
**DIGITAL EARTH '06, SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABILITY,
AUCKLAND, AUGUST 27-30 2006**

1. Purpose of Report

To provide information on and to seek approval for one elected member to attend the Digital Earth '06 summit on sustainability to be held in Auckland, 27-30 August 2006.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Approve the attendance of one elected member at the Digital Earth '06 summit on sustainability to be held in Auckland, 27-30 August 2006 and that the costs associated with attending the meeting are met from the Elected Members Budget (GVEM01).*
3. *Note that there is a LGNZ Zone 4 meeting and a St James Theatre charitable trust meeting scheduled on Tuesday 29 August 2006 and a Wellington Waterfront Board Meeting, an agenda meeting for Strategy and Policy Committee of 14 September, a Strategy and Policy Committee and a Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday 30 August 2006.*
4. *Note that a report back on the meeting will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee in accordance with Council policy.*

3. Discussion

The Digital Earth summit will focus specifically on sustainability, and how technology and the data it provides can be harnessed to develop information which will monitor, measure and forecast natural and human activity on the planet. This data, which can focus on specific areas of the planet, can then be used to tackle the issue of the planet's sustainable long term survival. Because the technology has been refined for just over a decade, the Digital Earth project has become increasingly popular in the present because problems, previously thought un-quantifiable, have become (through using the technology) within reach of being solved.

The Digital Earth 'movement' was developed by NASA in the late 1990s and is built upon the World Wide Web. Basically, Digital Earth is a series of computers linked together enabling specific global data to be entered and assessed in an interactive and

graphic manner, free of complicated technical jargon, which visually demonstrates the impact certain problems will have on earth in the future. Thanks to this, information is more easily accessible to not just everyone, but most importantly to the world's decision makers. In addition, because the movement has been created digitally, citizens can access both 'free and commercial information and services' which provides individuals with the resources to study and implement solutions to the problem of long term sustainability on earth during the 21st century.

The Digital Earth movement has held numerous symposia since 1999. However, the Digital Earth Summit in Auckland this year is not only the first to focus purely on sustainability, but will also be the first opportunity to focus the already extraordinary collection of resources that the Digital Earth Movement has collated towards specific issues of sustainability, in partnership with New Zealand's leaders, to achieve the overall sustainability goals of the Digital Earth Project.

It is important to note that although the Digital Earth project is a global solution to global problems, aspects of the projects, ideas and the results that arise from the project apply to Wellington City Council's own strategies, including the environment strategy, the urban development strategy and the transport strategy. Also, even though the project is deemed to solve the 'world's' problems, it has a scaleable application and will help solve small issues that occur and are present, locally, in many cities around the world.

The summit in Auckland will provide the 'catalyst for creating and launching' Digital Earth New Zealand, which will involve challenging the world's scientific minds to address opportunities to enhance sustainability specifically to New Zealand and, in addition, will help set the agenda for the 2007 International Symposium on Digital Earth to be held in San Francisco.

Below are the details of some of the presentations:

Introduction to Digital Earth Technology	Prof. Guo Huadong
Global Challenges to Sustainability	James Kunstler
Technology for Sustainability	Prof. Ian Dowman
Climate Realities and Policy Impacts	Prof. John Townshend
Biodiversity, a model for global information management	Dr. David Penman
Global Information Trends	Dr. Manfred Ehlers
Accepting the Challenge Govt. Ministerial response	Ministerial Response

Below are the details of the breakout sessions:

The aim of the workshops is to examine a wide range of activities which focus on making the right decisions for the future. They will concentrate on what information is required to make the decisions and how the information can be used and given effectively to those that will be making future decisions. A mix of New Zealand and international initiatives will be covered in these workshops.

Survival

Food and Primary Production	Focuses on maintaining healthy ecosystems for food and fibre production
Natural Resource and Ecosystem Management	This workshop will consider how information sharing and exchange can be improved in order to preserve natural resources and to ensure out conservation efforts are maximised.

Security

Natural Hazards	Focuses on what information is required and how decisions are made regarding the prediction of major geological and climatic hazards.
Health	What cutting edge technologies will contribute to healthier lives?

Social

Urban development and infrastructure	How can resource use and waste generation in cities and communities be contained to sustainable levels?
Business Processes	If businesses are to take a lead in sustainable development, what are the tools and processes that will help them achieve new heights in contributing to a healthy, equitable society?

Self Development

Lifelong Learning Specialist Symposia	How can we, as a species, best harness the quest for self-improvement for a sustainable future?
Art and Design Specialist Symposia	Focuses on the use of art, film and music to engage people in debate around sustainable development.

Government and Community Partnerships

There are two of these workshops. The first one will consider how Government can best engage the community to form partnerships for managing local resources. The second workshop will focus on current programmes of work aimed at setting the high level scene for sustainable development.

Youth Forum Workshops

These workshops will be specifically for the Youth Delegates to discuss and plan for the New Zealand that they want to live in, in the future.

The attached information is copied from the Digital Earth Summit website and provides a full description of speakers and topics.

3.1 Considerations

When deciding which elected member should attend this conference, consideration should be given to:

- the cost; and
- the impact of attendance on the budget; and
- the other conferences elected members may wish to attend later in the financial year.

The total cost if one elected member is appointed is expected to be \$1800.00 and will be met from the conference budget.

The cost of attendance is broken down as follows:

Item	Cost
Registration	\$975.00
Accommodation	\$465.00
Return Airfares	\$360.00
Total	\$1800.00

The impact on the budget of one elected member attending this conference is outlined in Table One.

Table One:

	2006/2007 Budget	Year to Date Expenditure	Unexpended Funds
Total budget for conference fees, accommodation and travel	\$34,000	\$7710 ¹	\$26,290
Impact of sending one elected member to the conference	\$1800	\$9510	\$24,490

4. Conclusion

A decision is required as to whether Council should approve the attendance of one elected member at the Digital Earth '06 Summit on Sustainability to be held in Auckland, 27 – 30 August 2006.

¹ The attendance of 5 Elected Members at the LGNZ Conference at a cost of \$5000.00.
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the TRAFINZ Conference at a cost of \$2310.00
 The attendance of 2 Elected Members at the Safer Communities Conference at a cost of \$400

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