



11 December 2019

Greener streets will replace trees removed for CRL

As work continues to accelerate for Auckland's step-change City Rail Link (CRL) project, trees are being removed from the sites for the project's new Aotea and Karangahape Stations and the redeveloped Mt Eden Station.

"Removing trees is necessary for our works programme, but every tree cleared will be replaced when we start street improvements after construction is finished," says Dale Burtenshaw, Deputy Project Director for the Link Alliance.

"The public spaces around the stations will be a lot greener for people to enjoy when our job is done."

The first site being cleared is at the Aotea Station in central Auckland. During December and January, trees will be removed from the open-air Bledisloe carpark, and some trees along Mayoral Drive, and in Albert and Victoria Streets.

The Karangahape and Mt Eden station sites will be cleared in early 2020.

The trees vary in species, age and size. Most are exotic or overseas species. A small number are natives. Around 150 trees will be removed from all three station sites.

Mr Burtenshaw says the Link Alliance and City Rail Link Ltd have worked with Mana Whenua and Auckland Council to investigate if construction work could be managed alongside pruning, fencing off or transplanting trees.

"Significant root entanglement with underground utility services means most of the trees are unable to be transplanted."

One tree to be removed is an Oriental plane known as the Harvey Tree, growing outside 93 Albert Street since the 1960s or 70s. Investigations indicate substantial root entanglement rules out transplanting. It is proposed that a cutting taken from the tree will be replanted nearby as part of the street improvements.

Trees that are being cleared have been offered to Mana Whenua, and to local wood turners and other wood craft people. Unwanted wood will be chipped and, where possible, reused on site.

Mr Burtenshaw says sustainability is a key objective for the Link Alliance and the project.

“The benefits of the City Rail Link reach well beyond creating a transformational change to the city’s public transport system. It also brings the opportunity to transform streets around the stations into pedestrian friendly, green and open public spaces,” he says.

Extra trees are planned around the Britomart and Lower Albert Street parts of CRL.

Mr Burtenshaw says replanting and streetscape plans will be developed for Aotea, Karangahape and Mt Eden Stations, and local communities will be invited to provide feedback.

The Link Alliance is delivering the main stations and tunnels for City Rail Link Ltd. More information about the CRL tree programme, including updates, is available at

<https://www.cityraillink.co.nz/trees>

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