

Living Streets Aotearoa



Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy
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Christchurch

Urban Development Strategy Submission

Introduction

Living Streets Aotearoa, the local walking advocacy group, is pleased to offer this submission regarding this very important planning project for greater Christchurch. We would be happy to provide any further information or clarification if required, and request the opportunity of presenting our submission to the Urban Development Strategy (UDS) Forum.

We have based our submission on the public consultation materials, on the attendance of many of our members at various UDS public meetings, attendance at the UDS workshop run by Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch (SOC) on 14 May and from decades of accumulated experience living in greater Christchurch.

We are very pleased to see this joint initiative at this time. Christchurch is at a cross-roads and needs to make some hard choices soon to avoid mistakes made elsewhere in choosing (or not choosing) its desired urban form. "Business as usual" should not be tolerated as the future option for Christchurch, whether by design, or by default through collective indecision. The transport aspects of this were well outlined in the background section of the Metropolitan Transport Statement.

We also support the submissions of Sustainable Otautahi Christchurch (SOC) and Spokes.

Of the four options presented, Option A comes closest to our desired option, but we argue for a more sustainable plan and future. When considering the vision of Living Streets Aotearoa any

form of greater urban green field expansion is in contradiction of our mission;

*"To energetically and creatively persuade decision-makers, officials and the public of the importance and desirability of walking, and to see **"More people walking more often in more places"** - young and old, fast and slow, commuting, between appointments, for exercise, for leisure and for pleasure.*

A closer look at our ideal scenario would include the following characteristics:

Urban villages or neighbourhood activity centres will form the nucleus of settlements. The focus is on walking and cycleable living environments. Housing would be tiered from the centre out. More, higher density energy efficient well designed town houses at the centre, up to three-storey level in height tapering to single levels at the outer boundaries. Car parking will be underneath premises and more space would be given over to green areas. Space needs to be maximized. Business and housing would co-exist.

Green corridors or arteries should be the plan of the future to bring the ecology of the countryside into the heart of the city. Also significant planting of larger native indigenous trees is required to enhance this great city. Around these corridors look for a truly Christchurch design vernacular that shouts, "I love this place and I love being here".

An example of this is illustrated in the SOC submission.

Business as usual eliminates good design as too costly, in the "lets make profit from putting up some more houses" process. People who are building their own home to live in put much more into their homes and community.

General Assumptions of the Urban Development Strategy

Population Growth and Distribution

We do not agree that the target population for greater Christchurch should be 500,000 people by 2041. A lower target should be set as a policy matter – rather than the "predict and provide" mentality that has dogged urban growth and transport planning in greater Christchurch for so many years. We are particularly concerned that the recent rampant growth patterns outside Christchurch City are not being challenged.

Growth in the outer areas is intrinsically unsustainable unless those communities become much more independent and do not rely on Christchurch for employment, education, shopping and recreation. However, the trend has been for the outer growth centres to become more dependent on Christchurch rather than less, putting increasing strain on our transport infrastructure. We would like to see strong limits on population growth and conscious decision making to not provide more road capacity to service an increased population.

Global population is expected by demographers to peak around 2040 or 2050, with a declining population thereafter. Why would we want to over-build our cities now in the lead up to this eventuality?

Traffic predictions

We do not accept the UDS traffic projections of 40% to 50% growth by 2021, and associated congestion increases (160% by 2021 and 320% by 2041). The traffic model does not take into consideration the inevitable fuel supply shortages and price rises predicted by most reputable energy analysts, under what is known as "peak oil". Global oil production is expected to peak within five years (if it hasn't already done so) with inevitable instabilities in supply and price. Planning a car-dependent future for Christchurch seems anachronistic and foolish, not to mention extremely wasteful.

In addition, we believe a policy decision should be made to limit (and eliminate) traffic growth rather than accept what the traffic models predict. "Predict and provide" is so 20th century!

We should instead be establishing a model sustainable city capitalising on our small geographic size and our ability to be a walking and cycling friendly city with a travel budget for most trips for most people of 30 minutes by foot or by bike.

In future consultation materials, we request that the mode split (by car, bike, walk and public transport) be quantified for all options and for all trips. In this context, we suggest that a trip be as defined in the New Zealand Travel Survey. Traditional traffic modelling and transportation planning ignores many trips by foot and by cycle.

Organisational Structure of Urban Development Forum

We support the Spokes comments on this.

Sustainable Transport for Christchurch

All options plan for a business as usual approach to transport giving us more of the same in somewhat slightly modified scenarios. **We need to be thinking harder.** What will make our transport networks significantly more sustainable?

Why not develop an option that maintained travel times at 2004 levels using walking, cycling and public transport for most trips? We expect that in comparison to a road building model it would be extremely cost effective, not to mention constructive to both outer and inner city neighbourhoods such as St Albans and Shirley, as **NO** motorways would be needed to accommodate the growth from north of the Waimakariri River.

We would like to see a much more sustainable future for Greater Christchurch. None of the options presented effectively deals with projected congestion. Congestion can be used as a management tool to encourage the modal switch to more sustainable options.

Too much emphasis is placed on building roads and travelling by car. Not enough focused on building communities where people can reach their destination in 30 minutes or less by other transport modes.

Strong longer-term sustainability goals should be at the heart of the Urban Development Strategy, currently they are not. For transport this means we should be trying to achieve the following goals.

1. Equitable Access
2. Access based by totally energy efficient modes
3. To achieve travel time budgets of 30 mins that applies to alternative modes
4. Safe integrated transport
5. Reduced ecological footprint
6. Integrated transport and land use planning
7. A transport hierarchy where the focus is first placed on the needs of pedestrians, and then cyclists, public transport, freight and cars last.

The options need to be expanded to achieve walkable local communities. These walkable communities will have effective bicycle links and for travel further a field will be connected by frequently serviced and dedicated public transport networks. Car based travel will be the mode of travel promoted least.

Some key points;

- Create dedicated public transport corridors (rail, bus, light rail). Our public transport networks can't get caught in the congestion. Bus only lanes, dedicated light rail networks and dedicated rail lines need to become fast and efficient networks, providing superior performance to individual cars. People will only be attracted to new forms of transport if they are fast, affordable, frequent and well connected.
- Commuter passenger rail should be returned on existing corridors linking outlying urban centres to the central city.
- Econet and Carnet. These concepts could be applied. Econet is the creation of calm 30km streets grids within non-arterial road networks. Priority travel is given to walkers, cyclists, scooters, and other slower forms of transport. A car or truck is discouraged from entering the network. Faster travel is directed to the Carnet, which comprises of all main arterials. Econet would have safe crossing points to cross from one network to the other.
- 30k/hr speed limits in urban villages and central city areas and along non-arterial roads as described with the Econet.

Our preferred vision for greater Christchurch suggests the "90 factor":

- 90% of all new housing to be urban renewal; 10% to be new subdivisions
- 90% of personal travel by sustainable travel modes (30% by foot, 30% by cycle and 30% by public transport)
- 90% of school students get to school by foot or cycle
- 90 km/h rural speed limit; 30 km/h speed limit in residential areas / urban villages
- Greater Christchurch designed for safe, independent travel by sustainable modes for a 90 year old (or a 9 year old)

Mode share needs to be altered quite dramatically. We need significant change not just tinkering around the edges. Urban design should be structured to achieve mode shares of:

30% walking
30% cycling
30% public transport
10% private vehicle

These mode shares reflect the new transport hierarchy that we referred to above.

Overall and in response to the feedback question 5.7 no option goes anywhere near where our members would see a real option. While you offer the developers' free hand of 90% new urban development

you do not offer the obverse option of 90% existing urban renewal in a planned way. We would certainly support the latter with good walking cycling and public transport to support that urban environment.

Kia ora

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