



Media Statement

Date: 23 July 2010
From: Brian Lester Chief Executive
Subject: Aquatic Centre and Indoor Stadium – Proposed Site

River Terrace Reserve Site Ticks the Boxes

After a thorough review of options to find the right site for the planned Aquatic Centre and Indoor Stadium, one site has come out ticking all the boxes - River Terrace Reserve.

Mayor Bede O'Malley has chaired a project group made up of representatives from the Ashburton District Council and the Ashburton Stadium Complex Trust. The group has worked together to assess all available sites for an aquatic centre and indoor stadium facility before coming up with its preferred site.

Mr O'Malley said the project group has found River Terrace reserve provides a central location, while enabling the facility to be unobtrusive. It offers park-like surroundings, much of which will be retained.

The site also has options for future growth of facilities which are being further explored, and provides interesting and practical options from a design point of view.

Essential services can be provided relatively easily and a traffic assessment has found any impact can be managed.

The icing on the cake is that the land is vested with Council with minimal cost and occupancy issues involved in securing it for the aquatic centre and stadium facility.

Mayor O'Malley says the assessment process was rigorous and the River Terrace site has the unanimous support of the project group, Council and the Stadium Trust. "The River Terrace site has very good accessibility – a key requirement for the user groups – and meets all the technical requirements Council asked for" he said.

The project group found the site has exciting potential in terms of design options and for expansion of sporting facilities, both crucial to ensuring the site and the facility are future-proofed.

"The more we looked at this site the better it got", said Mr O'Malley.

Detailed assessments have been made over the last two months around traffic impacts and stormwater options for the site.

Consultants found the traffic impacts could be managed quite comfortably. With the facility having peak use times outside normal work hours, the Smallbone Drive/ state highway 77 intersection is not expected to be put under additional pressure. Access options on River Terrace and the Dobson Street West extension, currently underway, mean traffic impacts were found to be within normal ranges.

Mr O'Malley said meetings had been held already with the New Zealand Transport Agency, with Agency representatives providing constructive feedback. "These meetings have raised no red flags and NZTA have given their agreement in principle to the site," he said.

Stormwater options for handling the run-off from the site and existing and potential future run-off from the Allenton area had been developed and will be refined when and if the site is given final endorsement by council. "The stormwater options are all workable and do not impact on the site at all," said Mr O'Malley.

The plans for the site include provision of a 1 metre building platform to even the site levels and to get the pool base safely away from ground water levels.

Ashburton District Council has included budget provision of \$25 million in its Long Term Plan for construction of the aquatic centre and indoor pool facility. Construction is planned to begin in mid-2012 with completion in 2014.

"This will be the biggest community project this Council has undertaken by quite a long way" said Mr O'Malley. "We have had to make sure the site meets all the requirements for the facility. We believe this proposal does that."

The Ashburton district community will now be asked to provide feedback on the proposed site. A consultation document will be delivered to households over the next two weeks and residents are encouraged to have their say. "This is still a proposal at this time", said Mr O'Malley. "We want to know what the community thinks."

Further information, including the full site assessment report will be available on the Council website www.ashburtondc.govt.nz or from the Council offices.

For further Information -

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