Esk Street CBD Consultation

Invercargill CITY COUNCIL

Friday, 6 June 2014

EMBARGOED UNTIL 5.30PM, MONDAY 9 JUNE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS
CIVIC REPORTERS

Shop open: have your say on Esk Street upgrade

Invercargill residents are being asked to this week (Tuesday 10 to Friday 13 June) visit a shop in Cambridge Place Arcade to view the design concepts for the upgrade of Esk Street and give their feedback to Council.

The Council is opening the shop, at number 9 Cambridge Place Arcade, with a special presentation to Esk Street retailers and the media on the evening of Monday 9 June. It will then be open to the public from 9am to 5pm on Tuesday 10 to Friday 13 June, with a late night to 7pm on Wednesday 11 June.

The shop will be staffed by Inner City Working Group representatives, Council staff and SIT students. Consultant landscape architect, Craig Pocock will be there for the Wednesday late night, to give people an opportunity to speak to him directly.

The design concepts include an Esk Street Pocket Park, better street lighting, covered areas to provide shelter, street furniture (tables and chairs), places to meet or relax and more greenery.

Inner City Working Group Chairman, Cr Graham Sycamore said this was the chance for people to look at the design concepts and tell Council what they think. Members of the public could continue to give feedback to the Council for a week after the shop had closed, until Friday 20 June. After that time Mr Pocock would take the public feedback and factor it in when working on the final design concepts, for presentation to Councillors, the Inner City Working Group and members of the public in early July.

Manager Communications and Secretarial Services, Eirwen Harris, 211 1678, (027) 293 8680
Fax: 211 1434 Email:eirwen.harris@icc.govt.nz
Or
Communications Advisor, Andrei Robertson, 211 1601, (027) 231 3939
Fax: 211 1433 Email:andrei.robertson@icc.govt.nz

BACKGROUND

The upgrade of Esk Street, including the Esk Street Pocket Park is the first stage of the Inner City Revitalisation Project.

In May two consultation meetings were held with Esk Street retailers and property owners, prior to design concepts being drawn up.

The businesspeople listened to presentations by Landscape Architect Craig Pocock, about the proposed development of the Esk Street Pocket Park and environmental design improvements for the area; and by Council's Roading Manager Russell Pearson, who outlined vital engineering work that needs to be carried out on watermains, stormwater mains and electricity services in Esk Street.

In order to complete the work by late November, because December is the busiest month of the year for retailers, Council engineers were suggesting that beginning infrastructural work on underground services in late August would give enough time to repair the pipes and undertake landscape improvements by November.

Cr Sycamore said at the meetings, the retailers were asked whether this timeframe was acceptable – and the prevailing view was that retailers would prefer for Council to aim to finish the work in early November. That way, if there were any unforeseen problems or delays, there was an extra two weeks before the beginning of December.

September was identified as a good month for carrying out the work – and if possible, the project could even be brought forward into August.

Businesspeople were also asked which time of day they would prefer work to be carried out – given that contractors would need at least an eight hour window to work. A balance had to be achieved between minimising disruption to shoppers during the day and noise concerns for hotel guests at night.

"The retailers indicated that they would be happier with work taking place between 2pm-11pm. But they understood that the upgrades of the underground services would be the most disruptive and were happier to put up with longer periods during the day and disruption earlier in the process, to assist in getting the work done on time before December.

"Shops and businesses would be provided with continuous water supply while the watermain upgrade was being carried out. This would involve a temporary supply being laid above ground – and Engineers will be working on ways to make this as unobtrusive as possible," he said.

Cr Sycamore said the retailers and property owners had been encouraging about the upgrade and were understanding about it involving some disruption to the streetscape.

"They were very practical about recognising it is short term pain for long term gain."

Cr Sycamore said retailers were also asked their views on how parking in Esk Street should be managed in future – and there would be further, more detailed consultation with them over parking management in coming weeks.

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“New technology is now available that gives more flexibility and accuracy in managing parking than traditional parking meters. We want to hear what the retailers want and what best serves their needs.

“Data is now available from 12 sensors in Esk Street about parking habits and this kind of data has not been previously available.

“We were given a clear message that retailers wanted Council to provide this data to them so they can analyse what it means and provide feedback and constructive ideas on parking – and we will do this. It’s really encouraging that the retailers are happy to work with us on a parking strategy going forward,” he said.

Cr Sycamore said that the design concepts being consulted upon in the shop incorporated feedback from the meetings with retailers.

“Now we want the people of Invercargill to give us their feedback on how they want Esk Street to look in future. The concepts are there, the staff will be there – all we need is people to come along and tell us what they think,” he said.

ENDS.

Inquiries, Cr Graham Sycamore, 0274395 045
Roading Manager, Russell Pearson, 0274357 493

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