



REGENERATE CHRISTCHURCH MEDIA RELEASE

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## Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor announcement



In its selection of the refined shortlist of land use options for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration Area, Regenerate Christchurch is today announcing that a position of bold environmental leadership underpins its planning for the future use of the land, which includes the area previously known as the residential red zone.

Water quality and public access to the natural environment are identified as priorities with a mix of naturally-occurring and new activities.

The Chair of Regenerate Christchurch, Sue Sheldon, says an 11-kilometre “Green Spine” from the city to New Brighton, walkways and biking tracks, wetlands developments and a variety of other potential public and private land uses will provide a range of opportunities for private, not-for-profit and community investment and attract up to 1 million unique visitors annually.

“Water quality in the area - which is nearly twice the size of New York’s Central Park and four times the size of London’s Hyde Park - has been a particularly strong consideration, with 83 percent of people surveyed by Nielsen in 2017 prioritising groundwater quality in the area and 72 percent prioritising water quality in its rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands,” Ms Sheldon says.

Regenerate Christchurch is responsible for developing the regeneration plan for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor and has considered more than 5,000 ideas submitted by the community, as well as surveys, technical reports and studies. Since the publication in October 2017 of 10 possible combinations of uses for the area, public feedback has identified strong common preferences, which have informed the development of a refined shortlist that will feature in an upcoming public exhibition.

Chief Executive Ivan Iafeta says extensive analysis has identified how improvements to water quality and the environment could be achieved, creating genuine long-term social, cultural, environmental, educational, health and economic benefits for Christchurch and New Zealand.





The Green Spine will be up to 150 metres wide on each side of the river with large areas of ecological restoration, wetlands, community spaces such as barbecue areas and coffee stops, and will support access to the river. Elsewhere, there are three significant areas suitable for a variety of potential public and private land uses reflecting themes of Food and Culture; Experiencing Nature; and Activity and Play.

“These will create opportunities for school children and researchers to learn about the natural environment to better understand the challenges and opportunities within a truly living laboratory. Ecological, food, cultural and recreational experiences, sustainable agriculture and adaptable housing will be part of a unique urban environment,” Mr Lafeta says.

One 31-hectare wetland area between Horseshoe Lake and New Brighton Road will treat stormwater run-off from as many as 10,000 properties and improve water quality in the Ōtākaro Avon River and Horseshoe Lake, which is culturally significant to Ngāi Tūāhuriri. A further 49 hectares of wetlands elsewhere in the corridor area will treat stormwater run-off from another 15,000 properties.

“Implementation of the plan is likely to be the beginning of a 30-year intergenerational programme of work. But the decisions that public institutions, private entities and the wider community make today, will create the world that future generations will judge us on,” Ms Sheldon says.

“In deciding the land uses for the refined shortlist we have determined that three potential uses previously considered will not be progressed any further. They are large-scale housing, a land-swap to enable the establishment of a golf course within the corridor area and a flatwater facility.”

Regenerate Christchurch was required to assess the feasibility of constructing an open water course suitable for international events. Last year, three possible options were included in the 10 possible combinations of land uses: a 1.1-kilometre out-of-river flatwater facility, a 2.2-kilometre in-river flatwater facility and a 2.2-kilometre out-of-river flatwater facility.

Mr Lafeta says extensive expert analysis determined that an in-river option would be subject to frequent algal blooms, and an out-of-river flatwater option would prevent the provision of stormwater treatment that would significantly improve the water quality in Horseshoe Lake.

“In addition, expert analysis found that keeping a 2.2-kilometre out-of-river flatwater facility free of algal bloom would require 43 million litres of water to be extracted from Christchurch’s deep-water aquifers every day. That is about a third of the average amount currently used in the city every day for drinking water.

“The water would need to go into the flatwater facility from the aquifers and then be flushed out into the Ōtākaro Avon River, increasing the flow of the river by about a third and causing greater flood risk and affecting the river’s banks and existing ecology.”

Information about the refined shortlist of potential land uses will be released for public comment as part of a wider engagement programme, which will begin with a public exhibition. An announcement on the timing and venue will be made shortly.

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MEDIA: Several versions of a short promotional video are available at the link below:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/p4bnf9f4ff9t6vc/AADgbnWjMzoFx-asxq5xqf9la?dl=0>

