

Developing a Land Use Recovery Plan for greater Christchurch

Issues paper

Seeking your views on issues to be considered in preparing a draft
Land Use Recovery Plan

(December 2012)



Working in partnership with



1 INTRODUCTION

The Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery (“the Minister”) has directed the Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) to prepare a Land Use Recovery Plan. All of the earthquake recovery strategic partners¹ will be involved in preparing the Land Use Recovery Plan, with input from key stakeholders and the wider community. The Land Use Recovery Plan is prepared under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act, 2011 (CER Act), and must further the purposes of the Act. The purpose of this paper is to give an overview of potential issues the Land Use Recovery Plan may need to address, as a starting point for consultation with key stakeholders. The supporting Context Paper provides more detailed key information and data that underpins this summary of the key issues.

2 PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE RECOVERY PLAN

The Land Use Recovery Plan is needed to provide certainty about future land-use patterns in greater Christchurch, particularly over the next 10-15 years. Clear direction is required to assist decision making about where and when to reinvest in greater Christchurch, particularly regarding residential and business land supply.

Significant impacts have occurred as a result of the earthquakes. Land-use planning needs to provide for necessary housing demand and the relocation of businesses, and acknowledge Red Zone decisions, changes in flood levels, business relocations, emerging building trends, changing demographics and many other issues that may be having an impact on the recovery. This requires re-examining the existing planning and policy framework, to ensure it is enabling an efficient and effective earthquake recovery, and furthers the purposes of the CER Act.

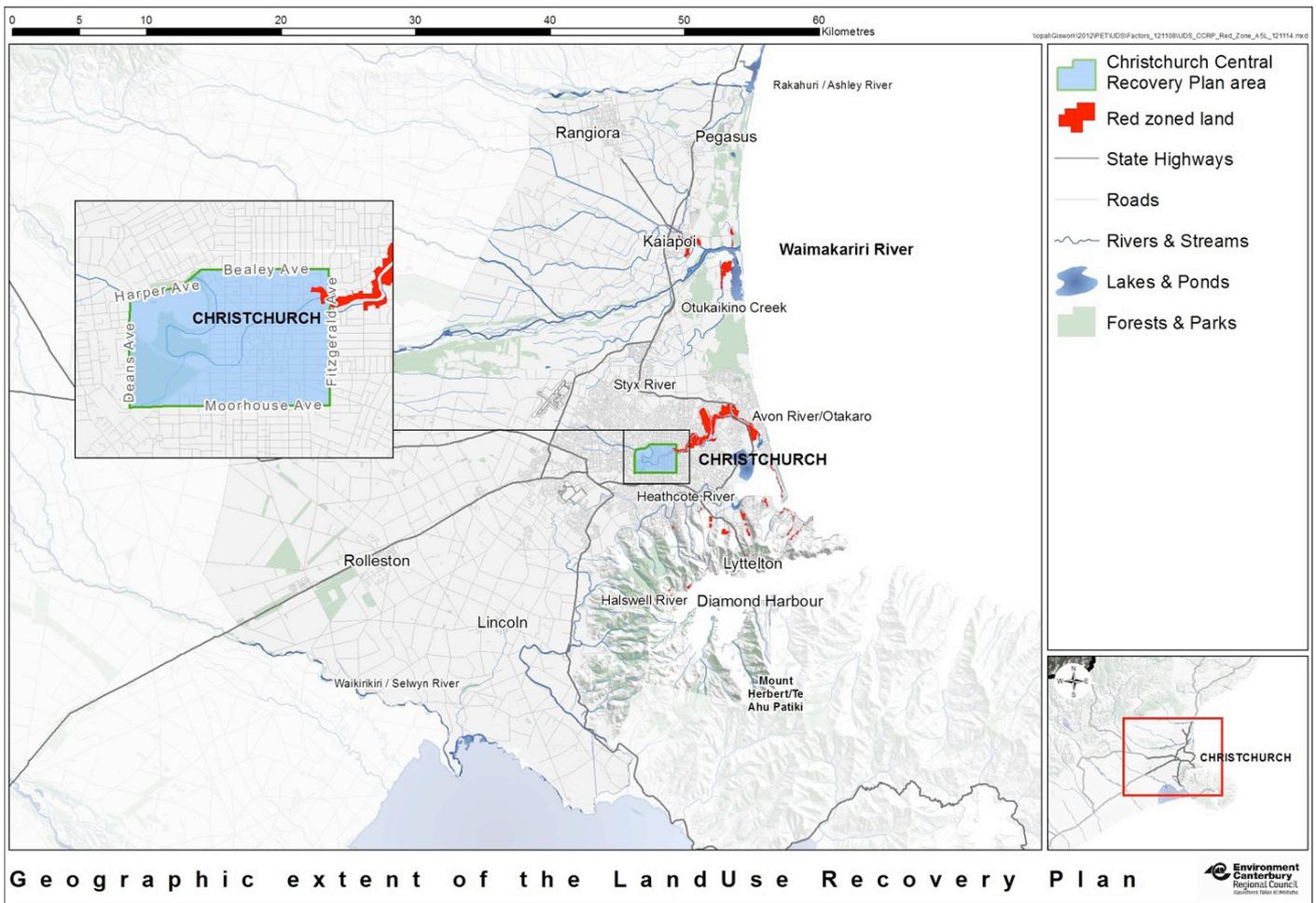
A range of tools and incentives may be needed to ensure the provision of housing and business premises to support recovery. There is also a range of natural hazards, environmental and other constraints that will inform where and when development occurs. This includes protecting strategic infrastructure, and informing significant investment decisions on the timing and provision of infrastructure to support the rebuild.

The Land Use Recovery Plan must be consistent with the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan and support the vision for the central city to be the thriving heart of an international city.

3 GEOGRAPHIC AREA

The Recovery Plan focuses on the metropolitan urban area of greater Christchurch, including towns stretching from Lincoln and Rolleston in the south to Rangiora and Woodend in the north. The Red Zone around the eastern suburbs, the Port Hills and Kaiapoi, along with the area covered by the Christchurch Central Recovery Plan, is all out of scope, and the Land Use Recovery Plan will not direct land-use decisions within those areas. However, the Land Use Recovery Plan is informed by implications of land use within those areas. (See map on next page.)

¹ The Strategic partners are the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Canterbury Regional Council, Christchurch City Council, Selwyn District Council, Waimakariri District Council, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the New Zealand Transport Agency.



4 SCOPE

The following matters may be considered by the Canterbury Regional Council in the development of the Land Use Recovery Plan, but will not be specifically addressed in the Land Use Recovery Plan: Recovery of non-land use resources such as water, air, soil, minerals and energy and all forms of plants and animals (being all other “natural and physical resources” as defined in section 2 of the RMA except for land and structures); future use of “red-zoned” land; and long-term provisions for growth and development in greater Christchurch.

The Land Use Recovery Plan will not answer all questions about insurance issues, geotechnical classification such as TC3 zoning, location of schools, natural environment recovery or a range of other matters being addressed through other work streams being led by the government, CERA or strategic partners. However, the implications for land use of those other work streams will inform, and be informed by, the preparation of the Land Use Recovery Plan.

5 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Land Use Recovery Plan is prepared under the CER Act. The Recovery Plan also needs to be consistent with the Recovery Strategy for greater Christchurch, Mahere Haumanutanga o Waitaha. The CER Act sets out the requirements for the development of Recovery Plans, and the functions and powers to assist recovery, among other things. The CER Act defines recovery as including both restoration and enhancement. Whilst the Land Use Recovery Plan has a short to medium-term focus, there will be opportunities to ‘build back better’, and ensure decisions and actions taken over the next 10-15 years have long-term benefits for greater Christchurch. However, the Land Use Recovery Plan takes into account and allows for possible

long-term benefits only to the extent that the Land Use Recovery Plan fulfils its primary purpose of enabling recovery.

Decision-making with regard to resource consents and preparing plans and strategies under the RMA and LGA must be not inconsistent with the Land Use Recovery Plan approved by the Minister. The Land Use Recovery Plan would need to be read together with and form part of the existing plans, and the Land Use Recovery Plan prevails where there is any inconsistency between it and other plans, such as district plans.

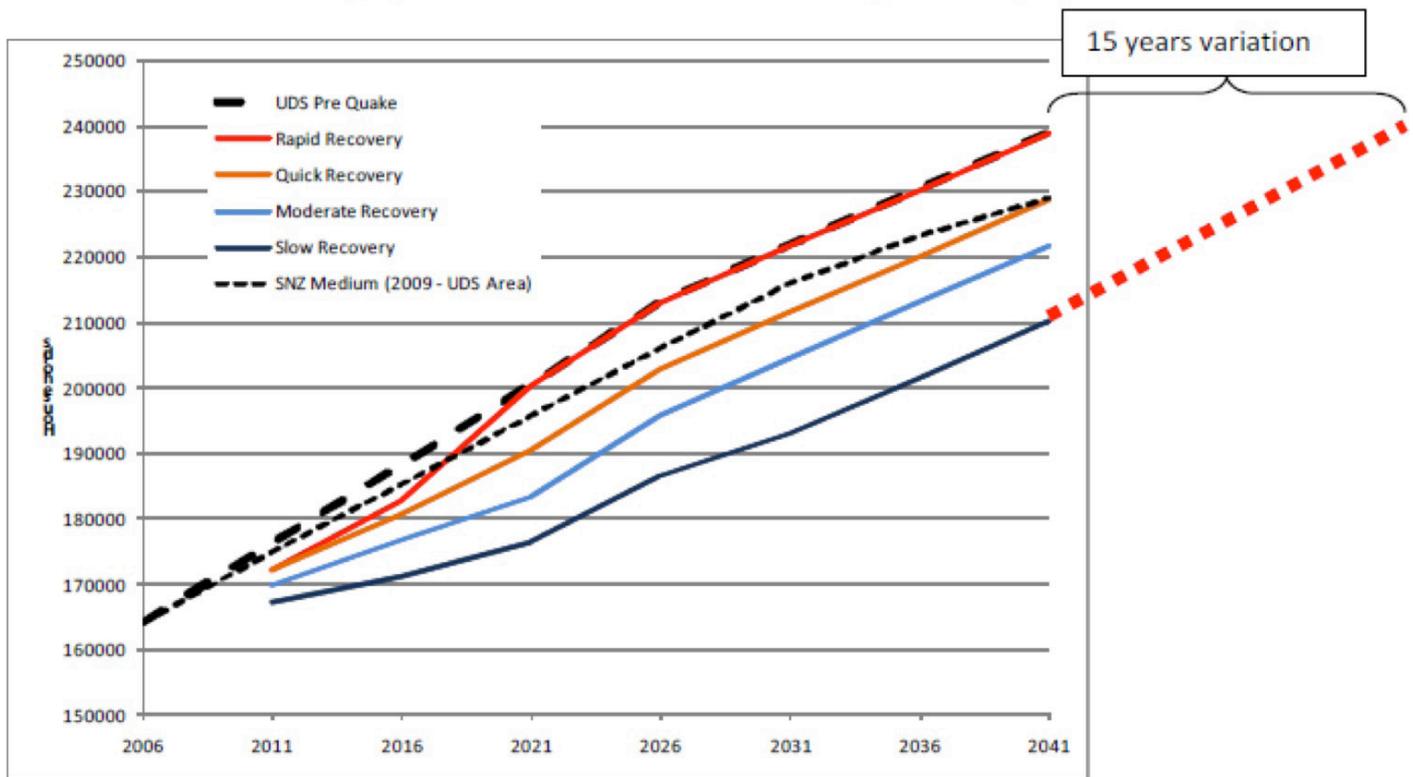
6 CONTEXT

Christchurch is the second largest city in New Zealand and largest in the South Island. Greater Christchurch has a population of around 454,700. Indications are that greater Christchurch is moving from a post-earthquake net population loss, to a net gain in migration. The total population of greater Christchurch is not anticipated to return to pre-February 2011 levels until 2016.

Source: 2006-12; Statistics New Zealand Estimates (2006 census base)		Waimakariri District	Christchurch City	Selwyn District	Greater Christchurch
Resident	2006	44,060	361,820	35,000	440,860
	2012	49,200	363,200	42,300	454,700
Census	2001-06 Av.	+1,200	+4,900	+1,300	+7,400
Annual Estimated Change	2006-07	+1,000	+3,900	+1,400	+6,300
	2007-08	+1,000	+3,200	+1,100	+5,400
	2008-09	+800	+3,700	+1,100	+5,600
	2009,10	+800	+4,000	+1,000	+5,700
	2010-11	+900	-8,900	+1,600	-6,500
	2011-12	+600	-4,500	+1,200	-2,700

There are significant variations in the location and distribution of the population compared to pre-earthquake. Since February 2011, Selwyn District is estimated to have grown by 2,700 persons and Waimakariri District by 1,580 persons. In Christchurch City there has been significant population movement, particularly away from the eastern suburbs and the city centre. This has a range of implications for the transport network and residents' proximity to employment opportunities, community facilities and entertainment and recreation. There are also a number of potential environmental effects and health impacts that arise as a result of the dispersed population, and this raises many other issues the Land Use Recovery Plan will consider.

A Household Growth Model (HGM) used by the strategic partners outlines four plausible recovery scenarios (Rapid, Quick, Moderate and Slow). The four HGM scenarios are depicted in the graph on the next page, but have not yet built in the expected demand for temporary worker accommodation or temporary rental demand to accommodate residents whilst repairs are undertaken. This model is currently being updated and integrated with other models to provide an overall picture of housing demand and supply. Initial indications are that the recovery is tracking relatively close to the moderate recovery scenario. As demonstrated by the graph, there is a divergence between the expected population pre-earthquake and the current rate of 'moderate' recovery, and a difference between the various scenarios.



7 KEY ISSUES

There is one key question that summarises the issue to be addressed by the Land Use Recovery Plan: **What needs to change as a result of the earthquakes, in terms of residential and business land use priorities, policy and planning provisions, and other tools and incentives, to enable the rebuilding and recovery of greater Christchurch?**

Some of the key issues to be considered as part of the development of the Land Use Recovery Plan, but which may or may not become part of the final draft Land Use Recovery Plan to be considered by the Minister, include:

- In the context of other residential demand, the need for a range of affordable housing options, including higher-density accommodation, rural-residential and Maori land, for:
 - Red Zone residents;
 - Non-Red Zone residents selling existing homes to Red Zone residents;
 - Non-Red Zone residents opting to build elsewhere because of constraints on rebuilding on their existing properties;
 - Accommodation for recovery workers; and
 - Short-term accommodation needs of existing residents during the repair or rebuild of their homes;
- Providing for the retail and services needs of the above residential development in conjunction with existing urban areas.
- Providing for business needs, particularly those businesses relocating.
- Providing certainty as quickly as possible to provide confidence and enable the efficient and effective use of resources, including the provision of infrastructure, by the government, councils and the wider community.

- Achieving quality development that enhances the sustainability, functionality, and desirability of greater Christchurch, including the integration of transport and land use and funding mechanisms.
- In dealing with the above issues, taking into account matters including natural hazards, existing land-use patterns, strategic infrastructure and transport networks, heritage, landscape and ecological values, and social and economic implications.
- Dealing with the fact that the developments are likely to vary in terms of the degree to which they are directly earthquake recovery related, it may not be possible to separate earthquake recovery restoration and enhancement from 'non-earthquake recovery' development.

It should be noted that not every issue might be dealt with in the Land Plan. However, the Land Use Recovery Plan will provide clear direction on land-use matters and a clear pathway on matters that will be addressed by either future iterations of the Land Use Recovery Plan, or other tools to facilitate recovery, and timelines for completing that work. These issues are discussed below in more detail and in the supporting background paper. The main issues are categorised under the headings 'Housing and residential land supply' and 'Business land supply'.

7.1 HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL LAND SUPPLY

Of the approximately 190,000 dwellings in greater Christchurch, about 91% received some sort of damage as a result of the earthquakes. Thousands of homes are either temporarily or permanently uninhabitable, creating a large unplanned demand for housing. From work undertaken to date, the key issues facing the recovery of greater Christchurch are summarised below, and explained in more detail in the Context Paper.

PERMANENT HOUSING

7.1.1 Supply & Demand

Indications suggest there is more than enough existing zoned land in Greenfield, Brownfield and infill locations for all of the anticipated permanent housing demand, for the recovery period of 10-15 years. However, there appears to be a significant difference between the amount of land identified as suitable for residential development and the number and timing of sections and houses being released onto the market. This could be attributed to a variety of matters, including availability of finance and other resources, commercial profitability, and geotechnical issues. Addressing these issues will be critical to meet demand.

7.1.2 Affordability

There is a significant gap between the median rateable values of Red Zone properties and new sections and homes on the market at present. This has placed some households under financial strain and influences the type and location of housing choice available to them. Many households may be forced to rent. There has also been a significant loss of affordable rental accommodation and social housing. These factors have the potential to increase demand for affordable housing, social housing and rental accommodation.

7.1.3 Infrastructure

There is a significant demand on infrastructure post-earthquake due to lost capacity and the need to rapidly service new urban areas. Adequate capacity in underground infrastructure to meet the

anticipated housing demand is required. The Land Use Recovery Plan is necessary to provide certainty as quickly as possible, to give confidence and enable the efficient and effective use of resources, particularly in guiding investment decisions and prioritising the rebuild and provision of new infrastructure.

7.1.4 Diversity

There has been a significant loss of higher-density housing. The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan seeks to encourage residential development within the central city to support business growth and make the city centre the thriving heart of an international city. Higher-density housing is also encouraged elsewhere, particularly adjacent to major commercial centres. However, providing housing in Greenfield areas has so far significantly outstripped Brownfield redevelopment. Providing for the appropriate mix of housing is expected to be important for the recovery.

7.1.5 Location

Natural hazards, potential impacts on strategic infrastructure, the timing and cost of providing local infrastructure, and environmental constraints all impact on the suitability of specific locations for housing. This could include issues relating to liquefaction and flooding, operation of Christchurch International Airport and the Lyttelton Port, groundwater protection zones and a range of other issues. Without clear guidance, addressing these issues can create uncertainty and delays in making decisions about the location of new housing. Consideration will need to be given to these issues when determining whether, and how, changes need to be made to the existing provision for housing.

7.1.6 Urban design and quality housing

Achieving good quality urban design of new and rebuilt urban areas is important to promote ongoing recovery. Greater Christchurch needs to remain a desirable place to live, to work and to visit, and these attributes can be achieved through good urban design. Suitable infrastructure and environmental initiatives, promoting public and active transport, and creating strong communities are important. The provision of safe, well-designed good quality housing is important also to maintain a healthy population.

TEMPORARY HOUSING

7.1.7 Short-term accommodation needs

One of the more critical recovery issues is providing for the significant temporary accommodation needs. Pressure on rental accommodation from greater Christchurch residents will continue over a number of years as many residents need to vacate Red Zone properties or relocate while homes are repaired. In addition, the temporary construction workforce will create a significant demand for temporary accommodation. There is considerable potential to provide accommodation on Brownfield sites. The provision of suitable temporary accommodation without significant adverse consequences on community livability, economic resources, the environment and transport networks, among other issues, is an important consideration.

7.2 BUSINESS LAND SUPPLY²

Greater Christchurch plays a major role as a business and employment hub for the South Island and in particular supports a range of economic activities in the wider Canterbury region. Business and

² For clarity, 'Business' refers to all employment sectors that relate to urban activities, including commercial (office and retail) and industrial land uses.

employment activity levels have proved remarkably resilient at a macro scale, but significant relocations of businesses across Christchurch continue, with a range of land-use implications.

7.2.1 Business Resilience

Official statistics and the Canterbury Economic Indicators show many measures of economic performance have returned to, or are now exceeding, levels prior to the earthquakes. However, the Tourism Sector is still considerably affected by the earthquakes due to a significant reduction in tourist accommodation capacity and a fall in guest nights spent in the sub-region.

7.2.2 Relocation & Decision-making

Between February 2011 and February 2012 the number of business locations and employees in the western suburbs increased across most industries – substantially for some. The reverse was true in the CBD for nearly all industries. A business relocation decision-making survey undertaken in September 2011 indicated less than 10% of business relocations at that stage were permanent. There will be a number of implications post-2016 when temporary consents for business premises expire. A suitable alternative supply of business land needs to be provided. While a degree of uncertainty remains for many businesses, clarity about the location, timing, quality and certainty of longer-term relocation opportunities will support decision-making.

7.2.3 Vacant Business Land

There is currently a significant amount of land zoned for business purposes to provide for the quantum of demand estimated for the timeframe of the Land Use Recovery Plan. However, issues exist around bringing the land to market, and ensuring supply of land in the appropriate location, with supporting infrastructure and without environmental constraints. Appropriate tenures and flexibility in the use of buildings are also issues influencing the provision of premises to meet demand.

7.2.4 Commercial Centres

Larger commercial centres are often also a focus for community facilities, transport hubs, and higher-density residential development. Successful commercial development in these centres contributes significantly to their ongoing viability and vitality. Certainty around the location, future composition and wider catchment of commercial centres is critical to secure investment and provision of supporting infrastructure.

7.2.5 Urban Design

Providing good quality business premises and attractive commercial centres is important to assist the recovery. There are challenges to address to ensure town and commercial centres are ‘built back better’ to provide a high-quality environment, and integrate with public and active transport choices. Providing certainty to developers and investors is critically important to assist their decision-making.

7.2.6 Infrastructure

There is significant demand on infrastructure post-earthquake, particularly the transport network and underground infrastructure. To ensure the most effective and efficient investment and to support business land supply, consideration needs to be given to the servicing of business land. The Recovery Plan should provide certainty as quickly as possible, to give confidence to business and landowners.

8 NEXT STEPS

Recovery involves the whole community, and the benefits of working together have been demonstrated post-earthquake. Environment Canterbury will speak with its partners and as many stakeholders as possible, and members of the wider community in preparing the draft Land Use Recovery Plan before presenting it to the Minister. Suggestions of how best to respond to the post-earthquake environment within the scope of the Land Use Recovery Plan are welcomed.

The key stages for the development of the draft Land Use Recovery Plan are:

December 2012	Collection of data and workshops with key stakeholder groups
December – February 2013	Development and testing of a preliminary draft Recovery Plan
March 2013	Workshops and open forum meetings with stakeholders and the community
March – April 2013	Development of a draft Recovery Plan
May 2013	Submit draft Recovery Plan to Minister. Minister calls for written comments under CER Act (minimum 4 weeks)
June 2013	Minister considers written comments and considers draft for adoption.

Public consultation will take place in March 2013, along with the release of a report of findings from consultation with key stakeholder groups consulted pre-Christmas.

The draft Land Use Recovery Plan will be publicly notified and the Minister will invite members of the public to make written comments that he will consider before determining any final Recovery Plan. The direction from the Minister does not require there to be a formal 'hearings' process.

Therefore it is important to ensure stakeholders and the community utilise opportunities to engage with Environment Canterbury during the preparation of the Land Use Recovery Plan.

MORE INFORMATION

Further information is available on the Environment Canterbury website, www.ecan.govt.nz
To discuss the Land Use Recovery Plan in more detail please contact:

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