

Rangataua Township Revitalisation

Ruapehu District Council Meeting - 9 June 2021

Executive summary

We are proposing Stage One of a phased township revitalisation project and are asking for assistance with, and funding for, planning, implementation, ongoing stages and maintenance. We want the project to remain community-driven with assistance from Ruapehu District Council and the Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board.

What is the problem we're trying to solve?

Rangataua is a small community, growing in popularity with families moving into and expanding the area. However, there are no safe spaces for the community, children and families to gather for passive and active recreation.

We have to travel by car into Ohakune, either along a State Highway or the narrow 100kph Dreadnought Road, to access play areas, safe walks and gathering spaces.

What's our vision?

Rangataua was once a vibrant community. We envisage a staged revitalisation plan for Rangataua, starting with a communal area for locals and visitors to gather in Rangataua.

What does success look like?

A community space that reflects the adjacent World Heritage Sites and the history of our area, which includes iwi, settlers, timber milling, railways, the maunga and snow and cycle recreation.

We envisage Stage One of the revitalisation as a safe and accessible space, with seating and tables, a play space and shaded areas, with plantings of native flora to encourage native birds, other native fauna and information on local urban ecology (this will require approval of RDC as described in the Ruapehu Bylaw 2018, Sections 12.2 (h)).

Which location are we recommending?

The Rangataua Hall is the logical starting place for township revitalisation. The Hall has Heritage Building status and is believed to be the last building remaining from the original village. The land on the west side of the hall provides a sunny area for people to gather.

The hall also has existing power, sewerage and water infrastructure in place.

Who are we?

We're a diverse and independent working group of Rangataua residents who recognise the need for community spaces and are enthusiastic about township revitalisation.

Detailed bios are included in the Appendices.

What's our approach?

Township Revitalisation is one of the outcomes from the RDC Long Term Plan 2018-28 Consultation. The motivation for this proposal came from preparing, submitting and speaking to Councillors in the feedback forum on the RDC Long Term Plan 2021-2031.

We will continue to consult, engage and work closely with the local community and the Rangataua Hall Committee. We presented our ideas at a Rangataua Hall Committee community meeting on 17 May, 2021 and received unanimous support.

We have presented this Proposal to the Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board and received positive feedback.

We're seeking assistance and support from the Council to ensure we meet all legal and safety requirements as described in Sections 3.5 and 3.6 of Ruapehu District Council - Recreation and Community Facilities Asset Management Plan 2018-28.

We bring a wide range of expertise and expect to maintain a lead role in developing and implementing the project from start to finish, with support from Ruapehu District Council, professional designers, local contractors and community volunteers. We will seek outside assistance where necessary.

What have we contributed to this project so far?

First and foremost, we've provided the vision and action to get our phased township revitalisation project underway.

We submitted our vision to RDC as part of the LTP feedback forum. We've met with and spoken to several local councillors and community board members to get input and feedback on our vision and invited council members to our first community meeting.

We've researched RDC policies and planning documents, Health & Safety requirements, NZ Standard 5828:2015, and have sought inspiration from other community projects locally and across NZ.

We have met with the local Rangataua community through a Rangataua Hall Committee meeting and received unanimous support for our vision from the 35 attendees.

We've spoken to local residents and created a list of people keen to support, provide expertise and volunteer work.

We have created a social media platform to engage with the community and keep them informed of progress.

We are in the process of seeking representatives from Ngati Rangi, local trades persons, businesses and experts in the type of space we envisage.

This project will support RDC in meeting the role and principles of the Local Government Act 2002 and subsequent amendments namely;

- To enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- To meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.

What parameters will we work to? (see Appendix 2 for visual representation)

In keeping with Rangataua's...	What it is	What it is not
Semi-rural and natural environment	Natural materials, rustic, sensitive to the place and environment it sits, native plants, encourages bird life	Overly structured, suburban, closed off, plastic, garish, bright paint colours, contrived or polished, introduced plants
Small community-feel and young families	A place for the community to gather or meet others, safe for kids and dogs, welcoming, accessible, straight up, educational, interactive	Fenced off, for only a few
Cultural environment	Dual World Heritage National Park, maunga, Maori/iwi, rivers, local industries and history - milling and railways.	Generic, modern, unnatural

What do we envisage it might look like?

Initial mock-up visuals are included in the Appendices. These are intended to give a feel for the project, and are not scaled or final designs.

What is our expected timeframe?

We are motivated and have positive momentum behind us. We plan to work steadily, take action quickly and use the momentum to deliver tangible results. We hope to have Stage One completed within a year.

What are the expected costs?

We have researched costs of other NZ Community Hubs and play spaces. These range from \$30,000 up to \$1 million. We will work with designers, contractors and the RDC to develop a space that is cost-effective and suitable to both the needs and budget of the community.

What challenges do we expect to face and how we will overcome them?

1. Direct neighbours: We have already gained unanimous community support for our vision but will also meet with all direct neighbours to the Hub space to ask for their support.
2. Rangataua locals who don't want development or the risk of increased rates due to development: we've created ways to engage with the community and share our vision. We will continue to do this throughout the project - both to ensure they are involved and that their concerns are listened to and addressed.
3. Health and safety: we are inviting H&S experts to consult on the project and will ensure all facets meet both RDC and NZ safety guidelines. Safety is a primary parameter that we will work to.

4. Iwi engagement: we have contacted the CE of Ngati Rangi and hope to meet with iwi directly, share our plans and seek their support. Our preferred location of the hub is not part of the current iwi land Treaty settlement agreements.
5. Ongoing management and maintenance: every project needs ongoing maintenance and management. We will research and include these costs in our project budgets to ensure that funding covers both the creation and the ongoing management.
6. Future improvements and additions: we are currently working towards Stage One, but have already brainstormed future additions to our Community Hub. Each stage will be thoroughly scoped, costed, evaluated and presented to RDC for support.
7. Site safety, infrastructure and ground work: we've visited the site and acknowledge that some development and upgrading of the site may be required.

SUMMARY

We're seeking assistance from the Ruapehu District Council, with support from the Waimarino-Waiouru Community Board, to ensure we meet all legal and safety requirements and are able to raise funds for Stage One of our Community Hub which includes native planting, tables and seating, play space and educational elements.

Appendices on next pages -

- 1) What other locations have we considered?
- 2) What do we envisage it might look like?
- 3) Who are the members of the working group?
- 4) What ideas do we have for further / future stages?

Appendices 1-4**1) What other locations have we considered?**

Public land in Rangataua is not clearly identified. We have investigated -

Vacant section at 51 Nei Street opposite Rangataua Hall. This section is in the Ngati Rangi Treaty Settlement Landbank (Various Railway Land In Ruapehu - Rateable - Residential Uses - Waimarino Waiouru Ward - L64570).

Vacant sections further west of Rangataua Hall (e.g., 30 Nei Street and 23 Miharo Street). These would incur extra expense to provide services such as electricity for security lighting.

The land gazetted as Recreation Reserve on Piwari Street. This site is far from Rangataua Hall and services and is isolated from the main village area (SECS 6 7 BLK IX RANGATAUA TN-REC RES-GAZ 90/4509). It also sits alongside the State Highway so poses safety risks.

2) What do we envisage it might look like?

Note: These are intended to give a feel for the project and are not designed, scaled or final.



3) Who are the members of the working group?

Lucy Tasker is a self-employed graphic designer, volunteer ambulance officer and owns property in both Rangataua and the surrounding area with her partner. Lucy has a passion for sustainability and the environment, and realised the potential for a community hub when she saw many people (including herself) driving into Ohakune to use park and recreational facilities. Lucy brings vision and creativity to the table, as well as contacts in playground design and build in the UK.

Bill Nagle retired as a Research Fellow working in invasive species management and was involved in community organisations from an early age. He was the Community Advocate for Queenstown-Lakes District ratepayer groups involved in RMA Hearings and Community Planning Workshops and recently set up a volunteer native plant community eco-nursery Central Otago. He chose Rangataua as a quiet rural village to spend his retirement.

Corinne Ebisu has worked for multinational companies in the US. She also worked for Queenstown Lakes District Council in the Regulatory Department, and was recently with the Building Control section of Auckland Council. She is currently with Ruapehu REAP as a Literacy and Numeracy tutor. She has volunteered with community groups, engaged in active conservation projects, and looks forward to working with the local community.

Linda Trillo-McLaren is a retired midwife and grandma of five. She's had a home in Rangataua for four years, and in Ohakune for 25 years. She's involved in the Community Hub project because she wants a place within our own beautiful village where our local families can gather together & enjoy this space. She believes it is her responsibility as a local, to contribute and invest in our local community. She brings time, energy, and commitment to working hard towards this project.

Keri Aves is a full-time ambulance officer whose previous career was in advertising and marketing. She's passionate about the environment and advocates for living a better life in harmony with the environment. Keri brings budget and project management experience to the project, as well as drive and diverse community contacts. She moved to Rangataua two years ago but has had ties to Ruapehu for over 20 years.

Kirsten Aves is new to being a full-time Rangataua resident but a long-time frequent visitor. Currently a stay-at-home mum by day to an outdoorsy, active daughter, an aging pooch and partner to a military man. By night, actively studying, planning a new business and fighting the environmental, waste reduction fight. She was excited by the initiative and immediately eager to utilise her background in business operations to drive project success equating to a safe, fun and inclusive hub for the unique and historic Rangataua.

4) What ideas do we have for further / future stages?

We have brainstormed a range of possible items that will make up the township revitalisation, both for Stage One and future stages, including:

- Reserve area for the community and visitors to gather
- Natural and interactive play space

- Native planting initiatives both around the Hall and along roadsides
- Community garden including space to grow food / fruit trees
- Dog exercise area
- Community book swap
- Invasive plant species control/eradication
- Community food pantry
- Wasp eradication
- Education on native planting and local food production
- Ultra-Fast-Fibre in Rangataua
- Dark Sky Reserve
- Safe cycleway connecting Rangataua with Ohakune
- Reserve land preservation for future community purposes
- Revitalisation of the Rangataua primary school and grounds
- Rangataua bush reserve walkways and protection