

Submission on the

Draft Long Term Council Community Plan

Submission from

Organisation: Golf Links Residents' Association Inc.

Name of submitter on behalf of the organisation: Tony Mander (Chairman)

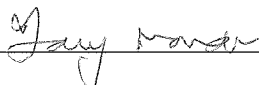
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Hearing: Yes, I do wish to speak at the hearing

Signature:



Date: 4 May 2006

First, we wish to congratulate and thank the councillors and council staff for the smooth, efficient and professional running of our city. It is a most complex organism and it functions very well!

Secondly, we are appreciative of the effort made to consult with citizens. As responsible citizens it is our duty to respond as, although the city runs smoothly, it is obviously not perfect and it faces some of its toughest challenges yet. We trust our contribution, together with others, may assist decision-making.

Proposed reductions (p. 86)

Although the bottom line affects everyone, we do realise that the cost of progress is increasing. However, we are not supportive of some of the proposed reductions.

- First, in the context of the total budget the proposed reductions are insignificant. We appreciate that finding the balance between determining when a facility has reached the end of its economic life and the consequent social impacts of closing it is difficult. Below, we suggest other areas for savings.
- We are also concerned about the level of accuracy of city budgeting. All goods and construction activities have a high oil-use component, directly or indirectly, and an increase in oil cost has a compounding effect. The outlook seems to be for continued cost increases in oil.

Libraries: savings not congruent with plan

- **Closing libraries** is a step requiring considerable justification. We live in the so-called information age, of which libraries are a crucial element. No citizen, of any age, should have reduced opportunity

to easily access a library. To be "A city of lifelong learning" requires ready access to suitable services.

The criterion of the patronage of a facility is simplistic. We realise it is the easiest measure, but the quality of the experience at a facility, such as a library, is far more significant. Adding a café to a library would probably increase patronage, but it may not necessarily be connected to a library's core function.

Although digitisation and the internet may reduce visits to libraries, there are written and oral records unlikely to be digitised and older people are unlikely to fully embrace a 'digital lifestyle' as the younger generation have – and we are still some years and collectively millions of dollars from that. Libraries provide expert information services and are also an important community meeting place.

- We are pleased that the **Shirley Library** is on the list of Capital Works programme (p. 76) but are concerned that it is presently outside the current draft LTCCP. We trust that there could be provision for a new library if the proposed development of 'The Palms' goes ahead.

Savings in roading

- The **roading budget** appears to have escaped scrutiny for savings. On driving around the city most of us wonder whether many of the kerb build-outs, traffic island widening, and speed humps are essential. Most seem to fall into the category of being desirable, and may enhance safety, but are not essential and are not guaranteed to increase safety.
- We suggest that proposed roading expenditure is carefully scrutinised and "desirable but not essen-

tial" works be seriously considered for pruning.

- There is considerable cost in **traffic reduction** measures in suburban streets. The street narrowing kerbs and other traffic exclusion and 'calming' measures are having an effect similar to 'gated communities', perhaps unintended but very real. Apart from the cost and the assumption by residents that no other traffic is welcome in their (public) street, there is also an equity issue: traffic is increasingly forced from these 'calmed' streets on to main roads, where residents pay the same rates but in return get only reduced access to their properties and more noise and emissions. Hardly equitable, especially when some have lived in those streets longer than the streets have been busy thoroughfares.
- The rationale behind 'traffic calming' in suburban streets seems to be that the many pay for the actions of the few. We would prefer more stringent enforcement of speed rather than more humps. Every hump means we either have to pay higher rates or go without something more useful. That some people are not responsible is no justification to penalise those who are, nor place high burdens of noise on those living near the humps.

Oppose outsourcing payments

We have two major concerns about the suggestion to outsource payments to (e.g.) NZ Post

- If the Post Shop at 'The Palms' is any indication, they wouldn't cope. There are usually long queues at this branch from their normal business.
- They would be unlikely to match the knowledge of present service centre staff nor be willing to take the time to be as helpful. Sometimes, citizens have questions they wish to ask that may not be related to the payment they are making and the present service centre staff provide a very high level of service (which may not be reflected if only the number of transactions in a particular period were used to judge the economics of their job).

Other policy areas

Water supply (p. 163)

- We support measures to conserve water. In particular, we suggest re-introducing the excess water charge. Some years ago, consumption beyond the base allocation attracted an excess usage charge. To ensure everyone values our water supply, perhaps we should put a value on it. That may help achieve the targets on p. 165.

Botanic Gardens

- We support the expenditure on ensuring the gardens returns to its 'jewel' status (p. 59, 73, 82, 83, 85, etc.)

Public transport

- We support the development of **bus lanes and bus priority routes**. (Incidentally, we don't agree that the Red Bus Co. is not strategic (nor City Care for that matter), we think that public transport is critical and therefore of strategic status.)
- **Bus exchanges:** We support the expansion of the central bus exchange, (p. 59, 72, etc.) but also which to promote the development of suburban bus exchanges. we believe public transport will be increasingly significant.

Sustainability (p. 92)

- This is a core goal of the city, yet developers are permitted to design subdivisions with little concern for sustainability. In particular, energy efficiency should be quantified for new houses so that they are encouraged to use renewable energy, such as being designed to utilise solar gain. Present building regulations focus on insulation, not on reducing energy consumption.

General issues

- **Promoting the city:** we could learn much from the way Wellington has promoted itself. Only one slogan: short, easy to remember, and effective (at least our 'Garden City, which shines, fresh every day', has been mostly forgotten!). An increase in pride in our city should also help people take more care of it.
- Increasing **parking charges** in the central city is yet another disincentive to go there.
- We are concerned at the **loss of local knowledge** by Council staff resulting from Council staff restructuring and frequent reassignment.