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Submission on the Greater Christchurch Settlement Pattern Update

To the Greater Christchurch
Partnership

Submission by Youth Voice Canterbury

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1 – Introduction and Background

Youth Voice Canterbury (YVC) is a network of young people from Youth Councils and youth participation groups from around the Canterbury region supported to have a voice and get involved in decision-making. We aim to bring our network together regularly, provide training and workshops, and provide support and opportunities to get involved such as submissions.

November 2018 was not a great time for us and the young people in our organization to run a thorough consultation and write a submission due to it being exam time and we had several big events organized for the holiday period. However, over the holidays our young people did some research into youth voices on issues in Christchurch identified in the Christchurch Youth Action Plan (CYAP). The Christchurch Youth Action Plan is an initiative to turn young people's ideas into actions, empower young people to be active citizens, and create an inclusive and vibrant Christchurch for young people.

The CYAP Foundation document has four sections that young people were consulted on that responds to aspects of the plans in Our Space 2018-2048. These sections are Transport, Housing, Representation & Belonging and Youth friendly Places and Spaces. These sections are organised with identified issues, aspirations and considerations. To feedback on the Our Space 2020 plans, relevant issues and considerations have been pulled out from the CYAP and the considerations and aspirations will be highlighted clearly as ideas young people feel that Christchurch will benefit from in its development.

The Waimakariri Youth Council recently surveyed approximately 400 young people in their district about issues facing young people, and Selwyn Youth Council also ran a district-wide survey called 'What Do YOUth Think?' Unfortunately, none of these results have been analyzed and only the raw data is available.

While the data from the Waimakariri and Selwyn youth surveys are not yet public, the full Christchurch Youth Action Plan can be downloaded online. We are keen to send the results of the other surveys to the committee once their data is available, and you can access the Christchurch Youth Action Plan through: www.chchyouthactionplan.co.nz.



2 – Housing

Issues that young people identified in the consultation process for CYAP focus on the quality of housing and the support for the young homeless to find suitable housing. The physical conditions of housing are a big concern for young people who can be on a limited budget when renting so feel that have to accept some housing conditions that can have an impact on their overall health especially in the colder months. To improve this issue young people, support the implementation of housing “*warrant of fitness throughout all houses and to ensure that all homes built in the future are of high standards*” as evidence shows that a good, comfortable home can improve a person mental and physical health.

Another aspect of housing that young people feel there needs to be more support is knowledge about their rights as a renter, potential or current home owner. As the city develops there will be more homes that young people want to be sure they are clearly advised and that when they sign on to rent or own, they are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

In the development of the city, young people want safe housing to be available to everyone so they advocated for city planners/developers to ensure there is some form of community, low income housing to provide a space for the homeless especially those who are young to find a space that is safe, warm and comfortable.

3 – Transport

Issues that young people face in relation to transport in the Christchurch boundaries and sometimes further are that traffic congestion in the central city can delay public transport to and from the suburbs. Young people believe a way to address this challenge could be investment in more buses that travel around the suburbs/communities without going into the central city. There are some communities that it can take young people nearly an hour to reach due to the current system taking most public buses into the central station.

Other issues that young people have raised about the quality of the public transport infrastructure in Christchurch is the common feeling that there is a lack of reliable public transport. Most young people will use public transport to travel to or from school, meet with friends or even go or from work, all these activities mean that young people are under time constraints. Ideas they have to address this issue is to re-introduce the free shuttle around the central city, reduction of the price of the trams for locals so they are affordable and able to be used as public transport, invest in light rail from Kaiapoi/Rangiora to Rolleston, via east side/Marshland area and provide funding and support the introduction of innovative transport concepts like solar powered trains.

Selwyn (written by a Selwyn Youth Councilor)

Young people in Selwyn often feel isolated due to a lack of public transport. Although our main center Rolleston has a direct bus link to the City Centre, areas such as Leeston and Darfield are disconnected. This results in young people being unable to connect with other people in the community, being unable to access resources and services, and an overall lack

of connectedness. This especially effects young people under the age of 16 who are unable to get their drivers licenses, or young people over 16 who are unable to get a car/other means of transport. Multiple young people living in Selwyn have mentioned that the school holidays are a particular time that they feel isolated, when parents are at work and they are unable to catch up with friends or participate in activities held outside of their township.

4 – Representation and Belonging

An important issue that young people advocate for is for developers to have a good understanding of creating spaces and communities that are inclusive, socially aware and makes everyone feel like they belong. The way that is understood can be expressed in many forms, but the best methods is through physical care to all people and the built infrastructure that reflect the community's needs.

Key aspirations young people have for Christchurch in this theme is

- Christchurch engages young people in all democratic processes and co-creates plans and action with young people.
- Decision-making bodies are welcoming and have offices that are inviting.
- Christchurch is a cultural hub that unites and celebrates people from different backgrounds and communities.

To achieve these aspirations young people have a few considerations that could support the development of Christchurch to be very inclusive and represent its many communities.

- A clear entry point for young people and anybody looking to work with decision-making bodies or to find out information about each agency or body
- More opportunity for cultures to express themselves through cultural events e.g. Chinese lantern festival
- An effort must be made to engage all communities and have advisors for specific communities who can advocate, support and represent.
- Increase knowledge of diversity through cultural hubs

The impact of positive practice to engage the youth population but more importantly all communities in the city, will have an impact of the development of the city's central hubs and the city's ability to attraction new residents.

5 – Youth Friendly Places and Spaces

The landscape of Christchurch will change as it develops and there are few key aspirations young people have for the landscape that they want to always exist and in be enhanced as time goes on. These aspirations are

- Christchurch is an inclusive community that offers facilities for all cultural groups.
- Christchurch offers plenty of spaces and facilities that encourage physical activity and are accessible to young people.

- Every community has access to a variety of green spaces for people to enjoy, relax and take part in activities.
- Christchurch has accessible gender-neutral bathroom facilities
- Communities within Christchurch are strong and thriving, with the ability to hold events and festivals.

Considerations that young people shared that will support the development of these aspirations and the city and its communities through time is

- Increase outdoor seating and shade area in existing places
- Use empty land and city council public areas to make youth friendly spaces
- Increase street lighting
- Improve footpaths
- Create more and improve places and walks with native trees and fauna
- Make the central city more green
- Increase community input into creating green spaces
- Ensure green spaces have natural and peaceful seating areas and adequate lighting

These ideas are inspired by what young people have seen already and want more of or are ideas that they feel will benefit all residents and visitors to Christchurch as the when a young person feels comfortable and can feel engaged in a space so can any other person.

Many of these ideas are things these young people will enjoy when they are no longer young and believe the future of Christchurch will benefit because it creates a space that has its own things and support all populations.

6 – Recommendations

Overall our key recommendations for the Greater Christchurch Partnership to consider are:

1. Enforce warrant of fitness standards for houses to ensure that all homes built in the future are of high standards.
2. Ensure there is some form of community, low income housing to provide a space for the homeless especially those who are young.
3. Investment in more buses that travel around the suburbs/communities without going into the central city.
4. Re-introduce the free shuttle around the central city.
5. Reduction of the price of the trams for locals so they are affordable and able to be used as public transport

6. Invest in light rail from Kaiapoi/Rangiora to Rolleston, via east side/Marshland area and provide funding and support the introduction of innovative transport concepts like solar powered trains.
7. More opportunity for cultures to express themselves through cultural events.
8. Increase knowledge of diversity through cultural hubs.
9. Use empty land and city council public areas to make youth friendly spaces.
10. Increase outdoor seating, street lighting, and shaded areas.
11. Improve footpaths.
12. Make the central city greener, create more and improve places and walks with native trees and fauna, and Increase community input into creating green spaces.
13. Ensure green spaces have natural and peaceful seating areas and adequate lighting