

Submission to Christchurch City Council Draft Annual Plan 2020-2021
Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust
April 7, 2020

The Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust is charitable CCO of Christchurch City Council with a mandate to support sustainable management, conservation and recreation in the Banks Peninsula ward for the benefit of the present and future inhabitants of the peninsula and its visitors. The Trust was established in 2010 and over the 10 years of its existence, has become a well-respected and key community organization with a reputation for cost effective and solid achievement.

In 2019 the Trustees signaled that the initial funds granted to the Trust by the Council could be fully utilized by 2021. The Trust asked the Council to provide future funding certainty based on agreed goals. A joint Working Party subsequently established by Council has concluded the Trust is delivering outcomes in support of the Council's Strategic Framework and its Public Open Space, Biodiversity, Visitor Strategies and emerging Climate and Ecological strategy. A proposal for future funding has been prepared for the 2021 LTP.

This submission to the Annual Plan is drafted after the Covid-19 Alert 4 emergency lockdown came into force. We recognize that much has changed since the Council released the draft Annual Plan 2020 and that budgets are likely to be very tight in the coming financial years. We are also concerned about the impact on the economy of Banks Peninsula due to its reliance on tourism.

Our comments therefore focus on where we see opportunity for the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust (RDBPT) to assist the Council with the recovery for urban and peninsula residents through:

- attracting Christchurch residents and domestic visitors to the Peninsula for outdoor recreation as restrictions on movement are relaxed.
 - assisting Peninsula businesses that rely on the visitor trade, and,
 - providing Christchurch residents with opportunities in their local area to explore and exercise for physical and mental health and wellbeing
- assisting Christchurch NZ with sustainable destination management planning for Banks Peninsula during the recovery through capitalizing on its outdoor recreation potential to the domestic market and developing sustainable tourism activities for when international visitors return in line with emerging government policy
- retaining a focus on the Climate and Ecological Emergency during the recovery from the more immediate Covid-19 emergency through:
 - providing sustainable low footprint recreational and educational opportunities for local families and visitors to replace higher emitting activities that involve travelling further afield and,
 - working to enhance biodiversity on Banks Peninsula to sequester carbon and improve the environment.

Exciting and relatively low cost projects that the Trust already has underway to support these are:

- Banks Peninsula Walks website and walking publications detailing all the existing opportunities. We are working to expand and improve these to provide more resources to Christchurch people once restrictions ease;
- Te Ara Pātaka tramping network provides a world class walk and we are working to develop it to link Christchurch to Akaroa, thus bringing to life Harry Ell's prescient vision. In time we plan to combine this with extensions to the Little River Rail Trail to provide mountain biking connectivity;

- collaborative work in the Native Forest/Climate Change space to encourage natural regeneration on private and public land, increase carbon sequestration and support landowners with increased income from natural native afforestation through carbon credits; and,
- support for and collaborative work toward Pest Free Banks Peninsula.

We see that developing more low cost but high profile outdoor recreational activities on Banks Peninsula in tandem with biodiversity enhancement work could be used to generate employment for occupations displaced by the Covid-19 restrictions.

Specific Requests for the Annual Plan

1. We support the existing operational and capital budgets and projects in the Annual Plan for the **Parks, Heritage and Coastal Environment** work on Banks Peninsula.
 - Keeping the parks, tracks and marine structures operating and in good condition will be important to the Covid-19 recovery effort and for the Climate and Ecological Emergency.
 - We request that Council continues its work to **protect what remains** of biodiversity in its territory by: funding fencing of native bush patches on its own properties that are leased to farmers; ensuring ecologists are part of decision making teams; ensuring its own rules on native vegetation removal are enforced through increased compliance monitoring. RDBPT is concerned about increased habitat destruction through aerial spraying and conversion of land with high biodiversity values to more intensive agriculture (such as at, but not confined to, Kaitorete Spit).
 - **Pest control** – The Trust wants to ensure funding and collaboration to work with other agencies such as ECan, DOC and community groups on weed and animal pest work is adequately resourced in the annual plan. Continuing support for Pest Free Banks Peninsula that is focusing on animal pests is essential. In addition we emphasize that funding for weed pests is money well invested. Weeds if removed at an early stage of invasion are far cheaper to control long term. Currently weeds are on a trajectory to take out hectares of native habitat on the Banks Peninsula. Particularly concerning are growing patches of sycamore, pine, bone seed and banana passionfruit while native species on rocky outcrops are being displaced by pig's ear and other dry-loving exotic perennials.
2. The Trust **purchase of the land of outstanding landscape and amenity value** in the Lyttelton basin earlier signaled to Council is proceeding. The purchase secures public access via the Te Ara Pātaka track network to a treasured cultural and geological landscape and would create a new conservation area supporting biodiversity and carbon sequestration. We request City Council support for this project.
 - We request Council consider some form of financial contribution but appreciate that funds are very stretched due to Covid-19.
 - A contribution of any size would assist the Trust to bring in other funding partners (such as Nature Heritage Fund) and lower the amount of its own funds the Trust needs to expend.
 - Other support Council may consider providing is ecological reports, and working with us as part of a team to determine the best form of long term ownership and management of the future conservation park being created.
3. We wish to develop an **MOU with Council** giving us the mandate to research and negotiate access with private landowners to develop the **Head to Head** walkway and the **Little River Rail Trail**. Both of these opportunities would provide inexpensive outdoor recreational opportunities for Christchurch locals, thus supporting the Council's Community Outcome of Safe and Healthy Communities – with an increasing proportion of people participating in active recreation.
4. We wish to work with Council to develop **policy around the use of unformed legal roads** for walking and cycling access enabling progress to be made at a minimal cost.

We wish to be heard in support of our submission.