

LTCCP 2006-16 Submission - Received by Email

Name: St Marks Presbyterian Church (C/- bob and robin ryburn [r.r.ryburn@actrix.co.nz])

CC:

Sent: Thu 4/05/2006 15:57

Your Submission:

Submission to Draft Community Plan

Submission to the Christchurch City Council
concerning the Council Community Plan 2006-2016

on behalf of St Marks Presbyterian Church, 150 Withells Road, Avonhead,
Phone 358 5443

Contact persons

Rev. Dugald Wilson, Phone 358 5670, E-mail dugald@stmarks.net.nz

Bob Ryburn, Phone 358 2218, E-mail r.r.ryburn@actrix.co.nz

This submission refers to the Community Support section of the plan (Summary version page 10). We do not wish to speak to the submission.

A common community view of churches is that they are Sunday-only and religion-only concerns. Certainly St Marks conducts well attended services of Sunday worship for its parishioners (a significant number of whom are recent immigrants, many of them Koreans) and visitors. In addition a Chinese Church, which attracts large numbers of Mandarin speaking student-age youth, uses the complex every Sunday afternoon.

This submission, however, sets out to round out that picture by noting what St Marks and indeed many suburban churches are doing for their communities in a large variety of ways. Awareness of these contributions to city life can only be of assistance to planners in fulfilling the aim of "providing strong and inclusive communities and opportunities to meet and socialise".

Submission

St Marks church complex was built only fifteen or so years ago. Like a number of other churches of the time it was designed with community use in mind. We have a number of large and small hall spaces for meetings and a modest sports-area / gymnasium.

Community use by non-religious groups includes active groups like Keep-fit classes, Indoor Bowls, Badminton, and Yoga. There are sessions for seniors like a Foot Clinic for people who cannot attend to their own feet, or Tai Chi For Falls Prevention. We are the venue for Probus, and for Craft and Painting groups. There are well attended Conversational English classes for new immigrants throughout the year. We also have significant use by youth organisations including Boys' Brigade, Girl Guides, A large Chinese Youth Group as well as our own youth group. A Friday morning pre-schoolers and mothers "Koffee and Kids" activity group has been embarrassed by large numbers.

With escalating petrol prices, Christchurch residents may well be less willing or able to travel across the city to venues or activities. This could lead to greater dependence on the local suburban area to provide for recreational, social and personal development needs. It is important that planners are made aware that churches are already making active contributions to address this need.

Together with the Avonhead shopping complex and perhaps Merrin Primary School, St Marks, in common with a number of suburban churches, is in many ways a centre of activity which helps define the suburban area giving residents not only activities but a sense of focus and belonging as well.

[End.]