furniture will be installed in such a way that it can be transferable once the upgrade in 2015/2016 occurs.
- 2.7 A new lighting design will also be investigated. The aim of this is to gain some consistency in the style of lighting in the CBD. Also, after discussion with the police in relation to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), well-lit areas were deemed important for crime prevention. Since the upgrade of Sundial Square where white light is now available, there had been little reported crime.
- 2.8 In conjunction with this, the Parks and Reserves department has been looking at landscaping opportunities within the CBD. As with the previously mentioned projects, this would not impede on future development and could be transferable. The aim is to improve the visual appearance of the town centre by upgrading tree guards and creating colour around existing trees. Care would be taken to make sure that plants would be easy to care for and not require excessive watering.
- 2.9 The project team is currently looking at employing a consultant to aid with the urban design concepts. Graeme McIndoe from McIndoe Urban is an architect and urban designer who has been involved in several similar projects including one in Kilbirnie, Wellington.
- 2.10 The future processes will include several studies which various members of the team are involved in to prepare for the series of workshops. These studies will provide the project team and Council with a full range of facts about Richmond's CBD and its future development. There will also be a series of workshops with the project team, Councillors and stakeholders with opportunities at each stage for further consultation.
- 2.11 It is hoped that a final concept design will be agreed by September 2011 so that the project can be considered as part of the Long Term Plan process which is published in June 2012. In this period, changes will also take place with the TRMP.

3 DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The project will also look at the present and potential functional and aesthetic values of the CBD as retail, commercial and public space.

- 3.2 It will account for land use activities and urban design opportunities including themes, design concepts and methods of land use management. This will be on top of the requirements for network services, road user movement networks and space (parking and public spaces) requirements.
- 3.3 The desired outcome is to have an enhanced and successful business and recreational environment in central Richmond which is sustainable over the long term. This space needs to have more vitality and vibrancy for it to be successful in the future.
- 3.4 This project is linked to the Ten Year Plan in that funds have been set aside for 2015/2016 for an upgrade to services on Queen Street. Following on from this work, funds have also been set aside for an upgrade of Queen Street with regard to the streetscape traffic environment.

4 RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Central Richmond Project report - RCN10-12-02 be received.

Gary Clark
Transportation Manager