

**Our Community Plan  
Christchurch O-Tautahi 2004/14**

Submission from The Christchurch Little River Railtrail Trust  
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**About the Christchurch to Little River Railtrail Trust**

After several years of planning by Community Representatives, Environment Canterbury, the Department of Conservation, Selwyn and Banks Peninsula District Councils, Christchurch City Council, and Transit New Zealand, a group of enthusiastic community supporters formed the Christchurch Little River Railtrail Trust in November 2003.

The objective of the Trust is to facilitate and fundraise for the development of a 50km cycleway/walkway along the disused railway route linking Christchurch (from Hornby) to Little River. The Railtrail will traverse three territorial authorities: Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council and Banks Peninsula District Council.

Since the Trust was formed, we have had strong proof of community interest from people living in all three Council areas. A "launch" function was held in April in the form of a country dance at Lincoln University and over 480 people attended. We have also had numerous phone calls, emails and letters from people willing to become "friends of" the Trust and to help with working bees etc. Lincoln and Hornby Rotary Clubs have taken on the Railtrail as their millennium project and the Rotary Club of Christchurch Sunrise wish to undertake the development of carparking, access track, and landscaping at Reserve 1105 at Kaituna. Both the N.Z. Historic Places Trust and the Waihora Ellesmere Trust have shown their support.

**Progress so far**

The Christchurch City Council has allowed for the planning and funding of their section in their Community Plan.

Selwyn District Council has included the Railtrail in their Forward 5 Year Works Programme. We are currently working with them on a memorandum of understanding.

We are also currently developing a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Conservation with liaison with the Wairewa Runanga who are facilitating the section between Little River and Birdlings Flat.

Support from funding bodies has been strong and in the last few months we have raised over \$200,000 towards the project (overall costs expected to be in the region of \$1,000,000).

Community consultation is underway with farmers between Motukarara and Birdlings Flat, through the Lincoln and Prebbleton Community Associations, and just commencing with the residents on the River Road section.

## **Relevance to Christchurch City**

We believe that an off-road cycling/walking track through this area will have enormous benefit to the economic growth and tourism potential of the region.

Malcolm Macpherson, Mayor of Central Otago District, endorses our project and says of the Central Otago Railtrail "It is rapidly becoming Central Otago's Milford Track – a tourism icon that attracts international attention, is a focus for the whole of the region's tourism brand, and acts as a magnet attraction, pulling visitors into the region who then visit other sites and centers, and spend money on other visitor – industry products".

To have such an asset connected to the city will in fact be an advantage over the Central Otago Railtrail in that it will be much more accessible to visitors and locals.

## **Our Community Plan**

We believe that the Railtrail will help the Christchurch City Council to better achieve almost ALL its Community Outcomes:

- **A Sustainable Natural Environment.** Areas on the fringes of Christchurch have greatly increased in population in recent years. Prebbleton has experienced substantial growth, and Lincoln is currently doubling in size. The Railtrail will allow people to enjoy and value our natural environment by encouraging people to cycle or walk to work in the city instead of adding to pollution and traffic congestion by driving. It will also encourage more of the city commuters to Lincoln University to use a safe off-road cycleway. With the development of the Railtrail, the City Council will be promoting "urban forms that facilitate cycling, walking and the use of public transport". P5 Vol 2. The Railtrail will enable the City Council to work with other TLAs "to protect significant natural features of the physical environment, open spaces and landscape elements" such as Lakes Ellesmere and Forsyth. We hope to have signage/pamphlet information which will identify significant features. We will work with groups such as the Department of Conservation and the Waihora Ellesmere Trust to landscape some areas and to fence off the Lake edges where appropriate to encourage native habitat and ecosystems. P6 Vol 2
- **A Learning City.** The environmental and heritage features of the Railtrail will provide an interesting and interactive way for people to learn more about our area. The Railtrail will be close to schools and universities and also be accessible to older people because of the flat nature of the terrain. P7 Vol 2
- **A Prosperous City.** By developing the Railtrail, the City will provide "the infrastructure and environment" which will encourage a range of new businesses and revitalize existing ones. This will be "a sustainable economic development initiative" which will also "attract further tourism investment". Malcolm Macpherson, Mayor of Central Otago, says "The economic impact of the trail extends far beyond the corridor itself. Many of those visiting the trail actually spend more time (and much money) on non-track activities, sometimes a long way from the track – a surge in upmarket accommodation, restaurant and vineyard sales, vehicle hire, extended stays and repeat visiting are all noticeable effects. We're also seeing a resurgence in economic activity

in the small rural communities all the way along the track. From individual pubs, which are now looking more to the trail than to their locals for economic viability; to bed and breakfast businesses, cafes and gift shops, and to dedicated trail support businesses – there’s significant new investment, new jobs, and new business creation.” Hornby would greatly benefit as the Railtrail could commence right in its heart where there is a lack of such amenities. A good link from there to the existing cycleway network would be essential. P9 Vol 2

- **Inclusive and Diverse Communities.** The Railtrail recognizes our bicultural heritage. We will be informing users of the Railtrail of the interesting aspects of not just the railway heritage but the wealth of Maori and European heritage through the Region. The Railtrail will also encourage people to participate in community life –by walking and cycling locally, this will encourage more social interaction. The Central Otago Railtrail has provided locals there with a far greater pride in their community, encouraging them to work together in projects and working bees. P13 Vol 2
- **A City of Healthy and Active People.** Obesity is becoming a major health issue in N.Z., particularly in the younger generation. Our increasingly sedentary lifestyle means that it is even more important now to encourage people to cycle and walk in accessible environments like the Railtrail for the sake of their physical and mental well-being. The Railtrail could further be used for recreational events such as marathons or cycle races as they do in Central Otago. P15 Vol 2.
- **A Safe City.** We applaud the City Council in its Cycling Strategy and existing efforts to improve road safety. However on rural roads, particularly as the speed limit for truck and trailer units has just increased to 90 km, it is becoming increasingly unsafe to cycle on-road. Cycling on-road is not conducive for family outings and we strongly support the need for off-road cycling on the Railtrail. P17 Vol 2
- **A Cultural Fun City.** Christchurch City does extremely well in encouraging cultural and leisure activities and we believe that the Railtrail will further enhance these facilities. Overseas examples, such as the Sustrans cycleway/walkway in the U.K., use parts of their trails as destinations for events such as the display of local artworks and sculptures. We believe that the corridor could encourage all sorts of exciting initiatives and events. P19 Vol 2.
- **A Liveable City.** We believe that the Railtrail will provide easier mobility and good access for City dwellers to the rural environment, and thus enhancing the quality of life. We applaud the City Council’s desire to extend cycleways throughout the city. P21/22 Vol 2.

### **Summary of Major Proposals.**

In your proposed new initiatives, we fully support your Metropolitan Christchurch Transport Statement, particularly Part One (P32 Vol.1) of the implementation which encourages “measures to provide attractive, viable alternatives to many journeys that would otherwise be undertaken by car. Such measures may, for example, include more bus priority lanes, off-road cycle lanes etc.”

## **Our Specific Proposals:**

- 1. We request that the \$59,000 allocated in the 2005/06 5 year capital expenditure programme be brought forward to 2004/05 and added to the \$4000 allocated for that year. Also that the \$172,000 be brought forward to the 2005/06 year. We feel that we are well underway with the Railtrail, with strong community support, and that it would be advantageous to have the City linkage underway as soon as possible.**
- 2. We request that priority be given to the planning and building of the linkage from Hornby to Marshes Road along the old railway corridor. The use of this route is important as it is our aim to have the majority of the Railtrail off-road. The middle portion of the Railtrail particularly around Lincoln cannot exactly follow the old railway corridor. For the Railtrail concept to be as "authentic" as possible, it is important that we can at least start the Hornby section along the old railway line (and finish along the old railway embankment from Motukarara through to Little River).**
- 3. We would like future linkages to be considered including from Halswell out to Old Tai Tapu Road.**
- 4. We ask that we can work closely with you on this project and that you can also continue to liaise with the Selwyn District Council, Banks Peninsula District Council, Environment Canterbury, the Department of Conservation and Transfund.**

We would like to ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ and look forward to answering any questions.