

SOC Submission: Draft Public Open Space Strategy 2010-2040

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I wish to talk to the main points in my written submission at the hearings.

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Date

5 February 2010

1. Is providing better access to new and existing open spaces over the next 30 years important to you?:

Yes

Yes. The imminent peak and then decline in oil production will lead to higher transport costs. This will induce people to move back into the city to reduce commuting costs and a related increase in population density. Recreational and holiday travel will become less affordable leading to the need for more local recreational opportunities. The compounding effects of increasing population density and more local recreation mean that the protection and provision of open spaces within and near to Christchurch is essential.

2. How important is it to you that the Council provides the same level of public open space per person in urban Christchurch

Important

Important. For the reasons given above at least as much open space per person is desirable, if not more. More open

over the next 30 years as the population increases?:

space per person is probably preferable in order to compensate for the loss of recreational spaces, trees and gardens available on larger sections, with the move to higher density living.

3. Do you support the Draft Strategys proposal to develop an increasingly connected network of open spaces across Christchurch and Banks Peninsula?:

Yes

Yes. With a price put on carbon, or because of unavoidable increases in the price of oil overseas holidays will become too expensive for most Christchurch residents. Low carbon holiday recreation near to the city will become very popular, for example cycle touring and multi-day walking trips. Banks Peninsula is an ideal location for this sort of recreation and open public spaces will be necessary to enable this recreation. In addition these will be required to improve biodiversity values since most ecologists believe a series of biodiversity stepping stones are essential. Such sites are needed both within the city and to link to surrounding environments, for example to provide linkage with the Port Hills, the Plains (and buffer dryland systems from irrigation on the Plains in particular), along the River Corridors to the foothills, and between coastal systems including Waihora Lake Ellesmere and the Heathcote and Avon rivers and estuary system.

4. Please identify which activities you regularly use public open space for:

OtherN/A; however SOC believe that the draft strategy identifies a reasonable range of activities of importance to public open space provision. In general these include cultural activities, social and recreational activities, environmental and heritage activities, and educational activities relating to all of the above.

5. What activity would you like to do more of in public open space? (please list)

Opportunities for three key activities need to be increased in public open space:

1. Provision of places where indigenous biodiversity can be enhanced.
2. Food production. Public open space could be a great place for the growing of fruit trees etc.
3. Providing space for social interaction which will assist with community building aims eg. adequate seating near to play grounds, sports areas, picnic areas. For example we recommend that circular seating designs as are used in public places in Denmark could be explored as these create spaces for conversation and add value to the utility of public open space.

6. Do you think there should be more public information available for everyone about how and where you can use public open spaces? (For example, signage, brochures, on-site interpretation):

Yes

Yes, to address issues of misuse or to increase awareness of the possibility of new uses. There is no need to waste resources on providing information unless there is a clear need.

7. In your opinion, to what extent does the Banks Peninsula concept map (page 6) provide for appropriate public open space opportunities?:

No opinion

The existing, and perhaps improved, ferry services across Lyttelton and Akaroa harbours may help to encourage non-motorised use of routes around the harbours for circular trips.

8. Referring to the Metropolitan Map (page 5) do you agree or disagree with the proposal for open space provision in regard to:

Agree

Agree

Agree

New neighbourhood parks (pink on plan) in suburbs currently lacking parks (page5)

Agree. Neighbourhood parks need to be reserved now before population density increases make their provision even more expensive.

Priority areas for new sports parks (yellow)

Agree. For the reasons outlined above we expect participatory sport to become more popular as long-distance travel becomes prohibitively expensive and the demand for local sports parks increases.

Improved recreation connections and routes

Agree. For example the Christchurch Perimeter Walkway is a highly desirable enhancement to the current and planned walking opportunities with biodiversity and cultural interpretation possibilities as well as for recreational walking.

9. Referring to the City Identity Map (page 5):

Agree

Agree

Protect important natural landscapes, waterways and the coastline

Agree.

Enhance opportunities off major roads for recreation routes

ï?´ Agree

Travis Wetland and Riccarton Bush should be included to help recognise the importance of our pre-European and pre-Maori heritage.

10. Referring to the Central City Map (page 4) do you agree with the Council's proposal for additional parks in the Central City?:

Yes

Yes

Do you agree with the Council's proposal for additional parks in the Central City?

ï?´ Yes. The southern part of the central city especially needs more parks.

Do you agree with the need for more tree planting and amenities along Central City streets?

ï?´ Yes although the parks design and tree replacement policies needs to be reviewed â?" it has been captured by the past rather than representing that of a contemporary mature city. Open spaces and entry points should represent all the layers of history not predominantly the colonial history. As part of the change in philosophy needed, biodiversity issues need to be better integrated into open spaces design. This is recognised as an issue which the city needs to address, but the proposed strategy does not provide a platform which will deliver better outcomes. There need not be a sharp distinction between nature and culture as seems to prevail â?" this draft strategy will further entrench a planning philosophy which promotes an inner city representing built structures and/or english garden city while the periphery is allowed to have some indigenous nature and other cultural components. This needs to change, and there is no good reason to maintain the status quo which is best described as an outdated model. Over the 30 year period this strategy relates to the results may be very damaging for the future of wildlife in the Christchurch area, and to other important values. Thus this strategy falls short of an appropriate model to support a prosperous yet sustainable city in the long term.

11. Should Central City streets be more pedestrian friendly?

Yes

Moorhouse Avenue (also for cycles) is horrendous (so wide and stark), much of Hereford St is quite harsh, as is a

12. What could Council do to improve the use of public open space in areas like Cranmer Square and Latimer Square?

lot of Gloucester St.

In Cranmer Square and Latimer Square more seats would be nice and some native plantings in a few places would make these places more attractive.

Generally there is a need to re-examine the safer parks policy to ensure that the issues it addresses are balanced against other issues. It seems to be dictating much of the design of parks and consequently the ability of these spaces to provide the range of benefits required of an appropriate open spaces strategy for Christchurch. These issues influence both the utility of open spaces and the feel of the city due to the combined effect of the number of uses targeted / provided for in the design of an open space at a given location, and restraints on the number of open spaces available. Perhaps a more balanced / integrated approach is required to make better use of the available open space, and this is somewhat precluded by misconceptions regarding safety issues and park design.

13. any other comments?

We feel that a better consultation process for contentious issues is needed to better represent all points of view, and this strategy is an important step in that direction. However when it comes to establishing further specifics eg. In the implementation of the strategy, further improvements in this regard are required to prevent the capture of issues by well-resourced special interest groups.
