

**Port Revitalisation Project, Ferry Service Interest Group
held at Whanganui District Council, 101 Guyton Street Whanganui
at 3:00 pm on Wednesday, 1 February 2017**

Present: Bill McDonald, John Jarvis, Rowan McGregor, Adrian Dixon, Bill Carswell, Marianne Cavanagh, Bernard Corkery, Graeme Young David Bennett, Neville Johnson and Alfons Reitsma

In attendance: Merle Benson (minutes).

Apologies: Robert Bartley

Item	Discussion/Outcome
Welcome	Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting.
Introductions	<p>Bill McDonald Vapour Ltd introduced himself to the group advising he is tasked with developing a Masterplan for the port revitalisation project. Bill explained that a number of focus groups have been set up for the project and information, suggestions and aspirations gained from those meetings will be considered in the development of the Masterplan. A Draft Masterplan is available on Council's website at www.whanganui.govt.nz/port to seek feedback from the wider community on their thoughts and ideas for the Port revitalisation. Submissions for feedback close on Friday 3 February. Bill added that once the Masterplan is completed, he will need to convince government that the Port Revitalisation Project is a good investment for government under the Accelerate25 programme for regional growth.</p> <p>Bill Carswell - WDC introduced himself as Team Leader – Property Investment looking after commercial property for Council.</p> <p>Alfons Reitsma - Asset Manager – McCarthy Transport who was invited to attend and in support of Neville Johnson.</p> <p>Neville Johnson – Mid-West Ferries Ltd.</p> <p>Rowan McGregor – WDC, Special Projects Manager.</p> <p>Cr Graeme Young – WDC</p> <p>Bernard Corkery ex Whanganui resident with keen interest in Port development.</p> <p>Marianne Archibald – CE Whanganui Chamber of Commerce is keen to see the port revitalised as a viable proposition with the help and support of government funding.</p> <p>John Jarvis – Vapour Ltd – taking care of the requirements of Accelerate25 programme for the project.</p>

	<p>Adrian Dixon – Manager Whanganui and Partners which is the economic development are of Whanganui District Council.</p> <p>Merle Benson WDC – Minute secretary</p>
Masterplan Update	<p>Bill provided the group with an update on the development of the Masterplan advising that public submissions to the draft plan close on Friday 3 February 2017. Bill added that the draft plan on the website is very much aspirational at this stage, but the feedback received and costs around the feedback will be reviewed next week with a draft plan being brought back to the group, based on the additional submission information. However, Bill said, depending on what information is received, the plan may be split into two areas, but being conscious of the fact that the marine precinct stage needs to have the business case completed by the end of March due to Q-West’s relocation requirements. The remainder of the masterplan will be completed 3 months later.</p> <p>A comment was made around the importance of having the submissions available to the community.</p>
Freight Logistics Opportunities	<p>Adrian Dixon updated the group on the increased business opportunities that his team had been working with around the Port area. Adrian also added that the Kaikoura earthquake and the damage caused to Centreport in Wellington highlighted the need for another Port to provide a service between the North and South Island’s. Adrian said the Anatoki which is currently shipping goods from Whanganui between the islands and has received an increase in cartage job requests since this event and is keen to expand the service.</p> <p>Adrian also said Rob Bartley has informed him that Centreport is looking at the expansion of the inland port with Mars Petcare also being involved in discussions around this topic. Adrian added that all under-utilised areas of land from Heads Road to Taupo Quay are being reassessed for use.</p> <p>The rural area has also expressed an interest in transportation of their products especially around the berry production who are looking to have the ability to use an inland port or Ohakea to export product from.</p> <p>Adrian said recent communications with Cloudy Bay Clams was very positive but added that the company will use their own transportation, and discussions have focused on setting up a factory in Whanganui in the near future.</p>
Whanganui to Motueka Ferry Service	<p>Bill McDonald advised a request was made to Neville Johnson prior to Christmas for more information on how Mid-West Ferry Service Ltd will fit into the wider context of the port area, but unfortunately this information has not yet been received from Neville.</p> <p>Bill handed the meeting over to Neville who tabled a new report. Neville’s new report was titled “Mid-West Ferries Ltd suggested plan and gains to Whanganui Region and Port as well as the same for Motueka and Golden Bay Region”.</p>

The documents contained a plan of a “Proposed Western Tourist Corridor”, two photographs of the Motueka Port area and an overall plan showing details of how Mid-West Ferries Ltd could fit into the Port Revitalisation Project.

Neville then asked Alfons Reitsma to provide some background information on port development based on Alfons previous work and life experience.

Alfons provided background information on his early childhood in an around a marine environment, sailing and later work experience of growing up in the Netherlands, working in the marine industry and around ports.

Alfons said commercial consideration is very important in the development of any port adding that one of the most difficult issues to achieve in a port development is to get good commercial activity without water depth.

He added that transport efficiency is also very important both in port shipping, rail and road transportation, but shipping is by far the most efficient means of transportation.

Alfons said Whanganui need to ask the question if Whanganui wanted an “all weather access port” or “full depth access 24x7” or a nice “recreational port”?

He continued explaining that the town he worked in the Netherlands was very similar to Whanganui in that it also had a number of wet industries in the Port area. These industries discharged their waste to the harbour where he sailed but eventually they were asked to “clean up their act” as or “move on”.

Alfons asked if the Navy has shown any interest in the port area or has anyone approached them about using the port?

Cr David Bennett joined the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Alfons continued stating that the tonnage capacity of ships, needs to match the tonnage of Heads Road products. He also recommended an approach be made to the Whanganui community and the wider boating region for a “registration of interest for marina berths” suggesting the result may be surprising.

Neville Johnson continued the conversation and commented that Wharf 2 which is fairly open to the sea, may need some “surge protection” in order to maintain the required depths for users.

Rowan McGregor added that Council will not be doing any capital dredging with the hope that people will come. Rowan then provided dredging details regarding the sand bar at the entrance to the harbour stating that although

dredging costs are not as expensive as they used to be, it is all about economies of scale, the more shifted the less it costs per cubic metre and then there is capital dredging and maintenance dredging. As soon as the dredged material needs to be carted a long way to dump it, then the costs rise. There are two dredging requirements at the port when talking about depth, the tide brings sand in and the out-going tide drops silt, then there is the bar itself which has 250k – 300k cubic metres of sand across the front of the bar each year, so if a trench is dug across the front of that, we need to deal with that volume.

Neville Johnson referred to his plan provided focusing on numbers 11, 12 and 13 as indicated on the plan as a recreational inner harbour area. The area 1, 2 and 3 would be created to use for the Ferry Terminals as there is insufficient parking space at Wharf 1. Neville also added that he had been in contact with Clayton Diaz from Maritime NZ who have expressed their concern about using Wharf 1 on an outgoing tide or if the river is flooded. Neville said he has also been in contact with Safety NZ who also expressed their concern about using the Wharf 1 area.

Neville indicated that the area of land to be reclaimed between numbers 11 – 14 on the plan is 420m long and believes the “inner harbour” area size is right.

Neville said his company would dredge to a depth of 7 metres over the bar and inner harbour as this is a requirement from Maritime NZ to allow a minimum of 1 metre depth at low tide below vessels.

Neville mentioned Ewan Crawford who successfully dredged to a depth of 7 metres in 1989/90, which almost eliminated any bar problem. Neville informed the meeting that his estimated cost to dredge to this depth would be around \$14m initially but would then be less each year the 7m depth was maintained.

In response to a question, Neville said his project was not ready to start immediately but suggested that around two years he would be ready to commence operation.

In response to a question regarding the costs for the project, Neville said the estimated costs were between \$50m - \$60m, but that figure involves Mid-West Ferries Ltd doing all of the work including rebuilding Wharves 1, 2 and 3, replacing the Victory shed with a new building and creating more parking. Neville added that if the area is tidied up it will attract people to the area. He referred to the attached photos of the Motueka port area.

In response to a question regarding the sandbar at Motueka, Neville advised the area would also require dredging to a depth of 7m, but this would result in removing around 1% of the sandbar.

A question was raised about the Godwits birds that have a nesting place on a sand spit at Motueka, but Neville indicated an ecological study of the birds had been done, but he was not concerned that it would inhibit his project.

In response to a question raised regarding his business case for the project, he said he was working with Carolyn Deucher from Auckland University, Tourism with a study on tourism potential and a proposed “Western Tourism Corridor”. Neville said he is also working with Warwick Walbran (Transport Consultant) who is completing an Environmental Impact Study for him to be ready in three months. Neville advised he will raise the funding of \$98,000 for these reports himself.

A question was asked if the group could see the “scoping details” for the reports now, rather than receive the reports and then find out that some questions that this group may have, may not be answered in the reports. Neville declined to provide this information but suggested that if anyone in the group had any questions around the scoping of his reports then they should send any details to him at info@njfs.co.nz

Rowan mentioned the timeframes in moving freight versus moving passengers, with passengers requiring a tighter timeframe than freight and asked if Neville if he felt there was any conflict about this compatibility.

Neville said he did not think there would be a problem with this and added that the Whanganui Port was open more days per annum than Cook Strait.

Neville referred back to his plan advising that number 21 on the plan would be a possible “surge wall” or “deflector” if required and was angled accordingly to provide protection to the recreational and inner harbour area.

Rowan mentioned that there are five ferries currently working Cook Strait, three Kiwi rail and two Bluebridge ferries. These companies have well established companies aligned to use their services, Rowan asked Neville if he had any concerns about attracting non-aligned companies to his ferry service. Neville responded stating that he did not see a problem with attracting non-aligned companies to use his ferry service as the total travel time to Christchurch would be reduced by around 5 hours.

Bill McDonald reminded the group that there must be no compromise to Q-West in Stage 1 as there are time constraints around their relocation of premises.

Neville added that he expected to be three months away from having a business case but advised that he estimated the project to cost around \$50 to \$60m. The business case will be available in three months’ time to talk to government seeking and economic development funding grant.

	<p>Neville added that he believed his new plan tabled today would not affect the commercially unaffected areas of the Wardale plan.</p> <p>David Bennett asked Neville if thought had been given to extending the rail line to the end of the Port to enable railed products to be off loaded direct to the ferries?</p> <p>Neville advised there is no rail connection at Motueka and his clients are not chasing rail connections as they prefer road transportation.</p> <p>David Bennett made a suggestion to flatten out the old Balgownie land fill site and allow trucks to operate from there with a rail link.</p> <p>Bernard Corkery asked if Neville was willing to provide his project team names, but this request was declined by Neville.</p> <p>A suggestion was made around that this group signing a “confidentiality agreement” with Neville to assist Neville with the business case, but Neville declined this offer.</p> <p>Alfons then commented on the importance of thinking about “global modular transport systems” and suggested don’t be restricted by side lifters, and the need to think about trailer standards and 45ft containers. The design of the Port is critical as clients only want to transport goods once, not twice. Any design of the first plan needs to be future proofed for 20, 30 or 40 years.</p>
Next Steps	<p>Bill McDonald advised the submissions to the Draft Masterplan will be evaluated and included in the masterplan next month.</p> <p>All investment opportunities will be looked at, noting that further information and estimated costs from Mid-West Ferries Ltd will be available in three months’ time.</p> <p>Meanwhile any responses to Neville’s plan can be made on the website.</p> <p>Murray Cleveland joined the meeting at 4:10 pm</p> <p>Murray added that he has received good support from his constituents regarding the ferry service, but people want to know “where are the details”, “the costs”, “and the masterplan”.</p> <p>Murray added there is also a need to make sure the masterplan does not conflict with Ferry operations.</p>
Meeting Close	The meeting closed at 4:12 pm