

RANGITIKEI Connect

www.rangitikei.govt.nz

46 High St, Marton
Private Bag 1102, Marton 4741
P: 0800 422 522 (24 hrs)
E: info@rangitikei.govt.nz
FB: Rangitikei/DC

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Consultants assess the proposed site for the Marton Rail Hub, off Makirikiri Road.

Marton Rail Hub on track as planning gets under way

Progress towards the construction of the Marton Rail Hub is moving forward with planning consultants beginning work on the site.

The development of the Marton Rail Hub was announced in early 2020 in a partnership between Rangitikei District Council, Te Rūnanga O Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's Provincial Development Unit and Rangitikei Forestry Holdings.

The rail hub project will set up the Rangitikei District as a key logistical hub for the forestry industry across the Lower North Island.

More than 80 jobs will be created during the construction phase and 22 full-time positions when operational. At a Rangitikei District Council meeting in December, the tender for a planning consultant was awarded to firm WSP, in a move that allows the rail hub project to progress towards comprehensive development planning. Planning work and assessments on site, off Makirikiri Rd outside Marton, started this week.

A governance board for the project was also appointed in December. Rangitikei District Mayor Andy Watson said the appointments marked an exciting key milestone in moving the rail project forward.

"The rail hub will significantly benefit our community, economy and iwi. It's great to see progress being made as we get into the new year," Watson said.

"As we look at 2021 and the process of recovering from the impacts of COVID-19, we are motivated to continue pushing forward to turn this opportunity into reality."

Te Rūnanga o Ngā Wairiki Ngāti Apa Chairperson Pahia Turia said creating new jobs in the midst of a global pandemic was really exciting for the rohe and our whānau, hapū and iwi.

"We are looking forward to the growth and development within our rohe, it will see significant development and opportunities within the Rangitikei district," Turia said.

"Our Paiaka Matua, our values guide everything that we do. One of our Paiaka Matua is Kotahitanga - Unity. Working with others to achieve positive outcomes for everyone. We value relationships and partnerships, and are absolutely committed to ensuring sustainable and positive outcomes for whānau, hapū, iwi and our community."

In August, a \$9.1 million investment managed by the Provincial Development Unit was announced through the Infrastructure Industry Reference Group, which helped identify infrastructure projects as part of the Government's \$3 billion COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

Rangitikei District Council has committed \$225,000 to a District Plan Change process, which will allow the industrial build to take place on former farmland if confirmed, and a further \$525,000 to create roading and rail access. Rangitikei Forestry Holdings will contribute \$500,000 to the project, as well as building and commissioning a debarker facility at the site.

Watson said Rangitikei District Council was committed to ensuring the Marton Rail Hub project was beneficial to the community and was currently working to address the concerns raised in the appeal to the District Plan Change.

A comprehensive development plan is due to be completed by April, which will determine the next steps for the project.

Project Updates

New Bulls Water Reservoir

The reservoir is approximately 8 weeks away from completion, with the precast walls and poured concrete floor in place.

Marton Memorial Hall

Works were suspended and the hall made ready for the shearing sports on Waitangi weekend. Our contractors are preparing to mobilise back to the site for the last phase of works.

Remediation of historic landfill on Putorino Road

We are now hoping to commence this work next week depending on the resource consent processing. A photo is below from the UAV (drone) footage we took in December 2020 to confirm that the landfill is still stable.



Aerial image of the old landfill on Putorino Road.

Keep track of where you've been

With recent movements in Covid-19 Alert Levels, it is a timely reminder to continue to use the NZ COVID Tracer app if you can and turn on Bluetooth tracing.

The app keeps New Zealand 1 step ahead of the virus — the more we scan the safer we'll be. If you don't have the app it is available free at the App Store and Google Play.

More information is available at www.covid19.govt.nz



Rangitikei has some big decisions to make in 2021

We are thinking about our plans for the future and how we're going to move our district forward. Soon, we will start consultation on our Long Term Plan for 2021-2031, and we want to know your thoughts.

If you want to be the first to hear about the Consultation and the topics we need feedback on, sign up at www.rangitikei.govt.nz/framingourfuture/signup or scan the QR Code.



High Demand Means Delays in Inspections

Rangitikei District, like many Districts in New Zealand, is experiencing rapid growth in the building sector. While this is fantastic for our District, it means that our staff are finding it difficult to keep up with the work that is associated with this increase. As a result we have created new vacancies to cope with the demand, previously unforeseen when we were planning for an anticipated economic slowdown following Covid-19 lockdowns. In addition, Council's major consenting subcontractor in this area has announced that while they will continue to accept building consents for processing, they cannot commit to meeting the 20 working day timeframe but will keep trying their best to do so.

There will now be at least a two-week lead-in time for any building inspections. There are also delays in the processing of consents, so until further notice our building team will not be doing inspections on Wednesdays or Fridays, to allow them time to undertake the required processing work.

We kindly ask you to please be patient with our staff and make sure you book your inspections well ahead of time to avoid disappointment and delays in building work. We are doing all we can to catch up and improve our service times.

We apologise for any inconvenience resulting from our approach to dealing with the high demands on our building team. We thank you for your co-operation and understanding.



Plumbosolvency

Some plumbing fittings have the potential to allow minute traces of metal to accumulate in water standing in the fittings for several hours.

Although the health risk is small, the Ministry of Health recommends that you flush a mugful of water from your drinking-water tap each morning before you use to remove any metal that may have dissolved from the plumbing fittings.

We recommend this simple precaution for all households, including those on public and private water supplies.

