

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- The Piriharakeke/Foxton River Loop is the former path of the Manawatū River. It is adjacent to the historical Ngāti Raukawa settlement at Matarakapa Island.
- In 1943, the Whirokino Cut in the lower Manawatū River was intended to create a spillway for flood events, however an unexpected flood during construction led to this becoming the main path of the Manawatū River.
- Since the cut was made, the Manawatū River Loop at Foxton has suffered excessive levels of E. coli, turbidity, sedimentation and aquatic weeds. This has had a strong negative effect on the self-esteem of the people of Foxton.
- Levels of unemployment in the town are high. The population is declining and over-represented by retirees.
- On the index of socioeconomic deprivation, where ten is the most deprived, and one is least deprived, Foxton Town is decile ten and Foxton Beach is decile nine.
- A 'four-well-being' framework has been used as a base for the preparation of a comprehensive economic development plan (Sept 2019) and an associated implementation plan (March 2020), to restore Foxton's vision and well-being and create a wide array of new employment opportunities.
- The short term plan makes some immediate improvements to water quality as part of a wider programme of amenity works. The longer term plan is to investigate and potentially restore flow through the Loop from the lower stem of the Manawatū River and achieve extensive ecological and water quality improvements.

A WORK IN PROGRESS

- Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom (TANS) cultural centre with 140,000 visitors per annum, town centre improvements and the windmill now stand proud as green shoots of Foxton renewal.
- Ngāti Raukawa marae and hapu have clear and necessary economic development aspirations and plans.
- Now the Otaki to North Levin expressway is confirmed, Foxton is ideally positioned for growth. Co-investment from Central Government is required to bring the proposed destination and economic development plans to fruition.
- Success with the PGF application will help change the current Manawatū River Loop at Foxton from being a festering sore for the Foxton community by dredging accumulated silt, removing aquatic weeds and constructing boardwalks/wharfs and landscape amenities. These works will help residents and visitors to 'face-the-river' with pride and joy. More visitors will come to Foxton.
- Improved walk/cycleways will provide better access to the world renowned Ramsar wetland in the Manawatū River estuary and a sought-after recreational experience. The Ramsar wetland has one of the highest diversities of birdlife in the country and is capable of attracting over 40,000 visitors per annum. Strong interest has been expressed in establishing visitor boat trips from Foxton town to the Ramsar wetland.
- A Waharoa (gateway) and a refresh of Paretao/Seaview Gardens in Foxton will provide a start point and view-scape of the impressive Lower Manawatū River, estuary and coastline.
- A modern ecology education, exhibition and visitor facility would add a new dimension to Foxton.

- Visitors will also enjoy the expected flourishing cafes and boutique shops that will establish on Foxton's main street to service après recreation and/or in-transit travelling needs.
- Preliminary designs and costings for the Loop dredging, boardwalks, amenity/landscape works and the walk/cycleway have been completed. This will allow these works to be 'spade-ready' in 2020 and significantly progressed in 2021.
- Proposed access improvements from State Highway One to Foxton town and implementation of a Horowhenua/Foxton destination and market development plan will facilitate increased visitor flow and enjoyment – with new employment/business development opportunities.
- Following the receipt of a letter to Hon David Parker, considerable Government support and awareness of environmental improvement initiatives is apparent.
- Further groundwork will also be undertaken to achieve extensive riparian planting wetland and stormwater-quality enhancements and the modelling of the options and implications associated with restoring Manawatū river flow through the Loop at Foxton. In addition, a second phase of walk/cycleway development across Matarakapa island will be assessed.

APPROACH



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

1. NEW RIVERSIDE AMENITIES



2. DREDGING



3. NEW WALK/CYCLEWAYS LINKING TOWN AND BEACH WITH BIRDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORMS



SUMMARY OF PROPOSED WORKS

- Manawatū River Loop at Foxton riverside amenity and landscape works and associated dredging (PGF)
- Waharoa/Gateway developments at Paretao/Seaview Gardens (HDC)
- Cycle/walkway development connecting the town and the beach together with Ramsar viewing platforms (PGF, Horizons and HDC)
- SH1 access and signage improvements (HDC and NZTA)
- Toilets (TIF/HDC)
- Māori economic development support (PGF)
- Destination development plan (HDC)
- Pou and wayfinding/story telling (PGF)
- Commencement of riparian planting (Horizons)
- Modelling of Manawatū River Loop at Foxton connection options (Horizons and partners)
- Assessment of a second phase of walkway/cycleway development (PGF)
- Further groundwork to secure funding to achieve significant riparian planting, wetland enhancements and storm water quality improvements (PGF)
- Planning works to facilitate the provision of further visitor services and experiences including cafes etc. on the main street of Foxton Town and the cultural area surrounding Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom (HDC)
- Environmental education/exhibition centre (PGF)
- Spray irrigation of treated waste (HDC)
- Stormwater quality improvement (HDC)
- Project management (PGF).

Total proposed investment: \$13.19m
Funds sought from PGF: \$9m

