

RiverLink

Better flood protection, lifestyle, transport links for central Hutt

Newsletter 4 – December 2016

Earthquakes and Flooding no setback

Just as we were going to press with this newsletter Kaikoura and shortly after the Wellington Region got a tremendous shake. We hope you made it through the earthquakes and subsequent floods ok, and that it hasn't caused you too much disruption or anxiety. We would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the RiverLink project preliminary design work continues, and that we are still available to discuss property purchases for those properties identified by the project. The project has had only minor time setbacks as a result of the earthquake, and we look forward to continuing our conversations with you to create a connected river space.

RiverLink website now available

Our new RiverLink website – www.riverlink.co.nz - is now on line and will provide you with a one-stop-shop for key information on the RiverLink project.

The site contains up-to-date progress reports on all aspects of the design process, information on what's planned and who's involved, newsletters and links to all the key documents on which the project is based.

We also want the site to become an interactive platform through which we can gather your views on news and issues of interest. We can set up dialogue forums to promote discussion and run surveys to gauge public opinion, all of which will be invaluable in keeping the project in touch with the community and guiding our decisions.

Big turnout for riverside design forum

Lower Hutt's Dowse Art Museum was abuzz with ideas and enthusiasm recently as nearly 300 people gave us their views on what they want to see along the Te Awakairangi/Hutt Riverside and within its river corridor.

The focus of all the activity over two days was how we should plan for activities, amenities and environments through the stretch of the river between the Ewen and Kennedy-Good bridges. People were invited to view a video on the project, review great ideas for riverside amenities and landscapes from here and overseas, and use symbols and stickers to give us their ideas on how we can make the area look great and work for the community.

"We got really useful and clear feedback on access to the river, what kinds of paths people want along the riverside and on the stopbanks and on the proposed pedestrian and cycleway bridge," says urban planner Marc Baily of consultants Boffa Miskell. "The community also showed a lively interest in garden-like landforms which look lovely and promote diverse ecology, active swimming, picnicking and play areas where you can sit and enjoy the river."

Three questions were also asked about the value of the river to the Lower Hutt community: 82 percent of people responding said revitalisation of the city is very important; 61 percent that its connection to the river is very important; 61 Percent believed having people live in the city centre was also very important.

"These findings are right in line with the community's decision to go ahead with the RiverLink project," says Marc, "which was favoured both as a flood protection scheme and as a city rejuvenation plan through Hutt City Council's Making Places project. They show the community really values the relationship between the river and the CBD and that linking them will be key to re-enlivening the area."

The community's input through the community design workshop is now being applied to potential urban landscape design options.

"What the community wants is a river it can connect with"

– Paki Maaka,
Urban Design Manager,
Hutt City Council

RIVERLINK - COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP 2016



...and this is my river...draw your vision for the river here:



Lively young imaginations look ahead to what could be – thanks Imogen (8 years)



RiverLink Community Design Workshop held on Saturday 1 October 2016

One third down two more to go



Lively discussion on progress so far

Harnessing and co-ordinating all the complex elements of a project of RiverLink's scope is no mean feat. So reaching its first development milestone – the completion of 30 per cent of the initial design phase – was a real achievement.

“With dozens of consultants and council staff involved in the design phase, working over a multitude of different workstreams, many of which are dependent on each other to make progress, we rely on the application of experience and expertise, strong project management and good communication between the teams to make progress,” says GWRC Manager, Flood Protection, Graeme Campbell.

“And that's what we've achieved in this first phase of the design project, which has begun to reveal how all the parts will fit together to create the blueprint we will submit to the community.”

Key decisions such as the alignment of the river channel are being determined to enable detailed consideration of the exact location of the stopbanks, and the form they will take. It has also enabled us to look closely at how and where we accommodate service such as stormwater outfalls and utility pipelines etc.

While the exact scale of the river channel (stopbank to stopbank) is yet to be determined, the urban landscaping team has begun to apply the findings from the Community Design Workshop into its brief to design the corridor's environment and amenities that will drive lifestyle.

Planning is also progressing on regional and local transport, with the NZ Transport Agency investigating transport issues along SH2 and at the Melling intersection, and Hutt City Council planning for the implications both of better connections into the CBD and traffic flows within and through it. Concepts for a cycleway/pedestrian bridge were also presented.

“We're making great progress. I can't wait for the next milestone, which will be at 60 per cent completion then 90 per cent early next year, when we will get a detailed view of how RiverLink will come together to provide its promised benefits for the Lower Hutt community”, says Graeme Campbell.

Combining transport, a local market day and sausages

Take a regular market day in Lower Hutt, some sausages and folks happy to have a chat, and you can get some real insights into travel patterns – the places we visit, how we travel, the routes we use and why we use them.

The project team ran a sausage sizzle at the Riverbank Saturday market in the Rutherford St car-park. We wanted to find out about people's experiences, problems they encounter, and opportunities they see when using the Melling and Block Road intersections, travelling through and accessing Hutt City, the river area, and the nearby residential areas.

Michael Siazon, NZ Transport Agency Project Manager, Melling Intersection Improvements, says “Members of the project team talked to about 60 people in a relaxed environment to better understand their transport experiences, what motivates them to make their journeys, what currently works and doesn't work for them, and the sort of changes that would make Melling and Hutt City a better place to be.”

This innovative approach to customer research is part of the Melling Intersection Improvements Project and involved informal interviews at the market day and at Melling train station, and some in-depth interviews with local residents and business owners. From this we got a good cross section of people, including car and train commuters,



pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, business representatives, and visitors.

Paki Maaka, Urban Design Manager, Hutt City Council, says “It was great to team up with Greater Wellington

Regional Council and the Transport Agency and hear people's views. We got some valuable insights into different customers' point of view, their travel experiences and sense of place and community.”

The key findings from the customer research will give us confidence that we're on the right track about identifying the problems that people experience and how these might be addressed. This work will help to shape our thinking as we continue exploring options to upgrade the Hutt City Centre, improve flood protection, river-focused city living and better transport links to and from Hutt City's central business district.

Workshop on improvements for Melling intersection



Project team members consider potential improvements for the Melling intersection

In November 2016, we held a stakeholder workshop to develop a long list of conceptual high level options to improve State Highway 2 connections at the Melling and Block Road intersections. These discussions involved the NZ Transport Agency, and the Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council, as well as technical experts, to make sure any potential transport improvement options are integrated with the Making Places and Flood Protection Projects which are all part of the joint RiverLink programme.

The next steps will be to evaluate and shortlist the options identified at the workshop and then present them to the wider community for input and feedback. We expect to be able to talk more about the options and our plans for engagement in early 2017.

You can sign up for updates on the NZ Transport Agency's website: www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-melling-intersection-improvements/

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For further information:

www.riverlink.co.nz
info@gw.govt.nz
or call (04) 384 5708
or freephone 0800 496 734

