

Submission on the Christchurch City Council LTCCP

From:

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We wish to be heard in support of our submission.

We would like to receive the comments/analysis on our submission at least two days prior to the hearing.

General comments on the plan

The short submission period this plan was given is quite inadequate to properly digest the plan and comment thoroughly on it. Given that the plan is a 10 year document, this is quite unreasonable. The plan itself is not designed to be easy to work through, including a confusing structure and 'in house' language designed to alienate the average resident. The lack of detail in places, including a breakdown of substantial budget items, precludes informed comment and gives rise to serious questions.

Sustainable development approach

While some sustainability issues are raised within the plan, the urgency to address these is missing when this should be the overriding consideration in view of current widely available information on peak oil, peak energy generally, peak water, peak food and climate change issues that are predicted to have challenging effects on the east coast of the South Island. Business as usual is not a sustainable option yet this is the impression given by the plan.

Vision

We find the description of future Christchurch including phrases like 'world-class boutique city', 'most attractive city' and 'must-see for visitors' mind-boggling when much more important aspects of our future do not get a mention. The concept too of Christchurch promoting itself as a 'global investment destination' given the global situation (see above) requires real caution.

We would like an explanation of how this vision was reached. We also want to see it reworded to encompass as a key element that the vision is 'to create a self-reliant community well able to supply its immediate needs to enable it to function successfully and sustainably in adverse conditions and considering only carefully selected global investment.'

Overview

In view of the global situation we see the 'feasible, healthy, and sustainable solutions' below (taken from, or adapted where necessary, Newurbanism.org) as applicable to Christchurch:

1. An immediate and permanent moratorium on all new road construction and expansions.
2. An immediate and permanent moratorium on all new airport construction and expansions, as well as an end to all aviation subsidies.
3. The immediate construction of a local rail network with an efficient, state-of-the-art electric train network comparable to what is currently operating all across Europe and Japan.
4. The immediate installation of full roof solar panels on every building.
5. An immediate moratorium on the building of any additional sprawl.

6. A major focus of local governments on the densification and revitalization of all existing cities and towns, with pedestrians and bicycles given top priority over automobiles. Included would be plentiful affordable housing units and high quality neighbourhood schools located so all children can walk or bike to them.

7. The immediate installation of major organic farms at the edge of every city and town.

We believe these solutions should be incorporated across the plan - overview, financial overview, Council activities and services, capital works priorities etc. We want to see them reflected throughout the final plan wherever applicable.

To quote the Mayor, "The people of Christchurch said urban sprawl isn't what they wanted and the Council listened?" How??

Community outcomes

We support much of this section but note all aspects of the outcomes should be working together with the aim of long term self-reliance and sustainability.

A well-governed city – needs to include 'able to respond to and pursue long-term sustainability.

A prosperous city – see comments above under 'sustainable development approach' and vision. Need to include: the ChCh economy should be based on self-reliance as much as possible and looking after and enhancing our natural resources and assets.

An attractive and well-designed city – Needs to include: increasingly self-reliant, mixed age neighbourhoods.

Strategic directions

We cannot see clearly how these refer back to the community outcomes. We would like to see these re-written/re-ordered to do so.

Goals and objectives

General

We cannot see where some of the very relevant challenges listed here have been addressed through the other sections of the document. It would appear they haven't been although the document doesn't make to confirm this. Some examples - where is the evidence for addressing the challenges in the decisions on the capital programmes priorities; where have you addressed energy and material efficiency in construction; where have you addressed the challenges of globalisation?

2. Re-word first bullet point to encompass sustainability (reasoning- see beginning of submission):

- Supporting only economic activities sustainable for the long term and with beneficial or neutral affects on the environment and natural resources.

P52, Point 3. Add bullet point:

- Work with ECan to put in place a moratorium on further water extraction within the city boundaries and wider Canterbury until further research gives a clear picture of water status and availability.

P57 Re points on Globalisation and Investing in innovations, as said previously, in view of the global situation we need to be creating a self-reliant community well able to supply its immediate needs to enable it to function successfully and sustainably in adverse conditions and considering only carefully selected global investment. This is the most pertinent challenge. We would like to see the challenges re-worded to encompass this need.

Financial overview

We ignore peak oil, peak energy generally, peak water, peak food and climate change issues at our peril. To face these and be as largely self-reliant, sustainable and successful as it can, the city needs to focus on neighbourhoods rather than increasingly centralising.

We see it as the Council's role to take responsibility for leading this process. The financial overview should therefore encompass this need. Refer back to solutions under Overview, P1-2 in this submission.

Capital works programme

What was the process for arriving at this programme? We would like a description of it.

Refer back to solutions under Overview, P1-2 in this submission. This programme does not reflect the urgent need to make the transition towards a self-reliant community well able to supply its immediate needs and to function successfully and sustainably in adverse conditions. Rather it seems to support 'business as usual' at the expense of taking action to protect and enhance our natural resources and to get ready for adverse economic, environmental and social conditions.

P71 Expansion of Christchurch waste treatment plant/Biosolids drying facility – We note on P74 in the plan the statement 'water is a valuable resource in Canterbury.' We agree, therefore, continuing to use our high quality potable water to carry away our waste makes no sense and is a shocking waste. The present system degrades the water and creates a brew that is irretrievably toxic. There is an urgency to find alternatives. The human-sourced sewerage will become increasingly valuable and crucial as energy and fertilizers become increasingly critical. The approach of the city should be to maintain current facilities rather than to upgrade or extend, while at the same time developing alternatives that do not rely on water as the carriage. Locally based rather than centralised solutions and the encouragement of efficient and effective composting toilets should be part of the mix. Separation of industrial waste from the sewerage stream should also be a priority.

We want to see these two capital projects revised to allow for development of sustainable alternatives, separation of industrial waste and the removal of water as the carriage.

We note it is disturbing to see two relatively new buildings (the bus exchange and the art gallery requiring further expensive attention. We hope there is better forward planning in the future, particularly for the bus exchange as public transport is going to become increasingly important as fuel costs rise.

We would also like to see allowance in the capital works programme to progress a light rail network for the city to address future public transport needs.

Streets improvement – Capital spending on this should be minimal with the focus and budgeting being put onto developing cycleways, walkways, and public transport to be ready for the changing patterns of transport that will be inevitable. We would like to see the works programme adjusted to fund further development of cycleways, walkways, and public transport rather than road/street improvements for private cars.

New leisure centres – These projects need to be reviewed as they appear to be centralising facilities at the expense of smaller neighbourhood ones. As a city we may come to regret this as the need for local solutions becomes more pressing. We would like to see this spending reviewed. In its place we would like to see consideration and planning for community food growing gardens and allotments spread across the city as one of the mechanisms in becoming more self-reliant and also providing other 'leisure' substitutes for those with little or no land.

Botanic Gardens project – We are pleased to see the Gardens get some attention as it has had to put up with a very small information centre/office for far too long, given its international and local popularity. We suggest there may be some financial gains if the former Robert MacDougall Art Gallery was returned to the Gardens, as was intended, and the Museum be given the use of at least parts of Our City as a second site, a valuable central position, currently well under-used and under-visited.

City Mall renovation – This seems to be a large amount of money. We would like to know the breakdown of its components. We would support encouragement to preserve heritage buildings and precincts. We do not support spending \$800,000 per year on advertising the central city. We want to see the annual advertising budget removed and spent on more urgent priorities to move us towards self-reliant and sustainability.

Discretionary projects: non priority

Water re-use - Strong support for any move towards re-using water safely as picked up in the GCUDS. This should be a priority item. Any new building developments and building refits should be required to incorporate water re-use. We want to see this move to an essential project

Implementation of Biodiversity Strategy – This too should be a priority item. It appears to have gone completely off the budget. Moving towards a sustainable city will require protection and enhancement of our indigenous biodiversity. We would like to see funding for biodiversity protection reinstated and as a part of this we ask the Council to allocate funding for strategic land purchase of important areas of biodiversity value on Banks Peninsula, based on the ten highest priority sites identified by Hugh Wilson to establish a network of Regional Parks.

Proposed cost savings

We do not support the reduction in community halls in view of the future need to be focused back on to neighbourhoods. At the very least these should be kept in public ownership, with minimal maintenance in the interim and possible upgrading or replacement in the future .

We do not support the rationalisation of community libraries or the ending of the mobile library. The combined savings is less than one year's advertising budget for the central city. These are valuable neighbourhood assets well appreciated by the elderly and young in particular. Very likely people will decrease library use if they have to travel further, particularly when travel costs rise. We want to see library rationalisation and the removal of the mobile library service removed from the proposed savings list.

Closing of Sockburn and four suburban pools – Again this goes against the need to return to neighbourhood solutions. There is also likely to be an increasing unwillingness to travel too far to seek alternatives as travel costs keep rising. At the very least the associated land should remain in Council/community ownership. We ask that these be removed from the list of proposed savings.

We support increasing parking charges along with associated improvements and developments in cycleways and public transport, including the investigation of a light rail service.

Council activities and services

All activities need to be in line with the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy.

City development

Promote and achieve good urban design – We note good design needs to be energy efficient and sustainable.

Democracy and governance

Community boards get scant mention in the plan and our understanding is that their roles have been reducing. They should be further empowered to be a working, contributing part of local community representation and participation in governance of the city. We see this as an important role in the necessary decentralising process that we need to move to cope with peak oil, peak energy generally, peak water, peak food and climate change issues. We would like to see this reflected in the plan with their role specifically described. We also believe the Council is now too small for the work load expected of it. This reflects on the quality of planning and decision making. We would like to see the number of councillors reviewed.

Economic development

We believe growth should be fund growth but all growth should be approached very cautiously in view of the circumstances noted above. Where growth/development has been carefully considered, including community consultation, we support the Council requiring developers to fund their share of the infrastructure. We want to see the Council reject all growth /development that would put further pressures on natural resources such as our aquifers.

We oppose the Council entering into public/private partnerships as the profit motive is inevitably going to cost the ratepayer.

We oppose the development of the airport – see general comments at beginning of submission and solutions from Newurbanism.org.

Parks, open spaces and waterways

We ask the Council to allocate funding for strategic land purchase of important areas of biodiversity value on Banks Peninsula, based on the ten highest priority sites identified by Hugh Wilson to establish a network of Regional Parks.

In view of future needs associated with peak oil, peak energy generally, peak water, peak food and climate change issues we would like to see parts of Council parks, open spaces and waterways in all neighbourhoods set aside for 'commons' perennial food crops such as nut and fruit trees, berries etc.

Refuse minimisation and disposal

We want to see the Council take urgent action to encourage and require reuse of more materials, remove all putrescibles from the waste stream and to separate all industrial and domestic waste. Resource material and putrescibles will become increasingly valuable and crucial as energy and fertilizers become increasing critical and should not be wasted in landfills.

Regulatory services

We would like to see the Council make all possible efforts to encourage energy efficient, sustainable building and development work including requiring all new development to incorporate these elements including solar water heaters, adherence to passive solar heating principles, use of grey water, rainwater storage tanks and composting toilets.

Streets and transport

In view of future pressures and needs we want the Council to avoid road developments and concentrate on minimal maintenance of roads while enhancing cycleways, walkways, and public transport and investigating and moving towards a light rail system for the city.

Another community initiative that would also save Council street maintenance money if it caught on is to offer neighbourhoods/streets the opportunity to undertake some of the street care themselves such reporting on maintenance needs, recycling abandoned cans and bottles, keeping the gutters free of leaves, paper etc. and composting the material in community and private composting systems.

Waste water collection and treatment

The present system degrades the high quality water used and creates a brew that is irretrievably toxic. There is an urgency to find alternatives. The human-sourced sewerage will become increasingly valuable and crucial as energy and fertilizers become increasingly critical. The approach of the city should be to maintain current facilities rather than to upgrade or extend, while at the same time developing alternatives that do not rely on water as a means of carriage. Locally based rather than centralised solutions and the encouragement of efficient and effective composting toilets should be part of the mix. Separation of industrial waste from the sewerage stream should also be a priority.

We would like to see the Council encourage and allow for the collection and safe re-use of grey water.

Water supply/quality

See comments above re water plus we want to see the Council allow for and encourage the collection and storage of rainwater and make this a requirement for any new building or refit of existing buildings. This could become crucial in view of predicted climate changes effects on ChCh/Canterbury. We also want to see the Council discourage and try to prevent any development that would put and further pressure on the aquifers.

We support all efforts to work in with ECan to urgently address water quality degradation and to discourage and try to prevent any activities or developments that contribute to this.

We want the see the Council work in with ECan to manage water as a whole catchment, taking a precautionary approach when considering any activity within a catchment and considering the effects across the whole catchment.

We would like to see a moratorium on all further consents to take water for dairying or any other large economic activity that requires a substantial water-take and effects the Council's area of responsibility. We want the Council to introduce water charges that properly reflect the value of our water to discourage excessive and wasteful use.

We oppose any further funding going towards the Central Plains Water Trust or Central Plains Water Ltd from the ChCh City Council, CDC, CEDF, CCHL or any other CC entity. We would like to see properly worked through solutions for water conservation and management involving CCC and ECan and with full public consultation. Water is too important a natural resource to be approached any other way.

Waste management

See refuse minimisation and disposal comments above.

Determining Significance and Strategic Assets

P292 We want to see the “sale of equity in Strategic Assets” excluded from the “Practicality” clause of the Policy on Determining Significance (). This runs the risk of excluding the public form consultation on the sale.

P294 We want to see City Care Limited and the equity in Red Bus Limited restored to the list of Strategic Assets. We believe it is in the city’s interest that they remain in public ownership.

We oppose sale of shares in the Port Company. We believe it is important that this facility remains in public hands and control, as shipping will become increasingly important as oil prices continue to increase and air transport becomes too expensive.