

RiverLink

Better flood protection, lifestyle, transport links for central Hutt

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Welcome to RiverLink, in which we'll keep you up to date with the progress of the former Hutt City Centre Upgrade Project, which will deliver improved flood protection, river-focussed city living and better transport links to and from Lower Hutt's CBD. We've changed the project's name to RiverLink to reflect its integrated approach to providing these benefits and to emphasise the focus of our efforts, the Hutt River.

Let's hear your voice on riverside design

We want to hear your views on how to make the central Hutt riverside a great place to play in and live by. So you're invited to a community workshop where you will be able to tell us how we can shape this area of the riverside and its proposed city-side promenade to provide not only a beautiful natural environment but the amenities you want to see to provide for recreation and leisure.

The idea sprang from the hearings process last year and your feedback during consultation on the favoured flood protection scheme for that part of the river that borders the CBD and nearby suburbs. So many great initiatives were presented to the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee that we've decided to capture and integrate them, where possible, into the design process currently underway.

The community workshops will take place on Thursday 29 September between 2:00pm–7:00pm and again on Saturday 1 October between 11:00am–4:00pm at the

Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt, so they've been timed to give you every opportunity to get along. Once there you'll be able to learn about progress on RiverLink to date and let us know what you want from the riverside by placing symbols on maps or writing in your own ideas. Don't forget to bring your kids, it's their future too.

Meanwhile, look out for more publicity and mark the dates in your calendar and be sure to come along.



One stop shop RiverLink website coming soon

Stand by for our new RiverLink website, which will provide you with a one-stop-shop for information on the project.

You'll find up to date progress reports on all aspects of the design process, videos showing what's planned, newsletters, surveys and links to all the key documents on which the project is based and the agencies involved. It will be the easiest and most informative way of keeping up to date with what's going on. The address will be www.riverlink.co.nz. We're looking to launch sometime around later October, so look out for an announcement on its availability.



The southern end of the Hutt River marks the end of the river corridor environment

Hutt River Environmental Strategy review progressing well

Our review of the Hutt River Environmental Strategy – which sets guidelines for the development of the entire river corridor from Upper Hutt to the harbour – is making real progress, with a presentation to community groups stimulating useful feedback on the kind of environment they want to develop alongside the Hutt River and the things they want to do there.

So far we've undertaken a survey of activity, spoken to a range of interest groups and began a round of presentations on the survey, as well as asked for feedback on the subject through the Greater Wellington Regional Council website.

The development of the strategy is of fundamental importance to the RiverLink project because it will guide our approach to developing the riverbank environment through Lower Hutt's CBD. A draft strategy for public consultation is due early next year.

Questions posed during ecology design walkover



The group talks about the value of different types of vegetation, trees, scrub and balance between natives and exotics

While RiverLink is designed to protect the lives and livelihoods of people in Lower Hutt, the river's world of fish, bugs and plants matters too.

The project has to resolve these potentially competing interests, and that's why the design team and ecology experts recently spent a morning inspecting the RiverLink project. The question they posed was: how can flood protection and the environment work hand in hand to enhance the ecology of the river and floodplain?

It's a great question, because the scale of the construction work being talked about could have significant impact on the river and if it isn't managed right could damage the river's environment. While there is legislation to protect against or minimise this damage, we want to do better than just rely on this process. For that reason we are making ecological values of the river an important part of our design discussions, sitting alongside recreation, culture, and heritage, transport, and flood security.

Better connections, better lifestyle

As flood protection designs continue to develop, it's time to focus further on the opportunity to develop the connection between the city and the river.

The vision for better connections is set out in Hutt City Council's Making Places project, which sets out how the Lower Hutt community would like the central business district to develop by 2030. One part of this vision is a riverside promenade, and we've heard very clearly from our community that while our river is one of our greatest assets we are not making the most of it.

The RiverLink project offers the opportunity to progress this work. A riverside promenade is proposed on the eastern side of the river that would sit on the top of the stop banks

currently being designed, and have terraced access to the river. Some of the suggestions for the design are buildings that are level with the promenade to provide an entertainment area, and mixed use development such as apartments.

A pedestrian footbridge over the river to connect with Melling Train Station, and access points to the river for recreational activities are also suggested. The potential impact of the project on the local road network is also being considered. Private investment alongside public investment is really important for this promenade to be developed to its full potential.



Illustration of the riverside promenade developed out of the Making Places project

This RiverLink project is also considering how people use the river corridor: the space alongside the river inside the flood protection stopbanks, and ways this could be enhanced in this stretch of the river.

There's a lot of discussion to be had, and decisions to make together.

SH2 Melling Transport Improvements

The NZ Transport Agency is looking at improvements along the SH2 corridor. The Melling Intersection Improvements project is a key part of this work, looking at different ways to improve the SH2 connections at the Melling and Block Road intersections. The project will be considering many options and working collectively with the Greater Wellington Regional Council on flood improvements

and Hutt City Council on its Making Places projects. Opportunities will be explored for improving journeys along SH2 and into Hutt City, improving access to Melling Railway Station, incorporating the Melling Bridge and linking with future Lower Hutt City CBD developments. We expect this work to identify one or two options following a robust assessment process.

The NZ Transport Agency will work closely with other stakeholders and partners and will talk to local businesses, residents, and road and public transport users to find out what they feel is important. As the project progresses we will talk more about possible options and opportunities for you to provide feedback.