

Christchurch Gondola Top Terminal new lease

- Summary of submissions
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Summary of Submissions

Several of those supporting the new lease highlighted the gondola's role as a key Christchurch attraction, and three others commented in appreciation of the annual passes and local value in exercise options from the top terminal down. Another requested associated mountain bike track development.

There were a number of comments about the use of the facility from submitters both in support and in opposition to the new lease, four highlighting its current under-use with suggestions for a range of additional activities to attract more custom and provide better value for money. Three suggested cheaper rates for locals.

Another two consider the terminal and surrounding area should be available for other community and educational activities, one also highlighting environmental outcomes and community partnership opportunities.

There were two opposing submitter requests for themselves or others to use the terminal facility and surrounding area for a range of community activities and wider use, including a request from the Port Hills Foundation Charitable Trust to occupy the site.

Two commented with strong concerns that the museum display is out of scope and inappropriate, believing that it is not inclusive and does not recognise tangata whenua.

Other comments and suggestions from those in opposition to the proposal include an assertion that a 30-year lease period is too long. Another provided conditional support while asking that no precedent should be set for further development on Crown Land.

Two others indicating opposition think dogs should be allowed on the gondola to use the tracks, while another two would like to see mountain bikes taken up as a condition of the lease.

Several submitters gave a range of suggestions for improvements to access and facilities such as the café and restaurant with a view, longer hours, children's and social activities. One submitter opposing the new lease identified the use of plastic cutlery as demonstrating no concern for reducing plastic waste in Christchurch.

Five submitters in opposition to the proposed new ground lease made the following key points:

- The new lease should be available to other community groups.
- There should be an opportunity for new people to compete with the current operators.
- The proposed 30-year lease term is too long.
- Single use plastic cutlery not showing concern for reducing plastic waste.
- The gondola and use of the top building has a lot of room for improvements – new operators with new ideas, lower prices, transporting dogs and bikes, additional facilities, services and hours.
- The museum experience is Eurocentric.
- No real changes to the experience, and the company should be encouraged to keep up with new knowledge and consult with local stakeholders on their proposals.

Staff consider that many of the suggestions and concerns raised in the feedback by staff relate to the operation of the gondola experience, rather than directly to the proposed granting of a new ground lease for the gondola top terminal building. However, where possible, staff have responded to comments or sought further advice, as shown in the table below.

Staff responses to submission points raised

Staff have provided the following advice and comments in response to points raised in submissions on the proposed new ground lease. Where an issue was considered to relate to the operation of the gondola experience itself, a statement has been sought from The Christchurch Gondola Limited.

Submitter issues and suggestions in relation to the proposed new ground lease for Christchurch Gondola top terminal	
Issue /suggestion No. of submitters in ()	Staff response
New lease should be open to other community groups (1) or another operator (1)	<p>The proposed new lease is a ground lease for the occupation of the land by the top terminal building only. The building is in private ownership (constructed, maintained and operated), and is a private commercial business, therefore –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building is not subject to tender by Council for a new lease or operator. • There is no obligation for community use. <p>The reserve is classified as Scenic Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 – a community organisation such as mentioned would not be consistent with the purpose of the reserve classification and therefore not a legitimate lessee.</p> <p>It should be noted that the building is situated above the Summit Road and is only accessible by aerial gondola from the base terminal building (both also owned by the current lessee), or by walking or biking. There is no public vehicle access or car-parking on site.</p>
Discount for locals in return for using ratepayers land (1)	<p>The land is not ratepayer/Council land – it is owned by the Crown, and only administered and managed by Council on behalf of the Department of Conservation.</p> <p>Ground rental is charged at full commercial rates.</p> <p>(For information on pricing and discounts refer further down the table in row 8.)</p>
Lease term of 30 years is too long (1)	<p>The right of renewal in the existing lease would have provided another 30 year length of tenure, as was expected by the lessee prior to the High Court decision and DOC directive.</p> <p>The Reserves Act 1977 would provide for a 33 year lease term, however Council has opted to offer the same 30 year period as the right of renewal would have provided.</p> <p>The 30 year period of the new lease recognises the substantial capital expenditure required in the construction of the facility.</p>
The new lease should have an enduring condition that any further encroachment onto the reserve be agreed and written into the lease conditions (1)	<p>This requirement is already in place as it is a standard condition in leases on Council owned or managed reserves that any new structures, alterations or improvements require Council approval. This is achieved through a formal report and resolution by elected members. Any extension to the lease area for new developments would similarly require a variation to the existing lease to be undertaken including a statutory public consultation and elected member approval process.</p>

<p>Extension of the gondola cableway to Lyttleton (1)</p>	<p>This is outside the scope of the current ground lease, but will be forwarded to the applicant for their consideration. Note for information – land to the south side of Mt Cavendish Reserve and into Lyttelton is partly owned by DOC and partly in private ownership.</p>
<p>Issues raised by submitters considered by staff to be outside the scope of the proposed new ground lease</p>	
<p>Issue/suggestion No. of submitters in ()</p>	<p>Staff response</p>
<p>Opportunities to enhance social/community and environmental outcomes; Promote sustainability and plastic waste minimisation</p>	<p>Community partnerships may be encouraged but must be consistent with the requirements for a Scenic Reserve under the Reserves Act 1977 and the lease conditions.</p> <p>Current Council lease documents now contain clauses re waste minimisation and sustainability, as will the new lease if approved.</p> <p>The Christchurch Gondola Ltd have provided the following information on environmental sustainability initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>" We have recently worked with a range of groups including the Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award, Te Tapuwae o Rakau Trust and Rāpaki iwi to collaboratively establish a memorial grove of 100 native trees on land at the Gondola's base station.</i> • <i>An addition to this planting is planned for 2022 with a further 60 native trees to be added to this area.</i> • <i>We have also worked with the Tūi Corridor project with plans to plant provided native trees in 2022 to re-establish native tūi habitat and encourage these native birds to return to Christchurch city.</i> <p><i>Public Transport:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A bus stop is in place outside our Gondola base station allowing easy use of public transport for guests to visit our premises.</i> • <i>Initial discussions have been held with the Christchurch City Council in setting up a storage area near our entrance for bicycle commuters: as part of this, park rangers would look at locking the Gondola gates in the evening to allow buses to arrive outside of Gondola closing times.</i> • <i>An outdoor bike rack is currently provided for guests cycling to the Gondola."</i>

<p>Bikes should be carried by the gondola/ the lease should be conditional on bikes being carried (2)</p>	<p>The Christchurch Gondola Ltd has provided the following information: <i>" We do not have external mounting options for bikes on the cabins, and we do not transport bikes inside the cabins due to the limited space.</i></p> <p><i>There is no maintained track from the Summit (Reserve Land) to the Summit Road."</i></p>
<p>Dogs should be allowed to travel on the gondola (2)</p>	<p>The Christchurch Gondola Ltd has provided the following information: <i>" The Christchurch Gondola is pleased to allow the following certified assistance dogs access to our attraction, with proof of current Identification certification from one of the following organisations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assistance Dogs NZ</i> • <i>Guide Dogs NZ</i> • <i>Hearing Dogs NZ</i> • <i>Mobility Assistance Dogs Trust</i> • <i>NZ Epilepsy Assist Dogs</i> • <i>Perfect Partners Assistance Dogs</i> <p><i>All assistance dogs must visit wearing harness or jacket with one of the above organisations logo's. No dogs will be permitted if they do not have the required evidence of certification from the above mentioned groups.</i></p> <p><i>We do not permit other dogs to the site for hygiene purposes in the complex, café and balcony."</i></p> <p>Staff note that the Council's Dog Control Policy specifies 'leashed' in Mount Cavendish and Scotts Valley Reserves.</p>

<p>The pricing is too high and/or pricing should be reduced for locals and/or to encourage greater use</p>	<p>The Christchurch Gondola Ltd have provided the following information re pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>" We engage with local schools including Heathcote, Heathcote Valley and Lyttelton to support them with vouchers and tickets for their fundraising purposes, with plans in place to approach other primary schools within the vicinity. Heathcote Valley School has also been offered our venue space free of charge for use on teacher-only days for activities offsite.</i> • <i>We also offer a reduced-rate Annual Pass allowing unlimited entry to the Gondola as well as the Christchurch Tram to make entry to these attractions more accessible for local members of our community. These passes are especially popular with families, and validity extensions have been provided after each lockdown to ensure that passholders are able to receive 12 months of uninterrupted access to these activities.</i> • <i>We provide tickets and discount vouchers to various charities, schools and community groups throughout the year to support their fundraising.</i> • <i>We offer discounts, in some cases up to 50%, for customers with disabilities and their carers to enter the Christchurch Gondola: these include discounted Annual Passes and associated carer passes."</i>
<p>A café or restaurant is essential; More activities, events and longer hours</p>	<p>There is a visitor licensed café – Red Rock Café – with current opening hours 10am -4pm 7 days per week.</p> <p>The company actively markets the venue's other restaurant and functions spaces for private business, conference and social events and promotions, including night-time use.</p> <p>It is the view of staff that current services and hours may be based on hospitality and tourism demand, and commercial viability, in the present Covid-19 pandemic, and that these may be expected to change over time as the situation evolves.</p>

<p>The museum [<i>Time Tunnel</i>] experience presents a Eurocentric story;</p> <p>Lessee should be encouraged to keep up with new knowledge and consult with stakeholders (locals and iwi) on their proposals</p> <p>(2)</p>	<p>Statement from Christchurch Attractions CEO Sue Sullivan.</p> <p><i>" Christchurch Attractions and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke are working together on the refreshment of the Time Tunnel, which will be known as the Christchurch Discovery Ride once the upgrade opens later this year.</i></p> <p><i>We acknowledge the current 17-year-old attraction needs to be updated. We believe the refreshed Christchurch Discovery Ride will be an enjoyable experience that celebrates Te Ao Māori and our multicultural city.</i></p> <p><i>The updated attraction will celebrate the history of Aotearoa, starting with the formation of Horomaka (Banks Peninsula) from volcanic activity. Our visitors will travel through native forests teeming with manu (birds), before witnessing the migration of Māori, and later the arrival of Europeans. Part of the ride includes sharing the kōrero (story) of Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke as mana whenua. The interactive tour will also highlight the ongoing impacts the Christchurch Earthquakes have had on the city 12 years on.</i></p> <p><i>Work first started on the upgrade in early 2019, but the project was temporarily put on hold when COVID-19 disrupted the tourism industry. A new script has since been written and narration featuring Pākehā and Māori was recorded last year. New technology will modernise the carts and trigger narration as visitors explore the city during the ride. Due to supply challenges, some of this technology won't arrive and be installed until the second half of the year.</i></p> <p><i>This is the first of many collaborations between Christchurch Attractions and Te Hapū o Ngāti Wheke, as we work together to ensure visitors to the Christchurch Gondola and other activities gain a deeper understanding of Te Ao Māori and the history of our city. We're excited to share the refreshed attraction with visitors when it opens before Christmas."</i></p>
<p>Promoting additional facilities external to the terminal building and ground lease – mountain bike tracks, playground (1), barbeques (1)</p>	<p>The gondola terminal only has a lease for the footprint of the building on Mount Cavendish Reserve (and for the gondola towers on Scotts Valley Reserve) therefore development of further mountain bike tracks, or a playground, or barbeque facilities, on the reserve land is outside of their mandate at this time.</p> <p>There is a network of mountain bike tracks along the Summit Road and in some adjoining reserves. Requests for more mountain bike tracks on Council reserve will be forwarded to the Regional Parks Team for consideration. It should be noted that the large Scotts Valley Reserve below the Summit Road and the gondola cableway has never had any Council built or managed mountain bike tracks, and has rock-fall issues.</p> <p>Staff consider that Council is unlikely to fund a playground or barbeque facilities under its capital programme in the Long Term Plan (LTP) solely for the use of a commercial activity on site. It is the view of staff that these facilities would not otherwise be merited in this location.</p>

