

Hatea Hub update from the Hatea Hub group

Since our presentation on the LTCCP plan of the WDC both WDC staff and Hatea Hub have made significant progress regarding design, costing, effects, options etc

- First consideration was the question, will the structure of a weir and drawbridge/lock have a significant detrimental effect on flooding of the CBD in extreme weather/rainfall
 - With the inclusion of several moveable “gates”, the lock being able to be open in extreme rainfall events and the design height of the weir (2.2m above Chart datum) calculations by engineers have shown there to be negligible impact
- Will the harbour silt up?
 - The same amount of silt will come down regardless of the “lock”, the distribution will change and further modeling will be done. Most silt will come down in extreme rainfall events, and this is when the “gates” are open, however with the water above the weir being 2.2m above CD the (annual) task of dredging will be a lot easier in that area.
- Will all the mangroves die?
 - No, very unlikely with the 2.2m weir height a lot of the pneumatophores will be exposed at this level. What will happen is that they are less likely to spread further into the channels in the upper harbour
- Will it cost too much?
 - Cost estimations done so far show very similar costing as a bridge with a drawbridge
- Will it work?
 - Yes, the concept will leave a feeling of full tide in the upper harbour and allow greater access between land and water. Tide ranges from neap to spring above the weir are from 0.3 to 1.1m.
- Will the consenting take too long?
 - Where there is a will, there is a way. RMA processes can be streamlined if projects are given priority. Politicians at local, regional and national level have committed to working towards resolving our current recession and cutting through red tape. This project creates infrastructure that will generate significant long term opportunities and benefits for our region.
- How will it affect the yacht/boats travelling to and from Whangarei Town Basin?
 - Approx 2 hours either side of high tide the lock can remain opened, so in that time period the yachts will have the same issue as with the “conventional” bridge/draw bridge. Times outside these periods they will go through the lock which is not very complicated. There will also be a period around peak vehicle traffic hours when the bridge would need to remain closed.

- Water quality?
 - With the “gates” and the tidal movement over the weir, coupled with the “ability” to allow full natural tidal movement when required therefore the water quality should not be adversely affected. Indeed when we embrace this concept and spend more time on and around the water in Whangarei we will be far more “vigilant” regarding the quality of the water.

Significant Benefits of Hatea Hub proposal

The benefits of the proposal are reinforcing the principles of the WDC 20/20+ vision and acting as a catalyst to achieve many of the objectives and actions of that strategy.

At a recent Tourism Trust meeting we defined Whangarei’s “Unique point of Difference”.

In essence this is “our relationship with the water”. Whangarei is a nautical city, meeting place of mariners, early Maori with waka, early traders, the harbour, the marine industry, the beaches, off shore Islands, Poor Knights, over a hundred beaches, sailing, fishing, paddling, diving, skiing, in short all our draw cards are **focused around the theme of water**.

The lock/bridge system would built on this and be the catalyst for a facelift of the city: **“The city where the tide has turned”**.

The importance of this concept is significant on a lot of levels:

- Marketing of the Whangarei District
 - Only place in NZ with lock/bridge concept
 - Fantastic looking yacht harbour in city center
 - The annual value of the international visiting yachts for Whangarei lies around \$8 million per annum, improved and enhanced facilities will likely double this within a few years
 - City with “canals” through center
 - Strong people/water relationship/interaction
 - Water themes throughout the city
 - Attractive boulevards
- Recreational opportunities
 - Waka ama paddling
 - General canoeing
 - Dinghy sailing
 - Rowing
 - Model boat sailing
 - Water recreation

- Economic development
 - Waterfront property development
 - A mix of apartments, shops, café's, art, hotels etc will significantly boost our economy
 - Tourism growth
 - With 4.3 million "visitors" driving to Whangarei, if we capture 10% and sell a coffee we increase turnover by \$4 million, however if we have an attractive center with things to see and do, we may increase the daily expenditure to \$100, giving a \$40 million boost. An overnight experience sees an expenditure of \$300, even if 5 % of the visitors decided on this it will add \$60 million p/a, and this is year after year!
 - Waterfront facilities
 - Approx 4 k of waterfront with footpaths, cycle ways, jetties, wharfs etc will need to be designed and built
 - Employment opportunities
 - In tourism, retail, hotel/café, water sports etc
 - Planning and design around water heart
 - The creation of unique designed buildings, art work, people spaces etc
 - Fitting in with vision 20/20
- Maori development opportunities are significant
 - Hihiaua cultural center
 - A centre piece in the development surrounded by both the Hatea and Waiarohia rivers
 - Waka trips
 - With the higher tide level hourly trips to and from the town basin can be organized to fit in with other tourism product
 - Carving/building school
 - Voyage canoe history
 - Most powerful display of navigation skills and traditional voyaging techniques
- Walking/cycle ways development
 - Around water heart
 - Increase use of city environment
 - Opportunities for community walks/events
 - Ultimate living environment
- Café/waterfront development
 - Entertainment hub
 - Variety in options/choices
 - Arts/crafts precinct
 - Various sculptures around water center

- Hotel
 - A bustling center is an attractive option
 - 4-5 star hotel will stack up from an economical point of view
 - Conference facilities
 - Supported by variety of work/play options
 - Buzzing center , aquatic heart, pumping place to be
 - Only 1.5 hrs away from Auckland
- Traffic
 - Easing of traffic in inner city
 - Easier access to Whangarei Heads etc
 - Parking opportunities on Pohe Island when big events take place at Okara Park Stadium
- Events
 - Rowing races
 - World championship Waka Ama
 - Small boat sailing
 - Dragon boat racing
 - On water musical event
 - Boat shows
 - Annual pirate parades
 - The economic value of these kind of events is significant
 - The marketing of Whangarei District will be greatly enhanced by this!
- Celebrating a city with vision
 - Inspiring place to be
 - Great place to work
 - Great place to invest
 - Place to be proud of and going in a positive direction

All these benefits can be derived if we can overcome the challenges that come with doing something a little different. The key to the above has to be the lock/bridge concept. It is the catalyst that will enable a whole raft of opportunities. Without this we will remain a city without a point of difference.

Add up all the potential benefits, add up all the “risks” ... can we afford not to take the next step?

We can make it happen!