

Taumarunui revitalisation timeline

Introduction

For some time Taumarunui residents had been calling for greater action on revitalising the township. They wanted to see leadership from Council, the Ward Committee and Enterprising Taumarunui Inc. for getting development underway.

In response, Council accelerated a number of projects including the Northern Entrance Project, the accessible walkway portion of the Ongarue/Whanganui Riverside Walkway Project, development at Cherry Grove Reserve, refurbishment of the town clock and the Taumarunui Town Centre Project.

September 2016

Taumarunui revitalisation meeting

On 5 September 2016 Council held a public meeting in Taumarunui to discuss a range of issues relevant to the township's future including; the Regional Accelerate25 Action Plan, government's initial co-investment announcements, planned and future projects, township revitalization, Council services, the 2018/28 Long Term Plan process and how this all fits together.

There was an excellent level of community engagement at the meeting where participants considered the issues confronting Taumarunui and what needed to happen to get them moving. This included discussions on the good things and not so good things as well as perceptions around township identity.

Full meeting 'brainstorm' notes can be found in the Document Links panel on the Taumarunui Revitalisation page on Council's website.

Involvement of Bespoke Landscape Architects

Principal Landscape Architect and Director Lee Brazier along with Associate Landscape Architect Leigh Wilson from Bespoke Landscape Architects visited Taumarunui on Tuesday 13 September to view the development area and hold a series of focus group meetings.

The focus group meetings were with the Taumarunui Ohura Ward Committee (TOWC), Council staff, community members (Maori Council, Youth Council, Enterprising Taumarunui Inc. (ETI) and Jenny Gawith who is doing research into life in Taumarunui with kids under 5).

They were designed so that Bespoke could develop a deeper understanding of the town, people and relevance (what people think and feel) of the spaces they would be working with. These involved workshoping around four key questions:

1. What is the historic and cultural significance of the town/town centre?
2. What is the role of the town centre for locals?
3. What is the role of the town centre for visitors? and,
4. The key structural elements that should remain or be taken out?

Key insights of the focus group meetings was the support for a town centre space that catered for locals first but was also an attraction visitors – "A Taumarunui that's for Taumarunui". There was also support for a non-traditional play space.

It was felt that the space must celebrate Taumarunui' history but also our future being both modern and a reflection of our landscape. It was clear from the discussions that people are ready for something really amazing and different.

Bespoke took this feedback and developed a set of concept plans which were presented to the community as a “starting point for a conversation” around what people wanted to see.

Bespoke concept plans version 1

On Monday 5 December 2016 the concept plans developed by urban design specialists Bespoke Landscape Architects were unveiled to the public. Over the following week around 1,000 people took the opportunity to view the concept plans and were encouraged to provide feedback.

It was stressed that the concept plans were the starting point for a more detailed conversation with the community. Community feedback was then sought with Council asking;

- Are we on the right track?
- Is this where we want to go?
- what is good?
- what is not so good?
- anything missing? etc.

Council stressed the need that community input was vital to ensuring that we get the overall plan right before we can make a start.

Once the right track was determined put a proposal through the Annual Planning process including an idea of how much it will cost and how we might pay for it.

Feedback on version 1 plans

December 2016 and January 2017 – Main Street Taumarunui

Feedback on the concept plans was received in a wide variety of ways including; official forms, verbal conversations, sticky notes, Facebook comments, and emails. All were treated the same. Although there was some negative comment the overwhelming feedback was positive with a strong desire to see something happen.

A full copy of all of the feedback can be found in the Document Links panel on the Taumarunui Revitalisation page on Council's website. There is also a summary analysis.

September 2017

Feedback from the first phase of public consultation on Taumarunui Town Revitalisation has been received, analysed and workshopped by the Taumarunui/Ohura Ward Committee.

The feedback has resulted in staff concentrating on breaking down a very large body of work into manageable sections, concentrating at this time on the area, which will provide the most impact, both visually and from a public use perspective.

The CBD area has now been broken into three phases:

1. The west side of Hakiaha Street between the boundary of the old library and the boundary to the south of the Taumarunui Railway Station.
2. The verandahs on the east side of Hakiaha Street and down Manuaute Street.
3. Manuaute Street re-development.

The re-development proposals for the west side of Hakiaha Street include proposed demolition of the old toilets and construction of new toilets on the ex-library site, a number of new elements in the open area between the new toilets and the town clock and changes to the railway station including façade work.

Once feedback has been received on the updated concept plans, the new elements can be costed and a project plan and costing produced for further consideration before inclusion into the 10 year plan and final public consultation.

New Taumarunui Public Toilet Concept Design Challenge

With regard to the proposed new public toilet, an open competition for how this could look on the elevation of the building facing Hakiaha Street is being run. The competition will open on the 10 September 2017, for a six-week period to the 20 October 2017. An evaluation team comprising representatives from art, building, landscape, Council, architecture and engineering disciplines, will undertake the evaluation and decide on the stand out winner or winners.

If there are more than one standout design, further public feedback will be sought. However if there is only one standout design, Taumarunui/Ohura Ward Committee and Council approval to proceed to developed design and costing will then be sought. Depending on cost, it may be possible to proceed with this stand-alone project in the current year utilising part of the \$500,000 already allocated to town revitalisation projects, the existing refurbishment budget in the current LTP. There is also the potential for part funding from a private individual wishing to support a new public toilet project in Taumarunui.

Other design elements

With regard to the remainder of the proposed new elements, if the updated concept design is approved by the Taumarunui/Ohura Ward Committee and Council, the concepts will proceed to developed design, costing and project planning for inclusion in the 10 year plan.

An engineering assessment of the verandahs in Hakiaha Street and Manuaute Street will be undertaken over the next two to three months and a further report brought to Members with recommendations.

An engineering assessment of the potential cost of re-development of Manuaute Street for the purpose of including costs in the 10 year plan will be undertaken over the next two to three months. This assessment will be based on the original concept plan of changing the road contour with potential in the future for the road to continue to be one way but incorporating shared pedestrian use and the options of using the street for market days and events. A further report will be brought to Members with recommendations.

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