

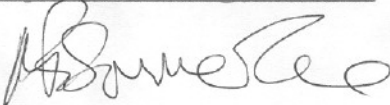
SUBMISSION FORM

Re: Hamilton Ave.

FROM: Nicki & Graham Sommerville
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Fendalton, Christchurch

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SIGNATURE: 

I do NOT wish to make a personal submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered.

We don't believe that Hamilton Avenue ratepayers should contribute 50% to the cost of power and electricity lines being put underground. Reasons for this are manyfold.

Firstly, it doesn't seem very smart to skip the undergrounding at this stage, which is what will happen if sufficient resident contribution is not found and Council is not prepared to pay more than 50%. It does not make economic sense to be left with the task of putting the lines underground at a later date, at a much greater expense to Council, than that which would be incurred if the job is done at the same time as the gutters, resurfacing and replanting. How can we maintain confidence in a council that knowingly postpones a task that will cost a future council – and its ratepayers – a great deal of money. It does not leave us with much faith in our current council's vision for the city's future, if they cannot pave the way by carrying out current works as comprehensively as possible, so that further work will not have to be carried out again for a long time.

Why are we, as residents of Christchurch, expected to contribute 50% to the undergrounding cost when there is only one other council in the country which expects a contribution for such works (Nelson – which at least has a maximum limit the ratepayer is asked to contribute)? Many other councils use the income from electricity companies to pay for such works.

Some of us at times struggle to pay our rates, which means there could be a large number who will not be in a position to pay the levy. We cannot expect other residents to carry the can for those who cannot afford it. Other streets in the city have had the work done at no extra cost to residents – what criteria must be met (or not) in order for decisions to be made as to who pays and who doesn't. Just because people live in what is considered a higher socio economic area, does not necessarily mean they all have more disposable income. Personal circumstances can vary many times during the period of living at a particular address.

Why spend all the money tidying up the street, only to leave an assortment of ugly, irregular poles and wires. This will severely affect the appearance of the new streetscape and make the improvements far less valuable. Recent heavy rain has again highlighted the urgent need for a total revamp of our drainage system – don't waste the effort by only doing part of the job.