

Community's feedback used to improve RiverLink plans

There was a pleasing turnout to our recent open day held at the Dowse Art Museum on Saturday 28 November. The open day was arranged for the community to see how the indicative plans are looking for improvements to river health, flood protection, amenities and transport connections in Lower Hutt.

On the day there were over two hundred people at the Dowse and over sixty people visited the RiverLink container at the Riverbank Beach.

Here is a summary of the feedback received on the day:

BIKE ROUTES

Positive feedback was received for the improved network of walking and cycling routes.

There were several suggestions for improvements to the proposed design and extensions to routes and improved facilities for people on bikes.

Also having better routes through the city was also mentioned by several people attending.

RIVER TRAILS

The network of trails received positive feedback and there were suggestions made for improving crossings, access and extended connections.

Several people at the open day said they wanted to bike but also scooter and skateboard along the trails.

The bridge width was raised as something that needed to be looked at to ensure there was enough space for everyone to use.

Safety along the river was also raised.

PARKING

Several comments were raised about the need to ensure adequate parking in the overall plan.

WALKING

Overall the feedback was that people would like a pedestrian friendly walkable city with safe areas to cross streets.

NEW SHARED BRIDGE

People liked the new pedestrian and cycle bridge and that fact it was free from traffic. The width of the bridge was raised as people see multiple users with different needs and expectations using the bridge.

THE INTERCHANGE

The new interchange is warmly welcomed. There were some comments and questions about the number of traffic lights required and ensuring the design works well for pedestrians and people on bikes as well.

TRAFFIC FLOW

The increase in traffic flow and speed was a concern. People are hopeful that the increase in transport options will mitigate this and the need to reduce traffic throughout the city was mentioned.

EXTEND RAIL

Several comments were made about the rail options.

RIVER AMENITY

People mentioned the range of activities that they use the river for – ranging from horse riding to skateboarding and wish to continue to do these activities.

People would like areas to have picnics, BBQs, and walk their dogs.

Some people mentioned having public art included in the area and the importance of making sure the area is clean and accessible for everyone to enjoy.

THE CITY

People commented they would like the city to be cleaned up, for empty spaces to be used and streets to be closed to make the city more pedestrian friendly.

ACCESSIBILITY

People liked the fact the project will make the river more accessible to walkers and cyclists and suggestions were made as to where to have better crossing points.

CITY CONNECTING TO THE RIVER

People like the river and would like it to be better connected to the city.

RIVER LIVING

People mentioned that having housing and cafes along the river would help connect the river to the city.

DUST AND NOISE

People were accepting that improvements need to be made but did note concerns about the future disruption of dust and noise.

HEALTHY RIVER

There were many comments about a clean river being good for wildlife and for people.

SWIMMING AND FISHING

Overlapping with a clean river, many people commented that they wanted to fish and swim in the river. Suggestions were made about swimming holes and migration steps for fish to enter into the Belmont Stream.

PLANTING AND WETLANDS

Planting suggestions were made for shade for people and wildlife. There was lots of support for native planting that would encourage native birds.

Wetlands were mentioned as a means to improve water quality.

NATURAL RIVER

Widening the river and letting it become more natural was a common theme in the feedback received.

BIRDS AND WILDLIFE

Comments included providing habitat that supports bird life, managing an apparent rat problem and considering the impact on birds through noise pollution.

Establishing a shade corridor for birds was mentioned.

There is still an opportunity to provide further feedback on the draft design. The online engagement will remain open for feedback throughout December and until 10 January 2021.

www.riverlink.co.nz/yoursay

Next Steps

The team are now considering the above community's feedback alongside input from our technical specialists, and project partners as we work to improve our draft plans. There will be more opportunities for the community to provide feedback at each stage as we work through to starting construction.

Next steps are to finalise the plans and submit them as part of our applications for resource consent in mid 2021.



SAVE THE DATE

**OUR NEXT OPEN DAY WILL BE
SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2021**

RiverLink is a partnership between Greater Wellington Regional Council, Hutt City Council, and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency. Together the agencies are investing around \$456 million to revitalise Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River, including \$258 million invested by the NZ Upgrade Programme. RiverLink is working closely with Taranaki Whānui ki te Upoko o te Ika, and Ngāti Toa Rangatira as mana whenua to create a more resilient, more connected, more vibrant city.

The project incorporates transport improvements, including a new Melling Interchange and River Bridge, as well as walking, cycling and public transport links.

Improved flood protection will safeguard Lower Hutt against floods that could cause major damage to homes and businesses.

The changes in the central city will enable development to make the central city more vibrant as it turns to face Te Awa Kairangi.



JOIN OUR EMAIL DATABASE

To keep updated on the RiverLink project and receive invitations to community engagement **subscribe here.**

