



Urban Task Force Proposes An Innovative Funding Strategy For Transformational Civic Masterplan

TAURANGA, 6 December 2021: Tauranga’s Urban Task Force (UTF) is heralding the Civic Masterplan released last week as a major step forward in the revitalisation of the City, and is encouraging the Council to establish a ground-breaking model to funding the project.

UTF Chairman Scott Adams says the long-overdue investment in the area is exactly what the group had lobbied for but warns that finance for the ambitious plan is a potentially thorny issue.

“The elephant in the room has always been funding and these significant costs cannot all sit with ratepayers.

“The scale of this package of work and the generational benefits needs a partnership funding model. It needs all three Council's across the Western Bay to contribute. It needs support and funding from central government” says Adams.

The Civic Masterplan proposal includes a museum, refurbished library, civic whare and hotel set around a multi-purpose outdoor space and connected to the waterfront area. The initial stage of development is estimated at \$300 million with construction pencilled in to begin mid-2022.

“To say this is a long time coming is an understatement. The UTF is 100 percent behind investment into our city centre to create a place we are proud of, a place with attractions and amenity, and a thriving hub for business, housing, culture and the community in the heart of the Western Bay of Plenty” says Adams.

The UTF is advocating for a funding partnership deal based on the City Deals model used throughout Australia to lock-in funding for large infrastructure projects. City Deals enable

central, regional, and local government to work collaboratively with city ratepayers to ensure sufficient funding is in place to see the project through.

“City Deals in places like Townsville, Hobart and Perth have seen major commitments to the development of facilities such as stadiums, airports and cultural centres. We’d like to see the Council explore solutions like this rather than asking ratepayers to fund such major development single-handedly” says Adams.

Earlier this year the UTF presented a submission to the Tauranga City Council’s Long-Term Plan, urging Commissioners to invest more than \$12m per annum into the ailing CBD over the next 10-year period. And while progress is being made, Adams questions the integration of public transport with the masterplan.

“The UTF’s transport strategy submission recommended that the CBD should not be used as a parking hub for buses and that the Willow St bus terminal should be re-located. With those sections of Willow Street and the Strand becoming integrated into the civic development, and public transport hub identified, where will the bus stops be located?”

Despite the lack of detail around finance and transport, Adams says the UTF couldn’t be happier that the City’s leadership are taking decisive action.

“We fully support the Civic Masterplan. This goes right to the heart of our LTP submission, it’s a significant building programme that will be our coming of age as a city. The Masterplan is a great step in the right direction for Tauranga. In 2022 alone, we hope to be spending more on construction materials than the last decade on paper and plans.”

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About the Urban Task Force

The UTF is an incorporated society formed to provide powerful, knowledgeable leadership and the benefits of years of experience to Tauranga city’s local authorities. Members comprise of some of the City’s most influential developers, investors, professionals and iwi deeply concerned about the direction the City is taking.

For more information about the Urban Task Force see: <https://urbantaskforce.co.nz/>

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