

Feedback on 10 possible combinations of uses for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration Area and the things considered to get to this point.



On behalf of Avon-Ōtākaro Network

Founded in 2011, Avon-Ōtākaro Network (AvON) has developed a popular community-driven science-informed vision for the future of the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration Area involving a number of diverse organisations and component proposals.

We seek to turn the Avon-Ōtākaro red zone into:

1. **A multipurpose city-to-sea River Park that meets diverse community needs** eg for environmental regeneration and restoration; recognition of cultural & community heritage; play, recreation and sport; food production; arts and entertainment; learning, training, employment, small business and tourism; limited and conditional residential re-occupation.
2. And while allowing for multiple uses as above, **the maximum possible restoration of native ecosystems**, to enhance water quality, biodiversity, mahinga kai values and resilience to natural hazards.

This vision attracted eighteen and a half thousand signatures on a petition to Parliament in 2012, the vision remains extremely popular within the communities of Greater Christchurch.

Recently Regenerate Christchurch released the vision for the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor based on the input of thousands of people, this very closely aligns with the AvON vision and is testament to the success of the advocacy we have undertaken over the past 6 years.

What we think of the 10 possible combinations of uses and the information considered to this point:

1. Firstly we would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work and wealth of information that has been completed to date by Regenerate Christchurch and its consultants on the Land Use Assessments and summaries including the combination options.
2. Our vision is for a multi-purpose river park that meets diverse community needs and as such none of the 10 combinations reflects a combination of all uses that meets the most diverse

combination of community needs, yet this is possible; for example, by combining Option 2 (recreation (including 2.2km in-river flatwater facility), visitor attractions and ecological restoration) with Option 7 (productive land uses, residential, visitor attractions and ecological restoration). In our view the best way to achieve fullest support, ownership and mandate by the communities of Greater Christchurch is to meet the maximum possible community needs, this means consideration of a combination of all compatible land uses. There is sufficient area to accommodate this.

3. Our vision also includes for the maximum possible restoration of native ecosystems, to enhance water quality, biodiversity and mahinga kai values. While this is possible, it is not achieved by the current proposal for an open space corridor that includes “small pockets of ecological restoration”. It is our contention that Option 5 (Ecological restoration) should be the default land use throughout the entire corridor and especially the riparian open space corridor and the Horseshoe Lake red zone. And that the opportunity for the maximum possible interception and remediation of stormwater and restoration of river floodplain functionality are priorities.
4. We consider that provision for flat water sports should be in-river rather than off-river, because: it is possible and cheaper; Horseshoe Lake is far too valuable for stormwater remediation of a significant catchment; New Brighton Rd is far too important for the east both economically and as an escape route to sever; and provision for primary contact water sport can be achieved off-river via alternative attractions such as a white-water complex.
5. We are willing to consider a level of residential occupation of the red zone on the following conditions:
 - That it is limited to the outer fringes of upstream red zone land outside the ‘open space corridor’ (and the Horseshoe Lake red zone), where ground conditions and flood risk permits; and
 - where it allows for a better interface between residential and green/blue space amenity; and
 - where it assists in making a community more whole/integrated again; and
 - where land is leasehold only; and
 - where buildings are relocatable and sustainable; and
 - where land is not insured but the structures and the cost of their relocation is; and
 - where the occupants agree to participate in global research in resilient housing.
6. We are willing to consider land swaps with neighbouring golf courses/reserves in principle as they provide for better options for residential redevelopment than red zone land, but only on condition that:
 - Adjacent communities are willing to relinquish the green space in exchange for substitute options – we acknowledge that heritage, access, recreation and amenity values of the status quo may exceed any economic or other value achieved from such land swaps;
 - Reserves on the red zone boundary are not considered for infill (such that residential boundaries become straighter, negating the improvement of the interface eg Donnell and Avondale Parks)
 - Bexley red zone is not considered for the substitute site as the area is far too valuable to accommodate salt marsh migration with sea level rise. Instead land at Bexley

Reserve and/or on the old landfill sites over Dyers Rd should be considered for a true Links as a substitute.

7. We are supportive of all of the other land uses considered.
8. We question this statement: “The proposed stormwater treatment programme set out in the Christchurch City Council’s Ōtākaro Avon River Stormwater Management Plan (SMP) represents the maximum reasonable amount of intervention the Council can make within the bounds of affordability.” This is a value statement that requires further assessment – it depends very much upon public priorities which continue to shift.

What we think is missing

1. Consideration of synergies and economies of scale.
2. Maintenance of the integrity of the corridor.
3. Options for land tenure that retain ownership of the land in common public trust.
4. Consideration of governance models – this would help inform land use options and their combination much more.
5. Detail on the possible natural restoration methodologies / implementation strategies (as opposed to differences in scale) and their different cost implications - refer to the work of Orchard 2017 summarised here:
<http://www.avonotakaronetwork.co.nz/f/90d6beb9c3fbcdfb.pdf>
6. Details of trade offs between land uses and opportunity costs of land uses e.g. such as potential cost to maintain for ratepayers.
7. Recognition of the need to conserve mature trees in any land considered for residential development whether existing red zone or decommissioned golf course.

Other comments

Thank you for making all the reports publicly available and seeking input from communities. It is critical that the public understands the logic behind the decision making and that every attempt is made to make the information accessible and encourage engagement of the public. To this end we would encourage the use of short, captioned explanatory videos – this will be particularly important when attempting to present and explain a short list of option combinations. It would be useful to more clearly explain that the options can be recombined at will and are not completely definitive.

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With the input and approval of Avon-Ōtākaro Network Strategic Steering Group