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Submission on Draft Long Term Council Community Plan

From:

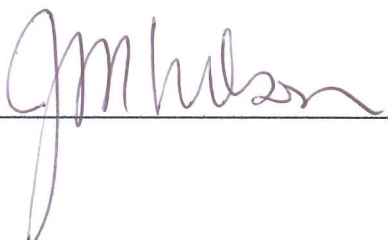
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◇ This is an individual submission

◇ I wish to discuss the main points of my written submission at the hearings 11-18 May 2009



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Wilson', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and extends below the line.

13 April 2009

The particular areas of concern on which I wish to make submissions are:

- (a) Protection of historic heritage
- (b) Transportation

1. Protection of historic heritage

I wish the Council to make much better financial provision in the LTCCP for the protection of the city's heritage. Specifically, I am concerned about

(i) the apparent deletion of the fund which was set aside some years ago to enable the Council to purchase threatened historic buildings and then sell them on to a new owner or developer for re-use, with a heritage covenant ensuring the buildings would be retained for future generations. The Council used this procedure successfully in the past to save the Government Buildings and the Coachman Inn. I was unable to find any evidence in the LTCCP that the Council is still committed to this as the most effective course of action to save threatened buildings at relatively little cost to the community. I would like the Council to reinstate this fund, to return to it the amount that had accumulated in it and to resume making an annual payment into the fund, to cover the small losses that are likely to result from transactions concerning individual buildings and to ensure that the fund grows to a level which means it can make a real difference in terms of saving all significant buildings that come under threat.

(ii) the sums allocated annually to historic preservation in the LTCCP are no larger than in recent years and show no increase over the two-year period of the Plan. There needs to be a substantially larger annual allocation of funds to heritage protection in order to:

(a) expedite the preparation and adoption of the long-promised variation to the City Plan which will put much stronger provisions for the protection of heritage in place in the City Plan.

(b) enable many more buildings, sites and items to be listed under the City Plan with sufficient research and adequate assessments done to ensure that the strengthened provisions in the City Plan will stand up to scrutiny in resource consent hearings and in the Environment Court.

(c) enable the Council to offer much higher levels of assistance to owners and developers who are repairing, strengthening or adapting new uses buildings which are important parts of the city's heritage.

Additional comment: the LTCCP needs to take into account that the central city intensification strategy which is part of the wider Urban Development Strategy may put some pressure on older buildings in the central city and that the Council may need to have funds available to encourage owners and developers to retrofit older buildings for new (residential and commercial) uses that fit with the central city intensification strategy.

There is no recognition in the LTCCP that the benefits of retaining historic buildings and places as the foundation of the city's historic and cultural character will only be gained if there is a much greater commitment by the Council to protecting the city's heritage buildings, places and items. This commitment has to be expressed in the allocation of much more money to historic preservation. There is economic justification for this because, apart from achieving cultural and other goals which the city is required to achieve under the Local Government and other Acts of Parliament, ensuring Christchurch remains a city of individual historic character is critical to attracting visitors, both national and international, to the city,

2. Transportation

I believe the LTCCP's sections on transportation are based on an unacceptable assumption that the people of Christchurch will (and should) continue to move around the city in private cars. This is evident in the disproportionate resources devoted to planning for and spending on roads intended to cater to motor traffic, as compared to the resources devoted to improving public transport and building cycleways. I believe the Council should spend dramatically less on roading improvements and dramatically more on (a) public transport (inaugurating before the end of the ten-year period either an extensive light-rail system or a comprehensive network of exclusive bus lanes (not just bus priority lanes on roads which are also used by private motor vehicles) and (b) cycleways (ensuring that by the end of the ten-year period there is a city-wide network of cycleways enabling cyclists to move all round the city separated from road traffic).

The Council's aim should be to make public transport fast, regular and reliable throughout the urban area and cycling a pleasant, safe way of getting around the city, as alternatives to people continuing to use private cars for most intra-city journeys of all descriptions (commuting, shopping, leisure).

It is totally unacceptable that walking, cycling and public transport usage should remain roughly constant over the life of the plan, as the draft LTCCP envisages. The LTCCP should provide for a substantial increase in walking, cycling and public transport usage and a corresponding massive decrease in private car usage.

Additional comment: The LTCCP as it stands completely ignores the oft-repeated and incontrovertible amenity, environmental and economic benefits that would flow from encouraging citizens to walk, cycle or use public transport rather than use their cars.

The emphasis of the LTCCP on continued reliance on the private car flies in the face of likely trends in fuel prices and in the face of the risk of global climate change. An economically rational and environmentally responsible transportation policy for the city must promote curtailing the use of private cars and encouraging people to walk, ride bicycles and use public transport.

3. The Edgware Pool land

I am appending a statement about the Edgware Pool land to this submission because I believe it illustrates my two major areas of concern, as discussed above.

I would like to see financial provision made in the LTCCP for the construction of a new pool on the site of the demolished Edgware Pool. Although the old pool was not of particular architectural or constructional significance, it was of enormous *intangible* heritage significance because of what it represented as both a product and, for many decades, a focus of St Albans community life and identity. In addition, the pool was accessible on foot or by bicycle to a large number of local residents. Obviously, I believe the Council's aquatic facilities policy is foolish to focus on fewer, larger pools and related facilities, which are accessible to large numbers of residents only by car. The Council should be planning to create a dense network of **local** facilities (pools, libraries, community meeting places, etc.) that people can reach on foot or by bicycle, without having to use a private car.

