

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL

Draft LTCCP 2009-19

- Received via Web

Submissions close on 16 April 2009

I do NOT wish to present my submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered

Are you completing this submission:

For yourself

If you are representing, how many people do you represent?

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13 April 2009

Your Submission:

Points I wish to be considered:

With regards to transport:

+ The amount spent on encouraging cycling and walking as forms of transport should be mainly focused on developing infrastructure, before being spent on promotion. Several specific actions could be taken by the council in this regard:

1. Ensuring that cycle lanes are present on all main roads (particularly Riccarton Road, which is an appalling example of the lack of consideration for cyclists), and do not just disappear. Car parks often need to be removed as a result, and in some cases this may breach some archaic regulation that requires a certain number of car parks. However, in the long term reviews of car parking regulation will need to be made to ease increasing congestion. Thus in many cases the removal of car parks will eventually positively benefit businesses concerned. Taking Riccarton Rd as an example, more people will actually consider visiting the shops along the road as cycling will be more viable. This is because parking cycles takes far less space, and the discouraging of cars parking on Riccarton Road will ensure a safer trip for walkers and cyclists alike (if you've ever tried parking and getting out of a park on Riccarton Road, you will know what I mean). The provision of cycle lanes on ALL main roads is therefore imperative in actually achieving any noticeable increase in cycling, as cycling is often perceived as scary and unsafe due to the difficulty in finding a space to ride. Walkers will further benefit as cyclists will not have to resort to footpaths to avoid getting run over.

2. Having a council run carpool service for commuters and having incentives for CBD businesses to use it. This may simply take the form of a website (some already exist, but the use of carpool sites is incredibly fragmented and they are poorly linked to those who need it). The use of the website by CBD businesses could be rewarded simply by hooking them up with other local cafes or restaurants, whereby the business with the greatest percentage increase in carpooling would receive vouchers for discounted or free meals/entertainment/services (thus also stimulating local businesses). This would not be particularly expensive for the council to fund, and local businesses that offer the deals would benefit from both the promotion of their business and/or the business itself. The reasoning is obvious: getting less cars with lone drivers and increasing the feeling of a community that looks after itself. Targeting workplaces is imperative as the regular travel of large groups of people during peak rush hour times causes precious time to be wasted and fuels morning stress that affects workers' productivity.

3. Having more accessways that serve as shortcuts for walkers and cyclists only, and properly signposting the existing accessways to ensure people know where they are and can therefore use them!

+ Tangible incentives must be provided to encourage use of public transport, rather than simply promoting a system with high barriers. One specific action that could be taken by the council in this regard:

1. "Take a mate for free" on the bus would address several huge shortcomings of the bus system, whereby anyone with a metrocard could take a friend or colleague with them on the bus for free. Currently, taking the bus is often uneconomical (even considering petrol prices) and yet also unreliable (even as a fairly "green" person, I will often refuse to take the bus due to these reasons). As reliability cannot be easily improved without further increasing the price of travel, the cost must be sufficiently low for any sane person with choices to consider sacrificing both their time, job, social life and money. As reliability is key for commuters, it makes sense to target leisure travelers and this is where "take a mate for free" would achieve the most. First, it encourages groups or pairs of people to take the bus, which makes up for the potential loss of giving free transport - some people would not have considered taking the bus alone, but would take it with a friend. Second, it doesn't matter so much for leisure whether or not you're on time, and when people travel in groups, the unreliability of the bus matters even less. Third, it creates positive associations with taking the bus (rather than making it anti-social and nerve wracking "people don't mind waiting for the bus as much if they have a friend to talk to) and garners positive attitudes toward the council.

+ Do not commercialise any Transport Interchange that is built "The draft mentions "extra facilities and services such as retail outlets" will be included in the plans for the Transport Interchange. Obviously, the definition of the "needs" of passengers must be carefully considered. However, in general the idea of creating further commercial space in the city centre is counter-productive, as it creates an incentive for people to travel from the suburbs into town, instead of encouraging less unnecessary travel in the first place. One specific action related to this that the Council should take:

1. More suburban routes that recognise developing and established SUBURBAN retail complexes (such as Tower Junction centre, Blenheim Square, or Church Corner shops) as destinations, without passing town and thus encouraging less travel to town in the first place. To draw on George Monbiot's conceptualisation of public transport, increased suburban routes would also benefit HUGELY from having priority lanes for buses, so that they are indeed as fast or faster and more time efficient (not just energy efficient) than taking the car.

In sum, it is important to develop physical and psychological structures and systems that offer time, money and/or social incentives for people to change their travel habits. I think it is quite clear that any promotional attempts will fall short of creating any real change unless this is the case "no matter

how great the campaign, no one is going to truly change unless the council makes some serious changes first. Public attempts to change that lead to dead ends will simply result in a return to old habits, no matter how good you make the dead end look.

With regard to the lack of local food initiative spending:

+ There is no mention in the plan of any plans to support local agriculture or food initiatives that would benefit the council and community in a myriad of ways. Specific actions that the councils could take are numerous:

1. Supporting existing and new community gardens in Christchurch by providing funds for promotion (or even directly encouraging the public to use them) and seeds/basic equipment, to increase incentive for expanding the initiative. This includes funding for schemes such as Kids' Edible Gardens. Additional funding as a reward for schools to engage in the schemes would also benefit parents, children/teens, and the community (for example, encouraging school canteens to use vegetables and fruit grown in their own gardens to decrease catering costs and the associated transport costs) These initiatives are excellent for improving the health of Christchurch citizens as they will be exercising, eating organic fresh vegetables for considerably less cost, and will be learning valuable skills they can then use in their own gardens at home " such skills are particularly essential during times of "economic hardship." Encouraging children and teens to engage in community gardens also provides a rewarding activity that counters the notion of Christchurch being a place where there is nothing to do.

2. Making a commitment to use sustainable, local food in Council catering and supporting local food providers, and promoting this fact to encourage awareness in Christchurch of the benefits and importance of doing so. This will not only stimulate local businesses, but decrease the impact on local pollution as a result of decreased food miles. Even having every council member aware of local food businesses will give local businesses greater exposure. Council members as a result will also benefit from fresher, more healthy food.

3. Providing better resources to support farmers markets in Christchurch (or the one farmers market). This would support local businesses and decrease local pollution caused by unnecessary food miles. Promotion should be on the council website (or at least a link) so that more of the community knows about the markets, and there is a larger customer base for the local businesses that often operate at the markets. The council could introduce a logo/certificate that may be granted to locally owned and operated businesses that can be displayed at all markets to bring greater awareness to what is local and what is not. Also funding could be provided to businesses who have never tried selling at a market stall, so that their first two weeks are free (thus reducing risk and supporting smaller and sustainable farms).

4. The council could set up a scheme and some funding to encourage local schools with cooking facilities (usually for "food technology") to open their doors in the evenings for parents to learn healthy, easy, in-season cooking (where parents pay a small deposit fee to cover the costs of hiring the venue and buying the food). This again supports local businesses who grow produce with the seasons, helps parents provide their children with food that helps them learn more effectively, and increases the general health and well being of families.

Essentially, I believe the council could be taking a more active and beneficial role to encourage local food production and local food buying. Supporting more sustainable and local food initiatives not only serves to reduce Christchurch's local pollution in terms of lower transport miles, but encourages healthier eating habits in the community. These will all contribute to wellbeing of the community and its environment.