

Better flood protection, transport and lifestyle for Lower Hutt

Making Places in the city



RiverLink offers Lower Hutt the opportunity to advance its plans for a vibrant city centre with a proposed riverside promenade.

A vibrant city centre is an important part of achieving growth and rejuvenation. The Lower Hutt community's vision for what they want in their city centre and how this will be achieved was set out in 2009 in a project sponsored by Hutt City Council called Making Places.

A clear message from public consultation on Making Places was that one of Lower Hutt's greatest assets is the Hutt River / Te Awakairangi and the city centre should be better connected with it.

We have a fantastic opportunity to make this better connection between city and river through the RiverLink project with a promenade along the new flood protection stopbanks on the city side of the river. A recent survey had 91 percent of the 600 respondents in support of the promenade and there will be more consultation this year.

Hutt City Council's investment in the Making Places project is already apparent in the city. The Civic Precinct has gone through a transformation. The Dowse Square is a popular public space. The city's administration building has been refurbished and the iconic clock tower is being strengthened. A new events centre will soon adjoin these historic buildings, providing key community and commercial events in a quality, purpose built venue in the heart of our city.

The events centre operator is constructing a four-star hotel, a first for the city and a great example of how public investment attracts private development. The hotel site is on High Street beside the river, a short walk through the newly refurbished Riddiford Garden from the events centre. This hotel is expected to spark other commercial activity in the vicinity.

Retail and commercial activity alone cannot bring significant change in the city centre. The proposed promenade will encourage mixed use apartment based development.

The RiverLink project offers an incredible opportunity to achieve a major part of the Making Places project, further realising the community's vision for our city centre.

Pop up progress on Hutt River project



Lower Hutt artist Ash Sissons painted the Pop-up Hub on site in February.

Come and check out the progress on plans to connect the Lower Hutt CBD with the Hutt River at the RiverLink Pop-up Hub at the Riverside Carpark in March and April.

"We have opened up space between the trees next to the river and tidied the river bank which will give people better access to the water", says Prue Lamason Chair of the Hutt Valley Flood Management Subcommittee.

Together with Hutt City Council we have set up a container and had it painted by a local Lower Hutt artist to portray the giant kokopu fish, another Hutt River local.

There are a series of posters inside the container showcasing RiverLink designs to provide better flood protection, transport and lifestyle for Lower Hutt, and we will change these as the designs progress.

We've talked to thousands of people over the past few years to get ideas to develop plans for stopbanks, promenades, a cycleway, riverside features and connecting paths to the CBD.

We're about two thirds through the design for flood protection works and we'd love people to keep coming back to the pop-up hub and check out the progress.

The pop-up hub will play host to a series of community events by the river, from live music to coffee and food, in early March and early April.

For more information and a schedule of activities on offer visit www.riverlink.co.nz

**Come and see us at the pop-up
hub from Friday 3 March**

Making progress on Melling Intersection Improvements

Since last year, we have made good progress on investigating how to improve the Melling intersections with State Highway 2.

Officers from the NZ Transport Agency, Hutt City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council have been working closely together to understand and agree on what we collectively want to achieve through the Melling Intersection Improvements project. We have also established some basic guidelines on how the intersection improvements could fit together with the other elements of the RiverLink project – Greater Wellington Regional Council's Flood Capacity Improvements and Hutt City Council's Making Places project.

As a result, four investment objectives have been developed. These are:

- Reliability – people and goods being able to reliably move on State Highway 2 and into Hutt City CBD
- Accessibility – improve the connection across the highway and provide better access to Melling Station and Hutt City CBD
- Safety – make it safer for people travelling on State Highway 2 and into Hutt CBD
- Availability – reduce the number of road/lane closures that occur as a result of crashes or flooding.

The objectives help evaluate the options developed so far to either weed out ones that will not work, or make adjustments to others that are worth further consideration.

In the next few months, we should be in a position to share with you where we've got to, and seeking your feedback what you think would be good to prioritise at Melling. Remember that you can sign up for updates on the NZ Transport Agency's website

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/projects/sh2-melling-intersection-improvements/>

Getting your take on travel

Late last year we got people into the summer barbecue mood with a sausage sizzle at one of Lower Hutt's regular Saturday markets.

This was an opportunity for us to get a clear understanding from locals regarding places you visit, how you travel, the routes you use and why you use them. The aim was to find out what people's recent travel experiences have been, what the problems are for travel in and around the Hutt CBD and what some of the potential opportunities might be to improve access to the City, riverbank area and local suburbs.

These conversations, along with in-depth face-to-face interviews with local residents and business owners, have given us valuable insights into different customers' points of view and provided us with an important piece of the puzzle to understand what the issues are and how we might address them.

Some key themes that came out of our conversations included that:

1. Lower Hutt is a great place to live and bring up families with excellent schools, services, retailers and recreational activities.
2. People avoid using the Melling area and come up with a variety of workarounds to get where they need to go.
3. Some of the reasons people avoid using the Melling intersection include safety concerns, congestion issues and traffic delays.
4. Talking about Melling train station was polarising – some favoured it for being easily accessible and a pleasant open space while others were concerned about the limited frequency of the train service and limited parking.
5. The Melling intersections with State Highway 2 create a complex set of interactions between people travelling along State Highway 2 past Melling, and others who use Melling to get into and out Lower Hutt.

These insights have helped shape our thinking so thank you for taking the time to talk with our team.

February flooding

The Hutt River swelled to 100 times its average February flow after up to 250mm of rain fell in the ranges over 24 hours in early February. Flood water closed Block Road and inundated the Riverside Carpark.

The river flow gauge at the Taita Gorge leaped from 10 cubic metres per second to 1016 cubic metres per second over a five hour period. Those sort of flows happen on average once every two years and serve as a reminder that whatever is built in the river corridor needs to be resilient.



The Riverside Carpark is often over run during flood events.

Earthquake strengthening for stopbanks

The stopbanks did not suffer any damage in the earthquake on 15 November 2016 but we are mindful of the primary fault rupture zone and we are applying techniques to further enhance the resilience of the new stopbanks. It's a prudent approach given that much of the land along Pharazyn St and at Melling are astride the Wellington fault and within its "primary fault rupture zone" where there is potential for ground deformation during a rupture of the Wellington fault.

Read more on how RiverLink is building resilience into its flood management designs, go to www.riverlink.co.nz

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For further information:

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