



Tuesday 19 December 2017

Feedback shows strong support for ecological restoration and recreation



Regenerate Christchurch today [published all feedback](#) on possible land uses for the 602-hectare Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor regeneration area.

From October 6 to November 6, 1,866 people and groups gave feedback on 10 possible combinations of land uses for the regeneration area, which is almost four times the size of Hagley Park and includes the former residential red zone.

The most common feedback themes were ecological restoration, residential development (including the proposed golf course land swap), recreation (including flatwater and whitewater facilities), visitor attractions and productive land uses, says Chief Executive Ivan lafeta.

“The recent engagement was an opportunity for people to look at the work we’ve done and tell us what they thought of the possible land uses and the information considered, and let us know if they thought we’d missed anything,” explains Ivan lafeta.

Ecological restoration received the most comments and support, with 906 responses.

“Almost half of the people and groups giving feedback saw ecological restoration as a priority and often supported recreation, visitor attractions and productive uses, as long as they had an ecological focus,” says Ivan lafeta.

Horseshoe Lake and Bexley were specifically mentioned as having high ecological importance.

More than 300 people and groups voiced specific support for an open space corridor, or “Green Spine” along the river. All combinations featured this corridor of up to 150 metres on either side of the Ōtākaro Avon River from Barbadoes Street to Bexley. This space could potentially include permanent paths, trails, gardens, forest, wetlands and community initiatives as well as significant areas of ecological restoration.

There was support for flatwater facilities, with 688 people favouring the 2.2km out-of-river lake and 442 supporting the 2.2km in-river lake option, primarily for ecological reasons.

Cycling and walking trails were the next-most common recreation themes, as well as support for a whitewater facility.





Ecologically and locally-focused visitor attractions received good support, but feedback on large-scale ticketed attractions was more divided.

Of the 685 people and groups who mentioned residential development, 342 were supportive and 343 unsupportive. Most supportive comments were conditional, saying any future housing must be innovative, sustainable, adaptable to climate change and limited in size and number.

“The idea of more housing in or around this area or any form of development raises many questions, including some important ecological ones and questions around how we adapt to climate change,” says Ivan Iafeta.

Of the 463 responses to the idea of the proposed golf course land swap, 416 were opposed.

Most feedback supported productive land uses, but with conditions such as having an ecological focus, while there were concerns about farming (particularly dairy) and private or commercial ownership of the land. After considering all feedback, the next step is to refine the options into a shortlist, assessing them against the [vision, objectives, and land use criteria](#).

The shortlisted options could be drawn from the 10 combinations, or be a mix-and-match of the 10 possible combinations of land uses that were published in October.

At a major exhibition of options early next year, people will be able to look at the cost and benefits of each shortlisted option, and the likely timeframes.

“Our goal is to determine how the regeneration area can make the biggest contribution to Christchurch and New Zealand’s future.”

Following the exhibition early next year, Regenerate Christchurch will prepare a preliminary draft Regeneration Plan by mid-2018, which will include a preferred land use plan for the area. The next step is to seek public feedback on a draft Plan that will confirm responsibilities for funding, delivery and governance, which is expected to be finalised by late-2018.

“We are approaching decisions that will shape the future of our city for hundreds of years and influence how people experience life in Christchurch for generations to come.

“We are grateful for the effort people made to express their views and we are excited about the exhibition coming up next year,” says Ivan Iafeta.

For more information please contact:
Anne-Marie Robinson, 027 703 1974

