

Maitahi development project an opportunity for affordable housing

Tim Newman 09:20, Sep 06 2021



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An impression of possible homes in stage one of the proposed Maitahi Village development in Kākā Valley. Koata Ltd is in talks with housing providers to potentially establish 100 affordable homes in their proposed development.

Community housing providers say the proposed Maitahi Village development is one of many in Nelson that could benefit from the provision of affordable housing.

The developers behind the Maitahi Village proposal in the Kaka Valley have applied for a private plan change request, to rezone parts of the land and pave the way for the development of up to 350 houses.

Further to this, they have made an application to the Government's Infrastructure Acceleration Fund (IAF), which, if successful, would help offset costs and allow for the construction of 100 "affordable" homes.

Koata Ltd chief executive Hemi Toia has said housing providers such as Habitat for Humanity, the Nelson Tasman Housing Trust and Abbeyfield have all been invited to talk about their potential involvement in the affordable housing element of the development.

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Toia told the Nelson City Council that without the IAF, the development would consist of 350 homes at full market price. He said the commercial realities without any IAF offset would

make it impossible to give housing providers early access to the development and would make land costs too high to provide affordable housing.



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Andrew Spittal and Hemi Toia pictured on site of the 310ha proposed Maitahi-Bayview development. The Maitahi part of the syndicated development consists of 350 houses in the Kākā Valley.

Habitat for Humanity Nelson general manager Nick Clarke said while they had been involved in some discussions with the Maitahi developers, these were conversations they were keen to have with any developer in Nelson.

“We’re really happy to talk to any developers looking to do work – if we want to encourage stable and enduring communities, we need to have spaces for affordable housing.

“We want to engage because in every development here in Nelson there should be space for affordable housing.”



Nick Clarke said Habitat for Humanity was happy to work with any developer to help bring more affordable housing to Nelson.

Clarke said with only a very conceptual understanding of what the project might look like, if it went ahead, it was too early to say how Habitat would fit into the development.

“Habitat has a couple of models we’ve been engaging with for the past 25 years in Nelson ... but it’s always a site-specific response.”

Nelson Tasman Housing Trust director Carrie Mozena said while they too had been in conversations with a range of developers, there were few that were able to accommodate affordable housing.

Mozena said many current developments in the region had covenants around section size and dwellings per site which made affordable housing impossible to do.

“That reality means we need to keep looking for other opportunities where we can find them.

“When there is a developer willing to entertain alternatives to a house and land package, we need to take that seriously.”



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Carrie Mozena said it was sometimes difficult for developers to include affordable housing options, so Nelson Housing Tasman Trust was always looking for opportunities where they were available.

Mozena said what had impressed her about the Maitahi development was that Koata Ltd had been actively thinking about delivering affordable housing for those in need, and the partnerships needed to make that happen.

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“We were very willing to talk to them on that basis,” Mozena said. “Maitahi has been very clear to us their ability to include affordable housing hinges on them being able to secure [IAF] funds.

“That’s fine, we just want to be at the table and part of the conversation to deliver genuine affordable housing options in our region.”

However, opposition group to the development Save the Maitai said the proposal for community housing was a “cynical sweetener” to drum up support for the development.

Save the Maitai spokesman Aaron Stallard said while the group was in support of more community housing, the Maitahi subdivision was not the best way forward.



A concept of the proposed Maitahi Village development. Hemi Toia said the impression that the valley was cold or damp was not correct, as he said the valley was a wide, U-shaped valley that got plenty of sun.

“The developers are only talking about 100 ‘affordable’ houses ... The truth is that without massive taxpayer (IAF) funding to subsidise the developers’ infrastructure costs, there will be no community housing at all.”

Stallard also said the developers’ claim they would leave the environment and river in a better condition than it was today was “laughable”.

“They plan to urbanise the rural recreation area in the Maitai Valley and fill it with cars, cut into the bank of the Maitai River, excavate the natural floodplain of the river, change the course of Kaka Stream, and discharge stormwater into Dennies Hole.

“This does not uphold te mana o te awa.”

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<https://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/news/126284523/maitahi-development-project-an-opportunity-for-affordable-housing>