

## **Timaru CityTown - Programme of Trials Workshop**

### **Background**

#### **Decision of Council, June 2021**

- 1 Through the \$34.6m capital works funding provided in the Long Term Plan 2021-31 Council undertook to *Enable* urban regeneration in the Timaru city centre, ie to create opportunities and motivation for private investment and community behaviour change, such as transport mode shift and residential uptake.

#### **Decision of the Tenders and Procurement Committee, November 2021**

- 2 In November of 2021 Council (by a resolution of the Tenders and Procurement Committee) then contracted Isthmus Group Ltd to develop a strategic, spatial, tactical Master Plan setting forth the key moves and corresponding project suite that would best deliver against stakeholders' aspirations for a thriving, vibrant, sustainable centre.

#### **Project Delivery and Partnership, November 2021 – June 2022**

- 3 Existing insights from all preceding community/stakeholder engagement were collated and analysed together with relevant research and technical reports. The overall theme of the data was to be future focussed, bold and strategic (vs short term focused, conservative, or reactive/ad hoc), and to partner with the stakeholders to be 'Enabled'.
- 4 This stocktake was therefore completed in parallel with a complementary series of design workshops with the Project Steering Group, council's multi-disciplinary project team, the Development and Investment Group, the Community Advisory Group, and the CBD Group. Ongoing input by Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua informed the vision, kaupapa and aesthetic to align with local mana whenua narratives and aspirations.
- 5 This body of work was then rationalised into a Strategic Framework (the Framework) setting out the Vision, the Kaupapa, the Outcomes and the Key Moves proposed to enable urban regeneration in our city centre, or Te Hokinga ki te Ngākau, a Return to the Heart. The Framework also includes the long list of possible projects that could, over a 30-50 year term typical of infrastructure planning, fully implement the Key Moves, referencing the need to refine our Delivery Tactics to prioritise the immediate (10-15 year) work programme to be funded from the approved LTP budget.
- 6 The Framework also incorporated a proposed schedule of exploratory and targeted Trials that would enable the project team and affected/participating stakeholders to test and refine proposed concepts for change with the community before putting any recommendations to Council to commit significant ratepayer funding to a more limited number of irreversible physical works (through the LTP 2024-34).
- 7 While consensus on individual topics or projects is not anticipated, the proposed tactical approach (experiential consultation and data capture) would rely on a robust, evidence based analysis to determine both the interim and the permanent measures that would have the most favourable net impact for as many stakeholders as possible in line with the Framework.

### **Council Workshop, May 2022**

- 8 On 31 May 2022 the project team presented the Strategic Framework – including the suite of proposed trials and the tactical approach – at a Council workshop. Elected members were invited to provide feedback on
  - Whether or not the Strategic Framework could be presented at a (public) Infrastructure Committee meeting on 14 June 2022; and
  - Whether any additional information was required to enable Council to make a decision (to approve, or not to approve the Framework) at the Infrastructure Committee meeting on 14 June 2022; and
  - Whether any trials in the proposed programme should be excluded/scaled back.
- 9 At this workshop the project team noted that next steps would be for the project team to further refine the suite of trials with technical experts and affected/participating stakeholders to identify those which would progress beyond concept stage. Trials progressing would include relevant details around success criteria, evaluation and monitoring, impacts and mitigation, timing, costs etc.
- 10 Leveraging a robust multi criteria analysis (MCA) approach, decisions would then be made at the appropriate level depending on whether the trials were operational or requiring governance input, eg road closures must be approved by Standing Committee or Council.
- 11 At this workshop elected members supported the Draft Strategic Framework being presented at the Infrastructure Committee meeting on 14 June 2022, and requested that a summary version be provided to facilitate discussion and decision making (this was actioned).

### **Decision of the Infrastructure Committee, June 2022**

- 12 At the Infrastructure Committee meeting on 14 June 2022 the Infrastructure Committee then approved the Strategic Framework (including the suite of proposed trials) in principle.

### **Project Delivery and Partnership, June 2022 – July 2022**

- 13 Council's decision to approve in principle was socialised through print and digital media and on the new CityTown website <https://www.timarucitytown.co.nz/> This content has since had hundreds of unique page views and social media comments/interactions. On 15 June 2022 officers also ran an information session for stakeholders with previous process involvement at which the Framework (including the proposed schedule of trials) was presented.
- 14 A series of public drop in sessions were hosted in the project space – including one particularly well attended session coinciding with the CBD Group's Mātariki Night Market – at which many members of the community came in to discuss the project. Interest in and support both for the overall Framework and for the proposed programme of trials in particular has been very strong with the primary community feedback being "it's great that we're finally getting on with it" and/or "it's great that we're doing these cool/innovative things here in Timaru, who knew we ever could/would".

## Decisions of the Tenders and Procurement Committee, June and July 2022

- 15 With the Strategic Framework document adopted this enabled the project team to more accurately forecast the work programme now required to complete the Master Planning process than had at any time been previously possible.
- 16 To minimise the costs and delays associated with iterative contract administration, and to de-risk the total project cost for ratepayers (providing cost certainty around the newly clarified deliverables and scope), Isthmus was therefore invited to prepare a new forecast and a Contract Variation Report was taken to the Tenders and Procurement Committee on 28 June 2022. The Tenders and Procurement Committee requested, and were provided with, full forecast details as well as a cost summary.
- 17 The (public excluded) Tenders and Procurement Committee (at which a number of other elected members also attended and spoke) declined to make a decision on 28 June 2022 on the grounds that *all* elected members should be invited to participate in the decision making process for this contract, first having additional time to review the comprehensive forecasting provided.
- 18 At the meeting of the Tenders and Procurement Committee on 26 July 2022 with attendance and voting extended to all elected members, and held in public, a decision was made to approve the requested contract variation *subject to* elected members taking a further opportunity to review and prioritise the proposed trials programme at another Council workshop.

## Current Situation

- 19 Work on the trials programme has since been largely suspended pending the review of the proposed trials. Where stakeholders are already engaged in preparatory work for trials eg Visible Arts and Culture, Bite Sized Recreation, and where there is a particularly high risk of losing buy in as a result of the newly introduced uncertainty and delay, these have continued to be supported. Costs have also already been incurred (on the previous contractual time-cost basis) against several trials in the programme in reliance on the approval provided on 14 June 2022 (ie work undertaken from 14 June 2022 through to 26 July 2022).

## Discussion

- 20 The decision of the Tenders and Procurement Committee on 26 July 2022, that elected members should prioritise the trials (rather than this being undertaken via the data-driven, consultative design process previously contemplated) has created some uncertainty and investment risk for the project and for affected/participating stakeholders. There may be reputational risk for Council (the prior decision having been not only publicly communicated but publicly supported by key stakeholders).
- 21 **Option 1:** Support the suite of trials subject to the selection of trials progressed or deferred being determined via an evidence based, participatory design approach with project team and affected stakeholders; governance input as appropriate on a case by case basis. This is the recommended approach.

- 22 **Option 2:** Pre-determine selection of trials to progress with little data and no consultation with affected/participating stakeholders.
- 23 **Option 1**
- 24 The participatory design approach proposed under Option 1 is robust, data driven, and led in each instance by a project team made up of relevant council officers, Isthmus/Gap Filler team members, affected and/or participating stakeholders and, in some cases, external experts where project team resource is otherwise insufficient to undertake the required modelling/analysis.
- 25 The participatory design approach enables trial concepts to be tested and prioritised as an iterative process. It presents a series of decision gateways whereby the concept scoping, preliminary design and developed design phases help to test the viability of a trial. This includes defining the problem that each trial might help solve and what we can learn from it, the potential path to permanence, and the ability for the community to sustain an activity in the future.
- 26 At each design stage, individual trials may be re-prioritised within the overall programme and not all will proceed to delivery. Criteria is used to assess whether a trial should proceed and in what timeframe (accelerate as a quick win/ await external factors or dissolve/ do more groundwork/ dovetail with another trial). Criteria are included in Appendix A of this briefing paper. Criteria are broad and balanced to ensure that a mix of relevant trials will proceed.
- 27 The trials programme is also regularly reviewed as a whole to ensure that there are no bottlenecks, and to introduce any new information such as interdependencies and work programme alignment. The criteria help ensure a geographic and demographic spread of trials across the programme, as this will ultimately inform where the Master Plan should focus its attention.
- 28 Elected members are invited to consider and contribute to the list of criteria that may have a bearing on prioritisation.
- 29 Some individual trials will require a specific governance input, eg a decision on whether or not to amend a policy or a bylaw, or the (temporary) closure of a portion of the road corridor.
- 30 The criteria incorporate relevant insights from targeted stakeholder engagement in accordance with Council's Significance and Engagement Policy.
- 31 Decisions to progress/defer each trial will therefore be evidence based, compliant with statutory and policy responsibilities, and highly defensible.
- 32 This approach will minimise both investment and reputational risk as available funds will be deployed only on those Trials which demonstrate a clear return, and which have the required levels of stakeholder buy in and support (noting that consensus is not a reasonable expectation).
- 33 Trials will not be chosen for immediate popular appeal but for a tested ability to provide relevant insights to inform long term investment decisions and to foster investment confidence, *Enabling* stakeholder and community-led regeneration of the city centre.

- 34 It should be noted that trials cannot now be publicly implemented until September 2022 at the earliest as both the project team and supporting stakeholders require lead time to prepare (including the purchase and preparation of equipment and materials, some of which have associated supply timeframes). We must also allow sufficient lead time with our public messaging in order for the community to anticipate and prepare for changes underway.
- 35 An **updated schedule of proposed trials** reflecting the now contracted delivery timeframes is therefore attached.
- 36 **Option 2**
- 37 As noted by Cameron Bagrie at the Council workshop also held on 26 July 2022, popular (rather than data driven) decision making is a very doubtful strategy with regard to future outcomes and the social licence for this approach is waning.
- 38 More specifically, and as was previously noted in the report presented to the Infrastructure Committee on 14 June 2022, further refining the current CityTown possibilities to a narrower set of opportunities immediately precludes certain stakeholder aspirations, a very difficult position to defend in the absence of either adequate supporting evidence or any stakeholder consensus on the most effective tactics to achieve agreed Outcomes.
- 39 An ad hoc prioritisation process may also undermine previously established community trust and confidence in the project and therefore in the future of the city centre.
- 40 A move to step away from the previously established partnership approach and to deter ongoing stakeholder participation and investment runs contrary to the *Enabling* approach selected through the LTP 2021-31 consultation process. As it is almost certain that council cannot regenerate the city centre *without* stakeholder participation and investment, the risks are considerable.
- 41 Any further delay/uncertainty also compromises the ability of the project team, and of potentially affected stakeholders, to anticipate and to leverage or address both potential opportunities and potential disruption. This could have a negative economic impact for affected stakeholders, could increase project costs through diminished efficiency, and could compromise the final dataset available leading to less robust decision making on projects.
- 42 The objective of the project team and affected stakeholders is still to implement a considerable portion of the trials programme in the summer of 2022-23 to capture the best window of opportunity (from a community engagement and data capture perspective) given that by November 2023 the draft Master Plan, with its corresponding budget and work programme, must be ready for Council's review as an input to the next Long Term Plan.
- 43 If the programme of possible trials is reduced there is a risk of arriving at our Master Plan without the full information and perhaps without everyone on board. This carries obvious reputational risks around transparency and fair process and exacerbates financial risk both for the project itself and for external stakeholders.

## Consultation

- 44 Stakeholders have been generous with their time to date and there is an obvious appetite for progress at pace, a desire to step beyond aspiration into action.
- 45 The present Strategic Framework, including the proposed Trials programme, brings together all of the insights and aspirations from the preceding 5 years of stakeholder and community engagement. These include but are not limited to
- the consultation undertaken by Colin Bass in 2019,
  - the submission made by the CBD Group to the Long Term Plan 2018-28,
  - the consultation undertaken by Beca in 2020,
  - the Key Research report of 2021,
  - the Long Term Plan 2021-31 consultation, and
  - our 2021-22 workshop series
- alongside technical documents eg Town Centres Study, Growth Management Strategy.
- 46 Uncertainty is unsettling for those potentially affected whereas certainty amounts to predetermination. The proposed Trials programme, if refined through a consultative and robust design process, strikes a balance between being bold, creating an impetus for investment, and being responsible and respectful of any concerns that may be raised around future or interim impacts on stakeholders. It is a difficult operating context for many right now facing the unprecedented social and financial challenges of the pandemic.
- 47 As noted in previous reports to Council, as Trial concepts are developed for each or any one of the targeted Trials, directly affected stakeholders (eg neighbouring businesses, building owners) need to be individually consulted and their ideas fed back into the design process. This input from those immediately on the spot on both the practical and perceived implications of each Trial is critical for us to make well informed decisions about which should progress (and when, where, how etc).
- 48 Any exploratory or targeted Trial that *does* progress will have clearly defined measures in place for monitoring and evaluation including appropriate feedback mechanisms. Other data points collected will be specific to each Trial but, taking the Strathallan Corner platform as an example, could include details around footfall or utilisation of a space (purpose, duration etc). This is to say that while we will consult “about” the Trials, the Trials are themselves a form of experiential engagement with our community.
- 49 For each Trial we will publish an evaluation report summarising the feedback received, any other data points collected, analysis, key insights and any interim conclusions or next steps.

## APPENDIX A

### Base Criteria considered for Trial Prioritisation

For reference, the following criteria are considered when assessing trial prioritisation (exploratory and targeted) at key milestones in the participatory design process. Criteria typically apply to assessment of individual trials within the context of the whole trial programme, and relevance to the Master Plan.

		Factors contributing to likelihood of a trial going on hold or being rescoped into another trial	Factors contributing the likelihood of a trial being slowed down for further assessment	Factors contributing to the likelihood of trial accelerating or being ranked as higher priority/ quick win
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Investment objectives and benefits</b>			
1.1	Supports a geographical/ spatial mix across the trials programme and CityTown scope area (to inform delivery tactics)	Repeats the physical scope area of another trial	Balances the focus of other trial location	Influences a wider scope / geographical area
1.2	Ability to deliver against Strategic Framework outcomes and measures	Will explore one specific outcome or measure repeated by another trial	Will explore one or two outcomes similar to other trials	Likely to address several outcomes not explored by other trials
1.3	Ability to deliver against Strategic Framework - key moves (targeted trials specifically)	Will explore one specific key move repeated by another trial	Will explore a key move similar to other trials	Likely to address one or more key moves not explored by other trials
1.4	Potential to attract external/ match funding for temporary or permanent solutions (e.g. Streets for People)	Does not fulfil criteria for funding	Reasonable effort and investigation required	Complies and/or application already underway
1.5	Ability to test options that could contribute to private investment confidence	Less relevant to private investors	Likely indirect contribution	Early indicators of direct contribution
1.6	Value of trial to de-risk future spend on expensive and permanent public realm infrastructure	Disproportionate spend/ high risk trial	Moderate risk trial/ future spend	Could avoid high risk/ misdirected high spend



<b>2.0</b>	<b>Critical success factors and dependencies</b>			
2.1	Co-ordination and alignment with other planned / strategic construction and renewals in the area	Trial could hinder other planned works in the city centre	Doesn't affect any of the planned works in the city centre	Changes will make it easier to implement other planned works in the city centre
2.2	Co-ordination and alignment with other planned events and activities in the area	Trial could hinder other planned events in the city centre	Doesn't affect any of the planned events in the city centre	Leverages and supports / improves other planned events in the city centre
2.3	Effort and cost effectiveness- Trial can be delivered quickly and cost effectively with minimal disruption (for exploratory trials)	Council investment for commercial gain	Potential permissions could cause delays	No changes within traffic lanes/ kerbs – e.g to carparks or road layout
2.4	Effort and cost effectiveness- i.e. ability to temporarily transform a space/ road layout without costly materials or changes to permanent infrastructure e.g. kerbs, bus stops, traffic signals. (for targeted trials)	Specialist materials requiring long lead times. Enabling works e.g. removing kerbs.	Value of trial learnings justifies disruption – and can be effectively managed and communicated.	Quick and easy delivery – changes not considered significant. Cost effective materials and minimal disruption.
2.5	Dependent on another trial or multiple trials to happen before?	Relies on more than two trials	Relies on kit of parts and/or another trial	Works independently
2.6	Ease of measuring outcomes (data capture, evaluation and monitoring)	No clear idea of what we need to measure and how we could measure it	We know what to measure but don't have the equipment/people to do it properly or requires expensive tools	Clear understanding of what we need to measure and what we are testing. Requires minimal tools
2.7	Business enthusiasm/ participation (through participatory design phases for trial)	Trending negative. Some concerns and no appetite to take part.	Neutral or not applicable.	Positive support and interest in participation
2.8	Community enthusiasm/ participation (through participatory design phases for trial)	Trending negative. Some concerns and no appetite to take part.	Neutral or not applicable.	Positive support and interest in participation



2.9	Neighbour / Affected stakeholder views	Trending negative. Some concerns and no appetite to take part.	Neutral or not applicable.	Positive support and interest in participation.
2.10	Does it require regulatory change?	Yes. Requires change judged as significant, require a Special Consultative Procedure or similar.	Yes. Requires change but isn't onerous & doesn't require public consultation.	No. Requires no change
2.11	Supports a balanced demographic across the trials programme	Exclusive to a demographic covered by another trial	Supports a demographic not covered by other trials	Inclusive across all demographics
2.12	Supports ability for community group or business to sustain an activity beyond the lifespan of the project	High dependency- requires significant input/ support via project	Indications of willingness / desire to take ownership	High likelihood can be sustained in the future as an ongoing activity
2.13	Ability to carry out length of trial for a suitable duration that matches intent, and during the appropriate season	No. External factors compromise timeframes.	Trial needs to be modified to suit new timeframes	Yes. Ideal duration/ season not impacted by external factors.
<b>3.0 Enduring Impact and useful insights</b>				
3.1	Potential for experiential consultation to reach a wide audience	Alters mood or behaviour temporarily for a small group	Memorable experience that changes perceptions of the city	Ability to gather wide ranging data through a highly engaging trial experience
3.2	Unique to Timaru- i.e. trial can engage with sense of place and unique features of the city centre- e.g. heritage buildings or topography	Could be considered generic or 'done before' in Timaru or elsewhere	Draws attention without clear rationale for regenerative potential	Potential to amplify uniqueness and change use
3.3	Ability to gain insights into the need and demand for public space and amenity to support urban regeneration	No clear direction for amenity / area dedicated to public life	Limitations that need to be better understood	Insights to Increases and improves amenity space/dedicated to public life
3.4	Path to permanence and ability to influence outcomes.	No ability to make permanent changes	Limited ability to influence or commitment to change.	High probability of permanent change occurring

3.5	Improves safety, accessibility and convenience for people walking, cycling or public transport.	Likely to be a less efficient route, slower and less comfortable or safe than an alternative.	Some perceptions around safety and convenience not able to be tested or improved through trial	Potential for easier, faster, smoother, more enjoyable movement in the streets to be explored and experienced.
3.6	Vibrancy i.e. ability of the trial to increase the number of people spending time in the city	Would attract more people on a one off occasion	Would attract more people regularly to the centre of town	Would attract more people regularly to the centre of town especially after hours and on weekends
3.7	Opportunity to partner with Mana Whenua for trial delivery, and authentically express Te Ao Māori values through approach.	Limited opportunity to involve mana whenua	Some opportunity to engage	Opportunity to work in partnership and brings stories to life/ enhance mauri and mana.
3.8	Multipronged / holistic approach: creates/requires multi-party collaboration	No	A little bit	Yes. Likely to have long term impacts