

Draft Long Term Community Council Plan Submission

The Central City Business Group (CCBG) submits our response to the draft Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) and request the opportunity to support this submission with a presentation to the Christchurch City Council (CCC).

Introduction

The Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce (Employers' Chamber) currently has a three year contract with the CCC to market and promote Christchurch's central city. This contract involves \$850,000 of funding per annum over three years to July 2007. The CCBG has been established by the Employers' Chamber to represent the interests of all stakeholders in the central city and has formed an Advisory Board of these stakeholders. Many Advisory Board members have made significant personal investment in the central city and continue to be actively involved in various groups working on central city revitalisation. *(refer page 92 of the LTCCP document - "Marketing the central city").*

The contract with Christchurch City council specifies key objectives in the context of marketing and promoting the central city which we are in the process of delivering and progress of which are reported on a regular basis to the CCC. In addition, the CCBG have been actively involved in the following keys areas contributing to the overall revitalisation of the central city:

- Precinct development - working with key areas within the central city to identify ways in which the areas can work together including joint marketing, cohesion, coordination of opening hours and access to discounted media packages
- Event leveraging and supporting - including identifying ways which businesses can leverage off events to maximise the return for individual business, the event and the central city as a whole
- Information conduit - the CCBG has established a database of over 1400 central city businesses and we now work closely with many units of the CCC to ensure businesses are kept informed of any issues relating to the central city. We provide an essential communication channel between the CCC and central city businesses.



In the draft LTCCP there is no long term commitment from the CCC to extend this funding beyond the current three year period.

Marketing and promotion is one key component of central city revitalisation contributing to the health and welfare of the central city and Christchurch as a whole. Others include:

- Urban design and development
- Operation and management
- Economic development

Given our brief is to market and promote the central city, our submission focuses primarily on this aspect of the four key components above. We feel it is vital to continue the marketing and promotion of the central city in a coordinated way that is supported by the CCC and with increasing involvement from central city businesses. In its current form the draft LTCCP does not provide long term commitment to fund the ongoing promotion of the central city. International market research confirms marketing and branding awareness becomes more effective and supported by both residents and businesses over an extended period as has been demonstrated by both Wellington and Auckland, who have had long term commitment from local government over at least the last 10 -15 years. Wellington in particular have been very successful in their central city revitalisation project through the ongoing commitment of their local council. There are also many other international examples, all of whom have had long term funding commitments from local government.

Research suggests if funding was not continued, the investment the CCC made for the initial three years of marketing and promotion would not reach its full potential. It is vital the marketing and promotion continues along with other key central city revitalisation components. One does not succeed without the other, all four are required for successful central city revitalisation.

Specific issues to be addressed

1. **Long term commitment to marketing and promotion of the central city**
 - No long term funding commitment to extend the current marketing and promotional contract with the Employers' Chamber

Solutions:

- To ensure funding is provided for ongoing marketing and promotion to support the CCC's investment and goal of a vibrant central city
- To ensure the commitment and investment the CCC has made between 2004 and 2007 can be built on in the following ways:
 - Continue to increase residents awareness of the central city thereby increasing the number of pedestrians in the central city through the ongoing marketing and promotion (*refer page 92 – "increased rate of growth in the central city compared to city wide" and "..increase commercial activity"*)
 - Continue to work with central city businesses to develop a centralised management and coordination for precincts within the central city across a range of areas including:
 - joint marketing
 - event support and leveraging off major events
 - consistency of opening hours
 - raising the quality of customer experience
 - precinct development including building personalities within each precinct to enhance the customer experience
 - Communication conduit between the CCC and central city businesses on key issues impacting upon the residents satisfaction of the overall city e.g. cleanliness, safety etc (*refer page 92 – "Providing information and advice...."*)
 - Work in partnership with the CCC to assist in reinforcing and delivering information to central city businesses (*refer page 92 – "... working in partnership with other parties"*)
 - Create a residents database to:
 - understand more about the customer to enable us to ensure the central city is offering what they need
 - promote the central city as a place to work, live and play(*refer page 92 "Increase in residents' satisfaction with overall city and environmental planning"*)

2. Strategic view and vision for the central city versus piecemeal projects

- One off reactive adhoc projects fixing one element of a problem in the central city e.g. bus exchange, top end of High Street, one way streets versus transport strategy
- No long term strategic interconnected plan to address good urban design and a vibrant central city

Solutions:

- Create a strategic plan to ensure we can build a vibrant central city incorporating all the following key components:
 - Urban design and development
 - Operation and management
 - Marketing and promotions
 - Economic development
- The plan to incorporate clear goals and KPI's to measure the progress
- The plan to address communication across the multitude of working parties and organisations involved in the areas above to achieve the best possible outcomes

3. Proposed targeted rate for central city businesses to contribute towards the upgrade of City Mall

- 97% of central city businesses surveyed are opposed to the targeted rate
- 91% of central city businesses think the upgrade should be funded from the general rate
- 45% of central city businesses would consider relocating their business if the targeted rate was introduced
- The City Mall is the most publicly used location in the central city and therefore the upgrade is of 'public' benefit vs. 'private benefit'
- The CCC needs to take a leadership role in determining the upgrade of the City Mall as a priority for the CCC in terms of their commitment towards creating a vibrant central city
- The targeted rate will discourage businesses into the central city and work against the Councils goal of increasing the number of businesses in the central city (*refer page 92 - "Implement a business retention and development programme to increase commercial activity"*)
- The introduction of a targeted rate could lead to ongoing imposition on central city businesses for future city infrastructural upgrades

Solutions:

- Fund the upgrade of the City Mall through the general rate
- Increase the awareness of the importance of a vibrant central city to all residents and stakeholders

4. Parking & access

- At peak times parking in the central city is difficult and acts as a barrier to residents coming to the central city
- The proposed increase in parking charges which we believe will act as a further barrier and work against attracting more residents into the central city
- One way streets
- Increasing parking within the central city versus looking at alternative solutions to better manage parking within the central city
- Current location of the Bus Exchange

Solutions:

- Through the introduction of better technology within car parking buildings, these operations would be able to be open for extended hours (if not 24 hours) which will go towards eliminating parking problems in key areas of the central city
- Investigate the feasibility of outsourcing the management of CCC operated car parking buildings
- Extend the 'one hour free' offer at peak times to change the perception of parking in the central city – this could be incorporated into a joint marketing initiative currently being worked on by the CCBG in form of a 'key' to the city card
- No increase in parking charges in the central city
- Create slow zones within the central city through effective urban design to reduce the traffic that use the city as a thoroughfare
- Streets within the central city are changed from their current status as 'thoroughfares' to 'feeders' into the central city
- Agree with the expansion of the Bus Exchange but need to look into alternative routes for the buses which create congestion and noise along Colombo Street. Also need to ensure long-term strategies are considered for the expansion to incorporate future needs and all other transport methods.

5. Social health and welfare of the central city

- Loitering leading to intimidation of central city users
- Noisy cars
- Cleanliness
- Security at peak times in selected areas

Solutions:

- Creating the right urban design which discourages loitering of undesirables
- Creating slow zones and feeder roads which will discourage boy racers and increases safety for pedestrians
- The CCBG working in partnership with the CCC to encourage participation in the 'cleaner partner programme'
- Formalise a partnership between the NZ Police and the CCC to have a police presence in 'high risk' areas at certain times e.g. The Strip, top end of High Street etc
- Ensure secure toilet facilities are available for 24 hours

6. Business retention and development within the central city

- Extended vacancies in the City Mall
- Lack of tenancy mix and quality in some key areas
- Lack of commitment made to ensure head offices and large corporates are retained or located in the central city
- The new proposed policy on Development contributions we believe has the potential to act as a disincentive to encouraging development within the central city

Solutions:

- Ongoing commitment of funding for the CCBG who currently have a database of 1400 businesses in the central city and are actively working with precincts to address all the above issues through working closely with the Employers' Chamber
- Work in partnership with other parties involved in central city revitalisation including Christchurch & Canterbury Marketing, Employers' Chamber, Canterbury Development Corporation etc
- Collation of information and advice for businesses looking at relocating to the central city to encourage their relocation
- Utilise the linkages with the Employers' Chamber to encourage and promote business success through ongoing training and development
- Work with precincts to identify customer needs to fill vacancies versus an adhoc approach to fill a vacancy
- Investigate providing incentives and removing barriers to encourage businesses to locate to the central city

- To ensure that any changes to the Development Contributions policy are structured in a way that will continue to allow economically viable alternations and developments to occur in the central city

Conclusion

We congratulate the CCC on the publication of the draft LTCCP document, which is well presented. We are very supportive of the CCC taking a long term strategic view of Christchurch and we thank you for the opportunity to present our submission on behalf of central city businesses.

We wish to request the opportunity to present in support of this submission to the CCC.

Leeann Watson
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Appendices

1. International market research key findings
2. Key focus of CCBG
3. Targeted rate survey results

APPENDIX 1 – International market research key findings

The CCBG employed a graduate marketing intern to conduct a comprehensive research into international best practice central city revitalisation. The cities included in the research were:

- Akron, Ohio
- Auckland
- Brisbane
- Charlotte
- Milwaukee
- Melbourne
- Memphis
- Pittsburgh
- Vancouver
- Wellington

Key components of successful central city revitalisation

- Marketing initiatives are only one step in a large process that is required to achieve central city revitalisation, others included infrastructure, heritage, environment and business improvement
- Branding is one of the important factors for successful revitalisation. Rebranding generally takes 2-3 years before brand has full effect, including economic benefits
- Development of precincts often leads to success when working collaboratively rather than independently
- Events contribute to central city success with businesses leveraging off events. Wellington central city is an example of a city that is successfully events driven, with the local Council leveraging off major events
- Marketing on emotional appeal is more successful, along with creating community pride. Reinforcing differentiation and competitive advantages of the destination
- Other common elements identified included the importance of leadership and management

Recommendations from the research

- Continue to increase consumers knowledge of the central city including brand awareness, reinforcing points of difference, using emotional appeal in campaign, further collaboration with businesses

Conclusions

- The research conducted reinforced the current marketing and communication strategy managed by the CCBG
- Current strategy provides a strong platform to build on with branding and being event focused
- Campaign must be supported by local government and work alongside other central city initiatives vs. in isolation

APPENDIX 2 – Key focus of CCBG

To market and promote the central city to its full potential for the benefit of all central city stakeholders to encourage Christchurch city residents and visitors to:

- Take advantage of the unique and diverse retail outlets
- Maximise the opportunities through the dynamic business base
- Identify the visitor attractions as a must see while in the central city
- Recognise the central city as a viable alternative for residential living
- Enjoy the vibrant hospitality and entertainment available
- Appreciate and recognise the cultural heritage

Goal Summary

1. Marketing & promotion

- Christchurch central city - Always Different Campaign – management and ongoing development
- Website enhancement
- Access to discounted media rates/loyalty incentive programmes for central city businesses

2. Public relations

- Selective Public Relations related to the campaign
- Increase media awareness of the campaign and objectives

3. Co-ordination & collaboration

- Co-ordination of marketing campaigns for the central city
- Facilitation of groups in the central city
- Precinct development

4. Specific event & targeted management & co-ordination

- Co-ordination of events in the central city (through working with all organisations involved in running and facilitating central city events)
- Co-ordination of event packages
- Attracting major events to the central city
- Maximising business opportunities for central city businesses by leveraging off events

5. Communicating to central city businesses

- Campaign progress
- Progress within the central city
- Website updating

6. Central city environment

- Attracting new businesses to the central city
- Effective communication channel into the CCC to report issues identified by central city businesses

7. Management & co-ordination

- Communication channels between CCC, CCBG and central city businesses
- Market research

APPENDIX 3 – Targeted rate survey results – City Mall update

Survey results

The survey was circulated to all central city businesses.

1. Do you think it is very important to upgrade the City Mall? (in the context of a vibrant central city)

	Response percent
Yes	74%
No	26%

2. Do you think the proposal to introduce differential rating for central city businesses is good policy?

	Response percent
Yes	4%
No	96%

3. Would you be prepared to pay a differential rate to fund up to 70% of the estimated \$10 million costs? (this could mean you pay a loading of an extra 6 to 10% over base rates)

	Response percent
Yes	5%
No	95%

4. Do you think the upgrade of the city mall should be funded from the total rate take?

	Response percent
Yes	91%
No	9%

5. Is a 6 to 10% loading on base rates significant enough to make you consider relocating your business?

	Response percent
Yes	45%
No	55%