

Safer Christchurch Strategy

The Safest City In New Zealand

Safer
CHRISTCHURCH

Christchurch
City Council



October 2008



Feeling safe in our homes and community is a basic human right which enables us all to live rich, fulfilling lives.

The safety of Christchurch's residents and visitors to our city has always been a priority, the Safer Christchurch Strategy recognising this commitment through its vision to make Christchurch the safest city in New Zealand.

The 2007 *Quality of Life in 12 of New Zealand's Cities* report found Christchurch was the city with the lowest percentage of residents who felt safe in their city centre after dark. It is these perceptions of safety which affect people's view of their living environment and impact on their daily well-being.

Communities which are safe give people a sense of belonging and of being valued. As a result, these communities are likely to be healthier places than those where people feel unsafe and excluded. It is perceptions of safety which will take the longest to change.

As Chair of the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group which oversees the Safer Christchurch Strategy, I am proud of our city's achievements in the first three years operating under the Strategy and in particular our achievement of being designated an International Safe Community based on criteria developed by the World Health Organisation.

What has been most rewarding has been the commitment and genuine desire by the 21 Safer Christchurch partners to work collaboratively to target injury prevention and community safety, and the whole of community response for creating a safe city.

While considerable progress has been made during the first three years, much still remains to be done as Christchurch strives to maintain its status as an International Safe Community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Parker'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bob Parker
Mayor of Christchurch

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Introduction

The Safer Christchurch Strategy was developed in 2005, the first community safety strategy for Christchurch. Reviewed in 2008, the Strategy aims to make Christchurch a safer place to live, work, play and learn by setting the strategic direction for the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group.

The Strategy focuses on three key areas – injury prevention, road safety and crime prevention – with the aim of making Christchurch the safest city in New Zealand. All initiatives under the Strategy have guided Christchurch in achieving accreditation in 2008 as an International Safe Community based on criteria developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The city must now strive to maintain this status with five-yearly reviews of its performance.

The four goals and objectives of the Safer Christchurch Strategy recognise all the contributions by community organisations and government agencies which contribute to community safety in Christchurch.

The Strategy will be regularly reviewed, to ensure the action plan for each goal reflects new and/or emerging issues that may be appropriate for consideration under the Strategy.



The Strategy is overseen by the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group, which comprises:

- Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)
- Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB)
- Christchurch City Council (CCC)
- Christchurch Police
- Department of Internal Affairs
- Families sector representative
- Healthy Christchurch
- Housing New Zealand
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs
- Ministry of Social Development – Child Youth and Family
- Ministry of Social Development – Family and Community Services
- Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income
- New Zealand Fire Service
- New Zealand Transport Agency
- Older Persons sector representative
- Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu
- The Department of Corrections
- Youth sector representative

The member organisations of Safer Christchurch are bound by their own statements of intent and strategic directions, however terms of reference have been developed to shape the way the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group will work together.

Principles

The following principles will guide the implementation of this strategy:

- Collective action – the whole community has a role to play in injury prevention and safety promotion.
- Collaboration and coordination – central and local government, iwi, non-government organisations, community organisations and safety networks work together for the benefit of the community.
- Proactive rather than reactive – where possible we will anticipate and respond to issues within Christchurch.

International Frameworks

International Safe Communities is a World Health Organisation (WHO) initiative recognising safety as “a universal concern and a responsibility for all”.

The WHO Safe Communities model creates an infrastructure in local communities for addressing safety and injury prevention initiatives through building local partnerships. The model is recognised world-wide as an effective intervention in safety promotion and injury prevention.

Accreditation as a WHO International Safe Community provides recognition for the efforts of the various organisations and individuals working together to design and implement strategies to promote safety and reduce the incidence and/or severity of injury in their population.

National Frameworks

A range of organisations across New Zealand share the goal of enhancing the safety of New Zealand communities. In the areas of injury prevention, road safety and crime prevention, significant direction in this Strategy has been taken from key national organisational strategies and initiatives.

Each organisational strategy has a clear theme of collaboration and coordination among key stakeholders, which also guides the Safer Christchurch Strategy.

For the Safer Christchurch Strategy, this has translated into a need to develop actions and planning processes that coordinate and complement the capabilities, responsibilities and efforts of stakeholders. An awareness of the goals and priorities of these groups has helped to inform the approach taken in this Strategy, as well as the development of terms of reference which outlines how the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group works together.

Local Frameworks

The Local Government Act 2002 has changed the way in which the Christchurch City Council plans for its community. A key theme for this planning process is an emphasis on the will of the community and the coordination of planning and activities across all sectors.

Through its Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP), the Christchurch City Council has engaged in a process of identifying priorities for action in Christchurch. Nine community outcomes guide Council activity to help create the kind of community in which Christchurch residents want to live. One of these outcomes is a Safe City, where rates of crime and injury are declining and people feel safe in their homes and community.

Traditionally, the nation-wide network of Safer Community Councils and Road Safety Coordinating Committees has managed the coordination role of crime and road safety efforts on behalf of local government. In 2003, the Safer Community Council network was wound up. Central Government, through the Crime Prevention Unit, then sought stronger partnerships directly with local authorities, iwi and Pacific peoples to create joint leadership, decision-making and funding of crime prevention efforts.

The Safer Christchurch Interagency Group represents Christchurch’s response to this shift in responsibility, importantly incorporating not only crime prevention but road safety and injury prevention to align the three areas.

Healthy Christchurch (modelled on the WHO Healthy Cities concept) is an intersectoral network launched in early 2002. It is based on the concept that all sectors and groups have a role to play in creating a healthy city. More than 200 organisations have signed the Healthy Christchurch Charter, which sets out the principles and protocols of how the signatories will work together “to promote, protect and improve the health and well-being of the people of Christchurch”.

A safe city is a key component of a healthy city, and therefore, Healthy Christchurch and the Safer Christchurch Strategy have strong links. For example, most of the agencies involved in Safer Christchurch are signatory organisations to Healthy Christchurch.

Strategic Direction

The following outlines the strategic direction and specific goals and objectives to be undertaken. This should be read with the implementation plan.

Aim: Christchurch is the safest city in New Zealand.

Goals

- 1. Reduce the incidence of injury in our community**
 - Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence of injury.
 - 2. Enhance safety on our roads**
 - Support the implementation of the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy.
 - 3. Enhance safety from crime through preventative and supportive actions**
 - Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence and effect of crime.
 - 4. Support safety and injury prevention through collaboration and coordination**
 - Ensure there are collaborative relationships built between central government, local government, iwi, non-government organisations and the community sector.
- > **Do we feel safe in Christchurch?'**
- 94% of us feel safe at home after dark
 - 78% of us feel safe in our neighbourhood after dark
 - 38% of us feel safe in the city centre after dark



Safer Christchurch Interagency Group

Working to maintain Christchurch's accreditation as a World Health Organisation International Safe Community is the aim of the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group.



The above diagram demonstrates the structure of Safer Christchurch and the alignment of the three goal areas.

The Safer Christchurch Strategy seeks to strengthen, coordinate and/or complement the safety aspirations of those government agencies and community organisations already actively involved in safety promotion and injury prevention in Christchurch.

The overarching aim of the strategy is for Christchurch to become the safest city in New Zealand. The following four goals work towards the fulfilment of this aim:

Goal 1 focuses on reducing injuries in our community in line with the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy, whose goal is 'a safe New Zealand, becoming injury free'. It seeks to align and coordinate activity already happening in injury prevention in Christchurch and to support and where appropriate develop initiatives that contribute to injury prevention, intentional and unintentional.

Goal 2 seeks improved road safety through the endorsement and support of the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy 2004. This strategy represents the culmination of significant research and expertise into an effective plan for improved road safety outcomes to 2009. The Safer Christchurch Interagency Group recognises the significant time and knowledge invested in this strategy, affirms its aspirations and seeks to assist with successful implementation.

Goal 3 reflects the breadth of factors that contribute to safe environments and incorporates a focus on actions to prevent crime in our community. The goal focuses on the promotion and implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles (CPTED). This goal also seeks to support the efforts of locally led projects which prevent crime in the community.

Goal 4 seeks to support safety and injury prevention through collaboration and cooperation. This looks particularly at initiatives that will support the whole strategy in terms of structural support, a sustained communication plan and coordination around funding for implementation. Maintaining World Health Organisation accreditation as an International Safe Community is a key focus of goal four which provides recognition for the efforts of the various organisations and individuals working together to make Christchurch the safest city in New Zealand.

The four goals seek to contribute to improved experiences and feelings of safety in Christchurch through coordination and collaboration with other partners, environmental design and behavioural change. The objectives within each goal outline the focus for action for the life course of this Strategy. The goals and objectives seek to strengthen, coordinate and/or complement existing work being undertaken in safety promotion and injury prevention and build on this work, which have contributed to Christchurch City becoming a WHO accredited International Safe Community.

The Strategy in Context

The overarching aim of the Safer Christchurch Strategy is for Christchurch to become the safest city in New Zealand. This aligns with the community outcomes and the Long Term Council Community Plan for Christchurch. Specifically, the people of Christchurch want:

A Safe City

“We live free from crime, violence, abuse and injury. We are safe at home and in the community. Risks from hazards are managed and mitigated.”

We will know we are succeeding when:

Rates of crime and injury decline:

- Rates of juvenile offending decline.
- Child abuse and family violence decrease.
- Vehicle crashes decline.
- Alcohol is a less significant cause of crime and injury.

People feel safe at all times in Christchurch city:

- We feel safe in our homes and neighbourhoods.
- We feel safe in the central city, especially at night.
- Pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and people with disabilities can safely move around our city.
- We feel safe using public transport.
- We are well prepared for natural hazards.

We have excellent safety networks, support people and services:

- We know our neighbours.
- Excellent support and prevention services are readily available.
- We are confident in our Police, judiciary and other justice services.

A group of outcome measures or indicators has been developed to track our progress towards these community outcomes. These indicators are drawn from the Christchurch City Council’s and other organisations’ monitoring projects and databases. Key indicators used to measure safety include total offences, perceptions of safety, hospital treatment for accidents, road casualty statistics and notifications to Child, Youth and Family.



Goal 1

Reduce the incidence of injury in our community

Objective: Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence of injury.

Why is this important?

Injury in New Zealand, both intentional and unintentional, is the leading cause of death among people aged between 1 and 34 years. It is the second leading cause of hospitalisation. In childhood, injury accounts for about 60% of all deaths. By adolescence and young adulthood, injury (including suicides) accounts for about 80% of deaths in New Zealand (Safe Communities Foundation NZ, 2008)².

In Christchurch, between 1996 and 2000, 646 people died as the result of injury. Between 1998 and 2002, 17,794 people were hospitalised. An analysis of Christchurch hospitalisation data by the Injury Prevention Christchurch: Community Injury Prevention and Safety Project (2002) revealed that the top five injury risk areas were:

- Falls (particularly in older people 65+).
- Sports, workplace and home injuries.
- Road and motor vehicle crashes.
- Suicide and self-inflicted injury.
- Violence (injury purposely inflicted by other persons).

Injury prevention allows continued quality of life for individuals and families/whanau, minimises disruption and increases productivity for businesses and service organisations. The wider community also gains from a safer, more positive and more productive population, and from decreased demands on the health care system due to injury.

How should Goal 1 be addressed?

The emphasis on injury prevention is strongly reflected at a national level. The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and the Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ) have identified key strategies for becoming an injury free community. The New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy (NZIPS) presents Central Government's strategic framework for injury prevention activity in New Zealand. The SCFNZ will assist with achieving the NZIPS vision of "a safe New Zealand, becoming injury free" and its goals of "developing a positive safety culture and safe environments". The key approach of the SCFNZ in pursuing this goal is to advocate for and facilitate the development of New Zealand cities as World Health Organisation International Safe Communities (Coggan, 2004)³.

Locally, injury prevention is already the focus of a number of organisations. Significant research has been invested into considering the impact of injury on Christchurch and ways to alleviate this. In 2002, the Injury Prevention Christchurch: Community Injury Prevention and Safety Project made a number of clear recommendations for action. These included the establishment of an intersectoral advisory group and the development of an action plan to coordinate injury prevention activity.

The Safer Christchurch Strategy affirms the recommendations of Injury Prevention Christchurch: Community Injury Prevention and Safety Project, and recognises the impact that high injury rates currently have in our community. It seeks to alleviate these impacts by investing in a long-term, whole-of-city approach to injury prevention.

- > From July 2006 to June 2007, Christchurch people made 11,580 new injury claims to the Accident Compensation Corporation, costing \$60,985,960⁴.
- > In 2007/2008 in Christchurch City, ACC handled 690 road-related claims; a 2.4% decrease on forecast claims for that time period⁵.

Goal 2

Enhance safety on our roads

Objective: **Support the implementation of the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy 2004.**

Why is this important?

As stated in Road Safety to 2010, our national plan for improving road safety in New Zealand, “Road crashes impose a massive and unacceptable burden of death, pain and suffering on New Zealanders.”

Nationally, the past five years have seen a decline in fatalities and injuries in New Zealand. However, most recently, these declines have reached a plateau and then risen slightly⁶. The number of fatal and serious injury crashes (216) was higher in 2007 than previous years. The annual numbers have fluctuated with no obvious trend. There were also more minor injury and non-injury crashes in 2007 than previous years⁷. Over the last five years the number of crashes at intersections has shown a slight upward trend⁸.

In Christchurch fatalities are trending down, but serious casualties went up in 2007, as did minor casualties. Some of this may be due to better reporting of cyclist casualties. It also reflects an increase in motorcyclist casualties. Pedestrian casualties as a percentage of all road casualties have declined. Alcohol and speed are still major crash factors. In terms of national comparisons, driver and passenger casualties are lower than the national average, but cyclist and motorcyclist casualties are higher⁹. Consequently, the Safer Christchurch Strategy acknowledges the need to provide continued support for road safety initiatives.

How should Goal 2 be addressed?

New Zealand Transport Agency is the lead agency for transport safety in New Zealand. The provision of a safe transport system however, lies in a collaborative approach by national, regional and local agencies and authorities involved in transportation and community wellbeing. In these ways, local approaches to road safety develop with a close appreciation of national road safety issues and initiatives.

The key local initiative to improving road safety outcomes was recently released in the form of the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy (CRSS). The CRSS reflects a national framework for improving road safety and builds on preceding local activities to improve road safety. The Christchurch Road Safety Strategy is designed to contribute to a region-wide direction established in the Canterbury Regional Land Transport Strategy. Its strategic goals are also aligned with goals in the National Road Safety Plan, and are consistent with the New Zealand Transport Strategy, and Road Safety to 2010. It is also integrated with other Christchurch City Council strategies such as the Cycling Strategy, the Pedestrian Strategy and the Parking Strategy.

The Safer Christchurch Strategy recognises the value of improved road safety outcomes and the opportunity to pursue this through an established framework.

The Christchurch Road Safety Strategy is designed to help the Christchurch community work together to create safer roads and safer road user behaviour. It provides strategic direction for local action that reflects a wider national policy context by identifying issues, goals and objectives for continually improving road safety work in Christchurch for the next five years.

> Three out of four Christchurch people think dangerous driving including drink driving and speeding is a problem for the city¹⁰.

Goal 3

Enhance safety from crime through preventative and supportive actions

Objective: Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence and effect of crime.

Why is this important?

When considering community safety, neither the experience nor the threat of crime can be overlooked. Both in reality and perception, crime has negative implications for the quality of life of our residents. For individuals, crime can be emotionally, physically and economically devastating with effects that are not always, if ever, alleviated. For the community, crime can inhibit the development of strong networks and can put pressure on community and police resources.

Perceptions of safety among Christchurch residents during the daytime are favourable in comparison to the 11 other largest cities in New Zealand (*Quality of Life in 12 of New Zealand's Cities 2007*). Since 2000, perceptions of safety in homes and neighbourhoods during the daytime have improved. In 2007, 98% of Christchurch respondents felt safe in their homes during the day.

With perceptions of safety after dark however, Christchurch residents feel less safe in comparison to the 12 other largest cities in New Zealand (*Quality of Life in 12 of New Zealand's Cities 2007*). In 2007, only 58% of respondents felt safe walking in their neighbourhood after dark. In the city centre, 93% of respondents indicated that they felt safe by themselves during the day. However, after dark only 38% of respondents said they felt safe by themselves at night, the lowest rating for all 12 cities (*Quality of Life in 12 of New Zealand's Cities 2007*).

How should Goal 3 be addressed?

Objective one and two address the adoption of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles.

The use of planning and design as a means of reducing crime and fear of crime is an activity that can contribute to improving the safety of our community.

Since 2003 the Christchurch City Council, as a member of the Canterbury Safety Working Party, has worked to develop clear guidelines for local councils, businesses, home owners and individuals for ready access, understanding and adoption of CPTED practices. The first of these guidelines have recently been released.

CPTED recognises that opportunities for crime and levels of fear of crime can be influenced by the design of buildings and the arrangement of streets, parks and other outdoor spaces (Canterbury Safety Working Party, 2004). The major principle of CPTED is: Natural Surveillance – “See and Be Seen”. That is, people are less likely to commit crime if they are, or think that they are, being watched. People are also likely to feel safer if they think that someone is looking out for them (Canterbury Safety Working Party, 2004).

CPTED design principles are already incorporated into the planning processes of many local authorities throughout New Zealand. Consequently, it is seen at this time to be a minimum expectation that CPTED become established as a planning approach for Christchurch.

The Safer Christchurch Strategy seeks to incorporate CPTED principles into the practice and policy of the Christchurch City Council and make residents and the building profession aware of the actions that can be taken.

Objective three addresses the value of targeted, community-based approaches to enhancing safety and/or reducing the incidence and effect of crime.

Christchurch City Council has made provision in the 2008/09 financial year for the establishment and operation of the Christchurch Safe City Officers (CSCO's) programme, with ongoing provision of the CSCO's programme being provided for in the draft 2009/19 LTCCP. The CSCO's will patrol designated areas of the central city where they will provide a reassuring presence for users of the area and a visible deterrent to those contemplating, or involved in, anti-social behaviour or crime. The CSCO's have a role in increasing public confidence in the central city's night-time economy. The Council also made provision in its 2008/09 financial year to extend the CCTV coverage to assist community safety throughout the central city.

A range of groups and organisations currently contribute to crime reduction/prevention in Christchurch. Different organisations take varied approaches to reducing the incidence and effect of crime. In this context, the Safer Christchurch Strategy focuses on ways in which it can contribute to preventative actions to complement existing activities.

The ongoing activities of local agencies and groups make a significant contribution to the aspiration of this Strategy for a Safer Christchurch. For this reason it is important that the work of these groups is able to continue. The Strategy recognises the contribution of these groups, respects their expertise in their chosen field and supports the activities.

Through this objective, the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group can take a collaborative and cooperative approach to planning and bidding for crime prevention project funding.



Goal 4

Support safety and injury prevention through collaboration and coordination

Objective: **Ensure that there are collaborative relationships built between central government, local government, iwi, non-government organisations and the community sector.**

Why is this important?

Safe communities is a World Health Organisation (WHO) concept that recognises safety as “a universal concern and a responsibility for all”. The WHO Safe Communities model creates an infrastructure in local communities for addressing safety and injury prevention initiatives through local partnerships. This approach to safety promotion and injury prevention mobilises local community members to action and encourages greater cooperation and collaboration between non-government organisations, the business sector, central and local government agencies (Coggan, 2004).

Gaining accreditation required a significant level of commitment, coordination and dedication from interested and affected parties. For Christchurch, gaining accreditation as a World Health Organisation Safe Community represented a strategy for pursuing safety and injury free environments that reflect the aspirations of the local community within a national and an international context.

How should goal 4 be addressed?

The Safer Christchurch Interagency Group have a role to play in not only providing leadership, support and coordination for the Safer Christchurch Strategy but a role in the coordination of resources for the Strategy to be implemented including retaining the city’s status as a WHO International Safe Community.

The Strategy’s four goals and various objectives were developed and have been reviewed to ensure new and emerging issues are reflected in the action plan for the Safer Christchurch Interagency Group during the next three years. These are developed with an appreciation of the contributions made by the various community organisations and government agencies to community safety in Christchurch.

Significant progress has been made during the first three years in all areas of the Strategy but there is still much to be done. The Strategy recognises the safety of Christchurch citizens and visitors to the city is a priority and that the greatest achievements will be made through collaboration and co-operation. It is these partnerships which enable Christchurch to effectively target injury prevention and community safety.

Reflected in the new action plan are the issues associated with boy racers, graffiti and alcohol use and abuse.

- > In 2007, the total number of recorded offences in Christchurch was 37,704, 6,217 fewer than the high of 43,921 in 1997¹¹.
- > Christchurch residents are significantly more likely to say graffiti is a problem in their city (72%) compared to a national average of 59%.
- > The proportion of Christchurch residents saying graffiti is a problem has increased from 47% in 2004 to 72% in 2006¹².

Implementation Plan

Aim: Christchurch is the Safest City in New Zealand

Goal One: Reduce the Incidence of Injury in our Community.

Objective: Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence of injury.

2008 Action

1. Support and develop initiatives that prevent falls.

2. Support and develop initiatives that prevent sports injuries.

3. Identify and develop initiatives that reduce childhood injuries.

4. Ensure an integrated approach to alcohol-related harm with crime prevention and road safety.

5. Support neighbourhood-based initiatives which aim to reduce injuries.

6. Support initiatives targeted at minimising the rates of suicide and self-harm.



Goal Two: Enhance Safety on Our Roads.

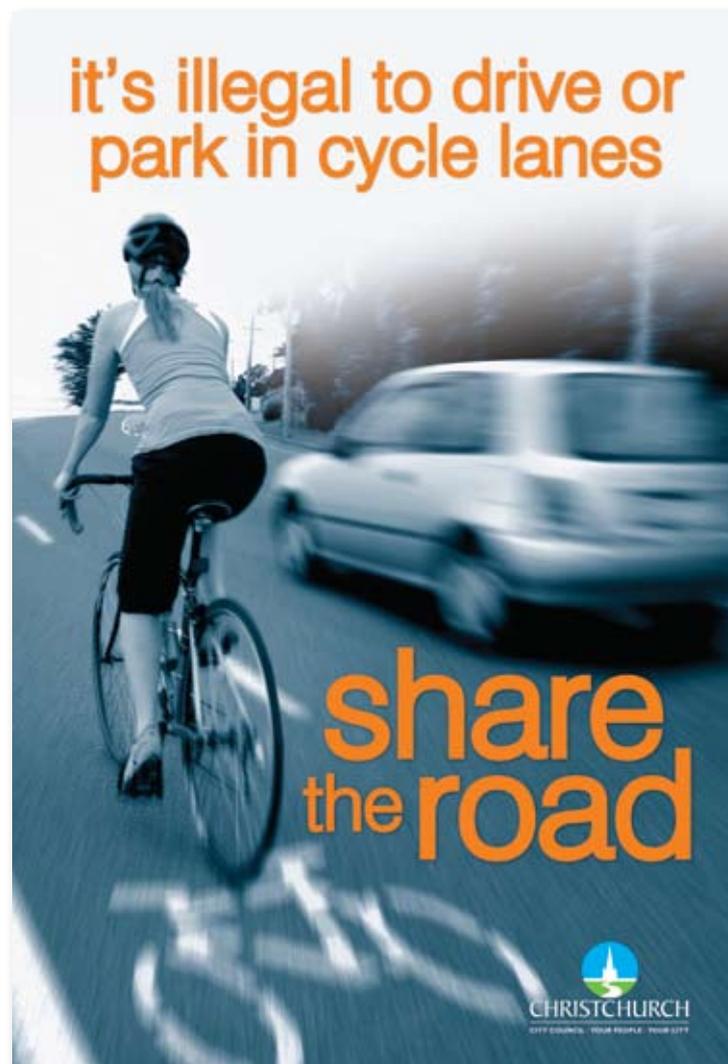
Objective: Support the implementation of the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy.

2008 Action

1. Support the Christchurch Road Safety Strategy as the mechanism to enhance safety on our roads.

2. Support initiatives targeted at minimising alcohol-related harm ensuring an integrated approach with injury and crime prevention.

3. Support community-based initiatives which enhance road safety.



Goal Three: Enhance Safety from Crime through Preventive and Supportive Actions.

Objective: Provide active support to locally led initiatives that make significant contributions to reducing the incidence and effect of crime.

2008 Action

1. Maintain a programme of training and community awareness in CPTED principles including safety audits for all appropriate staff at Christchurch City Council and Christchurch Police.

2. Support crime prevention and alcohol-related harm initiatives which seek to reduce violence and increase safety in the central city.

3. Support initiatives which reduce the incidence of Family Violence (FV), Child Abuse and Elder Abuse.

4. Support neighbourhood based initiatives which aim to reduce crime and to increase opportunities for neighbourhoods to connect.

5. Support initiatives around the restoration and wellbeing of victims.

6. To support reintegration back into the community.



Goal Four: Support Safety and Injury Prevention through Collaboration and Coordination

Objective: Ensure there are collaborative relationships built between central government, local government, iwi, non-government organisations and the community sector.

2008 Action

1. The Safer Christchurch Interagency Group will meet on a regular basis as the governance group for the Safer Christchurch Strategy and support and maintain coordinating committees for each goal area of crime, injury and road.
2. Injury prevention and safety promotion networks are built and maintained locally, nationally and internationally.
3. Maintain International Safe Community Accreditation.
4. Co-ordinate funding to implement the Safer Christchurch Strategy.
5. Ensure all projects initiated through Safer Christchurch are evaluated.
6. Develop a media strategy to enhance public awareness around perception of crime and safety and injury prevention activity.



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