

AGENDA ITEM C3

FEATHERSTON MASTERPLAN – CONCEPT OPTION, MASTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT AND DETAILED DESIGN REPORT

Purpose of Report

To seek endorsement on the preferred Featherston Masterplan Concept Option to proceed to the development and detailed design stage of the Draft Featherston Masterplan.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Council:

1. *Receive the 'Featherston Masterplan – Concept Option, Masterplan Development and Detailed Design' report.*
 - a) *Approve Vision 1 " Featherston- A thriving community of workers, families and creatives all supporting each other" to be included in the Draft Masterplan for formal consultation, or;*
 - b) *Approves Vision 1" Featherston- A thriving community of workers, families and creatives all supporting each other" and Vision 2 Featherston- Resilient, Creative Caring" to be included in the Draft Masterplan for formal consultation and the community to respond with their preferred Vision 1 or 2.*
2. *Approve Concept Option 1(Intensification around the existing town centre and existing train station) to proceed to the Draft Masterplan detailed design stage.*
3. *Endorse the two detailed design plans as priorities for the masterplan being:*
 - 3.1 *A detailed design of the Pathway and link from the town centre to the rail station.*
 - 3.2 *A detailed design of the main street.*

1. Executive Summary

The Council prioritised and approved the development of a Featherston Masterplan following the adoption of its District Spatial Plan in 2021. Featherston has been identified as a town suitable for transit-oriented development in the District Spatial Plan and in the Wellington Regional Growth Framework (2021). More recently, it has also been identified by the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee as a Complex Development Opportunity (CDO). It has been identified as a CDO for a range of reasons including being in a key location to achieve strategic objectives and the need for partnerships to ensure delivery of outcomes.

The preparation of a Foundation Discussion Document was the first stage of developing the masterplan for Featherston. This includes gathering evidence to underpin the masterplan and engaging with hapū/iwi, the community and stakeholders to hear their views. Three challenges and opportunities were identified in the Foundation Document

- Creating a pleasant town centre along the main street which also serves as a state highway
- Ensuring that there is capacity for growth, with associated infrastructure
- Protecting what is valued (such as family living/lifestyle options) while enabling future intensification, housing choice and change

Two Concept Options in response to these challenges and opportunities were developed from early engagement and were released for informal feedback 22 July to 19 August 2022. The 2 Concept Options were: Concept Option 1 (Intensification around the existing town centre and existing rail station) and Concept Option 2 (Moving the existing rail station nearer to the existing town centre and intensifying around both).

There were eleven questions asked via a hardcopy and online survey. Five 'drop in' sessions were also held within this timeframe. There was a high level of engagement with feedback received from 186 people and extensive discussions on social media.

Of the two options proposed, Concept Option 1 received the greatest level of support with the request for some adjustments, in particular more of a focus on the main street as well as a better connection from the main street to the train station. In addition to this, six key themes emerged and underpinned most submissions. These being:

1. Community and vision
2. Town centre development
3. Infrastructure capacity
4. Housing options and choice
5. Better connections
6. Value of reserves and parks

The information and themes captured from the engagement and consultation to date including the early engagement, discussions with stakeholders and government agencies, input from iwi/hapu and submissions have supported the recommendations of this report. Once the preferred option has been approved, the Draft Masterplan will be developed for the Featherston Growth Area (Node), and this will include two specific detailed design plans. The Draft Masterplan will be reported to the December Council meeting for review and adoption to enable formal consultation under the Local Government Act 2002 in late January-February 2023.

2. Discussion

2.1 Masterplan Concept Plan Options

Three high level concept options were an outcome of the agency charette held in April 2022. One of these options (Option 3) looked at whether or not it would be practical or feasible to have the town centre located next to the existing rail station. This option was ruled out after an economic review of the intensification options by Mike Cullen, UrbaCity. This review concluded that moving the *“town centre would lose direct regional access to the regions”* that the existing location of the town centre is on a movement network and that such networks are *“fundamental to urban commerce”*. He concluded that *“moving of the town centre is not a realistic option”*. Two options (see appendices) were therefore put forward for Council consideration and presented to the Featherston Community for informal feedback.

Concept Option 1 (Intensification around the existing town centre and existing rail station) and Concept Option 2 (Moving the existing rail station nearer to the existing town centre and intensifying around both) which reflects a more traditional ‘Transit Orientated Development’.

The Featherston Masterplan Concept Options and Foundation Document were released for feedback from 22 July through to 19 August 2022. Eleven questions were asked via a hardcopy and online survey. Five ‘drop in’ sessions were also held within this timeframe. 154 survey responses were received and 32 people attended the drop-in sessions. A total of 186 people provided feedback.

Concept Option 1 was the most preferred option with 95 people (64%) supporting retaining the current train station location and intensifying around it. 86 people mentioned that there was no need to move the station as it was close enough to town, provides sufficient parking and mainly serves locals.

15 people (10%) supported moving the train station as a way to stimulate the town centre.

33 people (22%) did not support either of the options. Of those that didn’t support either option or didn’t know (four people), infrastructure was mentioned as a concern and others believed that changes were needed to both, such as reducing density in parts of town. The most mentioned change, with 33 mentions, was creating a corridor from the town center to the shops, whether this be a well-lit, covered walkway with art or by introducing an additional mixed-use zone between town and the station.

Based on the feedback received and the clear support for Concept Option 1, it is recommended that Option 1 - Intensification around the existing town centre and existing rail station is approved to be further developed into the Draft Featherston Masterplan.

2.2. Vision

From early engagement with the community, local businesses, and groups, it’s clear that what makes Featherston special is its strong community, its large number of volunteers and the way that people work together to make a difference. This also came through strongly in the survey responses. In order to guide the Masterplan a draft vision was put out to the community for feedback:

‘A strong, caring community where there is a place for everyone’

Of the survey responses, 121 people agreed that the proposed vision was reflective of Featherston as it currently is, but people wanted a more aspirational vision that captures the uniqueness and qualities of the town that aren’t found elsewhere.

From the suggestions received through the survey results and the discussion at the Featherston Masterplan Workshop, the preferred draft vision has been amended to:

- **Vision 1: Featherston - A thriving community of workers, families and creatives all supporting each other**

This draft vision has used the language of submitters particularly that what makes Featherston unique are the people that live there and who have been described as a mix of creatives, workers and families. There were numerous mentions that people want Featherston to be thriving, which has also been captured in the vision.

Cr Colenso suggested ‘Place’ should be replaced with ‘Community’ to reflect the strong sense of community. This change is reflected in the preferred vision.

The advantages of this vision are:

- 121 people supported the first draft, and this amended vision is still reflective of that
- Reflects the language and suggestions of residents
- It is future focused
- It provides guidance to the masterplan, noting that the plan needs to accommodate families, workers and creatives and include initiatives that contribute to a thriving community.

The disadvantage of this vision is:

- It is longer

Mention was made in the recent Masterplan workshop that shorter visions may be more effective. There is the option to have more than one vision that people can respond to in the draft Masterplan if this is preferred by Council. In response to the mentions made, the second vision is:

- **Vision 2: Featherston - Resilient, Creative, Caring**

The advantages of this vision are:

- It is shorter, more concise
- It reflects the language of residents

The disadvantage of this vision is:

- Does not provide any additional aspiration/isn't future focused
- Doesn't identify the uniqueness of Featherston; could apply anywhere

For these reasons, it is recommended that Vision 1 "A thriving community of workers, families and creatives all supporting each other" is adopted for the Draft Featherston Masterplan.

Alternatively, there is the option to take both Visions 1 and 2 out to the community as part of consultation on the Draft Masterplan and ask people to choose one or the other.

2.3. Density

Through early engagement with the community, we heard that increasing house prices have impacted the affordability of Featherston as a place to live for those who have traditionally lived there. To help with housing affordability and availability, the concept options considered allowing further subdivision of existing lots beyond what is provided for by the District Plan. As a starting point, the concepts looked at potential site sizes of down to 300m² in the General Residential Zone and down to 200m² in the Medium Density Residential Zone. Currently the minimum average residential site size in Featherston is 500m².

Two questions were asked about these densities, what people liked and what they didn't like. From the submissions and discussions had, there was general support for increased density within Featherston with 69% supporting increasing density while 31% didn't support increasing density. The main reasons for supporting increased density were:

Homelessness

Overall people wanted to ensure that everyone had a home that was affordable and warm. There is hidden homelessness in Featherston and social housing is needed.

Older people

There are a limited number suitable sized, warm homes for older people as most homes are too large and have too large of a garden/section to maintain. When discussing increased density with older people, most said they would like to feel secure in their house and have interactions with others.

Younger people

Houses are no longer affordable for younger people and some people are looking at moving back to Wellington. Younger people were happy to have a smaller section if it meant that they could purchase a house.

Families

Submissions raised that families needed space and people would still like to see larger sections (500m²) plus for families.

Of those that didn't support increased densities, the main concerns were infrastructure capacity, followed by mention that the sections were slightly too small as there still needed to be options for families. These considerations will be taken into account when undertaking the Draft Masterplan and creating design guides.

There was general support for design guides in Featherston with 96 people supporting the development of a design guide. In order to create a design guide, the existing qualities of Featherston will be examined (such as road setbacks, outdoor living areas which all add to the existing character). A design guide would aim to retain these existing qualities while ensuring increasing density is done well and is sympathetic of the town's qualities. The design guide would be principal based rather than rule based. The rule-based framework would be retained within the District Plan (standards such as setbacks, daylighting etc).

Implementation in the District Plan

The South Wairarapa Spatial Plan directs retention of the current density provisions for both Greytown and Martinborough in the Operative District Plan. These are currently set for residential zones within the South Wairarapa District as a minimum site area/density of 400m² minimum area and an average site area of at least 500m² both excluding accessways (net site area). The direction from the South Wairarapa Spatial Plan included relooking at density for Featherston based on the it being identified as a transport-oriented growth node. This has not been undertaken as part of the District Plan review as the Featherston Master Plan project will undertake this work in detail. The results of the Featherston Master Plan will be brought into the District Plan when it and supporting requirements have been completed. Carterton and Masterton Districts currently have different densities in the Operative District Plan and these will be reviewed along with the spatial extents of their residential zones.

2.4. Detailed Design Plans

The community supported further developing Concept Option 1. Two very clear requests for amendments of Concept Option 1 came out of the submissions. These requests were to better connect the train station with the town centre and to improve the main street in both appearance and functionality. It is therefore recommended that as part of the Masterplan development, two detailed design plans are undertaken as follows:

- A detailed design of the Pathway and link from the town centre to the rail station. People saw this as also serving as a sculpture trail and innovative walkway/cycleway. This is in keeping with Mike Cullen's comments that there is a need to have more aspirational/transformational environment that complements intensification.
- A detailed design of the main street which may include traffic calming, planting, new paving, change of speed limit etc

2.5. Reserves

Submitters mentioned that they would like to see better use of parks and reserves especially with an increased density. At the Featherston Masterplan Workshop, a discussion was had on whether Featherston had enough reserve land and if there was a standard on how much reserve land was required based on the number of people. A standard that has been applied in the past is 4 hectares of reserves land per every 1000 persons (with a mix of passive and active space).

Featherston currently has a population of 2,600, over 30 years the population is projected to increase by 1,700 bringing the total population to 4,300. Based on this projected

population, 17.2ha of reserve land would be needed. Within the Featherston growth area, there is currently 13.3ha of reserve land, of which 5.2ha is passive space and 8.1ha is active space. It is noted that Ōtauirā reserve and One Tree Hill have not been included in this calculation as they are outside of the town boundary, if they were included it would bring the total reserve land to 32ha.

These numbers suggest that additional reserve land may be required in the future. It is noted that the District Plan is currently being reviewed, the provisions on financial contributions will ensure that as development occurs, a reserve contribution will be taken which can be used to obtain, develop and enhance reserve land. The reserve provisions are also being reviewed as part of the District Plan Review and can feed into the Masterplan process.

Further, reserves will be looked at as part of the development of the Featherston Masterplan including, connectedness, sign postings, functionality, and usability.

2.6. Industrial land

Featherston's main street currently has a mix of zoning with commercial near the middle and industrial on the east and west sides of the main street. Most of the industrially zoned sites along the main street are commercial and residential activities. There is also a larger industrial zone at the end of Birdwood Street near the railway line. The industrial zoning within the town centre reflects the historic uses of Featherston such as the rubber factory, chocolate factory etc. Concept Option 1 proposed to change the zoning within the main street so there is a town centre zone in the middle to provide for the core commercial activities. On either side of the town centre (the current industrial zoned land), a mixed use area was proposed. Mixed use would provide for a range of activities, including both commercial and residential.

Due to the proposed removal of the existing industrial zoning on the main street, a question was asked whether Featherston needed any additional industrial land. 59 people did not think more industrial land was needed, 54 people were not sure and 33 people thought that additional industrial land could help the Featherston economy as long as it provided for light industrial activities such as workshops for trades people etc. Some submitters agreed that more people working within the town would provide greater support to commercial businesses. Of those who didn't want more industrial land, mention was made that there was enough industrial land at Birdwood Street but it needed to be better utilized.

Some submissions mentioned that they, or other businesses had been wanting to establish light industrial activities within Featherston but there was either no land available or it was not suitable for their activity. Businesses that were mentioned included workshops for trades, mechanic's etc. All of which were small in scale.

Although Featherston is largely a commuter town at present, as the population grows people will look for work within the town. A level of self-sufficiency is needed, and land would need to be available to provide for these mentioned smaller scale light industrial activities. Provision of industrial land is also in keeping with the draft updated Vision 1. This Masterplan process will work through opportunities for light industrial within the current zoning.

2.7. Māori Engagement and the Featherston Masterplan Foundation Discussion Document

At the elected members workshop on 1 September 2022 a question was raised about the engagement the Featherston Masterplan team has had with Māori.

Council's consultant adviser Ree Anderson has been ensuring appropriate engagement throughout this process. This started with an initial conversation with the Chair of the Māori Standing Committee in February 2022. Following this conversation, the option to report and discuss engagement with the Māori Standing Committee was canvassed. However, the masterplanning team was advised to work through Pae tū Mōkai o Tauria and its representatives.

Ree duly did this and met both in person and online on various occasions with Pae tū Mōkai o Tauria representatives Narida Hooper (Secretary), Karen Mikaera (Treasurer and mana whenua) and Riki Hiemer (Chair).

The Chair, Riki Hiemer kindly, in a voluntary capacity, emailed, texted and left voicemail messages with whanau, as she had prepared a set of questions to assist with feedback. The questions asked of whanau follow:

- What are some of the highlights about living/being in Featherston?
- What are some of the lowlights about living/being in Featherston?
- Thinking about the infrastructure (e.g roads, drainage, waste water, power supply, buildings, parks - incl sports fields, walkways, camping areas etc..) what are the things that are working well in Featherston?
- Thinking about the infrastructure (e.g roads, drainage, waste water, power supply, buildings, parks - incl sports fields, walkways, camping areas etc..) what are the things that are NOT working well in Featherston?
- What (do you believe) is the most important thing for you (your whanau) right now?
- What (if anything) is getting in the way of achieving that?
- What can be done to help achieve that?

Eleven responses were received, of these one person was mana whenua and a resident, nine were Māori residents and one was not resident.

The responses to the questionnaire were reviewed and the paragraph 2.1 Tangata Whenua was drafted for the Featherston Masterplan Foundation Discussion Document. This paragraph was reviewed by Narida Hooper and Riki Hiemer and they were both comfortable that it captured the key themes from the feedback received.

It is also noted that Warren Maxwell (Ngāti Kahungunu) and a long-time resident of Featherston is involved in commenting on the masterplan through his involvement with Fab Feathy.

Additionally, some initial contact has been made through Narida Hooper with Darrin Apanui who is GM of Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust and a member of the Wellington Regional Leadership Committee. Further meetings are being planned with Darrin Apanui.

Nevertheless, it will be important going forward to ensure that there is capacity for Māori to be actively involved in the development of the masterplan. This is in keeping with Part 2 and 6 of the Local Government Act 2002 which “*provide principles and requirements for councils that are intended to facilitate participation by Māori in local government decision-making processes*”.¹

To this end, two representatives from Pae tū Mōkai o Taurira have been invited to join the Design Charette with government agencies and council staff and advisers in October 2022.

2.8. Next Steps and Formal Consultation

Once the preferred Concept option has been approved, further and more detailed work needs to be undertaken, including:

- Design Charette with government agencies and and Pae tū Mōkai o Taurira reps - October 2022
- Further engagement with iwi and hapu
- Engagement with youth (Kuranui College)
- Engagement Regional Leadership Forum
- CDO project meetings
- Drawings, mapping
- 2 Detailed design options developed (to be agreed with council)
- High level design public realm/parks
- Quantity survey (costings)-relative feasibility
- Draft Masterplan prepared
- Feedback and Clr/Com Board Workshop(s)
- Draft Masterplan December 2022

It is intended that the Draft Masterplan will be reported to the December Council meeting. Formal consultation under the Local Government Act would not begin until late January-February 2023. Five weeks would be provided for submissions, drop-in sessions etc during February. In March/April submissions would be analysed and likely reported back to Council in April. Provision will be made for submitters to speak to their submissions in keeping with the special consultative procedures under the Local Government Act 2002. Following the hearing of submissions, the Masterplan would be

¹ Localcouncils.govt.nz see: https://www.localcouncils.govt.nz/lqip.nsf/wpg_URL/About-Local-Government-Māori-Participation-in-Local-Government-What-does-the-Local-Government-Act-say-about-The-Treaty

finalised with decisions from elected members in May/June 2023. It is noted that workshop and meeting dates have not yet been confirmed and these dates may be subject to change.

The Masterplan will influence the 2024/25 LTP (Y3) budget planning which will start mid-late 2023. When the 2021-31 LTP is reviewed 2024/25 further provision can be made for initiatives stemming from the Master Plan

3. Conclusion

The Featherston community is a highly engaged community and has taken a keen interest in the development of the Masterplan through the various established networks. Endorsing the further development of Concept Option 1 and the two proposed areas to have detailed design will enable the Draft Featherston Masterplan to capture the communities' thoughts and ideas, along with responding to and providing for the growth that Featherston is experiencing now and into the future.

4. Supporting Information

2.9. Long Term Plan - Community Outcomes

The Featherston Masterplan has been identified as a priority within the Long Term Plan and aligns to delivering on all LTP outcomes.

2.10. Treaty of Waitangi

Pae tū Mokai o Taurira representatives have been engaged in developing the Foundation Discussion Document. That engagement is to continue as the Master Plan is developed further. It is anticipated that others including Rangitāne Tū Mai Rā Trust will be engaged further also as the Master Plan is developed.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Concept Option 1 and 2

Contact Officer: Kendyll Harper, Intermediate Planner

Reviewed By: Russell O'Leary, Group Manager Planning and Environment

Appendix 1

Concept Option 1 and 2



