

4 May 2006

28 Cumnor Terrace,
Woolston,
Christchurch.

Dear Sirs,

I borrowed your DVD on the 10 Year City Plan, and scanned through it plus read the printed plan. I would now like to make the following comments.

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS:

I was perturbed to learn about the Blenheim Road deviation – not so much about the plan itself but the high cost for the project because the land involved was Council owned in the first place before sale was made to Ngai Tahu who then sold it back to you at a considerably higher price (than they paid), thus making a substantial profit for themselves. It would have been more sensible to have held on to this valuable piece of land awhile longer. But I recognise that hind-sight is a very wonderful thing.

The Central City Mall redevelopment has me concerned – this presumably is the Cashel St Mall – I can't think why it needs to be redeveloped yet again. It seems satisfactory as it is. If you left it alone you could save 10.3 million dollars.

ESSENTIAL PROJECTS:

The Christchurch Art Gallery, so recently opened (four years) – why does it need an air conditioning upgrade already? Surely that should have been installed at the time.

Why can't you make your Civic offices do -you had a rather expensive refurbishment if I remember rightly not so very long ago. You could save 4.3 million dollars here.

DISCRETIONARY PRIORITY PROJECTS;

I am concerned about street plans in the pipe-line. I am in full agreement that continued maintenance of our city's streets is paramount but only in respect of installation of traffic lights where necessary, lines re-painted, good signage, surfaces in good condition, etc etc., but please please, stop spending prodigious amounts on narrowing streets, especially at intersections, widening footpaths, creating islands, "fancying up" with plantings. While all this looks nice and may be convenient and pleasant for pedestrians it makes for nightmarish motoring. If speed is a problem then put in a few speed humps at strategic places and save heaps of money. So many streets have been reduced to almost one way traffic and are now tortuous and slow, needlessly so, infuriatingly so. I know millions has already been lavished on this and feel that the money spent on this could be better invested somewhere else on something more worthwhile. On the subject of cyclists, I feel more could be done to cater for them. The narrowed streets certainly complicate matters and leave less room and that needs to be addressed.

Regarding leisure centres, one proposed for the north of the city is fair enough but what about something for us folk in the south east? The nearest large indoor pool is the Pioneer and the only other plain pool in the immediate vicinity is Woolston which you are proposing to close down. This will be hard for many poor, carless folk in that area. I object to Jellie Park pool being upgraded yet again. I think the money would be better spent on something in our area, and I see that you are thinking of this and I look forward to hearing more about it. Perhaps you could redevelop popular Waltham Pool?

I understand that you are planning a new visitors' centre in the Botanic Gardens and you propose to spend 11.1 million dollars on this. I am puzzled as to why there is a necessity for this as there is a perfectly good one there now and it seems to function adequately. Besides also there is a visitors' shop in the museum adjacent.

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS

I disagreed with all these except to reduce the number of City Scene publications from ten nine. I am not sure how well read these are and suggest that perhaps you reduce the number still further to five a year, and save even more.

Your savings from closing these essential services would be paltry compared with the money you are currently planning to outlay on more costly projects.

We need our libraries - all of them, and that includes the mobile library. These are all essential services for which we pay rates. Besides you made a firm promise to leave them open for another ten years and you need to honour that promise.

Keep the Riccarton and Hornby sub agencies open, etc. Keep agencies open for receiving Council payments or risk severely inconveniencing a number of people who might otherwise find it difficult to get to another location.

Keep community halls open and consider that the reason they are not being more fully used is because they are not being properly maintained, or perhaps you are charging too much for them. At any rate I believe that we need to have them all available for public use.

I don't believe that the savings you could make on closing these services would justify closing them. You cannot measure and calculate the value of services by the amount of profit made, or in this case the loss.

Keep car parking fees – both on and off street – to the level they already are. I understand they have recently been increased. You want to attract people into the central city, but you then penalise them by increasing parking fees! People will choose a mall wherever they can because the parking is free and the shops are less “trendy” and more family friendly.

And lastly, but not leastly, on the subject of rubbish: Please, please, please, get recycling up and running for ALL plastic receptacles, i.e. numbers 3-7. There are so many things at present that cannot be recycled and that fill our black rubbish bags. This is really imperative if we are to achieve ZERO WASTE. I hate the thought of all the pollution to scenic land when rubbish has to be dumped.

I hope you will consider all the above.

Yours faithfully,

Juliette M. Bryant, (Mrs)