

4. SHIRLEY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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Corporate Plan Output: Community Activities	

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Shirley Community Needs Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Members will recall that this research was initiated early last year, with the contract being allocated to two researchers: Lesley MacGibbon and Missy Morton. The findings were originally expected to have been presented to the Board late last year. However, unforeseen circumstances delayed the completion of this research until now.

The intention of this research was that the methodology deviated from the usual quantitative analysis by seeking an outcome based more on stories, life histories and case studies from within the area.

A full copy of the research has been provided to Community Board members under separate cover.

“OFFICIAL” FINDINGS

The first part of the report outlines the “official, statistical” nature of the area. There are some noticeable differences between this area and Christchurch as a whole:

- Maori make up a significantly higher proportion of those living in the area than in Christchurch.
- The numbers of Pacific Island people are also significantly higher.
- The percentage of children under 10 years of age is 1.7 x the city average in Emmett Street and 1.3 x in the whole research area.
- The numbers of families in the area receiving an income of less than \$30,000 is significantly higher than the city average.
- The number of families receiving Income Support in the area is also significantly higher than the city average. The number on Domestic Purposes Benefit are particularly high.
- A much higher number of people live in rental accommodation than in Christchurch as a whole, with those in Emmett Street being ten times as likely to live in a Housing New Zealand house.
- The area has a much larger proportion of unemployed than in the city as a whole – 10.2% in Emmett Street as apposed to 4.7% for the whole city.
- 48.9% of those living in Emmett Street and 42.9% of those living in the research area have no qualifications. The city average is 30.1%.
- People in Emmett Street are twice as likely as the city average to *not* own a car.

These statistics indicate an area of high deprivation and this is further borne out by the NZ Deprivation Index which indexes communities in New Zealand according to eight variables. A score of (1) is the least deprived and (10) the most deprived. The research block is located “within” an area classified as (8). Given the higher proportions of the statistics above, the deprivation index is likely to be greater than (8), especially for the Emmett Street area.

LIKES

The researchers commented that they were “surprised (at) the stability of the community, with many long-term residents in the Research Block”.

Reasons that residents gave for enjoying the area included:

- Affordability of housing.
- It was close to their families and/or they had grown up there.
- It was seen as stable, established and a “neighbourly” suburb.
- It was close to good amenities, including schools, doctors and shops.
- There are a number of parks in the area.
- Some parts are attractively planted and well looked after.
- The Orbiter bus service.

CONCERNS

- Noise.
- Not feeling taken seriously when they do make comment or advocate themselves.
- The loss of local offices, in particular Plunket and Housing New Zealand.
- The loss or demise of local initiatives, such as the food co-op from the Community Centre, the earlier holiday programmes and the drop-in-centre at St Aidens.
- Traffic and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Gangs.
- Graffiti and tagging.
- Run down appearance of parts of the area, in particular the shops in Acheson Avenue.
- The loss of good local shops.
- The possibility of a bar opening on Acheson Avenue.
- Children and young people being left to their own devices and getting into trouble.
- A lack of quality (well organised and supervised) social and recreational programmes for children and youth.
- A need for support for parents through formal or informal programmes.
- A need for better co-ordination between agencies, including the schools.

RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

A number of suggestions were made for improvements in the area. A key theme was that “*initiatives must be grounded in local needs, interest, and draw upon the skills of people living in the area; that any initiatives must be seen as incremental*”. The major recommendation arising from this research recognises “the need for support for low income families in their parenting and supervising children”.

Particular recommendations fall into five categories (for more details refer to pages 6-7 of the research document):

1. ***Community Development:*** Utilise the strengths and skills of the residents of the area by supporting community projects and initiatives with resources and advice.
2. ***Advocacy:*** Work to increase the responsiveness of local and central government to the concerns of this community.
3. ***Support for children and families:*** Develop programmes and projects that will assist families and young children.
4. ***Support for youth***
5. ***Co-ordination of agencies***

CONCLUSION

This report highlights the particular needs of one of the most deprived communities within the Boards area (indeed, within Christchurch as a whole). A picture of a community who enjoy living in the area, but with some glaring gaps in social services and community development is painted. Local solutions are indicated.

Recommendation:

1. That the research document “It’s lot of little things happening that will make the difference: a Community Needs Analysis of the Shirley Area” be received.
2. That the researchers, Lesley MacGibbon and Missy Morton, be thanked for their effort.
3. That a working group consisting of Shirley Board members, Advocacy Staff and Community Recreation Adviser be established to review the recommendations from the report. The working group is to report back to the Board meeting of 28 February 2001 with recommendations of short, medium and long-term implementation of the recommendations, as well as any funding that may be needed.

**Chairperson’s
Recommendation:**

That the officer’s recommendation be adopted and that Board and staff members also consider other sources of funding and partnerships to implement the recommendations.