MIN-4145 RiverLink - Upcoming Communications and Events

13 April 2023

Providing a high-level summary of communications and events scheduled to take place over the next three weeks as the Interim Project Alliance Agreement (IPAA) is signed, and the delivery Alliance comes on board.

Background

- RiverLink is a transformational set of projects for Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai (Lower Hutt). The programme of works combines the NZUP Melling Transport Improvements, Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River flood protection works, and Lower Hutt City centre revitalisation.

- The programme is a partnership between Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency, Hutt City Council, Greater Wellington, iwi Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira.

- With the approval of Joint Ministers (Transport, Finance), RiverLink released its Request for Proposal (RFP) to the public on 13 Oct 2022 and begun the procurement process to find a suitable delivery alliance. Three alliance teams submitted, with a final preferred proponent being publicly confirmed in late Mar 2023. However, we did not name the alliance at the time to ensure ongoing negotiations were done in good faith.

Monday 17 April – Announcing the preferred alliance

- We expect to conclude the Interim Partnership Alliance Agreement (IPAA) internal negotiations by mid-April, with a mana whenua powhiri and blessing of the incoming alliance to be held on 17 April 2023 at Te Tatau o Te Pō Marae. This is not a scheduled media event, or for wider partner organisation attendance. It is an internal mana whenua-led powhiri and blessing for new members of the team. A new name will also be gifted to the programme, Te Wai Takamori o Te Awa Kairangi.

- To coincide with the mana whenua powhiri, and due to the potential for public commentary, it is the intention of the RiverLink partners to release a joint public statement, together with representatives of the Alliance, on Monday 17 April, announcing AECOM-Fletcher as the delivery Alliance partner for RiverLink.

- We have drafted a ministerial statement should the Minister wish to contribute to communications on the 17 April, and we would follow his lead on statements issued for the day.

- It is important to note that this is not the main construction contract. We are entering an interim alliance agreement to develop the design and cost estimate for the project, and we will be briefing the Joint Ministers prior to signing the main design and construction contract, likely in Oct 2023. This is in line with the Joint Ministers NZUP delegations letter.

Thursday 20 April – Planning Institute Awards

- The New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) is hosting its conference in Christchurch from 19 – 21 April. Confidentially, RiverLink has been awarded the NZPI Best Practice Award, and will be receiving this on the night of 19 April, with a publicly released statement issued by NZPI on 20 April. Partners have contributed to a joint statement on this award to be released on 20 April also.

- On 21 April, NZPI will also be announcing the winner of the Nancy Northcroft Supreme Award. Unlike other awards, this is a surprise to the winners on the day. Communications are prepared should we win.

Tuesday 2 May – IPAA signing ceremony

- We have also tentatively booked an IPAA signing ceremony for Tuesday 2nd May in Lower Hutt for the Minister, Mayor of Hutt City, Chair of Greater Wellington Regional Council, and mana whenua.

- This event would be more public facing opportunity for the media and project partners and serves to celebrate the successful conclusion of negotiations and appointment of AECOM-Fletcher.

Proactively Released

Hon Michael Wood

Minister of Transport
Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety
Deputy Leader of the House

17 April 2023

PĀNUI PĀPĀHO
MEDIA STATEMENT

AECOM-Fletcher Alliance to deliver Melling Transport Improvements, wider RiverLink programme

Proactively Released

Transport Minister Michael Wood is pleased to see delivery of the Melling Transport Improvements remains on track, with project partners announcing today that AECOM-Fletcher will be the delivery Alliance for the RiverLink programme.

“The Melling Transport Improvements component of RiverLink will help deliver real choice for Kiwis however they choose to get around with reduced congestion, waiting times, more timely and accessible public transport, and a safer State Highway 2 corridor,” Michael Wood said.

“The current Melling bridge is also a pinch point in river corridor and removing that restriction and replacing it with a new bridge makes room for a wider river corridor, and higher stop banks, to significantly improve flood protection for the area.”

Funded by the New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP) the transport improvements include a new Melling river bridge and grade separated interchange, a new public transport hub created by shifting the current Melling train station south to be co-located with a new bus hub, and park and ride facilities.

In addition, a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over Te Awa Kairangi / Hutt River will link Lower Hutt City centre to the public transport hub, and a new cycle path will extend Te Ara Tupua north from Bridge Street along the rail corridor, joining the hub and other active modes along the river corridor.

“The Government is upgrading New Zealand’s transport system to make it safer and more efficient for now and future generations to come,” Michael Wood said.

“As a result of our investment at Melling, deaths and serious injuries are expected to reduce by 83%, rail patronage is projected to grow by 30%, and better resilience will see a 60% reduction in events affecting State Highway 2. New walking and cycling infrastructure are also set to enable significant active travel growth in the area, providing more opportunities for Kiwis to get around.

“I’m excited to see AECOM-Fletcher come onboard, and I look forward to project partners finalising the detailed design and beginning construction later this year,” Michael Wood said.

ENDS

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Notes for editors:

RiverLink is a partnership between Greater Wellington, Waka Kotahi, Hutt City Council, and iwi Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika and Ngāti Toa Rangatira to deliver crucial flood protection and river restoration work, improvements to public transport, walking & cycling routes, local roads and the SH2 Melling Interchange, as well as urban revitalisation of the Lower Hutt city centre.

Proactively Released