

# Christchurch City Council

## Mayoral Study Tour of North America

21 November to 7 December 2009 inclusive

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### Attended by

- Bob Parker, Mayor, Christchurch City
- Tony Marryatt, Chief Executive, Christchurch City Council
- Mike Theelen, General Manager, Strategy and Planning Group, Christchurch City Council

### **Introduction for Interviewees**

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with the three of us. The purpose of this briefing note is to give you a very brief overview of the topics we are focussing on, in order to assist you, and make our meeting with you as fruitful and productive as possible.

In addition to a range of interviews we will also be informally experiencing some of the areas and facilities we are interested in, and your suggestions about places to visit during our short time in each city would be invaluable.

### **The Purpose - What We Want To Achieve**

The Mayor and City Council of Christchurch have a vision to create a sustainable, exciting and attractive city for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A key strand in this vision is the consolidation of the City's urban form, and within that the revitalisation of the City Centre as a powerful and exciting place to live, to work and to play.

Higher density, mixed use, balanced communities are the goal, and a confidence that new populations will drive investment into retail, business, education and leisure, all concentrated in the City Centre. In addition the City is also looking to reinvigorate existing inner city suburbs, with a significant emphasis on design, quality environments, and safe, easy connectivity to the City core. A strong element in this cultural shift is the use of public transport (bus, light rail, tram) to reconnect the city beyond the car, and provide a sustainable and first choice system that meets the City's and its citizens aspirations.

This Study Tour will take in four key North American cities (San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver) that have been bold, and have successfully pursued and implemented strategies to revitalise their cities.

The focus of our visit is to explore, discuss, and meet with city officers, academics, politicians, and others who have played a role in achieving such ambitious goals. The key topics we are interested in pursuing in depth are:

- Inner City Visioning and Community Engagement
- Models to catalyst revitalisation (regulatory, financial, governance).
- Barriers to success and overcoming these.

- The role of transit systems to lead and support revitalisation (particularly tram, light rail).
- Social Marketing: re-engaging the community with the Central City.
- Sustaining a political vision over time.
- Working with developers to achieve joint outcomes.

Your willingness to share your insights and practical experience with some or all of these aspects of city revitalisation is gratefully appreciated. This will enable us to consider or re-evaluate our emerging strategies and programmes and assist us in making these a success for the City of Christchurch. We would like the discussions to be as open and frank as possible and are happy to respect any matters imparted to us in confidence.

## **A Brief Background to Christchurch**

Christchurch City is New Zealand's second largest City (population of 372,000) and covers an area of over 45,000ha. It is located on the East Coast of the South Island of New Zealand. The City is made up of a large urban centre (Christchurch), two smaller townships (Lyttelton and Akaroa) and a large rural hinterland (Banks Peninsula).

Christchurch is the principal City of the Canterbury region. The City is a major entry point and destination for tourists visiting New Zealand. The City is home to the South Island's major international airport, and its principal export/import seaport at Lyttelton. Christchurch is a significant administrative centre, with a strong economic base in agricultural, information and communication technology (ICT) and biosciences. It is the home of two internationally recognised Universities (Canterbury and Lincoln). Christchurch is also home to the United States Antarctic Programme which operates out of Christchurch International Airport.

Christchurch was first settled in 1843. It developed very early as a provincial centre for government and commerce. Known as the Garden City, its many parks and gardens reflect a very strong English heritage. This is also reflected in its built form which is a strong mixture of masonry Edwardian and Victorian style buildings.

As a planning authority the City is endeavouring to provide a strong and competitive urban environment that capitalises on its strong heritage and reputation. The key pressures confronting the city are peripheral urban spread, competing commuter towns, strong suburban retail competition that has undermined the Central Business District, and a largely suburban based population. While the City has one of the best bus systems in Australasia the City is still very car dominated with public transport, cycling/walking only operating as minor players. It is these challenges that the Council, led by the Mayor and Chief Executive are committed to addressing.

A number of key sites you may like to visit to find out more about Christchurch are:

[www.ccc.govt.nz](http://www.ccc.govt.nz)

[www.christchurch.org.nz](http://www.christchurch.org.nz)

[www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz](http://www.greaterchristchurch.org.nz)