

Getting Canterbury Rolling

Social Credit's plan for Canterbury Passenger Rail



Long time rail advocate and Kaikoura Social Credit candidate John McCaskey proposed a "By Rail to Christchurch" plan more than 20 years ago to establish a passenger rail service between Waipara and Christchurch.

That became the genesis for the development of Social Credit's extended plan for Canterbury Passenger Rail.

Christchurch, New Zealand's third largest city, has more cars per person than anywhere else in the country and is developing all the transport woes that plague the two largest.

A plan to move commuters into and out of the city centre is needed now, before gridlock, pollution, and wasted productive time becomes even worse.

Moving passengers by rail reduces traffic congestion, is more environmentally friendly, doesn't involve taking more precious farmland for roads, and supports economic progress` and connectivity to rural centres - something the rest of the world has known for years.

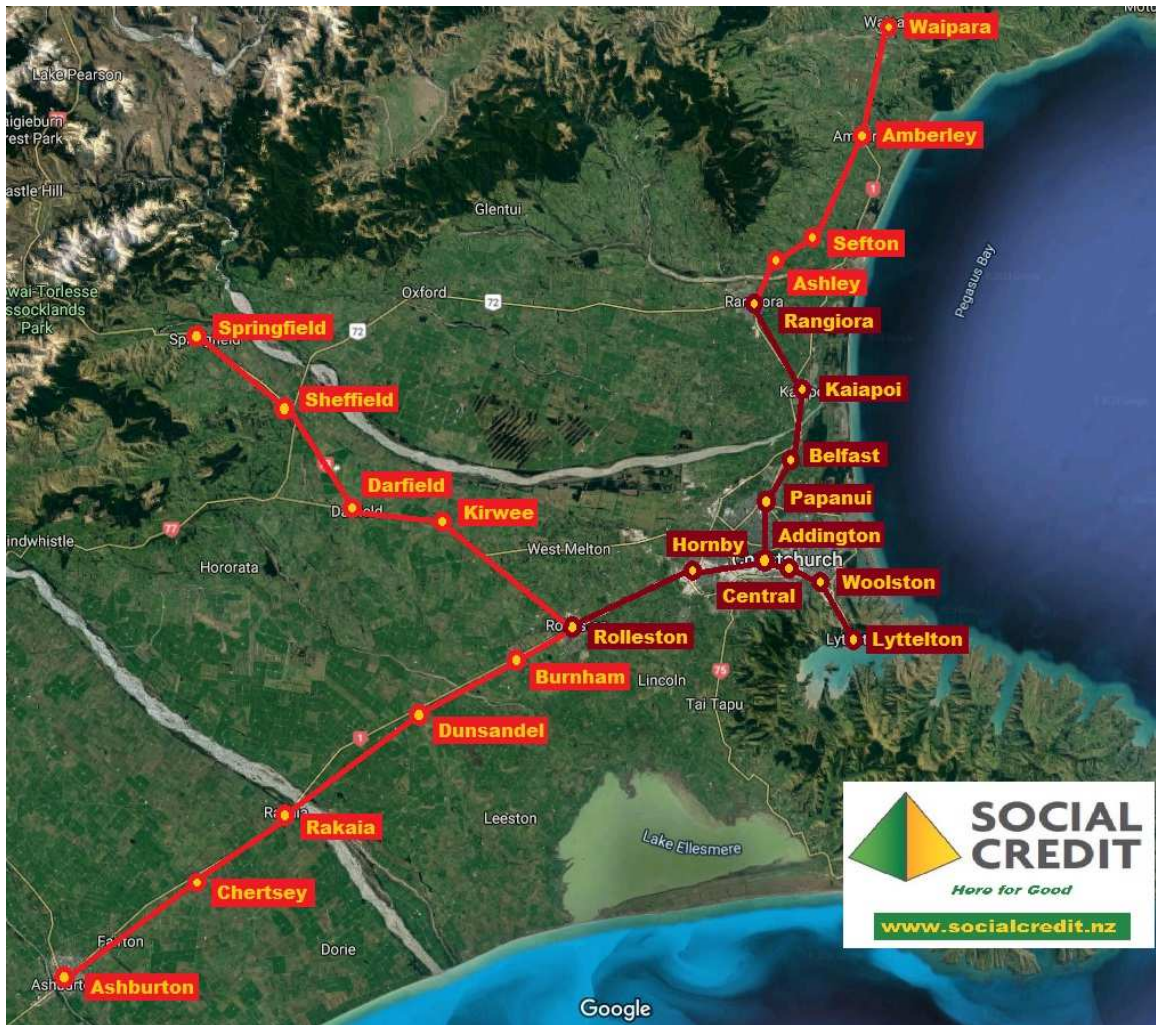
Other countries have got on and done it.

Most of the basic infrastructure is already in place.

While many proposals have been floated over the years, most have quietly sunk into obscurity, often because an avenue of funding has not been forthcoming.

Social Credit is the only political party with the funding mechanism to be able to fill in the gaps and establish a full Canterbury passenger rail service, with minimal cost to ratepayers or taxpayers.

What follows is an outline of what Social Credit thinks that plan could look like.



Basic requirements

- Urgent negotiations need to be undertaken with the owners of the former Addington Saleyards site to establish a Provincial Rail Centre on Deans Ave as part of the re-development of the site. Significant benefits to the proposed hotel complex would accrue.
- Use of currently unused and soon to be redundant Auckland commuter trains will reduce initial costs until patronage trends become apparent and newer equipment is purchased.
- Station platforms and shelters will need to be built at some sites, and existing facilities upgraded at others.
- Park and ride facilities will need to be provided wherever possible.
- The school bus fleet, unused in the early morning and late afternoon could provide feeder services to stations.
- Building a road overpass or underpass on Whiteleigh Ave to take the additional traffic generated (initially bus, bike, and pedestrian).



Proposed Deans Ave Rail Station

Buslane in Red with attached Cycle lane & footpath

Rail lines about the terminal building, in grey, with enough room for retail etc

Taxi/rideshare Parking in pink

Plenty of room for the proposed hotel and backpackers on site



Part 1 - Waipara and Christchurch

A frequent and reliable commuter train service between Waipara and Christchurch Central.

- Proposed stops at Waipara; Amberley; Sefton; Ashley; Rangiora; Kaiapoi; Belfast; Papanui; Deans Ave, Christchurch.
- Each workday, a train (with wi-fi facilities for commuter use) leaving @ 6.45am Waipara - Glenmark Station - (with park & ride facilities).
- Two minute stops at each of the stations noted above. Return ex Christchurch departing between 5pm and 5.30 pm.
- This service should have a one way time of 70 minutes. Fares could be based on those proposed for the Hamilton - Auckland 88 min journey (\$12.20 per person). Similar pricing could apply.
- If demand is there, an additional middle of the day return service to Rangiora to cater for those needing only a half day in Christchurch.

Part 2 - Springfield and Christchurch

A frequent and reliable commuter train service between Springfield and Christchurch Central.

- Proposed stops at Springfield; Sheffield; Darfield; Kirwee; Rolleston; Templeton; Hornby; Middleton; Deans Ave, Christchurch.
- Each workday, a train (with wi-fi facilities for commuter use) leaving Springfield @ 6.15am from a new "Springfield Station" (with park & ride facilities) at the current Springfield railyard.
- Two minute stops at each of the stations noted above. Return ex Christchurch departing between 5pm and 5.30 pm.
- This service should have a one way time of 90 minutes. Fares could be based on those proposed for the Hamilton - Auckland 88 min journey (\$12.20 per person). Similar pricing could apply.
- If demand is there, an additional middle of the day return service to Rolleston to cater for those needing only a half day in Christchurch.

Part 3 - Lyttleton and Christchurch

A frequent and reliable commuter railcar service between Lyttleton and Christchurch Central.

- Proposed stops at Lyttleton; Ferrymead; Woolston; Morehouse Ave.
- Each workday, a railcar (with wi-fi facilities for commuter use) leaving Lyttleton @ 7.30am from a new Lyttleton Station (with park & ride facilities) at the current Lyttleton railyard.
- Two minute stops at each of the stations noted above. Return ex Christchurch departing between 5pm and 5.30 pm.
- This service should have a one way time of 25 minutes.
- An additional middle of the day return service to Lyttleton to cater for those needing only a half day in Christchurch.

Part 4 - Ashburton and Christchurch

A frequent and reliable commuter train service between Ashburton and Christchurch Central.

- Proposed stops at Ashburton; Chertsey; Rakaia; Dunsandel; Burnham; Rolleston; Deans Ave, Christchurch.
- Each workday, a train (with wi-fi facilities for commuter use) leaving Ashburton @ 6.15am from a new Ashburton Station (with park & ride facilities) at the current Ashburton railyard.
- Two minute stops at each of the stations noted above. Return ex Christchurch departing between 5pm and 5.30 pm.
- This service should have a one way time of 90 minutes. Fares could be based on those proposed for the Hamilton - Auckland 88 min journey (\$12.20 per person). Similar pricing could apply.

Putting the plan into action

A “commuter” division of Kiwirail will be tasked with running the passenger rail operation and building as much of the rail hardware and rolling stock as possible. This would revitalise staff training, workshop capacity, and develop a local skills base which could be extended to other parts of the country.

Looking to the future

- Reinstatement of an expanded a free bus service around the central city which would link to the new provincial rail centre and the Orbiter service.
- Upgrades to all rail crossings in the Canterbury Region.
- A focus on enabling the building of high density housing along the commuter lines.
- Investigating the feasibility of a light rail service to New Brighton, a new East Christchurch transport hub, and a light rail service to the Airport via the University.
- Moving the Middleton Kiwirail yards to Rolleston and using that land for high density housing.
- Investigation into acquiring the Fulton Hogan Yards in Charleston for high density housing and a potential future station.
- Planning for hydrogen powered trains and hydrogen generation plants.

Conclusion

The time for more reports is over. It's time for action.

Social Credit is the only political party with the funding mechanism to be able to fill in the gaps and establish a full Canterbury Passenger Rail Service, with minimal cost to ratepayers or taxpayers.

New Zealand commercial banks created \$32 billion of new digital money in the last 12 months.

The current government has just announced proposals to fund a significant infrastructure programme by borrowing from those commercial banks and private sector investors – loading the burden of interest payments onto current and future taxpayers. (A national government would do the same).

Social Credit would not borrow money from those sources but instead fund projects from the Reserve Bank (owned by the government on behalf of the public).

That funding (quantitative easing for infrastructure [QEFI]) could be provided at no cost to ratepayers, taxpayers, or the government, as no external borrowing would be required.

Cost benefit analysis reports that drag on for years are not required either.

The cost benefit to people – in reduced stress, less pollution, more productive travel time, social interaction, wellbeing, etc – are the measures against which this nature of project should be judged. On those measures, this project is a win win because it puts people first.

The funding is the easiest input to the project.

While the details of the rail plan need to be fleshed out, and small changes may be appropriate, should Social Credit get sufficient MPs in parliament in 2020, there is nothing stopping the plan getting underway within weeks of the election.