Esk Street CBD Consultation

Invercargill CITY COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS
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Retailers express views on timing and parking

Esk Street property owners and retailers this week provided valuable guidance on key issues for the first stage of the Inner City Revitalisation Project, Inner City Working Group Chairman, Councillor Graham Sycamore said today.

Around 35 retailers and property owners attended two consultation meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday evening this week.

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.

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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.

“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 following the meetings with retailers, Landscape Architect Craig Pocock and his designers would now start to develop preliminary design concepts for Esk Street. These designs would be made available for feedback from retailers and members of the public in June, he said.

ENDS.

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