

COMMUNITY PLAN 2006-2016 SUBMISSION

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This is a personal submission.

I wish to be heard in support of my submission.

I am submitting only on matters that seem to me of particular importance.

Culture and Heritage

Historic buildings

I would like the Plan to place greater emphasis on protecting the city's built heritage. The plan provides for information, advice and funding for the city's heritage and its preservation. There is an urgent need (emphasised by the recent loss of the Mason Struthers building) to improve the lists of heritage buildings and to increase the level of assistance to private owners of listed heritage properties.

Libraries

The city's library services must not be downgraded in any way but should rather be expanded. Some rationalisation may be appropriate, but there needs to be more detailed assessment of proposed closures and reductions in services. A widespread, easily accessible library system is the city's most important cultural and social asset.

Akaroa Museum

The plan must reverse the recent, apparently individual and ad hoc, decision to push the proposed extensions to the Akaroa Museum (specifically its new storage facilities) out for several years (to 2012-13). As an historian I make frequent use of the Museum's facilities and am concerned that postponing promised upgrading and other improvements will reduce the Museum's ability to serve both visitors and scholars. The Akaroa Museum is not just a visitor attraction but a key cultural asset which contributes to the Peninsula's sense of identity. Any apparent reduction in resources made available to ensure the Museum can perform its vital roles effectively is most unfortunate at a time when the Peninsula has just become part of the city.

New Council offices

I see there is provision in the plan for fitting out new council offices. I am far from convinced the planned new building is necessary and would urge that provision be made in the community plan to investigate, even at this late stage, the possibility of refitting the existing council offices and making use of some of the large number of under-used historic commercial buildings in the area to accommodate the council's staff and activities. I am sure the Council could function effectively from a number of buildings all within close proximity to each other and that adopting such a course would make an outstanding contribution to preserving Christchurch's historic character, which the plan acknowledges is a key social and economic asset to the city as a whole.

Transport

Bus Exchange

The new bus exchange should remain in the plan and provision be made for it to be better planned for a greater and more rapid expansion of the use of bus services than was apparently the case when the present exchange was planned.

Public transport study

A city-wide transport study and improvements to public transport services (including consideration of light-rail options) should be given greater priority than it appears to have been given in the plan. It is an urgent matter for the city to start developing an over-all transport system that is sustainable and does not have the adverse effects (environmental, social and economic) of a system overwhelmingly reliant on road transport.

Cycling

It is urgent that larger sums be allocated each year to improving the city's off-road cycle network and to improving cycle safety and amenity on roads. (I use my bicycle constantly for moving round the city and am acutely conscious that the present provision for cycling is woefully inadequate and impeding the desirable increase in cycle use.)

Spending on roads

The council should sooner rather than later acknowledge that endless spending on road improvements is ultimately counter-productive by facilitating greater use of private cars for travel within the city, and so reinforcing the adverse transport trends of recent decades. Less should be spent on roading improvements and much more on public transport and on making the city cyclist and pedestrian friendly.

John Wilson

Christchurch

5 May 2006