



Submission on the Environment Canterbury LTCCP (2006 draft)

From
Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch Inc.
P O Box 2657
Christchurch

Contacts		
Chrissie Williams Chair Phone: 388 0798 Mobile: 021 330 789 Email: chrissie.williams@xtra.co.nz	Roger Buck Vice Chair Phone: 366 6888 (wk) Email: bucrl@clear.net.nz	Arthur Williamson Vice Chair Phone: 332 6815 Email: arthur.williamson@canterbury.ac.nz
Submission coordinator John Peet Ph 384 1281 Email: john.peet@canterbury.ac.nz		

We do wish to be heard.

And we do request an email copy of the officer comments on our submission at least 2 days prior to our attendance at the Council hearing.

Introduction

1. SOC thanks Environment Canterbury for the opportunity to make this submission. We have expressed to you a desire to collaborate with Council and to find constructive ways of working with you. Participating in this formal special consultative process is one of those ways.
2. Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch Inc. is an incorporated society formed in April 2005. SOC developed this submission through collaboration with members. This was refined by further distribution and comment of the draft from SOC members to produce this final submission.
3. The aims of the organisation as in the constitution are:
Recognising Te Tiriti O Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, to actively contribute within Otautahi/Christchurch to opportunities and means for achievement of long-term sustainability. In doing so, to seek to ensure that all people have their basic needs satisfied, so that they can live in dignity, in healthy communities, while having the minimum adverse impact on natural systems, now and in the future.
4. The objectives of the organisation as in the constitution are:
 - *To facilitate and promote education about the ethics and practice of sustainability in the community*
 - *To encourage education about sustainability by the promotion of innovative planning and design of urban developments and projects.*
 - *To promote, conduct and publish research as part of a programme to educate about a whole systems approach to sustainability.*
 - *To carry out any other charitable activities which are considered practicable and desirable in reaching the vision, aims, purposes/objectives outlined above.*
5. SOC is committed to ensuring social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of future development in Christchurch area are all addressed.
6. A fundamental premise for our submission is that Christchurch's development is on an unsustainable pathway, and urgent action is required to turn this around. It will not be possible to sustain the present system's resource exploitation, ecological destruction and social problems for much longer. Capturing the vision of citizens for a more sustainable future will enable a change of direction from the present unsustainable path.

General

7. We find the LTCCP well written and easy to follow.
8. The ECan LTCCP is very clear in its statutory responsibilities under the LGA 2002 and other Acts, and the inclusion of the appendices showing the relationship of the community outcomes to key strategic documents and processes; the key influencing organisations for each of the community outcomes; and a summary of ECan's statutory role and responsibilities are particularly helpful.

9. ECan demonstrates on pages 97-98 how it is attempting to improve its own sustainability and be a role model to other organisations for sustainable practice. We commend you for this.

Sustainable Development approach

10. Essentially the roles of the Council are to generate and foster democracy and to provide for the promotion of wellbeing of all taking a sustainable development (SD) approach.
11. “In taking a sustainable development approach a local authority should take into account –
 - a. the social, economic and cultural well-being of people and communities; and
 - b. the need to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment; and
 - c. the reasonable foreseeable needs of future generations.” (LGA 2002 S14 (h)).

This is well enunciated in the LCCP, but the LTCCP still seems to focus on growth management, not SD.

12. In reading the LTCCP it appears to have uncontrolled growth as a premise. There is no obvious attempt to acknowledge that in the long term - several future generations into the future, not just 10 years - the sort of growth currently envisaged (population, economy, production and consumption) will make more and more resource and waste disposal demands upon the fragile ecosystem that sustains us, all at a time when the cost and undesirable consequences of both material and energy resource use and of waste disposal appear to be growing more rapidly than the economy itself.
13. For most LTCCP activities the uncertainties have been listed. Not obviously included are what we see as some overarching uncertainties, of which the most important are:
 - a. Peak Oil, meaning that humanity has reached the stage at which petroleum-based liquid fuels (for transport especially) will continue to increase in price, with no substitutes in view at anything like present-day prices. This will go along with parallel increases in the price of artificial fertilisers for agriculture, many of which are petroleum-derived.
 - b. Climate change predictions of increased extreme events, reduced rainfall and drier conditions for agriculture and horticulture in Canterbury, and the concomitant demand by agriculture and related industries for more and more water are already creating significant social and environmental conflict
 - c. Continuing increases in the price of electricity as the availability of cheap hydro sources and cheap Maui gas can no longer be relied upon.

Uncertainties of this type can be expected to give rise to changes in the structure of economic (and social) life in NZ, greater than any experienced in the last 50 years. They should be explicitly planned for, rather than left until later, in the hope that “something will turn up”.

14. The overall process of economic growth in NZ (as in most of the rest of the developed world) is inherently unsustainable, and will inevitably lead to social and environmental stresses and failures. Many of these are already evident. In our opinion, planning for the

next 10 years cannot be separated from the inevitable need for planning for options available to future generations - meaning no less than 50 years ahead and preferably at least a century. Leaving options open for future generations, rather than pre-empting them to satisfy today's short-term priorities, would be a key indicator of moral strength.

15. We suggest a different way of thinking, which we characterise (Attachment 1) as that of a change from the current consumption-oriented Dominant mindset to a sustainability-promoting Emerging mindset. Without such a change, we believe the idea of sustainable development will have little substance, and remain both a dream and a slogan.

Community Outcomes

16. We have recognised some serious gaps in the Community Outcomes, if these are used as firm guidelines for future policy. We note that while a number of important areas relating to sustainability of the system of Christchurch-in-Canterbury are well addressed, there are also conspicuous gaps. We see this as a – perhaps inevitable – outcome of the Future Path public consultation framework, which concentrated more on developing a “wish list” than on realistic identification of issues likely to constrain future options and working within them. The process was therefore fated to produce outcomes that, whilst valid in one sense, are in another sense somewhat unconvincing.

17. Gaps which we have identified relate particularly to
 - a. the security and adaptability of the economic system,
 - b. the general viability of the total environment and ecological systems, and
 - c. overall recognition of the contribution of its parts to sustainability of the whole system.These areas need urgent attention, not least because unless this is done quickly, monitoring procedures will not be put in place in time to be able to track changes in the sustainability of critically-important parts of our total system. The risk is that while indicators of parts of the system may look favourable, the whole may be going further into unsustainability.

Education

18. We warmly affirm the environmental education work ECan is doing, its mention in the LTCCP several times, and ask that it be maintained and if possible enhanced across ECan's responsibilities.

Relationship with Maori

19. We congratulate ECan on its section on tangata whenua and Environment Canterbury. We ask that you remove the reference to the *Principles* of the Treaty, and instead ask that you address issues *within a Treaty framework*.

A decentralised urban form

20. The urban form in the future must be based on localised, largely self-sufficient, communities. This will be necessary if the demand for non-renewable resources is to be reduced, and to mitigate the associated economic effects as living costs increase. It will

also provide a degree of resilience to the community as a whole when confronted with natural disasters and other major events.

21. It is important to stress that peak oil, peak gas, and climate change are inevitable occurrences that will affect us all in very significant ways. In our opinion a major shift in the way we view and manage our urban evolution is essential, with the progressive achievement of community localisation being the primary objective. We see no alternative to this. This implies fundamental changes being made to the physical structure of the urban areas, and to governance.
22. We made a substantial submission to the GCUDS options, and urge you to read this submission. It gave the detail of how a decentralised urban system could be developed. It is important that SOC is represented on the UDS Forum to provide balance to the debate about our city's future.
23. It also stressed the need for an urban fence so that the high quality peri-urban soils are preserved and made readily available and accessible for local food production and distribution. Because it is essential to plan for minimising the distances that goods must travel, food and energy production, in particular, must be in close proximity to areas of demand to minimise transportation costs. We see services also being decentralised to reduce the need for work-related travel. We support the creation of environmentally sustainable carbon-neutral communities

Relationship with the Voluntary sector

24. ECan recognises some voluntary organisations with which it currently has a relationship. We submit that ECan could widen and strengthen its relationships with the community and voluntary sector. In developing these relationships ECan could find ways to strengthen the capacity of the community and voluntary sector; ensure officers have a good understanding of the sector; support volunteers; and insist on good practice by ECan in working with the voluntary sector. This will help ECan to meet its goals; will provide opportunities for ECan and NGOs to achieve shared outcomes; and it will contribute to strengthening civil society.

Energy

25. We congratulate ECan on the fact that it is one of only a few councils that clearly flags the importance of energy and energy-related issues in its LTCCP.
26. We are, however, disappointed in the lack of depth of treatment of the Energy group of Activities (pages 35-38) and the apparent lack of any overall sense of urgency in developing policies to assist the region towards resilience in the face of what we see as highly-probable escalations and disruptions in petroleum fuels availability and price, over the planning period and beyond.
27. We strongly support development of energy efficiency policy. To a considerable extent, however, this, like other areas of energy-related policy, is dependent upon central government giving the topic much more emphasis than is currently the case. Efficiency

improvement is a vital component of any policy to develop a degree of regional resilience in the face of an uncertain supply future.

28. As a first step we ask ECan to support the TAs to make it mandatory to install solar water heaters and double glazing on all new houses, and that part of the building consent process include strong encouragement for the orientation of houses to the sun.

Public Transport

29. We support the actions being taken to improve public transport. We too acknowledge the need for ECan to work with CCC so that bus priority is given on all key routes on Christchurch. Reliability is the key for continued patronage increase.
30. There has been ongoing discussion about the place of rail in the Christchurch transport system. We believe it is important that the corridors for bus transit or light rail are set aside now so that separated public transport can be constructed. Without such corridors the options for these alternatives that can avoid congested roads are limited.

Solid Waste

31. We made a submission on the CCC Draft Solid Waste Management Plan, and SOC is represented on the CCC Zero Waste Working Party. Our submission to the Management Plan still applies, and we are advocating for the removal of organic waste from landfill and reducing the total waste to landfill

Water

32. The reliability and quality of water in Canterbury is of critical importance to the community. The water system must be viewed with a catchment focus. The effects of our actions need to be understood by the whole catchment and conservation and allocation measures applied throughout.
33. **We also ask that rain water collection systems and tanks be allowed for and encouraged in all parts of Canterbury.**
34. As many other cities in NZ practise, charging those who use water excessively is a sensible step in demand management. Meters are already installed in Christchurch and household usage recorded. Adding a charge per cubic metre used for households exceeding a reasonably generous allocation would raise the awareness of the value of water and would provide an impetus for behaviour change. **We ask that ECan support the CCC in introducing water charging in the city.**

Biodiversity Strategy

35. Local Government has international and domestic legal obligations to New Zealand's biodiversity and is required to be more responsive to community aspirations (recent amendments to RMA and Local Government Act).
36. While ecological restoration and landscaping has added valuable habitat in Canterbury, some highly significant primary or natural habitat, along with critical populations of

indigenous species, have drastically declined across the Canterbury Plains over the past decade.

37. Both local and national opinion surveys have shown a steady increase in public valuation of native plants and animals.
38. There is a link between visibility and viability of nature; and there is an urgent need to break down the polarisation between nature and culture. There is also value placed on the Christchurch 'garden city' image, and together these sentiments suggest a wish to see a familiar garden city framework with increased indigenous composition and visibility.
39. **We therefore seek the following:**
 - a. **Acquire all possible leases in the Christchurch Airport to West Melton – Halkett block, in conjunction with CCC, in order to protect and manage the nationally rare and recently decimated dry plains grasslands biodiversity and classical plains landscape, eventually to be formulated as a unique plains park;**
 - b. **Establish a biodiversity partnership between CCC, ECan and a subcommittee of Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch, following the model of 'adopt a park' groups and the London Biodiversity Partnership, to provide continual liaison, transparency and shared experience in biodiversity matters;**
 - c. **Ensure that all development and environmental management decisions go through a more sophisticated community engagement process (cf. <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/sal/partnerships.asp>).**

Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust

40. We consider the Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust with its community based Ihutai Management Plan and MOU an excellent example of collaboration between a voluntary organisation, tangata whenua and the two Councils. We support the continued funding for this organisation.

Uniform Annual General Charge

41. We note the specific request for a response under this heading. At present, our organisation has not clarified its views on the matter, so we are unable to respond.
42. As a generalisation, however, we believe it is reasonable to make a direct charge for water consents, as this ties in with the suggestion (34 above) for charging for water use in the city.

Attachment 1.	
Two opposing social paradigms.	
Dominant Paradigm/Mindset (Consumption-oriented)	Alternative/Emerging Paradigm/Mindset (Sustainability-promoting)
Core values	
Material (economic growth)	Nonmaterial (self-actualization)
Natural environment valued as resource	Natural environment intrinsically valued
Domination over nature	Harmony with nature
Economy	
Market forces	Public interest
Risk and reward	Safety
Differentials	Incomes related to need (egalitarian)
Individual self-help	Collective, social provision
Society	
Centralized	Public interest
Large-scale	Safety
Associational	Communal
Ordered	Flexible
Nature	
Ample reserves	Earth's resources limited
Nature hostile or neutral	Nature benign
Environment controllable	Nature delicately balanced
Knowledge	
Confidence in science and technology	Limits to science
Rationality of means	Rationality of ends
Separation of fact and value, thought and feeling	Integration of fact and value
Adapted from Cotgrove and Duff	