



REGENERATE CHRISTCHURCH MEDIA RELEASE

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03 353 9600

info@regeneratechristchurch.nz
regeneratechristchurch.nz

Draft Regeneration Plan a bold commitment for Christchurch



A draft regeneration plan for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor is being publicly notified today, with Regenerate Christchurch inviting written comments up to and including 19 December. It will conclude 14 weeks of formal public engagement on the project since October last year.

Regenerate Christchurch Chair Sue Sheldon says extensive community engagement has identified a strong preference for environmental leadership. She says the draft regeneration plan delivers this and its implementation would see the river corridor emerge as a leading example of 21st-century urban environmental management.

“The draft plan demonstrates a bold commitment for Christchurch to a holistic approach to improve water quality in the area, better protect communities from flooding, ensure future generations can experience mahinga kai and create a restored natural environment open to all, that connects people, the river and the land. The draft plan is also practical, flexible and, over time, affordable.”

Ms Sheldon says if the draft plan is approved by the Minister for Greater Christchurch Regeneration, achieving the vision will require long-term investment and commitment from multiple parties.

“The Crown and the Christchurch City Council, as owners of about 98 percent of the land in the river corridor, will decide who will govern and have accountability for realising the vision; future ownership of the land; and how and when funding commitments will be made.

“As these decisions are made, the community will have greater certainty about when it can expect to see development begin and the scale of that development.”

Ms Sheldon says the draft plan provides a strong vision and sets out a plan for how the land could be used in the future and the steps required to transform the area over the coming decades.





Because regeneration of the river corridor area will be inter-generational, the draft plan allows for changes in community needs and priorities, and potential land uses and activities which may emerge, over the course of the next 30 years.

It is also proposed in the draft plan that the vision and objectives that have informed its development be the touchstone for considering any new ideas for the area in the future.

The vision and objectives were developed in consultation with the community, which put forward 5,000 ideas for regenerating the area, and drew on the findings of a community needs survey conducted by Nielsen.

The survey found for the regeneration area that 83 percent of people surveyed prioritised groundwater quality and 72 percent prioritised water quality in rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands.

Ms Sheldon says a 2.2 kilometre out-of-river flatwater facility is not shown in the draft plan because extensive technical analysis and independent research has determined that its formation would be inconsistent with the required area for stormwater treatment and desire to protect groundwater resources; its environmental impact would be inconsistent with the vision and objectives; and Regenerate Christchurch's assessment shows that the possible benefits would not outweigh the potential risks and likely impacts.

"The amount of aquifer water needed every year to keep a 2.2 kilometre out-of-river flatwater facility free of algal bloom would equate to about 10 Belfast water bottling plants.

"Further, Christchurch's aquifer water supply is fully allocated in this location and changes to the Land and Water Regional Plan would likely be needed to enable the significant water take required."

Ms Sheldon says, however, that the draft plan does acknowledge the demand for more space for flatwater sports in Christchurch - particularly for training purposes - and allows for the widening and deepening of the river in some locations - including the creation of a 1,000 metre local regatta course by widening Kerrs Reach.

The draft Regeneration Plan is available on the Regenerate Christchurch website. Hard copies are available for reading at Regenerate Christchurch (Level 1, Building 2, 181 High Street, Christchurch), as well as Waimakariri District Council, Selwyn District Council and Christchurch City Council offices, service centres and libraries. The public can provide written comment to Regenerate Christchurch online and via email or post up to and including 19 December.

Once written comments have been received and considered, Regenerate Christchurch will finalise the draft Regeneration Plan before seeking consent from Ōtākaro Limited to submit it to the Minister for Greater Christchurch Regeneration.

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For more information please contact:
Simon Makker
027 622 0487

03 353 9600
info@regeneratechristchurch.nz
regeneratechristchurch.nz

