

Housing project a design for the future, not the past

Hemi Toia 04:55, Aug 14 2021



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Developers and directors of Maitai Development Co General Partner Ltd, Andrew Spittal, left, and Hemi Toia, pictured on site of the 310ha proposed Maitahi-Bayview development.

OPINION: The Maitahi Bayview project has divided opinion in our city. That's a shame, because to us, it has always been about bringing people together and creating a community.

We understand that people want to live in a beautiful environment and that they treasure and respect the Maitai Valley and the Maitai River.

The particular piece of land where we hope to establish the Maitahi Village has been in private ownership for more than 50 years. It was not part of the settlement process for Ngāti Koata.

As owners of 4500ha of surrounding whenua in the Maitai area and given our affinity with the Maitai River and existing relationships, Ngāti Koata was invited to join three other local families as the land's new owners.

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As existing landowners in the area with a deep connection to this whenua, we have listened carefully to the concerns raised about change in this special place and the impact of more people, more homes, and more cars.

There will be traffic movements associated with people living in the Maitahi Village. However, as a much-needed housing solution that is only 2.6km from the Nelson City Centre, it provides a realistic option for residents to cycle and walk to and from home to the city centre.

It's also an opportunity for the Nelson City Council to collaborate with us on public transport solutions that integrate the community in a way that reduces private vehicle usage. New Zealand's future is not more cars it is less cars and we recognise our duty to design for the future not the past.



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The project, less than 3km from the CBD, will allow future residents to cycle and walk into town, reducing the amount of private vehicles on the roads.

We have been meeting with other organisations that are working to provide housing solutions for people who live in our region. We have been sharing accurate information with them about what we are trying to do within this development. We have shared our vision for creating a vibrant and healthy community. They have offered us support and encouragement and told us to keep going.

As we all know, one of the most pressing challenges our community faces right now is providing safe and warm housing for all our people. We simply do not have enough housing to meet our needs, at the present time or as our community grows.

People are living with the consequences of their unmet housing needs every day. People are struggling. We need to do all that we can to fix that, not ten years from now when children who are being born today are at intermediate school, but as soon as we can

At the heart of our vision for housing in the Kākā Valley is providing homes that meet the needs of a range of people – those seeking a first home and those seeking a last home – and many other kinds of needs in between.

Our community needs ambitious and progressive approaches to providing housing solutions and we are ready to play a part in that. Our vision is to provide a housing solution that respects the broad community goals we all share at its heart – goals that reflect our need to leave our environment better than we find it and to provide homes for those who need and want them.

We are working in partnership with experienced local people and organisations who share our vision for housing in our community. Ngāti Koata is a key partner in the development. This means that we will contribute a strong commitment to environmental stewardship alongside commercial acumen to the planning and successful delivery of this project.

Work has already begun to protect the Kākā Stream from grazing animals. We are making good progress with this work and seeing positive results. One of the reasons this is important is because of the Kākā Stream's impact on the Maitai River and the swimming holes we all enjoy using in the summer.

If you love the area as we do, then you will be pleased to know that the Maitahi Bayview plan retains all the current community recreation assets and provides significant new opportunities.



SUPPLIED

An aerial photograph of Nelson with the Maitahi-Bayview development site marked by a dotted white line at the top of the image.

It includes 16ha of ecologically enhanced esplanade including 2km of stream restoration with less than 10 percent of the total site covered by buildings. We are planning for an 18 ha or 32 per cent increase to the Botanical Hill (Centre of New Zealand) Reserve.

There will be more than 6km of walking, running, and cycling tracks, including 4km of ridgeline walking, running, and cycling trails for everyone to enjoy. Those are just a few aspects of our project that we are hopeful the community will embrace.

We understand how much the people of our region love to enjoy the outdoors – Ngāti Koata has been providing access to large areas of its land in the Maitai Valley area for just that purpose for many years.

We believe that we can combine housing, environmental guardianship, and recreational priorities in a way that makes sense, and protects and enhances a place that we all value.

When we imagine the realisation of the Maitahi Village project in the Kākā Valley we see a new community. We see a community that connects to our city and our region. Its eyes face the Maitai River and its roots are in the Maitai Valley.

Hemi Toia is the CEO of Koata Ltd and one of the project partners for the Maitahi Bayview Development.

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