



PNCET
PO Box 1271
Palmerston North
pncet.info@gmail.com

Submission to the PNCC 2009/19 LTCCP

Palmerston North City Environmental Trust

The Palmerston North City Environmental Trust (PNCET) is pleased to make this submission to the Palmerston North City Council's Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP). We appreciate the financial support provided by PNCC to environmental community outcomes via PNCET, and look forward to working with the Council and other community and environmental organisations in this and future years for the betterment of our city's natural and built environment.

1. Who we are

The PNCET aims to contribute to Palmerston North becoming a more environmentally sustainable and vibrant city through stimulating and supporting projects that will achieve this aim. We work with other like-minded groups and the community, and provide principled advocacy for the environment.

The Palmerston North City Environmental Trust (PNCET) was established 18 years ago by the Palmerston North City Council (PNCC), by renaming the then Palmerston North Civic Trust. The rationale for this change was recognition that environmental issues were becoming very prominent, and many civic functions were well supported by other organisations. The environment and environmental sustainability are incredibly important today, and the PNCET has a vital role to play in assisting the city leadership in best delivering on their duty to the rate-paying community of supporting environmental well-being.

2. Overview

We support the vision articulated in the document of Palmerston North "recognised as a vibrant, caring, creative and sustainable city", and the five draft supporting goals. In particular, we support the goal of "Palmerston North is a leading city in the quest to become environmentally sustainable", and the proposed increased emphasis put on this essential goal. We completely support the two areas of focus in this goal – 1) get people out of their cars and 2) recycling. However there are other essential initiatives required for a sustainable city, and provision for these needs to be in the Plan. Some of these initiatives are included under Discussion Points below.

We support the increased funding to implement Sustainability Strategy and sustainability initiatives (programme 61) (1/p62), and hope that the PNCET and other ENM member groups will be involved with the City Council the development of the Sustainability Strategy.

Environmental sustainability recognises the pre-eminence role of our natural environment in determining our well being at the social, economic and financial levels. Though seldom acknowledged, this fundamental rule does underpin the success or failure of Palmerston North City Council planning now and in the future. In planning for success, the LTCCP should embrace our obligations to a sustainably managed environment locally (e.g. urban planning), regionally (e.g. water quality), nationally (e.g. energy efficiency) and internationally (e.g. climate change).

Our primary and constructive criticism is that while the buzz word 'sustainable' appears throughout the LTCCP, the meaning of sustainable is often not reflected in stated performance measures. In planning for success, this needs to be corrected, both for the long-term wellbeing of our city and for the regional, national, and international credibility of your City's stated goals and intentions. The cure is simple: stated performance measures in the Plan need to specify targets that are consistent with the sustainable city vision.

Specifically in the draft LTCCP, the PNCET **does supports:**

1. The Sustainability Strategy, we support and welcome this development.
2. Improved communication between Council and Community – this is essential in the development of the Sustainability Strategy, and in the implementation of the Sustainable City initiatives.
3. Introduction of wheelie bins for residential recycling (note 3.2 below)
4. Protection of high class soils from development – this is an issue of national and international significance as we seek sustainable food production, and should be a matter of policy world-wide – we in New Zealand and Palmerston North need to do our bit
5. Adding walkways and the Ashhurst Domain to strategic assets
6. Increased expenditure on walkway upgrades and development
7. Community Housing—Eco-friendly Unit Replacements, programme 357 (1/p84)
8. Continued and inflation proofing of funding for community environmental initiatives via the PNCET, as indicated in the draft Plan

Specifically in the draft LTCCP, the PNCET **does not support:**

1. Investment in an additional bridge (its contribution to stated vision and goals is insignificant, particularly given its high cost and burden on current and future residents)
2. Large capital intensive projects that continually need redevelopment, rates resources are better directed to environmental and community enhancement outcomes.
3. Programmed abandonment of the conservatory in the Esplanade. It is a vital educational and passive recreation asset.

3. Discussion points – items not adequately addressed in the draft LTCCP:

- 3.1. The PNCET is keen to see Palmerston North achieve a centrally located resource centre for Environmental NGOs similar to Environment Centres now established in many NZ towns and cities. We seek support from PNCC through additional resourcing in the 2009/10 year for a bid to the Environment Centres Fund of the Ministry for the Environment (see <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/withyou/funding/centres.html>).
- 3.2. Accelerate other provisions in the draft Waste Minimisation Plan, particularly the introduction of the full three-wheelie bin system for domestic recycling, green waste and rubbish, and the **development of a resource recovery centre.**

- 3.3. The vision for transport and roading in the City needs to be consistent with the environmentally sustainable city goal, particularly that of 'getting people out of their cars.'
- 3.4. More closely link economic development goal with the environmental sustainable city goal – provide basic services and a great natural environment, and people and businesses will be attracted and retained.
- 3.5. Desire to connect with and communicate with more residents can be facilitated by supporting more people to be involved in local initiatives and voluntary groups – add relevant performance measures.
- 3.6. Good to see new performance measures for cycling and public transport (1/p. 135), but these need to be specific in terms of a target increases (e.g. 5%/yr) rather than undefined.

4. Conclusions

Sustainability is for current and future residents, as specified in the Local Government Act (1/p9). Future residents have no say in this plan or in present decisions; therefore, their rights must be protected and it is our (present residents) obligation to do this. Thus, it is imperative that we proceed in ways that ensure the protection of our natural environment and its essential services. The draft LTCCP begins to recognise this, but we believe this needs to be more specific, and we invite the Council to interface with us in how this obligation can be better reflected in a Sustainability Strategy.

Again, the PNCET thanks PNCC for continued financial support of community led environmental initiatives via PNCET as specified in the draft LTCCP. PN rate payers receive excellent value from this investment in the environment. We currently have 10 active Trustees from business, community, and learning backgrounds who donate over 600 hours of their valuable time each year. At any reasonable cost for this time, the amount easily exceeds the annual grant, ensuring 1:1 leverage. And this does not include the other items donated by trustees as they volunteer, or the hours of other volunteers whose efforts are supported by grants from the PNCET. Inclusion of those increase the gearing to 3:1, a handsome return by any measure.

Finally, the Palmerston North City Environmental Trust would like to thank the Palmerston North City Council for giving us the opportunity to comment on the environmental issues and implications in their draft LTCCP. While we support many of the initiatives that the Council has undertaken or is planning to undertake, we are acutely aware that environmental initiatives are underfunded in the Plan, and that environmental sustainability is not yet adequately addressed in specific performance measures throughout the plan.

We encourage Council to consider this submission as a basis for constructive and collaborative dialogue with the PNCET on realising the aims of environmental sustainability in our fair City.

We would like to speak to this submission. Our preferred date and time for this is **Tuesday 19 May from 4:30-6:30pm**. An acceptable alternative is **Wednesday 20 May from 7:30-9:30pm**.

Brent Barrett
Chair, PNCET
021 793 361

Terry C Kelly
Treasurer, PNCET

1 May 2009
Palmerston North