

# Long Term Plan submissions summary

Public consultation on the Plan attracted just under 3,000 formal written submissions.

2015 – 25 Long Term Plan	2997
2012 – 13 Annual Plan	2673
2006 – 16 Long Term Plan	2003

Several individual submissions were accompanied by substantial petitions – one with just over 1000 signatures supporting Rawhiti golf course, and another 483-signature petition opposing asset sales.

More than 1800 Facebook posts and comments made at community meetings and at Mayor in the Chair sessions have also been summarised and provided to councillors. (See analysis of social media feedback in the key themes section of this document).

## Next steps

**8 June:** Mayor's Long Term Plan proposal to the Office of the Auditor General

**23 June:** Council meeting to adopt the Long Term Plan (24 and 26 June if required)

**July:** People who made submissions will receive responses from the Council

## Key themes of formal submissions

### The Council's funding proposal (1060 comments)

Most individuals and community groups were critical of the Council's proposal for addressing the \$1.2 billion the funding shortfall, while private sector organisations tended to support it in principle. Most submitters opposed rates increases.

Suggestions made to reduce rates increases and/or offset asset sales included:

- Defer infrastructure repairs and non-essential work, or prioritise the work and spread it over a longer period.
- Defer or drop Anchor Projects, especially the Convention Centre and the Sports Stadium.
- Focus on essential services, scale back non-essential ones.
- Renegotiate the Cost Sharing Agreement with the Government
- Pursue other funding options such as bond financing, ratepayer levies, and partial floats.
- Sell smaller non-strategic assets and surplus council land.

For submissions commenting specifically on asset sales, 83 per cent were opposed to them.

Key themes:

- Concern about loss of control over asset sales.
- If assets are to be sold then sell them to entities, such as other local authorities or the NZ Super Fund, with buy-back options.
- Any asset sales should take into account community goals and the public good.
- Sustainability and resilience issues: there was a sense the city could be left vulnerable to future events if assets are sold.
- Whether for or against asset sales, submitters wanted the Council to explore ways to cut costs and reduce debt.

## **Anchor Projects (573 comments)**

For submissions commenting specifically on the Anchor Projects, 68 per cent opposed funding them by selling public assets or raising rates.

- Many submitters felt repairing basic infrastructure and community facilities should take priority over Anchor Projects.
- The convention centre and sports stadium were the two least favoured projects, while the Avon River redevelopment and Margaret Mahy Family Playground received mixed support.

## **Strengthening Communities (568 comments)**

Accessible and affordable local community facilities were a high priority with submitters who also wanted to retain current levels of community funding. Submissions focussed heavily on eastern Christchurch and the need to invest in New Brighton infrastructure, public space and facilities. There was strong opposition to closing Rawhiti Golf Course and the South Brighton Camping Ground.

Other key themes:

- Concern about lack of equity, with more spending in some suburbs compared with others.
- Perceptions that financial imperatives are driving and over-riding community well-being.

## **Housing (102 comments)**

Overall submissions:

- Supported the Council more actively working with the Government, community groups, the private sector and other agencies to increase the supply of both affordable and social housing.
- Supported the Council transferring some, and leasing the remainder, of its social housing stock to a proposed housing entity, especially if this helped increase the supply of social housing.
- Opposed ratepayers subsidising social housing (rates money is not currently spent on social housing and there are no plans to change this).

## **Transport (520 comments)**

Key themes:

- Concern about the general state of city roads and the slow rate of repairs
- Support for reducing heavy traffic, improving public transport and major cycleways

## **Restoring and renewing water networks (204 Comments)**

Key themes

- Support for funding the repair and renewal of water, wastewater and stormwater networks.
- Prioritise critical repairs to prevent flooding and sewage overflows.

## Other hot topics

### **Parking (174 submissions)**

Calls for a realistic amount of affordable car parking available in the central city.

### **Arts Funding (65 submissions)**

Most supported continuation and expansion of arts funding. Some said the Council's Arts Policy Strategy and funding methods needed reviewing.

### **City Council Governance (52 submissions)**

- Council bureaucracy is deterring public participation and slowing down the recovery.
- The Council needs to push back against influence by CERA and the current Government.
- Criticism of the Long Term Plan's lack of detail and consultation process.

### **Victoria Square Redevelopment (50 submissions)**

Submitters were opposed to redevelopment, considering that maintenance and basic repair would be sufficient, and funds should be spent elsewhere.

### **Parks and Open Spaces (50 submissions)**

- Opposition to cuts to maintenance and development of parks, reserves and open spaces, but support for community and corporate involvement in this work where the Council cannot cover costs.
- Groups often want further and more in-depth consultation in relation to proposals.

### **Grants Funding (45 submissions)**

- Strong objections to proposed cuts to the Strengthening Community Fund.
- Some opposition to increased funding for organisations, such as the Canterbury Development Corporation and Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism.

### **Heritage (38 submissions)**

Nearly all support the preservation of all remaining heritage buildings and sites such as the Canterbury Provincial Council Chambers, the Town Hall and Barbadoes Street Cemetery.

### **Central City Issues (25 submissions)**

- Most comments focus on making living and working in the CBD affordable, and increasing high density housing.
- The Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce submission accentuates the importance of a connected, holistic approach to the rebuild, Anchor Projects, and commercial office space.
- Several submissions think too much focus is put on the CBD development and that the Council should focus more on "local ward issues".

## Long Term Plan social media feedback

The Council's Facebook page received 1106 Facebook posts on the Long Term Plan. Topics that drew the largest number of comments were:

- Increasing rates (17.13 per cent of total comments)
- Prioritising road repairs (13.39 per cent)
- Management of the Major Works Programme (11.95 per cent)
- Releasing capital in assets (9.80 per cent)
- Reviewing Council operational spending (9.72 per cent)

**Proposed rates increases:** 96 per cent of comments opposed them. Many said that the increase would drive them out of Christchurch, or make the price of living unaffordable.

**Prioritising road repairs:** 92 per cent of comments supported prioritising repairs, while 8 per cent believed they can be put off in favour of alternative rebuild options. Road repairs were especially important to eastern suburbs residents.

**Management of major works programme:** 99 per cent of comments said major works could be managed more efficiently and effectively. Half raised concerns about the inefficiency of repeatedly repairing the same stretches of roads.

**Asset sales comments:** 64 per cent supported the proposal, with many saying the Council should maintain a majority share in any assets sold. Some favoured the sale of shares in Council-owned companies, while others mentioned selling other assets such as Council-owned buildings and land. Those who opposed sales mentioned the importance of ensuring a viable future for further generations by retaining assets for the benefit of the community.

**Anchor projects comments:** 76 per cent opposed the proposed timeline and commitment in the draft Plan, in particular the stadium. Residents supported the idea of the rugby bodies funding this project, if it goes ahead. Many said the proposed Convention Centre was too big.

**Improving public transport:** Most felt this should be a priority, with 60 per cent supporting investment in light rail public transport to other areas of Canterbury.

**Arts funding:** All disagreed with money being spent on artwork for the city, saying it was a waste of ratepayer money that could be better spent on other areas.

**Finding other funding sources:** All comments supported finding alternative funding sources. Ideas included a regional fuel tax, charging fees for use of some sports parks, and charging residents from neighboring local authorities to use our facilities.

**Reviewing the major works programme:** All agreed on the need for a review, with a focus on *need* to have projects rather than *want* to have ones.

**Housing recovery:** 60 per cent of those who commented on this issue agreed with the Council supporting housing recovery. Many commented on the need for more affordable housing for families. Those who opposed the Council's proposals were in favour of selling most social housing.

**Major Cycleways comments:** 72 per cent supported the development of major cycleways to improve safety. Those who opposed the cycleways all said that damaged roads should be fixed first.