



Greater Ōtautahi Submission Guide to the Christchurch City Council's 2025/26 Annual Plan

About Us

Greater Ōtautahi is a non-partisan group of Ōtautahi Christchurch residents who want to help create a better city. We advocate primarily for housing choice, transport choice, access to amenities, safe streets and a vibrant city. Through this vision, we see a future Ōtautahi that is liveable and equitable for generations to come.

We can be contacted at greaterotautahi@gmail.com or through our [Facebook page](#).

Introduction

Kia ora! Welcome to Greater Ōtautahi's submissions guide for Christchurch City Council's Draft Annual Plan for 2025. This is the year's "budget", and tells us what CCC will spend money on. This is one of the key ways that people can influence Council decision making.

There are a few ways to make a submission. We recommend you decide which method you're going to use, have a read through this guide, and then submit. Once you've made your submission, it goes into a pot from which Council staff will read every submission. They'll then do a "thematic analysis", which means they'll analyse all the submissions and see popular themes and responses.

This will often be guided by the questions that they include in the "consultation documents". In addition, you can also get your submission read by the Councillors (in theory) if you say that you want to speak to your submission at Council. To do this, you'll need to provide your telephone number; and commit to speaking for five minutes to Council at some point in May.

The submission page is here - [Our Draft Annual Plan 2025/26 | Kōrero mai | Let's talk](#)

As this is a submissions guide, ***please don't simply copy and paste the contents below.*** Don't feel you need to answer all questions.

Other Methods to Submit:

Email:

This is the fastest and easiest way to make a submission, but because it isn't restricted to the consultation documents, it risks sitting outside the thematic analysis. This is pretty easy. The steps are:

1. Email cccplan@ccc.govt.nz with an informative subject line such as "Draft Annual Plan 2025 Submission".
2. Provide in the body of your email and your full name. If you want to speak to your submission, say so, using a phrase like "I wish to speak to my submission. Contact me at my telephone number [provide your telephone number]." You **must** provide your telephone number if you wish to speak to your submission. You may also, if you wish, include demographic information about yourself.
3. Attach your submission as a file. We recommend you don't include your submission in the body of your email, as it means that it may be released, with your personal information, to LGOIMA requests.

Questions

Proposed Average Rates Increase

Q1. What do you think of our proposed **average rates increase of 7.58%** across all ratepayers (which is lower than the 8.48% signalled in the Long Term Plan 2024–34) and an average residential rates increase of 7.40%?

Key points:

Rates are a charge levied by Council on properties (“rating units”) in the Christchurch City area. They’re based on the *capital value* of a property (an alternative method is *land value rating*), and are charged quarterly. They are CCC’s main source of revenue.

Our recommendation:

Support increasing rates to fund services, because:

- 1) CCC should be funded and resourced properly.
- 2) We want to see services delivered.

And:

- 3) Until CCC facilitates increased density (to spread the rates burden wider), this is within the normal range of expected rates increases.
- 4) CCC should investigate *Land Value Rating*.

Our view:

The amount rates go up by isn’t as important as what they are being spent on. If a rates increase cut means programmes are being cut, that is not a good way to keep rates low.

Greater Ōtautahi wishes to see a city where programs are funded sustainably and equitably, and where existing infrastructure continues to meet the community's expectations. This means that CCC should be operating in a way that it can function and meet its obligations around programme delivery and service levels. We want to see this hand in hand with more transparency about what these programmes are delivering, and how well resourced they are.

We also believe that CCC is not and has not done enough in other areas to mitigate rates increases.

CCC's delay and resistance to adopt the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) and effective housing intensification has effectively suppressed the number of rating units inside the city, and grown the number of people commuting in. This means we are disproportionately feeling the pressure of having a sprawling network of infrastructure, while simultaneously not trying to share the burden across more people.

Delivering on the MDRS, and investigating systems such as Land Value Rating, should be key strategic priorities for CCC in the coming year. These have the ability to more effectively distribute rates increases instead of our current model.

Elected Members over successive councils have failed to act on this, and continue to act in ways that priorities artificially low rates (such as the transfer of funds from one budget to another) rather than actually resolving the issues driving rates increases.

Council should ensure it rates at a level that it can deliver on its programmes and service levels. It should also prioritise new incomes/systems instead of cutting budgets.

Proposed Spending

Q2. Do you have any comments about our proposed spending on our **transport network**, including the staged approach to delivering Papanui ki Waiwhetū **Wheels to Wings major cycle route**, or the proposal to **defer the Lincoln Road (Curletts to Wrights) Public Transport project** from 2026/28 to 2029/30?

Key Points

Transport is one of CCC's biggest expenditures. Within it, a number of projects have been realigned or defunded in this Annual Plan, which will impact delivery and service. The main ones are the Wheels to Wings Papanui ki Waiwhetū Major Cycle Route, between Papanui and the Airport, and the Lincoln Road (Curletts to Wrights) Public Transport Project, which was to install bus lanes on the middle section of Lincoln Road.

There are also a number of line items that are in need of clarification or we have comments on.

Our recommendation:

Support transport spending in general, because it is an essential service. This includes **local cycle connections**, **major cycle routes**, and **public transport**. You may also note:

- 1) CCC should ensure that work on MRT continues within current timeframes. This means that it must either fund the project adequately (including staff resourcing).
- 2) Cost-effective deliverables for safety and transport accessibility should be introduced across the city, like widening footpaths in parks to act as shared paths.
- 3) The Parks, Events, Assets/Libraries, and Transport budgets should introduce funding to proactively install cost-effective bike parking in key areas.
- 4) CCC should establish a program of cycleway maintenance, to prevent cost blowouts from *ad hoc* work.
- 5) Railway crossing safety upgrades should be deferred to the next plan cycle, and CCC should contact Minister Chris Bishop to provide a solution to these as he did for Auckland.
- 6) Asset renewals and maintenance must be separated from cycleway costs.
- 7) CCC should increase the transparency of the PT Futures program, and emphasise deliverables such as infrastructure improvements and business cases.

Our Views

Wheels to Wings Papanui ki Waiwhetū Major Cycle Route

We support the council allocating a budget in the capital programme to deliver the Wheels to Wings cycleway in stages.

Wheels to Wings represents a key connection for residents in the North-West. We support the decision to move funding forward to complete the section that links the Nor'West Arc and the Northern Line cycleways.

We believe CCC should take the approach of building the key safety improvements first, and connecting them as funding becomes available. Several of these improvements are universally needed, such as the traffic improvements at Bishopdale roundabout, and some are already going ahead, such as the lights at Breens and Gardiners Roads. Building these first, and connecting them later will provide large safety benefits while allowing the project to minimise costs in the immediate term.

We think further delays in this project are unfair to the residents of the North-West.

Lincoln Road (Curletts to Wrights) Public Transport Project

We support building the bus lanes on Lincoln Road from Curletts to Weights as a priority.

Lincoln Road is a major public transport corridor for communities in the south-west of Christchurch. With the ongoing rapid growth of Halswell and Metro Bus Route 7 uplifting to turn-up-and-go frequency in April it makes sense to invest in this infrastructure now.

The current political environment is not favourable to delay. NZTA is almost certain to decline to contribute typical co-funding to the project, and we will be delayed for no benefit. In the next National Land Transport Fund (NLTF) period, there are significant financial pressures that NZTA faces which may result in another round of no co-funding, leading to a delay for nothing. In the meantime, buses will find themselves stuck in traffic and bunching, reducing the reliability of the service.

The risk involved in delaying is not worth any potential or hypothesised outcomes. CCC should move forward with this project now.

Additional Comments

Footpath Connectivity

We want to see additional spending on new footpaths; it is unacceptable that there are communities in our city that are not adequately served by footpaths. It is good to see that roving repair teams have been making impacts. This should continue to be funded.

Cycleway Funding and Reporting

We have concerns with how the Council reports spend on cycleways. An example of this is the road upgrade on Antigua Street. The cost of the cycleway and the cost of the road upgrades needs to be split out and reported separately.

Currently, all spending is announced as cycleway spending, and this drives the belief that our cycleways are expensive. We would prefer to see such projects being simply referred to as 'improvements', except in the case where calling projects cycleways can attract greater co-funding from NZTA.

We strongly support the Te Aratai College and Simeon Street cycle connections. We would like to see some of the cycle connections that were previously deferred or removed added back or brought forward on this Annual Plan. Specifically, we would like to see them done in a similar manner to the Rolleston Ave/Park Terrace cycleway. This presents excellent value for money and will improve access to many neighbourhoods, schools, malls and other amenities that are currently poorly served by cycling infrastructure.

Public Transport Futures (PT Futures) and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Programmes

Transport staff at CCC need to be properly resourced to complete these programmes/business cases. It is unacceptable that business cases are missing funding opportunities because there is not capacity to follow through.

With PT Futures being the second largest line item for Transport, it is critical that there is visibility on what it is paying for. There must be more clarity and separation of items, rather than lump funding for a poorly defined programme.

CCC must ensure that the MRT Business Case is completed in time for NZTA funding opportunities. We simply do not have the luxury of missing these opportunities to acquire funding. CCC has taken on the responsibility of this business case from ECan, it must do it justice and complete it promptly so that we don't end up being left out of funding discussions.

Both of these projects deserve more clarity and focus. As key programmes that underpin the future of public transport in this city, their delay will have impacts for decades potentially.

Q3. Do you have any comments about our proposed spending on our three waters network?

Key Ideas

Three waters refers to fresh-, storm-, and wastewater systems within the city. This is infrastructure like pipes, waterways, and retention basins.

Our Recommendations

Support spending on the three waters network, because this is an essential service that supports housing in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Also note that:

- 1) Since we are funding these assets anyway, the city should ensure that they're used to their maximum extent by intensifying.
- 2) Denser urban form makes the network cheaper, as there is less network area to maintain.
- 3) CCC should rate as necessary to keep the network in good condition, to prevent *ad hoc* work resulting in cost escalations, and to insulate against future cost increases - there is no better time than today to invest in infrastructure.

Our Views

Cities need clean drinking water, functional sewerage and resilient stormwater networks both to support quality of life for existing, but also future residents as well as being managed to *enable*

growth. We support the proposed additional funding for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor stopbank project, as these stopbanks will be critical safety infrastructure for residents living in communities near the river.

As our city continues to grow, it is important that we find a sustainable way to grow our city water infrastructure, so that future generations are not left with a poor quality water network, or shocking repair bills. We should also be encouraging efficient usage of our existing network through intensification.

Q4. Do you have any comments about our proposed spending on our parks and reserves?

Key Ideas

Parks and Reserves is what CCC spends on maintaining, upgrading, and creating parks within our city. This covers things like plantings, mowing, and other infrastructure within parks.

Our Views

Generally, we believe Council should be ensuring that third spaces (parks, reserves, walkways in this instance) are equitable, accessible, well-maintained, and friendly.

Communities benefit when shared spaces bring them closer. Christchurch is peppered with small urban parks and reserves, each with its own character and history. These represent significant investments in, and social glue for local communities.

To this end, ensuring that our parks are well maintained and accessible should not only be a matter of civic pride for Council, it is also a tangible investment in community growth.

Residents take pride in their local amenities, and they provide spaces for people to gather as whanau, groups, and organisations. This is of invaluable benefit to the social wellbeing of our city.

Q5. Do you have any other comments about spending on our capital programme in general, for example our facilities?

Key Ideas

The remainder of CCC's capital spend covers everything from new facilities and staffing costs, to maintenance and service levels. It is a very broad subject to touch on.

Our Views

Council facilities often represent a critical piece of infrastructure for the ratepayer. Without them, many ratepayers would see significant losses of service.

Libraries, Service and Community Centres, and Recreational Facilities are one of the largest benefits the Council provides to its residents. These facilities are absolutely necessary in building the fabric of communities and represent one of the most valuable investments Council could make. As the ratepayer already pays for these facilities, closing them is an entirely inefficient use of these spaces.

Facilities like these are the beating hearts of our city. Without them, residents would be deprived of affordable and well-maintained spaces to meet, associate, and socialise. Community events would not be as successful, and our city would suffer.

Christ Church Cathedral Targeted Rate

Q6. Should we pause the collection of the targeted rate for the Christ Church Cathedral reinstatement for the remaining three years we were due to collect it, and factor the saving into our proposed rates increase of 7.58%?

Key Ideas

The Christ Church Cathedral Targeted Rate is a rate taken to provide funds for the restoration of the Christ Church Cathedral. The project has subsequently been placed into stasis, awaiting more funding. CCC is asking what to do with their funds.

Our View

We have two suggestions.

- 1) That the funds raised from the targeted rate be used to improve public amenities within Cathedral Square. It could be used to bring forward capital projects that are in the 2027/28-34 lines. This would help improve the Square as a civic space, and provide an environmental connection to the Performing Arts Precinct and Te Pae on the Northern side of the city.
- 2) Return the funds to the ratepayer as an offset to rates increases. This would return funds not being used for purpose to the ratepayer in the form of either a rates reduction or a rebate.

Rating for Renewals

Q7. Should we increase our rating for renewals by a further \$2 million a year (\$12 million in total over six years) in order to keep our borrowing costs lower over time? This would result in an additional rates increase of 0.25% in 2025/26 but will generate \$2.6 million of overall rates savings over the next six years, and \$21.3 million over 30 years.

Key Ideas

Rating for renewals is the idea of using rates to pay for infrastructure renewals, rather than borrowing as CCC currently does.

Our recommendation:

Support rating for renewals as much as possible, because renewals are essential urban infrastructure that is cheaper to fund directly than by borrowing.

Our View

We generally support the proposed increase to rating for renewals.

CCC needs a more robust method of renewing infrastructure. With urban sprawl exacerbating CCC's infrastructure maintenance costs, it is more crucial now than ever that CCC gets ahead of the curve, and does so in a way that won't saddle the city with long-term debt.

While borrowing for renewals means there is no up-front cost to the ratepayer, it will create more pressure in the future, as we need to both service a larger infrastructure network and more debt. CCC should "bite the bullet" and fund this renewal work itself. The expected savings alone are enough to justify this change.

Fees and Charges

Q8. Do you have any comments on our proposed changes to fees and charges?

This is outside the scope of this guide.

Answer this question as you feel necessary.

Trade Waste

Q9. What do you think of our proposal to change how we charge for trade waste? Which option do you prefer? Why do you prefer this option?

This is outside the scope of this guide.

Answer this question as you feel necessary.

Reducing Rates

Qs10/11. Tell us about the services you value the most and would not want reduced, and tell us about the services you could manage without.

Key Ideas

These questions are asking about what kinds of services, facilities, and activities you value, or don't; and if any are acceptable to cut in order to save rates.

Our recommendation:

Oppose service reductions, as any service reduction will make the city worse by reducing amenities and services for residents.

Our Views

We believe service reductions are not an equitable solution to managing rates.

Those who are most affected by rates increases are also those who are most affected by service reductions, such as operating hours for libraries and swimming pools. These “third spaces” are a critical part of a thriving city, as they create places for people to meet and connect with one-another. For example, libraries provide crucial social spaces for young parents, internet access for people without a personal computer, and meeting places for a host of community groups. Recreational sport facilities provide wellbeing classes for senior citizens, swimming lessons for rangatahi, and fitness equipment to keep people in shape.

When considering the enormous benefit these services provide to residents, tangible service reductions are unacceptable.

Q12. Tell us about the services where there could be an opportunity for savings.

Key Ideas

This question is asking if you can think of any ways for CCC to save money in its services.

Our Views

CCC should be focused on increasing revenue streams and enforcing existing ones rather than simply looking to cut services.

Below are some suggestions about services or activities CCC could engage better with to make this happen.

- 1) There are large amounts of free car parking across the city which consistently is at capacity. Specifically in the Central City under the Central City Parking Policy, 85% occupancy in a parking area should be promoted through parking charges — this is not being followed.

Not only is this leaving money on the table, it also makes finding car parks in the Central City more difficult. We ask that the Council follows its Central City Parking Policy and begins charging for Council owned off-street parking as well as on-street parking that consistently exceeds 85% occupancy.

- 2) CCC should explore leasing additional food truck spaces. This can increase council revenue whilst providing additional public amenity, assisting in regenerating low foot traffic and developing areas. If any harm, lack of interest, or undue controversy is caused, sites can easily be delisted. There are many public plazas, parks and on-street car parks which could be suitable for new or additional sites, which may include:

- Mātai Common
- Edmonds Band Rotunda
- Rauora Park
- Margaret Mahy and Cathedral Square
- Oxford Terrace
- South East Central Neighbourhood and Sydenham

While additional revenue can be easily sought under the existing policy in the interim, [Greater Ōtautahi has previously discussed how the council's existing food truck policies are unnecessarily restrictive and should be reviewed to be more enabling.](#) most importantly in the Central City.

Climate Resilience Fund Policy

Q13. Do you have any feedback on the draft Climate Resilience Fund Policy, specifically how the Fund will work, what the Fund can be used for and how long it will be held in reserve before being used?

Key Points

CCC is looking to establish a Climate Resilience Fund to set aside finding dedicated to natural disaster relief and climate change impacts

Our View

Our view is that this funding is crucial for future risk mitigation.

As climate hazards continue to mount, it will be important to protect vulnerable communities, and at-risk council infrastructure. Having this fund set aside is key to ensuring this burden does not fall on future ratepayers.

We believe CCC should extend this fund in perpetuity, rather than ceasing it after 10 years of generation.

Air Force Museum Grant

Q14. Should we proceed with our proposal to grant the Air Force Museum \$5 million towards an extension of its site?

Key Ideas

This is about a proposed grant to the Air Force Museum for its P3K2 Orion and C-130H Hercules Hanger extension.

Our Views

This is outside the scope of this guide.

Central City Shuttle Service

Q15. Should we allocate up to \$200,000 for a scoping study for a central city shuttle service?

Key Ideas

This study will look at reinstating a revised version of the Central City Shuttle that ran prior to 2011.

Our View

We strongly support this initiative. We have concerns that the \$200k cost for an analysis exercise seems quite high.

The Central City suffers from poorly interconnected public transport. Improving these facilities would provide a more efficient and effective transport network in the Central City. The hop-on/hop-off orbital shuttle proposal would improve mobility and accessibility within the urban core. It would be a massive amenity improvement for both residents and visitors. The new bus network implemented by ECan in 2014 has left areas of the Central City without service. While this wasn't such a pressing issue while the Central City contracted and rebuilt after the Earthquakes, growth in population and new developments mean this warrants revisiting.

Alongside this there is the added complexities of servicing One New Zealand Stadium at Te Kaha, a venue that will require a wide range of transport connections. This service could be used to assist mobility needs visitors between the venue and car parking buildings as part of its route. This service also has the potential to enable service improvements in the South-East, Central, and Sydenham neighbourhoods.

Provision of public transport in Christchurch is the responsibility of ECan, and not the City Council. We think it wise therefore for Council to engage closely with ECan in this work. Shared workload offers both authorities an opportunity to reduce costs. While the appetite to introduce this service is being driven by the City Council, the service itself should be provided by ECan. The Council is unlikely to be able to complete this task without their support.

Motu Move will provide CCC and ECan with more opportunities around pricing zones, so we also expect that that is considered in any work CCC does on this study. If the same service impact can be provided through Motu Move, CCC should consider that avenue with equal priority.

Potential Disposal of Properties

Q16. The Council has a small number of properties which are no longer being used for the purpose for which they were originally acquired. Do you have any feedback to help us decide the future or next steps for these properties?

Key Points

This question is asking if you have any opinions around small parcels of land being sold by CCC

Our Views

We believe CCC should be able to sell properties it owns, however:

- 1) CCC should not sell land that is being used by or providing an amenity to the community.
- 2) CCC should be cautious that the land it sells will not trigger further urban sprawl.
- 3) CCC should be cautious around the usability of the land in relation to contamination and identified risk under the District Plan.
- 4) CCC should ensure that the sale will give a return to ratepayers higher than the amenity value it would provide if retained.
- 5) CCC should ensure that Elected Members' Conflicts of Interests are scrutinised in the sale of land.

Greenfields developments are typically detached homes with a higher rate burden than infill housing/medium density. Greenfield development also contributes to higher infrastructure burdens on a lower number of rating units, contributing to higher rates.

We believe CCC should look to sell the Lichfield Street Carpark Building.

CCC shouldn't be in the business of operating a facility that subsidises traffic, while not turning any reasonable return for the ratepayer. The only benefit it gives CCC is a marginal say in the car parking market.

CCC has no obligation legally to operate a car parking building.

We believe property in the Port Hills Red Zone should be reassessed before being sold.

Several vacant properties in the Port Hills Red Zone now provide accessways for the public. If these properties are to be sold, CCC should ensure this access is retained through property resizing, so that the access residents now have is not lost.