

Submission: Christchurch City Council Draft Annual Plan 2006

Submission from

Organisation: Golf Links Residents' Association Inc. (discussed at the public meeting 18 April and again by the committee and others interested on 30 April)

Name of submitter on behalf of the organisation: Tony Mander (Chairman)

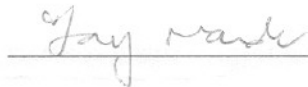
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Hearing: Yes, I do wish to speak at the hearing

Signature:



Date: 11 May 2005

Introduction to our Submission

We make this submission in full recognition of the complexity of the governance and management of the City and are sincerely appreciative of the progress being made through the dedication and efforts of all involved.

While still impressed with the structure of the LTCCP and therefore of the draft plan, time has allowed us to identify areas we believe need re-consideration for the next three-year LTCCP, as changes in this plan are barely possible.

We are especially critical of the vague Outcome and Key Indicator statements. While the key purpose of a governance plan such as this is to define goals and to not state how the goals are to be reached, this being the responsibility of management, the vague statement of most goals means we are unable to measure progress towards achieving them.

Although the Draft Plan is part of a "long-term plan", the long-term view is in fact only short term. The plan needs to also address possible scenarios 40–50 years out. This Plan is simply insufficiently visionary.

Our thanks and congratulations on the increase of opening hours of suburban libraries and the increased level of consistency of services at all libraries. This was included in our LTCCP submission last year and while we may still be critical of some areas of consultation this is evidence that it does happen in governance. Thank you.

Our suggestions

1 Include sufficient detail in the outcomes and key indicators in particular so it is possible to identify progress towards achieving them.

Outcomes which are vague are unlikely to be achieved.

Plan example, page 10: A Sustainable natural Environment (and sustainability in general):

- In the past year it has become increasingly obvious that ensuring sustainability is more urgent than ever, yet the plan specifies few measurable outcomes and key indicators. The language is vague and non-achievement would be difficult to recognise.
- None of the key indicators describe how they would be useful in evaluating progress towards achievement of the outcomes. "Soil and water quality" may imply 'high' quality, but no criteria are included to identify what is to be achieved. While we accept that a plan of this type may not be able to include such detail, we would question whether a vague statement with no criteria at all is really of any practical value.
- While water quality for human consumption is defined by regulation, natural water and soil quality is not, regulations being largely restricted to protecting them from undesirable uses and runoff, not to maintaining defined attributes. A plan defines intentions, in this Plan the intended natural water quality is not defined.

- While the City Plan recognises the need to preserve productive soils for horticulture, it has no mechanisms for doing so. By the time mechanisms are developed we are concerned that there may be few areas of productive soils close to the city left to preserve, and we are thinking of the Marshland soils in particular. There is increasing agreement that energy costs will rise inexorably, so in a few years time having highly productive soils close to the city will be a wonderful asset, as they will require lower energy inputs for production and transport to market. We believe a range of solutions to retain these soils ought to be urgently investigated before they are lost forever.

- **Energy provision and use**, for transport, industry and housing, will become a crucial issue in a few years. There is little evidence that the Council has addressed such basic issues as the orientation of houses in new subdivisions to allow effective solar gain, and there appears little effort to increase the energy efficiency of all buildings through regulation. While the Council may not be able to make such regulations, it can certainly develop energy policy and public education goals and work towards promoting such regulation. This is an important component in planning for sustainability and should be specifically in the Plan.

- We believe the **protection of Christchurch aquifers** is both essential and urgent and strongly support such action.

- Plan to specifically increase awareness and appreciation of the essential role of **ecosystem services**. The “Our Prosperity” column on p. 3 of the 2004/14 CCC Plan states:

“Our people recognise that the natural environment plays a critical role in our prosperity. The whole community ensures that negative impacts on the environment are managed to maintain environmental sustainability.”

How would they recognise it and how would we know that they do? Few people are familiar with the ‘ecosystem services’ concept (see the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Synthesis Report, released earlier this year by the UN, an important document for decision-makers).

2 Ensure that consultation is more than lip-service, and therefore that the City Plan is more than fine-sounding prose.

Plan example, page 12: A Well Governed City:

- Our very recent experience strongly indicates that the Council is still retaining the “plan–consult–defend” model of consultation. We would suggest a “propose–dialogue/consult–plan–consult–implement” model.
- In this instance, residents in our area were presented with a highly detailed plan, the implementation of which would have considerable impact on some of them. They were consulted, but many did not agree with the plan, were promised further consultation, but this did not eventuate, and were recently informed that a contract had been let to implement the original plan and that work would begin shortly.
- This is a sure method of ensuring that the outcome of “Our people participate in decision making...” and the key indicators of “Community involvement in Council decision making” and “Community confidence in Council decision making” will not be achieved!
- The Challenge to “Improve consultation and participation” is certainly alive and well!

3 Involve Residents’ groups more.

Residents’ Associations in particular generally consist of people passionate about their city, provide opportunity for informed debate, and make an effort to inform residents of current issues. While many residents’ groups are well-supported by individual Community Boards, the draft City Plan, surprisingly, says little about them.

Plan example, page 12: A City of inclusive and Diverse Communities:

- The Challenge to “Strengthen communities and neighbourhoods” appears to not include residents’ groups except indirectly.
- Residents’ groups are one of the few avenues of “participation in community life” which allow a diversity of interests and social groupings to meet with the common goal of helping make the city a better place to live rather than for personal gain – and they tend to be major submitters of suggestions for this aim, in comparison to other specific-interest groups.

- Residents' groups are volunteers, passionate stakeholders in the city, often of highly qualified people, and are a valuable source of feedback and useful suggestions. Include them specifically in the plan – use them!

4 Ensure that each policy covers all aspects of its application.

Plan example, page 14: A Liveable City:

- For example, we have found in practice that the pedestrian policy is lacking in its scope, being largely concerned with the “big picture” of encouraging people to walk more. However, it is lacking in specifics about places people already walk, such as pedestrian access to and within malls and, to our surprise, within parks and reserves.
- Our experience of a local reserve upgrade found that having sealed or all-weather access (including disabled access) to play areas was not provided as policy, even though the play areas were able to be used all year. We believe policy should exist to ensure that mothers with push-chairs and people in wheelchairs can easily access the otherwise excellent play areas, that if the play areas can be used at all times of the year (e.g. sealed court areas, well-drained and bark-covered play equipment areas) then access should be provided so that they can be reached at all times of the year.
- The outcome of: “...easy mobility and access to open spaces...” will not be achieved until policies (as in the example above) are properly applied.
- This also applies to the performance measure for Parks and Open Spaces on page 58 for the ‘Social’ Service where it states: “Parks and open spaces are accessible ... located within easy walking distance...” – yes, they may meet these performance criteria, but “walking distance” is usually on all-weather footpaths, and of little use when the last few metres is over wet grass or mud as no all-weather access was provided from the footpath. In our example above the access provision ought to have been a policy issue, rather than our having to seek it especially.