

Consultation on 2005 Draft Plan,
Christchurch City Council,
P.O.Box 237,
Christchurch

Consultation on Christchurch City Council 2005 Draft Community Plan.

1.1 Introduction

We wish to make a submission regarding the above community plan with reference to the proposed change to rating differential.

Our valuation reference is 2351243209 RTZ2288521

We argue that there are three issues that we want you to consider in respect to this plan. They are :

- (a) The definition of rural land in relation to "land within the sewered area"
- (b) The definition of rural land in relation to additional services
- (c) The definition process and rationale

1.2 The definition of rural in relation to "land within the sewered area"

Firstly we would like to submit that the differential rating for section B – residential and other properties, specifically (b) – "the land within the sewered area", should exclude rural properties which otherwise meets all the definition of section C – "Rural Properties", as does our property.

At the time when our property was developed it was designated as rural and as a condition of the development under the Christchurch City Council District

Plan and a Christchurch City Council (CCC) requirement for this site we had to provide our own system (as opposed to the developer), as the CCC would not provide a sewage connection to our individual properties. At that time the rationale and justification was that as it was a rural property, this was not the responsibility of the CCC.

At the time of consent for the development of our property the sewage connection was already on Springs Road. Since this time nothing has changed or been added and no additional sewage benefit or systems have been made available to us since this development was established in early 1990.

We live at the end of a 900-meter private road off Springs Road. Although the sewerage connects on Springs Road, nearly 1 Km away, we have had to provide a holding tank and a dedicated sewage pump to connect to the council sewage system.

Because this was the requirement and condition set down by the CCC, the individual households provided all additional services and the ongoing maintenance is also met by the individual households. As such we can see no rational justification or additional benefit to us that would justify that a designation change from "Rural" to Residential" can be made in regard to this particular proposal.

1.3 The definition of rural land in relation to additional services

We also submit that other services provided to ratepayers should be a consideration when the definition of "rural" and or "residential" is decided upon.

For example our property has:

- No footpaths.
- Curbing and channeling or is linked to the Christchurch City Council (CCC) storm water system (each property has to provide a soak pit to meet the requirements of a rural property)
- No road maintenance
- No CCC street lighting in Busch Lane
- No mains water pressure (we had to provide a water tank and water pump for the provision of household water plus yearly maintenance and operating costs)
- No refuse collection provided in Busch Lane
- No maintenance of road sides, trees, and signage by the CCC or City Care

Added to this we have :

- Rural mail delivery
- No right to subdivide the land to 1000 sqm consistent with a residential determination
- A requirement to maintain the "green belt" concept of this rural property

We live 800 meters from the Selwyn District Council. A property in Trices Road 2 Kms from our property with a rating value of \$800,000 (which is higher than ours) pays rates of \$2003.00pa which includes a water rate of \$286.

We are currently paying rates of \$3240 and we also are charged a water rate of approx \$130 as a separate item.

We are zoned "Rural". We have more than 50% of our property for horticultural use.

The CCC gave consent for our development to proceed, on the basis that lots were a minimum size of 2 hectares, that all shelterbelts were retained, that the properties could not be subdivided and that they were for horticultural use.

We do not accept the proposed CCC Draft Community Plan on the basis that our property be redesignated residential, when the proposed plan only changes one criteria, that we are now "land within the sewered area " without all other conditions and advantages to residential properties available also to us (as outlined above).

1.4 The definition process and rationale.

We also find your system of identifying properties, which you propose to re-designate from Rural to residential to be considerably flawed.

In your letter, you state that this assessment was made from an aerial photograph. On enquiry, when we requested a copy of the said photo of our property, we were told that this was taken 3 to 5 years ago and shows it to be bare land. Our house has been on our site since building began in January 2001.

We know the CCC is willing to make inspections, and had you done so you would have found our house bordered by a market garden, an orchard, a horse paddock, a sheep paddock, adjacent to a llama paddock and next to bare land.

The major aim of your proposal appears to be that you want to change the designation of land from rural to residential base solely on the concept of

"sewage area" regardless of what conditions have gone before, or what the actual land is used for and the context in which this activity takes place .

Your letter to us states that even though our property may be outside of the "serviced areas for sewerage and water", it is proposed that this now will no longer be a consideration for attracting a rural differential.

Our submission is that nothing has change in any way (either significant, or minor), to justify a change in the rural definition.

In fact we believe that the sole argument that the CCC is making relates to a change in semantics as opposed to any substantive material change, and it would appear that your intent in relation to the concept of "serviced area for sewerage and water" is at odds with your own definitions on the "Extract on the Differential System- Section C" (on the back of the letter) which says that it is the use of the property which is the determining factor.

It would appear that the intent of this proposal is not concerned to clearly identify land use and define land use in a consistent way. It is our view that this proposal is aimed at increasing the rate revenue from households without any attempt to provide us with the same level of service and advantages as all ratepayers in the CCC District. At best this is really a crude way to collect higher rates and at worst a clear case of discrimination.

We purchased a rural property expecting to pay for services that would not be provided by the CCC. To now find that this proposal would require us to pay about \$600 more a year on top of the cost associated to our rural property is not acceptable. For any such change in definition there should be a commensurate level of services and we would expect compensation to the current property owners who accepted the conditions imposed on them by the CCC in good faith, when they purchased their rural property.

Thank you for considering my submission. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.



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