

South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce Submission – Timaru District Long Term Plan 2018 – 2028

Representation:

The South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce is a membership based organisation representing over 520 businesses across South Canterbury including our largest organisations such as Fonterra Clandeboye through to sole traders. We have served South Canterbury businesses for 112 years and our purpose is to achieve Better Business Outcomes which in turn supports our whole community. We are the recognised and respected business services organisation for South Canterbury and the voice of the local business community. As an affiliated member of the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce Incorporated we are part of the national body representing the 28 plus Chambers of New Zealand representing over 22,000 businesses.

Introduction:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to the Timaru District Council on the Long Term Plan and compliment the Council on the clarity of presentation and the planning that has taken place. We appreciate the on line video viewing options, these will hopefully garner greater engagement.

The SC Chamber's feedback aligns with our submission on the TDC Growth Management Strategy and the LTP Pre Consultation Survey.

The SC Chamber does wish to speak to the submission at a Council Hearing.

Submission:

The purpose of the Long Term Plan is to describe the Council's proposed investments, activities and the likely community and commercial outcomes.

The Long Term Plan represents the council's best efforts to balance needs and costs.

The SC Chamber has considered the plan and in response to member feedback and engagement suggest that there are solutions and options that should have further consideration.

In line with previous submissions the SC Chamber expresses concern that growth assumptions are conservative, especially in the industrial/commercial area and in spatial planning, and have insufficient long term focus. To attract businesses to invest and base themselves in Timaru we need to have a solid and long term proposition that will enable businesses to grow – this must include the basic fundamentals of guaranteed and sustainable potable water, reliable energy supply, access to labour and access to global markets.

It is the responsibility of our generation to be preparing for, investing and protecting the future for the generations who will follow in our footsteps.

Water – A resilient future water supply

The Timaru District’s wealth is built from a platform of agriculture with added value manufacturing and food processing; the future of this economy is reliant on the essential infrastructure and services being available to enable these developments to continue. The Canterbury Water Management Strategy recognises the value of irrigation to Canterbury and estimates that by 2040 this will contribute “an additional \$1.7 billion per annum to the Canterbury economy”. Hence the critical need to future proof water supply for agricultural production, processing and manufacturing, town water supplies and environmental factors.

In the submission to the Timaru District Council’s Growth management strategy the SC Chamber encouraged the T.D.C. to “Be ambitious to create the future we want and to Facilitate Investment” these themes are inextricably linked to our most precious resource water.

Although not opposed to water metering this methodology should be utilised as a water management tool with accepted efficiencies and environmental benefits BUT should not preclude the need for a long term alternative and additional solution for the supply of potable water.

ECAN’s executive summary in the Waihao River Water Resource document states:

‘The water resources of the rivers and associated groundwater resources draining The Hunters Hills in South Canterbury are described and quantified. These rivers include the Pareora River in the north and the Waihao River in the south, and those between. None of the rivers is large and while they sometimes flood, their usual state is to convey very low flows. Given the population in the region, including Timaru which takes much of its water supply from the upper Pareora River, the region is arguably the most water deficient in the country.’

The SC Chamber recognises that freshwater management must be one of the regions highest priorities and that it is also one of the most contentious and complicated issues. From a strategic perspective and looking to a 20 -30 plus year horizon, to focus only on water metering and increasing the take from water short sources may be fiscally prudent, however lacks the longer term vision and horizon that is needed. Attached for reference is the map from the Land and Water Regional Plan (ECAN) identifying Nutrient Allocation Zones and the water quality status in the Timaru District – most of which are of serious concern.

The water sources identified in the Long Term Plan do not have sufficient regard for the economic benefit of the current water takes/consents. To marginalise or limit current consent holders will potentially have a detrimental long term economic impact.

The cheapest and easiest source of water does not take into account the “opportunity cost” and alternative use that brings economic benefit to this district.

From this basis the Chamber is concerned to see minimal reference to the Hunter Downs Scheme and alternative water options, and encourages the Council to investigate further options to secure long term inter-generational potable water options for the benefit of industrial development, town supply and environmental factors. These options should include Hunter Downs and alternative Alpine sources.

A mix of options, not just limited to those proposed should be explored and developed further with greater emphasis placed on a longer term vision of growth and development.

Theatre Royal Redevelopment & New Heritage Facility

The SC Chamber commends the Council for reviewing the cultural facilities provided for the district and recognising the social significance of two key assets, the Theatre Royal and the South Canterbury Museum.

As submitted through the T.D.C. Pre- Consultation Survey the SC Chamber recommends a master urban design plan is produced prior to making decisions like this in isolation. This would include future designated areas for pedestrians, car parking, CBD inner living, key access routes and the like. Future proofing is essential and with the proposed significant investment must be part of an integrated urban design plan rather than a piecemeal ad hoc development.

The Timaru District Council were pro – active in forming a CBD Group created to revitalise Timaru’s CBD and the SC Chamber has actively participated in and supported this group. The key proposal from this group was the development and funding of an urban design masterplan that could:

- improve the CBD environment
- entice more active use of public spaces
- attract high value businesses and skilled workers
- stimulate a greater economic exchange and consumer spend
- improve visual and social amenity
- improve environmental qualities
- improve accessibility and range of viable trips (by all modes) and
- make the district more robust to an uncertain future.

The SC Chamber recommends this work is now completed as a matter of urgency alongside the current proposals. The Chamber does support redevelopment of these facilities and that they are retained within the CBD to maintain and build vibrancy.

Other Issues:

Making our Buildings Safer

The SC Chamber recommends that workshops are implemented as soon as possible in this area to disseminate accurate information. The Council's responsibilities to carry out seismic assessments have significant implications for areas of the CBD and further afield with commercial implications for building owners and tenants.

Roading

In the T.D.C. Pre-Consultation Survey roading costs and a likely reduction by government of roading funding was the first area of focus and although referenced in the LTP no feedback has been sought. The SC Chamber would like to reiterate comments made in the earlier document that our roading network is essential and critical to economic growth and must retain ongoing investment. Smarter applications, group procurement and alternative funding models may assist in meeting the costs of these essential services.

It is hoped that the Timaru District Council will invest time and in depth consultation with the transport industry in our region to gain a true understanding of future demands.

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