

Summary submission form

Instructions

You may send us your submission...

Please read before completing your submission

It will help us process your submission if you can state the issue you want the Council to consider, and the action you think the Council should take.

If you wish, you can present your submission at a hearing. (If that is the case, please tick the box). The hearings will be held between Thursday 25 May and Wednesday 7 June 2006. Generally, 10 minutes are allocated for hearing each submission, including time for questions.

It will help us if your submission also refers to the page of either the full version or the summary version.

Please note: we are legally required to make all written or electronic submissions available to Councillors and to the public. This includes the name and address of the submitter. All submissions will be published on the Council's website from 10 May 2006.

No anonymous submissions will be accepted.

By mail

Please mail your submission (no stamp is required) to:

Freeport 178
Our Community Plan
Christchurch City Council
PO Box 237
Christchurch 8003

By email

Please email your submission to:
ccc-plan@ccc.govt.nz
Please make sure that your full name and address is included with your submission.

On the internet

You may enter your submission using the form provided on the Council's web site at:
<http://www.ccc.govt.nz>
Please follow all the instructions on the web site.

Please remember to indicate if you wish to present your submission in person at one of the hearings.

Please ensure your submission arrives no later than Friday 5 May 2006.

Your submission

You may use this form for your submission on the draft Our Community Plan if you wish. Whether you use this form or not, please include your name, address and contact telephone number with your submission.

Tick one ☐ I do NOT wish to present my submission at the hearing, and ask that this written submission be considered OR ☒ I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings to be held between Thursday 25 May and Wednesday 7 June 2006

Are you completing this submission: ☐ For yourself ☒ On behalf of a group or organisation

If you are representing a group or organisation, how many people do you represent? heaps

My submission refers to: ☒ Full version ☐ Page No. ☒ Summary version ☐ Page No.

Do you also want to respond to: ☐ Development Contributions ☐ Aquatic Facilities ☐ Other

Contact Name Paula Lambert

Organisation name (if applicable) Chch Coalition for Cannabis Law Reform

Contact Address 313 Woodham Rd Wonside 8006

Phone No. (day) 3891955 Phone No. (evening) same

Email (if applicable) _____

Signature Paula Lambert Date 5 May 2006

Questions

See list of major projects in the summary document

1 Do you have any comments on the major projects in our draft Our Community Plan? page number

2 Do you have any comments on groups of activities (the activities and services that Council provides)? page number

[illegible]

3 Do you have any other comments or suggestions you want to make? page number

For office use only	
Submission #:	
Referred to:	
Date referred:	
Date required:	

You may add more pages if you wish. Thank you for your submission.

For office use only

Submission #:

Referred to: _____

Date referred: _____

Date required: _____

Heard: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Christchurch Coalition for Cannabis Law Reform

313 Woodham Road, Avonside, Christchurch 8006 tel 03 389 1955

5 May 2006

SUBMISSION on draft Long Term Community Plan 2006-16

Dear Mayor Gary Moore and Christchurch City Councillors,

Thank you for this opportunity to engage in the democratic process and make comment on the LTCCP 2006-16. We believe our contribution will enhance the set of community outcomes that have been identified by the LTCCP to assist our city to be prosperous, livable, safe and well governed, with healthy active people.

We agree with you 'the most important thing in the world are its people, its people, its people' and this is what our submission is all about. We represent groups and individuals from our Christchurch community.

- 1) We agree with expenditure for "Base" capital programme and "Essential" capital projects so long as 'best practice' is maintained to ensure the best possible deals for the projects.
- 2) We believe there should be rigorous debate with the community for 'Discretionary capital projects' with serious considerations to the rising costs that will heavily impact on those with fixed incomes in our community who will be unable to bear them.
- 3) If rates are going to be increased we believe the Council is obliged to give ratepayers on fixed incomes an answer on how they will be able to pay for these increases as part of the future vision.
- 4) Local facilities such as libraries and swimming pools should not be closing down. They holistically contribute to community health and need to be accessed with minimum expense.

Our vision for the future of Christchurch : A Prohibition-free Christchurch.

We believe we should stop criminalizing our community for using cannabis. A very large number of our adult population are regular users and it is high time we stopped treating them like 'naughty children'. We believe Christchurch is a visionary city with outstanding leadership qualities, eg. it has recognition for being a Peace city for work that has already been done here, and with our Mayor leading by example for the future.

We would like to share a proposal with you that we believe will be of enormous benefit to our community. We propose that Christchurch yet again shows its strong leadership and leads the way in New Zealand by following the example of our Sister City Seattle. Other US Cities are looking at following this example because the results so far are positive, with youth use in particular on the decline. (See Appendix - Seattle)

Community Outcomes : We believe ending cannabis prohibition will assist substantially to achieve the proposed community outcomes in the LTCCP

A Safe City

We believe safety in the community would be increased - by reducing crime and violence - if cannabis was taken out of the black market. A great number of our youth are at heightened risk when dabbling on the edges of the black market, just because they want to smoke a 'bit of pot'. The black market involves a lot of money changing hands and has resulted in rip-offs, bashings, and standover tactics involving extortion, blackmail and intimidation in our community. The result of all this is to push our young people toward risky precipices. Ideally some form of legal regulation, as with tobacco and alcohol, would take the cannabis market out of the hands of criminal gangs. We would be happy to sit down with the Christchurch City Council and any other interested stakeholders to discuss how this may be achieved.

Community

Treating such a large sector of our community as criminals creates division, fear and suspicion amongst neighbours. If diversity is truly valued then we must accept the fact that a substantial percentage of our adult Christchurch community smoke pot.

Currently under the law they are treated as outcasts, but they too need to have a sense of belonging and feel able to participate in the community without fear of arrest, detention and punishment. They need to be included not excluded from society. We recommend education, treatment or medical assistance rather than punishment for cannabis consumers (we don't arrest alcohol consumers unless they step over a certain line).

We believe ending prohibition will also increase community trust and mutual respect. This could result in far less vandalism and anti-social behaviour by our young people whose feelings of alienation is increased by outdated prohibition laws.

The NZ National Drug Policy is due for a review. Submissions close 24 May 2006.

Environment

Cannabis/hemp for Canterbury is far more efficient, sustainable and ecologically sound than cows - and even trees - for Canterbury. Current prohibition legislation is holding up the ease with which production of this very valuable plant could be developed. It grows to average 15 feet in one season with low care maintenance value. As well as an excellent source of renewable bio-fuel energy, hemp would provide carbon credits, bio-diversity, and contribute to reducing pollution and there are thousands of other documented uses for this valuable plant. We are silly to ignore it.

Governance and Democracy

National statistics show that cannabis consumers are 52% (age 15-45) of the population and Christchurch is no different. Therefore they also need to be represented by 'their decision makers.'

Regarding your objective (p110) "To develop strategies and policies which set the direction and work for the future of Christchurch."

Under this objective we would like the Christchurch City Council to tackle the issue of cannabis prohibition by investigating alternative strategies for handling this social and community issue.

While we work out the best way to legally regulate cannabis the CCC could meet with local police to encourage/explore non-arrest of cannabis users, following sister city Seattle's example where they made it the lowest police priority. This frees up resources for more serious victim-crimes, enhancing community safety.

Prosperity, Economic Development

Continuing to criminalize people for cannabis use means a huge loss of human potential with on-going costs to the community. It costs Christchurch a great deal through arrest, court, periodic detention, prison, rehabilitation, loss of job and future opportunities, as well as broken, dependent families while the mostly male population is in jail. We believe the alternative is to develop a Harm Minimisation program for cannabis users. Then development of a hemp industry, with it's 20,000 plus uses, will create additional economic and employment opportunities.

Health

We agree with Mayor Gary Moore in his opening remarks in the Draft summary that Christchurch needs to be a city in good heart. However this also means overall good health.

The Christchurch City Council has an umbrella organization (for approximately 180 community health-related groups) called Healthy Christchurch which has acknowledged the Ottawa Charter in their own charter but is failing to deliver any leadership regarding the Ottawa Charter's emphasis on a holistic overview of health in relation to cannabis use.

Cannabis consumers need access to health care without fear of the law.

The therapeutic uses of cannabis are well documented in modern scientific literature. Studies indicate that cannabis

provides symptomatic relief for a number of medical conditions, including nausea and vomiting, stimulating appetite, promoting weight gain, and diminishing intraocular pressure from glaucoma. There is also evidence that smoked cannabis and/or THC reduces muscle spasticity from spinal cord injuries and multiple sclerosis, and diminishes tremors in multiple sclerosis patients. Patients and physicians have also reported that smoked cannabis provides relief from migraine headaches, depression, seizures, insomnia and chronic pain, among other conditions.

People should be allowed more choices for treatment. Prescription cannabis should be allowed if we have compassion for our fellow human beings. Ending prohibition will also reduce stress and increase the mental and spiritual health of our community.

We maintain that it is a fact that current laws on cannabis do nothing to keep our community safe or healthy, or deter use. The statistics of use bears this out.

Knowledge

Education on safe cannabis use to reduce smoking is the goal. Criminalising people for smoking cannabis is draconian and extreme. It shuts down knowledge by using misinformation instead of informed debate that makes use of the available scientific evidence.

In Conclusion

We believe ending prohibition - which did not work with alcohol and only created crime and misery - will enhance the four strategic directions which are used to define the Council's role in achieving the community outcomes: Strong communities, Healthy environment, Livable city and Prosperous economy.

1. We wish the Christchurch City Council to acknowledge and observe the first paragraph of Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *"Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."*

We also wish to share with you quote from Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion . . ."* and also Article 19 *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion..."*

Our coalition members fall under any or all of the three categories of *"religion, political or other opinion..."*. We believe cannabis use should be allowed under the law and that users should not be penalized criminally or socially. We believe if people have a problem with cannabis they have the right to the option of treatment without fear from the law or punishment from the law.

We, the undersigned, call on the Council and people of Christchurch to take a lead on this issue and adopt Sister City Seattle's attitude by including the above aspects in your considerations of this Long Term Council Community Plan.

We wish to be available for oral submissions to discuss this matter further and answer any questions you may have.

Yours faithfully



pp CHRISTCHURCH COALITION FOR CANNABIS LAW REFORM

Jakh Heremia, Christchurch Co-ordinator, Green Cross Medicinal Cannabis Users Support Group

Paula Lambert, National Secretary, National Organisation for Reform of Marijuana Laws NZ Inc

Brandon Hutchison, Convenor, Christchurch Drug Policy Group

Kevin O' Connell, President, Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party

Intersection of Worcester Street/Madras Street (Latimer Square East)

- 24 At paragraph 43 of his evidence, Mr Nixon voices concern over the lack of certainty over provision for pedestrians to cross Madras Street if Worcester Street is closed through Latimer Square and becomes a “T” Intersection. The timing (phasing) of signals along the one-way system does actually create significant gaps between the main platoons of traffic – pedestrians do not have to “*run for it*” as suggested by Mr Nixon. Indeed these streets are, as a result, relatively safe and convenient to cross mid-block, compared with two-way streets. Notwithstanding this, and the fact that traffic exiting Worcester Street east would be subject to slightly more delay if signals were retained, I can confirm that the Council’s Transport and City Street Unit intention is to *retain* signals at the reconfigured intersection, as it accepts that this will clearly delineate and acknowledge an important pedestrian and cycle connection at this point and emphasise the amenity of the linkage for these sustainable modes through the Square along the current Worcester Street axis. In my view, not only will cyclist and pedestrian access be retained, but it will be enhanced by the priority that a direct, non-car route would afford, in conjunction with the intended retention of signals at Worcester/Madras Street. I would emphasise however that the latter is not an RMA process, but within the powers of Council subject, amongst other things, to the provisions of the LGA and LTMA.
- 25 Dr Ladd offers his conclusion at paragraph 6 of his evidence that “*Closure of Worcester street would make a dangerous T-intersection at Madras Street. Traffic would likely be running at higher speed there, particularly if it is without a traffic light. Pedestrian crossing there would be markedly more dangerous. Latimer Square would then be surrounded by four T-intersections, making pedestrian entry difficult*”. My opinion is that each of these “conclusions” is both factually incorrect and clearly strays beyond the area of Dr Ladd’s professional expertise.

<http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/Content?oid=25507>

Seattle's Move to De-Prioritize Marijuana Arrests Is Working

Dec 1 - Dec 7, 2005 BY ELI SANDERS

What kind of drug experts are awake at 8:00 a.m. on a Thursday morning?

Normally, one would expect to see only the most ragged tweakers on Capitol Hill up at such an hour. But in Seattle last week a bunch of middle-class professionals—drug experts all—were gathered bright and early in a dim conference room at the downtown Red Lion. They wore business attire and academic eyewear, carried laptops and lattes, and shared one common goal: to dismantle the war on drugs.

This was decidedly not the Hempfest crowd. Instead, the people at this conference represented the intellectual vanguard of the drug-law reform movement: physicians, psychiatrists, attorneys, policy experts, teachers, and social workers who feel that the current drug war is a failed policy in need of radical revision. They had come to Seattle from across the country because it seemed the natural place for a gathering of those at the forefront of thought on illicit drugs. While Americans may tend to think of San Francisco as the likely center for any drug-related movement, and while it may seem surprising to think that Seattle could be at the vanguard of anything at this moment, given the prevailing feeling of stuckness on civic issues in this city, it turns out we're ahead of the rest of the country on this one. Largely below the radar, Seattle has moved to the new cutting edge of American social policy on adult drug use.

The most obvious example of this is Initiative 75, passed by a strong majority of Seattle voters in 2003. The measure mandated that arrests of adult marijuana users would become the lowest priority for law enforcement agencies in the city, all but decriminalizing pot smoking in Seattle. It was opposed by drug warriors from U.S. Drug Czar John Walters on down to Seattle City Attorney Tom Carr, but it nevertheless succeeded in radically altering the climate for pot smokers here, and has become the model for subsequent similar measures in Oakland, Denver, and Columbia, Missouri. Add in Seattle's innovative drug court, which allows people convicted of drug crimes to choose treatment over incarceration, and the King County Bar Association's new and groundbreaking blueprint for drug-law reform in Washington State, and this city emerges as something of a demonstration project on drug reform for the rest of the country.

It's all part of an intentional, coordinated effort by local activists. The aim, says Roger Goodman, director of the bar association's Drug Policy Project and an organizer of the conference, is simple and exceedingly ambitious: "Change the culture."

First, here in Washington. Then, slowly, across the United States.

* * *

Initiative 75, if you believed those who warned against its passage in 2003, was going to confuse kids, lead to an explosion of marijuana use, and squander taxpayer money on a citizen review board to study the effects of the new law. None of this has happened, even according to Carr, the

city attorney, who had warned before the law's passage that I-75 was "wrong for our children and our community."

Marijuana-related case filings by the city attorney's office have dropped sharply since I-75 took effect, from 178 filings in 2003, the year the initiative passed, to 59 filings in 2004. That's a 67 percent reduction in arrests, prosecutions, and jail sentences connected to marijuana use—and a similarly large reduction in the angst felt by local dope smokers, the lives altered by jail time for smoking some pot, and the taxpayer money spent sending stoners through the legal system. (As of this November the number of marijuana-related filings by Carr's office was set to decline again in 2005, with only 35 filings reported in the first 11 months of this year.)

At the same time, the predictions of mass confusion and increased pot smoking among Seattle's youth have not come to pass. A survey of students in the Seattle Public Schools, conducted by researchers at the University of Washington, found that the number of 10th and 12th graders who reported using marijuana within the last 30 days had actually declined slightly between 2002 and 2004. As opponents of I-75 point out, the percentage decline is very slight (less than 2 percent in both grades). But the backers of I-75 respond that they never promised that pot smoking among high schoolers would disappear as a result of the initiative; they just said the concerns of an explosion of pot smoking among Seattle's younger generations were unfounded—and the survey appears to prove that this position was correct.

In addition, the "waste of taxpayer dollars" predicted by Carr is nowhere to be seen. He now describes the financial cost of I-75 as "a small marginal cost"—the cost of, for example, photocopying data on marijuana arrests for the Marijuana Policy Review Panel, whose members are not paid for their time.

Faced with this evident lack of I-75-induced cataclysm, Carr now openly admits he was wrong about some of the law's predicted negative impacts. But he is still not any closer to thinking it might have been a good idea. "It's a silly law that was enacted for political purposes," he says. These days he employs a strategy of minimizing the law's positive impact, suggesting it was unnecessary in the first place, and ineffective as a program for social change in the second.

Perhaps as part of that minimizing, Carr told the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* last month that there were only 74 marijuana cases filed in Seattle in 2002, making it seem like the drop to 59 cases in 2004 was statistically insignificant. I-75, he told the paper, "had little to no effect." In fact, data provided by his office to the Marijuana Policy Review Panel shows there were actually 161 cases in 2002, making the drop to 59 cases two years later much more significant.

When I contacted Carr's office about this discrepancy, his special assistant, Ruth Bowman, at first blamed the error on the author of the *P-I* story, Mike Lewis, whom she said had misquoted Carr. Shortly after I contacted Lewis about this claim, Carr's story changed.

Bowman recanted, and said Carr had not been misquoted by Lewis. She told me support for the 74 figure would be coming soon. A few minutes later, Bowman e-mailed me a dense page of data that it turned out had nothing to do with 2002 marijuana filings. When I pointed this out, she sent me new data, without comment. It was the correct data, and it directly contradicted Carr's 74 figure. It showed that the number of marijuana filings in 2002 was 160, almost exactly the same as the 161 filings claimed by the Marijuana Policy Review Panel (and more than twice as many as Carr claimed when speaking to the *P-I* in November). I asked Bowman if Carr still stood by his statement to the *P-I*. The next day, Carr e-mailed to say he was sorry if he'd made a mistake, but

added defiantly: "If you want to go ahead and suggest that the marijuana initiative made a difference, you will be mistaken. It made no difference whatsoever."

Funny numbers aside, on a more philosophical level, Carr argues that I-75 is bad for democracy. "In a democracy, you change the law if you don't like it," he says. By downgrading enforcement of state and federal law to the "lowest priority" in one particular city, I-75 actually "undermines law," he says. If activists want to decriminalize marijuana possession, Carr believes, "the place for marijuana reform is really at the state and federal levels."

Dominic Holden, a longtime Carr adversary on marijuana issues who came up with the idea for I-75 and chaired the initiative campaign, admits that on a purely philosophical level, I-75 is imperfect. But it's not meant to be a permanent fix. Rather, it's meant as a temporary object lesson on the benefits of drug-law reform, en route to broader reform at the state and federal levels.

"Think of this as Seattle's interim measure for dealing with a state and federal policy that we find ineffective," he says. "People all over the country are looking at what's happening here. And our positive experience with I-75 will act as armor against what the federal government and the conservative state legislators will argue when we move to decriminalize marijuana over a broader area than just Seattle."

* * *

Mikki Norris, a board member of the Oakland Civil Liberties Alliance, the group that in November of last year made marijuana busts the lowest law enforcement priority in that city, agrees with Holden. She said Oakland's Measure Z was heavily influenced by the model of Seattle's I-75.

"It's been real helpful to us," Norris said. "It was inspirational to the movement in general. It gave a lot of people things to think about." Next year, she said, similar measures will be run in four California cities, probably Santa Cruz, West Hollywood, Santa Barbara, and Santa Monica. (San Francisco and Berkeley both passed laws in the 1970s against allocating police resources toward marijuana busts, but these laws differ from the newer Seattle law, Holden says, in that they don't establish a citizen review panel. They're also more than 30 years old, remnants of a different historical moment in drug control, one that came to a close during the Carter administration.)

The question, then, is not whether more American cities will follow the recent example of Seattle. It seems clear that many more will, establishing a chain of urban refuges from zealous enforcement of federal and state marijuana laws, and making the case to the rest of the country that marijuana decriminalization can work. The real question is: What comes next?

That's where last week's conference in Seattle sought to enter the debate. The conference, sponsored by the King County Bar Association, aimed to imagine an "exit strategy," not just from the war on pot, but also from the larger war on drugs, which conference participants unanimously described as a failure. ("A fool's errand," "Like shoveling water," "A war on poor people and vulnerable people.")

Former Seattle Police Chief Norm Stamper was at the conference, and in an editorial that appeared the following Sunday in the *Seattle Times*, he called for the legalization of drugs—"all of them."

"I've never understood why adults shouldn't enjoy the same right to use verboten drugs as they have to suck on a Marlboro or knock back a scotch and water," Stamper wrote. "Prohibition of alcohol fell flat on its face. The prohibition of other drugs rests on an equally wobbly foundation. Not until we choose to frame responsible drug use—not an oxymoron in my dictionary—as a civil liberty will we be able to recognize the abuse of drugs, including alcohol, for what it is: a medical, not a criminal, matter."

In a more than 100-page document produced by the King County Bar Association earlier this year, much the same argument is made, albeit with a lot more footnotes and slightly less accessible language than Stamper uses. The dense document, however, may end up being more significant than the editorial by Stamper, or even any of the "demonstration projects" in cities that make marijuana busts a low priority. It is part of a "grass tops" effort to give opinion leaders and policymakers a way of thinking about life after the war on drugs, and the fact that it comes from a deliberative body made up of well-informed lawyers makes it all the more persuasive for the many politicians and civic leaders who already silently doubt the drug war's efficacy.

The report imagines the State of Washington controlling the distribution of currently illegal drugs, with softer drugs like cannabis perhaps being taxed and sold only to citizens who meet certain requirements (old enough, a resident of Washington, not too intoxicated at time of purchase), while harder drugs like heroin and crystal meth might only be given out under medical supervision to addicts involved in treatment. It's hardly the Bacchic free-for-all that backers of the status quo imagine when they talk worriedly about decriminalization. In fact, it could end up, in practice, being far more restrictive than the current drug-control regime. The aim would be to reduce crime by drying up the illegal markets for illicit drugs; improve public health by focusing state efforts on treating, rather than imprisoning, addicts; and protect children better by cutting down on the black-market drugs available to them while also cutting down on the incentive of drug gangs to lure children into black-market drug work.

Roger Goodman, the bar association Drug Policy Project director who spoke of wanting to "change the culture" when it comes to drugs, oversaw the creation of the document, which has the kind of prosaic title favored by policy wonks, "State-Level Regulation as a Workable Alternative to the 'War on Drugs.'" But rather boldly, it includes a resolution by the bar association calling on the state legislature to begin studying ways out of the war on drugs. The legislature declined to do so last session, but Goodman takes the long view. "You can't accomplish something like this in a short period of time," he says. The bar will be back this session, asking the legislature to do the same.

In the meantime, as with I-75, bar associations in other states are now eager to mimic the work the King County Bar Association has done on drug reform, which differs from other earlier critiques of the drug war offered by bar associations in that it offers both a critique and a solution. Similar solution-oriented policy reviews are currently being prepared by bar associations in Vermont, Oregon, Alabama, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Georgia, New York, and Washington, D.C.

It's part of a process familiar to other long-term movements aimed at changing entrenched cultural attitudes and counterproductive laws: Take a small step forward, prove to doubters that the world hasn't ended, then take another step forward, and repeat. "I-75 was a pretty big step," Goodman says, echoing that strategy. "And the sky has not fallen."